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Literary Voice

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Paul Auster

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Editorial Note

Literary Voice 2014 has got delayed due to my sudden departure for Canada and U.S.A. to attend to a medical emergency concerning my infant grandson, and it resulted in my absence from India for about three months. My sincere apologies to the contributors and members of *LV* for bearing with me for the inordinate delay.

The present issue of *Literary Voice* is a mixed bag of critical essays, poems and book reviews about the established and budding writers who have been critically analyzed by well established names in the Indian academia. A comprehensive Review Essay on Harbir Singh Randhawa's edited book about Dalit Literature, is a significant milestone of *LV* 2014. The Book Review section provides ample space to refreshingly new voices in Indian English fiction and poetry. An insightful analysis of the translated works of a well-known Hindi poet, Mahendra Bhatnagar and a powerful voice in contemporary poetry in Panjabi, Swarnjit Savi, adds riches to *LV* 2014. The Poetry Column brings into focus the critical and imaginative flights of Dr Lalit Mohan Sharma and Swarnjit Savi. The contributors' active engagement in research pursuits and their incisive understanding of multifarious nuances of critical and creative outpourings not only in English language but also in Indian languages, is manifest in their write ups.

We have made a modest effort to satiate your intellectual appetite, in the hope that with your feedback about our endeavours you will help us to serve the academic cause in a better and more meaningful manner in the days to come. Amen.

T. S. Anand
Editor

Existential Ethics in Paul Auster's *The Book Of Illusions* (2002)

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The Book of Illusions is written as an autobiography of the narrator which he intends to be published after his death. It is an exploration of an extraordinary grief, possibilities and ways of living a life after a catastrophic loss. Zimmer survives his wife and two sons and negotiates with the rest of life; Hector, after laden with the guilt of being instrumental in the Death of his pregnant beloved Brigid O' Fallon, rolls down the lanes and by lanes of existence. Auster's characters are moral beings who invent their personal moralities and sticking to them helps them to ascertain the meanings of their actions, both right and wrong. By giving his characters choice, Paul Auster attempts to give shape and form to the otherwise amorphous and confused contemporary experience. Auster seems to be concerned with giving a working sense to the malaise called post-modernism and "feels an obligation to bring back selected values, but in a way that recognizes the ruptures caused by the postmodern"(Madaleine Sorapure, William Dow, 280).

Prof Zimmer, like Paul Auster is a writer and can do so only when a large sum of money becomes available in the form of inheritance in case of the author and in the form of insurance claims on the death of the family members of the protagonist. *The Book of Illusions* is a maze of biographies and autobiographies that "explicitly recognize[s its] own futility, accepting the fragmentary

and essentially mysterious nature of [their] subject, and yet the project must be attempted" (Bertens and Joseph Natoli, 20) a veritable "strategy of imagination against despair" (Ihab Hassan, 316). Zimmer brings his wife and two sons back to life by writing this book. Hector Mann brings Brigid O' Fallon back from the dead by making movies on an isolated ranch only to be destroyed after his death. Alma wants to write Hector Mann's biography to bring back her dead parents back to life.

Auster's protagonists are modernist objects who live with an acute awareness of their existential abandonment. In the face of utter hopelessness and absence of any absolute values and props to cling to, the protagonists know that the burden of choice rests squarely on their own shoulders. Their action is the only proof of their self-consciousness that fashion their life and of those who concern them. As true existentialists, Auster's protagonists take the onus of their actions, thereby, own the subsequent consequences thereon as the outcome of their own choice. Being the existential denizens of postmodern world, they "oppose the disillusionary reality with the vision of their own choice" (Robert Hipkiss, 3). It may happen in the form of carrying a guilty conscience and punishing themselves through self-torture and self-affliction. For example, assuming that there are no bullets in the gun and that Alma knew the facts, Zimmer pulled the trigger of a loaded gun placed close to his temple; when the trigger could not be pulled, what Zimmer discovered, to his surprise and awe, that gun was loaded but the safety catch was on. Here, as in the other Auster novels, chance plays a vital role. If the trigger had gone on, Zimmer would have died on the spot. Zimmer, after surviving the incident, summarizing his state of being that has crossed all barriers of fear, life and death and has attained an existential status where things no more matter. He says

"The world is full of holes, tiny apertures of

meaninglessness, microscopic rifts that the mind could walk through, and once you were on the other side of one of those holes, you were free of yourself, free of your life, free of your death, free of everything that belonged to you" (BOI-109).

Chance plays a crucial role in the work of Paul Auster. Prof Zimmer's narrative about his own life is interspersed with the phrases like 'If not for… would have been', Had it not been… would have' etc. the accidental death of Zimmer's life and his two children, his discovery of Hector Mann, his journey into and outside of the lives of Hector Mann, Alma Grund and Frieda Spelling is a zigzag steeple chase of one chance encounter or the other. The life of Hector Mann, the chief protagonist of *The Book of Illusions,* also epitomizes an odyssey steered by accidents and coincidences. Brigid O'Fallon would not have been killed accidently by Hector's fiancée Dolores Saint John's if the tire of Hector's blue DeSoto had not gone flat on the night of January 14, 1929.

"On the night of January fourteenth, he knocked off work with Blaustein at seven o'clock. Saint John was expecting him for dinner at her house in Topanga Canyon at eight. Hector would have been there well before then, but he had car trouble along the way, and by the time he finished changing the tire on his blue DeSoto, he had lost three quarters of an hour. If not for that flat tire, the event that altered the course of his life might never have happened, for it was precisely then,… Saint John had accidently fired a thirty-two-caliber bullet into O'Fallon's left eye" (BOI,137-38).

After burying Brigid O'Fallon's dead body 'into the mountains north of Malibu', Hector disappeared from the scene leaving Saint John and disguising himself to escape arrest.

The only truth of "immediate self-consciousness" on the basis of which, Auster's protagonists as existentialists operate, meets with the utter disappointment when their "truth" goes on

being illusive. Paul Auster's novels, especially *The Book of Illusions* is an attempt to grasp the ungraspable, that is , the *real.* "The elusiveness and resistance of the signified and the deferral and inadequacy of the signifier mark the context in which Auster and his characters construct narratives" ((Postmodernism: ed; Hans Bertens and Joseph Natoli, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 24). The title of the novel becomes apt in the light of the novelistic concerns undertaken by Paul Auster. Nothing is absolutely authentic or certain, yet the protagonists negotiate with the circumstances and conditions plausible at human level. Auster goes on to understand that life cannot be lived on the basis of pre-established and pre-conceived morals or ideas: anything substantial can only be said about a life once it has been lived. Furthermore, the after-evaluation of a 'life lived' is also put to the incapacitations and incapability's of language. A conversation between Hector Mann and Mr. O' Fallon authenticates Auster's existential stance:

"Do You Believe in God"

"No I do not. I believe that man is the measure of all things. Both good and bad" (BOI, 174).

Owing to the responsibility of his having been a sole reason for the death of pregnant. Brigid O'Fallon. Hector Mann starts on a never-ending journey of extreme self denial and excruciatingly painful self-inflictions. At a stage during the resolution of his corruption, Hector becomes a masked porn-star only as an attempt to demean and denigrate himself: "squalor has its own rewards, Hector said, purposely talking over her head. If a man decides to crawl into his tomb, who better to keep him company than a warm blooded woman? He dies more slowly that way, and as long as his flesh is joined to her flesh, he can live off the smell of his own corruption"(BOI,181).

"He was an exhibitionist and a hermit, and debauchee and a solitary monk, an if he managed to survive these contradictions in himself for as long as he did, it was only because he willed his mind to go numb. No more struggles to be good, no more pretending to believe in the virtues of self-denial"(BOI, 184).

Hector becomes disinterested and objectively interested in life, like a seer whose physical activities are divorced from the concerns of his mind.

Auster motif of silence is prevalent in the novel in the form of silent movies, the title of Zimmer's book on Hector Mann i.e., 'The Silent World of Hector Man', Hector's going silence after his mysterious disappearance, Zimmer's silence after his family disaster as he hibernates, Alma's silence by virtue of her book on Hector being burnt by Frieda followed by her death etc. Auster seems to bring home the face to the reader that language cannot grasp the real. Silence becomes the only apt reaction to the life that does not render itself to any definition.

For Zimmer, like Thomas Nashe in *The Music of Chance*, unexpectedly large amount of money from personal tragedy brings freedom to leave present job and negotiate with rest of the life. He dives under the crust of the society and searches for the alternative mode of existence. Zimmer tells the doctor, "I am looking for oblivion, Doctor , not Death The drugs will put me to sleep, and as long as I am unconscious, I won't have to think about what I'm doing. I'll be there, but I won't be there , and to the degree that I'm not there I'll be protected". Whether it is Professor Zimmer, Hector Mann, Frieda Spelling Thomas Nashe or any other protagonist in any work of Paul Auster, all of them "float through life with a burden of freedom they can neither sustain nor legitimately abandon…"(Irwing Howe, 131) Zimmer's accidental encounter with Hector Mann's Silent comic movie ignited a glimmer of life inside him. Therefore, he decided to write a book on

Hector Mann's film without being particularly interested in films. He, being a Professor of English, makes use of his professional acumen as a safety valve in to the alien world, as an escape route. Professor Zimmer's "outward purpose was to study and master the films of Hector Mann, but the truth was that I was teaching myself how to concentrate, training myself how to think about one thing and one thing only. It was the life of a monomaniac, but it was the only way I could live now without crumbling to pieces" (BOI 27). After writing a book on Hector Mann, Zimmer accepts the invitation of translating Chateaubriand's *Memoires d'outre Tombe.* Frieda Spelling's letter arrives as a surprise in the middle of Zimmer's translating the *Memoires* declaring that Hector Mann is still alive and wants to meet him. The unexpected meeting of the two major protagonists of the novel changes the course of the narrative and further aggravates Professor Zimmer's condition. Perhaps it begins the closure for Hector Mann, Professor Zimmer, Amla Grund and Frieda Spelling.

The Book of Illusions, as a piece of literary arte-fact, follows the aesthetics of existentialism because it places its protagonists in real life situations and examines their behavior. in this context, Steven Earnshaw rightly states: " Taken as a whole the rich texture and density of Existential writing is not an aesthetic affectation ; it is part of each philosopher's attempt to render their thinking and experiences in a way which is a proper realization of those ideas, sensations and events"(10). The feeling of alienation mixed with an overwhelming wonder at the 'thisness' of the world and self becomes the predominant characteristic of Paul Auster's fictional matrix.

Both Hector and Zimmer, more so Hector, fit into the defining aspects of existential living and experience such as 'awakening', 'After the Awakening,', 'Finitude', 'The Humans' as delineated by Steven Earnshaw in his much acclaimed critique called "Existentialism; A Guide for the Perplexed"(1-19). Every

individual, before the point of awakening , lives an unthinking life of 'every man', Kierkegaard, in "The Sickness Unto Death", argues that ' the only life of one who so lived it , deceived by life's pleasures or its sorrows, that that he never became decisively, eternally , consciousness of himself as spirit , as self"(Kierkegaard, 57). The 'Awakening' makes an individual 'conscious ' of his 'self' when he begins the journey in the search of meaning of life , universe, laws and values and finally the authenticity of his own being and self. What it is I s accompanied is the feeling of angst, the awareness of nothingness leads to the discovery of a new way of looking at things, one that contrast at every point with the natural attitude of experience and thought. For Hector, the point of 'Awakening' came when pregnant Brigid O'Fallon received a bullet in her left eye and died. Till that point, Hector had been leading a life of a lasciviousness and indulgence changing sex partners every fortnight besides struggling in film business that was slowly dying in the face of introduction of sound in the films. Accidental death of Brigid O' Fallon and the introduction of sound in the films coincided with each other. Awakening means the discovery of 'in authenticity' of our lives, therefore, we start the search of an authentic existence, accompanied by 'dread' or 'anxiety' which is the fundamental feature of our existence, and that leads to journey into nothingness. The act of Hector's going into disguise and getting a new name was an act of making himself a nonentity, a permanent act of nothingness, of becoming the other. This split into the other gave Hector a chance of looking at his own 'self' from a distance objectively, a chance to understand and absolve it.

"He learned how to look at himself from a distance, to see himself first of all as a man among other men, then as a collection of random particles of matter, and finally as a single speck of dust- and farther he travelled from his point of origin- the closer he came to achieving greatness"(BOI,147).

Taking the identity of other, i.e., the process of objectification serves an important purpose in the attempt to search for the self-identity as a result of subjectification. The switching of identity reflects the postmodern fluidity of subjectivity and, therefore, the futility of the attempt to establish an authentic self. It points towards the cardinal instability of one's self in the face of a life that is based on postmodern splintering of the self. However, the protagonist gets a closer access to his 'self' through the other, though both remain essentially unfathomable. Hector decided to go to Spokane, the city to which Brigid belonged. This came as another chance of torturing himself, an act of self-imposed punishment."Of all troubles Hector could imagine, of all the pains he could possibly inflict on himself, none was worse than the thought of going to the city where they (O Fallons) lived"(BOI,148). Alma Grund puts Hector's state of mind thus:

"You don't drive an innocent girl insane, and you don't make her pregnant, and you don't bury her dead body eight feet under the ground and expect to go on with your life as before. A man who has done what he had done deserved to be punished. If the world wouldn't do for it, then he would have to do it for himself"(BOI,145-46).

There began the course of torturing himself to the extreme, both physically and spiritually. He made himself as uncomfortable as possible. After the awakening, the second important aspect of existential mode of life if belief in the 'finitude' of life. An existential accepts death not as an end of life, but an event which is bound up with now and the way one projects oneself. It is the 'finitude' of life that entails 'choice' and its significance. Until now, Hector's life is the outcome of his choice as his decision to torture himself has been. Subsequently, Hector Mann decides to hibernate himself in a ranch along with Frieda Spelling and produce films which are meant to be destroyed within twenty four hours of his death. Hector makes this project the *sonum bonum* of his life with "a

greater sense of urgency … for our lives are the projects we achieve…"(Earnshaw, 19). By investing the rest of his life in an absurdist project of producing films meant to be destroyed, Hector attempts to generate some meaning of his life as if it would bring Brigid O' Fallon back to life. Hector's self which was chaotic before the accidental death of Brigid O' Fallon suddenly awakens to its own state of de-centering and strives towards the attainment of selfhood which is more centered. He sets out on a course of self-infliction and his penance becomes: "a continual work in progress, and the punishments he meted out to himself changed according to what he felt were his greatest deficiencies at any given moment. He craved company, he longed to be with a woman again, he wanted bodies and voices around him, and therefore, he walled himself up in that walled factory, struggling to school himself in the finer points of self-abnegation"(BOI,146).

This 'continual work in progress' marks Hector's stepping into penultimate level of the construction of self that has so far been in chaotic state. His self-abnegation is nothing but owning the onus of the result of the choice he made in living the life of debauchery that ultimately lead to Brigid O' Fallon's death. He accepts the fact that he was not forced to do what he did by any external agency. As a being in 'anguish' it was Hector himself who was responsible for the predicament he lands himself in. Hiding himself in the ranch is his way of erasing himself from the public memory and confining the struggle for search of the self to his individual being. Through the character and life of Hector Mann, Paul Auster tries to answer an ultimate existential question the he asks in the novel *The Book of Illusions*:

"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"(BOI, 208).

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REDEFINING ANCIENT WISDOM: CREATING NEW PERSPECTIVES IN ENGLISH PROVERBS

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Proverbs in any language are the repository of the wisdom of a social group. They not only comment, but also guide human actions. A study of the proverbs easily brings out the social ethos of a people who share the same language. Life is full of twists and turns and proverbs are the guide-posts of a language. They are the essence of human thought and activity in a given circumstance. A look at them shows how they define man, his society, and his existence, in general terms. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that proverbs, if deconstructed, can take us on an odyssey deep into the beginnings of civilization, and point to the conditions in which these were formed and, came into vogue.

Definition of a Proverb:

Generally, a proverb can be defined as a short, pithy statement of a general truth, one that condenses common experience into memorable form. Miguel de Cervantes defines a proverb as "a short sentence based on long experience." According to Paul Hernadi, proverbs are "brief, memorable, and intuitively convincing formulations of socially sanctioned advice."

"Time heals all wounds" is an ancient proverb which contains great wisdom. But by reversing it, Jane Ace has added a new dimension to its meaning: "Time wounds all heels." Now, the reserve is also as true… although the idea has undergone a total shift Stefan Kanfer, in his article "Proverbs or Aphorisms?" defines a **proverb** as "anonymous human history compressed to the size of a seed."

Sydney J. Harris believes that "A **proverb** is a statement we

enthusiastically embrace when we are unwilling to examine the particulars in a general situation."

William Shakespeare, in his famous play 'Much Ado About Nothing' remarks "Patch grief with proverbs" underlining the significance of proverbs in human life, which support us in our grief. Proverbs are formations of human wisdom against which individual sorrow and grief look insignificant.

However, Kenneth Burke, in 'The Philosophy of Literary Form' remarks that "**Proverbs** are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*" and adds that " another name for *strategies* might be *attitudes*." Burke's definition relates the function of proverbs from the elevated state of representing wisdom to strategizing human behaviour.

It can be concluded that Proverbs represent not only human wisdom but they also guide mankind in the performance of its various functions.

Proverbs are either persuasive or expository. Examples of contemporary proverbs that persuade people to action are 'The squeaky wheel gets the grease'; 'Wake up and smell the roses'; and 'The early bird gets the worm.' Proverbs that dissuade people from doing things are 'If you drive, don't drink' and 'Don't count your chickens before they hatch.' Explanatory proverbs include 'Rolling stones gather no moss' and 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Frank Zappa, while emphasising the shared wisdom of the world of proverbs makes a startling disclosure about human nature when he says "One of my favorite philosophical tenets is that people will agree with you only if they already agree with you. You do not change people's minds."

Some startling examples:
An old broom knows the corners of the house
Be sure your sins will find you out.

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES:

If we look at our proverbs, it is very clear most of them were adopted over the ages and there was no one in specific who wrote

them down. Like folk ballads, and folk songs, they are also the creation of the social groups. We have to look at the philosophic roots of the world in which these proverbs were condensed into meaning. If we look at our world before 1850, the year when Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was published, it was a God-centric world, held together by faith. In *The Dover Beach* Matthew Arnold also talks of this faith which was evaporating turning the human race into 'ignorant armies, clashing by night'. 'God is in the Heaven, all is well with the world' - Robert Browning's faith proved misplaced and Alfred Lord Tennyson had to talk of a Victorian compromise between what it all was, and what had emerged as a result of Darwin's theory of Evolution challenging the long held beliefs of the people. The CRACKS IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF CIVILIZATION which are visible in Arnold and Tennyson could not be repaired, rather the world went on changing into a difficult station for man, in which God, though all-powerful, lost a lot of ground to man. The industrial revolution was evidence enough of the powers of human effort and brain power, and the world wars also showed how man could decimate in seconds what God had created over the millions of years. It is said that by 1910, the world changed. The modern period begins, with man torn from outside and from inside as well. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* depicts the human world in total disarray, shorn of all faith, a God-less world, a necropolis masquerading as the big city. With the Russian and American rockets reaching into the space, it seemed the era of God had come to an end. . . and it was now the new demi-god, the man, who was re-creating his own world so that he could house himself in it. . . And man's powers knew no bounds. His knowledge expanded the horizons of human perception to the Mars. No doubt, all along, he gathered enough ammunition for 'harakiri' too. Man today, has disowned nature, and disowned God too… he is standing in opposition to the old precepts today. Might appears to be right, in his case.

The world has changed very rapidly in the last two decades, and it is still changing at a very fast pace. Nothing stays in vogue for long. Films which ran for 100 weeks to platinum jubilees, are now

found tumbling in the second week. In this world, which has witnessed change not only in form, but human content as well, it appears a time has come to REDEFINE AND RECREATE the store of human wisdom, which once guided 'many a ship' in the turbulent waters of time. I have no doubt that WISDOM is indivisible. Truth is indivisible. But as we move further into time and space, from a God-centric world over to a Man-centric world, which is increasingly overtaken by the machine, we find that it is a total reversal of roles. And the wisdom of today sometimes is found standing in direct opposition to the wisdom of yore.

Now, just take one example: Honesty is the best policy. This is a quote which evokes wildest and widest reactions from the people of our young generation. Our people would like to reframe this quote with a little more caution: Honesty is not always the best policy'. The old wisdom is not entirely challenged, but in modern conditions, where enemies are masquerading as friends, one has to take everything with a pinch of salt. One more example can clarify the issue.. In the past, dacoits would appear in black dress and on horse back, wear bullet stripes, and carry rifles. From the very look, which was honest, we can say, they could be recognized. But today, the greatest dacoit is found in finest of clothes, in the highest of positions, speaking chaste English, fooling with Police Commissioners, and living in a decent palace. With such a man, honesty can surely not pay. And one will have to say: Smartness, not honesty, is the best policy.

To encase the smart wisdom of the modern age, I have tried to reframe some of the very popular proverbs… and also created new ones which, apart from their freshness, also try to convey the reality of the modern times.

I am discussing some of the new formations for my readers.

'BARKING DOGS SELDOM BITE' CAN BE RE
-WRITTEN AS BITING DOGS SELDOM BARK:

The explanation:

The original 'Barking dogs seldom bite' is about the psychology of a dog, if it starts barking, it means it is giving signals of impending danger, and once it barks, it also exposes itself, so that the lone walker becomes alert and the event [of biting] does not take place.

In the past, dogs could be taken for granted. And men too trusted the wisdom of older people. They believed in God.. too.. They believed in what the dogs believed in. That is why, it all went well.

However, now the times have undergone a change. It is a man's world. And dogs too eat the junk food thrown at them by man. This is a world characterised by distrust, not only of God, but of all his species, including other men, too. Distrust is the most defining feature of the modern age. Dogs know, if they bark, the man would save himself. Or, he could hold a pistol too. Their junk wisdom tells them to keep shut, and attack unannounced.

In the past it was a part of the war-strategy, particularly in these parts, that no enemy was attacked without giving him a chance to save himself. In the great wars, we often see warriors giving a challenge to the other person, and giving him time to pick up his weapons. . . but, this is a world where all ethos have taken wing. We often describe this world as 'dog eats dog'. The corporates have shown all goodness, decency, honesty, the way and what is left behind, is lust, greed, conspiracy, intrigue.. In such a world, there is no ethics. And if you want to bite your enemy, you must assault without announcing. The reworked proverb: BITING DOGS SELDOM BARK encases this proclivity of modern man. It can also explain the behaviour of silent bosses who spoil the confidential reports of their juniors, while in talk, they remain very polite and sweet.

THERE IS MANY A SLIP BETWEEN THE CUP AND THE LIP:
THERE IS MANY A CUP BETWEEN THE LIP AND THE SLIP:

The original proverb underlines the uncertainty built in an almost certain situation. This proverb was very well represented in

a Hindi movie 'Waqt' i.e. Time and the whole film revolved round bringing out the truth of this one-liner. The proverb shows that what appears to have been done, can be stopped from final doing, by the will of God. In Hindi, it means, 'Abhi Delhi door hai'. . . it means that 'we have not yet reached Delhi'. Delhi here stands for the destination. The destination is still to be reached. . . echo these lines. And this may not be reached, is the fear expressed.

However, in the inverted lines, an altogether different story has been represented. Although the end result is the same. The final destination does not arrive. It shows why? Due to a cup. Now look at what happens in corporate dealings. Two people reach an agreement which is to be sealed next morning. At night, some one else comes in, and has drinks with one party. That one cup changes the mind of one party. And the agreement does not come to pass.

Such a situation can best be summed up by the re-worked version of the proverb:

THERE IS MANY A CUP BETWEEN
THE LIP AND THE SLIP.

This is how a new perspective is imparted to the old proverbs by modifying them, and re-writing them.

However, there is always scope for new formations also. When we look at the modern conditions minutely, they present themselves for deep contemplation, and they too can be condensed into objective reality. Here are some examples:

GIVING A BARK TO MANY A DOG:

This is an original creation in which, the intended meaning is that someone has done something, or said something scandalous about somebody, so that people have started criticising him. Suppose a wife accuses her husband in public about his affairs, what will the dogs do? They cannot remain silent.

GIVING A WHISPER TO THE WINDS:

Suppose someone tells something secret about you, and then, the people start talking about it… just before it becomes the talk of the town, it is in the umbilical stage of a rumour…. She has acted in such a manner that it has given a whisper to the winds.

Living in the sea, and fighting the crocodile?
Living in the sea, and fighting the waters?

In the old saying: it is living in the sea, and fighting its monsters, the crocodile. The sea, in the past, had only the crocodile or a few whales which could endanger human life. But, today, we see a different type of equation. Think of a nice and honest man, living in a world of the corrupt. How can he survive? If the air itself becomes dusty, where shall we breathe? Sometimes man finds himself in confrontation, not with one or two biggies, but with the waters of the sea as a whole. Today, the whole sea is corrupted. The existence of man is in danger from the sea waters. Hence, the new age proverb: Living in the sea and enmity with waters?

The foregoing discussion brings out the fact that there is an urgent need to modify the ancient wisdom, and work on our age-old proverbs so that they encase new wisdom as well. Every age has its own idiom. As such, every age must have its own proverbs as well. No doubt, truth is indivisible. Yet, truth has several versions. In the modern world, it has many 'avataars'. We need to make an attempt to comprehend the changing patterns in a whole array of new proverbs which are either modified or born original, so that the truth of the modern society could also be encased in crisp sentences.

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"Roof of the World, Yet Marginalized": Reading Yangzom Brauen's *Across Many Mountains*

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I always found the name false which they gave us: Emigrants
That means those who leave their country. But we
Did not leave, of our own free will.
Choosing another land. Nor did we enter
Into a land, to stay there, if possible forever.
Merely, we fled. We are driven out, banned.
Not a home, but an exile, shall the land that took us in.
(Brecht: *Emigrants*)

Tibetan exodus is recorded as one of the biggest geo-political events in the pages of contemporary history. The above poem by Brecht is apt to describe the pain and suffering of the Tibetan Diaspora.

"Roof of the World" sobriquet refers to the Tibetan Plateau surrounded by imposing ranges and harbouring the world's two highest summits- Mount Everest and K2. It is the highest plateau yet the people of this land are marginalized, exiled and live as refugees. Socrates considered exile as "an amputation of self" (Gass: 2). Exile is a political rather than an artistic concept. Exile is when you can't go back, which definitely means severing of blood relations, loss of family ties, impairment of clan identity and displacement of cultural definition.

The Tibetan emigration happened in two waves. The first wave was during the 1959 Tibetan Uprising when the 14th Dalai Lama, Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso and some of his Government

fled to India. From 1959 to 1960, about 80,000 Tibetan followed the Dalai Lama to India through the Himalayas. It was during the winter of 1959, when Chinese soldiers were destroying monastery after monastery, looting the treasures and leaving only rubble, that Kunsang and Tsering, the first generation Tibetans in Yangzom Brauen's book, left Pang, a remote mountain village in the southeast of Tibet, to flee to India. After the opening of Tibet in 1980s to trade and tourism, a second Tibetan wave of exile took place due to increasing political repression. From 1986-1996, 25,000 joined their exile community in India. The Third Wave continues from 1996 till date.

The Central Tibetan Administration (Tsenjol Bodi Mi Zhung Gi Drigtsug) was established by the 14th Dalai Lama in 1959 shortly after his exile from Tibet. The stated goal of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in their various documents is "rehabilitating Tibetan refugees and restoring freedom and happiness in Tibet." CTA is commonly referred to as Tibetan Government in Exile. CTA has its headquarters at Mcleod Ganj, Dharamshala (H.P.). India is generally considered to be the heart of the Tibetan Diaspora and the official seat of the Dalai Lama in exile. In addition to political advocacy it administers a network of schools and economic development projects, health services and cultural activities. The CTA operates under the "Charter of the Tibetans in Exile", adopted in 1991. Its executive power is vested in the 'Kalon Tripa' (Prime Minister), currently Lobsang Sangay , who was elected in 2011.

Invaded by China in 1949, Tibet has suffered loss of life, freedom and human rights under Communist Chinese domination. 'Buddhism' has been labeled as foreign culture to remove the core point of Tibetan integrity and destroy their identity. Tibetans follow the *Vajarayana* sect of Buddhism. *Vajrayana* is a Sanskrit word meaning 'Diamond Vehicle'. It is viewed as an extension of the Mahayana form of Buddhism. Buddhist *Tantra* is the foundation of *Vajrayana* and is a system of meditation. It is also known as *Mantrayana*, esoteric Buddhism. Buddhism forms the centre stage of the socio-cultural identity of

the Tibetans. Within Tibet, Tibetans have been marginalized because of continuous transfer of Chinese to Tibet, the Cultural Revolution, the violation of basic human right, curving of their creativity and marginalization of the Tibetan language. Outside Tibet, the Tibetans are marginalized because they feel a sense of alienation and also face a tough competition with the host country regarding education and work opportunities. Tibetan writings in English is a small part of this secular culture. After nearly 60 years in exile one finds numbered Tibetans writers, painter, scientists, models or musicians.

Honey Oberoi Vahali writes:

What does exile symbolize? A dissociated part of the Self? A metaphorical image carrying the truth of our existential splits, human vulnerabilities and helpless beginnings? A symbol that stands for the divide within? A condensed historical metaphor, containing since times immemorial, the overwhelming burden of bearing testimony to the pseudo and artificial divison of the world on the basis of the 'established Self' and the 'expelled Other'? Is the exiled not really a fragment of the Self—forsaken, expelled, banished and eventually split off? (Vahali, Honey Oberoi xxxvi).

Exile is the shifting sands of hope mingled with the crippling sorrow of estrangement. When hope fades into distant horizon and only the pangs of displacement remain, exile becomes a hollow existence hanging upon a thin thread of moral courage.

Vladislav says:

Our home is the place from which we originate, and toward which we turn to look from an ever-increasing distance. Our home is a point in time which we have lost, but can always rediscover, along with details which we would not even have noticed then, on the spot … the unreal time …. freezes and realizes itself in memory. This is not only a question of individual memory for a man home, fixed in time, is shaped not by his own history, but also by the histories of those who surround him, by his family and tribe, and by the palpable history of tilled fields, of ancient villages

and new cities, and alone all by that changeable unfathomable, mythic reservoir of his native language (Vladislav:15)

This exilic pain, alienation, rootlessness, homelessness, disappointment, hope and belongingness can be seen in the poetry and writing of some Tibetans writers. To name a few, K. Dhondop, poet and historian; Lhasang Tsering, a poet-activisit whose faith in Tibet's independence can only be matched by the strength of his work; Tenzing Tsundue- a full time activist and creative writer is a well known Tibetan poet writing in English; and Bhuchung D. Sonam the Tibetan poet who expresses his longing for his homeland and pain of exile in almost every poem. It is this rediscovering of the far off nation, the people of the parent land, the history, language, myths and culture of home country that drives writers like Yangzom Brauen to return to their roots, to bring forth and highlight the agony and trauma of being in exile, to express the unsaid words, to protest through writing and to uncover the Tibetan world be it in Tibet or as refugees. Most of the refugees like Kunsang (Mola), Sonam (Amla) and Yangzom in the book '*Across Many Mountain*' have their heart tied to their homeland, Tibet, which some of them have not seen but yearn to set feet on its soil one day The paper explores cultural dilution through generations within the exiled community as depicted in Yangzom Brauen's autobiographical novel *Across Many Mountains,* a memoir. The novel is a cultural eye opener as at one time one was unable to read about Tibetan life and socio-cultural living through literature. The book is a memoir of a Tibetan family's journey from Oppression to Freedom --- freedom which is still questionable.

Born in 1980 to a Swiss father and Tibetan mother, Yangzom Brauen, is an actress, model and political activist. She lives in both Los Angeles and Berlin and has appeared in a number of German and American films. She has always been extremely active and vocal in the Free Tibet Movement, making regular radio broadcast about Tibet and organizing public demonstrations against the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

The novel is a multifaceted work as it operates at several levels and educates one on political and cultural situations and

exiled perspectives. The book has been translated by Katy Derbyshire who retains the Tibetan flavour of the book. The Ahne nunnery, where Kunsang Wangmo was the youngest nun, was in the easternmost corner of Tibet in the province of Kham. It was high in the mountains, where little grew except grass and herbs and wildflowers-ox eye daisies, orchids, gentians and edelweiss. Later after getting married to Tsering Dhondup she lived at Pangri La monastery in Pang, a remote mountain village in the south east of Tibet, from where the family escapes to India along the Pangu Chu river and then across the frozen heights of the Himalayas. The Tibetan refugees arrived in the Indian state of Assam from where they were shifted to Shimla, which was warmer than Tibet but cooler than where the refugees lived after reaching India. Kunsang worked at Summerhill, which had been built as a summer retreat for the British. Her daughter Sonam studied for a few years at Auckland House School, Shimla, later moving to a girls hostel in Dehradun. From Mussorie life takes Kunsang and Sonam to Zurich, Bern, Los Angeles New York and Berlin. In 1986, the year of the fire-tiger in the Tibetan calendar the entire family went to Lhasa, where the monasteries had been bombed and reduced to piles of rubble. Many old buildings had been torn down and replaced with new buildings in the 'socialist utilitarian style'.

The novel also gives a vivid account of the political situation in Tibet. "The Chinese had systematically bled Tibet of its customs, suppressing both the language and the culture" (216). Six thousand Buddhist monasteries and the Jokhang the largest Buddhist temple in the centre of old Lhasa was looted during the cultural revolution in 1960 and then misused for many years as the headquarters of the Red Guards, who were Mao's troop of young Communist thugs and re-educators. During this Revolution the people were forbidden to own religions objects, In 2008 non-violent demonstrations by Tibetan monks, marking the forty ninth anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising lead to violent clashes between Tibetan Youths and Chinese security forces in Lhasa, which was crushed with great brutality by Chinese police and military. In 2009, the Chinese declared March 10, the date of

Tibetan uprising, as a national holiday, the "Day of liberation from Slavery" and the first death sentences were passed against Tibetans involved in the demonstration of spring 2008.

Across Many Mountains gives a highly descriptive and detailed account of the old Tibet and its rituals. There were no identity documents, birth registers or certificates or registry offices. There were no hospitals in the entire country. Children were born in huts, nomadic tents, in farmhouses or in the stately town houses of the rich families. "Monks were in-charge of the monasteries, estates, goods and workers, they did the book keeping, paid wages, and gathered taxes and dues" (14).

The book is an eye-opener on Tibetan customs and rituals. Buddhism determined every aspect of life. Everyone prayed to the gods, used prayer wheels and prayer beads, and asked monks or nuns to perform rites and rituals for them in times of need. Life in old Tibet was one of deep spirituality, peace and self-imposed isolation. *Kora* was performed by the Tibetans, when they made a pilgrimage. *Kora* is circling a sacred mountain or monastery, making prostrations – kneeling, sliding along the ground, and lying down before standing up again and continuing. As one reads through the memoir one learns about bodhisattvas, which means one who has an enlightened existence with the ultimate but distant goal of becoming a Buddha, a being in a state of perfect enlightenment like Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha from the fifth country B.C. Kunsang repeated the mantra *Om Mani Peme Hung* throughout her life. The mantra cannot be translated literally but the Dalai Lama explains the meaning of the six syllables as:

The first, *Om* symbolizes the practitioners impure body, speech and mind, it also symbolizes the pure exalted body, speech and mind of Buddha. The path is indicated by the next four syllables. *Mani* meaning jewel, symbolizes the method; the alterative intention to become enlightened, compassion and love. The two syllables *peme,* meaning lotus symbolizes window. Purity must be achieved by an indivisible unity by method and wisdom, symbolized by the final syllable *hung*, which indicates

indivisibility thus, the six syllables, *Om Mani Peme Hung*, means than in dependence on the practice of a path which is an indivisible union of method and wisdom, you can transform your impure body, speech and mind into the pure exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha. (29-30)

Through Kunsang one learns about the sky-burial, the traditional Tibetan funeral ritual where, after all the required prayers and blessings, the people expose the corpse to the vultures. In the Tibetan mountains and high plains, digging graves is impossible because the ground is hard, rocky and often frozen wood for burning the dead is difficult to find. According to Buddhist belief once the soul has left the body, the corpse is an empty vessel which should be put to the greatest possible use for the benefit of other creatures. Sky burials are conducted by skilled masters, who know how to cut the corpse in a certain way, grind the bones, open the skull and mix the brain with the *tsampa* so that the vultures would eat the remains.

The *rinpoches* meaning 'previous one' or the experienced teacher or lamas taught techniques at monasteries and in the villages. Mention of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, the 'noble eightfold path' and many other Tibetan rituals find place in this book. An interesting one is the destroying of ego centricity in the Buddhists. This ritual is called *chod,* meaning "cutting through the ego." This is one of the few religious practices in Tibet introduced by a woman, the Tibetan holy woman Machig Labdron, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. *Thangkas* which are painted banners depicting Buddha stories are highly priced nowadays and the stories on the *thangkas* are still used for religious instructions.

Apart from learning about the struggle of Tibetan independence, the complexities of the Tibet-China relationship, the principles of Tibetan Buddhism, women issues, the style and the Tibetan words make it an endearing read.

We learn a lot about the Tibetan food as we read. Like *ala buk*, the flat, unleavened buck wheat bread eaten in the Kongpo region; *thugpa*, a thick soup made of dried meat, peas, daikon, or wheat, seasoned with chilli or yoghurt; *Momos,* dumplings filled

with meat, vegetables or cheese, which were eaten only on special occasions and *bazamgu* a kind of noodle eaten with melted butter; *guthug*, the soup of nine ingredients like meat spinach, peas, radish; *doma* - the roots of the potentilla-bulgur, pre-cooked wheat and noodles; *Tsampa*, which is roasted and ground barley. Sonam started commercial distribution service of *tsampa* in Bern. The success later made her run her own distribution company in New York. Other words which are often used in the book are *Chupa*, the traditional Tibetan clothing; *Chang*, Tibetan barley beer; *chuship*-grated cheese. Rinponche which means "pervious one" and is usually used to describe an experienced teacher or lama. The most important festival for Tibetans is *Losar,* Tibetan New Year. Cones made of *tsampa* are decorated with butter and bits of which are thrown into the air twice by saying, "*Tashi delek pun sum tsok,* a *ma bak dro ku kham zang,* ten dang de wa thob par shok, du san da tso la, tra ru ru jel gyu yong wa shok," which means, "May all things be happy, outstanding and flourishing, and may the mother of the house remain happy and healthy. May everyone be lucky at all times, and may everyone see the others again at this time next year" (211). After the offerings to the Gods *katak* - or white scarf for good luck is placed on the altar.

The book covers almost 100 years of Tibetan history, from the time Kunsang Wangmo, the author's grandmother a Buddhist nun in Tibet, to the family's harrowing flight across the world's highest mountain ranges to India, to Martin Brauen falling in love with Sonam, Yangzom's mother and Martin taking mother and daughter to Switzerland where Yangzom was born. Kunsang's story is an evolutionary story starting from Old Tibet. The Old Tibet which clung to its traditional view of the world and its spiritual way of life, disregarding many scientific and modern and enlightened ideas, where people left political, social and economic decisions to a small circle of aristocrats, monks and spiritual dignitaries. In 1920s this was a country where there were no roads, railways or any other means of transport. The wheel was a religious symbol for Buddha's teaching. Padamsambhav, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism had prophesized "when the iron

bird flies and horses run on wheels, the Tibetan people will be scattered like ants across the face of earth & Buddhist teaching's will reach the land of the red man "(6). The prophecy was fulfilled when the Chinese army came, attacked monasteries, fragmented the society and outlawed the religion. Kunsang remembered this ancient prophecy when she flew to Zurich - fulfilling it by taking Buddhism to the West. Kunsang, Yangzom's grandmother and grandfather Tsering Dhondup came from the Nyingma school (the earliest Buddhism school) which did not have hard and fast rules about their monks and nuns remaining celibate , but after getting married to keep up with their spiritual development and the effect of bad karma, on the advice of the *tulku* (wise man) they continued to wear the red *chupa*–the traditional Tibetan religious clothing. In 1950 the Chinese invaded Tibet. Monks were tortured and prison camps were set up. Monasteries were ransacked in order to fill the war coffers. The Chinese put the clerics and the aristocrats behind bars or labour re-education camps. The simple life of prayer, spiritual introspection and motherhood that Kunsang had sought was shattered. March10, 1959 marked the official beginning of unrest among the Tibetans and to this day Tibetans around the world commemorate it as Tibetan Uprising Day. The Tibetan resistance was crushed by the Chinese army. The Dalai Lama and 80,000 Tibetan fled. When Kunsang's monastery was attacked by the Chinese, Kunsang and Tsering along with their two small daughter and their few possessions left for India. They took enough food to last them a few months, few blankets and a round wooden bowl that a *rinpoche* (high ranking monk) had given her and a browns mould for making *tsa tsa* (figures of divinities). The journey was treacherous as they walked through the narrow icy path where Sonam almost lost her life when she fell down a crevasse. After almost a month of travel all of them succeeded in escaping to India. When they arrived in India they faced the brutal circumstances of life in refugee camp, because of lack of decent sanitary facilities, food and drinking water and heat and humidity many people died. Kunsang and her family reached Shimla.. The strenuous living condition and heavy work took toll on Tsering's

life. Living in abject poverty and with no access to clean water, education or cultural stimulation Kunsang lost her husband and younger daughter. On his deathbed Tsering tells Kunsang not to tell anybody that they were married or Kunsang would have to pay for the funeral. Kunsang and daughter Sonam were fortunate enough to work with a Swiss supported charity for Tibetan orphans. Sonam studied at Shimla and Mussorie. Working as a waitress in a Tibetan restaurant in Mussorie she met Martin Brauen, a Swiss academic from Berne. He was an ethnologist and fell in love with Sonam, who was then 21. They married soon and Martin took Sonam and her mother to Switzerland where Yangzom (which means united luck) and her brother Tashi were born. Sonam grew into an entrepreneur and a gifted abstract artist. This little girl who nearly lost her life in exodus from Tibet lives in Manhattan. Kunsang 91, still lives in Switzerland with members of the extended Tibetan family. Yangzom who is 30, is a model and an actress living in Los Angeles. With a strong devotion to her cultural heritage, Brauen is an activist of the Tibetan Freedom Movement, seeking to bring attention to the suffering and the violation of human rights that Tibetan face. She was arrested in Moscow in 2001 for protesting the choice of China to host the 2008 Olympics. After her arrest Yangzom began to seek more of her personal history. She initated an explorative search both inwardly and outwardly.

In the novel, the movement from exile to struggle for freedom binds three generations - those who were born and grew up in independent Tibet and chased into exile after 1959 (Kunsang); those who were born amidst the political upheavals of the communist Chinese takeover and were forced into exile at a tender age (Sonam); and those who were born in exile (Yangzom). Yangzom and her brother are third-generation Tibetans to live the life of many Tibetan exiles scattered across the globe. Yangzom writes, "Our hearts are tied to homeland the some of us have barely or never seen but love nevertheless, each in our own way" (279). Tibetans refugees like Yangzom love their homeland but at the same time are capable of adapting to life in their host countries. It

has been more than 60 years since the Chinese invasion of Tibet and 50 years since the flight of the Dalai Lama and the coming of refugees to India. In Tibet during this time the Tibetan culture has been subjected to all kinds of effacement. The International Commission of Jurists has labelled the situation in Tibet as 'Cultural genocide'. Outside Tibet, the Tibetan communities suffer from the twin traumas of loss of homeland and stateless refugee existence. Younger generation Tibetans are being drawn into two directions. On one hand they are pushed towards material temptations of Western society and on the other hand pulled back into Tibetan traditions, which causes role conflicts.

Cross cultural influences on Tibetans living as diaspora may be recognized and affirmed. Considering the uniqueness and vulnerability of Tibetan culture utmost efforts have been made to preserve the fine traditions which are passed down from one generation to the other in the Tibetan community. The outside identity markers for these people are the clothes (*chupa*), food (*tsampa, thentheek, and chang*), the Buddhist prayer wheel, the colourful big and small Tibetan flags and the Tibetan language. The inside identity markers are not only the values of active meditation and compassion derived from Buddhism but also to preserve culture and identity in exile. Tibetans have accultured themselves into the western and Indian society familiarized themselves with the language, songs, customs, rules and regulations. Traditionally, Tibetan women accepted only Tibetan Buddhist for husbands. Sonam's mother was an extremely traditional woman and it was highly unusual for a Tibetan girl to marry outside her culture, but Sonam breaks this tradition and gets married to Martin, who came from one of the oldest families in Switzerland. Marriages with Westerners, traditional music and dance alternating with discotheques and the change from *chupa* to jeans have certainly diluted the Tibetan culture.

Yangzom writes, "my mother, the daughter of a nun from the Tibetan highlands who only a couple of decades ago didn't even know there was such a thing as post office, now runs a European distribution company via a Skype account from her

kitchen table in new York"(224). As time passes and cultures change, religious and traditional values too evolve and change. Education and internet have made a marked difference in the lives of exiled Tibetans. It is not unusual these days to see Tibetan monks in cyber cafes surfing the net which is in contrast to the monks who always had prayer wheels and a rosary in their hands, constantly chanting *om mani peme hung* (29). Women have come a long way in exile. Lobsang Wangyal, a friend and a photojournalist and director of the Miss Tibet pageant, Tibetan music awards, Free Spirit film festival and Tibet fashion week feels and often voices his opinion in many interviews, "these events are a platform for young Tibetans especially women to showcase their talents and aspirations. These events help assert the Tibetans as a people and a race, through preservation of Tibetan culture in contemporary fashion." In the Norbulingka Center for Arts, Dharamshala, the traditional skills are preserved and passed on through training and apprenticeship inclusive of statue making, *thanka* paintings, appliqué and tailoring, and metal craft. To preserve the identity as well as the nostalgia for Tibet, the Tibetans have started naming their shops and restaurants in Mcleodganj, Dharamshala as *amlo cha-chung* restaurant, Café *Shambhala*, *Potala* tour and travels, *Dhompatsang* boutique, *Rangzen* café, *Kunga* lodge, *Lhasa* hotel etc.

The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) an international non-governmental organization that advocates independence of Tibet from China believes that the preservation of Tibetan culture, customs and traditions is the key to preserve Tibetan national identity and thereby the continuity of the national struggle for *rangzen* or freedom. Freedom to see the blue sky in Tibet and let their minds roam over the harsh barren hills of Guge in Western Tibet or let their heart beats flutter in the fragrant green meadows of Amdo in the far north east.

Yangzom is a modern blend of freedom activist and gorgeous Hollywood starlet, but as she writes, "if Tibet were free, I would go there to visit my relatives but I would not want to live there. … although it is a part of me, it is far removed from the values and ideas with which I grew up" (279). There are questions

that disturb many of us and create an unsaid dilemma within us. Because of globalization there is much cultural dilution and the third generation Tibetans are looking to wider spectrums and broader horizons. In such a scenario, is the movement just a political statement; are the slogans a part of identity markers; and the dreams and belongingness just imaginary or is it real, concrete and sincere? Every word that I have read on and about Tibetans, and every Tibetan I have met voices the protest, the pain and the love for homeland that is free Tibet.

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Temporality of Narrative in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967)

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In this paper the novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has been analyzed through the perspective of temporal categories as suggested by Gerard Genette in his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in the Method* (1988) which is considered as the culmination of structuralist theory of narrative. Genette is perhaps the first narratologist to talk in a systematic way about the temporality in literature which he studies under the heading of 'Tense' which is further subcategorized as 'Order', 'Duration', and 'Frequency'. 'Order' maps 'story time' against its representation through the sign of narrative time. The narrator uses 'anachrony': 'analepses' and 'prolepses', which is defined by its reach and extent as to whether 'anachrony' is 'internal', 'external', 'homodiegetic' or 'hetrodiegetic' and 'repeating' or 'completing'. Keeping in view the length and space of the paper only 'analepsis', 'prolepsis' and 'frequency' have been applied in the temporal analysis of the novel. Both 'analepsis' and 'prolepsis' stand for what was traditionally called flashback and flashforward whereas frequency determines their being narrated once or more than once.

The narrative of the novel is experienced as broken, fragmented and partially coloured in magic realist style of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The violation of chronology of events helps the narrator to present simultaneous presence of past, present and future of Buendia family. As a whole the narrative looks mysterious and disrupted.

Let us summarize the events as they appear in the story, and not the way in which they appear in the narrative.

Story:

It so happens that Jose Arcadio Buendia and his cousin, Ursula, get married. Ursula is stressed that incest will lead to a child with a pig's tail, so she doesn't want to consummate the marriage. Prudencio Aguilar teases Jose Arcadio Buendia about his wife being virgin. He kills Prudencio Aguilar, and consummates the marriage. Prudencio Aguilar's ghost haunts Jose Arcadio and Ursula and they decide to pack up and leave Riohacha, found a new city, Macondo. The couple has two sons, Jose Arcadio (II) and Aureliano. The town is connected to the outside world by a group of gypsies, headed by Melquiades, who brings real-life and magical inventions to the town.

Jose Arcadio leads a group of men to find a route to the sea and to find the outside world. They get stuck in the jungle and eventually give up. Meanwhile, Jose Arcadio (II) has sex with Pilar Ternera, freaks out at impending fatherhood, and elopes with a little gypsy girl. Ursula goes to find him, but comes back after having found a route to another town, connecting Macondo to the outer world. Pilar Ternera gives her son to the Buendia family, and he is named Arcadio and raised without knowing who his parents are. Also joining the family are Rebeca, an orphan and Amaranta, daughter of Ursula and Jose Arcadio, born recently. Aureliano falls in love with Don Apolinar's beautiful nine-year-old child, Remedios.

Suddenly, the town is hit by insomnia plague. Jose Arcadio and Aureliano fight the disease by posting signs on everything, and by creating a memory machine. But it's of no use. In the nick of time Melquiades helps them with a potion which brings all the memories back. Melquiades holes up in a room to write manuscripts in a secret code and teach Aureliano how to be a goldsmith. The memory that pops up after the plague is the ghost of Prudencio Aguilar, who hangs out with Jose Arcadio for a night, and the next day Jose Arcadio goes completely insane and the family ties him to a tree. Meanwhile, Aureliano goes to bed with Pilar Ternera and ends up getting her pregnant. After Remedios attains puberty, she and Aureliano marry.

During a party, both Rebeca and Amaranta fall in love with Pietro Crespi, a piano technician, and a bitter hatred and rivalry starts up between them. Jose Arcadio (II) suddenly comes back. He and Rebeca get married despite the fact that their relation would also be incestuous.

Remedios dies giving birth to a child. After her death, Aureliano starts to become more and more political. He joins the Liberals against the corrupt Conservatives. Aureliano starts calling himself Colonel Aureliano Buendia and becomes a leader in a civil war between the Liberals and the Conservatives. He loses all of the rebellions he starts all over the country, but constantly escapes death in a series of assassination attempts. Eventually he is captured and put in front of a firing squad, but his brother Jose Arcadio (II) rescues him. Arcadio, the secret son of José Arcadio (II), marries Santa Sofia de la Piedad. Arcadio is put incharge of Macondo by Colonel Aureliano Buendia and is finally executed by firing squad. He and Sofia have three kids: Remedios, and the twins Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo. Colonel Aureliano Buendia is forced to sign a demoralizing peace agreement, which subjects him to extreme depression and loneliness. He comes home and spends the rest of his life making tiny gold fishes, melting them down, and making them again.

The story, then, mentions Americans and a banana plantation company. The workers of the company get upset about their terrible working conditions and they strike. The company gathers the 3,000 workers together in a square and slaughters them. Jose Arcadio Segundo regains consciousness after the massacre, he finds himself on a train of corpses on their way to be dumped into the sea. He escapes from there and on reaching Macondo, he finds that no one knows that the massacre has happened. All the people in the town stick to the version of the govt. that the strike ended peacefully and all the workers just went home.

Aureliano Segundo has fallen in love with Petra Cotes, but marries a religious woman named Fernanda. With Fernanda he has two daughters, Meme, and Amaranta Ursula and a son, Jose

Arcadio (III) who is sent for studies abroad. Meme falls in love with a mechanic named Mauricio Babilonia. She has a son, Aureliano II, in union with him. But the son does not know who his parents are. Amaranta Ursula goes off to Belgium for studies, and eventually Aureliano (II) is left alone in the house. Jose Arcadio (III) comes back and local kids kill him for his money. Then Amaranta Ursula comes back with her husband. After a while, she and Aureliano (II) end up loving each other, and the husband leaves.

Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano (II) do not know that they are aunt and nephew. She dies after giving birth to Aureliano (III), is eaten by ants. Aureliano (II) translates the scrolls that Melquiades had left behind, which turn out to be the whole history of the Buendia family, from the event of patriarch being tied to a tree to the baby devoured by ants. As he finishes reading the story, Aureliano (II), the house, and the rest of the town are wiped away by a hurricane. Everything is gone from memory, history, and existence.

Analysis

The novel starts in the *media res* manner: “Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice” (*OHYS*, 1). The very first lines of the novel put the reader into a puzzling time framework. With no preparation at all, the narration starts with what normally sounds as an ending the 'firing squad' and, from this final perspective, focuses back on a childhood memory, a “distant afternoon” (*OHYS*, 1). The narration begins, deliberately discarding any ordinary sense of historical time. This renders the narrative atemporal, a sense which returns frequently throughout the novel as the order of events in the narration clashes with the order of events in story. These disconcerting moments form an essential part of Garcia Marquez's narrative strategy to undermine the traditional chronology of history and story. The artificiality of such constructs is hereby questioned. Jerry Root (2) puts it: “Garcia Marquez makes us feel the artificiality of such constructs and ask, "Whose history?", "Whose story?”.

ANALEPSIS

The insomnia episode brackets better than any other section, the importance of the importance of memory in *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* Through the 'analepsis' the author suggests a kind of symbolic and cultural amnesia. During the amnesia, Macondons make two instructive attempts to recover their memory. Initially they try to catch it with words: either with Aureliano's labeling system, or with Jose Arcadio Buendia's 'memory machine', a great 'spinning dictionary', that represents the simultaneous existence of past, present and future. Both efforts are doomed to certain failure because they concentrate on the "solemn nonsense" (*OHYS*, 50) of artificial signs that class and categorize memory. The Macondons always remain connected to the past through memory that provides them the strength to look to the future. When, Colonel Aureliano Buendia "could no longer find the memory" (*OHYS*, 273), he lost the essence of life and leaned against tree to die.

'Analepsis' plays thematic and structural role in the novel. The memory of ice is associated with Aureliano, whereas, the memory of an execution (*OHYS*, 190) is associated with Jose Arcadio Segundo. Analepsis a subtle structuring device in the novel because very few memories have persisted and repeated themselves throughout. Thematically, analepsis marks the division within the family i.e. the Arcadios as brutal and solitary and the Aurelianos as curious. As far as the 'order' of events in the narrative is concerned, the ice and the execution scenes are the oldest memories (events) that Aureliano and Jose Arcadio Segundo can recall. These internal repeating analepses makes the narrative turn upon itself, and the readers must frequently retrace their steps in order to determine which memory belongs to which character. Within the novel analepsis occurs as follows:

Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice (*OHYS*, 1).

Colonel Aureliano Buendia saw once more that warm March afternoon . . . (*OHYS*, 16).

"It's the largest diamond in the world.""No," the gypsy countered, "It's ice" (*OHYS*, 18).

He [Colonel Aureliano Buendia] saw himself again in short pants, wearing a tie around his neck, and he saw his father leading him into the tent on a splendid afternoon and he saw the ice (*OHYS*, 132).

In the story order, the first event from which the memories originate occurs third in the order of the narrative and the actual memory of the ice occurs fourth. This sequence of 'analepses' makes memory of one of the characters become our own most remote memory according to the narrative order of the novel. By disrupting order of events in the story, the author puts the reader and the character in the same situation. Both are haunted throughout the novel by the image of that 'distant afternoon' and the 'ice'. Not only does the Colonel look back at that afternoon as one of his only 'happy moments', but the narrator also uses it as a kind of point of reference for the identity of the Aurelianos: "He looked exactly like the colonel at the time he was taken to see the ice" (*OHYS*, 154).

We also engage in the same kind of behavior when we distinguish between different brothers, Aureliano and Arcadio. The memory in the novel always has content which emphasizes its function. For instance, when memory continues to recede, the frozen image in the content of memory exerts a more powerful force through time than the event that originated it.

The twin memories of 'ice' and 'execution' remain the recurrent point of reference during the critical moments in the lives of Colonel Aureliano and Jose Arcadio Segundo. In the context of the memory of 'ice', it seems that the author has already anticipated the destructive tendency of the ice image, and that we have two 'analepses' before the actual afternoon of the ice takes place undermines for the reader the authenticity of that afternoon. Aureliano's discovery of ice in that distant afternoon cannot be the discovery for the reader because reader has already seen the memory of the event twice. Such an arrangement forces us to submit to an

arbitrary rule of language and not that of experience, the signifiers precede the signifieds. From the first sentence of the novel everything takes place through an obligatorily déjà vu perspective (Root, 11). The arrangement of events in the narrative is such that, though it perplexes us, it makes us feel as if we have already seen or read events even when we see them for the first time. The actual afternoon of the discovery of ice (*OHYS*, 18) does not claim as much attention as does its already narrated memory. All recurring memories of that 'distant afternoon' occur with reference to death especially in the context of Colonel Aureliano Buendia viz, "execution" (*OHYS*, 127), "execution" (*OHYS*, 130), "execution" (*OHYS*, 130), "natural death" (*OHYS*, 107). The repeating analepsis suggests that death is the only authentic and motivating experience from which all memories emanate and to which all memories lead, a circle which encircles the natives of Macondo.

The narrator repeatedly narrates Colonel Aureliano Buendia facing firing squads, but the reader feels cheated when he dies a natural death. Jose Arcadio Segundo is also plagued by memories of an execution as exemplified by the following instances of analepses from the text: Jose Arcadio Segundo asked Colonel Gerineldo Marquez to let him see an execution (*OHYS*, 188).

For the rest of his life he would remember the livid flash of the six simultaneous shots and the echo of the discharge as it broke against the hills and the sad smile and perplexed eyes of the man being shot. (*OHYS*, 190).

The news was like the announcement of death that he had been waiting for ever since that distant morning when Colonel Gerineldo Marquez had let him see an execution (*OHYS*, 307).

Unlike Jose Arcadio Segundo, Colonel Aureliano Buendia's retrospective moment at the time of his death brings back a pleasant childhood memory of discovery of ice. During the times of Aureliano Segundo, devastation is so insidious that death itself has become the distant memory for him. An analepsis, the ice memory, helps bring out the suicidal impulse of the Buendia

family through Jose Arcadio who has an instinct and tendency towards execution. Significantly, he expresses his wish to see the death execution (*OHYS*, 190). The repetition of the analepsis makes the memories play structurally dominant role in shaping the narrative and the life of characters. The novel abounds in predictions and memories of execution and it seems that this kind of death had become a cultural inheritance.

Both, the execution memory and the ice memory are set differently in the novel. As far analepsis is concerned, we move chronologically through Jose Arcadio Segundo's wish to see an execution, through his two memories of an execution, and finally to the scene of his execution. The announcement of his execution in turn reminds him of 'the distant morning' when he saw an execution. His repeated memories of execution become somewhat vague over the course of one hundred pages in which they take place owing to their association with other characters as well, especially Arcadio. Indeed, both Jose Arcadio and Arcadio are victims of execution. In nutshell, Jose Arcadio Segundo and his namesake have a kind of instinctive memory of, and impulse towards, execution, and that both fall into the ever tightening cycle of deterministic history. Segundo moves chronologically from his most distant memory of execution to his own execution, 'without any regret', and 'without nostalgic retrospection'. He, in 'that crowd held tight in a fascination with death' (*OHYS*, 310), shouts out the defiant, suicidal insult: "You bastards! Take the extra minute and stick it up your ass!" (*OHYS*, 310).

The mass execution of the three thousand follows. The memory of execution associated with Jose Arcadio Segundo is less particular to him than the ice memory associated with Colonel Aureliano Buendia. The execution image appears in a variety of contexts and his suicidal impulse has come to represent the impulse of the whole community.

The narrator increases the speed of narration, an alternative history of Macondo, as the novel's world moves more and more surely towards its own self destruction. The perplexing

proleptic perspective has given way to a more conventional use of 'analepsis'. The repetition of the execution image leads us to expect the inevitability of Arcadio's destiny by execution. However, just as Jose Arcadio Segundo's memories do not lead to his death, Colonel Aureliano Buendia's memories also do not lead to his execution. The narration denies Jose Arcadio Segundo a real experience of death: he wakes up midst the dead bodies on train and is able "to flee from the nightmare" (*OHYS*, 312) of death. The final announcement of death again proves to be false, and the execution scene is undermined. This undermining does not mean that the acceleration of the destructive force has stalled, it haunts through analepsis, the present of the text. Jose Arcadio Segundo's memory of the execution is somehow more real than the execution that he experienced himself.

The fantastic return of Segundo from the dead parodies the equally fantastic proclamation of the Banana Company. If the Company claims that no massacre occurred, then, the narrator also lets the narration abide by its rules and lets the dead come back to life. Even after his death in the massacre, Garcia presents him as a messenger to the Macondons about the massacre. This magic realist aspect of Garcia's novelistic technique is an attempt to counter the official announcement that nothing happened and nobody was killed. Segundo not only lives after his death but lives with the memory of the massacre. When he is about to die the second time, he proclaims: "Always remember that they were more than three thousand and that they were thrown in the sea" (*OHYS*, 359).

Memory is an immense source and plays the structural and thematic role in the narrative as well as the shaping of the collective consciousness of Macondons. Memory becomes part of the community inheritance as a 'child', 'Aureliano' will 'still tell' of the massacre, as if it had happened very recently. The past has become a lethal force "consuming itself from within, ending at every moment but never ending its ending" (*OHYS*, 409). The memory is amorphous, extended both in past and future and

therefore following the both in the minds of the characters. As such the present becomes suspended and nonexistent and denies Segundo his real experience of death.

PROLEPSIS

Prolepsis is less common, especially in third person narratives. "First person stories lend themselves better than any other to anticipation" (Genette, 82). Still Garcia Marquez manages to use recurring prolepses the novel as a temporal displacement. He inverts the normal retrospective narrative perspective. A close analysis of the first sentence of the novel reveals that it is both analeptic and proleptic. Whereas, the conventional narratives begin in the past, *OHYS* begins with the narration of the future event e.g. "Many years later, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that afternoon when his father took him to discover ice." The employment of 'prolepsis' and 'analepsis' in the same sentence links the memory of 'firing squad' and the memory of 'ice' and makes them structurally significant.

The initial 'prolepsis' becomes what Barthes calls 'hermeneutic code' (Roland Barthes, 81.) the reader waits for the execution of Colonel Aureliano Buendia and we are assured by the narration that our wait will be rewarded. The narration teases and irritates and subjects us to "space of retard, postponement, error, and partial revelation" (Peter Brooks) as it does not fulfill its promise. Out of many repeating prolepses, five are quote below:

> Many years later, as he faced the firing squad . . . (*OHYS*, 1)
> Many years later, Colonel Aureliano Buendia crossed the region . . . (*OHYS*, 12-13)
> Years later, during the second civil war . . . (*OHYS*, 24).

The frequently repeated analepsis "Many years later" introduces indefinite 'ellipsis' so that the time of facing 'the firing squad' remains elusive. Moreover, this ellipsis brings in uncertain time gap between 'Many years later' and 'the distant afternoon'.

The vantage point of time, from where 'Many years later' and 'the distant afternoon' are referred to, remains nonexistent. The 'repeated prolepses' , shows that the narration is double voiced, undermines its own pattern, and denies to the reader what it has promised. Even if the announced execution of Arcadio does take place, and the prediction of Colonel Aureliano Buendia's execution did not really cause his death, we can only feel that we have been caught in a narrative trap, that our desires have been frustrated. The repeating prolepsis keeps the anticipation move on the pattern of ebb and flow.

Garcia Marquez dramatizes in One Hundred Years of Solitude what Peter Brooks describes as the dynamic of plot in Flaubert:

Desire here (as often in Flaubert's novels) creates hallucinatory scenarios of its satisfaction, yet in doing so it reaches at once over and through its objects, exhausting them in the realm of the imaginary, reaching a regret for their fictive loss before their actual possession. The dynamics of ambition are lost. (Peter Brooks, 19).

Both the readers and the characters experience the same desire; when Fernanda felt free from any compromise, as if life were pulling her once more toward the world of her parents, where one did not suffer with day-to-day problems, because they were solved beforehand in one's imagination (*OHYS*, 368).

The narration exhausts itself along with its ability to promise anything more. The future closes off as all ambition is lost and the one hundred years come to a close. The narrative finally becomes an embodiment of zero possibilities of the progression of time which proves self destructive for the novel and its imaginary world as well. The use of anachrony simply goes on to teach us the impossibilities of possession, a lesson confirmed by the last Aureliano. He physically embodies the proleptic attitude of the narration:

"impatient to know his own origin, Aureliano skipped ahead…Aureliano skipped eleven pages so as not to lose

time…Then he skipped again to anticipate the predictions and ascertain the date and circumstances of his death" (*OHYS*, 422).

The ending, indeed, brings us back to the beginning. With nothing more to expect, we think that Aureliano may not finish reading the story because his own death is imminent. By the time the novel ends, we are really at the beginning waiting for the firing squad to hit. We are forced in a world which is cut off from final signification. We are left to repeat the "chanted encyclicals" (42) in hopes of breaking the code that will decipher the final lines.

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An Eco-centric Reading of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

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The term 'Ecocriticism' first emerged in William Rueckert's 1978 essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". Since then ecocriticism has emerged as a pivotal discourse to understand the relationship between Nature and art. It is fundamentally an ethical criticism that investigates and helps make possible the connections among self, society, Nature, and text. Glen A Love defines ecocriticism as a literary enquiry that "encompasses nonhuman as well as human contexts and considerations" (*Practical Ecocriticism* 1). The ecocritical stance reconnects literary study to both the processes and the problems inherent in living on this heavily burdened planet, focusing our attention anew on the ground beneath our feet, on our complex relationship to that ground, and on the implications of our behaviour towards that ground. Lawrence Buell identifies an environmentally oriented work as one in which firstly, the nonhuman other is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history. Secondly, human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest. Thirdly, human accountability to the environment is a part of the text's ethical orientation. Fourthly, some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text (*The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, nature Writing and the formation of American Culture* 7-8).

The present paper endeavours to re-read Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) from an eco-centric angle, thus, analyzing the

relationship of African-American community with nature. Placing the text into its socio-historical context, I wish to demonstrate that Morrison skillfully links questions of gender and race with ecological concerns, thus forming new interdependencies for the people of colour. From their earliest contact with African people, Europeans posited that the African's closeness to nature meant distance from God. To tame, domesticate, civilize, de-nature, and de-spirit Africans and to affect the process of control over African population, became the mission of American plantation owners. To maintain their spiritual vocation Afro-Americans revoked their symbolic relationship with the natural world. Evidence of this abiding reverence for the power of nature abounds in literature representing its beauty and mythic potential to save African people from the traumatic terrain of American racial landscapes.

One major facet of ecocriticism is its insistence on interconnectedness of the world. Cheryll Glotfelty rightfully notes in his essay, 'Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis', "all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnectedness between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature… "(*The Ecocriticism Reader* xix). Expanding on this connection, Morrison uses the art of re-memory to establish a link between African-American's past and present. By doing so she makes them revisit their spirit, their culture and their roots. Morrison's literary imagination demonstrates African women as those who have remembered what others have forgotten, and are like the baobab trees spreading their roots toward the sky and below the earth, providing nurture and spiritual sustenance to the community.

The concept of 'The Spirit' includes a holistic concept of love, and is symbolically represented by a circle. Establishing a link with Spirit, according to another Afro-American writer, Alice Walker includes authenticating one's 'voice'; second, leading an environmentally friendly life; and third, preventing problems based on questions of gender and race. Asserting the circularity of

and concentricity of African cosmologies, Morrison also links her narratives with the sacred, symbolized by elements of nature to cleanse the community, re-integrate the African personality, and restore cohesion. The two-edged nature of life in *Beloved* is implied by circle images. Denver's circular bower, formed by "five boxwood bushes, planted in a ring" (*Beloved* 28) is a safe haven but also a womb-a metaphor, along with her fascination with the story of her birth, for her paralyzing infantilism. Circles are especially ambivalent in Beloved's strange description of her return to life. She sees a "round basket" (*Beloved* 210) of flowers, then notices a "circle around [the] neck" (*Beloved* 211) of the woman whose face she needs. But this circle becomes "the iron circle ... around our neck" (*Beloved* 212) an evocation of slave collars. Perhaps the most dramatic, and the most contrasting, circle imagery details Sethe's near strangulation in the clearing. Nirmal Selvomany in his book *Essays in Ecocriticism* defines a new kind of ecocriticism called 'oikocriticism', one that "employs oikological concepts to read texts. The Greek term 'oikos', which means 'household' is a conforming nexus of humans, nature and the spirit beings" (*Essays in Ecocriticism*, xii). Even scientific or deep ecology admits the interrelation among the organism and its holistic environment. It allows the organism to create a new identity for himself, one which is somehow continuous with the being of another, thus creating an ontic continuity.

The employment of rebirth in *Beloved,* also forms a circularity between humans, nature and spirit beings. The novel reinforces this pattern by locating the characters' rebirths in water. Beloved describes her reincarnation as crossing a body of water in a ship, which invokes both the passage of slaves to America and the passage of the fetus into life. Sethe's escape to the North requires two similar voyages: the birth of Denver in the waters of the Ohio River and their perilous crossing of the Ohio with Stamp Paid. In addition, Paul D's most painful memory is his captivity in Alfred, Georgia, where he escaped from a trench by a miraculous passage through the water-logged mud, an-other rebirth via water. Morrison also employs dance as a way to establish circularity with

nature. In *Beloved,* Morrison represents this ritual as a way to heal African people and the land where their horrors occur. Baby Suggs, as a major character in the novel represents the perpetuity and enduring relation of the ancestor to the realm of the living. Baby Suggs, described as an "unchurched preacher" led every black man, woman, and child to the "Clearing—a wide open place cut deep in the woods" (*Beloved* 87). As a woman who also "knows things" she led the community in a cleansing ritual, a way for them to exorcise the trauma of their previous status as captives through the performance of dance. Morrison writes, "In the heat of every Saturday afternoon she sat in the "clearing while the people waited among the trees," "Then she shouted, "Let the children come!" and they ran from the trees toward her," the woods rang" (*Beloved* 87) These dances in the "Clearing" where Baby Suggs, holy, invited the people to dance in a counterclockwise fashion is the embodiment of ancestral remembrance and connects the characters to the circle of nature. Morrison's insistence on circularity and interconnectedness has a much larger purpose in present environmental conundrum.

Ecocriticism emerged as a sharp antagonism to the anthropocentric attitude of humankind. Lynn White Jr. in his essay "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (1967) argues that the major strands of environmental pollution ensue from the anthropocentric attribute of humans, a progeny of Judeo-Christian thinking. According to White, the Judeo-Christian idea that humans are created in the image of the transcendent supernatural god, an entity separate from nature, consequently, separates humans themselves from nature.

In *Beloved*, the School teacher's nephew saw Sethe as a "cow, no, goat … ." (*Beloved* 200). Later the School teacher instructs his nephew to list Sethe's animal characteristics on one sheet and the human characteristics on the other. This attitude of the School teacher and the nephew exposes their egocentred vision towards ecological beings. Morrison uses animals to reprimand the acts of appropriation which humankind practices in reality over the natural world. Animals are also used to subdue and divide the

body of the Afro-American from his/her spirit. For Morrison, the call to recognize and understand the language of nature is not just an appeal for humans to treat the nonhuman more responsibly; it is also an opportunity for human communities to access a kind of ancestral wisdom that can help them heal wounds of racism, sexism and life's other damaging dynamics.

An important aspect of the Ecocritical discourse is its perennial battle with science and reason. Both the chosen writers talk of a spiritual communion with nature, showing their skepticism towards science. In *Beloved*, Sethe: worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe. Unfortunately her brain was devious. She might be hurrying across a field, running practically, to get to the pump quickly and rinse the chamomile sap from her legs. Nothing else would be in her mind....Then something. The plash of water, the sight of her shoes and stockings awry on the path where she had flung them; or Here Boy lapping in the puddle near her feet, and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was and it made her wonder if hell was a pretty place too. Fire and brim- stone all right, but hidden in lacy groves. Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamores in the world. It shamed her-remembering the wonderful soughing trees rather than the boys. Try as she might to make it otherwise, the sycamores beat out the children every time and she could not forgive her memory for that (*Beloved* 6).

Sethe struggles with the haunting memory of her slave past and the retribution of Beloved, the ghost of the infant daughter that she killed in order to save her from the living death of slavery. The land has been an accomplice in her victimization and Morrison attempts to re-instate her trust in the land. Sethe, having learnt the true cost of running from memories, puts her foot down and refuses to accompany Paul D to a new world. She reiterates that there is only one world, and there is no running from it. I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house and nothing in between but the daughter I

am holding in my arms. No more running-from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth. I took one journey and paid for the ticket, but let me tell you Paul D Garner: it cost too much! (*Beloved* 15).

Through the words of Sethe, Morrison brings forth the complex relationship of humankind with the mother earth. Now that we have defiled her, exploited her, turned our back towards her, there is no running away. Sethe accepts her past and decides to make her present survivable. Morrison also wants her readers to accept their mistakes and reclaim their links with nature.

Ecocriticism not only calls for a renewed connect with our roots but it also focuses our attention to the health of the universe. Lewis Mumford, an American social ecologist in *The Myth of the Machine Vol II: The Pentagon of Power* (1970), criticizes the modern trend of technology, which emphasizes constant unrestricted expansion, production, and replacement. Toni Morrison suggests that that health of human communities depend upon the respect given to the nonhuman world. She envisions an Edenic state before language when humans could converse with animals. Rather than advocating a refutation of language or modern culture in order to regain such a state, though, she emphasizes the need for following traditions firmly rooted in ancestral wisdom and an intimate relationship with nature.

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PATHETIC PLIGHT OF INDIAN WOMAN: A STUDY OF EUNICE DE SOUZA'S POEMS

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Having been brought up in a conservative Catholic family in Goa, Eunice de Souza has a first-hand experience of the multilayered subjugation that women are subject to. The plight of Indian woman in various contexts finds a constant voice throughout her writings. Her earlier poems are representations of the hypocrisy of the value system of the catholic community in India and its unjust treatment of women. These poems reveal the pathetic plight and frustrations which a woman faces because of the patriarchal structure and the discrepancy between the way she wants to behave and the way she is made to behave.

Eunice de Souza began with full understanding of the Indian situation in which women have to groan under regimented propositions unlike their male counterparts. In her first collection of poems *Fix*, she gives an authentic image of the Goan Catholic community which was as suppressive as other religious groups.

In her poem de Souza Prabhu speaks of the indifference that is shown towards a girl child. In Indian society, even in the present time, a daughter is considered as an unwanted or unwelcome child. Being a woman, de Souza cannot forget her bitter experiences of life as a victim of indifference. Eunice de Souza tells that she has been a victim of indifference and how she did every effort to please her parents by acting in a foolish tomboyish manner, holding back her female feeling and urges. Consequently, she fell into the trench of identity crisis. However,

in the concluding lines of the poem, she honestly brings out the indifference that is shown towards a girl child in an Indian set up.

I hear it said
my parents wanted a boy.
I've done my best to qualify.
I hid the bloodstains
on my clothes
and let my breasts sag.
Words the weapon
to crucify. (de Souza *Prabhu* 15-22).

These lines voice the anguish and agitation of her mind which could not tolerate the bias met out by her parents. Realisation seems to have dawned on her that if she had to change the scenario she had to "wrest from men what they do not want to give; control, power and privilege" (Terri 27).

De Souza's memories of Goan Catholic life in Pune deal with its subjugation, prejudices, ignorance, social injustice and women's place in marriage and family. Her poetry reveals women's oppression within the patriarchal system. Eunice de Souza does not shy and give a detailed explanation of how a girl is forced to go beyond her body to seek a frigid feminine identity that comes to a catholic girl as almost a legacy at a tender and vulnerable age. As Simone de Beauvoir acclaimed, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir 267).

A nun screamed: You vulgar girl
don't say brassieres
say bracelets.
She pinned paper sleeves
onto our sleeveless dresses. (*Sweet Sixteen* 4-8)

These lines reveal how a tender girl is made to go beyond the immediate reality of her body and align her identity with an abstract and obscure thing that her society considers as

spirituality. It is a part of the indoctrination that a girl is subjected to in a patriarchal system. Her Catholic characters are, as Veronica Brady observes, "an embodiment of the complacency, the closed heart and mind which constitutes evil in de Souza's world because it entails the refusal of freedom, the passion for the possible" (Quoted in Singh 95). Sharing Dharker's concern, the poet brilliantly describes certain restrictions imposed on young girls in Christian society:

Never go with a man alone
Never alone
and even if you're engaged
only passionless kisses. (*Sweet Sixteen* 10-13)

Problems like early marriage and bearing of number of children are also discussed in her poem *Grandmother*. Emphasis is made on the physical beauty of the girl.

My grandmother was fourteen
when she married.
We've lost that photograph of her
with gold combs in her hair.
She was beautiful
bore seven children. (*Grandmother* 1-6)

It is thought that her role in life is to bring up the children and perform all the domestic duties silently. Commenting on the status of woman, Juliet Mitchell observes: "Production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization of children are the key structures of woman's situation" (Mitchell 100). In poem Catholic Mother, the condition of rural woman in India is presented.

By the Grace of God he says
we've had seven children
(in seven years). (*Catholic Mother* 5-7)

She expresses woman's psyche in her poem *Grandmother*. Women bore silently all their pains, sufferings and never speak against

the system. These dogmas that become part of a woman's psyche relegate her to a space of servitude where silence is the only language.

She and the servants
spoke the same language
of silence. (*Grandmother* 9-11)

The male voice in Bandra Christian Party is cast in the sexist typology which defines a woman's personality by her physical characteristics:

What personality says Dominic
such pink lips men and
look at that chest. (*Bandra Christian Party* 16-18)

She writes that Catholicism has forced Indian families to repeat the structures of rural Indian life as in her Catholic Mother the woman has to bear child after child: "By the Grace of God […]/we've had seven children/(in seven years)" (5-7). This parallels many rural families, regardless of the religion they practice. The silent wife is the haunting figure of the subaltern, who returns again and again in the collection, *Fix*.

Pillar of the church
Says the parish priest
Lovely Catholic family
Says Mother Superior
The pillar's wife
Says nothing. (*Catholic Mother* 13-18)

The colour prejudice governing arranged marriage is satirically exposed in *Mrs. Hermoine Gonsalvez:*

just look at my parents
how they married me to a dark man. (*Mrs.Hermoine Gonsalvez* 5-6)

The silenced voice of the subaltern — a cousin Elene is the subject in the poem *Marriages are Made*.

Her complexion it was decided
Would compensate, being just about
the right shade
of rightness
to do justice. (*Marriages are Made* 15-19)

The persona of de Souza's poetry, the figure who identifies with "the lame ducks" becomes increasingly more embracing of the world. It is rightly pointed out by Bruce King "her earlier poems are attempts to make sense out of a world that is fragmentary and unacceptable for her: The poems, reflecting de Souza's childhood, are a mean to gain control over private fears, anxieties, and angers. Such poems are in the confessional manner, where instead of consistency of character there is a mosaic of guilts, desires and revelations; especially about how one's motional life has been formed by the past (*King* 3).

Goan vulgarity and the attitude of the Goan community towards women stimulate alienation, frustration, disappointment and deep sadness in her poetry.

I thought the whole world
Was trying to rip me up
Cut me down go through me
With a rajor blade. (*Autobiographical* 23-26)

Not only this causes her pathetic feelings and depressed mentality even resulted in her suicidal attempt:

Yes, I've tried suicide
I tidied my clothes but
Left no notes. I was surprised
To wake up in the morning. (*Autobiographical* 13-16)

In *Marriages Are Made* the protagonist Elena is to be

married. However the marriage is not a happy occasion for her, but rather, it is the time for her to be subjected to numerous humiliations to prove herself worthy of being married:

> Her family history examined
> for TB and madness
> Her father declared solvent,
> her eyes examined for squints,
> her teeth for cavities,
> her stools for the possible
> non-Brahmin worms. (*Marriages Are Made* 5-11).

In another significant volume titled Women in Dutch Painting, de Souza's feminist voice has turned out to be milder as never before. In Christian theology, Eve was believed to have been created from Adam's rib. As Adam, the first man on the earth, remarks about Eve: "this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man" (Krishnaswamy 73).

The poet brings in a complex imagery of innocence in the Garden of Eden and the not so-innocent side of duality fused into a singular pronoun 'I'. In the 'I' of the poet as a woman and the resulting illness she feels as she fights her present situation: "I am a rib again" (*I Choose Not to Marry You, Love* 3). Here de Souza's patriarchal treatment of her mythic consciousness is noticeable and the consequent use of 'I' is the 'I' of Adam, the original man, the originator of patriarchal destruction in the world, where "stars turn black holes" (5).

It is obvious that discrimination towards a girl child, her upbringing under set rules and conditions, early marriage, treating a woman just as a procreation machine are the causes of her pathetic plight and frustration. From the close study of the poetry of Eunice de Souza, it is clear that she reflects such pathetic predicament and dissatisfaction of Indian woman in her poetry. She explains each and every factor responsible for this state of

woman. At the same time there is a desire of freedom as her poetry has struggled to break the boundaries of tradition while describing the conflict between the old and the new and it has endeavoured to express the desire of a woman to break free of the bonds that have restricted her since times immemorial.

Thus, poetry, for de Souza, is the means to move out of this dismal space and to subvert the 'discourse of silence'. De Souza's critique of the discrimination based on gender is contextualized in relation to other identity markers. Her poems are conceptually connected and when they are read together, a world view emerges in which everything is connected to everything else.

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Inferiority Complex Reflected in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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Toni Morrison is a renowned author of Afro-American Literature. She not only represents the picture of American culture in the truest sense, but also writes about the hidden intricacies of cultural and racial discrimination of the Black people living in America. She could be termed as the modern voice of the rights of Black people living in America. Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1979) studies the constant embarrassment of being poor and black in white America. It depicts the detrimental impact of the race and class hierarchy on the lives of the "poor and black" 'Breedloves' who have come to comprehend their designated position in the social order and identity. *The Bluest Eye* is a story of a little black girl Pecola Breedlove who, hating her black self, prayed each night for the blue-eyed beauty of Shirley Temple. Narrated by nine year old Claudia MacTeer, the novel details the lives of three young girls and their families, and the way in which they struggle and sometimes lose their battle for self-affirmation in a world that sets forth Anglo-Saxon standards of physical beauty and a middle-class life-style as the norm. It also depicts the impact of the white culture on the lives of black people and the inferiority complex developed in them, and shows how the economics plays an important role in the exploitation of African people and makes them feel inferior. Both the MacTeers and Breedloves symbolize the exploited class although the Breedloves are less economically stable than the MacTeers. The MacTeers are poor; the father works and provides some shelter, food and clothing for the economic survival of the family, whereas the contrast of the Breedloves family shows the social exploitation of

their own people. They are dirty and poor and the poverty has stripped them off of their sense of human worth. Morrison tries to illustrate that the MacTeers and Breedloves do not suffer simply because of racism, but because of poverty as well.

Pecola's ultimate goal, however, is to have the bluest eyes; "Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time" (35). Pecola's yearning for blue eyes--the white American standard of beauty--is an external manifestation of the internal need to be loved and accepted by the white community: "White standards of beauty . . . are impossible for her to meet, though no less alluring and demanding. Surrounded by cultural messages that she is ugly by definition, she can achieve peace only by retreating into schizophrenia" (Hedin 49-50). Pecola's light-skinned classmate, Maureen Peal has bathed in unmerited luxury by being nearer physically to the white norm than any of the others. Socially, Maureen's behaviour patterns reflect the way in which some within the dominant class relate to poor African people. Another African family, which dissociates itself from poor Africans and associates itself with the ruling class, is the family of Geraldine, Louis and Louis Junior. The family members consider themselves to be colored, a term that for them signifies some nebulous group of Africans who are neither European nor African: "Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud" (67). Geraldine's life is defined by her efforts to escape the 'Funkiness' of the poor, struggling African masses: "Wherever it erupts, this Funk, they wipe it away; where it crusts, they dissolve it; wherever it drips, flowers, or clings, they find it and fight it until it dies" (64). When Pecola stands in Geraldine's house --trickled there by Geraldine's hateful son- she transgresses a line demarking "colored people" from "niggers", light skinned from dark. Rather than finding the kittens she was promised, Pecola receives facial scratches from a frightened cat that Junior Louis throws at her. Junior accuses Pecola of killing the cat when his mother enters the room. Disgruntled by the injury done to the cat, but more by the presence of a little black girl in her home, Geraldine

expels the innocent girl with words that cut deeper than the cat's claws: "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house" (72). Pecola represents all the dirt and disorder which she has managed to shut out of her artificial but neat environment. Geraldine is also attempting to rid herself off her fears of her own evil, of her own unworthiness, of her own shadow of blackness (Awkward 194).

Morrison describes the Whitecomb's family who are deeply obsessed with the physical appearance of Europeans. Elihue Micah Whitecomb is that kind of black for whom the blackness is a burden. He represents the dying vestige of the black elite. A mixed West Indian and descendant of British nobility Whitecomb learns from his ancestors "separate (himself) in body, mind and spirit from all that suggested Africa; to cultivate the habits, tastes, preferences that --- (they) would have approved" (133). Not only do the Whitecomb's strive for the "whiteness" of the ruling class, but they imitate the exploitive nature of this class as well; they exploit their own people, the Africans who live in West Indies. He is wholly convinced that if black people were more like white people they would be better off. Internally he also tries to remove the ancestral blackness from his mind.

Pecola experiences the most damaging effects of intraracial prejudice, however, at the hands of her abusive, negligent parents. The onus of Pecola's negativity rests initially with her family's failure to provide the socialization, identity, love and security that are essential to healthy growth and development. They are ironically named. They don't breed any love, affection, care and concern which are the main unifying factors in a family. Cholly and Pauline Breedlove destroy their daughter whose victimization is a bold symbol of their despair and frustrations. In the pathos of their defeated lives, Morrison demonstrates the process by which self-hatred becomes scapegoating (Furman 15).

Pauline's feeling that she is ugly and inferior is reinforced at the time of Pecola's birth when she overhears the white doctors at the hospital pejoratively refer to black woman like her, as animal like: "they deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses"(97). Shamed by

the doctors, who view her as an object of contempt, Pauline unconsciously equates her child with excrement: that is, with something dirty and disgusting. It suggests that from the outset Pauline projects her own sense of ugliness onto her daughter. She and the marginalized community succumb to what Jean-Paul Sartre calls "the Look". According to Sartre, one's reality and identity are both confirmed and threatened by "the Look of the Other", the Other, in this instance, constituting the gaze of white media images. Pauline is incapable of showing motherly love and forgiveness. She shows only her deadness in mother-daughter relationship. Her attitude towards her daughter reflects her self-contempt and denial of responsibility.

Like Pauline, Cholly too is driven by personal demon which attempts to purge in violence against his family. His life is a compilation of abandonment, self-contempt, circuitousness and despair. He is deserted by his father at birth and by his mother when he is only four years old. His Great Aunt Jimmy rescues him from a junk heap. When his Aunt dies, he is again abandoned, lonely and homeless man. On her burial day, he runs off with Darlene to make love in the woods. His first sexual encounter is noticed by white men who discover him with Darlene in the woods. They watch and ridicule him. He hates Darlene because she is an eye witness to his degradation. Cholly fails to get love in his life. He lives life as a fatherless, motherless, brotherless, sisterless, homeless and loveless wanderer who runs away to Macon in search of his father who also discards him. With nothing left to lose Cholly becomes "dangerously free." He makes choice of his freedom by being apathetic to all the feelings and emotions. He has become anti and asocial. In marrying Pauline, Cholly seems fully recovered from these earlier traumas. Initially he is kind, compassionate, protective, but these feelings are very temporary. He retreats from her emotional dependence, humiliated by economic powerlessness, fed up with his wife's growing needs and demands and mitigates his frustrations in drinking and abusing others. He has no human connectedness because he has been denied primary socialization.

Under the pressure of white domination Pecola's psychic behavior exposes the vicious genocidal effects of racism on the black girls thereby raising the question of what it means to be black in a racist society. As Shelby Steel states, "to be black was to be a victim; therefore not to be a victim was not to be a black" (58). Pecola fashions a life in 'Bad Faith' and 'Falsehood'. She remains dishonest with herself. By acting in "Bad Faith", she remains responsible in the final analysis for what happens to her. Her alienation and sense of unworthiness emerge not solely from "the Other's" definition but also from her own inability to transcend the resulting reification (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 15). Her essential invisibility symbolises her status as object within the community. She forfeits her being--for--herself and becomes a being--for--the--Other. Not only her socio- economic status as poor black has set her on the periphery of society, but her perception of herself as ugly isolates her further, resulting in her self--hatred which is the most destructive element in her life.

The Dick and Jane story is also broken down into seven head notes for the mini chapters at the beginning of the each section of the novel. These lines show the picture of an ideal American family which is held up as a model in the schools, magazines, advertisements, etc. and which insidiously inculcated an inferiority complex in black children of the inner city by promoting the values of the homogenized white suburban middle class family (Bell 272).

There is a complete contrast between the placid and calm surroundings of Dick and Jane and the environment in which Claudia lives. In reality, life is no fairy tale, no happy ending, but it is a struggle for survival and full of nightmares and scapegoats. In depicting this contrasting view of life, Morrison underscores the dilemma with which the black child has to deal-the make believe world of which he has no part and the real world with which's he is all too familiar.

The brief children story, which is repeated in three different styles, from standard to non-standard English, provides

an ironic contrast to the plot, which is further reinforced by the narrator with a marigold planting analogy that ingeniously and immediately establishes the lyrical style and tragic mood of the narrative (Bell 272). Its sanitized image pervades all of American Society--from schoolbooks to print and electronic media--as the standard for family behaviour and beauty. The second version repeats the same passage exactly, but without capitals or punctuation. It is printed at a more accelerated speed. In the third version, the wording of the paragraph is likewise unaltered but without boundaries of spacing or punctuation, the pace is frenzied:

The passage which is completely run together like one long collection of consonants and vowels seeming to signify nothing, invariably reminds passage in Beckett's play,_*Waiting for Godot*, through which Lucky thinks. The three versions of the opening paragraph of *The Bluest Eye* are symbolic of the three life styles that Morrison explores. The first version of the paragraph indicates an alien white world, represented by Dick-Jane family that intrudes into the lives of black children. The second version presents the life-style of the MacTeer family which survives the poverty and racism that it encounters in Ohio. The third distorted run-on-version of the paragraph stands for the Breedlove family which lives in the deformed world being exploited by the ruling class.

The text sets the terms. The last word, the key word "pretty" is repeated completely four times, but the fifth attempt at the word stops with P, the word has no real existence because this section of the narrative is about the Breedlove storefront home about which there is nothing intrinsically "pretty": The limits of Pauline's vision are seen in the next section of the story, which is introduced by passage focusing on the key word "happiness", repeated several times but truncated after H at the end.

Home for Pecola is not the green and white picture--a perfect house of white myth. Instead mother and father keep quarrelling, uncaring and unconcerned with the children's growth and development. Pecola stands as an epitome of the unmitigated humiliation attending racist projections. The

poignancy of her victimization emanates not only from the racism but also from the intraracial conflicts related to colour firmly rooted in white racist myths.

Only in her mad world is Pecola someone special, a black girl with the blue eyes of a white girl. Her condition is intended to represent the muted condition of all women as well as the powerlessness of children in the face of cruelty, and to indict a dominant culture that values speech over silence, and presence over absence (Rigney 21).

The title *The Bluest Eye* has multiple significances other than its reference to Pecola's only desire in life: to have the bluest eyes. But Morrison is punning on the title's suggestive possibilities indicating the "gloomy ego" of Pecola (Ogunyemi 112). "Blue" in this case, does not simply mean "gloomy", it suggests the blues, those sweet sad songs of loss and reconciliation sung by Claudia's mother and Miss Marie in this novel. And the 'eye' or 'I' refers specifically to Claudia and the effect of Pecola's story on her "seeing" and understanding (Carmean 19). The three prostitutes China, Poland and Miss Marie demonstrate their choice as non-conformists. They are self-employed people who control their business; they are independent and self-reliant.

Discovering at an early age that men would seek pleasure from them, they choose, upon coming to maturity, to be compensated for their physical love; and they do so almost with a vengeance. Although, they, like the Breedloves, live in a storefront, they live above the squalor. Downstairs, Pecola suffocates in home displaced and fragmented lives. Paradoxically it is the only place Pecola can find genuine love. Miss Marie takes almost maternal interest in the exiled child. These women reject the traditional domestic roles that they were expected to play. They are social pariahs, yet they are not devoid of self-confidence.

In *The Bluest Eye* the story spans a year, moving through "Autumn", "Winter", "Spring" and "Summer". Barbara

Christian comments in her *A Promised Song*, that Pecola's story does not follow "the usual mythic (cycle) of birth, death and rebirth, from planting to harvest; to planting. Hers will proceed from pathos to tragedy and finally madness" (140). In the first chapter of 'Autumn' Claudia establishes the time, place and structure of the novel. She also acquaints the reader with a community in turmoil and her fragmentary accounts reflect the confusion and conflict within community. During 'Winter' Pecola's quest starts folding inwards, as there is intensified chill outside and within. She takes the path of rejecting her Self. The chapters therein detail the cold, sterile undercurrents within the community. In 'Spring' ironically, Pecola is increasingly stunted as she draws nearer to her personal abyss. The child's sense of rejection is confirmed by her mother as she throws her out of the spotless kitchen in which she is employed. Finally, her father violates her body as others have violated her spirit. And when Pecola comes to Soaphead Church petitioning for blue eyes, he "gives" them to her by means of a contrived "miracle". Thus, Pecola is recreated, permanently blue-eyed and mad. During "Summer" the quest has surely ended as we see Pecola fragmented, engaged in a dialogue with Self.

Pecola has been made a scapegoat by a neighbourhood of people who themselves live their own unnatural lives under the gaze of the dominant culture. Pecola's silent and sacrificial presence holds a symbolic function for them. Trapped as we-objects, they find comfort in Pecola's dissolution. Contrasting themselves with Pecola they embolden their own worth, deny the incongruity and inauthenticity of their own lives. Pecola's madness serves to perpetuate one community's own illusions. However, Pecola's sacrificial position awakens Claudia towards the unnaturalness of black life and in retrospection she starts realizing how she and the community failed Pecola. If novel ends with hopelessness for Pecola's Self, at the same time this sorrowful recognition can serve as a hope to search Claudia's own authenticating Self.

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Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*: A Validation of 'Womanist' Stance

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Alice Walker is a prominent figure in the African-American literary arena for her vociferous concern for Black womanhood. Being an African-American woman living in America, she belongs to a section of women who are black as well as sexually exploited, highly marginalised and strictly denied from a worthy and meaningful participation in the American society. In an interview with John O' Brien, Walker averred:" I am preoccupied with the spiritual survival, the survival of whole of my people. But beyond that, I am committed to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties and the triumphs of black women…. the most fascinating creatures in the world" *(Our Mother's Gardens: 250)*.

Walker conceives herself as a womanist rather than a feminist. In *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* she writes, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender."(X11) Her womanist perspective tends to embrace all the inconspicuous Southern Black women, facing neglect not only from the white but also from the black men of their own community. Walker's narrative dialectic is chiefly concerned with illuminating the plight of these hapless women who are victimised as much as by self-hate as by an oppressive racist and sexist social system. Her creative oeuvre strewn with physically and emotionally battered women has often been celebrated, precisely, for depicting the ultimate resurrection of these victims by fighting back purely through the power of their voices. Thus, the womanist ideology as propounded by Walker is not 'revisionist' but 'revolutionist' in character with its emphasis on a

new way of perceiving self by redefining the boundaries set by the society and the male sexist culture.

This womanist vision of Walker is most fully realised in her National Book Award and Pultizer Prize-winning novel *The Color Purple.* The success of this novel proves Walker's victory as a writer in breaking new grounds in restructuring female subjectivity by creating a literary aesthetics termed as 'Walker's recreated Universe' by Froula. Her female protagonist Celie in *The Color Purple*, an epitome of rural and unlettered southern black women embodies apparently its creator's vision to lend voice and representation to these women who have been silenced and confined in life as well as literature.

Adopting the narrative technique of the 18th century epistolary Novel of Sentiment, *The Color Purple* unveils the life of an impoverished and vulnerable black girl Celie through a series of letters; first written to God and then to her sister, Nettie. The narrative opens with Celie's first confessional letter to God,"Dear God, I am 14 years old. I have always been a good girl may be you can give a sign letting me knew what is happening to me." (Walker 3)This painful utterance comes from the mouth of a fourteen year old, uneducated and insecure black girl, who has been raped, beaten and silenced by a man she believes to be her father and calls him 'Pa'. She addresses all her letters to God as she is threatened by 'Pa', "You better not never tell anybody but God. It'd kill your mammy". (3)

Moreover the fact that Celie doesn't sign any of her letters written to God points towards her complete self-negation and depersonalisation because of her gross mental and physical oppression by her father. Owing to her repeated sexual exploitation, Celie has to bear the cross of unwanted pregnancies one after the other and at a very tender age she gives birth to two children who are taken away from her by her so-called 'Pa'. Though deprived of her own children, Celie acts as a surrogate mother to her younger sister Nettie and wants to save her from meeting the miserable fate like hers at the hands of their father. Expressing her concern for Nettie she says, "I see

him looking at my sister, she scared. But I say I'll take care of you. With God's help."(5). Celie's desire to protect her sister to be another victim of sexual exploitation, urges her to marry Albert, a widower and father of three children. A cruel and abusive man, Albert whom Celie addresses as 'Mr....', uses Celie as a mule and treats her as a dog.

Thus, Celie a victim of incestuous violence by a father, turns into a victim of whims and atrocities of an uncouth and male chauvinist husband. After marriage, Celie assumes the role of an archetypal, meek and subservient wife who, "never say nothing back. She never stand up for herself" (39). Her perpetual chiding by her step-children and her husband makes her doubt even her humanity, leading to her complete objectification. She contends, "He beat me like he beat the children… I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you are a tree, That's how come I knows trees fear man" (22). This passive and silent suffering causes Celie lose her sense of belongingness and self-acceptance as she feels herself reduced to the level of a mere 'nothing' . 'Mr.'s'. reproving acts as a constant reminder , "Who you think you is?---- you black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. God dam you nothing at all"(204).

However as the story evolves, like most of Walker's women, Celie in spite of being suppressed, oppressed and marginalised, rises out of her own ashes like a phoenix and startles and surprises us with the way she strives for a dignified survival. In keeping with the epigraph of the *The Color Purple* -'Show me how to do like you. Show me how to do it' (Stevie Wonder), Celie eventually seeks and learns to shed the yoke of patriarchal oppression in its variegated forms. It is really inspirational for all of us to be a witness to Celie's gradual progression towards self-acceptance and later self- assertion, giving expression to her latent potentialities and creative urge. However, Celie does not tread alone on the path of her evolutionary journey from victimisation to consciousness of her dormant strength. There are a host of strong women in the *The Color Purple* who felicitate in the development of Celie's battered self as a subject, giving a stronghold to Walker's

concept of womanism- 'Understanding among woman is not a threat to anyone who intends to treat women fairly'(273).

This female bonding which, according to Tonette Bond Inge, "restores the women to a sense of completeness and independence" (320) is represented in *The Color Purple* by Shug, Sophia and Nettie, three important women in Celie's life. Shug Avery, a jazz singer and Celie's husband's mistress is the first person who becomes a beacon of hope for Celie and removes the terrible 'nothing' from her life by encouraging her to have a mind and voice of her own. Acknowledging Celie's inherent goodness and humanity, she dedicates a song to her which gives a fillip to her tarnished sense of self-esteem. Celie feels extremely elated as she says, "first time somebody made something and name after me" (Walker 72). Shug not only replenishes Celie's faith by propounding a new concept of God but her dynamic personality marked with a strong sense of independence brings a paradigm shift in Celie's conception of her inner and outer self, eventually helping her to realise her position in the universe.

Another woman playing a significant role in Celie's growth and evolution is Sophia Butler, the 'amazon' and the first wife of 'Mr.—s' son Harpo. Sophia teaches Celie her first lesson in self-respect by demonstrating 'a feisty refusal to be controlled by anyone- by whites regardless of sex, or by men, regardless of race.' Sophia shows exemplary courage in holding on to her convictions despite adverse circumstances. It is because of her that Celie comes to acquire this belief that women are oppressed not due to any disabilities and faults of their own, but because of the fact that they lack a will to fight. Sophia becomes a role model to Celie by instilling in her a will to wage a vehement fight against all kinds of exploitation.

Another female to whom Celie is very emotionally attached and to save whom she offers herself as a sacrificial lamb to be the wife of Albert, is her younger sister Nettie. Though never herself present on the scene Nettie's letters, highly instructional and educative in tone, serve as an edifying tool for improving

Celie's life and provide her requisite strength to emerge successful in her quest for self-discovery. The very first letter of Nettie opens with the message, "Celie…you got to fight them for yourself… You got to fight ...." (114) Nettie's education has enabled her to enter and understand the outside world. Working as a missionary in Africa, she passes on the knowledge of tumultuous history of the Blacks to Celie, highlighting the dormant strength of their race. Besides challenging racial myths , Nettie's letters also throw light on the oppressive sexist African mentality as she writes about the ingrained belief of the Africans in male dominance, "I think Africans are very much like white people back home"in their assumption that "a girl child is nothing to herself, only to her husband can she become something," which of course is "the mother of his children" (140).

Proving the hypothesis that 'oppression is a universal phenomenon', Nettie's letters provide Celie with an inexhaustible reservoir of strength and motivation. They play an important role in breaking the linguistic silence of Celie by equipping her with the necessary knowledge of the world and the reality she lives in. Armed with a new admiration for her black skin as well as her femininity, Celie is now ready to proceed on the path of empowerment and self-emancipation.

Thus, through her bonding with a community of women, Celie comes to discover her essential womanist self and emerges as a winner against twin scourges of sexism and racism. Her emphatic statement towards the end of the narrative testifies to her self-conscious recuperation. She says, "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook... but I'm here".(187)Celie's awe inspiring transformation from a self effacing woman to one having total control of her life by recognising her inner strengths shows that "redemption that Walker's characters experience is possible for all of us"(Inge 321).

Walker's depiction of a woman 'who struggles through adversity to assert herself against almost impossible odds', points towards a triumph of her womanist ethos. In her womanist

universe, the collapse of male erected boundaries that separate a woman from her 'self' is a precondition for her coherent self-assertion. There is no doubt that Walker has succeeded in placing black womanhood on a pedestal where female subjectivity not only redefines herself as autonomous but also as 'self in relationship'. In her womanist gospel, a woman must be whole before she can be a part of the wholeness.

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FOUCAULDIAN PERSPECTIVE OF THE SUBALTERN IN THE WRITINGS OF SHAKESPEARE

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Introduction

Shakespeare has written around 37 plays, 154 sonnets and 2 narrative poems. He had lived in the 16th century, died around 400 years back but is still widely read and universally liked. What is it that still makes Shakespeare so popular? Is it his plot or his characters or his subject or his language or his poetic as well as his philosophic insight into the psyche of his characters? Why is he the grand panjandrum of English Literature? The answer lies in the question itself. The grandfather of modern dramatics, the psychiatrist of the human soul, the master magician of characters— Shakespeare had an in-depth understanding of the working of the human mind and its intricacies. He had an empathetic oneness with the human heart which conceals in itself many morbid truths, innumerable secrets, myriad feelings, unfathomable depths of human experience but it still plans and conspires, suffers and inflicts pain unto others and conjures up all its energies to outplay others.

The play of power and its aftermath is prominent in the plays of Shakespeare. He portrays his characters as close to reality as possible and this is one of the many reasons for his popularity. Shakespeare's universal appeal only grows with time. His understanding of the power hierarchy is brilliantly highlighted in his plays. Be it the portrayal of female characters or the projection of the powerful or for that matter, the folly of the Fool in his plays, Shakespeare excelled in each. The present day scholars study his

characters in light of feminism, post modernism, theory of psychoanalysis, Foucauldian perspective, and much more.

This paper is an attempt to study Shakespearean characters in the light of Michel Foucault's philosophy about human psyche and hierarchy of power.

What is Foucauldian Perspective?

Michel Foucault is one of the most powerful scholars of the 20th century who has provided a novel view of power. For him power is not concentrated or focussed in the hands of few individuals or in one place. Thus deviating from all hitherto perspectives, Foucauldian perspective suggests that power is not something that is vested in the State only. Contrary to all perspectives of power held so far, Foucault believes that power is found in all social relationships. He focuses on the way in which state develops its ability to classify and exercise its power. Power and knowledge are inextricably inter-related and produce one another. Possession and exercise of power enable creation of knowledge and thus created knowledge begets more power. Therefore, power and knowledge produce each other.

Foucault does not always think of power in coercive terms: as well as restricting people, power can enable them to do things. This can be seen in the fact that the knowledge of Law enables Balthasar to save the life of Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Furthermore, and paradoxically, Foucault only sees power as operating when people have some freedom. Power never allows total control and, indeed, constantly produces resistances and evasions as people try and often succeed in slipping from its grasp.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault writes about the fundamental shift in the nature of punishment. In the early centuries, punishment mainly focused on the body, directly inflicting pain so as to make the offender suffer and also to discourage others. In the late 18th and early 19th century, the focus of punishment became the soul of the offender, resulting in the loss of his rights, particularly the right to liberty.

In the earlier period people were judged for what they had done, but later they were judged for who they were. The motive behind the crime was taken into account and punishment was awarded according to the motivation behind the crime.

Foucault says:

The question is no longer simply: 'Has the act been established and is it punishable? But also: 'What is this act, what is this act, what is this act of violence or murder? To what level or to what field of reality does it belong? Is it a phantasy, a psychotic reaction, a delusional episode, a perverse action?' it is no longer simply: 'Who committed it?' But: 'How can we assign the causal process that produced it? Where did it originate in the author himself? Instinct, unconscious, environment heredity?' (Foucault 19)

Why Foucauldian Perspective?

Shakespeare's plays always portray people either exercising or suffering power. There is always a strong underlying current of power governing human relationships. Through power, Shakespeare brings a strong emotional portrayal of the subaltern and how this subaltern deals with his powerlessness and how the powerful use various manoeuvres and machinations to exercise their power for their own interests at the cost of the subaltern. In order to understand this power dynamics in human relationships as portrayed through the characters of Shakespeare's plays, the poststructuralist or postmodernist Foucault's perspective on power becomes more significant and relevant framework for analysis.

To explain Shakespeare's works and the subaltern perspective in Foucauldian terms, it would be appropriate to understand the conceptual framework of power. Power is not something simply possessed by an individual. Foucault says," Power is exercised rather than possessed." An individual does not simply hold power; he can use it if he can muster the right 'dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques' to achieve what he

wants. Furthermore, power is only exercised by getting people to do something, even when they have a choice of not doing it. It is therefore not simply physical coercion. Foucault reiterates that power and knowledge are inseparable:

"we should admit that power produces knowledge … that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 27).

Michel Foucault exercises a strong influence on literary critics. The debate about sexuality is conducted primarily in terms of knowledge and power. If sexuality is socially constructed, it is also verbally constructed and therefore language itself is far from being gender – neutral. So it can be said that men control language in real life as well as plays. An example of this can be seen in *The Merchant of Venice*. The whole play deals with the exploits, encounters and circumstances of Antonio and Bassanio and Shylock. The court uses the language of Law and the language of Law is the language of men. Even Portia has to disguise herself as a man to be able to use the language of men, the language of power.

Regarding Shakespeare's actors in disguise, the debate is if the convention empowers women to adopt freedom otherwise denied to them in a patriarchal setup or whether in the end the disguise serves only to reaffirm the sexual hierarchy. Here Shakespearean genealogies of power come to the fore. Woman is always dominated and exploited by man. Whether she is a princess or a maiden does not matter. What matters finally is that she is a woman. In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia uses disguise to defend and save her husband's friend, who otherwise she would not have succeeded in saving. She has to take up the garb of Balthasar to defend the case of Antonio; here her knowledge of law becomes her power to defeat Shylock, the Jew. The disguise is sufficient to prove that a woman is unable to prove her mettle in this world of patriarchs but if she garbs herself as a man and hides her femininity, she or rather *he* is accepted and appreciated.

Woman is exploited by man and a weak man is further exploited by an affluent or powerful man. Shylock tries to overpower Antonio and Bassanio with the power of his wealth, here money becomes power. Shylock, when his turn comes, leaves no stone unturned to avenge himself and his tribe on Antonio and the Christian state at large. Here, his wealth and motive of revenge become his power. If we use the Foucauldian perspective of power, we find each character trying to assert his power over the other. When Balthasar comes to Antonio's rescue, the former's wit and prudence become the latter's saviour. It is with this power of knowledge that Balthasar defeats Shylock. When she says to Shylock:

"But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate Unto the state of Venice." (Act IV, Scene I)

she is asserting her power of being a Christian and thus trying to marginalize the Jew. Further she says:

"Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you. It is enacted in the laws of Venice, If it be proved against an alien That by direct or indirect attempts He seek the life of any citizen, The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive Shall seize one half his goods; the other half Comes to the privy coffer of the state; And the offender's life lies in the mercy Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice." (Act IV, Scene I)

This is enough to show the power hierarchy in the State. Shylock, because he is a Jew, is being threatened with his life even when he is seeking justice.

The genealogy of power reaches its zenith when Antonio says that Shylock could be forgiven only when:

"Two things provided more, that, for this favour, He presently become a Christian." (Act IV, Scene I)

Shakespeare's Shylock is a curious combine of the powerful and the subaltern in the typical Foucauldian sense. As a

moneyed man he is powerful whereas as a Jew he is a subaltern. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock is a Jewish moneylender who lends money to his Christian rival, Antonio, setting the security at a pound of Antonio's flesh. When a bankrupt Antonio defaults on the loan, Shylock demands the pound of flesh, due to his dislike for Antonio as the latter used to loan money without charging any interest and thus made Shylock lose business. Meanwhile, Shylock's daughter, Jessica, elopes with Antonio's friend Lorenzo and becomes a Christian, further fuelling Shylock's rage.

During Shakespeare's era, money lending was a very common occupation among Jews. This was because Christians did not venture into this business due to their belief that usury was a sin. It was also one of the few professions available to Jews in medieval Europe, who were prohibited by law from most other professions.

Shylock's 'trial' at the end of the play is a mockery of justice, with Portia acting as a judge when she has no real right to do so. Here, we are not calling into question Shylock's intentions, but the fact that the very people who berated Shylock for being dishonest had to resort to trickery in order to win. Shylock delivers one of his most eloquent speeches:

"Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction." (Act III, Scene I)

The depiction of Jews in the literature of England and other English-speaking countries bears a strong imprint of

Shylock. With slight variations much of English literature up until the 20th century depicts the Jew as "a monied, cruel, lecherous, avaricious outsider tolerated only because of his golden hoard".

Life for Jews in Shakespeare's England was extremely difficult, as they had to live in hiding. Many converted to Christianity, or pretended to do so, to protect themselves, but they were not allowed to own property, and most careers were closed to them. They were forced in ghettos and were also forced to pay their Christian "protectors," and they were the subject of lurid myths and legends which undoubtedly influenced Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock.

In the first part of the 1800s, depictions of Shylock began to change. While previous actors had simply portrayed Shylock as a villain, 19th century actors began interpreting him as a tragic hero who fought for dignity, respect, and equal rights. Many actors argued that their interpretation of the role came from the play itself, suggesting that Shakespeare meant for Shylock to be seen as a complex person, rather than a simple villain. It is possible that Shakespeare's play was intended to humanize the Jewish community, although given the plethora of Jewish villains in Tudor theatre which Shakespeare was undoubtedly influenced by; this seems to be a dubious claim.

Conclusion

Knowledge and power are inter-related. Here, power is seen in the human behaviour outside State, so far power was always seen as vested in the State only. In *The Merchant of Venice*, money or wealth holds power over the poor or needy who represent the subaltern. Man is depicted as the central being and woman is the one who is marginalized. Knowledge of Law gives an individual power while absence of it makes him subaltern. And finally, Christians are the most powerful while the Jew is the subaltern because in this case it is the State versus the individual and power here is also represented in the race of the characters. The superiority of the civilized races is established which reinforces

cultural as well as racial hierarchy.

So, in the light of the characters in *The Merchant of Venice*, the plight of the marginalized, the subaltern and the powerless in the works of Shakespeare is brought about in the Foucauldian perspective.

In the end I would like to quote the famous lines of Portia on the quality of mercy:

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest; It blesseth him that gives and him that takes"

To conclude, I would say that the power hierarchies are an inevitable and unavoidable part of any society. One who is powerful at one point of time may be subaltern at another. Therefore, regardless of the power status of one, all human beings should follow the virtue of mercy, love and compassion and only then would the earth be a better place to live and love.

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Narrative of a Teen-aged Indian-American Girl

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Prologue

She awakens, peeks through her hopeful eyes for a better daylight. She opens her eyes to the beaming sunshine, to the radiant future that it seems to offer. The crisp air hits her face, reminding her of all the troubles that yesterday had offered. But today is not yesterday. Today is today. Today is a new hope, a new effort. She stretches her wings as if she is about to conquer something. She prepares for a long flight. She takes off, and just as she begins to experience the satisfaction of her flight, she plops right back down. The open fields and infinite skies no longer embrace her. She is tied to the thick bars of the cage that surrounds her; where the horrors of life are able to get in, but have no way of leaving. She succumbs. "It is impossible for humans to fly." No, this isn't a statement that I have made, just in case if you're wondering. It's the truth of life for those who don't want to fly. This is something that you might find in your science textbook, or an answer that you might get from your mom or dad. "Flying is for birds." Well, I beg to differ. Flying isn't about spreading your wings and taking off into the limitless sky. No. Flying is about closing your eyes and not being able to picture a single flaw in your life. To fly is to be content. To fly is to reach tranquility. To fly is to accept the imperfections as perfections in your life. I remember my first flight, and each flight that followed…

The Conqueror

There are some things that give you the peace that nothing else can. That was bike riding for me. I felt at ease when the cool yet

warm breeze hit my face and brushed past my cheeks. I felt satisfied every time I was able to smell the fresh scent of the flowers that were starting to bloom. As I felt myself speed past the grounded trees and their swaying leaves, I felt like a conqueror. It was as if everything was suddenly in my possession and I had a right over all the beauties of the world. But most importantly, speeding past the blooming flowers and tall trees helped me to forget the worries that my home offered. I would suddenly forget that the members of my family were working their fingers to the bone in order to save my ailing grandmother. My grandmother was once the backbone of our family, a pillar of strength. But after three major heart attacks and a stroke, that pillar had been crumbled to the ground. The face which was once full of life now resembled a feeble raisin; the life had been sucked out of her face as she fought to live. And for some reason, I felt responsible for everything that was happening to her. I never knew why, but I felt guilty doing everyday tasks in front of her, it felt like I was living the life that she was supposed to live, and I was snatching it away from her. But at the same time, I loved her more than anything in the world, and it injured me to see her in this condition. She'd get hurt, but I would feel the pain. Every time I looked at her, all of these thoughts began to run through my head, eating up my mind, smothering it. And when I couldn't take it anymore, I would run out of the house with my bike to escape from the troubles and to fly away from them. Here I was again today. Amidst the buzzing bees, the blooming flowers, the passing breeze. I had never felt so free before. I raced past the still trees and the swaying bushes. My heart started to beat faster as I felt myself gain momentum. Yes! It was finally happening. I was conquering all of my troubles. They would never be able catch up, as I was finally out of their grasp. I felt myself pedal even faster, trying to defeat everything that came in my way. I had never felt this way before, but I knew that no one was happier than I was. I pedaled faster, even faster, but somehow my foot missed. My bike began to tremble and ended up betraying me. I found myself lying on the ground, with scrapes and cuts on my hands and knees. My bike was lying a few feet away from me as

its wheels kept turning. The flight was over. I stood up and quickly brushed all the dirt off of my body. From the corner of my eye I was able to notice another bike which was racing towards me. I ran towards my bike to pick it up and the next thing I knew was that I was on the hard ground once again. I felt myself going farther away from where I had fallen. What was happening? I felt my entire body being scraped by the ground. My cheek, my ear, my forehead, was all burning from the friction. I managed to look up and saw that my bracelet had gotten stuck to the biker's bike chain. I was being dragged across the ground as he continued to race past the still trees and swaying bushes. He was the conqueror now. I felt my entire body get hot, the blood oozing from my face and body. I let out a scream.

The Revelation

They had caught up with me. I was back in their grasp. They were creeping onto me, clinging on to me like leeches, sucking the life out of me. I felt paralyzed, with a burning sensation over my entire body. I tried to move my arm, and when it felt like a million needles were piercing through my skin at once, I retreated. As much as I didn't want to, I had finally given up. I opened my eyes to see my entire family standing in front of me. I saw my mother, aunt, and grandfather standing in front of me with disturbed looks on their faces. But what hurt me the most was my grandmother's face, which had wrinkled even more because of the worry that I had brought home with me today. I had done it again. I had sucked the life out of her once again. I hated myself. “His bike crashed into you…” my mother began to explain. But I wasn't listening. The only thought running through my head was of my grandmother. I was supposed to take care of her, take her mind off of worries. “…when you fell, your bracelet got tied into his bike chain and you were dragged across the ground…” she continued. How could I have done this? How could I have been so selfish? How did I expect to escape from all of my troubles without helping my own grandmother get rid of hers? “He realized what was

happening when he heard you scream. He quickly got off and helped you get up. Mrs. Jain saw you when he was still talking to you, and thankfully she brought you home." She concluded. I deserved all of the pain that I was feeling. I deserved to burn. I deserved to die. "But don't worry, honey. You're okay. You'll be okay." She assured me, with huge tears forming in her eyes. She quickly turned her face, and when she realized she couldn't hide it any longer, she stormed out of the room. "Come on, dear. Let me wash off your wounds and put some hydrogen peroxide on them. We'll get rid of these scars in no time." My aunt reassured with a weak smile on her face. Wait, what?! Scars? Wounds?! What had happened to my body? She helped me get off of the bed and began to give me a prep talk as she led me to the bathroom. "Now, you will be a bit disturbed when you look in the mirror. But don't worry. They're just scars. They will go away, I promise." She said. I didn't want to do this. I didn't want to see my face. I wasn't ready. She slowly brought me into the bathroom, and slowly turned the lights on. I felt myself get hot as soon as I saw myself in the mirror. I screamed. The entire left side of my face was browned with cuts, scrapes, wounds, and blood. I couldn't recognize my own face. I lowered my gaze to look at my neck, only to find the same. I turned my head to check my arms to see the same wounds. My entire body felt as rough as the ground that I was on a few hours ago. My heart was racing and began to feel heavy. My lips started to shake, and before I knew it, tears were streaming down my cheeks, causing even intense pain and burning. Not only had I raised the instability within the house, but had also lost myself. I wasn't flying anymore. I had fallen into a deep, dark hole. And I didn't know my way out. *** Days passed. The leaves began to change their color, indicating their demise. Death had never looked so beautiful. I drew the curtains and ran back to my grandmother, whose condition was worsening day by day. If she was a leaf, she would have turned black by now. It was written all over her face, all over her body. And there was nothing beautiful about it. She began to snore slightly, and I took her hand into mine. I don't want to let go of you, Mama. I don't want to let go. I felt myself begin to lose control, so I

placed her hand on the bed and quickly ran into my room. My wounds were still fresh, and would bleed if touched. And they were. Tears were streaming down my cheeks, my nose running, my voice choked. It was as if someone had taken the heaviest thing in the world and was pushing it onto me. As I was wiping my tears, I noticed a large round scar by my wrist. I had never seen it before, but I knew it was from the other day. I ran to the bathroom, took some water and frantically made an attempt to rub it off. I took some soap and smothered it all over the scar, in hopes of somehow making it disappear. But it didn't. It was there like a dirty stain on a cloth. Except that this was an ugly, dirty stain on my life.

The Abomination

I spent my ninth birthday in the funeral home. Winter still wasn't as cold as my life. Cousins, relatives, friends, acquaintances had all gathered for the viewing. I sat in the corner as I watched everyone mourn and express their sympathy. All the tears had dried up. Nothing was left to shed anymore. I sat there like a stone, trying to convince myself that I was a callous person with no trace of emotion. I wasn't going to cry. Not today. There was just one thing I held in my heart for the world, and that was hatred. I hated everything and everyone, including myself. I looked down at the adamant scar that still lied by my wrist. I felt a tear roll down my cheek as it fell on the scar.

A year later, everything had returned to normal. Well, at least that's what everyone else thought. I had very conveniently tucked myself underneath a shell of deceit, so to everyone else, I had returned to my normal self. But deep down inside, I was devastated. Ever since my grandma's death, I became reserved and kept my thoughts to myself. The same guilt that I had felt when she was suffering in pain was alive in my heart. To some extent, I still felt responsible for everything that had happened. Even thought I had absolutely no control over it. The ugly scar that I had gotten from that accident a year ago was still there, reminding me of my pain. I loathed the scar so much. Not because it was ugly, or

because it reminded me of the accident, but because it brought back all the troubled emotions that I felt a year ago and still felt today. As much as I wanted, I couldn't get rid of it. It would always be there to remind me of my dark past.

When Fiction Overpowers Facts : A Study of Hilary Mantel as Historical Novelist

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The year 1990 has been considered to be transitional in the history of the world as it witnessed a breakway from earlier paradigm in the wake of scientific and technological development in the form of E-revolution or Internet. Advancement in science, technology as well as communication system compressed the whole world into a 'global village.' However, this socio-technological advancement or information superhighway brought in its wake its own pluses and minuses. As regards its pros, it ushered in many high-profiled jobs which no doubt upgraded the standard of living of people. But its seamy side one cannot afford to ignore. The increasing work pressure kills the employees working in MNCs to such an extent that they do not get a fraction of second to think of their emotional life. Rather than communicate, with the nearer relatives, the current 25s and 30s generation prefers to dwell in the 'Virtual' world as facebook, twitter, what's up, thus de-linking themselves from the surroundings. But being a social, seeing, feeling, contemplating being, present day mess has made a human being too nostalgic about the past. May it be to escape from dissatistaction with the present., monotonous routine life or to get enlightened regarding better future, craving for past has become a dominant feature of late 90s and the first decade of twenty first century literature. In the hands of creative persons like Kij Johnson (*The Fox Woman*, 2000), Cecilia Holland (*The Witches' Kitchen*, 2004)

or for that matter Ellis Avery (*The Last Nude* 2012], it has become a tool to develop historical dimension. No wonder, past two decades witnessed the resurgence of historical novels (apart from non-fiction) on literary stage, the term itself is an oxymoron since history. We consider to be the record of facts regarding man's achievements from past to the present, falling under literature of knowledge, while novel is imbubed with imagination, so coming under literature of power as per the distinction made by Cardinal Newman: "To present and interpret facts is the historian's business … to summon up a past epoch, to show men and women alive in it and behaving as they must have behaved in the circumstances is the labour and joy of the life of the genuine historical novelist"[1] (E. A. Baker).

The historical novel is a 'magnetised history' imbubed with the spirit of history and at the same time gratifies the claims of imagination. Encyclopedia Britannica defines it to be"a novel that has as its setting a period of history and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity (which in some cases only apparent fidelity) to historical fact."[2] It has been to the credit of Sir Walter Scott who gave birth to such type of novels though prior to Scott, attemps were made right from Luo Guanzhong's 14th century 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms' to many other fore-runners viz. Dickens, Thackeray, Victor Hugo, Tolstoy and James Fennimore Cooper. In the twenty first century, it has its culmination in the hands of *Illuminations* (2012), *A Gift for the Magnus* (2012) etc. Among them, Hilary Mantel deserves special applause, the twice recipient of Booker Prize and the first woman to receive the award twice following in the footsteps of J. M. Coetzee, Peter Carey and J. G. Farrel. Though her work ranges in subject from personal memoir, short story, essay and novels (historical and contemporary), she is greatly acclaimed today as a historical novelist, although she herself is wary of this stamp since for her 'historical novels are just, as diverse as contemporary novels, and their writers don't

necessarily have anything in common; so, being labeled a historical novel{ist] "can be a kiss of death," and expects her readers to treat as a "contemporary novel[s] about past events."

But, still, for technical convenience, Mantel as a historical novelist is treated for four novels. Her first historical novel is '*A Place of Greater Safety*' (1992) which built her reputation as a historical novelist. Ironically the title stands for grave by greater safety where nobody will come to torment and one will be relieved from all sort of persecution. It is "a dazzling and magisterial novel about one of the most crucial and shattering events in modern history., the French Revolution". [3] Kirkusreviews described it as a massively impressive, painstakingly detailed saga of the French Revolution as its leaders lived it. This "sprawling novel of French Revolution"[4] she finished in 1979 but, rejected by every publisher since the time was not ripe for historical novels as she says:"I wrote a letter to an agent saying would you look at my book, it's about the French Revolution… and the letter came back saying, we do not take historical romances."

It was the time when the term historical novel was wrongly associated or interchangeably used with her easy sister historical or costume romance and so "could not read my letter, because of the expectations surrounding the words 'French Revolution' – that it was bound to be about ladies with high hair.' So could see the light of the day in 1992. Since everything happens with an intention and sometimes the things get deferred but not denied, Mantel could be see justice in the form of Sunday Express Book of the year award for the book.

This huge and dynamic novel traces the careers of three makers of French Revolution, Danton, Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins from childhood to their early deaths during the region of Terror of 1794. All of them actively led the revolt against the tyrannies and injustices of the Ancient Regime. The novel shows a very complex and chaotic revolution, accelerated by many types of people and careering out of anyone's control. Anybody to have

studied the history of French revolution will find it to be a marathon journey from 'peasants' rising upto guillotine the aristocrats. Mantel distincity and uniqueness lies in the fact that unlike her predecessors Alexandre Dumas and Charles Dickens for whom "French Revolution makes for great drama."[5] Mantel here has brought "twentieth century sensibility to the stirring events of 1789."[6]

If it is expected of the historical novelist that he will revive the past in his imagination and be familiar with the social history of the times he is seeking to portray, Mantel is successful in presenting the life of a bygone epoch, one of the most troublesome phases of modern history.

"It is helpful to be acquainted with violence because the past is violent. It is necessary to know that the people who live there are not the same as people now. It is necessary to understand that the dead are real and have power over the living. It is helpful to have encountered the dead firsthand in the form of ghosts."[7]

So saturated was Mantel with the spirit of the past that New York Times praised her saying "more novel and less history might not better suit this author's unmistakable talent".[8]

The novel is hinging round three young provincials who had come to Paris to make their future. Georges-Jacques Danton, an energetic, pragmatic, debt-ridden, ugly and charismatic spokesperson, Maximilien Robespierre, slight, diligent, precise, wishing to do good for others, stemming out of his conception of his revolutionary virtue and so was called "the incorruptible" and their friend Camille Desmoulins, an inveterate conspirator, pamphleteer of genius, a charming gadfly, erratic and untrustworthy, also beautiful. At the beginning of the novel, one finds that he is obsessed by one woman but engaged to marry another, 'her daughter.' However in the swells of revolution, the things take a drastic turn. Initially, enjoying the summer of rise, they each taste the addictive delights of power, though the sudden topsyturvism in the course of time calls for their downfall; this

arrival of winter in the form of terror and violence makes them pay for the 'price,' snubs them to their doom. No doubt, this long and dynamic novel is an audacious, informed and encompassing portrayal of the genuine achievements and the harrowing tragedy of the French Revolution.

Another striking fact which grabs attention is that in the wake of obeying the sanctity of history, Mantel has just not reproduced the facts for the sake of it. Due to that though Danton, Robespierre and Desmoulins occupy centre stage position, they are not the only major characters who populate the novel. She has revitalized the whole gamut of eighteenth century France right from their obscure origins to Louis XVI to his decadent court, Mirabeau and Marat, the Marquis de Lafayette and the Marquis de Sade, Saint-Just and Choderlos de Laclos, the Committee of Public Safety, the Mountain, the Gironde, the Sans-culottes and Dr. Guillotin's Machine. This wide galaxy of characters brings different points of views, granting us access to their deepest thoughts and feelings; the fact evident of hers to have done her 'homework': "She found that quite a bit was known about the revolutionaries. They had died young, but their wives and sisters had lived, and saved letters and kept diaries. So it was only here and there, at first that she was compelled to invent things, filling in gaps. She might read about a conversation and deduce what other conversations must have preceded it. She might read about a separation and infer the quarrel. Whenever she could, she quoted directly from the record."[9]

As a result of this deeper penetrative research, Danton, Desmoulins and especially, Robespierre do not appear before us as 'larger–than–life' bogeymen as portrayed in popular fiction but real human beings of flesh and blood, having respective pros and cons. As a result, so- called "People's revolution" appears before us as an attempted political coup gone horribly wrong, and as she delineates further, we encounter how even movers and shakers get stultified at the bloody turn of events and eventually, fell prey to

their own scruples. Fall of Robespierre bears testimony to all this. His moral earnestness and unappealing Puritanism marred the "humane" side of him to such an extent that he assets to the execution of Danton, his friend, a master of commanding phrase, a born lawyer, which deprives him of the single great force that might have spared him from the execution and eventually makes nemesis in the form of 'Karmic cycle' play its further inning. Thus, in her teasing fiction out of history, Mantel has unveiled before us many probabilities, unrecorded circumstances political maneuvering, historical personages as individuals, their trials and tribulations about which the readers were vaguely aware of as she makes crystal-clear. It is this which makes this fiction appear on a grand scale and in the grand tradition.

If *A Place of Greater Safety* is a meticulously researched account of French revolution and the increasingly tortuous relationship among the revolutionary trinity of MaximIlien Robespierre, Georges – Jacques Danton and Camille Desmoulins, *The Giant O'Brien* (1998) focuses on the battle between the revolution of science and the ways of poem and song, reason and emotions, as well as instincts, old and new, in the eighteenth century era of Enlightenment; but rather than glorify its elegance unlike others, Mantel is foreshadowing its seamy side (with her Irish sensibility) which had marred its elegance and the eighteenth century stands before us as the era of derangement. As history unfolds before us, one knows, "The late eighteenth century was marked by an intellectual revolution. In the middle ages, European culture had progressed with Christianity as its pivot with the advent of Renaissance and reformation, this religion-oriented attitude was replaced by reason and sciences….. came to dominate statecraft, society, economic activity and the pursuit of knowledge. In this age of enlightenment natural science acquired a new complexion; social science was studied scientifically, philosophy came under the influence of new ideas, humanism determined social values and criticism was harmonized with traditional ideas

of art and literature. Naturally, this new outlook affected politics and society. In every walk of life-religion, society, law, economics and administration, reason emerged supreme. Everything was judged by the yardstick of reason; consequently, traditional prejudices disintegrated, men lost faith in the scriptures and divine injunctions and were imbued with a new sense of dignity and worth. The Enlightenment taught men to give up their faith in supernatural elements. They began to study science in place of theology. They reached the conclusion that the world and the human society were regulated by natural law. Indeed, reason was elevated to the highest level"[10] (Banerjee: 3).

Counter to it was Ireland, a land "ripped by poverty and famine, caught between the old beliefs and scourging reality of hunger and death, abandoned even by the mythical "gentlefolk" who populate [ancient fairytales] and captivate the listeners, while their woodland homes are cut down for firewood."[11]

The novel puts the real stink of the eighteenth century into our nostrils. Under the pretext of "the clearance", mild sounding name for the process of evicting Irish tenants, England had made them homeless and destitute. With no other alternative left, many had to seek refuge in London. However, it fares no better for all its modernity and rationalism since they had brought in the course of time certain vices and in turn, "London becomes a place where all souls descend to their basest, modes of existence."[12] as revealed through the downfall of the naïve Irish giant Charles O Brien, who seems to measure about eight feet, poverty stricken, so leaving his native land of "poverty and poetry with a rag-tag entourage,'[13] allows himself to be taken to London to seek fortune by showing himself as a 'curiosity' for the amusement of the public. Everyone wants to profit from him right from his Irish friends Claffey, Pybus, Jankin to the agent Joe Venace who contracts with him and the people who house him. Amiably he tells in the ancient Irish mode his tales of "bliss and blood" in the flickering firelight viz a proud woman's beautiful child is taken and a "Yellow child, its skin

flapping, its eyes running and its nose snuffing" is substituted. The seven dwarves are beaten to death, "each dwarf watching the pulping of his brother "while snow white" is punched in the face, spat at and driven from the cottage by fire; a pig-faced girl, instead of being rescued by the love of a Prince lives a long life of loneliness. The Giant is a giant only in physical appearance but inwardly he is a fairly gentle and intelligent creature. The hostile circumstance compels him to put himself on display to earn money in a city where one can "make a living from being tall" and he becomes a sensation in all over London.

But, apart from being a great age for the shows, the eighteenth century was also the age in which "People were having strange fascination for the things queer and distinct. Many of them belonging to well-to-do section assembled huge collections of dried flowers, skewered butterflies, fetuses in jars. Since science was still a matter of academic recluse, confined to a few, not yet matured into a profession, no trained biologists or chemists, people with enough leisure and determination used to unravel the mysteries of the universe on their own even when "medicine was rudimentary . . . [and] little was known about the inner workings of the human body as about the interior of Africa."[14] Being the age of curiosity, zest to grapple with the unknown had gained an upper mark with both idle and serious. John Hunter, a Scottish surgeon and distinguished anatomist of his time was a spearhead of these kind of people. He was violently interested in the things that can be studied with scientific analysis. Having insatiable desire to experiment on both the living and the dead, both man and animals, he has employed enough body snatchers to supply his needs so that he will be able to autopsy and study them.

When he hears about the latest London sensation in the form of Giant, he was determined to possess his body at any cost and add to his collection. In the course of time, giant's innocence comes out to be his undoing. Ominously he grows and his bones and joints creak as he continues to expand. After getting known

that the giant is on death-bed, Hunter's scientific obsession compels him to have him or rather his skeleton. "I will move that armadillos three feet to the left, and the giant bones will sway, suspended on their wires, boiled and clean; for a man's a goner."

In the end, we find Hunter to be engaging the services of grave-robbers and other nefarious dealers to get possession of his body for his anatomy classes and today we see the giant's bones "during the usual exhibition hours at the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London." Though the novel makes it a point that progress is inevitable and the old ways will dwindle into insignificance, it bemoans the fact that, the innocent people suffer in the name of such progress, as was the plight of Charles O'Brien. Moreover, "greed and violence are common to both the rich and poor throughout the ages as are innocence and compassion."[15] However, being an implicit believer in 'poetic justice', she is not showing merely the downfall of innocence. She brings before our eyes, as we see at the end, ludicrous, horrific Hunter to have gone stark, staring mad. If anything which exceeds spoils everything, excess of reason drives Hunter into madness. He is not spared for losing 'humane' side of life.

As was the case with her first historical novel, in this novel too, Mantel has skipped herself off from accepting stereotypical, false glorification of history. Rather, than show material opulence of the era of elegance, she foreshadows the gloom, filth and squalor "in which the lower class exists, ruled by prejudice, superstition and strong drink"[16] in eighteenth century England; sliced with black comedy she brings home the darker side of eighteenth century, the irrationality of rational era which takes place in the wake of ravenous curiosity matches with Dr. Faust.

Her third historical novel, *Wolf Hall* (2009), too, delves deep into the heart of Tudor History. As one is aware of, the reign of Henry VIM has been considered to be one of the most tumultuous phases n the history of England. Apart from the problems of social mobility, religious freedom, the ongoing tussle

between the individual, church and state. Mantel equally throws a flood of light on the base aspects which dominated the era viz. betrayal and bloodshed. So the starched ruffs and the retinue of doomed wives also come into picture. Equally obsessed with the capaciousness of fortune, in the novel full of bounds and tumbles, she delineates the ascent and decline of the pillars of sixteenth century England who were the dose associates of Henry VIM. It brings into limelight the rise of Thomas Cromwell, the product of underdog section, the blacksmith's boy but later became the king's right-hand man the fall of Cardinal Wolsey the defacto ruler of England and Thomas More, the high brain intellectual of the time.

As one proceeds through the novel, it dawns upon the readers that the milieu delineated by Mantel is of England 1520 which was a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by the civil war. Henry's marriage to Catherine has failed to produce the vital her. Henry's analysis is simple : Catherine was his dead brother's wife and Leviticus plainly states that if one marries one's brother's relict, one shall not breed. The Pope and most of Europe oppose him; for them, it is not the scripture the church of Rome ordains His advisor Cardinal Wolsey, despite his wit, his sense of wonder and of beauty, his instinct for decorum and pleasure, his finesse,' fails to broker a divorce for him and is stripped off his robes, his riches and eventually his life Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell, for whom Cardinal's loss comes out to be his gain. Son of a brutal blacksmith, a political genius, a briber, a bully and a charmer, Cromwell flouts off all established norms to soar high. Rising from the ashes of personal disaster, the loss of his young family and of Wolsey, his beloved patron — he picks his way deftly through a court where man is wolf to man. In order to survive n the evil world, he had to be more evil and gradually moves inch by inch forward as his contemporary Thomas More speaks about him. 'Lock Cromwell in a deep dungeon in the morning and when you come back that night he'll be sitting on a plush cushion eating larks

tongues and all the gaolors will owe him money.'

Pitting himself against parliament the political establishment and the papacy, he is prepared to reshape England to his own and Henry's desires. As an adept resurrectionist, with a vast array of characters and rich overflowing incidents. Mantel's novel peeps back history to show us Tudor England, as a hat-made society moulding itself with great passion, suffering and courage. Due to her meticulous historical reconstruction, the personalities like Henry VIM, Thomas Cromwell do not appear just as royal personages or as 'dwellers of ivory tower' seated on higher pedestal, but hue human, individual beings with a unique amalgam of pluses and minuses. Cromwell in history has been described as stem, venal and implacable. But, Mantel with her Magpie's eye for the telling detail. 'Chivvies the dead into dancing Life, revealing the humanity that has flaked away from the official record'. As a result, one finds Cromwell to be a victim of circumstances, a man who is more sinned than sinning. Whereas Thomas More a so-called saintly, virtuous man appears to be rather a hallow, abstract intellectual who has nothing to do with a die-hard, core reality. Due to that, in many ways, the novel appears to be a riposte to Robert Bolt's acclaimed 1960s play *A Man for All Seasons*, which casts More as saint and Cromwell as Sinner.'

Close on the heels of *Wolf Hall*, her sequel novel *Bring Up the Bodies* (2009), too, delves into the heart of Tudor History. But while the former deals with the ascent of Anne Boleyn, the later deals with her impending downfall as the king Henry gets disenchanted with her, thus exploring one of the most mystifying episodes in English history. As in her former novels, in this novel too, one finds Mantel to be triggering off the incomprehensible power of fate in keeping harmony with the lines of Thomas Webster viz "We are just star's tennis balls, struck and handed which way please them" since nobody knows in the morning what is there in store for him till late night.

In this follow-up novel which begins where the previous

finished, we encounter that the Queen Anne has failed to fulfill the purpose for which King Henry VIII married her. Instead of giving him a male heir she gives him priceless Elizabeth. In the course of time, the rumours regarding her infidelity add fuel in straining her relationship with Henry who later falls for shy, dull, demure, flat-chested Jane Seymour of Wolf Hall. In order to indulge in official wedlock with her, he had to get rid of Anne. Here comes the turn of master politician Cromwell again who has to find a solution that will satisfy Henry, safeguard the nation and secure his own career. Then using the rumours of gossip and infidelity regarding her, Cromwell ensnares her in a web of conspiracy, though he has to ally with his natural enemies, the papist aristocracy. The novel foreshadows the dramatic trial of the queen and her suitors for adultery and treason, unveiling, before us the most terrifying moments of history. The novel ends with the death of Anne Boleyn, underscoring its reputation as a 'bloody story.' But Mantel's credit as a historical novelist lies in making the readers "think through the blood."

On the whole, as a historical novelist, Mantel has gone beyond the fundamentals of history. Due to that, her novels appear to be a happy marriage of facts and fiction since a historical novelist is under no compulsion to chronicle the facts of history with absolute fidelity without an admixture of his imagination. There is a kind of truth which is sometimes higher than truth to fact and in Mantel's case, it is through her visualization, finding out the probabilities and possibilities through available record, dry bones of history have come out to be a living soul. Her fictionalized conversations are occasionally interspersed with extracts from historical documents, making her account appear more authentic to fabricated twist. It is this which has advantaged her character portrayal as they do not appear to be a historical replica in a uni-faceted, skewed manner but as manifold ones. So her Cromwell we find to be a warm, bright, humane, decent, immensely capable but a torn and tormented soul who lives with the regret of having

helped bring about the executions of Sir Thomas More and Cardinal Wolsey while Sir Thomas More, the so-called Saint to be fussily pious, stiff-necked and un-naturally fond of torturing heretics. Thus, the general temper of the time is faithfully reflected in her novels with no-false glorification or romanticisation. As a result, the eighteenth century England stands before us in its seamier, darker angles as is evidential of her *The Giant, O Brien*. Unlike her predecessors and contemporaries, Mantel as a historical novelist mark a breakaway due to her novels bearing contemporary implications. Unlike Walter Scott's historical romances, they are not escapist and take us into the land of 'no where or distant place' but leave us thought provoked as, "revolutions [and history] is the snake eating it's own tail."[17]So we can see how the corrupt can be uncorrupted and [how the] unjust can suddenly see the light of mercy and truth.[18] Her didactic motif that the wheel of destiny in the form of rewards and punishments, rolls on everybody's neck, gains an upper mark which distinguishes her from many of her peer group as they no more remain the products of mere 'tea-time reading' but being a deeper penetrative endeavour demand more serious attention. It is this which widens their scope as more a meta-historical one.

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REVIEW ESSAY:

Nation,Translation and Bhasha Literatures, ed. Harbir Singh Randhawa. Sarup and Sons, New Delhi, 2013, pp. XI + 324, Rs. 1200/-ISBN-978-81-7625-908-8

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India is a land of diversities in dress, cuisine, climate, etiquette and customs besides languages but all these differences are capped with common cultural ethos to provide her the aura of complete oneness. There was a time when states were formed on the basis of separate languages and conflicts arose out of giving significance to certain languages within the Indian State. Now there is a movement of people from one part of India to another and they carry their language with them and interact in it with other people, thereby giving birth to the concept of lingual transaction which in turn resulted in cultural transaction. There was always felt a need to have a book which not only gave significance to the theoretical aspect of translation but also understand the problem of translation in translating Bhasha works from one language to another or into English.

The vacuum might have been felt by Dr. Randhawa who edited this book taking under its gamut all major languages like Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Maithali, Garhwali, Kamauni, Marathi,Kannada,Bengali and Oriya for dealing with Indian translational issues in all its ramifications. The book under review evaluates the paradigm of translation with regard to different genres of Bhasha literatures in its role of developing Indian nationhood without taking it as mere exercise in semantics but as Susan Basnett mentions, "a complex negotiation between texts, ideologies and cultures." It is really very interesting to witness that translatorial construction of a 'national' literary identity for post colonial India is happening through English, which was used by

the colonizer to make the colonized governable. Aijaz Ahmad is not wrong when he avers, "It is in English more than any other language that the largest archive of translations has been assembled so far, if present trends continue, English will become , in effect, the language, in which the knowledge of 'Indian' literature is produced."

The book has twenty five articles contributed by scholars belonging to all parts of India. The book does not have an introduction as such but the article 'Translation : Some Reflections' by Prof. Jaiwanti Dimri serves that purpose. While stressing the significance of translation in literary studies, she cogently brings home this fact that translation of regional writings into English has imparted the desired visibility and wider readership to them despite certain inherent demerits. She advocates the necessity of inter and intra translations in regional languages in view of the polyphonic fabric of Indian linguistic scene. Dr. Pradip Sharan analyses the problem of linguistic and cultural transference in translation and provides solution to that problem. According to him, the translator must have in- depth insight into the taste, ethos and milieu of the SL context and the TL readers. For this he has to adopt complete re-distribution, analytic re-distribution and synthetical re-distribution transfer processes for the purpose of translation. He is of the opinion that with the formation of linguistically accurate multilingual dictionary of Indian languages, the translation of Bhasha literatures can be facilitated to a great extent. Dr. Shweta Nanda takes Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (Punjabi), Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti* (Urdu), Lalitambika Antarajanam's *A Leaf in the Storm* (Malyalam) and Pakistani director Sabina Sumar's film *Khamosh Pani* to unravel women's consciousness and explore the ways in which women like Lajwanti, attain self awareness and try to come to terms with their sense of loss. She highlights the thematic unity- partition travails found in all these translated works which is the hall mark of the literature of this sub-continent, despite differences of medium and genre. Prof. Sanjay Saksena highlights this fact that the translations

of Mirza Ruswa's Urdu text into English by David Mathews and Khushwant Singh made the novel more central to composite Indian Culture than it was when Ruswa wrote it. With the result it has become a part of a national enterprise, in all mediums including English and India's produce for the global market place. Dr. Eeasha Narang in her article "Babel in Benjamin : Translating the untranslatable" tries to put forward that translation offers the surviving impulse for any text by virtue of its supplementary and complementary characteristic. This ensures the growth of languages besides affirming the inseparability of the tasks of translator and the historical materialist. In this way she also brings forth the relevance of Benjamin's *Task* to the Indian context. Dr. Vinita Sinha and Miss Abrar's joint paper is focused on Ramanujan's *Folk Tales from India* which according to them become a fusion of transliteration, translation and transference of identities. While making a comparison of this book with the English works in India they substantiate this perspective that English literary traditions in India have always treaded the fine line between constructions of the self and the other and this work is not only a literary translation but a cultural translation of 22 Indian languages with an entire paraphernalia of oral Indian phrases, songs, proverbs, tales and epics. Dr. Sudhir K. Arora has tried to define the Indian concept of nationhood with regard to the in-depth analysis of Ananthamurthy's *Samskara*. He concludes that *Samskara* offers a vision- casteless, classless, secular and progressive India. According to him Ananthamurthy offers a message that people should understand that religion is for man, not man for religion. Dr. S. C. Hajela in his customary style upholds making the activity of translation a great weapon for decolonizing English studies as poetics of resistance. For this he analyses the select translated works of Prof. C. N. Ramachandran, a prominent Kannada writer. According to him, Ramachandran's translation of ancient oral literature of Kannada with the foregrounding of marginalized groups/identities open up an agenda of the poetics of resistance through translation in the present scenario by

globalization and marketization of literature, setting an example not only for Indian scholars of English but for all lovers of literature. Prof. Syed Ali Hamid has discussed thread bare the multifarious problems and concerns in translating the Ghazal into English. According to him, translating the Ghazal into English does not only involve cultural negotiation, it is also at the same time an attempt at translating a form that does not have its roots in the western literary tradition. But he concludes that as the western readers became more and more familiar with the Ghazal in English, there is all possibility of their feeling gradually more at ease with the metaphors and symbols commonly used in the Urdu Ghazal, and subsequently with the form itself, adopting it as their own. Dr. Pratyush Vatsala and Vandana Pathak took the works of Kamauni's *adikavi* Gumani Pant as a motif of their paper for presenting translation of Bhasha texts as rewriting to bring the problems, pains and tribulations of the people residing in distant places for public knowledge, which might have otherwise gone unnoticed. Dr. Madhumeet has chosen Punjabi writer Kartar Singh Duggal's short stories to bring home this view point that there is always a pressing need for laying bridges everywhere until all of us are truly welded into monolithic entity. English which has been formerly stigmatized as a foreign language, has today become the most potent medium of national integration. Keeping in mind this fact that Bhasha literatures should include every Bhasha literature whether it is spoken in any part of India, Anu Verma has portrayed Kuki, a woman character of Oriya writer Sarojini Sahoo's *The Dark Abode* (2008) for highlighting her extension of the dimensions of connectivity to interconnectivity and intra-connectivity of tradition, gender, caste, religion and culture. Dr. Ashima Saxena has made a comparative analysis of Dharamvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* and its translation in English by Alok Bhalla to aver that the translator has not done literal translation but has imparted grace, dignity and strength to the original work by conveying effectively the original writer's thoughts and emotions in a different language. Uttarakhand is broadly divided into two

major parts – Kumaun and Garhwal. Dr. Randhawa wants to cover both the Bhasha literatures – Kumauni and Garhwali realizing this fact that 'charity begins at home' so he included the article of Dr. Madhu D. Singh which described the problem of linguistic and cultural translation from Garhwali into English. According to her, in Garhwali there are about 50 words for denoting smell, more than 32 words for devoting taste, about 100 words for sound, more than 26 words for touch, about 60 words for different sensations and a vast vocabulary for numerals and group words. She concludes that English is an SVO based language, while Hindi is an SOV language so the problems of translation in Garhwali poetry get multiplied but this should not dishearten the prospective translators as they can create trust and stimulate interest in these unnoticed Bhasha texts. Dr. Vandana Rajoriya has described the essential features of Marathi Dalit translation works for underlining this fact that English translation, if not done properly, distorts some of the subtleties of native experience. Dr. Ranjana Mehrotra has taken another Marathi work *Indhan* (Fuel) by Hamid Dalwai translated by no one else but Dilip Chitre (2001) for exhibiting a pluralistic scrutiny of Indian Society. According to the writer, one of the most daring moves of Chitre has been to translate the Konkani Muslim Marathi dialect spoken in the Chiplun region into a blend of Black and American dialects, an invented 'patois'.

On the other hand, Dr. Deepanjali Mishra has described the versatile usage of the globalized language – Hinglish by upwards of 350 million people in the urban areas of India. According to her, recharge, missed call, top-ups have become so common that they are exhaustively employed by the rural masses. Dr. Bishun Kumar in his paper on "Translation of Bhasha Literatures as transforming identities and redefining India" manifests that the translation of Bhasha literatures has opened the mighty gates of the reservoir of the rich cultural, historical and literary heritage of India and transformed its identity from sub-national to pan-Indian and later into international one. It has also helped India getting free from colonial clutches and evolved it

from margin to the centre. Dr. H. S. Randhawa has chosen four short stories of four different languages namely Assamese, Kannada, Hindi and Oriya for exhibiting that their translation into English becomes a form of shared cultural transaction leading to transculturation. According to him, translation as a source and transculturation as a by – product push people, places, culture and languages out of the reified status within which academic discourse sometimes binds them because text and context are in constant transformation. He could not agree to this charge against English that speeches in English create a make- believe world and artificiality exists in the description of scenes. He convincingly establishes that a reader not knowing Kannada, Assamese, Oriya or Hindi start moving in these regions through translation and thereby discover the subtle structure of Indian literature in its totality. Prof. Pashupati Jha has upheld the pressing need of translation by mentioning that Indians unlike westerners are largely trilingual and have translating consciousness but side by side formulates guidelines for a good translator. According to him the translator should read the creative work not in parts but as a whole to know the essential meaning and then alone be should begin his translation, being cautious both of the particular meaning of the page being translated and the general meaning of the whole text. A translated work should first and foremost, convey the essential feel of the source text. Dr. Nar Deo Sharma has described the untranslatable lexical items because they are language specific registers and provides panaceas for it too. Dr. Tuhin Majumdar by making a selective study of plays of Tendulkar, Karnad and Mahasweta Devi articulates the polyphonic experiences of the subaltern. According to him, Indian translated plays in English not only serve as a space where multiple voices of the neglected gain force but become a source of the revival of national theatre into which the streams of theoretical art seem to converge.

Thus, all the twenty five articles of the book deal with this hypothesis that translations have built a link between the east and west, north and south and contributed to the growing richness of

contemporary creative consciousness for redefining Indian nation hood. The worthy part of this anthology is that four articles deal with the theoretical aspects of translation, six articles are concerned with the problems of linguistic and cultural transference in translation and remaining 15 articles revolve around Bhasha texts of Urdu, Assamese, Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Kumauni, Kannada, Maithali, Garhwali, Bengali and Oriya languages. They also discuss in the first part of the paper the translation as a concept followed by its application in the second part, keeping in mind the text in hand. Majority of the books written on the translation studies present translation on a theoretical framework, this book analyses translation and its components in the Indian context with regard to its application on the Bhasha texts. The aim is to present the perceived difficulties and surmounting of these obstacles in the translational enterprise instead of just acquainting the readers with works written in different Indian languages. The editor has rightly mentioned in his preface that translation of Bhasha texts will augment their inclusion in the syllabi of the Indian universities which in turn will de-colonise the English studies and Indian students will have the grasp of world literature in English without being uprooted from their home turf. This will no doubt help in the formation of pan Indian literary identity.

Despite all these merits this book appears to be exorbitantly prized. Besides it should have covered the Gujarati, Telugu, Tamil, Kashmiri and North-Eastern works because the nation cannot be formed dispensing with these vital parts of the motherland. Thirdly few contributors have not been able to develop their ideas relating to translation to the logical conclusion in their articles due to various reasons. Altogether this book will surely be of great benefit to sincere students and research scholars interested in exploring Indian translational concerns and accurate translation of Bhasha texts. The most significant feature of this book is that it contains certain articles which are dealing with the works of significant but unrecognized writers by those who are

themselves translators and have encountered first hand problems in the process of doing translations. The book as such facilitates a much needed dialogue among Bhasha literatures primarily through the institution of English translation while invoking the cohesive force-Indian nationalist assertion. On a deeper analysis it can be said that it does not deal with only vertical and horizontal translation but takes into account the requirements of the readers (the target group) of the translated texts.

Poetry Column

Three Poems by Lalit Mohan Sharma

KNEES ON THE ROAD AND IN THE AIR

I

In myths
The gods offer their skills and weapons
To the goddess
That she destroy the demons
Who are out to ravage
Man and nature

Resounding alarm bells are heard
By the divine and the human
That the very survival moves
As if to a destined doom
And when all get together
All the victims
They could revise fate
And devise a new one

II

With bated breath and bodies
Quivering in pain and agony
Millions of decent human beings
Lived bruised and battered
Died unknown even to next of kin
Unknown to gods of either sex
Of divinity regional or local

III

Men choose divine friends
On their forays into fears
On vows of insecure vision

Let their minds camouflaged
By the unquestioned legacy
Of that received wisdom
Idiom of human conduct
Practiced over generations

Learning to question
Neither parents nor gods
Forgetting gods like parents
Too have their darling ones
Dole out favors to those
Whom they choose

Are they always listening
The gods
Aren't they out of reach
Not switched off though
But there is no signal

IV

Two young persons
A man and a woman
Carted around in a bus
On the roads of Delhi
Half a dozen men
Do to them
What a tool may refuse
To do
To a machine

Then throw the two
Naked
Out on a road bright
With neon signs

Mobikes and cars

Stop watch and go
Till a human being stops
A human voice intervenes
For the bated breath and bodies
Bare and bleeding
Quivering
In pain and agony

V

Day and night
Night and day
Young men and women
Of all ages turn up
Gather in one voice
Like an early monsoon blizzard
Then it grows thick more dense
Roars like a massive downpour

Braving water cannons
Tear-gas shells and batons

(Hang the demons at public square
Burn them live)

Icy winter waters do not douse
The smoldering pitch of protest
Cops cart them around as
The barricades are broken
Drag by the sleeve legs arms
Knees on the road and in the air

Not powerless against the power
Of helmets and the cane-shields
Hazy fears of their own fate
Turns their hate more bitter
Their concern so very sincere

For the victim on the ventilator
Arraign the state to victim's court
None to escape unquestioned

VI

That Sunday night
A country's traditions
Older than myths
Could resume journey
Endless polemics
On diabolic crimes
One of fake counters
A thousand and a few hundred
In a small state in the far east

Boycott the broadcaster
Forget the text
But not the context
For lack of information
Exalt not the ancient blah blah blah
Don't just stop watch
And go your way
But stay-put to intervene
And the cry is for Help
Meant for you

Heart-Beat

Facing each other
His hands clasp at her back
Holding soft the gentle sway
Of body as her face looks up
Eyes look at eyes
Her hands at his neck
He bends to kiss her eyes
The one and then the other
And between the eyes too
Pulled her head lies soft
Feeling the heart beat

A Vintage Quartet

I

Love to slip on your left side
Legs slightly curled arms folded
Look at all the icon gods
And to float
Into the valley of dreams
Visuals in thoughtless frames
Keep flirting with sleep
Till it descends
To seize and release you
Into the comfort of unconscious

II

I know how you adore the arm
Stretch out of the car window
And point at the fort ruins
Far up on the hill-top
Excited you look at the waters
Race gurgle down the valley
You take to trekking up a climb
Up a mountain through a pass
So glad when on a glacier
Or ride Cruiser by the sea

III

We all carry unheard melodies
Within us like heart in the chest
And like a lotus flower bound
In the folded bud nod at dawn
Oriflamme taste of lips as kissed
Shines in smiles as you recall
The joy unhurried in time
Fulfillment like someone or the other
Drops in a short while and haunts

Many a frame of colour and sound

IV

Encounter with ruins has hazards
Yet platitudes don't attitudes matter
You like to lift vintage moments
Like mountain peaks in a landscape
Or fruit trees with loads of blossoms
Dreams desktops arms and eyes
Throb with adorations for the icons
Of desire on a mere glimpse

Journey

Swarnjit Savi

I thought of journey
and
she began the conversation about
the caves of Ajanta and Ellora
and
started enjoying the
enormity of Niagra Falls

I thought of bird
and
she soared high
chirping amongst
woods, hills and clouds
and
perceived a nest

I thought of joy
and
she spread her wings
let-go my finger
and
flew into green valleys
and snow-clad hills
like breeze.

I shut my eyes
and
through stars and planets
she made me traverse in pitch darkness

I thought of sorrow
and
meandering through *stupas* and ruins
she vanished into the picture made on a pillar

I became quiet
and
she touched the canvas
with veritable hues
and I got imaged on the canvas

I thought of death
and
she kept caressing
the foreheads of mummies
that lay buried in pyramids

And
all those who lay asleep for centuries
stood up
as if startled out of a
dream.

To Put Up

Ritu Sharma

Putting up with the enigmas
Of mine,
Leaving aside the trails of life
For how long will I be paying
The cost,
When I have none for my support
One more flame is to burn
And the negative thoughts
Are to shun
Just peace, peace and peace

Book Reviews

TRANSLATING: POEMS, POETRY 0R WHAT YOU WILL– Mahendra Batnagar & Swarnjit Savi

Lalit Mohan Sharma*

Notwithstanding the observation of Robert Frost that "Poetry is what gets lost in translation", we owe so much to the art of translation which enables us to have access to the minds of the people working in several other languages. Without those several voices we cannot imagine the meaningful insights which illumine the collective human mind. We think of Dante and Baudelaire, Dostoevsky and Homer, and some of them, to use words of Goethe, "arouse an irresistible yearning for the original", learn Sanskrit to read Kalidas or French to read Camus.

Two books of English translation of poetry are being reviewed here, one from Punjabi and the other from Hindi. Swarnjit Savi's Kameshwari (Chetna Prakashan Ludhiana, 2012, 2nd edition) is a translation from Punjabi and each page of verse is accompanied by pictures of sensual sculptures. The translation is done by Ajmer Rode, one among the founders of Punjabi theatre in Canada. And his ten books include a translation of Gurdial Singh's Marhi da Diva. Titled "Kameshwari", a little more than forty pages, the poem flows, billowing or sedate, and you pause to look at the pictures, as if down a river, not losing sight of figures on the bank all through. More of this book a little later.

The second book,'Life as It *Is*', again an English translation of poems in Hindi by Dr Mahendra Bhatnagar, born in Jhansi U.P., the year 1926. His eighteen collections of poems are compiled in three volumes, and has also published 11 volumes of poems in English. Dr Bhatnagar's celebrated academic and creative career has also seen his poems done into French "Un Poet Indien Et Moderne". Bhatnagar dedicates this book to a list of fourteen names as 'all co-translators of my poems'. 199 poems in all, with a few of four lines each and some say of forty or far less and each poem is given a title. To continue with a reading of

Bhatnagar's poems, fragments of feelings are treated along with an attempt to splice such observations with thoughts of sagacity and time-tested wisdom. Beautifully drawn metaphors like in poem 13, both in English and Hindi, are fascinating. The last lines betray a little uneasy rendering into English: Ya achjanak/adrishya hua vartmaan/punah usee tarteeb sey/utar aata hai/bhookump key parinaam ki tarah!/apney purvvat roop-naam ki tarah. To a Hindi reader the complex 'comparison' is realized as a poetic emotion. The translation seems reluctant to rise to the same level: 'Or at once/The vanished present/Descends from that very se-/quence/once again/Like the result of an earthquake/Like its very form as before'. It is dealing in poems only, and the translation seems painfully shy of transmuting the poetry.

Translating poetry requires a lot more than the vocabulary, the grammar of linguistic equivalents. Each language has its offer of words, the glide of its rhythms, the tone and tenor of moments when expressed words reflect meanings. Look at another example: asankhya aavaazon key shor main/kisee sey apnee baat/bhala,koi kaisey kaheh! How beautifully, the last line transforms the dignified prose of the two lines into a poetic whole! The contribution of the comma and the exclamation in the last line can't be overstated. Now please go through the translation; for once, Robert Frost seems to be spot on. The English version is : “Well,/How one can say/His word to anyone/In the noise/Of countless voices! “ Or, look at this line from poem number 80 titled “Incomplete': kuchh reh gaya/ un saha. And into English: “Something unedurable/persists”. Poem 7 titled Jeevant is done into English as Lively; it begins: Dard sumeitay baitha hoon! And the English: I stay on amassing pain!

Most of the Hindi poems of Dr Bhatnagar resonate with music, both of feelings and of words apt and vibrant with the poetic. Desperate feelings of sad loneliness and betrayal, ruin and dejection notwithstanding, the poet is geared to “fight every movement /of realty” with “the might of his soul” (Poem 171, Sankalp-Vikalp). Kaamna (62) , Ateechacr (8), Bodh-Parapti (20),

Anahoot Sthitiyon main(160)…one can never tire of referring to the Hindi poems. The reader will remain beholden to Dr Bhatnagar for having published the Hindi verses along with the English translation. The beauty of expression and the insight in perception touch the example in the original. The choice of words in translation, if one may hazard a statement, rings inauthentic:

Peet-patton ko guva kar daalian jab/ lut gayi tab, dur sey aa/chal padi madhumai basant-biyaar! When branches shed their dry leaves and sacked,/Then came sweeping from afar/sweet spring breeze! (Vardaan, poem 191). No doubt, the English reader deserves the charm and range of the Hindi poetry of Mahendra Bhatnagar. A flawless English translation that does justice to the original shall be waited upon eagerly. In a large measure, the present effort fetches not a secure bridge from one language to the other. The last poem number 199, Asah (Intolerable) is also marked by the inadequacy of failing to transmute the beauty of the the vintage Bhatnagar:

Priya doobhar jeena;/Mook hridya-veena,/aaghaat samay ka/ab na saha jata. And the English: Dear! Life is difficult,/Heart-lyre is mute,/The stroke of time is/ unbearable!

Not a case of unconvincing translation; it is not 'well-written English prose' which, T.S. Eliot observed in one of his essays, should be true of a good poem as well.

As we move to Swarnjit Savi's long poem, subtitled, The Goddess of Kama, the original Punjabi is not at hand. The language is resonant oration, sounds English without the sub-conscious refrain of going through a translated piece. Aesthetics of engaging the reader on a quest like exploration as well as readiness to take the plunge even as”sound of/endless instruments rises/in my mind/the heavens flooded/with melodies/my language has no words/to catch the moment/only the awareness/of being with you/I have…”(p.80). The 'window of my trivial laws', the speaker knows, cannot sabotage his surrender to his artistic compulsions: “Filled with meanings/little balloons of language/wander in search of poetry/become poetry,/afloat/on erotic currents” (p.68)

He is ready for 'the embrace of conflicting truths'. The mystery and mesmerizing pull of what fascinates and prompts the voice in the poem can be gauged from such lines as the following:

Blood throbs/in my guts/like an alaap of raga bhairava by/Pandit jasraj/it gathers strength/to sing to you/I build your form/from the words and notes/from the elements/flowing from my guts/I gather my broken being/bow before your beauty/in an effort to gather/the broken pieces of my self (pp77-8)

Swarnjit Savi is in tune with "the echo of his inner valleys". The joy of celebration in the union is unique in its search for metaphors:

Your touch does to me/what wind does to lipstick flowers/Sun rays to sunflower/Bow to sarangi strings/Fingers to tabla/ Your touch does to me/What the sticks of artist's hands/do to jaltarang bowls…/What sound of O…m/ does to the samadhi /Of a yogi(pp47-8).

I recall the experience of reading Shiv Kumar Batalavi's "Luna" in Punjabi as also its English translation. While the original was a pleasant surprise to my Punjabi mind, the English rendering has had integrity of rhythm wedded to meaning and one is never sub-conscious of reading a translation. The Indian names and sounds were as clean and transparent a part of the pattern as in a book by Amitav Ghosh. As Swarnjit Savi is willing to "break all laws/ set by/ language history form thought", as a reader I should like to read Kameshwari in Punjabi as also other books like Dayrian Di Qabr Chon and Dard Piadey Hon Da.

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Saxena, Aakash. *Dude We're Screwed*. Mahaveer Publishers: New Delhi. pp 240. Rs. 139/-

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Dude, We're Screwed is a novel providing lessons in a road journey transcending into lessons in the life of modern day youth. The protagonist, Aakash is a confident, witty, 'still single' engineering student. He has an eye for detail and an opinion on every matter. His friends Arpan, Atul and Insha are also pursuing the engineering degree with him. Like any modern day youth, their life revolves around adventure, fun and most importantly girls. Atul seems to have attained graduation in the latter part namely 'girls'. He is the only one amongst them who has a 'college hottie' as a girlfriend. Palak, who has been 'ruining' Atul's life for some time now, is also the genesis of what conspires in the course of the novel.

The novel begins with the engine fumes charging towards Delhi. The four friends Atul, Akash, Arpan and Insha decide to visit their families in Delhi to mark the end of their first year of graduation. Instead of boarding a traditional locomotive, they gear up for a road journey in a Wagon R. However, their plans are altered at the last minute to accommodate Atul's girlfriend, Palak. Among her suitcases and Louis Vuitton bags, Palak had brought Ishita as an excess baggage. Since, all of them could not be accommodated into one car; therefore, they decide to hire the car of Arpan's uncle. By this time the reader is familiarized with the high pedigree Palak, daughter of a retired colonel, who had supposedly befooled her father in believing that she was safely travelling by a

train. Her adventurous escapade is supported by Ishita and fueled by Atul. The journey commences with the pumping of male egos ensuing into a 'Fast and Furious' styled car race.

Till here, the novel seems like a tale of a journey undertook by a group of friends, for whom driving in a car from Ludhiana to Delhi seems as the biggest adventure of their lives. With the addition of girls, the story develops a few romantic contours, thus, providing it a page right out of a Bollywood film. On the surface, the novel sails along with few empty packets of chips, aerated cans of cola, brewing romance and witty one-liners. Conversely, one can sense an impending calamity, a disruption of magnanimous proportions or an emotional attyachar right around the corner.

The novel enters the flashback mode with Akash narrating his unrequited love story, thus unraveling the secret behind his singlehood. The anecdotes of school life, where the four friends meet the beautiful 'Disha' are charming and replete with 'sunshine'. The teenage infatuations and infinitesimal heart breaks power the novel with flushed innocence. The incidents and the anecdotes of this childhood romance seem to be snippets out of Hindi romcoms like 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai'. In fact, Aakash describes Disha's laughter as the first part of 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' and her smiles as 'the second part of 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai'. The recounting of Aakash and Disha's romance has strong autobiographical leanings. The novelist by reliving the episodes from his own life is documenting the life of an average teenager. The playing of violins, the straight out of heaven clichés and the string of romantic escapades act as, in the words of the novelist, 'the perfect curtain dropper' of this coming-of-age story.

The novelist uses the tool of stream of consciousness to arouse emotions and to generate empathy for the characters. At this point, the novel starts oscillating between dreams and realism. The two storylines run parallel to each other often crossing paths. Disha's sweet voice is soon silenced by the screams of Palak announcing the arrival of her Colonel father. The latter after discovering her daughter's scandalous act of betrayal, calls for his

guns and marches on to Delhi. The pace of the novel races with the increasing volumes of deafening horns and menacing fists. The high chase drama in which the Colonel's car comes 'dangerously close to the cars of Atul and Aakash, ring in the climax of the novel. After some good miles of chase and some unexpected turn of events the characters decide to surrender before the will of Colonel. However, their surrender ensues not from fear but from self affirmation. The teenagers had realized the futility of the chase considering they had not committed any gruesome act. This act of existentialism does not go well down the Colonel's throat. What follows is a family drama with the lover professing his undying love for the girl, the daughter accusing the father of high-headedness and the wife saying the final word 'divorce'. The novel culminates with the friends at last maneuvering the potholes of New Delhi and Aakash reweaving his ties with his unrequited love, Disha over the blue pages of Facebook.

The novel can be best described as 'pulp fiction' or 'popular fiction' that would certainly touch the chords of many teenagers. The use of repartee and one-liners unravel the language and styles of a modern day teenager. The epithet of 'Life and times of a harried teen' perfectly jacket the essence of this literary work. This verisimilitude of friendships, betrayals, heart breaks, adventures and dramas bring the reader face-to face with the true meaning of these words. "There were times when I started questioning myself, trying to think about how the past could've altered the future. It's no use, really. There were always a brighter side which I never really saw. The screwed up bastards were always with me, be it ups or downs. I guess there's always a silver lining to every cloud. Of course, in my case it was yellow" (237).

On first look, one may refute the story as just another romantic tale sketched by a newbie Indian author. What strengthens this belief is the cartoon styled characters on the front cover of the book. The back jacket of the paperback edition introduces the reader to the basic plot of the novel. " If a six-hour journey drive takes you nineteen, if you are in the last year of

teenage and still single and if you have to run for your life, then let me hear you say, Dude, We're Screwed." The use of these new generation slangs may make the reader rate the book as a story of Americanized Desi dudes. However, the creative and well scripted introduction dissipates all such thoughts and makes one sit up and pay attention. The communion of well-thought words and an adrenaline powered storyline makes the novel worth a buy.

Ravinder Singh. *Like it Happened Yesterday*.
New Delhi: Penguin, 2013. Rs. 140

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Ravinder Singh's third novel, *Like It Happened Yesterday*, just like his earlier two (*I Too Had A Love Story* & *Can Love Happen Twice?*) is a rendition straight from the heart. Penned in an easy, conversational tone, the author endearingly unfolds the teeny weeny emotions that characterized his childhood and the pulsating ones of his adolescence. The author extends a warm invitation to accompany him to the land of yesterday- where "the biggest worry was to score well in the next test" (*Like It Happened Yesterday*, viii)

The novel spread over seventeen chapters deals with different phases of the author's life. Setting the tone, he leads his readers, first of all, into his colourful childhood life. Endearing episodes, such as his tearful first day to school, a terrifying visit to the dentist, vaccination horror, an exciting photo shoot at the photographer's studio where he and his kid brother mount a red tricycle and feel immensely proud, the big dilemma of his birth- how did 'he' happen, his fascination with the TV, the embarrassment at his father not owning a scooter as his friends' fathers' did, the discomfort that accompanied the fact that he didn't pay the school fee, rather studied on a freeship for needy students, his courageous efforts to hide his humble background from his peers, lest they mocked at him, and umpteen other little incidents and episodes are offered from a child's peep into the grown-up world and are handled beautifully. Huge chunks of narration are a master stroke from the point of view of a child's psyche.

But the novel is not just a random collection of childhood

memories. It raises quite a few issues which form the backbone of our society in general and our education system in particular. Though dealt with by a mild and almost amusing hand, the author does harp on the pervasive unhealthy competition that each one of us is expected to become a part of from a very tender age. The author points out towards the anomalies of not only our education system, which thrives on rote learning; but also makes a sad comment on how parental expectations weigh heavy on as little a child who is in class I. "Study well. You have to come first!" (*LIHY*, 6) A child, then, is not aware that he has just "stepped on the starting line of what later was going to become a rat race" (*LIHY*, 6).

The pressure is real for sure and picks up abnormally as we move on to higher classes. When in class V, the author, too, is warned by his parents, "Look at your classmate Mandeep. He had scored 100 out of 100. And he is far ahead of you! You should be friends with him at school" (*LIHY*, 58). The advice of his parents confuses the young author who is at his wit's end to decipher how scores and friends could be equated. Again, it is a poor reflection of our society which measures its relations on the scale of performance in material aspects. The author strikes roots with this particular episode and shuns the fickle and improbable dictates of the grown-ups. It is an unfortunate comment on the upbringing provided by worldly-wise parents to their children, who from a very impressionable age are tutored as to how they should pick and choose friends! The criteria of doing so is utterly material and the end result is often not deep and understanding friendships, but friendships of convenience and profit. How then, are we justified in commenting at a later stage that the world has gone awry and that all relations are only skin deep and a facade?

The author also digs at the usual carrot-n-stick formula adopted by parents and teachers alike, especially when it comes to academic performance. "You will only get your bicycle when you study hard and get good results. *What? People who didn't score top marks didn't ride bicycles*?" (*LIHY*, 69) How amateurish does it sound, but how rampantly is it practiced! While it is deliberate in most cases,

it may be unconsciously or inadvertently done at other times; which, anyway, does no good to the one who is subjected to it.

The author also delightfully shares his growing pains and aches. A hint of mischief cannot be missed in the entire length and breadth of the novel. The arrival of puberty and adolescence as well as changes within and without, sometimes surprise, at other times embarrass and yet at other times exhilarate the young author. Whether it is his infatuation for the English teacher or his interest in the skirts that girls of the convent school wore, or again, just like all boys his age, his eagerness to know all about the three lettered taboo word, the excitement of the class when the Biology teacher has to teach the chapter on 'Reproduction' and several other fun moments shared amongst the boys are discussed with panache. The author seems to point out that in the absence of any parental guidance on such issues; young minds would explore and find out answers by themselves, often from wrong or immoral sources! The widespread Indian habit of shirking and avoiding the issue of imparting vital knowledge to the inquisitive adolescents' minds must be amended.

The author boldly touches the issue of child abuse to which he is subjected to by an unknown co-traveller in a public bus- how his young mind shudders at the repulsive act, his own helplessness and a miraculous rescue- how in spite of feeling a grown-up in all other aspects, he "wanted to hug her (his mother) and tell her everything that had happened … I wanted to tell her how safe I felt when I was this close to her" (*LIHY*, 155). The reader is benumbed. How superbly the author deals with the sensibilities of not-so-young boys! His mother's warm hug drowns his pain and fears, there's a longing to empty the heaviness of his heart in her lap, and yet, the next moment, the boy, who is no longer a child "went numb … Not a single word came out of my mouth" (*LIHY*, 155). The author talks about the dilemma faced by all youngsters his age , who are dangling between childhood and adolescence, the cross-over phase as to how much to reveal and how much to conceal. The awkwardness of the puberty phase makes the author

hug his mother for reassurance, but also hold back from giving graphic details of the episode on the bus.

In the concluding chapters, the author's focus once again shifts to the inhuman pressure of board exams. Feelings of disappointment are natural to envelop one in the face of failures. In a country like India, where there is throat cutting competition amongst students; where the best of friends begin to distrust each other prior to exams; where envy made one sick of one's best friends; where friends become your competitors overnight; where the class XII score, rather than your inclination and interest, decided your life and career; where one feels "suffocated in this madness to become Number One" (*LIHY*, 181); and where the only way for us to have a good life when we grew up was to score the finest of results" (*LIHY*, 182); one is bound to get bogged down.

Towards the end of the novel, the reader learns that the author ends as a winner- fulfilling the dreams of his parents and redressing their umpteen sacrifices. He achieves the top merit slot in his school in his XII board exams and qualifies the benchmark! The reader too exults at the enviable position the author has managed to clinch. However, when one reaches the epilogue, one realizes how futile the rat race had been! Armed with a Computer Engineering degree from a reputed institute, the author finally finds his calling in "the profession of storytelling" *LIHY*, 195). This serves as a rude shock and also as an awakening call to the so-called grown-up, mature and prudent generation, for whom stereotypical and hackneyed career paths alone seem to make sense. How often, many a dream nurtured in a young heart has been thwarted by well-meaning parents and teachers, friends, associates and relatives, for want of their viability in this materialistically driven world! How common it is to find the young multi-talented generation of today towing the line of their advisors, rather than heeding to the call from within!

Career choices should be made selectively and not as a rat race. Though qualities of hard work and persistence must be inculcated in the young, yet they should be given wings to explore

the world and identify new horizons for themselves. Creating benchmarks and touchstones can hardly serve a purpose. After all, what matters is the intrinsic happiness quotient, and the index of happiness is individually variable. The author in his light hearted novel has unwittingly made a powerful appeal to the readers to peep into the world of children and adolescents- a world they too inhabited once, but have outgrown and forgotten it. He not only invites us to share the innocence, the naughtiness, the creativity, the dream and the potential packed in the characters of his text, but also makes us smile and nod and enjoy our own childhood and growing years.

The novel is through and through a one-time joyful read!

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