Teaching English in Use:
Bridging the Gap between a Sentence and the Native Speaker's Meaning

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1. Introduction

Pragmatics came into existence in the late 1970s. Being a prominent sub-field of linguistics, it has largely affected the understanding of communicative competence (CC), whose development is now the usual practice in the EFL context. At first, CC was limited to the speaker-hearer's knowledge of their language (Chomsky, 1965). This view was quickly challenged by Hymes (1979), who highlighted that CC involves knowing not only the language code, but also what to say to whom, and how to aptly say it in different contexts. And this is where pragmatics marks its beginning. More recent literature reveals that Hymes' notion of CC has undergone evolution. Canale and Swain, in their 1980 paper, define CC as consisting of four elements: *grammatical competence*, *sociolinguistic competence*, *discourse competence*, and, last but not least, *strategic competence*. A new division was introduced in the survey of CC by Bachman (1990). Communicative competence was split into two main branches: (1) *organizational competence*, which subsumes grammatical and discourse (renamed *textual*) competences, and (2) *pragmatic competence*, which consists of sociolinguistic and illocutionary competences.

Since pragmatic competence (PC) constitutes part of CC, its place and role in the contemporary EFL context must be clarified and strengthened. In order to encourage teachers to regularly teach English in use and make this discussion informative, guiding and engaging for EFL practitioners, this article will first define the terms of pragmatics and pragmatic competence. Next, the key concepts of pragmatics that EFL teachers should seriously take into account will be briefly described. Finally, the evaluation and improvement of two EFL teaching materials with regard to fostering pragmatic competence will be offered.

2. Pragmatics in Language Pedagogy

Before presenting definitions and various aspects of pragmatics, it should be made clear that researchers still have not reached a definite consensus about the scope of this young discipline (Brumfit, 2000). To make matters more complicated, there appear to exist two lines of interpretation of pragmatics, namely *Continental* and *Anglo-American*. The former subsumes, among others, discourse analysis, ethnography of communication and various aspects of psycholinguistics, whereas the latter is strictly associated with sentence structure and grammar (Levinson, 1983). The following discussion will reflect the broader approach and treat discourse analysis as a sub-field of pragmatics.

2.1. On Defining Pragmatics and Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatics is a broad concept, which makes it difficult to define. Despite somewhat contentious debate among pragmaticians, several precise definitions are presented in the literature. For instance, according to Stalnaker (1972: 383), pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed". Similarly, Levinson (1983: 9) delineates pragmatics as "the study of those relations between language and context that are *grammaticalized*, or encoded in the structure of a language". Crystal (1985), in turn, notes that pragmatics, being the study of language, should be examined from the users' points of view. The choices people make and the limitations they face while employing language in acts of communication should be considered in the definition. The effects that linguistic behaviour exerts on all the other interactants in social interactions is also of vital importance. Likewise, Mey (1993: 5) defines pragmatics as "the science of language as it is used by real, live people for their own purposes and within their limitations and affordances". Yule (1996: 3) highlights that pragmatics prioritises contextual meaning and, accordingly, studies "how more gets communicated than is said".

As can be seen, pragmatics examines the use of language in human communication. Pragmatic meanings occur interactively in the process of language use. In various studies, PC is referred to as sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), actional competence (Celce-

Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995) or pragmatic knowledge (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). A definition includes: (1) knowledge of the linguistic resources, (2) knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and (3) knowledge of the contextual use of a given language (Barron, 2001: 10). In other words, pragmatically competent users of a particular language successfully convey and comprehend communicative intentions through efficient performance and interpretation of speech acts.

2.2. Key Concepts in Pragmatics

Having defined pragmatics and PC, the stage is now set for the presentation of the key concepts in pragmatics. These features will help to make EFL practitioners aware of various differences between conversational and course book language and, consequently, act as a teaching practice guide. The concepts in question can be arranged into six categories: pragmatic context, principles of human interaction, speech act theory, politeness theory, features of conversational organisation and linguistic features of spoken discourse respectively. They are all discussed below.

2.2.1. Pragmatic Context

As already mentioned, pragmatic meaning is context embedded. This means that in everyday communication, the texts human beings produce are invariably influenced by pragmatic contexts, which eventually determine the meaning of these utterances. For instance, Duranti and Goodwin (1992, quoted in Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000: 12) present four types of context, namely: (1) *setting* (physical and interactional), (2) *behavioural environment* (nonverbal and kinetic), (3) *language* (co-text and reflexive use of language) and (4) *extrasituational* (social, political, cultural, and the like). However, for the purposes of this discussion, *setting* and *language* are of greatest importance. Cutting (2002: 3) refers to both of them as *the situational context* and *the co-textual context*. The former subsumes purposes of texts, interactants and physical and temporal settings where exchanges occur. The latter constitutes the context of the text itself. It can therefore be concluded that it is meaning, context and communication principles that contribute to meaning creation and utterance interpretation.

2.2.2. Principles of Human Interaction

Another aspect of pragmatics is *the cooperative principle* which Grice (1975: 45) defines as "mak[ing] your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". In other words, Grice treats natural language communication as an act of cooperative effort where interactants fulfil social purposes. Grice adds four maxims (see Figure 1) to the definition presented above. The main aim of the four maxims is to elucidate the connection between uttered texts and what is understood from them.

1. **Maxim of Quantity**
   - Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
   - Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. **Maxim of Quality**
   - Do not say what you believe to be false.
   - Do not say that for which you lack evidence.

3. **Maxim of Relevance**
   - Be relevant.

4. **Maxim of Manner**
   - Be perspicuous.
   - Avoid obscurity of expression.
   - Avoid ambiguity.
   - Be brief. (Avoid unnecessary prolixity).
   - Be orderly.

Figure 1. Conversational maxims by Grice (after Grice, 1975: 45)

It should be borne in mind that people do not always comply with these maxims. Sometimes people lie or deliberately deceive and mislead

their conversational partners. As Grice (1975: 49) further says, the maxims can be *flouted*, *violated* or *opted out* (see Figure 2).

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1. **Flouting**

   Speaker 1: How much did you pay for your car?

   Speaker 2: Enough. (implied meaning: It's none of your business).

2. **Violating**

   Speaker 1: How much did these new cufflinks cost, darling?

   Speaker 2: (sees the receipt - £135, but says…) £35.

3. **Opting out**

   Speaker 1: Mark, you could give us a few more facts about Jack's stag party.

   Speaker 2: My lips are sealed; I can say no more.

Figure 2. Lack of compliance with Grice's maxims

In flouting, people invite their interactants to find new meanings beyond what has just been uttered (e.g. sarcasm or irony), and these additional meanings are termed *implicatures* (Grice, 1975: 43-44). Violating the maxims, on the other hand, is associated with disregarding the expectations corresponding to truthfulness. In opting out, conversation participants refuse to communicate (Martinich, 1984). Consequently, it can be concluded that the four maxims not only present guidelines for effective communication, but also underscore the fact that acts of communication generate expectations which they subsequently exploit.

2.2.3. Speech Act Theory

The next aspect that needs to be addressed is *Speech Act Theory* (SAT). Austin (1962), the author of this position, identifies two types of speech acts, that is, *constatives* and *performatives*. Constative speech acts do not perform the act they describe (e.g. *I am baking a cake*.), whereas performative speech acts describe the act they perform (e.g.

I now pronounce you man and wife.). Soon after stating his position, Austin (1962) replaced constative versus performative opposition with locutionary and illocutionary acts, stating that each utterance has three kinds of force, namely: *locutionary*, *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* (see Figure 3).

If you utter a sentence such as *Is there any gravy?*,

1. **the locutionary force** is a question about the presence of gravy.
2. **the illocutionary force** is that you desire gravy.
3. **the perlocutionary force** is to get somebody to pass/bring you the gravy.

Figure 3. Three kinds of force in an utterance

The first one, the locutionary force, is the literal meaning of what is said. The second, the illocutionary force, is the action or meaning intended by the speaker, whereas the third, the perlocutionary force, refers to the effect of an illocutionary act.

Austin's work was continued by his student, Searle, who later proposed a classification of speech acts in which he listed five major categories of communicative illocutionary acts (Searle, Kiefer & Bierwisch, 1980: 297). They all disclose what people can do with language (see Figure 4).

1. **Representatives** [also **Assertives**]	commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding)
2. **Directives**	are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning)
3. **Commissives**	commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering)

4. Expressives	express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating)
5. Declarations	effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extralinguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, marrying, firing from employment).

Figure 4. Searle's classification of speech acts (after Searle, Kiefer & Bierwisch, 1980: 297)

To summarise, SAT clarifies that message communication is something more than just making statements. It is a communicative action which is made up of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, all of which are performed in actual situations of language use. Thus, SAT provides a clear view of communication in which utterances can be analysed in terms of their grammatical properties, the context in which they are embedded, as well as various intentions and expectations on the part of interactants.

2.2.4. Politeness Theory

The ideas of Grice, Austin and Searle were further extended in the late 70s and 80s and became the starting point for the *Theory of Politeness*. Brown and Levinson developed this theory. They conceptualised politeness as a group of conversational strategies which people employ in order to maintain harmony in social relationships and "face," concurrently avoiding interpersonal conflicts (Brown & Levinson, 1978, quoted in Dainton & Zelley, 2010: 57). They base their considerations on the following three assumptions: (1) all individuals are concerned with maintaining face; (2) human beings are rational and goal-oriented, at least with respect to achieving face needs; and (3) some behaviours (e.g. apologies, criticisms) are fundamentally face-threatening. For instance, if we wanted to ask someone to open the window, how would we ask for it. (see Figure 5)

1. Open the window!

2. Open the window, will you?

3. Can you open the window please?

4. Could you please open the window?

5. I wonder if it might be possible for you to open the window.

6. I would be grateful if you would open the window.

Figure 5. Different ways of expressing request

All the options presented above are possible, yet the choice is determined by the relationship between the interactants. Another aspect worth mentioning is the magnitude of the request. If we wanted to ask someone to lend us their yacht or plane, we would definitely choose a more polite form than when asking for a pen or a dictionary. Why? According to Leech and Thomas (1990), indirectness reduces the size of imposition on the hearers.

The discussion of politeness theory would not be complete without mentioning Leech's (1991: 132) *politeness principle* with its six maxims (see Figure 6).

1. **Tact Maxim** (in impositives and commissives)
    · Minimize cost to *other*
    · Maximize benefit to *other*
2. **Generosity Maxim** (in impositives and commissives)
    · Minimize benefit to *self*
    · Maximize cost to *self*
3. **Approbation Maxim** (in expressives and assertives)
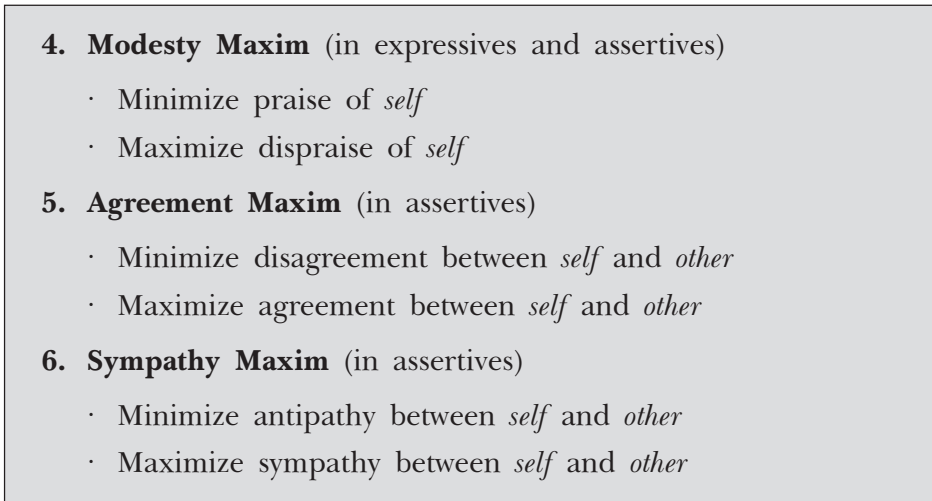   · Minimize dispraise of *other*
    · Maximize praise of *other*

4. **Modesty Maxim** (in expressives and assertives)
   - Minimize praise of *self*
   - Maximize dispraise of *self*

5. **Agreement Maxim** (in assertives)
   - Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*
   - Maximize agreement between *self* and *other*

6. **Sympathy Maxim** (in assertives)
   - Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*
   - Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*

Figure 6. Politeness maxims (after Leech, 1991: 133)

The politeness principle, developed to supplement Gricean cooperative principle (see 2.2.2), elucidates how politeness functions in conversations and why people happen to be indirect in communicating what they mean (Leech, 1991). In order to answer the latter question, Thomas (1995: 143) would give at least the following three reasons: (1) the desire to make one's language more/less interesting, (2) to increase the force of one's message and (3) politeness/regard for «face». Finally, it should also be remembered that politeness is determined by diverse social and psychological variables (Geyer, 2008), many of which are culture specific. What is regarded polite in one culture may not necessarily be mannerly in another culture.

2.2.5. Features of Conversational Organisation

The discussion of spoken interactions would not be complete without mentioning some aspects of conversational organisation, due to which human utterances are orderly and sequentially structured. The first feature to be explained is *conversational stages* such as opening, centring (topic development) and closing (Carroll, 2007: 228). Opening stages, for instance, serve to address other interactants or request information to get the attention of others. Closing stages, however, begin with various pre-closing statements, simultaneously indicating a readiness to terminate conversations (Carroll, 2007).

Another feature is *turn organisation*, which is not only sequentially and linguistically constituted, but also socio-culturally affected. Turn organisation refers to *turn-taking*, *turn-holding* and *turn-yielding*, where the first consists of two components, i.e. *turn constructional component* and *turn allocation component* (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, quoted in Wong & Waring, 2010: 249). The constructional components are grammatically and pragmatically complete units (e.g. lexical, clausal, phrasal and sentential units), whereas the allocation components describe how interactants select speakers in conversations (e.g. current speaker selects next speaker or current speaker continues). Turn-holding and turn-yielding, on the other hand, are often related to prosodic and phonetic cues, but not always (House, 2009). For instance, holding the floor can be signalled by initial subordinate clauses or words such as first, second and the like (Bergmann, 2006), whereas the indication of concluding one's turn can be realised by "a drop of pitch, the termination of hand gestures or a drop in loudness" (Carroll, 2007: 230).

Apart from being sequentially structured, conversations are also segmented into responsive and matched pairs of exchanges called *adjacency pairs* (see Figure 7).

1. **Speaker 1:** Hello!
   Speaker 2: Oh, hi!

2. **Speaker 1:** Can I borrow your car, dad?
   Speaker 2: I'd rather you didn't.

Figure 7. Adjacency pairs

As Thornbury and Slade (2006: 115) observe, adjacency pairs have three characteristic features: (1) they consist of two utterances; (2) the utterances are adjacent, that is the first immediately follows the second; and (3) different speakers produce each utterance. However, these characteristics seem to be quite general, for, as Tracy (2002) highlights, adjacency pairs may be split over a sequence of turns (see Figure 8).

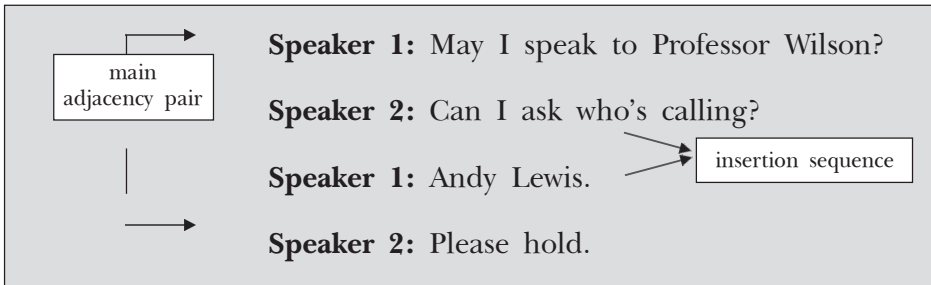| main adjacency pair	**Speaker 1:** May I speak to Professor Wilson?
	Speaker 2: Can I ask who's calling?
	Speaker 1: Andy Lewis. insertion sequence
	Speaker 2: Please hold.

Figure 8. Adjacency pair with an insertion sequence

Adjacent pairs of exchanges necessitate the explanation of another feature of conversations, that is, *preferred* and *dispreferred responses* (see Figure 9). Some adjacency pairs are marked by a preference for a particular type of second part (e.g. requests and invitations).

1. **Preferred response**

   Speaker 1: Want to go to London with us next weekend?
   Speaker 2: I'd love to!

2. **Dispreferred response**

   Speaker 1: Want me to drive you to school darling?
   Speaker 2: No, you're an awful driver.

Figure 9. Preferred and dispreferred responses

Preferred responses, more natural and culturally expected, are simple to create since they employ the assumptions and lexico-grammar of the initial move. Dispreferred responses, in contrast, are unexpected and frequently delayed. These responses are difficult to form as they need a new lexico-grammatical form and a link with the initial move (Levinson, 1983; Mulholland, 2003).

2.2.6. Linguistic Features of Spoken Discourse

The last aspect to be discussed is the linguistic features of spoken discourse. This aspect is extremely important and thanks to these features, speech sounds more natural, coherent and cohesive. For

instance, spontaneous conversations are replete with such discourse elements as false starts, repeats, filled/unfilled pauses, tag questions, lexical items expressing vagueness (e.g. all that, lots of that stuff, that sort of thing) and paralinguistic components (e.g. volume, rhythm, pitch and inflection). Additionally, since spoken discourse is produced in real time, there are numerous pauses, as well as hesitation and repetition discourse markers (e.g. erm, you know, well, OK) which organise its turns (Müller, 2005) and make it more cohesive (Schiffrin, 1987). For example, discourse markers frequently appear in question/answer pairs (e.g. Any particular reason? Well … I wanted to teach, so…), introductions of new discourse topics (e.g. Now … do you have any questions … perhaps?) or as delaying tactics (e.g. Let me think then … OK … erm …), helping the interactants to hold on to their turns while they need more time to collect thoughts (Paltridge, 2006). Among these discourse markers, according to Schiffrin (1987), we can further distinguish markers of participation (e.g. I wanted to get to know the people better … you know …), markers of cause and result (e.g. Well … I wanted to teach, so obviously ELT methodology was a better option, after all.) and, finally, markers of transition (Then … I taught in a primary school …). Also, since ellipsis (e.g. My friends are poor and ____ live in a caravan.) and intensification (e.g. It was absolutely delicious.) are common in authentic speech, they are worth examining. Finally, since speaking involves listening, it is essential to analyse how native speakers provide feedback, termed as "back-channelling" (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006: 99), to their interlocutors through body-language (e.g. nodding), sounds or words such as "yeah", "mm-hmm", "right" (Nash & Calonico, 1996: 53).

3. Teaching *English Language in Use* in the EFL Classroom

The theoretical overview presented above gives various reasons why pragmatics should be implemented in the EFL classroom. How is theory echoed in practice, if at all? My observation is that pragmatics is still in its embryonic stage in many teaching contexts. Teachers prefer not to move beyond the world of the course and teacher's books, many of which insistently promote grammar-orientated English rather than that in actual use.

Having observed many lessons conducted by both qualified EFL teachers and teacher trainees, I have seen a lot of tasks which offered great potential for teaching pragmatics in the classroom, yet the teachers left the *language in use* aspects untouched. A brief discussion of frequently employed activities and an explanation of how the activities could be successfully exploited in teaching pragmatics in the EFL classroom is necessary.

EFL teachers frequently employ role-plays in their teaching practice. Teachers use them to teach speaking and listening skills. The role-play activities I would like to focus on in this article aim at practising making phone calls in both formal and informal situations at a pre-intermediate level (CEFR A2). A careful analysis of course books and teacher's books reveals there is no precise and explicit information on how to teach pragmatic aspects of English with the provided role-plays. Neither can teachers find ideas or notes on how certain tasks could be extended. However, the situation is not hopeless. In many activities, useful phrases for phone calls are presented, practice of phone numbers is offered and elements of politeness can be practised. These can be illustrated in the following way (see Figure 10):

Useful Phrases		Saying Telephone Numbers
Hold on. I'll connect you.	43026	four three oh two
Who's speaking?		six (BrE)
Could I speak to …?		four three four zero
I'll call back later.		two six (AmE)
I wonder whether I could …		

Figure 10. Useful phrases for phone calls and saying telephone numbers

What is difficult to grasp is that despite the given help, which is extremely limited, the classroom performance does not reflect the importance of pragmatics. Role-play tends to be used by EFL teachers as a means of introducing pair- or group-work, or to help to reduce inhibition in learners by enabling them to experience situations from the point of view of other people. Another reason why role-plays are

frequently employed in the classroom is pure entertainment and fun, which works especially with young learners.

It is important to note that role-plays are perfect tools for practising all the pragmatic aspects discussed in section 2.2. For instance, teachers could record a few real life phone conversations to provide their students with proper models. It may not be easy to do but it is not impossible. Having listened to these conversations, students could be asked to role play their own versions. Then, both types of phone calls should be compared; similarities and differences should be identified and thoroughly discussed. Finally, if necessary, it should be stressed which pragmatic features students should pay more attention to and why.

What can EFL teachers promote through role-play? Firstly, teachers could begin with the stages of a phone call conversation (see 2.2.5), highlighting their interactional and collaborative character. Students should be told what kind of information needs to be included in each stage. For instance, greeting adjacency pairs are different in different languages. In English, in informal situations, the first two turns are as follows "Speaker 1: Hello?" – "Speaker 2: Debbie?", whereas Poles while answering the phone usually say "Speaker 1: Yes?" – "Speaker 2: Debbie?". Spaniards say "Speaker 1: Yes?" – "Speaker 2: Debbie?", whereas Finns opt for "Speaker 1: Heidi" – "Speaker 2: Good Morning, Heidi". Since course books offer role-plays from diverse contexts and different situations (e.g. formal and informal), teachers should provide their students with appropriate greeting forms for particular situations. Learners must be made aware that the required forms are not interchangeable.

Secondly, EFL students should be encouraged to use contracted forms (e.g. I'll put you through.), tag questions (e.g. We can't discuss it later, can we?) and ellipsis (e.g. Sounds great!) in order to sound more natural. Students should be informed that phone call conversations between friends or family members are based on simple phrases (e.g. When will you call? Tomorrow. What time? Around six.) instead of full sentences (e.g. When will you call? I'll call you tomorrow. What time will you call? I'll call you around six.). The latter are hardly used in

everyday conversations. What is more, students' attention should be drawn to elliptical structures in spoken discourse. Students must be made aware that native speakers tend to omit words in speech that can be understood from contextual clues (e.g. What's the matter? Got an awful cramp.).

Thirdly, students should be given an extensive practice of implied meanings, which, as presented in section 2.2.2, are the effect of conversational norms. Additionally, they should realise that authentic language works differently from orderly and precise course book language, and closed questions are not always followed by *yes* or *no* answers (see Figure 11).

> **Speaker 1:** Shall we meet at six?
>
> **Speaker 2:** Rick's at home.
>
> or
>
> **Speaker 1:** Will you be able to deliver the computers tomorrow?
>
> **Speaker 2:** Our delivery van is being serviced, I'm afraid.

Figure 11. Implied meanings and their interpretation

It is imperative for students to be able to interpret such responses by activating shared knowledge of the world. There is no avoiding this kind of top-down processing in a foreign language.

Fourthly, politeness, directness and formality are also of great importance. In general, English people sound much more polite than other European nations. For this reason, teachers should make students aware of how to speak politely or with the right level of formality. Students should be prompted that speech which is too formal in certain contexts may make conversational partners feel uncomfortable. When speech is too informal, interlocutors may be perceived as being rude. Therefore, in formal situations, if speakers want to sound polite and formal, they should apply modal verbs such as *could*, *may* or *would* (see Figure 12).

Could you give me your name and number, please?

May I please speak to .... please?

May I leave my telephone number?

Could you please repeat that?

Would you mind spelling that for me?

Could you speak up a little please?

Figure 12. Phrases for sounding polite and formal in phone calls

EFL students should also be advised to apply proper lexis to soften the force of requests (e.g. I just need …) or produce embedded requests (e.g. I was wondering if …). Also, it should be noted that more often than not requests are preceded by apologies. For example, analyses of spoken discourse provide such examples as: *I hope you'll forgive me if I don't come*. or *Hope this won't trouble you too much, but can you ask them to be here at 5pm*.

Fifthly, teachers should provide their students with lexical items or fixed phrases (see Figure 13) necessary to perform the genre of telephoning in both formal and informal contexts. Considering the fact that these activities are meant for pre-intermediate courses, some students may find certain phrasal verbs difficult to understand and use. This is especially true when separable and inseparable phrasal verbs come into play.

Informal Context	Formal Context
Just a sec. I'll get him.	I'll put you through now.
Hang on!/Hold on!	Thank you for holding.
Pick up the phone!	Extension number, please?
or Pick the phone up!	

Figure 13. Fixed phrases and lexical items for telephoning

Sixthly, teachers should explicitly demonstrate the usage of discourse markers as English appears to be much richer in this respect than other languages. If teachers want their students to be pragmatically competent, they should encourage students to incorporate these markers into their linguistic repertoire. Several discourse markers that can be practised in role-plays are presented below (see Figure 14).

a) introducing new topics (e.g. now)

  Now, shall we discuss the sales contract?
  Now, it's time to discuss terms of payment.

b) drawing attention (e.g. look)

  Look! Life is tough these days. Even work is crazy at the moment!
  Look! If you offer me lower prices, I'll buy more computers.

c) expressing unexpected information (e.g. actually)

  Actually, the contract we offer includes a one-month money back guarantee.
  Actually, I was too tired to cook Rick the meal.

d) expressing agreement or indicating acknowledgement of the preceding utterance (e.g. OK)

  OK, we can offer you a 10% discount.
  OK, I know I let Rick down, but he should've* understood my situation.

e) responding to the preceding utterance (e.g. well)

  Well, I think we could deliver the computers next week.
  Well, Rick got furious.

f) markers of participation (e.g. you know)

  This week's* been hell, **you know**.
  Your products are quite pricy, **you know**.

  *highlight and practise pronunciation

Figure 14. Discourse markers for practising pragmatic competence

Finally, while giving descriptions of the past few days in the informal role-play, students' attention could be drawn to the use of anaphoric reference, which, relating to elements that have been previously identified in an utterance (see Figure 15), guarantees textual cohesion.
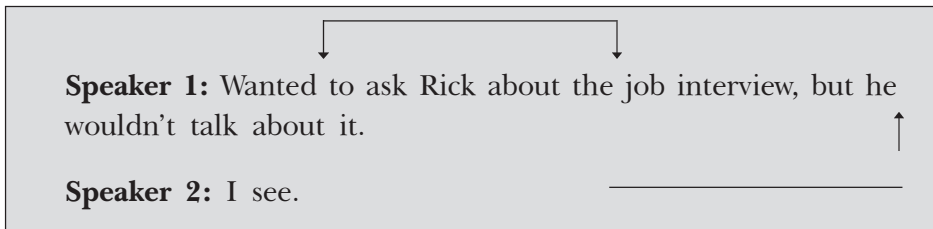
Speaker 1: Wanted to ask Rick about the job interview, but he wouldn't talk about it.

Speaker 2: I see.

Figure 15. Anaphoric reference

4. Conclusion

Pragmatic competence, an inherent element of communicative competence, is difficult to develop. It necessitates providing foreign language learners with various linguistic tools which allow them to construct and interpret contextually appropriate utterances. This, in turn, relates the process of PC development to the teaching of the target language culture, where both constructs, language and culture, are ingrained in human interaction and, thus, liable to contextual factors. Consequently, PC appears to be indispensable for successful communications. Students' pragmatic awareness should be regularly stimulated in the classroom context. This regular practice should be, first and foremost, conducted in the EFL context, which, more often than not, suffers from insufficient exposure to, and usage of, the target language pragmatic norms.

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Conjunctural Identities and Lived Realities Amartya Sen on Identity and Difference

Dr. Vincent B. Netto

Identity and difference seem an untenable conjunction. But such a conjunction is not only plausible but also desirable and, in a sense, ineluctable in the contemporary context of globalised multicultural identities. Precisely because of the complex configurations and multiple connotations, identity has been employed to explain a variety of phenomena and has been defined in various and often conflicting ways. The paradox of the situation is that though being subjected to a searching critique, there has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concepts of identity and difference. Philosophy places the self-sustaining concepts at the centre of post-Cartesian subject, psychology believes in the unconscious process of formation of subjectivity, postmodernism celebrates the endlessly performative self, and the adventurous theoretical conceptions of cultural studies sketch the politics of location to ground identity and difference.

The centrality of the concepts of identity and difference is constituted by and constitutive of modernity. Identity is not an essentialist but a strategic and positional one. It does not signal the stable core of the self unfolding from the beginning to the end; instead, the vicissitudes of transformation. Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular, never unified but multiple constructions across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicisation, and are constantly in the process of change (Stuart Hall, 4). Identities are always relational depending upon the difference from and the negation of some other term. It is the temporary and unstable effect of relations which define identities by marking differences. Hall observes: "Identities can, therefore, be contradictory and are always situational… in short, we are all involved in a series of political games around fractured and decentred

identities...since black signifies a range of experiences, the act of representation becomes not just about decentring the subject but actually exploring the kaleidoscopic conditions of blackness" (87). It is the figure of fragmentation that is responsible for the contradictory and multiplicity of identities. Theories of fragmentation focus on the multiplicity of either individual identities or of the social categories of difference within which the individuals are placed. Paul Gilroy's concept of syncretism and Hebdige's notion of cut and mix are built around the concept of fragmentation.

The deconstructive approach subsumes that identity operates "under erasure". Like all signifying practices, it is subject to the play of difference. The most important effect of this reconceptualization of identity is the surreptitious return of difference. Identity in postmodernist arguments is described as a kind of game played against difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that identities come only through the relation to the "Other", the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, and to what has been called its *constitutive outside*. The notion of identity involves both negation and difference. Even when it invokes difference, it also summons the desire to express similarity. Indeed, there can be no difference without similarity, though similarity is always seen as the opposite pole of difference. Identity is always constituted out of difference as differences are out of identity.

Identity, constructed on the plank of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation, exists in relation to sameness as also difference. "Our" similarity is always posed against "their" difference. Identity is partly the relationship between the "Self" and the "Other", for only when there is an "Other" can the "Self" know itself. Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* talks of how the gaze of the "Other" fixes one in an identity. Identities can function as points of identification and attachment *because* of their capacity to exclude as also include. Edward Said, Homi K. Bhaba, Jean Francois Lyotard et.al. have resorted to the variants of the figure of difference in the contemporary theories of identity. The challenge of shaping "Other" is to transcend difference

and thereby to fulfil its real purpose – to provide variety and diversity in a world that cannot exist with it.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, renowned for his humanitarian approach to Economics, made wide-ranging impact on the several streams of thoughts as varied as economics, ethics, gender studies, history, philosophy and public health. Though his life has been a mad race against time and the deadly disease of cancer, the humanist avatar of Sen posits a rational vision, drawing lessons from the past and present, for a better world of tomorrow. Sen's musings on the concepts of identity and difference lie scattered in his several volumes, the prominent being *The Idea of Justice* (2009), *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (2006), *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (2005), *Rationality and Freedom* (2004), *Development as Freedom* (2000), *Reasons Before Identity* (1999) and *Inequality Rexamined* (1992). Of this corpus, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* forms an elegant yet provocative volume exclusively pertaining to matters of identity and culture. His several books and the lectures he delivered on the subject at various venues round the globe gain momentum in the contemporary context of the proliferation of identity related violence all over the world, be it religious fundamentalism, ethnic conflict or race riots. Sen attempts to find a formula for understanding cultures notwithstanding the differences and the need for reconciling diversity and social cohesion; and explores the implications of his thesis on multiculturalism, public policy, globalization, terrorism, anti-Western rage, democracy and theories of culture.

In spite of the problematic relationship with the many variants of post-structuralism, Sen's ideas on identity and difference is shaped by, and is a response to, the post-structuralist debates about history, identity and representation. His project is not to escape the discourse of identity but to relocate and rearticulate it by placing it within the larger context of multiculturalism as he fears that gerrymandering of a heterogeneous people into particular slots for purposes of control and domination would have far reaching consequences and create long-term disturbances. The paper proposes to situate Sen's debates about identity and difference within the historically specific developments and practices

which have disturbed the relatively settled character of populations and cultures, congruent with the process of globalization, a process co-terminus with modernity.

Growing up in Bengal, amidst Hindu-Muslim riots and the partition of India, Sen was misfortunate to be a first hand witness to the consequences of sectarian identities pushed beyond rational limits. As an eleven-year-old boy, he was shocked by Muslim-Hindu riots that erupted in British India in the 1940s killing more than a thousand. The murder of a local Muslim labourer Kader Mian by Hindu thugs in 1944 was an early lesson in the explosive dimensions of cultural conflict. As a child he was perplexed and admits that he is still bewildered by the violence of identity. Though the book *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* is an exploration of the haunting memory of a bewildered eleven-year-old boy and recounts personal reminiscences, the book does not amount to an autobiography. For Sen, the task is primarily one of theoretical clarification of the conceptual disarray and an ethical solution to the turmoil and barbarity around us.

The central argument of the book is that conflicts, be they ethnic, cultural or social, are sustained by the dangerous illusion of a singular identity. The imposition of an inclusive singular identity leads to the miniaturization of people. Although most of the rioters shared the same economic class identity as poor people, Sen feels that partisanship demonized each other with a lethal singularist "identity of violence"-in this instance, a diminution of their humanity to religious ethnicity to the extent that "…the illusion of a uniquely confrontational reality had thoroughly reduced human beings and eclipsed the protagonists' freedom to think" (174). The radical shift in identity, an outcome of divisive politics articulated in the 1947 partition of the subcontinent of India, was another fatal blow to Mother India. The identities as Indians or as humans, writes Sen, "…seemed to give way quite suddenly to sectarian identification with Hindu, Muslim or Sikh communities…. The carnage that followed had much to do with unreasoned behavior by which people, as it were discovered their new divisive and belligerent identity and failed to subject the process to critical examination" (*Reasons Before Identity*, 20).

Sen discards the solitarist theory founded on the premise that human identities are formed by membership of a single social group. Neither religion nor civilization can be a person's self-encompassing identity (*Identity and Violence*, 83). He proves how particular prominence on a singular aspect of plural identity often breeds violence: "The imposition of an allegedly unique identity is often a crucial component of the martial art of fomenting sectarian confrontation" (xiii). The illusion of solitary and unique identity, almost coeval with religion, is irrational as much as dangerous in creating divisive tendencies. The violence of identity is a result of erroneous beliefs. He cannot accept that its causes are inherent in human beings themselves. It is fatalistic and pernicious when individuals are born into particular little boxes of communities and view themselves and are viewed by society as members of that community only. A Hutu labourer from Kigali may be pressured to see himself only as a Hutu and incited to kill the Tutsis, and yet he is not only a Hutu, but also a Kigalian, a Rwandan, an African, a labourer and a human being (4).

What grates on Sen is the singularist idea of categorizing individuals according to the popular assumption of singular affiliation – the belief that a person belongs, for all practical purposes, to only one collectivity. An individual can see him/herself in a plurality of ways and as members of a variety of groups:

> The same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a schoolteacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual, a believer in gay and lesbian rights, a theater lover, an environmental activist, a tennis fan, a jazz musician, and someone who is deeply committed to the view that there are intelligent beings in outer space with whom it is extremely urgent to talk (preferably in English). (*Identity and Violence* xii-xiii).

Sen echoes Jacques Derrida in positing that identity presupposes difference as it also entails an endless process of deferral meaning. Different spaces get collocated through multiple accents and often

clashing priorities. Identities are constituted differently in different historical contexts for they are neither stable nor internally homogeneous (*Argumentative Indian* 19). He advocates for the recognition of plural and diverse identities which all individuals have and emphatically champions the role of reason and choice in deciding an individual's identity (*Identity and Violence* 5). He clarifies his position in *Argumentative Indian* when he argues that the prioritization of the identities of an individual is essentially a function of his/her choices, rather than the discovery of an immutable attribute (334-356). An individual should hyphenate him/herself according to the logic of necessity and exercise some choice over his/her affiliations out of the multiple identities from a wide range of economic, cultural and ideological alternatives. A person's gender, class, or politics can be just as important to their identity as their ethnicity, culture or religion (*The Idea of Justice,* 142).

The intellectual theories of exclusiveness are often used to provide conceptual basis for conflict. Singular identity, whether based on a particular culture or religion can be exclusionary and creates an illusion of destiny. Sen does not subscribe to the arguments of essential identities and dismisses the clash of civilisations' thesis being floated by very influential American social scientists like Samuel Huntington for its essentialist and purist connotations. "The illusion of an inescapably non-democratic destiny of the Middle East is both confused and very seriously misleading – perniciously so – as a way of thinking about either world politics or global justice today" (335). It is disheartening that faith or ethnicity and the recognition of those identities obliterate all other multiple identities. Both the proponents of violence and their opponents suffer from the same dangerous conceptual myopia. Such a sense of solitarist illusion has far reaching implications on global identities as the difference between global and local becomes irreconcilable. To prevent such flawed understanding that distorts our vision, it is imperative to question the order, ethos and politics of the society. There must be intellectual fairness in dealing with global history.

Sen's insistence on capabilities as providing a sound basis for thinking about the goals of development locates identity in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his (*sic)* communal culture,

a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of those two identities. And this thought bears resemblance to P. Strawson's thinking who traces the identity of a person to his corporeal characteristics and states of consciousness (104). There are several ways of looking at capability, the most viable being is to equate them with freedom (*Development as Freedom*, 19). Freedom, being a central value and behavioral feature of individuals, facilitates in carrying out one's plans and goals. The constant curbing of an individual's freedom prevents him from fulfilling the obligations and requirements of groups with which he associates. Thus it seems fair to say that "capabilities-as-freedoms framework" depends on the one central freedom or capability of being equated with the identity of an individual.

Sen's views on identity assume the ramifications of social identification and rationality. He distinguishes between personal identity and social identity, and warns against seeing personal identity as social identity. Personal identity covers the four aspects of the self or concepts of the person that operate in one form or another in standard economics' characterizations of self-interest. The three standard types are: self-centered welfare, self-welfare goal, and self-goal choice (*Rationality and Freedom*, 33-34); and the fourth is commitment (*Rationality and Freedom*, 33-37, 206-224). While the first three focuses on the self of the individual, the fourth is preoccupied with the social or intrapersonal aspect of identity. The identity of a person is primarily that of social identity, or the idea of identifying with others: "we shift our attention from the notion of being identical to that of sharing an identity, and to the idea of identifying oneself with others of a particular group" (*Development as Freedom,* 2). Often, the sense of identity is social identity because private interest is socially determined (*Rationality and Freedom*, 215).

Since identity is embedded in the historical socio-cultural context, it has a say on how relations between the "self" and the "other" are constituted and negotiated. Sen's interest in multiple preferences and meta-rankings can also be read against his ideas about identity. An individual's multiple preferences and meta-rankings are pointers to his/her multiple social identifications with others as also his/her capacity

to see him/herself simultaneously as different types of persons. Community, nationality, race, sex, union membership, the fellowship of organizations, revolutionary solidarity, and so on, all impose or imprint identities that can be, depending on the context, crucial to our view of ourselves, and thus to the way we view our welfare, goals or behavioral obligations (*Rationality and Freedom,* 215). This strong sense of social identification serves an impetus to multiple social identifications as multiple meta-rankings produces "conflicting demands arising from different identities and affiliations" (*Development as Freedom*, 30). Sen's capability framework serves as an alternative in the crisis about identity in terms of social identification. His perception forms a link to his later thinking about functioning and capabilities, and makes it possible to argue that the capability framework employs an understanding of personal identity.

The prospects of peace in the contemporary world lie in the recognition of the plurality of our affiliations and in the use of reasoning as common inhabitants of a wide world. The stabilizing force of identities including social collectivities of class, race, gender and nation has been deeply undermined by social and political developments of contemporaneity. The social and cultural identities have been considerably fractured, fragmented, undermined and dispersed down the ages, particularly so, in the last five decades. The fragmentation of social identity has become very much a part of the modern and the postmodern experience. Metaphorically speaking, fragmentation goes local and global at one and the same time, while the great stable identities do not seem to hold. It would prove hazardous if the society/ sect about an individual imposes a confined or contemptible picture of his/her identity (*Argumentative Indian*, 351).

Sen's concept of the communitarian view of identity— the belief that identity is something to be discovered rather than chosen has its underpinnings in Charles Taylor. Taylor effectively draws the social construction of identity in a Hegelian manner by arguing that identities are formed in a continuing dialogue and struggle with significant others (66-67). Self knowledge is mediated by others and therefore involves not just cognition but recognition. People want their identities and

significant attributes of their community to be not merely socially acknowledged but publicly endorsed and respected. For Taylor, as for many communitarians, identity appears to come first, with the human actor following in its shadow. However, it is rather troubling that Sen neither addresses the issue of how identities are created nor reveal the implication of crucial inter-relation with other real-life processes.

Sen's is a project to critique identity and difference as floating signifiers both to liberate the spaces foreclosed with singularist notion of identity and to enable a nonreactive and nonparanoid mode of subjectivity and agency in touch with its historically constituted reality of globalization lest the heterogeneous lived realities of people are mobilized to indulge in violence in the name of singular identities. In opening up new spaces, this critique must find for itself the ideological and rational means to connect the popular beliefs of the people with the consciousness of a new universality as to subvert the ideological sway of the pseudo religious gurus or fanatic nationalistic leaders.

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The 'Hidden Constants:' Women's Rights as 'Espoused Theories'

Dr. Kunhammad K.K.

> *Even when the path is nominally open – when there is nothing to prevent a woman from being a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant – there are many phantoms and obstacles, as I believe, looming in her way. To discuss and define them is. I think. of great value and importance; for thus only can the labour be shared, the difficulties be solved.*

Virginia Woolf, "The Professions and Women" (1942)

Narcopolis, the recently Man-Booker-longlisted novel by Jeet Thayyil, begins with an interesting exchange between the female eunuch, Dimple and her friend, Dom. Dom asks Dimple: "Is it better to be a man or a woman?" Her answer is: "For conversation, better to be a woman, for everything else, … better to be a man." When I asked the same question to a senior colleague of mine, he said: "If had a choice, I would rather be a woman." When I asked him why, he gave me a long list of the benefits of being a woman in our society. The main points in his reasoning were as follows: A woman is well-protected and taken care of at home, she is respected by the society, several laws are in place to prevent the invasion of her privacy, when she is driving, men give way, she is allowed to jump queues, she doesn't have to worry about money, all she has to do is to be a patient and faithful wife, a loving mother, a caring daughter-in-law. The majority of men are blind to the invisible dynamics of sexist prejudices and assumptions that underlie the so-called benefits of being a woman. He seemed to have no idea about the marginality involved in being thought of as an object to be enclosed within strictly prescribed limits, the dehumanizing drudgery involved in the phrase 'the domestic chores,' the unmarked forms of oppression implied in the horrendously challenging collective expectations of being a good wife and a good daughter-in-law, and the implications of the politics of preferential

treatment of women in public. This paper attempts to visibilize a series of what Pierre Bourdieu calls "hidden constants" or invisible categories of thought underlying the social perception, appreciation and practice of women's rights in various locations of culture in Kerala.

In her fascinating book on cultural marking, Sally Robinson observes: "One cannot question, let alone dismantle, what remains hidden from view… What is invisible escapes surveillance and regulation" (2). Due to the largely unquestioned set of premises that holds the entire notion of women's rights in a masculine grasp, it becomes almost impossible to address certain central issues that shape the contours of male-female interactions in our society. I believe that uncovering the normally unmarked patriarchal archetypes embedded in everyday life practices in Kerala would lead to an enhanced awareness of the masculine unconscious underlying the current reality of women's life in our society and will eventually lead to making gender justice possible in its true sense.

Perhaps the most pernicious scheme of thought that remains unmarked and invisible is the ubiquitous presence of what is generally known as "gentle violence." Gentle violence refers to invisible modes of sexist oppression that result from the ways in which women unconsciously internalize male-centred paradigms and indirectly contribute to varying forms of legitimized gender subjugation in social and family life. As Pierre Bourdieu puts it:

> When the dominated apply to what dominates them schemes that are the product of domination, or, to put it another way, when their thoughts and perceptions are structured in accordance with the very structures of the relation of domination that is imposed on them, their acts of *cognition* are, inevitably, acts of *recognition*, submission. (15)

When the dominated women fail to realize that they have unconsciously inherited cognitive structures created by masculine domination, their thoughts could never be original—they are incapacitated to "cognize" or think. All they can do is to "re-cognize" or fall in line with the thoughts already formed by men, which is a

naturalized form of submission. This aspect has become a hidden constant of cultural life in Kerala.

Forms of communal life in Kerala provide innumerable examples of the operation of a collective "androcentric unconscious." In Kerala, the power dynamic has always remained a vital trait of the cultural practice of patriarchy. Though the past decades have witnessed tremendous changes in the equations of family relationships, the masculine unconscious has remained a hidden constant. Family still continues to be an open space for children to imbibe negative patterns of sexist prejudices. It is in the family that children learn that men are more equal than women and that it is only natural for "the female of the species" to be subjected to differing modes of oppression. From early stages of childhood onwards, the sex of the children is the most crucial factor in determining the vastly different collective expectations regarding their life-roles in the domestic as well as social spheres. The unequal division of labour based on sex starts at home very early on. Girls in most families have to get up at least an hour earlier than the boys and it is common to see boys playing outside while girls are helping their mothers inside. When a mother proudly announces that she is preparing her daughter to be a housewife, the boys internalize the notion that sex-differentiation is a natural necessity and that boys and girls do not have equal rights. Maureen O'Hara speaks about this profound impact of asymmetrical parenting styles on girls:

> Through practices, customs, taboos and restrictions that circum-scribe every aspect of her life, she is pruned and doctored like a Bonzai tree so that by the time she is an adult she sees this as the natural state of affairs. She willingly perpetuates the process by cooperating with the pruning of the next generation—her daughters. (152)

Gradually, children adopt these axiomatic archetypes as the true version of reality and develop defensive routines to avoid the possibilities of unlearning sex differentiation. Perpetuating these attitudes gives boys advantages that are anything but earned or deserved, thereby producing what bell hooks calls "the primary contradiction" of human life.

The relationship structures such as parent and child, adult and non-adult are grounded, not in values that apply to all in equal measure, but on hierarchies based on the sovereign state of exception. As John Hodge points out, it is in:

> the family where most children first learn the meaning and practice of hierarchical, authoritarian rule. Here is where they learn to accept group oppression against themselves as non-adults, and where they learn to accept male supremacy and the group oppression of women. Here is where they learn that it is the male's role to work in the community and control the economic life of the family and to mete out the physical and financial punishments and rewards and the female's role to provide the emotional warmth associated with motherhood while under the economic rule of the male. Here is where the relationship of … superior-inferior, of master-slave, is first learned and accepted as "natural". (qtd in Hooks, 37)

The invisible forms of sexist oppression that exist even in highly educated families in Kerala still remain an unmarked category of thought.

Another important hidden constant in the family system is the romanticization of motherhood and the resultant misconceptions about and distortions of the responsibilities of paternal parenting. There was a time in Kerala when most young males found the notion of working wives very repugnant to their social sensibility. It was held to be an unquestioned mark of male privilege and hegemony to believe that man and only man earned the daily bread. But the last couple of decades was marked by the emergence of two-career families. While the male privilege of being the sole bread-winner of the family was willingly sacrificed in the name of women's empowerment, the patriarchal notions about the division of labour in the domestic sphere remained a hidden constant—unquestioned and unquestionable. The mother's mothering responsibilities remained the same while the father's concerns about the family income were considerably eased. In most homes inhabited by the so-called "ideal couples," the wives' transfer of salaries into the husbands' accounts became a unique mode of

seamlessly integrating sanitized modes of gender subjugation into contemporary life. In effect, in the name of women's empowerment and the motherhood myth, women became victims of an invisible form of double oppression, provoking Arlie Hochschil to refer to domestic work as a working woman's "second shift". As Shashi Deshpande observes:

> Actually, as far as women are concerned, the mother myth, an immensely powerful one, is a huge burden. … We have made it almost impossible for us to get past the image of the ever-forgiving, the always-sacrificing mother. (97)

The notion of fatherhood still continues to be a largely invisible cognitive category which significantly augments the oppressive nature of mothering duties. The parenting role of the male is conveniently conceived purely in terms of exercising authority and providing for material needs, which is a role secondary to that of the mother. Women have been taught to believe that men cannot parent effectively and should not even attempt to do so. As a result, it has become an accepted fact of family life in Kerala to see women struggling hard to balance the huge responsibility of working and parenting. Bell Hooks observes:

> By placing sole responsibility for nurturing … onto women, society reinforces the notion that to mother is more important than to father. … Women and men should define the work of fathering and mothering in the same way if males and females are to accept equal responsibility in parenting. (139)

When a woman appropriates parenting responsibilities as a natural birthright, she is passing on the time-honoured tradition of gender prejudices and sexist oppression to future generations. When both men and women are sufficiently sensitized to the androcentric unconscious that structures our mode of thinking, our family will be transformed into spaces that fuel organic development. As Germaine Greer puts it:

> The point of an organic family is to release the children from the disadvantages of being the extensions of their parents so that they can belong primarily to themselves. They may accept the services that adults perform for them naturally without establishing dependencies. (141)

Drawing on the conceptual frameworks provided by Peter Senge and Robert Fritz, the paper attempts to locate and resolve the "structural tension" between current reality of women's rights violations and our vision of eradicating all forms of women's oppression and ensuring gender justice. Senge underscores the importance of "a relentless willingness to root out the ways we limit or deceive ourselves from seeing what is, and continually challenge our theories of why things are the way they are" (148). He makes a distinction between "espoused' theories" and 'theories-in-use.' Espoused theories are beliefs that remain conceptually valid but have no consequences at the level of practice. A number of our beliefs about women's rights are espoused theories and until they become theories-in-use, they can never be brought under rigid procedures of surveillance and regulation. If the gap between "espoused theory" and "theory-in-use" is not bridged through the formulation of strategies aimed at transforming the present state of the material and symbolic power relation between the sexes, the structural conflict between current reality and the original vision with regard to our fundamental notions of women's rights will never be practically realized.

When one sharpens one's perception and understanding of the current reality of women's rights in the country, the hidden constants begin to appear. In the Delhi tragedy, the hidden constants were everywhere—in the eyes of the drivers of passing vehicles who slowed down to gaze at the mutilated nudity of the helpless victim, in the misogynist slogans used by the male protestors against the woman Chief Minister of Delhi, in the attitude of the police officers who refused to touch the dying girl fearing defilement, in the raw logic of the doctors who refused to administer first aid, in the abuses hurled against Arundhati Roy for seeing a pattern rupture in the nation's culture of rape, in the callousness of the political leaders who compared the mass protest by women to a beauty pageant, in the minds of the Delhi University boys who told a reporter that they joined the protest to see some good chicks. You could spot the hidden constants everywhere, in the centre and peripheries of the nation. But these hidden constants cannot be discussed. They are undiscussable and the fact that their undiscussability is also undiscussable is another hidden constant in our society.

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Decolonizing the Body: Maternity as Strategic Resistance in Emma Donoghue's *Room*

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Emma Donoghue's *Room* is a novel that opens up immense scope for a feminist political act, that of "decolonizing the body," an attempt to free woman's body, mother's body, from the restricting and exploitative chains of slavedom in patriarchy. This article traces how *Room* accomplishes this act of "decolonizing the body" by using "maternity" as an effective form of strategic resistance. Michel Foucault's works have been influential to the feminist understanding of patriarchy as a colonial model of domination and subordination causing resistance. We should not think that these relations of power involve a static disparity between those who rule and those who are ruled or subordinated in an assortment of institutional settings like patriarchy or a phallocentric social order. It is from Foucault's notion of power and bodies that we conclude that beliefs about sexuality do not necessarily produce decisive and unchangeable inequalities between groups of individuals, men and women. This creates the wonderful possibility for turning the working of an institution like patriarchy upside down, to terminate the colonial structures staying alive in a phallocentric universe.

Room is an examination of the discursive power of maternity, narrated from the point-of-view of a five-year-old child (Jack) born and raised in a tiny, windowless cell where he and his mother (Ma) have been held captive by the man named Old Nick. In the novel, we find that despite all her suffering, struggle, trauma of solitary confinement, terrifying memories of being kidnapped by Old Nick at the age of nineteen, and being locked-up and repeatedly raped by the man in a tiny room, Ma has incredibly kept herself sane by devoting all her energy and moreover all her life to give Jack as normal an upbringing as possible. As the novel nears its end, both the mother and her son regain

their physical liberty (as they finally escape from their long years of captivity under Old Nick). They are also on the verge of regaining their mental liberty as Ma and Jack, on their entry into the world outside and succeed in establishing a unique alternative maternal space (the mother-child dyad) against the patriarchal society outside.

Foucault insists that power is a distinctly "productive" relation, one that creates resistance at the same moment as it exerts force. This Foucauldian notion of power explains how patriarchy as a discourse has, finally, given rise to resistance and thereby, paradoxically, prepared the ground for the emergence of maternity discourses as we see in Donoghue's *Room*. In *Room*, Ma's use of her maternal power or her use of her son as a means to fight back can be seen as a representation or manifestation of Foucault's model of "reverse" discourse. Foucault's general point that power can be refracted through discourse showing how it is not always burdened by a repressive sovereign law constitutes his concept of "reverse" discourse. According to feminists, this Foucauldian suggestion, actually sends in a possibility for patriarchy to be overthrown as is demonstrated in Donoghue's novel *Room*. As we see in the novel, when the Law of the Sovereign-Father fails to function, when the tendency to surround desire with all the trappings of the Old order of power is removed, when the bastion of patriarchy collapses, woman's body or rather the mother's body undergoes the process of decolonization and, as in Jack's Ma, the Maternal Body finally re-emerges as an independent, liberated and challenging discourse.

As feminists like Gayle Rubin insist, patriarchy does not offer a static model of how the West establishes its moral attitudes towards family, sexuality, marriage, parenthood and so on. This notion of Rubin gets a clear expression in Donoghue's novel *Room* which, by rupturing all the set and fixed patriarchal codes of conduct, speaks of a family structure and of maternity as free, independent realms which are no longer a "boon" following the sanctity of the marital knot. In the novel, Ma with her "unmarried/single status" succeeds in making the bold decision to live all alone by herself with her son Jack and most importantly without a "man". She also succeeds in forcing and making the patriarchal outside world accept her and her son as normal like

any other mother and child. This becomes evident as the characters in the novel like Steppa, Grandma and the Clinic people like Dr. Clay and Noreen (members or inhabitants of the patriarchal society outside) finally acknowledge Ma's bold decision to live all alone by herself along with her son in their new apartment, and as they try to do everything they can in order to assist Ma's endeavour to begin her life anew with her son. This is an instance of what Rubin speaks of as the contested zone in the middle which indicates how the moral values attached to sexuality, parenthood, family, marriage and so on are gradually shifting.

This feminist belief gets projected in *Room* as Ma triumphs as an unmarried and rehabilitated rape-victim, as a single parent, competent enough to lead an independent life with her son and establish a new family structure consisting of two members – the mother and her son. As a result, "marriage" or the "will" of the husband or father, as the novel proves, is no longer the criterion for a woman's right to "mother," her right to run a "family." For instance, in *Room*, dismissing the patriarchal view that Jack is the end-product of a rape, of a crime that Old Nick has done against her, Ma considers her son as one from whom she never wants to get separated or as one whom she wishes to be eternally united with. In this way, Donoghue's novel *Room* revolutionizes the concept of family and parenthood and it also throws in a wonderfully imaginative concept of "family" as a reincarnation of the Maternal Womb – Jack's "Room."

In *Room*, the old bachelor loner, the male pervert Old Nick, no longer goes scot-free because of the fact that he is a "man," one who belongs to the "master" class in the colonial structure of patriarchy. Moreover, Ma re-emerges from the status of being a "slave" and a helpless rape-victim (the colonized) to that of an all-powerful maternal force who has silenced the "master," Old Nick, and made him sink into oblivion. This occurs with the disappearance of the shadowy presence of Old Nick, the "man," the patriarch, the colonizer, as Ma finally succeeds in getting him arrested and jailed-up. By practically making a literary attempt to decolonize the female body, by freeing it from the endless years of subordination and thralldom (as Ma finally escapes from her seven long years of incarceration), Donoghue's novel *Room*, actually,

clears a space where new stories about women, about mothers, can take root.

From prehistoric times to the present, as critics like Susan Brownmiller point out, rape has played a critical function in perpetuating the colonialist space of patriarchy. Rape is, therefore, a conscious, deliberate process of intimidation by which men keep women in a state of fear. This ultimate test of man's superior strength and the subsequent triumph of his manhood get reflected in Old Nick's initial advance as a Colonizer, the patriarch, in taking complete control and power over Ma's body. Old Nick's act of raping Ma repeatedly in the tiny room, in spite of all her protests and struggles, is an instance that clearly reveals the fear that patriarchy forcefully injected into woman through man's physical domination over her as the Colonizer in the colonialist space. However, as part of the novel's feminist political strategy, the plot of the novel *Room* does not give context for Old Nick to evolve effectively as the Colonizer, the patriarch. Hence, in *Room*, Ma poses a strong resistance to this act of intimidation she was subjected to. This initiates the decolonization of Ma's body which is managed by using her maternal power as the sole source for this imperative political act.

As Brownmiller points out, the patriarchal Fathers have always viewed rape as a "property crime" of man against man. She argues: "Criminal rape, as a patriarchal father saw it . . . was, in a phrase, the theft of virginity, and embezzlement of his daughter's fair price on the market"(18). It is this patriarchal father who is brought into light in Grandpa (Ma's Dad), though not explicitly, as he calls Old Nick "that beast" who has "stolen" away his daughter, her virginity, his pride (282). So, in patriarchy, when a woman is taken by force and raped by a man, she is regarded as the "stolen" property (like land or money) of which another man is robbed of and not a kidnapped "subject," a "human-self." So, for Grandpa, in *Room*, Jack can no longer be accepted as his grandson, since he sees the five-year-old boy as an end-product, a reminder, of a crime done not against his daughter, but against him by another man: the abduction and rape of his daughter by Old Nick. However, Ma forcefully makes her dad accept Jack as his grandson; this, in turn, reveals her strong command over patriarchy.

According to Brownmiller, when a man takes title to a specific female body, it is not only a great sexual convenience for him but also a testament to his warring stature; he has to assume the burden of fighting off all other potential attackers, or scare them off by the retaliatory threat of raping their women. But, as Brownmiller argues, those men who assume the historic burden of woman's protection – later formalized as husband, father, brother,   clan – reduces her status to that of chattel, and therefore a crime committed against woman's body becomes a crime against the male estate (17). In *Room*, we come across this patriarchal notion of man's historical burden – the protection of woman – as Old Nick attempts to play the role of being the sole "man-protector" to Ma in Room (the cell), deliberately turning a blind-eye to the fact that to Ma he is nothing more than an old pervert, the cruel Rapist. This is clearly illustrated at an instance when Old Nick addresses Ma and says:

> I don't think you appreciate how good you've got it here, . . . Do you? . . . Aboveground, natural light, central air, it's a cut above some places, I can tell you. Fresh fruit, toiletries, what have you, click your fingers and it's there. Plenty girls would thank their lucky stars for a setup like this, safe as houses. Specially with the kid— . . . No drunk drivers to worry about . . . drug pushers, perverts . . . . (86)

Here, Old Nick deliberately imagines himself as one of those cultural heroes, celebrities, such as a movie star, sports figure, rock singer or respected-man-in-the-community who has provided Ma with all that a woman, a girl of her times could dream of or desire for. Thus, we find Old Nick re-enacting the age-old patriarchal game of playing the sole "man-caretaker" to Ma, the "woman-mother." But Old Nick's cunning play does not last for long as Ma's maternal power interrupts and puts an end to all his colonial or patriarchal motives, as Ma finally begins to plot against him and make up plans for her "Great Escape" with her son, Jack, from Room. She, thus, ultimately denies Old Nick of his "historic patriarchal burden," in Brownmiller's term, of ensuring Ma's protection: protecting the "specific female body" to which he has forcefully taken title to. Ma, thereby, no longer allows Old Nick to play

a sole "man-protector" to her body, and hence the male-pervert's dramatic power-play lasts only for a while and it comes to an end as Ma finally escapes from Room (the cell) with her son.

Thus, in *Room*, as we cross to the decolonized space where Ma exists as an independent and confident "woman-mother," inscription will exceed the undoubtedly important horizons of sexual preference and dethrone Old Nick, the man, of his post of being the Colonizer. Though Old Nick has colonized Ma's body initially, as a Colonizer he is not strong or competent enough to intervene in her power of mothering. For instance, when Ma gives birth to Jack in *Room*, Old Nick is shunned as Ma makes him leave the cell. While Ma once describes her experience of having an abortion to Jack, she refers to Old Nick's indifference to it and her experience of giving birth to Jack later all alone by herself as follows:

> . . . remember the cord that goes to the belly button . . . the girl baby, it got tangled when she was coming out, so she couldn't breathe . . .

> He was right there, watching . . . He didn't know the first thing about babies getting born, he hadn't even bothered to Google it. I could feel the top of her head, it was all slippery, I pushed and pushed, I was shouting, 'Help, I can't, help me—-' And he just stood there . . . She came out blue . . . She never opened her eyes . . . The cord was all knotted around her neck . . . He took her away and buried her under a bush in the backyard . . . The 'her' part of her, that went straight back up to Heaven . . . Maybe it really was you, and a year later you tried again and came back down as a boy . . . I didn't let him in Room that time . . . I heard Door, the beeping, and I roared, 'Get out' . . . I was ready, this time I wanted it to be just me and you . . . You were born with your eyes open. (255-257)

Here, we find that, as part of her resistance, Ma is actually posing a strong threat to that which ultimately constitutes the man's colonial power in patriarchy, that is, the paternal. Moreover, in the novel, Ma always succeeds in keeping Old Nick away from her son and the voice

of this all-powerful mother resounds as Ma, in *Room*, once tells Jack: "I just don't want him looking at you. Even when you were a baby, I always wrapped you up in Blanket before he came in" (32). Thus, whenever Old Nick tries get a sight of Jack or whenever he tries to talk with the boy or touch him, the powerful command of Ma ordering him to "stay away from Jack" rings in the man's ears and he is finally forced to retreat at the end of all such attempts in *Room*.

Therefore, Ma, paradoxically, uses her maternity, her female body, which patriarchy regards as the core of woman's vulnerability, as an instrument to challenge the universality and eternity of the very same social order founded on phallocentrism. Donoghue's *Room*, thus, reveals that "decolonizing the female body," as Ma does in the colonialist context of patriarchy using maternity as her tool, has ultimately reversed the patriarchal concept of female body as a site for male conquest and oppression. Ma in *Room*, hence, stands as a solid proof of this sprout of the new, rebellious, powerful Maternal – one who poses a strong strategic resistance to the colonial structures of patriarchy.

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Trends and Prognosis in Protest Literature: Evaluating Class Stratification in Festus Iyayi's *Violence*

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Introduction

Festus Iyayi's *Violence* written against the social context of contemporary Nigerian society reiterates Chinua Achebe's "The Novelist as Teacher," in which an African writer cannot but get deeply rooted in the social circumstances of his immediate environment: the African writer works against a background of often awesome social and material deprivation: hunger, displacement, human stress. The committed writer thus has perforce to view his duty in different terms. Poverty is unlikely in any sense to relieve, but there is an ingrained poverty of the spirit and the cultural will, a chronic failure of the communal imagination for the tending of which his craft and skills are peculiarly relevant (103). This paper attempts to examine the degree of class stratification in Festus Iyayi's *Violence*. A attempt has been made to critically illuminate the relationship between the bourgeois and the proletariat in Nigeria to visualize how contacts between the duo lead to violence and protest that affect the superstructure. In *Violence*, the exploration of the living conditions of the urban poor in contemporary Nigeria provides the locus of the narrative of social condition, woven around Idemudia and Adisa's attempt at coming to terms with their society. Protest theory is best suitable for the understanding of these fundamental problems.

The Protest Theory: A Societal Superstructure

Kenneth Boulding in his celebrated work *Towards a Theory of Protest* identifies four movements towards the understanding of the protest theory and how the framework is applicable to societal superstructure.

First the "protest arises when there is a strongly felt dissatisfaction with existing programs and policies of government or other organizations, the affected parties but are unable to express their discontent through regular and legitimate channels."

Second, "Protest is most likely to be successful where it represents a view which is in fact widespread in the society which has somehow not been called to people's attention" (*A Review of General Semantics* 50).

Third,

> Where the society is not supersaturated, a protest movement has a much rougher time. It then has to move the society toward the new position, from which change can then crystallize out, and this is a much more difficult task than crystallizing change in a society that is ready for it. Furthermore, protest as a social form, which may be very effective and indeed necessary in crystallizing a supersaturated society, may be quite ineffective in moving a society which is not saturated for change toward a point where it is. (55)

The fourth point is that

> The dynamic process of social systems is not entirely random, and this means that any particular social system is more likely to go in some directions than it is in others. Obviously, a protest movement which is trying to push the social system in a direction in which it has a high probability of going anyway is more likely to be successful than one that is trying to push the social system in a direction that has a low probability. We can identify certain cumulative processes in the history of social systems, such as the growth of knowledge, the widening of integrative systems, and so on, which have a certain long-run irreversibility about them, even if they may have short-run setbacks. Systems move, however painfully, toward payoffs. (60)

Iyayi's identification with the condition of the working classes buttresses protest that also partly reflects his own class position as a petit-bourgeois intellectual who is able to empathize effectively with the

working classes through his writing. His portrayal of Obofun, Queen, Dala and Iriso as exploiters of the working classes offers a helpful context in which we can assess Iyayi's commitment to the cause of the downtrodden. He courageously exposes the moral depravity of the Nigerian bourgeoisie, paradoxically a class to which he too belongs as a privileged individual. Iyayi decries the gluttonous attitude of the elite who assumed the leadership of their nation at the expiration of colonial rule in Africa and have since independence perpetrated the exploitation of their own people with a ruthlessness that was never seen during colonial rule. Such exploitation is seen in the rapacity of the elite: sexual promiscuity as typified by the relationship between Iriso and Queen; bribery and racketeering in the ministries and government parastatals which Obofun was involved in before his premature dismissal; diversions of essential commodities like milk and eggs from the ministry of agriculture to Queen's supermarket. The employment of Idemudia by Queen to offload bags of cement with its attendant poor remuneration provides the needed political discourse for the analysis of the economic structures of the society, prevailing norms, injustice, exploitation, conflict and revolt, as the variables of social exchange between the elite and the working classes in the novel.

The commodification of members of the working class by the elites in the novel recalls the observation of Maynard Solomon, "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are of the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses" (40). Solomon further emphasises that within the capitalist system as obtainable in Nigeria, all methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer.

> All means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers: they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work, and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange

from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power ..... (41)

The dialectics of human relationship between the rich and the poor in *Violence* is aptly illustrated by Tunde Fatunde, "In Festus Iyayi's novel a balanced picture is given, both of the working people and of the exploiters. Neither social class is infallible. They both show a degree of human failing and human strength, although it is abundantly clear that Iyayi is on the side of the working people. As a radical writer he is not complacent towards the plight of those who have only their labour to sell. But he does not legitimize Idemudia's attempt at beating his wife; neither does he approve of the (understandable) 'sexual methods' of Adisa, who searches for money to pay off Idemudia's hospital bill" (114). No doubt, the significance of labour ethos is given prominence in the novel. However, Iyayi does not hesitate to acknowledge the importance the workers' contribution to national development, even if their efforts are not adequately rewarded. Protest in the novel derives its power largely from the author's outrage at the injustice of a system that reduces human beings to chattel and love to a commodity measured in terms of Naira and Kobo. The commodification of Idemudia, Osaro, Patrick and Omoifo in the offloading of the bags of cement at Freedom Motel by Queen is a signifier of this outrage.

This outrage further reverberates in a scenario at the building site, when Queen had to treat some workers with indignation: The other workers were already there and they gathered as soon as they saw Queen. Queen faced them, "I understand that some of you want more money," she said quietly. Idemudia was surprised at the hardness in her voice. "You there," and Queen pointed to a tall, shirtless man. "You have always made trouble, ever since you came here." She drew an envelope. "Here is your money." She spat at him. "You will find twenty-three Naira, seventy-seven kobo inside the envelope. Not one kobo more, not one kobo less" (234). The rhetoric of protest in *Violence* is mediated by Festus Iyayi's Marxist inclinations. It is an inclination which is represented in a sustained disappointment and bitterness of the failure of Nigeria State to provide employment and basic social needs for her citizens.

Iyayi in the novel posits social relationship as a continuous process of contestation inseparable from human development paradigms. Iyayi's interrogation of the social inequity in the novel is anchored on Karl Marx's theories of class stratification. This is done to enable him interpret Nigeria's social milieu. Iyayi's narrative of class stratification in *Violence* foregrounds the exploration rather than amelioration of social relationship of the elite and working classes. Iyayi's delineation of social classes in *Violence* underscores Ngugi's examination of the typology of writers in post-colonial Africa as identified by Patrick Williams, "For Ngugi, social conditions mean that there are broadly two types of writers in any given historical period.

The first group consists of those who believe in the status quo … The second group comprises those who have deliberately or instinctively acquired a more dialectical perspective on society, as well as belief in the possibility and necessity of change …." (Williams 156).

Money symbolises power for the elite, while it paradoxically symbolises a means of survival to the working class. Money serves as a potent tool for the construction of identities by the individuals from both social divides in the novel. As such, money is an effective symbol through which class identities are constructed. Ultimately, what gives coherence to the social relationship between the elite and the working class is embedded in social exchange signified by money. This is appropriated by Iyayi as a political discourse which he uses to create frames of understanding of contemporary Nigerian society. Money serves as potent tool of social exchange in the novel.

The motif of money is used to construct Nigeria society, articulate a shared experience of oppression, and evaluate social consciousness through which Iyayi identifies himself artistically by making an emphatic case for the value of social justice in the idea of society. Through the depiction of money as a vehicle of social exchange, and especially by juxtaposing stupendous wealth with abject poverty, Iyayi evaluates the danger inherent in the misuse of money as derivations of corruption, injustice, greed and oppression.The depredation of the working class in *Violence* recalls the observation of John Harris,"We must remember

that to deny someone control of their own lives is to offer them a most profound insult, not to mention the injury which the frustration of their wishes and the setting at naught of their own plans for themselves will add". (35) Iyayi protests the oppressive labour policies which hold an individual captive and makes him a gratuitous object of commodification.

The elite in *Violence* through its uncontrolled desire and insatiable greed crave the acquisition of material goods. By so doing, they have become slaves of their own creations and are consequently alienated from the humanness of society. The despoliation of the societal resources by the elite renders members of the working class dehumanised. Idemudia, Adisa, Osaro, Pa Jimoh and a host of other poverty-stricken individuals in the novel are graphically presented by Iyayi as individuals who have suffered some degree of estrangement from the economic well-being of society. They are forever consigned to that unfathomable abyss between what they are and what they would like to be, which is the fallout of social disequilibrium orchestrated by the likes of Obofun, Queen, Iriso and Dala of the elite class.

Idemudia is a typification of a fragmented man whose social identity is ambivalent, as exemplified in the hospital play titled *Violence*. He is a representation of millions of individuals marooned in a cesspool of poverty, whose lives are crushed beneath the merciless and implacable wheels of economic manipulation of the elite. Idemudia is a product of the Foucauldian analysis of power play in the society.

> The individual is no doubt the fictitious atoms of an 'ideologist' representation of society: but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline.' We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: It 'excludes,' it 'represses,' it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks,' it 'conceals.' In fact, power produces: it produces the reality: it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.' (194)

Although the pauperisation of Idemudia, Osaro, Adisa, Pa Jimoh and Mama Jimoh has its more remote sources in chequered post-

colonial economic and political history, it was directly caused by the head-on collision of two different, indeed totally opposed circumstances: the social inequality orchestrated by the post-colonial apparatus, greed, avarice and economic schism created and nurtured by the elite class. Subjected to this double trauma, the members of the working class in Nigeria are helplessly condemned to be the spectators of their degeneration into the state of dementia. The gap between them and the opportunistic members of the elite who enjoy the opulence and bliss of society becomes deeper at the emergence of every successive civilian and military administration in the country and has become more and more difficult to bridge. The economic disempowerment of Idemudia and other members of the working class is thus by no means a physical one. The deprivation they experience is due to their exclusion from the economic largesse of society. They are not people crippled by physical disabilities but specific and well-defined individuals stranded in a socio-economic quagmire: poverty, hunger, disease and loss of identity.

To the members of the working class in Violence, poverty presupposes non-existence, and non-existence culminates in a deep sense of alienation. This notion is clearly demonstrated in the submission of Isaac Yetiv, "Alienation presupposes identity, just as Death presupposes life. It is in the final analysis, the loss of identity, be it individual of ethnic, and the effort to recapture this lost identity which constitutes the "identity crisis." Like life itself, identity is a dynamic phenomenon ...." (87). Virtually all the working-class characters feel themselves estranged from their society. They are haunted by a sense of alienation borne out of hunger, lack and want.

Protest is deployed in the novel to articulate the palpable emptiness in the lives of working-class people. Idemudia's inability to secure a permanent job, Osaro, Omoifo and Patrick's consistent existence on the fringes of life; Adisa's endless endurance of hunger and Papa and Mama Jimoh's subsistence living in a rundown apartment are significations of the emptiness aptly mediated by Iyayi's dialectic of class stratification. Violence is a canvass crowded with alienated individuals and an alienated society of the wealthy and the poor. Idemudia serves as a

metaphor of the alienated individuals trapped in an urban society. Idemudia, a school dropout who could not continue with his education because his parents could not pay his fees, finds it remarkably difficult to secure a decent job and ends up as a casual labourer at the building site.The thought of his failure to complete his education, which would have provided him an adequate meal ticket often fills him with resentment and bitterness. His preoccupation with charting a path of survival for himself and his wife Adisa also led him into selling his blood intermittently.

The overwhelming sense of economic marginality drives Idemudia to rue his almost existential sense of helplessness. What troubles him is not so much of existential anguish but the absence of fairness in the distribution of economic opportunities in Nigeria society. In spite of the social difficulties and economic marginality suffered by the novel's working-class characters, these individuals' refuse to succumb completely to the criminal existence to which they have been condemned. Idemudia's courage, untarnished by the misery around, and his equally uncorrupted love for Adisa are an assertion of human dignity in struggle. This is a central assertion which is imbibed by members of the working class, and significantly buoys their determination to survive against all odds. Most of these characters are not articulate about their marginality. Aside Idemudia, Osaro and Omoifo, who are assertive and often confrontational, Papa and Mama Jimoh, Patrick, Adisa and the other reactionary elements at the building site seem to have internalised their collective subjugation, they are crippled by the prevailing social conditions.

The reactionary attitude of these individuals in the working class succinctly foregrounds the dialectic of class stratification by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "They would like to have a slave who not only accepts that he is a slave, but that he is a slave because he is fated to be nothing else but a slave. Hence he must love and be grateful to the master for his magnanimity in enslaving him to a higher, nobler civilisation." (12) However, Idemudia, Osaro and Omoifo frantically strive to restore self-worth and dignity to the image of the working class. Through hard and debilitating tasks, they are determined to assert themselves and their

inalienable human identities. Their quest for social security and identity is encapsulated in the concrete and specific terms of a definite social struggle; their protest against inhuman social conditions foistered upon them by the elite in the form of poor remuneration at the building site. The workers' strike provides the much-needed opportunity to confront their social marginality headlong. Their triumph over social alienation comes when they succeeded in forcing Queen to negotiate over the condition of work and remuneration. But such meeting is marked by a pervasive cynicism, because it portends for the workers fear and humiliation symptomatic of a tyranny of fear that elite oppression creates. Negotiation between the labourers at the building site and Queen should have normally promised something positive and realistic; an increase in the wages of the workers and better conditions of service. But its circumvention by Queen, through her sexual blackmail of Idemudia, underscores a sign, not of disruption or change in the relationship between the elite and the working class, but of continuity in the unchanging dialectic of oppressor and oppressed. Iyayi uses the dialectic of the elite/working class to foreground empirical realities. Violence, for instance, uses the hospitalisation of Idemudia after offloading bags of cement from a truck for Queen and his inability to pay his medical bills as a springboard to criticise extortionist gambit of the elite. Idemudia's quest for employment got him a job that demeaned him and which subsequently made him sick, because he had to work in the rain amidst debilitating hunger. Consequently, he fell ill because he was cold and hungry. The point of scathing criticism against the elite class in *Violence* is that the elite economically emasculates the poor in order to perpetually gratify their gluttonous appetites.

The matrimony of Obofun and Queen epitomizes instability and collapse of a family structure among the elite, in which a wife pursues economic freedom so as to create an individuality and a separate personhood. Queen is presented as a typical urban woman of the elite class in a post-colonial African society where most socially pre-eminent women are pre-occupied with the zeal to be economically independent of their husbands, and many often worship money above principles and values. The elite in *Violence* are engaged in infidelity and drunkenness.

The sanctions and taboos which shape the traditional society and gave it its seeming stability, dignity and respectability are completely subverted, as everything takes second place to the relentless drive for wealth. Obofun, Iriso and Dala, who are supposed to be respectable husbands and fathers, plunge into decadence and immorality. The uncontrollable subscription to corrupt practices also signifies the fragmentation of the hitherto secured family units as husbands and wives are neck deep in the feverish wealth-acquision syndrome, thereby becoming vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Obofun and Queen are marooned in a lifeless matrimony devoid of a conjugal relationship. Co-habitation there is merely a product of artificiality, as most outsiders do not have a glimpse of the sterility of their marriage.

Iyayi, however, in *Violence*, does not significantly stress the oppression of one gender by the other. He creates a balance of judgment in the relationship between men and women, especially among the elite. The portrait of men as harsh, dictatorial and inconsiderate has its match in the portrait of women as callous, selfish and vindictive. While Obofun's sexual predation ensnares Adisa in its web, Queen successfully seduces Iriso, with Idemudia only narrowly escaping her snare. Queen is financially independent of Obofun. She is privileged to enter into sexual relations with any man without other motives than that of emotional and sexual gratification. Adultery, for Queen, is the ultimate possibility of exploring a relation devoid of utilitarian ethos. For Obofun and other male members of the elite, adultery provides the sexual benefits of flaunting their wealth and success in society. Since wealth is relatively concentrated in the hands of men, a woman needs a financial lift in order to have a chance at a decent standard of living. But unfortunately, the elite males prey on the hapless wives of the working class, as demonstrated in the amorous affair between Obofun and Adisa, Idemudia's wife. Unlike Queen, Adisa is not acting out of a sense of disillusionment with the institution of marriage, but Adisa's vulnerable position essentially derives from the fact that Idemudia does not adequately provide for her. She has an affair with Obofun to raise the much-needed money for Idemudia's hospital bills. Here, Iyayi sees the city as a site of corruption where sex is commodified. Material wealth is seen as a weapon effectively deployed

for the benefit of prosperous men, and all women are placed in a position of powerlessness. But Iyayi does not seem to agree with the notion that women have to adapt to their subordination in order to survive. Such subordination smacks of oppressive, exploitative, and alienating arrangements that serve to further social control of the working class by the elite in its entirety. Adisa is presented as the epitome of semi-literate, vulnerable, and poverty-ravaged working class woman trapped in the throes of the cities of Nigeria, and whose social and economic survival is determined by the urban elite.

The social and economic subjugation of the working class by the elite reflects a complex situation of gender oppression intertwined with the rhetoric of class oppression. This remarkably posits how different forms of exploitation are made possible within these structures of power relations in *Violence*. The theme of misery and its effects are sharpened against the backdrop of wanton desolation.This precarious habitation of the downtrodden in the novel is conceived as a metaphorical abyss where human lives are cheap and fragmented. In a fundamental social sense, the run-down habitation of the working class dramatises an aberration highlighted in elite opulence against working class despair and hopelessness.

Marxist Ideology and Social Consciousness in Iyayi's *Violence*

Iyayi's ideological disposition, as mediated in Marxist dialectics, is discernible in his interrogation of power structures in the post-colonial Nigerian society, with its attendant variables of dominance, control, exploitation, subjugation and victimisation.

The exploration of social relationship between the indigenous entrepreneurs and casual labourers in *Violence* foregrounds Iyayi's determination to expose the ideological bias of the Nigerian elite against the perspective of the exploited majority to interrogate the class interests as significantly inscribed in the novel. The collective plight of the underprivileged in ruthlessly competitive Nigerian urban cities sharpens the social consciousness of Iyayi, and develops into truculent protest against the inhumanity of the elite. By so doing, his voice typifies the voice of the oppressed. This is inscribed in the thematic

preoccupation of *Violence*, the social background of Ideumdia, and the evocative style which is replete with ironic overtones. The novel's title, *Violence*, articulates the callous exploitation of the surplus labour of the working class in the novel without a commensurate remuneration. This exploitation is vividly captured in the novel.

In the play, violence is used by both the elite class and the working class as narratives for the evaluation of their respective class positions. The elite class appropriates violence as hegemonic narrative to examine the disruption of their social status by the activities of the working class, which if not controlled could irreparably destroy their power base. Thus, social disruptions like armed robbery, mob action, rioting, kidnapping and assassination of members of the elite class are frowned upon. Codes in the name of laws and legislations are therefore established to curtail such working-class interrogations. The working class on its own part approves violence as a counter-narrative to decry their frustration, exploitation and dehumanisation by the elite. It also creates its own codes of reaction through the use of tactics like armed robbery, kidnapping, drug-pedalling and prostitution to subvert the elite's hegemonic narrative. The narrative and counternarrative of violence of both classes is clearly captures by Paulo Freire,

> Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognise others as people – not by those who are oppressed, exploited and unrecognised. It is not the unloved who cause disaffection, but those who cannot love because they love only themselves. It is not the helpless, subject to terror, who initiate terror, but the violent, who with their power create the concrete situation which begets the "rejects of life." (32)

Iyayi's identification with the oppressed is given prominence in the mobilisation of the labourers, led by Idemudia, for a showdown with Queen. Such mobilisation is designed to champion the cause of the oppressed members of the working class and also to project Marxist ideology as the only viable ideology which can question and challenge class inequity in contemporary Nigeria. Thus, the labourers' confrontation of Queen and Mr. Clerides, the site engineer, is presented in Fanonian mode, in the form of a fearless and aggressive attitude, which

represents the new determination of the labourers to liberate themselves as prescribed by Frantz Fanon, "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect". (74) The confrontation of Queen by the labourers strikes a chord of optimism in the trajectory of social struggle in the novel. The confrontation imbues the labourers with the zeal of social consciousness, which doggedly pursued, could signal the eventual victory of the oppressed over the oppressor. Iyayi's advocacy of social change in Nigeria echoes Inih Akpan Ebong's call for economic, political and attitudinal change in Africa,

> Africa is ripe for a revolution. It is not the promiscuous violent, bloody revolution of permissive wantonness to life and property, not is it the cultural revivalism of black humanity asserting itself in protest against the indifference of the West. The revolution for contemporary Africa presupposes the reorganisation and the restructuring of the African mind and psyche (71).

Protest as invested in the labourers' confrontation of Queen, the epitome of oppression orchestrated by the elite, betrays Iyayi's attempt to move beyond the ostensibly passive critical attitudes characteristic of first-generation Nigerian writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Gabriel Okara, J. P. Clark and Chris Okigbo, whose reactions to social issues in Nigeria are often perceived as reactionary by many second-generation Nigerian writers. Iyayi as a representation of second-generation Nigerian writers clearly and confidently articulates the dialectical relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed in *Violence*. Such articulation has its undercurrent in Nigeria's social, political and economic problems which have become more pronounced in recent years. Instead of merely portraying these inadequacies and shortcomings, Iyayi has stridently advocated radical social change as a viable alternative to the situations depicted in the novel.

Iyayi employs the motif of poverty to protest the desperate living conditions in which the working class is mired. Lack, want and dire need provide the undertone for the lampoon of inequity in social distribution in the novel. The critical evaluation of the manifestation

of poverty from the Marxist point of view locates the narrative of economic subjugation within the locale of dialectical materialism. It is a subjugation which could have attracted criticism from other literary tropes, be they humanist or feminist. Nevertheless, it is imperative to state that it is not the type of trope employed in the depiction of the appalling situation of poverty in the novel that matters so much as its vivid depiction, which is reminiscent of the material poverty of the downtrodden in the contemporary Nigeria. Such depiction is a reaction to the quintessential question by Gayatri Spivak,

> What is very much a question for me at the moment is that if you are construed in one particular kind of language, what kinds of violence does it do to your subjectivity if one then has to move into another language, and suppress whatever selves or subjectivities were constructed by the first (66)

The desolation presented in this opening page foregrounds the semiotic of lack which permeates the lives of the working class throughout the novel. Idemudia and Adisa his wife are too poor to afford wrist watches or a wall clock. They are quarantined in a rundown mud house that is vulnerable to flooding. The cemented floor of the dingy solitary room is cracked. The broom is decrepit and the rusty window hinges underscore their level of impoverishment. This graphic presentation of the decrepitude provides a counterpoint to the splendour of the vast opulence of the chalet in Obofun's guest house in the novel, "Again Adisa looked round the room. She noticed the polished floor again, then the walls and the high ceiling painted white where the air-conditioner softly blew cold air into the room" (123).This description is further complemented by the aesthetics of landscaping, which further accentuate the glamour of the elite's neighborhood.

The paper has examined class stratification in Iyayi's *Violence*. It has been observed in the paper, that the squalid living of the poor reiterates the basic problem of economic insecurity which is transformed into class struggle in the novel. For the poor whose lives are consigned to transcendental hopelessness, they are marooned in their economic deprivation. Their awareness of this deprivation leads Idemudia,

Omoifo and Osaro to protest against inhuman working conditions at the building site. The workers' confrontation of Queen and the subsequent threat to embark on strike if their demands are not met urgently is strongly endorsed by Iyayi. *Violence* is thus a protest novel of class reconstruction, portraying and justifying the proletariat's struggle for social and economic liberation. The exemplary virtues of Idemudia, who led the protest against the elite class, are also given resounding acknowledgment. His social and political consciousness makes the workers aware of their exploitation and inspires them to plunge into the protest against inhuman working conditions at the building site.

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'Visualising' Terrorists: Representation of the Muslim Terrorist in Indian Graphic Novels

Gokul T. G.

The growth of the graphic novel as a medium of expression is inextricably linked with American counter cultural experiments of the 1960s. In 1954, fearing governmental crack-downs following Dr. Frederick Wertham's incessant attack on comics for their "corrupting influence on young minds," the American comic book industry established a comics code authority outlining guidelines for acceptable comic book material.The underground comix movement of the late 1960s was in a way a reaction to this authoritarian gagging of artistic freedom. Revisionist and subversive, the underground comix artists substituted the 'c' in the comics with an 'x' (for adult rated) and boldly explored subjects hitherto considered taboo by the comics code authority. If the comic code meant that comics were prevented from saying anything meaningful about the real world, then by defying it, they felt they were re-awakening the revisionist possibility of the medium (Sabin 92).

Dissemination of underground comix happened outside the traditional market, through a network of head shops peddling psychedelic posters and drug paraphernalia and surprisingly, chalked up large numbers in sales. This alternative distribution system later played a vital part in the establishment of and growth of comic book specialty shops and the direct market, which brought about the rise of alternative comics and revisionist retelling of superhero tales in the 1980s. The underground demonstrated that it was possible to create comics outside the dominant publishing industry and to assert the creative rights of the individual artist as opposed to the anonymity of the artist in the assembly line studio system (Hatfield 16). Despite head shops closing down in large numbers in 1970s, the underground comix movement proved to be instrumental in shaping the counter narrative

characteristics that alternative comics—and later graphic novels—would incur in terms of subject matter, treatment, artistic rights, and modes of dissemination.

However, graphic novel's 2004 investiture in India with Sarnath Banerjee's *Corridor*, concurred with a different set of social, political, and economic situations. Despite internal unrests, India was bubbling with new found economic confidence as a result of its liberalization policies, boasting a growth rate of 8.5%. The world was slowly recuperating from the global repercussions of the 9/11 attack, and the United States remained deeply mired in the War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. The War on Terror had subtly posited a war between a Muslim "Them" and a non Muslim "US" (i.e. the United States) fostering in the process, a global project of "othering" the Muslim community. Concerned by these developments, speakers participating in the 59th UN general assembly plenary (11th and 12th meetings) had rightly warned the world about the increasing tendency to link international terrorism and Islam. They had reiterated the urgent need to stop the tarnishing of Muslims by unfair stereotypes, debunking the theory that there is a "clash of civilizations" (United Nations).

Examining *The Believers* (2006) and *Kashmir Pending* (2007) this essay seeks to explicate why, despite being written by Muslim writers, these graphic novels shirk from exploring the counter narrative capabilities of the medium and end up inadvertently promoting the prevalent international narrative that blindly equates Muslims with terrorist activities across the world. These works remain seminal for being the first two Indian graphic novels published by an Indian publishing company which leaves them in a position to set the tone for later works.

Changing contours of 'Secularism'

The term secular itself has undergone significant transformation in India with its contours being continually determined by the national narrative. In India, as in other secular countries, the present narrative demands Muslims bear their national allegiances twice over. First as a

loyal citizen of the state and then as a secular Muslim who shall readily distance him/herself from violent Islam. A declaration not expected or demanded of, any other religious community in India. From accused of being partial towards non believers and minorities, secularism, today, has become a majoritarian discourse coloured by the concerns of "cultural nationalism."

On being quizzed by Ravi Sharma of *Frontline* on BJP's idea of secularism, L.K Advani answered that it was "of the kind where there is ample scope for devout Hindus and devout Muslims" (Sharma). In the same interview he also clarifies that BJP equates Hindutva with nationalism and that the terms Hindu, Bharatiya, and Indian are slogans of sorts, for an Indian way of life and not the name of a creed. However in the same interview, in contradiction to his claims of Hindutva as a 'way of life', he also strongly assert that "the temple should be built at Ayodhya." This is consistent with the two pronged strategy BJP has been following successfully for the last twenty years. It engages urban, middle class voters on issues of nationalism, security, and progress while reserving religious issues for the rural Hindu voters.

Despite their discomfort with minority rights, the majoritarian Hindu right sits perfectly at peace with the institutional procedures of the Western/modern state and the idea of secularism. Secularism stands to mobilize, on its behalf, the will of an interventionist modernizing state. In doing so, the presence of religious or ethnic particularisms from the domains of law or public life can be erased, which in turn helps, a perception of a homogenized content to the notion of citizenship, replace the current discourse of national culture (Chatterjee). Partha Chatterjee has argued that such a stand allows the Hindu right to deflect accusations of being anti-secular while developing a modernist critique of Islamic Fundamentalism and accuse "Pseudo-Secularists" of preaching religious obscurantism and bigotry.

The ability of secularism to stand up to the challenges posed by fundamentalism have been questioned and found wanting by social scientists like T. N Madan and Ashis Nandy in India. Nandy, especially, has been a vociferous critic of secularism, going so far as to call himself "anti-secular." He identifies two distinct streams into which religion in

South Asia has been split into "religion as faith" and "religion as ideology." This "religion as faith" serves as an edict for a way of life, a tradition that is non monolithic, plural, and tolerant. In contrast, "religion as ideology" functions as a sub-national, national, or cross-national identifier of populations fighting for non religious, political, or socio-economic interests. It is usually identified with one or more texts rather than the lifestyles of believers (Nandy, The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance). This dichotomy is important for Nandy, as he considers the idea of secularism an import from nineteenth century Europe seeking to keep religion and public life separate and incompatible to the non western meaning of the concept. Asserting that the modern state always prefers to deal with religious ideologies rather than with faiths because it finds lifestyles more inchoate and unmanageable, he concludes that the concept of secularism is a by-product of enlightenment and modernity standing in contradiction to the idea of religion-as-faith and in confluence with the modernizing state that promotes religion-as-ideology (322-24).

Madan's and Nandy's stand endorses Gandhi's concept of religion as a source of values that permeates arenas of social life and politics. This sense of religion-as-faith carries with it an attitude of tolerance to other persons and their religions while standing opposed to the idea of religion-as-ideology propounded by the Hindu right and the Islamic ideologues like Jamiat-e Islami founder Maulana Abdul Ala Maududi. While the political motivations for the rise of terrorism in the name of Islam in India can be attributed to the rise of the Hindu right, rapid globalization that engendered a pan Islamic brotherhood, Indian middle class's increasing affiliation with the United States, and the failure of the Indian Muslim League to address the issues of the lower rungs of the Muslim community, the ideological source has been the teachings and writings of Maulana Abdul Ala Maududi. Maududi reiterated the need to set up an Islamic government with religion as its manual, even branding Muslims who indulge in secular democratic processes as non believers. Maududi's idea of religion-as-ideology does on the surface differ from its secular variant proposed by the Hindu right, but both end up using coercive power of the religion-as-ideology discourse to persecute non confirming citizens.

The prevalent discourse of secularism in India, given the above mentioned developments, makes it a prescribed rather than a subscribed position as far as Muslims are concerned. It denies the existence of a position other than the two extremes: either that of a fundamentalist or of an apologetic secularist. This reluctance to recognize differing positions results in the assertion of stereotypes and makes impossible, a neutral enquiry into the reasons for the rise of terrorism in India.

The idea of Hindus as a specific political community can be traced back to the early nineteenth century reactions to the onslaught of excessive modernism, Christian evangelism, and exposure to European ideologies of nationalism. This primarily classical, vedantic, and brahmanical attempt to redefine Hinduism as a proper religion used a nativized ideology of nationalism in its project to convert Hindus into a conventional European style nation. It defensively rejected or devalued the various cultures of India in favour of a "high culture" more acceptable to the modern Indian and post- Enlightenment Europe (Nandy, Creating a Nationality 57-58). Since independence, right wing Sangh Parivar has made effective use of this idea of political modernism by constantly emphasizing nationalism, secularism, national security, history, and scientific temper. By mounting systematic political attacks on the forms of ethnicity and religious cultures identifiably different from their ideas of mainstream culture, they have made minority communities easy targets of criticism, social engineering, and a crude form of Indianization derived from ideal-typical definitions (Nandy, Creating a Nationality 78). The Ramjanmabhumi issue and the subsequent demolition of the Babri Masjid was a logical conclusion of this project, a political movement given religious colour so that this possibility could be exploited. The articulation of Muslim as the enemy becomes imperative for the Sangh Parivar if its ongoing project of politicization of the Hindu identity is to be accomplished. It is this concern gets manifested in the writings of Himani Savarkar, President of Abhinav Bharat, when she asserts that, "We must declare ourselves a Hindu Rashtra where everyone is a Hindu. Anyone who isn't should be declared a second class citizen and denied voting rights (Datta)."

Silence in the Stories

The Believers traces the growth of religious fundamentalism in Kerala, through the tale of two Muslim brothers. One brother pursues an academic career abroad and the other embraces a whirlpool of terrorism and religious fundamentalism. The secular, educated younger brother returns home to find his brother, friends, and neighborhood divided on religious lines nurturing mutual distrust. Chagrined at the rapidly deteriorating situation, he sets out to make his brother see the light of reason and persuade him to forsake the path of violence. In the end, the two brothers reconcile, and the elder brother is unable to escape his inevitable end at the hands of the law even though he sees the futility of violence.

To his credit, Abdul Sultan does touch upon the alienated existence of the Muslim community, the growth of Hindu fundamentalism and the economic backwardness that haunt the lower rungs of the community in an attempt to provide an over deterministic view of the rise of Muslim fundamentalism. Sadly, this is done with a few references strewn across the story and predictably, the work stops short of exploring these reasons in depth. The reasons are always provided by the hardliners in the story while the secular characters adopt an apologetic tone continually lamenting the loss of secularist ideals. This, in effect, undermines any trace of legitimacy of such claims.

By limiting the discussion of the politicization of Hindu identity by the right wing Hindu groups to a few remarks, *The Believers* inadvertently plays down the magnitude of the effect that it had on the feelings of alienation, insecurity, and fear of persecution increasingly felt by the Muslim community post-Ayodhya and Gujarat where the state had first been a silent spectator and then an active participant. In its discussion of terrorism in Kerala, *The Believers* also indulges in a convenient categorization of Muslims into "Good" and "Bad." The good, educated, logical, modern, and secular younger brother is pitted against the bad, uneducated, irrational, anti-modern, and fanatic elder brother. This is reminiscent of George W. Bush's post - 9/11 categorizations of Muslims into good and bad (Mamdani 15). It holds

"bad Muslims" responsible for terrorism and anticipates a Muslim civil war. In this war "good Muslims" would attempt to clear their names and consciences by joining the crusade against "bad Muslims." Mahmood Mamdani identifies in such a categorization, a hidden presumption that all Muslims are "bad" unless they prove themselves "good" and laments that "the presumptions that such categories exists masks a refusal to address our own failure to make a political analysis of our times" (Mamdani 16). This international narrative of "good" verses "bad" Muslims co-opted in *The Believers* is faulty, as it largely engages the effect and not the cause of terrorism. A similar tendency is also visible in *Kashmir Pending*, the second graphic novel brought out by Phantomville.

Kashmir Pending recounts the transformation of a young man of the Kashmir valley into a hard core terrorist and his subsequent realization of the senselessness of violence and abhorrence of it. In other words, this is the transformation of a Muslim into a "bad Muslim" and then back to being a "good Muslim" again. The protagonist is shown to be weak in his studies and easily influenced by the fiery speeches of communal leaders. His decision to join the struggle is largely irrational and hastened by the killing of a vegetable vendor in a cross fire between holed up terrorists and security forces. This would again amount to the stereotyping of Muslims as irrational and an innately violent community, unconsciously supporting the prevailing international narrative that proposes a collective restraining of anti- moderns for the betterment of civilization. Nasser Ahmed tries to present what he takes to be a neutral and honest account of the struggle in Kashmir, but like Abdul Sultan in *The Believers*, forgoes a detailed discussion of the circumstances that brewed such a resistance. He rightfully details the ideological influence, training, and the assistance that the armed struggle receives from Pakistan. Yet, he remains silent on the tumultuous circumstances the state's accession to the Indian Union occurred. The effect of this action can never be over emphasized. The silence continues in matters of corrupted governments and bureaucracies, lack of economic development, Cold War politics, and the reactionary attitude of the administration. All of this has contributed to the present state of affairs in Jammu and Kashmir.

Media Bytes

These silences and omissions by the writers reflect the ideologies of their times and show how the principles of a society control and determine what can be and cannot be said. This necessitates a wider reading that encompasses the portrayal of Muslims in mainstream Indian media and cinema. Nasserudhin Shah, one of the most respected Indian actors had recently noted that, "Muslims stereotyped as terrorists in films is an unfortunate thing and films are cashing in on prevailing sentiments in different sections of the society (Stereotyping Muslims in Films as Terrorists Unfortunate). This has been a subtle and long ongoing project which has gathered speed with recurring incidents of communal violence and explosions in the last decade. Amit Rai identifies a genre of 'cine patriotism' in Bollywood mainstream cinema, that seeks to represent, visualize, and narrativize the sovereignty of the supposedly secular, but in practice upper-caste, Hindu Indian nation (Rai). He finds that:

> Contemporary representations of Muslims in Hindi films position specific cultural and religious identities as both necessary and intolerable to the security of the Indian nation. The figures of the radically alienated Muslim, juxtaposed with the patriotic Muslim and Christian citizen, and the dominant, often unmarked Hindu show how difference is crucial to the stability of the Indian nation– but not excessive difference: the militant Muslim is the figure of an intolerable difference… a monstrous "other" that needs to be exorcised from a Hinduized national family.

Similar disturbing trends can also be found in the mainstream media, including the news channels that have come to dominate the process of formation of public opinion in India. While Naxalites, Maoists, and other groups involved in subversive activities are termed radicals, fighters, and rebels by the media, any such Muslim group invariably attracts the tag of terrorists. Ajith Sahi, an investigative reporter with the Delhi based *Tehelka*, in a blog interview with Yoginder Sikand noted that, "A hidden anti-Muslim bias pervades the media, although media persons who like to call themselves secular and liberal would hate to admit this. This is reflected, for instance, in the fact that in most cases of Muslims

arrested on grounds of terrorism, all that we have are 'confessions' before the police, which are not admissible as evidence before courts, because obviously such 'confessions' are often false and procured after brutal torture. But the media simply projects these statements as supposed evidence, and then weaves this picture of Muslims as terrorists (Sahi)." However the same media had refrained from doing the same with Hindu fundamentalists and had completely failed to anticipate a Hindu Terrorist attack as was exposed in the case of Malegaon blasts. Vinod Mehta, senior journalist and editor of *Outlook* enquiring into the allegations of media unfairness towards Muslims, admits that the media tend to go for the hard line voices because they are easily available and make interesting, saleable copies or bytes (Mehta).

Finding the Market

The publishing industry, cinema, and media are all part of the Althusserian notion of the "Ideological State Apparatus" and perpetuates the dominant ideology of capitalist society. However, given the variety and omnipresent nature of the media in this age, governments across the world have realized that propaganda in its conventional sense is no longer a sensible option (McNair 195). The silences and gaps in these graphic novels, films and media reports allow us to see this ideology at work. The capitalist ideology being rooted in the ideas of modernity and manifesting in the projects of colonization and globalization would hate to admit that the specter of terrorism haunting the world is its own creation. It needs to perpetuate the narrative of Muslims as anti-modern, irrational and violent and indulge in a categorization of Muslims into good and bad for its own sustenance. By tacitly endorsing the theory of clashing of civilizations and thereby divorcing economic and political reasons, it seeks to hide the fact that the recent western interventions in the Middle East and Afghanistan has its roots in the lure of the petro dollars and the unfinished business of Cold War years.

The nascent Indian graphic novel industry's reluctance to engage in a counter narrative discourse, like its American counterpart of the 1960s, is largely dictated by the market and social conditions. Being the insignificant part of the 2,400 Cr Indian Book industry (English)

graphic novels cannot but follow the ideology of the market. It is unable to compete with the sales figures of say, Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone*, estimated to have sold over 700,000 copies (Business World, May 11, 2008). The graphic novel industry in India seems to have a pre-conceived notion of the reader whom it seeks to address. It positions itself as being above the pulp fare churned out by the traditional comic book industry, and the profile of the reader that it intends to court does not encompass the larger generation who has grown up reading Amar Chitra Katha and other indigenous comic books of the 1970s and 1980s. As Sarnath Banerjee puts it in an interview with Samit Basu:

> Historically comics reading population was quite narrow-minded, people could make an acute demographic profile of an average comic book reader. However that profile has changed already, at least in the west….The comics form is crossing over to Cinema and advertising. In short these are exciting times for comics. Unfortunately, I feel we have to wait till it gets filtered down from the western, particularly the American market. In France the first print run of comics is 10,000 copies even for a beginner, in India 5,000 copies is the magic number, it means you are a bestseller.

With such an overriding economic concern, it becomes unproductive to be counter narrative since the prevalent national narrative on terrorism is so pervasive. Being counter narrative runs the risk of being branded anti- national and scorned by the public. Existing in a rapidly liberalizing economy, the Indian graphic novel industry has looked to cater to a readership of a post- literate middle class fed on the ideology of globalization and armed with amazing purchasing power (Banerjee). This section of the society with a strong desire for upward mobility has been exhibiting a strong admiration and longing for a globalised Meta culture that is undoubtedly Western and particularly American (Jacob). The dress codes, food habits, and the deserted regional language medium schools in India provide proof of the overarching presence of this globalised Meta culture. Pavan K. Varma in his seminal study on the Indian Middle class has identified a crippling ideological bareness coupled with a total absence of any credible appeal to social commitment or a moral imperative that can counter the obsession with personal gain and promotion plaguing this particular class (Varma). Surprisingly,

inspite of the obvious contradictions, globalism and nationalism—nationalism preaches the virtues of the nation state while globalism preaches that of the global—both products of modernization and the ideology of modernity, remain the two most important discourses exerting influence in the polity and society of contemporary India. Striving for homogeneity, standardization, and conformity unites these discourses. The pervasiveness of these two discourses forces the graphic novel in India to surrender its counter narrative history and meekly follow the diktats of the market and the ideologies that govern it.

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Paradigms of Beauty:
A Post Feminist Reading

Sebastian A. V.

Introducing their work, *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*, Gill Plain and Susan Sellers critique, "Journalists and commentators write of post feminism as if to suggest that the need to challenge patriarchal power or to analyze the complexities of gendered subjectivities had suddenly gone away" (11). A strong objection to the media representation of feminism is also found in "Birthing Terrible Beauties", by Ipshita Chanda when she says that there is an attempt by the media to obliterate the political project of feminisms…(228).This enunciates a reflection of the complacency feminists commonly experience. Feminists are historically oriented. They fail to notice the androcentric indoctrinations . After the centuries long struggle to emancipate women from the clutches of patriarchal representations – resulting a period of successful social transformation – there exist a dilemma as to what next. It is not yet time to take a break. There are new strategies to control and manipulate women in every postmodern possibility. Such an attempt is seen in the formation of beauty concepts.

In this paper an attempt is being made to juxtapose two beauty concepts of the present era. One is the thriving fitness industry, where men turn themselves to muscled, "six packed" body builders. The other is slimming industry where women tread to become "prefect 10", slim beauty. The reflection of the two trends can be seen in all media representations. Whatever be the product the slim models promoted their slimness itself got more popularized. It was an ad within an ad. The task attempted here is to ignite a discourse on the two beauty concepts of our age: the six pack and the perfect 10 slim beauty. The post feminist outlook will focus more on slimness to see whether there are any patriarchal engineering behind the concept.

The beauty concepts have changed from age to age keeping intact the design which nature has installed in man and women to attract each

other. The changes are due to the option of peripheral modification. Dr. Devendra Singh of the   University of Texas, an evolutionary psychologist, after spending years examining representations of women through history found that there was a trend for slightly larger women in the 17th and 18th centuries-a trend typified by the paintings of Rubens. Dr. Devendra Singh measured hundreds of statues beginning different centuries and referred early century literature to study the beauty concepts of the specific time. He notes that even though the preference was for fleshy, buxom women the slender waist was a recurring demand throughout the ages. The waist hip ratio was a sign of well fed woman. The ages that followed gave less importance to health. The change of the former trend can be seen in the centuries that followed. A 19th century magazine, *Women's Own Book of Toilet Secrets* pictures a slim woman highlighting the criterion to be slim:

> Five feet 5 inches in height, weight 128 pounds. Arms extended should measure from tip of middle finger to tip of middle finger just 5 feet 5 inches … A woman of this height should measure 24 inches around the waist, 34 about the bust, if measured under the arms, and 43 if measured over them. The upper arm should measure13 inches; the wrist 6 inches. ("Dimensions of Perfect Women" 1)

Along with the plump to slim process slimness itself intrinsically became more and more slim. In the 1960's women were slimmer due to the increasing influence of the fitness & slimming industry. Sara Joynt in *fashionspot.com* describes beauty ideals through the 20th century from Camilla Clifford (1900's), Clara Bow(1920's), Greta Garbo (1930's), Veronica Lake (1940's), Marilyn Monroe(1950's), Twiggy – exceptionally slim (1960's), Farrah Fawcett (1970's), Brook Shields(1980's) and Kate Moss (1990's).The gradual shift from slim to slimmer is evident in these beauty ideals. In Bollywood too heroines of yester years have been replaced by slimmer women. The debutantes who were looking rather fleshy in their first films confirmed themselves to the ongoing discourse of slim beauty. Rani Mukherjee, Kareena Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Parineeti Chopra etc. epitomize the transformation.

In cyborg too the trend followed. Women were depicted slim with hour glass figure. The animation films, games and porn sites inculcated slimness into women's beauty. Walt Disney's Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella are modeled after the present slim beauty concept. They are followed by the new generation heroines Belle, Ariel and Jasmine.

The birth of beauty contests created indelible understanding that slimness was a social necessity. The first modern American pageant was staged by P.T Barnum in1854. In 1880, the first Bathing Beauty Pageant took place as a part of a summer festival to promote business in Rehoboth beach, Delaware. Universal studios Inc. produced a newsreel of the Texas centennial celebration beauty pageant in 1935, which shows models attempting to fit into life-sized cut outs of the centennial committee's concept of the perfect slim figure. The cut-outs with perfect female figures were a projection of the patriarchal mind in its modeling of a mould to conceptualize women's beauty. Desmond Morris giving exact measurements for slim women says: "to be youthfully feminine it is doubly important to have a small nose, hands like pianists -more flexible, hour glass shape of torso, slender waist and waist –hip ratio to be 7:10" (Morris 6,161). The model recruiting agencies standardized the requirements for modeling. The model requirements from 'Gemini models' (figure: 1) gives a glimpse of the socialized modeling beauty paradigms of the times:

Model requirements									
Type of Modelling:	Appearance and Physical features:	Age Group:	Len-gth:	Wei-ght:	Bust Size:	Cup Size:	Waist Size:	Hip Size:	Dress Size:
EDITORIAL MODELLING	Tall, thin build, narrow hips, smaller bust, and usually young…	14-24 yrs	5'8" - 6'0"/ 1.75-1.84m	113-128 Ibs/ 51-58 kg	32"-34"/ 81-86 CM	A, B OR C	66 cm/ 26"	90 cm, 35½"	4,5, 6
RUNWAY/ RAMP MODELLING	Young, very tall, slender and move very well in clothes. (Very thin, narrow hips, small bust)	14-early 20's	5'9" and taller/ 180 cm	22"-25"/ 56-63.5 cm	32"-34"/ 81-86 cm	A or B	22"-25"/ 56-63.5	33"-35"	0-6

CATALOGUE MODELLING	Young, very tall, slender and move very well in clothes. (Very thin, narrow hips, small bust)	14-25 yrs	5'7" or taller/ 1.70 cm or taller	110-125 Ibs/ 50-57 kg	32"-35"/ 81 cm	--	22"-25"	33"-36	4,5,6
PRINT MODELLING	Print Models must be tall with a slender figure & attractive	14-25 yrs	5'7'-5'9"/ 1.70	110-130 Ibs/ 50-59 KG	34"-86 CM	--	24"	34"	4,5,6
LINGERIE MODELLING	No cellulite or excessive muscles, thin waist, narrow hips, fuller bust. Flawless skin, not much body hair…	18-28 yrs	5'6"-6/ 1.70-1.83M	90-140 Ibs/ 41-63.5 kg	32"-36"/ 81-91.5 cm	C-cup	22"-26"/ 56-66 cm	34"-35"/ 86-89 cm	

Figure: 1 ("model requirements"   *geminimodels.co.za/*)

Even though there are slight differences found in various sites of modeling for each category, the parameters of the present slim beauty concept for women are clearly mentioned. The five feet five inch height in the 19th century is a little hiked by 2 or 3 inches in the present era (figure 1)

Men on the other hand had a reverse course of beauty concept. They started to grow their muscles, thighs, arms and belly. "Six pack" is the most common term to denote the body building paradigms. From Eugen Sandow, the father of modern Body building, the fever has made imprints in every globalizing culture. Hollywood heroes like Arnold Schwarzenegger- who was Mr. Universe (1967) and Mr. Olympia (1970 to 1980), and the James Bond fame, Sean Connery (third place in 1950 Mr. Universe), popularized the body building fad. In Bollywood there was a bent in the 1990's to go "six pack". Salman Khan was the first to get acclamation to be "six pack". Saif Ali Khan and Hrithik Roshan followed. Sharuk Khan and Amir Khan the big shots who persisted in retaining their natural body too slowly turned six pack. Rajeev Singh, who won the Man Hunt international pageant in 2001, added popularity to fitness lifestyle in India.

Naturally there are differences in the food habits of men and women. *FoodNet* population survey conducted in 2006-2007 over 14,000 American adults from May 2006 to April 2007 states that men were significantly more likely to eat meat and poultry products especially duck, veal, and ham, shrimp and oysters. Women, on the other hand were more likely to eat vegetables and fruits. When it comes to body building and slim beauty the difference increases. Man further increases his consumption many fold to be anabolic and women shrink to a harder diet to secure herself within the design of slimness. The food habits turn politically important as there is a call to limit the consumption of food because of the growing demand and inadequacy of food supply. The food habits of the body building legend Lee Labrada and Miss Universe 2012, Miss Olivia Culpo, highlight the difference. Lee Labrada announces that he ate every three hours   "I ate every three hours, and that those meals contained exact ratio of proteins, carbohydrates and fats to optimize the muscle building process... In addition to the protein, I would take in every complex carbohydrates in the form of sweet potatoes, black beans and rice, lentils and rice, whole grain cereal such as oatmeal, vegetables and then some fruit in the form of apples or other low calorie fruit...Additionally I would consume up to one gallon of water every day" (Lee Labrada/ *bodybuilding.about.com*).

It is here that women come to balance the intake. When he takes six meals per day she is happy with three or less. Miss Olivia Culpo's diet give a relief to the emerging population: "...Stick to a low carb, high protein diet...I eat breakfast, and then I'll have a snack of almonds or something. Then a lunch of high protein, low carb then another snack of fruit..." (Chang "Miss USA diet workout").

When women seemed a threat man contained her in every sphere, spacing her in subordinate roles. Aristotle proclaimed women as lacking certain qualities. Rousseau placed women at the mercy of man's judgment mentioning her place in front of law. Freud, psychologically, held women to be jealous and wanting. Politically, she was second 'because women have no interests separate from those of their husband or father, they have no need for independent political representation'

(Mill, J.S. qtd. in Bryson 15). Religion spaced her as an object of sport, as Manu says "killing a women, like the drinking of liquor is only a minor offence"(Chandrababu & Thilagavathi 9). In literature woman finds less space as Anne Finch puts it:

> Alas! A woman that attempts the pen,
> Such an intruder on the rights of man,
> Such a presumptuous Creature, is esteem'd,
> The fault, can by no vertue be redeem'd
>
> (Finch, qtd.in Plain and Sellers.30)

Industrially, every product man created for her also underwent a gradual process of slenderizing. Two wheelers like TVS- Scooty, Hero Honda- pleasure, Bajaj- Wave DTSi, Mahindra- Rodeo and Duro etc... echo the mind of the patriarchal designers, bound in an everlasting decorum of slimness. The muscular truck created by MAN Truck &Bus AG, based in Germany, comes with an axiom 'consistently efficient' which is propitious to man, revealing the binary design set apart for him, and juxtaposing him against the slender woman. In fashion industry, the women models are to ramp on a straight narrow line, a guideline of man, with less space to ramp- a tight rope walk. Male ramp models, on the other hand, walk with feet farther apart than female models. He has a wider space to walk. Interestingly, the cat walk shoes of women are so designed that they take less space on the floor. They lessen the feet-Earth contact zone, making women to be reduced down to Earth. Culturally, she was placed in the kitchen. The kitchen-a home with in a home for woman- is further reduced as the kitchen appliances are made sleek and slim. It's here in the kitchen women have been spaced as the archetypal provider, imposing on her lots of virtues.

Motherhood was the first virtue man instituted to contain women: "The values attached to motherhood in human societies undoubtedly establish the indomitable hold of patriarchy over women's biology" (Nisha Singh 192).The first virtue is credited as the archetypal server of food. The role starts with pre-natal feeding, passing through breast feeding, bottle feeding, spoon feeding, hand feeding, and off- hand feeding. Firestone opines that this roles handicapped women over the

centuries: "The heart of women's oppression is her childbearing and childrearing role" (Firestone, qtd.in Bryson182). The virtue is better understood considering three words "pre-serving", "serving" and "re-serving". "Pre-serving" is the state prior to serving. Serving is the actual allocation. Dr. Johnson's dictum; "nature has given women so much power" stands for "pre-serving" (a priori) and "that the law has wisely given them little" stands for "serving", the inadequacy of which caused the origin of feminist movements. The act of serving decides the boundary of equality and inequality. "Re-serving" is the remedial distribution after the inadequacy of the first serve which feminists can claim as the result of feminist movements (a posteriori). The reservation that women enjoy today is "re-serving".

The former world food programme executive director Josette Sheeran, when asked what can be done to defeat hunger, answered as follows:

> My answer is simple; empower women, because women are the secret weapon to fight hunger… Women are not merely victims of hunger they are also the most effective solution to combating and preventing hunger…women also play a key role in guaranteeing food security for the household… in the hands of women food is more likely to reach the mouths of needy children. (*wfp.org*)

Woman as a provider is most praised because of her quality to deny food to herself for the sake of others. This quality is otherwise known as "de-serving"(herself). She has to balance between the demand and supply. UN warns of looming worldwide food crisis in 2013: "World grain reserves are so dangerously low that severe weather in the United States or other food exporting countries could trigger a major hunger crisis next year" (Vidal, *The Observer*). Now the only solution to manage the available resource is in women's virtues. Griffin, Susan, et al. assert that it is only women's values that can save the planet from ecological disaster (Bryson 185). Adrienne Rich adds: "Motherhood is not only a core human relationship but a political institution, a keystone to the domination in every sphere of women by men" (Singh 193).

Today she is ideologically orchestrated to remain slim. The previous virtues are camouflaged or metamorphosed as dieting, hour

glass figure, thigh gap, waist –hip ratio, size zero and so and so forth. Man, on the other hand, is constructing his body. He is building it. He grows anabolic. The fullness of his muscles, convex, bulging and projecting stands for his extrovert, strong, having and progressing nature. Woman's concave, receding curve symbolizes introversion, emptiness, shedding and giving up. She doesn't construct her body but demolishes it. She is reduced further and again to a slender size. The spacing of women to a lesser size has been, thus, culminated: "She is made to give, not to take" (Beauvoir 242). The slimming process can be otherwise called "missing". Women have missed enormously due to the androcentric interests. Her decision to be always "missing" in relation to men is "virtuefied" and vitrified by the beauty pageant titles like; Miss Universe, Miss World, Miss Asia Pacific and Miss India. Her body, on the pilgrimage to the titles given by the "governing bodies" of men, fasts, abstains, sacrifices and "de-serves" to achieve the sainthood of beauty, failing at the same time to recognize the insidious motifs of man.

Matrimonial ads represent the demands of the bride and the bridegroom. The classifieds contain the hierarchical bylaws of conventional social stigmas gathered in the marriage system. Therefore if any social change has been brought out, the matrimonial ads will reflect the social changes. When a man looks for a bride his demands are specified. The words "beautiful" and "good looking" mean the same but the criterion that makes one beautiful has been changed. "Slim" is the new criterion. The use of slim is on the increase in the matrimonial signaling another social change in the making. What is questionable in the matrimonial pages is, again, the spacing of women. One can seldom see a word about the physical appearance or standard women prefers of men. The demands of women are not freely expressed as they are prepared under male governance. Therefore the absence of the word six pack or anabolic in the matrimonial voices not the anti-trend but the trend of spacing her voiceless.

The other trend is "thinspiration", something at the end of the road which worries man. Women compete each other to be more and more slim resulting in "thinspiration"- a deteriorated slimming strategy

leading to anorexia. It is glamorizing the serious illness. His concept of slim beauty has gone beyond his control. Achilleas Constantino, the founder of London fashion week commented that women should be slim for their man – but not size zero. He voices the worry of the men who fear the de-construction of beauty concepts. Constantino warns every country to ban the skinny models as Israel has done it: "Although other countries have taken steps to prevent size zero, they have not introduced legislation; a step I believe should happen in the U.K" (Waterlow "Women Should Be Slim For Their Men But Not Size Zero"). There are two ways to look at thinspiration: one as leading to serious illness and the other as a protest to fight back the construction of beauty concepts. A Slogan of "thinspiration" is ; "Everything looks good on skinny", ("thinspiration quotes" *tumblr.*). It is a call for women to be martyrs of beauty. The web sites on thininspiration are now turning to be dogmatic principles of the new community. The Barbie image iconize the thin, skinny, size zero concept. Valeria Lukyanova-the human Barbie is the ideal of thinspiration. On the other hand another model Valeria Levitina, an anorexic, is an ideal victim of thinspiration. She is known as the "Live corpse". The gap between Valeria Lukyanova and Valeria Levitina is dangerously narrow. The pressure to look slim is taking a worrying toll not only on teenagers but also on woman in their fifties and sixties. US News Health posts a statistics of eating disorders: "Among western women between 15 and 24 years old, approximately 1 out of every 200 suffers from anorexia nervosa, while about 1 in 50 is bulimic" ("Eating Disorders" *health.usnews.com*).

It will be improper to conclude the attempt on paradigm of beauty without showcasing the new trends. Now the trend is to focus women not as whole but in parts creating "navel specialists", "cleavage and lips experts" etc… who are generated through the celluloid. When a heroine dances, it's her navel or eyes or lips which are focused on. Slowly they turn images which symbolize women. The symbols to represent women are engineered to give her less place in the very act of representing in media. In the language of film the symbols save lots of space, time and money when instead of the whole woman figure, her parts are made to pronoun her. On course of time as her body in fragments symbolize, her existence also will be treated with symbolic importance. The

fragmented body itself will become a symbol of her own fragmented cultural existence.

The paradigm of beauty is a participation in the social conditioning. Woman's body is the signifier to which many a meanings are signified. She is a multi-signified signifier: "The body cannot escape embodiment: it remains enmeshed within webs of signification" (*Plain and Sellers* 330). Kate Millet's distinction between sex and gender is to be slightly rewritten to accommodate the phallocentric engineering behind women's body as 'sex is determined biologically, while gender is culturally, socially, psychologically and [physically] constructed through historical and social conditioning'. Being a body shapeless and spaceless, subjected to the shaping of man, becoming another body of shapelessness and "spacelessness", is the aim of genderization. For man, beauty- conceptualized woman remain as a symbol of post modern harem where culturally readied-a new version of the old cut out of the centennial committee's concept of the perfect slim figure - women are specially set apart and made easily accessible to "fast sex". Man, thus, securing his place wide and safe, securing his body, preserving enough food for his muscles – denying her all the same –moves on conceptualizing concepts one after another, once again alerting feminists to form discursive "antiviral" programme or a strategic essentialist approach to keep in check the social system of women and to escape from the paradigm that woman is what figure makes.

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Framing the Dalit: The Subaltern Subject in *Sadgati*

Alwin Alexander

Introduction

Satyajit Ray's *Sadgati* is a film adaptation of Premchand's short story "Sadgati" (Deliverance). The story satirizes the caste discriminations prevalent in India. It revolves around the poor and out-caste village tanner/chamar Dukhi who goes to the village Brahmin/pundit to get an auspicious date for his daughter's marriage fixed. But the pundit demands labour without pay in exchange. Dukhi succumbs to the febrility aggravated by this excruciating labour. The narrative involves a profound discourse on the issue of untouchability and its vacuity. This article explores the injustice of caste system, the vicious circle of poverty and social ostracism, from the perspective of Subaltern Studies. The semiotic systems that are inherent in the representations of the dalit, the formation of dalit alterity within the original text and its dynamics in the adapted version are also examined. The chain of subaltern signification and its politics in these subversive texts are analysed using Spivakian tropes.

Representation of Dukhi as Subaltern

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her essay "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular", says, "The reasonable and rarefied definition of the word subaltern that interests me is: to be removed from all lines of social mobility" (476). She continues to note; "Subalternity is a position without identity" (476). The concept of identity here is not an essentialist, but a positional one. Identity here does not mean the traditional stable core of the self but the process of becoming and recognition. It is precisely this becoming and recognition, in other words mobility, that the subaltern is deprived of in his/her position as the 'subaltern'. Dukhi, the dalit protagonist of Ray's film adaptation represents this 'position without identity' and 'impossibility of mobility'.

In him is constituted a space of othering and difference, distinct from the upper class pundit (Brahmin). His caste/subalternity is a discursive construct (not biological) which is formed and sustained by social performatives, unaltered. Ray's film adaptation of the short story is significantly faithful to the original literary text of Premchand. Yet, the semiotic environment of the celluloid gives him a liberty to employ paradigms of signification to portray subalternity, in a way absent from and unrealizable in the literary form. The binary relationship of the subaltern/subordinate with the dominant group is efficaciously traceable and expressible only in the simultaneity of juxtaposition, possible in movies and not in the linearity of the literary text. Dipesh Chakrabarty testifies to this binary relation and says, "the word 'subaltern' in Subaltern Studies… refers to the specific nature of class relationships in India, where relationships, at almost all levels, are subsumed in the relations of domination and subordination between members of the elite and subaltern classes…" (375). This manifest binarism necessitates a concomitant treatment in its representations, and Ray's adaptation obliges with the same.

Satyajit Ray employs signifying processes on different levels to precipitate the dalitality/subalternity of Dukhi on the screen. The primary distinction is between the realms of corporeality that they occupy and move in. Dukhi reaches the pundit's house without having his breakfast (a frugal one in aluminium bowl and tumbler, for that matter). This is contrasted with the sumptuous food that the Brahmin has in his shiny steel plate and other vessels. Food is used here by Ray as a signifier to signify the dalitality of Dukhi. In Lacanian terms there is "an unexpected precipitation of meaning" (66) here. The signifier 'food' goes beyond provoking the signified/concept of 'nutrition' and signifies the discursive reality of inferiority/superiority and the economic experience of lack/surplus. Into this binary comes a third signifier, the food prepared for the Brahmin by Jhuria (Dukhi's wife) served in plates of mohwa leaves made by Dhania (Dukhi's daughter). There is a polysemy in this signification, giving rise to discursive ambiguity. The food prepared for the Brahmin is a polysemantic metonymy that conflates and yet retains conflicts simultaneously. Ray problematises the whole notion of casteism in this one frame. The food and mohwa leaves

on a peripheral level, signify 'superiority' and 'holiness' respectively. But there is a sliding of the signifieds possible here and at a deeper level these signifiers could also signal 'inferiority' (of the dalits) and their apparent 'unholiness'; for it is the deficiency of food, the insufficiency of their cot and the impossibility of borrowing it from the headman's house that makes them prepare it. The signifier 'food' becomes a space for the sliding traces of these signifieds. There is a deliberate subversion inherent in this deconstructive reading of the metonymy of food. Images of edibility and consumption appear in the scenes where husk is obtained by Dukhi for the cow, tobacco (beedi) procured by him for a smoke and the pundit chews pan after lunch. More than being a signifier for the feed of the cow, husk signifies the absence of seed or kernel. It stands for the refuse and symbolizes Dukhi's plight as an outcast, marginalised. Smoking conventionally signifies leisure. But in Ray's frame it's a riposte signifying labour, hunger, vacuity and futility – all subaltern realities. The pundit's pan stands as a rejoinder to this subalternity of Dukhi, signifying leisure. Yet, Ray's craftsmanship retains traces of the dalit's labour in the pundit's pan, depicting the latter after the former.

Satyajit Ray through his adaptation demonstrates the possibility of subaltern signification at a visual level as he shows how the elite gaze refuses reciprocal respectful recognition to the subaltern. He treats the body as a field of signification that can be interpreted visually. Through Dukhi and the pundit he represents the dominant discourse which has ordered the body and delineates a grammar of the body that signifies subaltern physicality. The subaltern is robbed of an identity and is constrained to conform to the expectations of an elite gaze that does not recognize him or allow him mobility or change. The dominant discourse only reads him with a string of empty caste/class signifiers constituting a visual grammar of the subaltern/elite body. Ray presents the bodies as texts and explicates the significations inherent in them. The lean frame of Dukhi is deftly contrasted with the corpulent figure of the pundit. Dukhi's emasculated figure with its subservient gestures and postures are signifiers that evidence his subaltern consciousness, to use a Spivakian term in a negative sense. The pundit's glorious figure with sandalwood markings on appears divine to Dukhi and he cannot

help but fall prostrate. The closed, well groomed, shiny body of the pundit is a signifier not just of graceful and fine living but also of his voluptuous patriarchy, exploitative suaveness and intimidating oppression, heightening the subaltern self consciousness of Dukhi.

The language of physical signification in the movie extends beyond the body to its performatives as well. Judith Butler in her work *Bodies that Matter* says:

> Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. (95)

One of the iterated performatives of the body of Dukhi is 'hard labour' and of the pundit is 'rest'. The repeated performances of these activities constitute their respective subjectivities. 'Hard labour' for the dalit does not signify financial gain but drudgery, exploitation and helplessness where as 'rest' signifies not leisure or weariness but superiority and dominance over the subaltern. It is the subaltern's hard labour that allows rest to the elite. The signifier of rest attains another level of meaning when Dukhi takes rest. In the space of the subaltern's body 'rest' becomes a signifier of fatigue, starvation, subordination and inferiority. The performative of the dalit's body continues even after his death. The dead body of Dukhi troubles the pundit. He is perturbed by the possible stench of the corpse, the loss of his ceremonial sanctity by touching the corpse, the non-cooperation of the chamar men, the difficulty faced by the other Brahmins in fetching water from the well across the street (due to the corpse) and the probable police case. The pundit drags the body to the outskirts of the village and dumps it where the carcasses are left. Paradoxically the dead body of Dukhi signifies excitement (as he animates the pundit to work) and by extension, life.

Certainly, the skeletal remains of the animals signify the sub-human existence of Dukhi. But it cannot be refuted that the signification of 'Dukhi's body with that of the animal skeletons' could be subversively interpreted as the bestiality of the dominant class. After the pundit gets back he takes a bath and performs the purification rites. But the axe that Dukhi used is seen remaining stuck in the log, signifying the performativity of the subaltern perpetuating subalternity. For there would come some other hand to hold that axe!

The title of Ray's movie is *Sadgati,* yet in brackets he adds the title of the English translation – 'Deliverance'. When the story concludes it comes full circle with a sense of anguish. The last scene where Dukhi's body lies with the carcasses must be perceived as an interpretation of the title. Yes, certainly, but which title? *Sadgati* or *Deliverance*.? They surely have different significations! And the filmmaker, it seems, plays on this equivocation. If it's 'Deliverance', who is being delivered? Is it Dukhi, from the travails of this life (as is understood conventionally)? or the pundit, from the inconvenience caused by the corpse? The translation of the word as 'deliverance', involves an epistemic violence, when it is generally (and easily) understood as 'Dukhi's deliverance, in a metaphysical sense. The physical reality of the subaltern must not be obfuscated. This is what Dukhi's body symbolizes. 'Sadgati' could be literally translated as 'good passage' or 'ultimate condition'. These translations would problematize the issues of untouchability and the state of subalternity in their physical dimensions by demanding a solution. The solution must be experienced in this life, physically and not in the other world, metaphysically. The term 'sadgati' is a location of multiple significations and Ray exploits all of their ambiguities to highlight the plight of the subaltern.

Conclusion

Dukhi's experience demonstrates the singularity of the subaltern experience. Spivak says, "Subalternity cannot be generalized according to the hegemonic logic" (475). The singularity of Dukhi's experience is acute and particular. It is only the experience (as subaltern experience) that can be repeated and not 'Dukhi's experience' or Dukhi himself. Such generalizations would result in hegemonic expansionism.

The repetition of the subaltern experience is "how the 'human' is repeated-in-difference in single humans" (480). This Deleuzian notion of singularity is metaphorically presented by Ray through Dukhi's loneliness in his final journey. Dukhi's singularity retains the subaltern problem in the realms of public space and discourse.

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Watching a Movie and Reading a Novel: Adaptation of *Paleri Manikyam Oru Pathirakkolapathakathinte Katha*

Radhika K. S.

When the plot of the novel is adapted for a movie, the functions of the author, the material and the spectator are redefined. The arrival of cinema as a new art form, a form which is able to narrate with its own resources, a story which is told previously in other art forms like novels, poems and short stories, brought about a radical change in the traditional technique of storytelling. Being a visual medium, with moving pictures, it could provide a visual narration of the details once read and imagined. By employing aesthetic and narrative techniques to transform the characters and situations into the other medium, the film maker, performs subtle operations to achieve his end. The study facilitates learning and comparing the technicalities of both of the word picture and the moving picture. Thaiz Forges in his article "Is Adaptation Truly an Adaptation?" says:

> The process of adaptation has been seen as unidirectional – going always from literary text to film – with priority for the former at the expense of the latter. Consequently, the study of adaptation tended to concentrate on the comparison between two types of text and the measure of success attained transferring from one to the other. In summary, the concern of critics has been to verify the faithfulness of the film compared to the work of fiction, that is, if the film manages to capture all the elements of the narrative: plot, characters, etc. (218)

A historical study of Malayalam movies proves the fact that many of the popular Malayalam movies owe their origin to Malayalam literature. Starting from Changampuzha Krishna Pillai's *Ramanan,* which is made into a movie with the same title, there is Vaikom Muhammed Basheer's *Neelavelicham* as *Bhargavinilayam*. Later came

films like *Mazha* based on Madhavikkutty's *Nashtappetta Neelambari* and *Thoovanathumbikal*, an adaptation of Padmarajan's *Udakappola*. Many film makers experiment with the adaptation of literary texts for their movies, either attracted by the scope of achieving the popular appeal or compelled by a social necessity of presenting the subject of the literary text in the visual form.

In case of T.P. Rajeevan's *Paleri Manikyam Oru Pathirakkolapathakathinte Katha*, the adaptation becomes challenging: the narrative technique is complex and the novel represents a regional society. More than a narrative which deals with the murder of lower class woman victimized by the patriarchal bourgeoisie assault, the text presents a history of the events and individuals who mould the culture and social life of a village called Paleri. When this text is adapted for a movie with the same title, its total framework shrivels itself into a story of the murder and its investigation, with the omission of many characters and events.

Being a novel with innumerable meanings, *Paleri Manikyam* provides the reader with multilayered narration. Cheeru herself changes her story many times regarding Manikyam's death, starting from Manikyam's epileptic fits to Velayudhan's rape and murder of Manikyam. Connected to this murder, Chirutha again forms another perception in which Manikyam falls in love with Kunjaru Nair and continues her relationship even after her marriage. Chiruta's husband Othenan's demise is also interpreted in many ways by the people of Paleri. Although the multiple outlooks confuse the reader, they provide the reader with an amazing reading experience: consciously or unconsciously the reader too becomes a native of Paleri.

Instead of playing with the emotional world of the empirical spectator, the film maker tries to create the spectacular distancing with the sequences of scenes similar to that of Brecht's "Epic Theatre"(147 Stam). To provide the audience with the artistic experience, the film maker chooses Haridas as his tool to make Manikyam's destiny a universal one rather than that of a single woman in Paleri. In the movie, when Haridas narrates the story to his friend Sarayu, the scenes move away making both Haridas and the spectator alienated. Following the scene in which Haridas sits on a bench in the empty courtroom where

Judge Mary Kuriakkose declares the judgment, there comes the next scene, the judgement by Mary Kuriakkose. Again the film maker comes back to Haridas. To some extent, by taking this sequencing of scenes as his device, film maker achieves the universality of the theme which the novel portrays with more ease and clarity.

When the film maker tries to achieve a universal appeal through this series of scenes, knowingly or unknowingly he projects the visual pleasure of a patriarch. Though Haridas acts as an agent in bringing out the fact about Manikyam murder case in the novel text, in the movie, along with this, he represents a man who gazes at a woman. Here Manikyam is objectified and Haridas approaches the whole thing from the point of view of a male spectator. As Laura Mulvey states in her famous essay, "Visual Pleasures in Narrative Cinema":

> Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like. Hence the split between spectacle and narrative supports the man's role as the active one of forwarding the story, making things happen. The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extradiegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle. This is made possible through the processes set in motion by structuring the film around a main controlling figure with whom the spectator can identify. (5)

Haridas represents the male spectator who watches the traumatic experience a woman has undergone, with sympathy and not with empathy. Being the central character, it is with him that the audience identify themselves.

The complexity of adaptation arises because the movie text focuses on Manikyam, the individual, whereas the novel text concentrates on the story of Paleri, the place, by providing the reader with a wider perspective: here the reader's experience differs from that of the spectators. Each and every character in the novel text directly involves with Paleri, but the film maker has chosen only those characters who are related to the Manikyam murder case. This becomes an important

issue when one examines the significance of the characters likes Dharmadevan Namboodiri, Dharmadathan Namboodiri's son, Kunjaru, Manikyam's imaginary lover, Narayana Swami, the traditional toxicologist and Kittan. These characters form the inevitable part of the Paleri, but they do not appear in the movie.

Representing the many affected women in Paleri, Manikyam stands as a unique as well as universal example for those who endured the cruelties and sexual aberration of the rich class patriarchs. Manikyam, the twenty year old woman undergoes the traumatic experience of gang rape and death, and fifty years later someone finds out the truth, rather restates the truth in a logical manner. When the novel is transformed to a movie, there takes place an inter-semiotic translation: from words, the sign system shifts to visuals. But when such a change takes place the narration in the movie text seems to contradict of that of the novel text: instead of looking at Manikyam from the background of an extensive scenario, Paleri, the movie centers around Manikyam, the individual and stares at the society of the region Paleri. Manikyam came to Paleri from Aavala, her village after she is married to Pokkan and the marriage changed her destiny, rather destroyed her life. It is Ahammed Haji who wanted Manikyam to marry Pokkan so that he can use her whenever he wants. Thus the place called Paleri plays an important role in the plot.

When Sarayu and Haridas discusses the painful situations Manikyam had to face, Haridas states that a woman like Sarayu could not imagine or experience them. "For that you have to born like her in 1930s. A woman like you, who was born and brought up in great cities, who lived in those cities knowing its realities and falsehoods cannot complete the inner life of Manikyam who lived in a village 50 years before" (*Paleri Manikyam 50*). The title *Paleri Manikyam* shows that she became a victim just because she was married to man from Paleri and her experience is universal in relation to the other women in a village like Paleri, but it is unique when compared to the women from cities.

Some characters lose their totality and only a fragment is presented in the movie. This happens primarily in case of Chiruta, Manikyam's mother-in-law and the enigmatic character Murikkumkunnathu

Ahammed Haji. The pictorial description of Chiruta's abortion which throws light to her loveless relation with Haji and her pious love (*Paleri Manikyam Oru Pathirakkolapathakathinte Katha* 56) for Chandamman and it marks her real nature which is not that much evidently conceived in the movie. Murikkumkunnathu Ahammed Haji, too is present throughout the novel, but he appears only in the 51th scene of the movie. (*Renjithinte Randu Thirakkadhakal* 66) Here the filmmaker makes his first appearance in dramatic style, suitable for a movie, but it differs from his full-fledged presence in the novel. Kesavan's comment on Ahammed Hajis character goes like this, "Ahammed Haji is of an enigmatic character. He was a man of all virtues. He was ready to give anything to anyone. He was ready to help anyone. But, he has a bad eye"(56). If he sees something and likes it, it is sure that he will achieve it. But the author has given an aura of virtue, courage and love to Haji: he is a villain who possesses many heroic qualities, but the filmmaker fails to portray those qualities.

The last part of the novel is very powerful and touching as Haridas and Sarayu interpret Haji's order to Velayudhan regarding Manikyam. Haji asked him to silence her and Velayudhan has rightly interpreted it as murdering her. Haridas tells Sarayu that silence is the most powerful language in many situations and Haji has successfully made use of it. The same silence made Manikyam alive all these years as she told everything through her silence. If Manikyam had been alive she would not have been a historical figure. Manikyam's cry symbolizes the cry of a woman to gain freedom from the chains of patriarchal society. In spite of the discrepancies, the movie has given conciseness and compactness to the story line whereas the novel narrates many stories within the main plot. Being a subject of contemporary significance, the Manikyam story declares itself to be an independent entity beyond any medium of narration which makes the movie independent beyond the influence of adaptation.

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Gandhi through Western Eyes: a Post-colonial Reading of Attenborough's *Gandhi*

Preeti Kumar

Biopics or biographical cinema have become a popular mode of infotainment in the present day. However, this very popularity of historical cinema emphasises a need to engage seriously with historical films and understand the problematics of its production.

Post-modern thought posits the idea that history is not an unproblematic area or a simple record of facts or events of the past. It is, in the words of Chopra- Gant, a "contestable category" (Chopra-Gant 2) because every historian, academic or cinematic, selects certain data to create his narrative and this selection is not value-free. Chopra-Gant quotes Hayden White on the susceptibility of history to narrativization:

> The events must not only be registered within the chronological framework of their original occurrence but narrated as well, that is to say, revealed as possessing a structure, an order of meaning, that they do not possess as a mere sequence. (8)

As H. Carr puts it, though facts are imperative in the writing of history, "facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides which facts to give the floor, and in what order and context" (qtd in Chopra -Gant 4). History is thus mediated through the political, social and cultural ideologies of the historian. Considering that the majority of the public receives its knowledge about history from cinema, it is vital that cinematic narrative be analysed for the social and historical ideology that informs it.

So far as cinema is concerned, images are not produced in isolation – they are, as Gillian Rose says, socially constructed. Movies, thus, generally confirm a prevailing myth and appeal to the dominant historical and public understanding of an age – what Roland Barthes calls the 'doxa' of the time – its common sense assumptions

(Chopra- Gant 62-3). This is why the Gandhi film is easy to accept both by viewers in India and abroad. Films can be seen as an exposition of the hegemonic discourse prevalent in the culture in which they have been produced and received.

This paper seeks to analyse the critically acclaimed and hugely popular biopic, *Gandhi,* by Richard Attenborough and to examine how the historical events are represented so as to determine its ideological sub-text. While this paper does not assess the historical accuracy of the film, it analyses the distortion of events as an instance of how history is constructed. The mode of representing events using the cinematic language, the process of stylization and selection in *Gandhi* determine the degree to which the film represents an account of the colonial value-systems of the film-maker for "Orientalism reveals by proxy more about those that describe the Orient than the peoples and places that are being 'described'" (Mac Leod 41).

Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, a movie that took 20 years in the making, was based on secondary literary sources rather than on primary historical evidence. A historical film that relies on biographies and autobiographies interested in building legends and perpetuating myths will be twice mediated – once by the source itself and the second by the film (Gant 94). The prime motive of the film is more dramatic than strictly historical as is stated in opening scene explaining the filmmaker's approach:

> No man's life can be encompassed in one telling. There is no way to give each year its allotted weight, to include each event, each person who helped to shape a lifetime. What can be done is to be faithful in spirit to the record and to try to find one's way to the heart of the man (Attenborough *Gandhi*).

But the dramatic selection unconsciously reveals the subjectivity of the filmmaker and pertinently the latent assumptions of the colonial discourse. Two major representational techniques used in the film that show it as complicit in the colonial discourse are the prominence given to the European and English characters and the interpellation of Gandhi into the value-system of the colonizer.

The opening sequence with the funeral procession of the Mahatma is notable in that the only figures one recognizes are, apart from Nehru, Patel and Azad, all western – Mountbatten, Madeline Slade, and even the New York Times photographer, Vince Walker (a fictional journalist based partially on Webb Miller).

A major narrative technique used to make or unmake a public figure in biography is the use of 'voices' – the voices the audience hears during the cortege as radio broadcasts are all from Occidental leaders – the American Secretary of State, George C Marshall and the words of Albert Einstein. Gandhi "the brown man in the loin cloth" (*Gandhi*) is legitimized through the observations of 'white' voices.

Similarly, screen time is appropriated more by the 'white' followers and associates of Gandhi than Indian. It is notable that the English clergyman, Charles Freer Andrews, enters the movie within 15 minutes of its opening and is placed with the titular hero in every scene for one hour of screen time. Within 27 minutes of his exit, we see the entry of the next major associate – the daughter of an English Rear- Admiral – Mirabehn. The conflating of many characters to represent a general type is a directorial licence – however, the focus on Andrews and Mirabehn distorts the relative importance of both, at the expense of other characters that Gandhi was closely associated with for longer periods like Hermann Kallenbach, Mahadev Desai, and his numerous women associates – notably, Saraladevi Chaudrani and Sushila Nayar. Gandhi's rationale for asking Andrews to leave – so that he and 'they' (the citizens of India) can be sure that freedom can be won without the help of an Englishman – rings hollow when at every instance the frame shows an English ally of the Indian force. The representation of people as "...less capable and needing western paternalist assistance..." is a part of the colonial discourse (Rivkin and Ryan 1072).

Similarly, the English are, mostly, fair and just – violence and brutality is associated in the film with the constabulary, local hooligans and minor officials. The officers are for most part, either enlightened Christians – Mr. Baker, Judge R.S. Broomfield; or at worst, bewildered and isolated – Lord Irwin, Sir Edward. They are not the colonizing force, ruthless, ruling and misusing a subservient nation. The "'superior'

civilized order of the British outsiders" (MacLeod 18) is also seen in the references Gandhi himself makes to the fairness of English law, the freedom of the press, the courtesy of General Smuts and the trial of General Dyer.

Again, "Orientalism is ... a series of *images* that come to stand as the Orient's 'reality' for those in the West" (MacLeod 41). The opening shot is the conventional picture of the Ganga with women washing their clothes on its bank. The homecoming of Gandhi has shots of Indian life focusing on the poverty, destitution, filth and crowded homes of the natives.

The Western stereotype of the overpopulated timeless Orient, whose people are oddly "most comfortable" (*Gandhi*) on top of a train, is again evident in the train journey of Gandhi – Charles Andrews, Gandhi's companion, travels not only spatially but also temporally to an earlier unsophisticated world.

One of the most striking facts about *Gandhi* is how in the movie he seems to have "internalized the logic and speak[s] the language, perpetuates the values and assumptions of the colonizers" (MacLeod 18). His views are presented as a syncretic fusing of Indian with major Western models. From the very beginning, the movie has Gandhi reiterating his loyalty to the British Empire – thinking of himself as a British rather than a colonial subject and at no point are we shown the man who wanted to be known as the Indian O'Connell and looked to the Irish model of combining Home Rule with a cultural revival.

Fanon describes colonialism as "a denial of all culture, history and value outside the colonizer's frame; in short 'a systematic negation of the other person'" (qtd in Rivkin & Ryan 1088). In a narrative, what is omitted and ignored is as significant as what is stated. The interpellation of Gandhi into Western civilization necessitated omissions and silencing of those Gandhian practices and beliefs that would be unacceptable to the West. We do not see him comparing Swaraaj or Swadeshi to the ideology of the Irish Sinn Fein. Nor is in his uncompromising resolution during the Quit India movement do we hear his "Do or Die" call – ironically taken from a stanza in Tennyson's

Charge of the Light Brigade written to commemorate the fate of the British soldiers who perished in the Crimean war. Though these lines had a lifelong fascination for Gandhi and he used it to praise the heroism of Indian soldiers, the movie does not invoke the idea of military valour. His call for independence is negotiated through non-violent means alone. Culturally and religiously, he is eclectic with his constant references to Christ and the New Testament – "Love thy neighbour", "Doesn't the New Testament say, 'If your enemy strikes you on the right cheek, offer him the left?" (*Gandhi*). In the film he states how his diasporic experiences reinforce his lack of understanding of his country and his interpretation of his culture from abroad – "India is an alien country to me" (*Gandhi*). His food fads, his obvious religiosity which initiated the fissure with Jinnah and the Muslim League and his apologist stance on caste is nowhere in evidence. Gandhi's racial identity is destabilized as he is brought into the compass of European cultural values.

Gandhi can be seen as a part of the discourse of the Enlightenment thinkers who "were willing to admit a shared humanity with the colonized" and in that process "looked for those who conformed to the European ideal: high-minded, aristocratic ... or later, of primitive virtue" (Walden, 1083). Post-colonial theory posits how Orientalism gendered the Orient and Occident as binaries of gender – the East becoming " ... 'feminised', deemed passive, submissive, exotic, luxurious, sexually mysterious and tempting; while the West becomes 'masculine' – that is, active, dominant, heroic, rational, self-controlled and ascetic..." (MacLeod 45). Gandhi, in his numerous writings and speeches, spoke of his 'feminine' side and how he emasculated himself. However, the movie seeks to construct its hero in a masculine mould. He asserts himself before General Jan Smuts and his secretary, emphasises the ideal of dignity in wearing only a loin cloth, declares that he is not for "passive anything", asks for a "coldly rational" list of peasant's problems and dominates every frame with his commanding body language. The movie integrates Gandhi into the cultural signs and practices of the English.

Most Indians know Gandhi from this film than from text books they studied. However, even when Attenborough's *Gandhi* is a genuine

attempt to present on celluloid a historical account of the life and practices of Mahatma Gandhi, "it does not necessarily follow that a sympathetic representation of the Orient or the Oriental will automatically be from the latent assumptions of Orientalism" (MacLeod 48). The narrative devices used in Attenborough's *Gandhi* make it a part of the texts that incorporate the underlying colonial discourse on the Orient.

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Eco Critical Concerns in the Harvest Narratives Of Old and New Testaments

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Apart from being a religious text The Holy Bible contains history – a long and complex history of human civilization. Begun as oral traditions they became written traditions in the ancient languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. They were composed in the background and world vision of the culture of that time, limited by their geographical circumscriptions employing the literary forms available to them. The Bible as Harrington says "is the literature of a people, the Chosen people - God's people" (Harrington 17).

The people of the biblical times were essentially rural. Agriculture and farming practices provided the framework for the lives of the Israelites. For this reason the Bible is replete with agriculture and land imageries. Moreover, these references strikingly reveal the relationship between God, land and man. In the beginning of the sacred scriptures the creation story is given in two perspectives–the Priestly and the Yahwist account of creation. While the priestly account of creation has a certain liturgical solemnity and heavenly majesty about it, the Yahwist account of creation is earth oriented and very anthropomorphic.

The opening verses of the Yahwistic creation narrative in Gen2: 4b-15 reveals some basic information about agricultural conditions in the ancient Near East. The land is said to be dry. It needed water for things to grow. That water came from rivers and from God. We see these attributes of the land in this story because they are consistent with the farming experiences of the ancient Israel. The author points to the intimate bond between human beings and the earth by using two similar sounding words to underscore the relationship. Adam-man is taken out of Adamah-the ground or soil. The expression "to till the earth and take care of it"(Gen2 :15). The first assignment given to man confirms the bond between man and earth waiting expectantly for the human touch to transform the land shows that there exists an intimate relation

of affection and veneration between a farmer and his land.(*New Community Bible* 13)

Arid rocky soil (Is 5:1-2) filled with thorns and thistles (Gen 3:17-19) with limited water resources made agriculture a real challenge. The landscape of Judea, barren rocky and arid, conveys such a forcible impression of disquiet that it is astonishing to remember that it is forever associated with the memory of the love of God. (Rops 10)

Harvests were celebrated as festivals and were invariably linked with the life of the people. Among the six main festivals celebrated by the Jews, these were harvest related feasts. The feast Pasch came first. It falls in the month of Nissan which would be between March 15th and April 15th. During the seven day of Pasch or Azymes "bread made from the first produce of the new crop was to be eaten in its pristine state, i.e., untouched by leaven"(Jerome 61). After seven weeks i.e., fifty days the feast of Pentecost is celebrated. The Feast of Pentecost as such lasted only for one day on which loaves of bread made from the newly harvested wheat was offered in the temple along with other special sacrifices (Rocciotti 68). Since Pentecost celebrated the harvest of wheat, Pasch, the first harvest of the year is of barley which comes one and a half month ahead of wheat (Bible Dictionary) and was the staple diet of the poor. About six months after the Pasch came the feast of the tabernacles or ingathering (Levi 23:34) which fell on the 15th day of the month of Tishri, which would be end of September or beginning of October. It was celebrated at the end of the grapes and olive harvest. People built little booths of green branches like tabernacles in the square and on the terraces and there they disported themselves. Hence the name of the feast.In addition they went to the temple bearing a bunch of palm, myrtle and willow in the right hand and citrus fruit in the left. To symbolize the need for rain there were daily processions from a pool bringing water as a libation to the temple. The temple was illuminated with torches. "All three of these were among the Canaanites seasonal agricultural feasts progressively appropriated by the Israelites under the action of Divine providence in their History" (Boulet 24). The primary crops of the Bible include grain, grapes figs and olives. Grain crops were the staple food of rich and poor alike, although the

poor may have had to consume barley bread rather than the more palatable wheat (Cleary 80) In the parable of the sower (Mt13:3-23, Lk 8:5-15, Mk 4:1-20) we find a detailed account of sowing and the fate of the seed. Both barley and wheat was sown by scattering the grains into prepared land usually ploughed by draft animals.

> Seed was sown by simply scattering it with a wide sweep of the arm; we call it sowing broadcast. Obviously it was less accurate than modern methods. Moreover in Palestine the seed was often sown before the field was ploughed, so that if some seed went on the footpath or among the weed it would not matter all that much, as both path and weedy patch might be ploughed in when the plough came round. (Duckworth 80)

The Israeli agricultural methods then, unlike modern farming practices, were unsophisticated with primitive implements often used in harsh condition where rocky ground and vigorous weeds gave scanty harvest. Hence it would be quite normal for some of the scattered seed to fall on a path of compacted soil where it would not be covered and lie vulnerable to birds. Similarly some seeds would fall at the margins of the fields where thorny thickets and rapidly growing thistles easily suffocated the germinating wheat. Shallow soil and lack of moisture during the hot dry summer encouraged the withering of the seeds that did sprout into young plants on the field's outer borders. Those seeds that fell on moist, deep soil grew and matured their ears ready for harvest.

The book of Ruth provides a beautiful narration of the harvesting scene that was carried out by whole families and extra hired men, followed by poor women gleaners picking leftovers. Custom required that harvesters leave something in their wake for the needy, specifically the aliens, orphans and widows. A sickle was used to cut off the ears (Deut 16:9). All grains are not reaped using sickle. Dill, cumin and similar such grains are pulled by hands.The ears were held with one hand and then bundled together in small sheave to be carted off to the threshing floor (1 *Chronicles* 21:22) - a small cleared area of stamped earth or stone. The sheaves were spread on a flat rock or prepared earth. Animals were walked over the floor often dragging threshing

sledges (Amos 1:3). The threshing procedure also varies as narrated in Is 28: 27-29:

> Dill is not threshed with a
> threshing sledge,
> nor is a cart wheel rolled over cumin;
> but dill is beaten with a stick
> and cumin with a rod.
> Grain is threshed for bread,
> But one does not thresh it forever;
> One drives the cart wheel and
> horses over it,
> but does not pulverize it.
> This also comes from the Lord of hosts;
> He is wonderful in counsel,
> And excellent in wisdom.

The grains were swept together and separated from the useless chaff by winnowing. Farmers separated the barley from its chaff by tossing it into the wind. The heavier grain would fall to the stone floor while the chaff was blown away. Suitable winds crossed the Judean highland out of the west from about 2 pm until sunset, threshing started late in the day and continued until night fall The owners and workers spent the night at the threshing floor to prevent theft (Jerome Pg 608). A portion of the crop was always kept aside and carefully stored in dry condition for sowing the following year (Gen 47:24)

The grapes narratives in Is 5:1-7, Jer31:5,Levi25:3,Jn15:1-5,Mk 12:1-9, Ps 80:13, Sos 8:11-12, Mk 13:15, Rev 19:15, gives vivid images of vine dressing, pruning, harvesting and crushing. The stony hillsides of Judea were fenced and terraced to provide deep stone free soil where the rainfall could water the vines roots in winter. Dung and compost nourished the plants which needed to be trained over rock fences. Constant attention had to be given to the trailing branches of carefully chosen varieties in order to yield sweet green or black grapes. As harvest

time approached, the owners of the vineyards and their families camped near the vineyards in shelters or in stone - built towers (Is 1:8) to protect the grapes from animals such as jackals and wild pigs (Ps 80:13) and human thieves. When ripe, the grapes were picked for eating fresh (Is 65:21) drying in the sun as raisins (1Sam 30:12) or crushed for wine. Most vineyards had a winepress where the grapes were trodden under human foot (Neh 13:15; Rev 19:15) the juice collected in flagons or skins and fermented. During the winter the long shoots of the previous year's growth had to be pruned away from the vines to leave a few buds for the next season (Jn 15:2) (Butler 159). Olive and fig are the other crops. Though its harvest is not abundantly mentioned in the Bible, its growth and nurturing process appear in many places in the Bible.

A comparative study of the old and new Testaments brings to light the marked difference in the narratology of harvesting and the intended implications of each of the harvest traditions. The narration of the harvest festivals found in the Old Testament is in the Pentateuch particularly so in the book of Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus. The first five books of the Bible are referred to as the "Law" or "Torah" - a Hebrew word meaning "teaching" or "instruction." These are teachings given by God to men in order to regulate their conduct. Much of the priestly legislation found in the book of Exodus is the covenant code, it is the law of a pastoral and agricultural society. The Book of Leviticus displays the law of Holiness. The book of Deuteronomy gives the code as a reinterpretation of the earlier law.

Chapters 12 and 13 of Exodus give a description about the ritual celebration of the feasts of Passover and unleavend bread. These festivals as mentioned earlier were spring festivals celebrated by the people for the well being of their flocks and over the jubilation of the first fruits of the year(here barley and wheat). It is this "feast of Yahweh" which Moses was asking pharaoh's permission to celebrate in Ex 5:1. The narrative technique used in the chapters Ex 12, 13 is frame within frame. God speaks to Moses what Moses has to speak to the people. The first frame presents a setting of who said to whom and where as presented by the author (third person omniscient in the second frame God instructs Moses and Aaron to tell the people of his precepts and

finally the third frame is in direct speech second person narrative. Leviticus 23:8 also follows the same pattern. Whereas, Deuteronomy is in second person narrative. The feasts of harvest in all these passages are handed down as precepts or Laws. Keen observation of the narrative presents the intention of the author to change a harvest festival into a new religious ritual. All these festivals are put into historical relationships with the decisive event of the escape of Israelites from Egypt and thus are given a new religious significance. The ritual for annual feasts synoptic in Exodus Leviticus and Deuteronomy required the people to celebrate these festivals - Passover in remembrance of the escape of Israel from Egypt, the Feast of Unleavened Bread in recalling the law given at Sinai and the feast of Tabernacles to recall the years in the desert. Bible scholars point out:

> The insistence of the text on the date seems to bear out the fact that the unleavened bread was originally as an agrarian feast of the first full noon of spring which acquired a new religious meaning from the Exodus. Further on, the law of annual feasts promulgated (Ex 23: 14-18)..... (Ex 34: 18-22) where the feast above called the harvest is called "feast of the seven weeks" (Boulet 25)

The nucleus of these narrations are the mosaic laws which abound in the Pentateuch. History of the Israelites here is transformed and recast through centuries of experience. The nature of the writings owes much to the oral recitation in the sacral life of Israel. The reader senses this especially in Exodus 1-15, which functions as a Passover legend accounting for the feast and picturing the struggle of Yahweh with gods of Egypt as embodied in the pharaoh (Johannes Pederson Israel 629). The book of Leviticus contains laws which the priests of the tribe of Levi had to know, practice and teach. The book of Deuteronomy is the second book of law. While in Exodus and Leviticus the law is handed over to the Israelites by God through Moses, the book of Deuteronomy presents Mosses teaching the laws to the elders. By this it can be assimilated that the harvest culture of the Israelites in these narratives is intended to project the might of the God of Israel in protecting and relieving them from the tyranny of the Egyptians, and their obligations towards God. There is a law and a judgment.

This pattern is consistently followed throughout the OT harvest narratives. For instance Is 5: 1-7 The song of the vineyard..

Let me sing for my beloved

My love song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones,

and planted it with choice vines;

He built a watchtower in the midst of it,

and hewed out a wine vat in it;

he expected it to yield grapes,

But it yielded wild grapes.

And now,

inhabitants of Jerusalem

And people of Judah,

judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for

 my vineyard

that I have not done to it?

When I expected it to yield grapes

Why did it yield wild grapes?

This poem composed during the early years of Isaiah's ministry is in the form of a popular ballad sung at a vintage festival. By the end of the second verse the subtlety of the poem is exposed. The vintage ballad openly exposes the callousness of the Israelites in not performing their duties towards their God, and the punishments that would befall them. In 27:1-7 is yet another vintage ballad which uses vine as a metaphor for the Israelites and the gardener as the savior who would redeem the vineyard from enemies, restore it from punishments administered.

On the other hand harvest narrations in the New Testament is in a different tone altogether. In the New Testament we find Jesus Christ

the center of the Gospel replacing all the implications of the harvest rituals. The feast of the Tabernacle in Jn 7:1-13 is on the autumn harvest festival mentioned earlier.

The festival or the ritual itself is not the center but it forms the background where in Jesus, a faithful Jew practices these rituals in its true sense. Similarly Mt 26:17 depicts the final celebration of Passover and unleavened bread by Jesus with the emphasis not on the ritual but on Christ. The language in the Old Testament Harvest ritual narrative is terse owing to its function that is to instruct or rather to make a legislature. But the style in the New Testament changes. It is filled with signs and symbols, images and metaphors. It is due to its function to reveal. The Jews in the time of Jesus awaited a political - Messianic kingdom. In the NT the Passover is closely linked with the final sacrifice of Christ with the unleavened bread pointing to Christ who is the real bread, the true sustainer and nourishment. Here the harvest Feast becomes not the harvest of the grain, of barley and wheat but is the harvest of Eternal life.

The parable of the vineyard (Mt 20: 1-16) illustrates the dreadful condition of casual labor in the Hellenistic - Roman world. Vineyard owners look for unemployed men waiting to be hired. The story has a surprise ending; at the end of the day all receive the same wage, no matter how long they have worked. The owner of the vineyard obviously represents God. Jesus tells this startling story to open the hearts of his hearers to the love of the father.

Jesus quite easily picks up simple parallels from daily life to instill the thought of conservation and protection of nature. He is surely against hoarding up things which is hazardous for both man and nature. In this context his parable about the rich fool is significant (Luke 12:13-21). Jesus does not mean that people should be resigned to deprivation or destitution in their living condition. But his instruction is 'avoid every kind of greed'. It is in the context of a partition fight between two brothers that this parable comes up. The rich fool is a farmer whose land has produced a rich harvest. Instead of sharing the produce of the land with the needy the man is thinking of hoarding.

The basis of Christ's eco friendly philosophy is the precepts handed down by God as seen in the New Testament. The agricultural practices of the ancient Israelites reflect their understanding of themselves as stewards of land that was both a divine inheritance and a divine gift but that ultimately belonged to God. God exhorts them in Leviticus "the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. "(Levi 25:23). Therefore it can be understood that God desired cooperation from man to nurture nature when he put them in charge of it (Gen 2:15) and not complete ownership. Man's relation with God is in direct proportionality of his relation with nature. The first fall symbolizes man's future follies and its consequences. The fruit of the tree is a miniature of entire nature which he was instructed not to pluck. He distanced himself from nature by plucking the fruit and at the same time distanced himself from God. Whenever he sinned his land failed to produce yield (Jer 12:13,Is 7:23)

The Bible is filled with instructions for keeping the land healthy and fertile for a long time. Keeping the land fallow after a certain period allowed the regeneration of nutrients crucial to growth. There were also rules to protect the trees in times of conflict. Deut 20:19: "If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you?" The Israelites were bound to respect the earth under God's rules or face poor harvests, attacks from intruders, and ultimate expulsion from the land (Levi 20:22;26:14 -25). By all this it can be gleaned that this people were taught that their interactions with the land had real consequences for their health and safety. Their precepts provided an outline for environmental care.

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Mikhail Bakhtin and the Perception of the Carnivalesque: Robert Kroetsch's *Gone Indian*

Dr. Rakhi Raghavan

Contemporary trends in literary theory offer insights which illuminate a diverse variety of issues that the postcolonial text addresses. Mikhail Bakhtin's interpretation of the carnivalization of literature is perhaps one of the most influential instances of the recent developments not only in literary criticism but in cultural studies as well. The reception of Bakhtin's notion of "carnival" has been so substantial that this aspect of his philosophy has had the greatest influence among intellectuals around the world. 'Carnival' is Bakhtin's term for those forms of unofficial culture that resist official culture, political oppression and totalitarian order through laughter, parody and grotesque realism.

This paper attempts an exploration of Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque as embodied in Robert Kroetsch's *Gone Indian* which occupies a unique place among the group of revisionist texts that reshaped attitude towards North American Indians in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The carnivalesque, an idea first introduced in *Rabelais and His World* (Mikhail Bakhtin's dissertation on the French Renaissance writer Francois Rabelais, published in 1965) refers to a literary approach that undermines and liberates the assumptions of the prevailing atmosphere through humor and chaos. It is Bakhtin's attempt to democratize literature and theory, a study of how the social and the literary interact. Two subtexts that he identifies are (a) carnival or the carnivalesque, which he describes as a social institution and (b) grotesque realism, which he defines as a literary mode. Using the concepts of carnival and the culture of laughter – both of which helped the lower classes in medieval and Renaissance eras to parody official languages and conventional notions of high culture, Bakhtin proclaimed that the carnival liberated and empowered those in the inferior echelons of society. Carnivalization makes it possible to extend the narrow sense

of life; it offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things. The aspiration of carnival is to renew, unearth, challenge or even destroy the hegemony of any ideology that seeks to have the final word about the world.

Bakhtin divides the carnivalesque into three forms: ritual spectacles, comic verbal compositions, and various genres of abusive language. Although he divides the forms of the carnivalesque, they are often conjoined within the carnival. Carnivalization represents a theory of resistance, a theory of freedom from domination. Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia are two fundamental aspects of the carnival – plurality of voices, each bringing with them a different point of view, a different way of seeing the world. He asserts that two voices are the minimum for life, the minimum for existence, and if dialogism ends, everything ends. It is only when one is outside one's culture that one can appreciate and recognize one's own culture. It opens new possibilities for each culture, stimulating renewal and enrichment, creating new voices and new potentials that may culminate in a dialogic interaction. Thus the outsidedness of groups marginalized by a dominant ideology within non-carnival time gain a voice during carnival, commenting something about the ideology that seeks to silence them. Therefore, multiple voices come together in the free and frank communication that carnival permits and although each retains its own unity and open totality they are mutually enriched.

The novel traces the journey of Jeremy Sadness, the quintessential Kroetschian hero, from the American East to the Canadian northwest, seeking the frontier. Jeremy seeks liberation from the oppressions of academic life in the (American) East and initiation into a more open, non-categorized identity. The carnival in which Jeremy participates serves as a focal event and metaphor, and as a turning point in the development of his character. The carnival celebrates liberation from the prevailing truth and the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival is the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal, hostile to all that is immortalized and completed.

The final volume of the "Out West" triptych, the novel deals with several themes common to Kroetsch's oeuvre: differences between spoken and written language, distinctions between Canadians and North Americans, and contrasts between repressive forms of civilization. Jeremy Sadness is an American graduate student, who, is working on his Doctoral thesis and suffering from writer's block and sexual impotence. For this reason, his English professor Mark Madham urges him to leave his New York College and apply for a post at the University of Alberta. As the novel progresses, we see that this unsuccessful PhD student discovers the benefits of the northern wilderness and conquers his problems by transforming himself into his idol, Grey Owl, an Englishman who adopted an Indian lifestyle:

> Given as he was to self-deceiving self-analysis, he believed that his life's predicament found its type in Grey Owl. He was almost anally fascinated by that quick-tempered English lad who left Victorian England, disappeared into the Canadian bush, and emerged years later as Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin.
>
> He-Who-Travels-By-Night (*Gone Indian* 7).

Jeremy's journey to the Canadian northwest, seeking the frontier, is quite significant in the multicultural context because it is an attempt by the white man to live the life of an Indian and to discover the factual essence of it. His trips to Edmonton for an interview for an academic post, which he never attends. On arrival at Edmonton airport he is instantly brazened out by a notion of alternative identity which Kroetsch calls "the possibility of transformation" (*Gone Indian* 7). He learns from the Customs official that the suitcase he has claimed is not his own, but that of one Roger Dorck, a barrister and solicitor resident in a town called Notikeewin. The exchange of suitcases suggests that Roger Dorck may be an alter ego for Jeremy, but this is only one of a number of possible alternative roles available to him. Accepting a lift to Notikeewin from a returning rodeo-circuit rider, Jeremy is struck by the white emptiness of the land through which he is driven and it seems that the signifying systems of his eastern upbringing are being mystified by the mirage-like quality of the prairie winter landscape. On arrival in

Notikeewin his routine styles of perception are further dislocated as he is forced into the carnivalesque world of the town's annual winter festival, at which Roger Dorck, comatose victim of a snowmobiling accident and is now hospitalized, was to preside as king.

In an essay entitled "Carnival and Violence: A Meditation," Kroetsch takes his interpretation of the carnival from Mikhail Bakhtin:

> One might say that carnival celebrated liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed (119).

In the world of carnival, the division between performer and spectator breaks down and without the distancing characteristics of established order a kind of chaos reigns. The carnival is a communal, participatory event, allowing "the free, familiar contact among people" (Kroetsch, "Carnival" 114). It is a celebration of multiculturalism, a festival of the coming together of diverse cultures, peoples, customs, traditions, beliefs and values. Bereft of hierarchies, identities are lost; the participants are temporarily unnamed and may create whatever identity they like and wear it as a mask. For Kroetsch, "carnival rejoices not in our completeness but in our incompleteness; the mask allows us to partake of several possibilities; we are allowed to cross boundaries; we can at once be serious and mocking, be ourselves and caricature others, be others and criticize ourselves" (116). The carnival allows the fusion and understanding of other people's worlds; it is a blend of cultures, the true mosaic. The individuals mingle with one other; their differences are resolved and mental impurities are purged which result in the conception of a harmonious world. It is a world of harmony, where a renewal of cultural inconsistencies takes place, at least temporarily.

In all the three novels of Kroetsch's "Out West" triptych, a version of carnival serves as a focal event, and as a turning point in the development of the central character. In *The Words of My Roaring*,

Johnnie moves from confused speechlessness during the search for Jonah's body, to the confidence of his first big speech, thereby finding himself at the center of attention at two successive carnivals. He creates his own role, and fulfills it, undergoing a kind of renewal in this carnivalesque environment. In *The Studhorse Man*, the wedding is the carnival. Traditionally a symbol of unity, order and renewal, the wedding in this case is the first extended scene in which Hazard and Demeter have come together in the same place.

However, it is in *Gone Indian* that, as event and metaphor, the carnival is most prominent. It is during the winter festival that Jeremy discards his jacket keys, symbolically reducing his identity to a void from which he can recreate himself freely. He now has the ability to reject the identities that are imposed on him, especially the identity of Dorck and the consequent role of beauty contest judge: "Given a choice of three identical possibilities he steps outside and makes up his own rules, thereby reinventing the roles of Winter King and Winter Queen. The identities that he embraces are those he chooses, and in a carnival world he not only can do that, he can get away with it" (Ball, "Carnival" 19). His quest is deconstructed in the surreal, carnivalesque world of the prairies during the winter festival, a world where social roles are exchanged and identities become so blurred that Jeremy can be unnamed – stripped of his previous identity – and renamed into an array of new identities that include buffalo, Roger Dorck the Winter King, and Indian. While rodeos, weddings and festivals are the most likely sources of the carnivalesque spirit, the environment of liberation from order and rebirth into manifold possibilities is itself situated within a larger place. Kroestch says: "I grew up in a rural part of western Canada, where a trace of carnival, if not the carnivalization of literature, was vital and alive. We measured time by wedding dances and sports day's rodeos" ("Carnival" 120). The prairie, as the setting for the "Out West" novels, is the home of their carnivals. Kroetsch comes close to identifying the carnivalesque with the prairie itself when he quotes Frederick Jackson Turner's "The significance of the Frontier in American history" as the epigraph to *Gone Indian*: "For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant." If the prairie as frontier – as new place, as the boundary

between known and unknown – is a natural location for the becoming world of carnival, it is "also a natural metaphor for the larger place of which it is a part: the new, becoming country of Canada with its new, becoming literature" (Ball, "Carnival" 23).

The renaming of Jeremy Sadness into a multitude of identities – Roger Dorck, Has-Two-Chances, Buffalo, Grey Owl, and even traces of the former self that he never completely leaves behind – suggests that the unmaking of the world can open up a number of possibilities. Madham defines this as "a consequence of the northern prairies," a diffusion of personality into a complex of possibilities rather than a concluded self" (*Gone Indian* 152). In terms of Canadian literature, this means that a writer who peels away the layers of inherited languages and traditions to get into the silence of an unnamed world can build in a number of directions on top of that foundation (Ball, "Carnival" 1-22). The languages that may emerge may be innumerable, but they will be the writer's own. Jeremy, in all of his various identities, moves from being a voice present on the open prairie to being a silent absence; he escapes quite literally from the fixity of lived experience to the realm of imagined, multiple possibilities. Defying the control of his narrator, he exacerbates closure by disappearing without a trace, leaving Madham to speculate on various imagined ends. The writing down of a world of possibilities involves the recognition and expression of chaos, and when narrative itself evokes chaos, a number of changes must be made to the traditional roles of reader, writer and text. What a world of multiple possibilities leads to, then, is a breaking down of established orders, of traditional roles and hierarchies. This breakdown of border between the reader, writer and the text is in itself an emblematic representation of the carnivalesque spirit.

The novel presents to the readers a dialogue between two voices, between supervisor and student, between scribal and oral discourse, between academic control and youthful iconoclasm, between a westerner gone east (Madham confesses his origins were in Alberta) and an easterner gone west, gone Indian. Both voices exhibit anxieties and discrepancies which are centered on the dialogic aspects inherent within them. Jeremy's monologic confessions to Madham are, in one sense,

a revolt against whose authority he frequently rebels. His narrative, despite supposed censoring from Madham, is liberally dotted with undeleted exclamations, many of which are directed against his guide. Therefore, although the version of his tapes that Madham offers shows him on one level to be a product of his eastern, academic upbringing, an element of western carnivalesque subversion becomes visible. Jeremy's narration, as Kroetsch explains in *Labyrinths of Voice*, can be seen as representative of a new generation's attempt to rid itself of the language of the Father, the old academic order (Neuman and Wilson 19-24). Kroetsch seems to share with Bakhtin the sensitivity to this breakdown of the old order, the collapse of hierarchic distinctions and the birth of a new kind of chaos which is reinforced by the Bakhtinian theory of the dialogic as opposed to the monologic.

Jeremy Sadness's entry in the snow carnival world can be read as involving a loss of identity, a symbolic death, but such a death is welcoming, for it offers the possibility of rebirth into a new identity – comparable with Archie Belaney's transformation into Grey Owl – and an alternative universe of discourse, which is associated with a Plains Indian sensibility. A comment by Kroetsch in *Labyrinths of Voice* elaborates on this:

> *To go Indian*: an ambiguous phrase: to become released or wild in the carnival sense. And I was playing that off against the professor (Madham) and graduate student (Sadness) – people who are into the whole notion of control . . . ordering, explaining. It is their extreme movement from the professorial stance into carnival that interested me. Sadness arrives in a carnival: he is both released and realized by that: he is completed by that, even by the loss of identity and the shift into a new identity by accident, by the mixing of life and death that takes place, the kind of phallic connection. So the carnivalization is what? It's happening to the characters and it's happening to the novel. It's double (Neuman and Wilson 36-7).

According to one possible version of Jeremey's eventual fate, offered in the closing pages of the text, he actually succeeds in finally realizing his Grey Owl fantasy. This account, however, is disputed, for Kroetsch leaves the ending of the novel to the reader – we see him

dying/disappearing into a new identity as he leaps from a high-level railway bridge in the middle of a snowstorm. Therefore, 'snow' functions in *Gone Indian* both as the prime element of the winter festival world and as a manifestation of the process of carnivalization, which the novel itself is undergoing. The ending of *Gone Indian*, even though left open, is remarkable, for "perhaps apocalypse, perhaps transcendence, perhaps faked death, perhaps the real thing: we have the openness of the prairie, an un-ending openness" (Arnold and Davidson 174).

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The Image of 'Powerful Women' – A Psychological Study of Namita Gokhale's *Gods, Graves & Grandmother*

J. Jesu Latha

Dr. Latha Devi

Indian women writers present varying and conflicting images of women in their works of art. Some writers depict women as an embodiment of 'Shakthi' which means power. 'Powerful woman' is one who has positive and everlasting impact on her life. Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre is one of the earliest representations of an individualistic, passionate and complex female character. The other examples include Sethe from *Beloved*, Ammu from *God of Small Things*, Nora Trovald from Ibsen's *Doll's House*, Elizabeth Bennett from *Pride and Prejudice* and Miss. Havisham from *Great Expectations*. These women are known for their determination, will-power, self-confidence, self-esteem and perseverance to create a space for themselves in the patriarchal society. A typical woman character considers herself inadequate and thinks that she must seek her identity and self-fulfillment through masculine desire. She remains passive by pleasing her man. Feminism breaks the andocentric hegemony which makes women feel that they are expected to fulfill their duties as a wife and a mother. Betty Friedan in her book *Feminine Mystique* emphasizes that a woman has the right to develop her potential to the maximum. Marianne Williamson says:

> We were born to make and manifest the glory of god that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Namita Gokhale's second novel *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* was published in 1994 stands in contrast to her debut novel *Paro; Dreams of Passion*. Unlike Paro, the protagonists of this novel are adorned and

respected by the readers. This book effectively moves between the everyday details of poverty, ignorance and illiteracy and the supernatural realm of the temple which forms the focal point of the lives of Gudiya and her grandmother, Ammi. This paper attempts to showcase some of the 'powerful women' in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*.

Ammi, the grandmother, her daughter, and granddaughter, Gudiya reach Delhi after the death of Ammi's younger brother. Having lost their riches, they come to Delhi on the advice of Riyasuddin Rizvi, an old beggar. Ammi is a 'powerful woman' who knows Indian psyche and their faith in religion. Ammi's positive outlook on life and her innate resourcefulness enable her to set up a temple under the Peepul tree (for good reasons botanists call it ficus religiosa). She steals a marble slab from a nearby building site and five rounded stones from the Saheb's rockery and arranges them on the marble, takes one steel thali, and puts some money and a ten-rupee note. Ammi's decision to build the shrine displays the immense hardship in her struggle for survival. Even though they are born Muslims, the old woman acts as a Pujarin of the newly built temple. Being a kothewali which means prostitute, she has a liquid, mellifluous voice which she puts to good use singing bhajans. The temple flourishes and she earns a lot of bhaktas and money. At last she becomes a holy woman. Grandmother herself confesses:

> When I was your age, Gudiya, she said, still stroking my hair, I wanted to be a film star. There were only silent films in those days, no sound. I wanted to be like Zubaida or Jayshree. But look at me now-a holy woman! Truly, no one can understand the ways of God! (51)

Ammi's courage, self confidence and diplomacy are praiseworthy. Once when she is harassed and threatened by Sundar Pahalwan, who is the dada of that area, her tactfulness and timeliness is amazing. She says, "Seize our money Pahalawanji, but spare our self-respect. I am the widow of a Brahmin, my husband was a priest, guard your tongue or else a virtuous woman's curses may follow you" (12). Gudiya sums up Ammi's personality as she is not one to shed tears and she never wastes her time on anger. The old woman prospers as more and more people flock to the temple to listen to the bhajans soulfully sung by

her. Slowly, she attains the stature of a spiritual mystic and becomes the power-centre of the temple. She is a woman who holds within herself great vigour and greatly contributes to the well being of the world. She optimistically overbears the other characters who receive a considerable part of their hope, courage and determination from her. Ammi is presented not only as a person who makes a success of her failures in a highly competitive world, but is also shown as a transformed woman reaching spiritual heights which few women are known to have attained inside and outside of literature.

The Shrine serves as a place of shelter and protection to many people. Many lepers and beggars make their living because of the temple. The lepers are generous enough to contribute a sum of five thousand and one rupees for the grand ceremony of grandmother's statue installation. Lila, the ardent devotee of Ammi, leaves her son and family and takes shelter in the shrine. It provides income and life to Phoolwati, Pandit Khailash Shastry, Sundar Pahalwan, Gudiya and many others. Grandmother devotes herself to the development of the shrine. In this pursuit, she even detaches herself slowly from Gudiya. She spends more time and effort on the shrine. Some miracles also happen in the premises of the temple. People who come to demolish the house are punished as the electricity taken illegally from the street pole bursts on the head of the departmental chief. A scorpion bites a man who spits and dishonours the temple, while Shambhu finds a wallet full of money outside his tea stall. This way God curses the ones who oppose the temple while those who respect it are kept under His benign care.

Phoolwati, a disciple of Ammi, is an unprototypical image of woman. Phoolwati is a plump and attractive woman with the most enormous bosom. She runs a tea stall and another stall which sells incense, marigold garlands, coconuts, and little brass amulets. She is one of the 'powerful women' portrayed by Gokhale in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*. Phoolwati kicks her first husband Shambhu when he gets drunk and attempts to beat her. It marks a reversal of the patriarchial norm of wife beating. Shambhu's death does not evoke the traditional wails of grief and helplessness in Phoolwati. In fact she rejoices over his murder just because he had an illegal relationship with the one-eyed Saboo's wife Magoo. Saboo murders him for the same reason.

She is not cowed by bullying Sundar Pahalwan and shows courage in dealing with him. Sundar begins to admire her for her brilliance and business tactics and soon they get married. Once he praises Phoolwati as, "no one in the whole of India can match my Phoolwati for brains. M.A., B.A., PhD.- she is cleverer than all that" (191). She is practical and unsentimental. These qualities save her from even mourning for the death of her second husband Sundar Pahalwan, whom she admires and loves sincerely. Of course she feels grief-stricken and subdued and suffers from occasional bouts of sadness.

Phoolwati believes in the power of God as well as grandmother wholeheartedly. When Kalp Nath Sinha and family come to the temple to meet grandmother to save their son from coma, Phoolwati eagerly waits for a miracle to happen. She has a great eagerness to help and she is generous. When Gudiya begins her menses, she brings a collection of old rags and towels and instructs her on their usage. She gives Gudiya many gifts – a length of ribbon, a set of bindis, a small mirror, a kajal stick and a bright, shiny lipstick. Grandmother warns Gudiya saying, "don't forget, you are not to step into the temple compound … You are impure for a few days and we can't offend the gods" (55). Gudiya asks Phoolwati why grandmother is upset. She observes, "In our village we celebrate the arrival of womanhood, the decent of the Devi. But then your grandmother is an old lady; she has to manage the temple" (55). After the death of grandmother, Gudiya feels depressed, lonely and sick. Roxanne, the Principal of St. Jude's Academy, where Gudiya studies, takes her home and provides all comforts. Though Gudiya is sophisticated, she is not happy there and comes back to Phoolwati's house and decides not to go back again. When Gudiya is in Roxanne's house, Mr. Lamba tries to clarify things. Then Phoolwati answers reproachfully, "Arre sahib, don't worry about your money on our account. We may not be rich like you, but we do have our izzat. By the grace of god, our Gudiya is not short of money" (93).

Phoolwati is the mother-surrogate, friend, guardian, sister, well-wisher, etc. for Gudiya. She attains prosperity in her life through hard work. She always remembers the promise given to grandmother about bringing up Gudiya. She always gives hope to Gudiya and provides her with all sort of comfort. Keeping safe in the bureau the gold coin

treasure which they (Phoolwati and Sundar) dig up from under the Peepal tree, she says to Gudiya, "one key for you and one for me, she said, but the money is yours; never forget it" (203). Gudiya gives all her sridhan to Kalki, her husband. Later he moves to Bollywood and forgets poor, innocent Gudiya. Gudiya and her daughter, Mallika are under the care of Phoolwati. It is Phoolwati who always gives shelter to her whenever she is desolate.

Gudiya embodies the modern 'powerful woman' who upholds her individual perception and opinion about life. In *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, women's desires are given primacy through Gudiya. Gokhale makes Gudiya desire Kalki, the young good for nothing bandwallah. In social status and wealth he is inferior to her. But she gets married to him which indicates the writer's intention of giving importance to female's desires. Gudiya in search of a new identity for her wants to change her name, through this Namita wants to redefine feminism. She changes her name to Pooja Abhimanyu Singh, a royal-surrounding name which would lift her in the social hierarchy. This new identity makes her self-confident, poised and graceful. She does not fall prey to any difficult circumstances. Gudiya does not bother about the absence of Kalki. Even though she has the glimpses of memories, this does not affect her growth or self-confidence. As she herself puts it, "I missed him, but I sensed in his absence an opportunity for growth, for escape which I was determined not to miss. I loved Kalki, but love is not life, and the imperatives of survival pulled elsewhere" (224). This proves her to be a strong woman like her grandmother. She knows, "pain was a general principle of life" (220). She is courageous and self-confident enough to argue with Miss. Malvika Mehta, her new teacher. Miss. Mehta pronounces her name distastefully and asks what she wants to be. Gudiya is upset by her ill-treatment and replies, "I am going to become a film star and marry the prime minister's son … I will be the richest woman in the world, travel by aeroplane – and lock you up in jail, you witch!" (126).

Gudiya is a brave, talented and generous girl. She learns many things from Grandmother. She has haunting memories about her late grandmother. Still she manages to live in this materialistic world. Pooja

Abhimanyu Singh (Gudiya) proves the worth of the name through her dealings with money-minded Mr. Lamba and Cyrus, his nephew. According to Mrs. Roxanne's will she is to possess some portion of wealth. But she says, "I don't want it, I said. I won't take anything from the two of you. Yet if Roxanne left me any money, if she believed in me, if it is my due, I will not refuse it. Let me talk to the teachers in St. Jude's before I decide that" (207).

Mrs. Roxanne Lamba is an English educated Parsi woman. She is broad-minded social worker. She is well-off and her family owns The Sharp Blade Company, an old and respected firm of blade manufacturers and distributors. She is very affectionate and has a special liking for Gudiya. She is portrayed to be stronger than her husband, with lofty ideals, committed to the cause of education for deprived children. Mr. Lamba enjoys his wife's wealth holding no profession, no ideals and no commitment. When Gudiya falls sick after Ammi's death, Mrs. Roxanne gives medical care and looks after her fondly. She places an eagle feather under the pillow of Gudiya to rid her of fear and says, "Shikasteh, Shikasteh, Shaitan, she murmured. Ahriman Ahriman gajasteh Karu Kerdar" (100). She consoles Gudiya with the comforting words, "Remember that you can tell me everything. Don't think you are alone because your grandmother is gone" (100).

Lila is a calm, pious, self-effacing old woman who becomes a committed disciple. She always accompanies grandmother and believs in her supernatural powers. She learns to live without the support of her son. She lives at the temple all the time. Her love towards Ammi is great. She washes the clothes of grandmother and Gudiya, and irons them. She massages the feet of Ammi. She has a dog-like devotion to Ammi. She even goes to an extent of throwing her jewels into the grave of grandmother. Her selflessness is shown through this. She is half-dead after the death of grandmother. On some occasions she is overpowered by grandmother and talks in her voice and guides all the people. Even the minor character Malvika Mehta is a 'powerful woman'. In one of her counseling sessions, Gudiya observes:

She was extremely good looking. She had creamy white skin, jet-black hair, cut in a short, extremely succulent lip. She was dressed

in simple clothes that I suspected of being very expensive something about her looks; her clothes and her air of total control aroused my instant and unprovoked hostility. She represented everything I most wanted to be and almost, but not quite, was. (124)

The novel portrays a handful of powerful women with supernatural power, self determination, optimisim, hardwork, honour and respect. Gokhale's women are autonomous and do not depend on anyone for their survival. They are powerful women who solve their problems themselves, and are practical, assertive and resilient. Through the women characters Gokhale presents the urges, dreams and desires of Indian women. The author depicts the Indian women in different dimensions. She clearly conveys the winning attitude of women amidst all their failures. All the women in the novel are found to be determined, courageous, dynamic, courteous and selfless. They face life the way it comes. No woman of Gokhale is found to be mourning over their failures, rather they are intelligent and focused, and they have the power to come out of their problems. They have the power to create new things, criticize the ill will of others and to fight against odds. Gokhale has succeeded in narrating the lives of powerful women who can change and write new fates for themselves.

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Poems

Chandramohan S.

1. Terrorism(1)

Ambitions forsaken on the battlefield,
identities swallowed by bomb shells,
souls absorbed in humiliation,
the wounded hearts aching for love
erupts violently..time and again

2. Terrorism(2)

unrecognized talents
persecuted identities
humiliated souls
wounded hearts longing for love
erupts violently time and again

3. Terrorism(3)

submerged Identities
entombed as icebergs
erupt time and again
wrecking many a shipments.

4. English Periscope

submerged identities
entombed as dorment icebergs
ray of light from english periscopes
metamorphize them
into revolutionary nuclear submarines
torpedoing
annihilating
fleets of caste ships
turning the tides of cultural wars.

5. Moaists

A love child
illicitly conceived of an adultreous liason
between a welfare state and crony capitalism
grows up in a womb of dark underbelly
malnourished
bastardised.
Mother India ; tired of baby kicks on her womb
nibs it in the bud
like foetuses without penises!

6. Neo Shambukas

An
intelligent,
articulate,
assertive
dalit/feminist/homosexual
is rendered invisible
eclipsed into a reclusive limbo,
like
a violin in a black case!
Souls amputated,
strangled by their umbilical cords
seek asylum in a drape of camouflage
as exiles fleeing the gallows.
Castrated into an impotent comatose,
in a dark stuttering world
where none knows anyone
not even himself!

7. Deafening Silence

The silence emanating from
Kiliroor,
kaviyur,
vithura,
thopumpady,

panthalam,
puvarani, kozhikode icecream parlour
Suryanelli
gnaw into my soul
like
unborn baby voices
haunting an abortionist.

8. Saree:

a surreptitious manifestation of
phallic greed to subjugate the eves
is draped into a six yar drape
elegance beauty and grace,
eliciting the acquiscence
for oppression
of the oppressed
not just her, but her daughter and grand daughter
saree clad goddesses of learning and wealth
mysogynist hypocracy of denigration coumflaged in deifying,
enslaved by chivalry,
infested by jaundice of yellow double standards
male philanderers valorized as Casanovas,
female casanovas ostracized as sluts.

Soldier

Jane John

Soldier
stiffen up that upper lip
clench your fist and draw a breath
the pain is as good as it gets
you bleed.
Soldier
no one to tie you a tourniquet
no one to have jumped in front of your person
prevent the gushing wound
you bleed.
Soldier
gun in hand, helmet on head, vest on chest
what good to a bullet that sneaked through the chink in the armour
you bleed.
Soldier
bullets brush by
grenades fling hot dust and flint onto crouching puppets in action
engulfing them in a remorseful veil of glitter
a masquerade and you still bleed.
Soldier
a dreamer
don't let watery eyes tranquil you into hopes of family
haze your eyes from the performance of the ages
so you bleed...?
mark my words soldier
battlegrounds stay battlegrounds
strewn with dust-laden and damp crimson bodies of the nameless and
the
disfigured
and She will never turn her back to set eyes on a roasted and disfigured
face.
You have bled enough, my soldier.

Beyond the Ink

Jane John

I've never met him he's never seen me in person
No way he'd figure out the truth

i am bare
my pictures lie
Deception
i am crippled
my pictured hide
Redemption
i am naked
my pictures talk in whispers
Confusion
i am vulnerable
my pictures are now embers
Seclusion

He's never met me I am but a picture
No reason for him to judge me otherwise

And The Mountains Echoed

Khaled Hosseini
Publisher: Bloomsbury India
Publication date: 2013
Edition: First
Pages: 404

Anju James

And the Mountains Echoed is a novel that encompasses nearly 60 years of the history of Afghanistan. It makes the reader travel through the consequences of an atrocious but desperate act that wounds two young hearts, which resonates and reflects through many others. The relationship between parents and siblings and ways the past can haunt the present is well portrayed in this novel by Hosseini. In a series of intertwining story lines with shifting viewpoints, this multi-generational family story explores how one family loves, hurts, abandons, betrays, honours and sacrifices.

The novel begins in 1952 with a father narrating a folktale to his two young children Abdullah and Pari. "You want a story and I will tell you one"(1) Saboor, the father of the two children begins the tale. He narrates the tale as they set about on a journey through the mountains on their way to Kabul, a parable to prepare them for the tragic parting about to come in their lives, one that will echo down generations. The haunting tale was about a father who had to give up his favourite son to a *div*, an evil giant. Unable to cope with the loss of his son, he loses his sense of mind and sets out to track down the giant and find his son. Contrary to his thoughts he finds his son in "lush green lawns" full of happy children, with no memory of his own family. The father returns to his village alone, realizing that he will never be able to see his son happier if he took him along from this place

of plenty to his own arid, desperate land. As a token of kindness, the giant gives the farmer a potion that makes him forget he ever had this son. A day after he tells the tale of the *div*, Saboor gives away his own daughter Pari to a wealthy man in Kabul. He parts with Pari most painfully and unwillingly in order to save at least one family member from the scourge of poverty and winter season. What follows is a chain of stories within the story, told through multiple perspectives by different people directly or indirectly linked to the separation and union of these siblings.

After the heartbreaking separation of Pari takes place, the story is taken forward by multiple narrators. Parwana, the second wife of Saboor carries forward the story giving details about her life with her twin sister in their native village Shadbagh, giving the readers insights into the life of Afghans. Pari's step uncle Nabi then takes over the wheel of narration, covering the time period from 1947 until 2002 in an extended letter written to the Wahdati house's next occupant, Markos Varvaris, a plastic surgeon who comes to serve the Afghan war victims. In the letter he expresses his regret for facilitating the spilt-up saying, "I took those two helpless children, in whom love of the simplest and purest kind had found expression, and I tore one from the other."(102). In addition, the brutality of Taliban forces and the destruction the war has caused to the nation as a whole is carefully pictured. We slowly learn that Pari's foster father Mr. Wahdati falls ill and dies soon and her foster mother Nila moves to Paris taking Pari along. Nila, whom Nabi secretly admired and loved becomes a renowned poet in France noted for her erotic verses and later falls into pits of depression and commits suicide. Pari's growing up in France and her adventures in the wake of her mother's infamous reputation, and Abdullah's life in San Francisco, where, eventually, he experiences a miraculous reunion with his long-lost sister marks the end of the novel, giving a halt to the search for identity that pained Pari all through her life. This substantiates that love is a great leveller, cutting through language, class and identity brings the broken strings of the family together.

The part where we feel Hosseini delineates from the main thread of the story is when he brings emphasis to the lives of the Greek plastic

surgeon Markos Varvaris who has given his life to helping the wretched of the Afghanistan and to the story of two well-off Afghan brothers who grew up near the Kabul house. When they later emigrate America, each of them realise how big a role they can play to help their fellowmen in their country of never ending suffering.

However it's the plight of Abdullah and Pari, living apart in two different continents, speaking two different languages and living in two cultures, that holds the novel together. In the tale Saboor tells in the beginning, the little boy taken by the *div* had always worn a bell around his neck. As he came of age the father had completely forgotten the boy but sometimes he feels he hears the clinging of bells from nowhere and doesn't understand "why a wave of something, something like the tail end of a sad dream, always swept through him whenever he heard the jingling."(15) The same way the story of Abdullah's and Pari lingers with an effect not unlike that "wave of something." Pari feels a missing of someone close to her throughout her life though she cannot remember who it is and Abdullah longs for her sister till his last breath to give her the collection of feathers he had kept safely for her since their parting 60 years back.

Though painfully sad, *And the Mountains Echoed* is a novel beaming with love. It shares with the readers, the permanent, abiding bond of a brother and sister, the intolerant but a bedrock acquaintance of two cousins, the quiet intimacy shared by a master and servant who become friends and the genuine responsibility of a doctor and nurse to the victims of Taliban's cruelty. Even if some characters have less emotional resonance than others, and the pace slows down in the centre, when the echoes of the original story returns in the closing section Hosseini reveals his mastering power of breaking your heart and leaving you smiling. To underscore love's centrality, Hosseini closes with a picture drawn from a dream: a cherished scene of bygone happiness all the more treasured in memory because we know how brittle it is.

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Book Review

Goat Days: Benyamin

Translated by Joseph Koyippally
Publisher: Penguin
Publication Date: 2012
Edition: First
Pages: 264

Lisiya Joseph

Benyamin's *Goat Days* is a painful representation of lives that are marginalized in the lands of the desert. We experience the struggle of the protagonist whose existence becomes decapacitated as his life is stuck in the merciless and sterile land. Surviving in the hands of a cruel sponsor becomes a state of mind, where he imagines himself to be a goat.

Goat days, the title prompts us to think about the life of a goat. While reading the novel, as a reader, we experience a sense of pity towards the protagonist of the novel, Najeeb. This novel is the English translation of *Aadujeevitham*, one of the bestselling novels in Malayalam written by Benyamin. The English version by Joseph Koyippally is an equally heart rendering narration of events. The metaphor of the goat opens the doors of the protagonist's mind. The story becomes an intense reading experience as it maintains equal access to both conscious and unconscious functionings of the mind.

Benyamin portrays an Indian emigrant who dreams to earn enough money to send back home. But the strange and unusual events that happen after his arrival at the airport subsumes his life to such an extent, that we see the face of an ordinary man from Kerala being tortured in the Gulf nation.

Najeeb is a victim of the "Gulf boom" that started during 1970's. We usually hear the successful stories of gulf emigrants. But unfortunately the less successful voices are never heard. They fade in the horizon of the unknown land. Hence we witness the triumph of the human spirit, its inner strength and beauty despite its torturous existence. Existence for Najeeb becomes a hazardous task. Each day he experiences the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the agency and then the reconciliation of the self to its pitiable existence.

The violation of human rights is realistically picturized in the novel. The forty-three chapters of the novel begin in the "prison", hazardous life of Najeeb in the "desert", final "escape" and "refuge" to the home country. Life in an unknown alienated land, suffering all the tortures of arbab, Najeeb finds his solace only with goats, camels and sheeps.

The people of the third world nations are exploited by the affluent Arab nations. The life of the workers are suppressed and controlled by a tyrant nation or a man. Najeeb in this novel is compelled to do backbreaking jobs without adequate amount of food and water and sometimes we see that he is unable to fulfill his primary needs. The protagonist, like the desert remains, barren emotionally anaemic due to the intensity of his sufferings. Najeeb finds his own life as inferior to the life of a goat. He calls himself a goat. Najeeb identifies himself with a goat, which culminated in the title *Goat Days*. He begins to dream, and desire with the goats. But the ray of hope and his unending belief in the unseen presence brings freedom to his life at one point of time.The characters that accompanies Najeeb in his long run is found to lose their life, but Najeeb survives from all the cruelties of life. Here we see the hidden touch of the unseen.

As the novel progresses, many questions surface in our minds which are left un answered in a dialectical manner.

1. Why Najeeb endures in silence this unbearable torture under arbab?

2. Where does Ibrahim Khadiri disappears?

3. Where was Najeeb's real sponsor?

Apart from the rich, prosperous urban Gulf, we see a pain and a_fragmented face of Arab nation. The poor economic backwardness makes the third world countries slaves.

Najeeb says "How many goats like me must have got trapped in this masara before?" (127). The alienation of a man in a desert becomes a powerful symbol of a life in a neo globalized world where we lose our discerning capacity to distinguish between dream and reality, as the lived reality becomes a probable impossibility to come to terms with. The novel makes us to think of the life of all emigrants which remains unrepresented. Benyamin has painted the life of Najeeb with artistic exquisiteness, bringing that life fully in to accord with its essence as possible. While reading the story which for the reader is truer than truth itself, large tears often smudge the pages of the manuscript, sensing the invincible struggle of a man who succeeds in fulfilling the highest obligation, something higher than morality, truth or beauty, living the life that is ordained rather than ending it unceremoniously.

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Table of Contents

ARTICLES

Statement about ownership and other particulars about the newspaper
- **Teresian Journal of English Studies** - to be published in October
issue of the journal every year.

FORM IV

Place of Publication	:	St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam - 682 011.
Periodicity of its publication	:	Yearly
Printer's Name	:	Sr. Teresa, Principal
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam - 682 011.
Publisher's Name	:	Sr. Teresa, Principal
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam - 682 011.
Editor's Name	:	Dr. Celine E.
Nationality	:	Indian
Address	:	St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam - 682 011.
Owner's Name	:	St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam - 682 011.
NAationality	:	Indian
Address	:	Principal St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam - 682 011.

I, Sr. Teresa, *declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.*

15th October 2013   **Sr. Teresa**
                                          Printer & Publisher

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