




College of Engineering & Technology

KONGUNADU COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor
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Contents

Greetings from the Chairman Dr. PSK. R. Periyasamy

Greetings from the Principal Dr. R. Asokan

Message from the Dean/Research & Development Dr. J. Yoga Priya

Editor's Note

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P. Mythily

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and
Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

1-10

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **17:3 March 2017**

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*

i

Dr. N. Geethanjali, and S. Jayalakshmi Post-Colonial Perspectives in Bapsi Sidhwa's <i>Water</i>	11-17
L. S. Jerry Gracia, M.Phil. Scholar Adherence to Adolescence: A Psycho-analytical View on Donna Tartt's <i>The Goldfinch</i>	18-25
Kanchana Devi. G. Cultural Studies and Diasporic Literature	26-30
Dr. V. Latha The Cultural Conflicts in Wole Soyinka's <i>The Lion and the Jewel</i>	31-38
C. Nesavathy Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai's <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i>	39-48
Dr. R. Sumathi & R. Priyadharsini Silent Suffering in Anita Desai's <i>Fasting, Feasting</i>	49-56
J. Priya, Ph.D. and Vishnu Chander, I EEE Teaching English as a Second Language	57-64
A. Syed Rehanas & Dr. P. Mythily Ngugi's African Language in <i>Decolonising the Mind</i>	65-70
Dr. S. Rema Devi From <i>Small Things</i> to <i>Big Promises</i>	71-79
Dr. N. Geethanjali and T. Sangeetha, Ph.D. Research Scholar Self-Condensation for Atonement in Gloria Naylor's <i>The Men of Brewster Place</i>	80-86
J. Sheela & Dr. N. Geethanjali Diasporan Souls in <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri	87-92
S. S. UmaSundara Sood, M.A., M.Phil. and Dr. P. Mythily, Ph.D. Metamorphosis of Meggie Cleary in Colleen McCullough's <i>The Thorn Birds</i>	92-98

Greetings from the Chairman



I'm very glad to know that our Department of English is publishing the selected papers of the One Day National Conference on English Language Literature and Culture conducted on 4th march 2017 in *Language in India*, www.languageinindia.com, a reputed online monthly journal. I would like to express my thanks from the bottom of my heart for the Organizing Committee members who have made great efforts and conducted the Conference successfully. I congratulate all the students, research scholars and faculty members from various colleges for their participation in the Conference.

Wishing you all success.

Dr. PSK. R. Periyasamy

Chairman, Kongunadu Institutions

Greetings from the Principal



It is very essential for us to be proficient in the global language English for success and progress in all our academic activities, business and technical fields. Language, Literature and Culture are interrelated. Research in language, literature and culture will enable us to communicate more effectively in all our professional fields within India and around the world. I'm very glad that our Department of English is publishing the Selected Papers in Language India www.languageinindia.com, a reputed monthly journal. Participants from various colleges and Universities presented their research papers and also exchanged their ideas in the conference. We are grateful for all the participants in the Conference. I wish to express my appreciation to the Department of English for their diligent effort. I extend my warm greetings to the students, Research Scholars and Faculty members of the college. I also thank Language in India Journal for their cooperation in publishing the research papers which will now be available all over the world.

Dr. R. Asokan

Principal

Message from the Dean/Research & Development

Dr. J. Yoga Priya



Kongunadu College of Engineering and Technology (KNCET) is committed to build and sustain itself as an institution where quality is the hallmark in each and every activity. I am immensely happy that the Department of English is publishing the selected papers from the 1st National Conference on ENGLISH LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE conducted on 4th March 2017 in Language in India. This conference was the platform for exchanging innovative research thoughts of Faculty Members and Students. We believe that the conference has collected some of the latest research within the field of English. The papers will serve as a vital reference compendium for faculty, research scholars and students. I wish to congratulate the faculty members of English Department, particularly Ms. T. Vembu, Assistant Professor who has organized this conference with great success.

Dr. J. Yoga Priya
Dean/Research & Development

Editor's Note

The Department of English, Kongunadu College of Engineering and Technology conducted a National Conference on ENGLISH LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE conducted on 4th March 2017. Our goal was to enable faculty members and research scholars of colleges in the region to present their research findings and their thoughts on the inter-relationship between language, literature and culture, especially relating to learning and teaching of English as a second/foreign language.

This volume presents selected papers presented in the conference. Papers focus on topics directly relevant for the teaching and learning of English at the collegiate level. Social themes relating to family life, inter-personal relations, patriarchy, place of women in the society, social and political oppression, various aspects of diaspora, etc. are dealt with in these papers.

Through reading literature we gain knowledge about our own culture and life even as we know other cultures and societal issues around the world. Reading literature enables us to improve and increase our vocabulary, sentence construction and expression of our thoughts - personal, inter-personal and global business. Language learning is greatly facilitated by reading literary works.

The papers presented in this volume will be found useful for classroom activities even as these help do more research on the selected topics.

Addresses of authors of the papers presented in the volume are given at the end of each article. You are most welcome to correspond with the authors using their email addresses. Such communication will be useful for all of us and will be greatly appreciated by the authors themselves.

We are glad that the research findings of the authors of this volume will be freely available for all around the world through Language in India www.languageinindia.com.

My grateful thanks are due to:

The Chairman, the Principal, and the Dean. My colleagues in the Department of English and Science and Humanities inspired me to work hard by their own examples and I am grateful to them for their guidance:

Mr. K. Balasubramanian, HOD/S&H

Mr. K. Vijai HOD/S&H

Mr. S. Senthil Kumar, HOD/English

Mr. B. Raguraman, AP/English

Ms. S. Seetha, AP/English

Mr. R. Ranjith Kumar, AP/English

Ms. P. Poornima, AP/English

I am blessed to have the total support of our College Administration, and I am thankful to everyone in the College Office for their support throughout the process of arranging and conducting the First National Conference and also during the process of editing work.

Ms. T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. Candidate
Editor, *English: Literature and Social Issues*

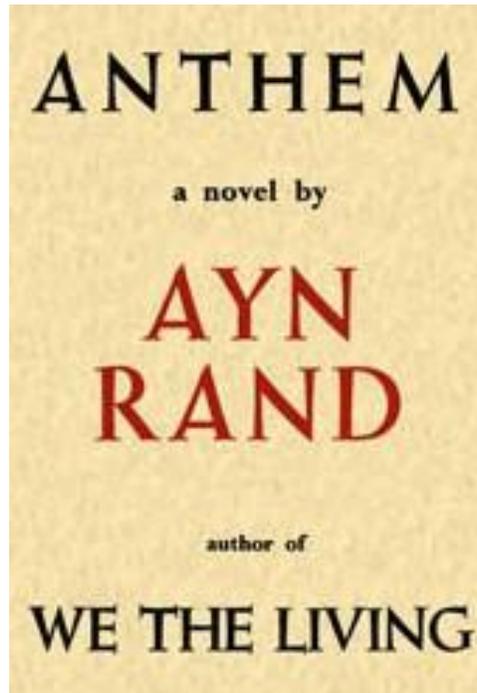
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor

English: Literature and Social Issues

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily



Abstract

Ayn Rand born Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum, on February 2, 1905, is a Russian American Novelist, philosopher, playwright and screen writer. Ayn Rand explored contemporary cultural issues and questions of identity in her 1937 novella *Anthem*. Her books portray a future in which individuality and free will have been stamped out. Sci-Fi works are interesting from a cultural studies perspective because they're not just about fantastical adventures and escapism. Instead, she used the genre to highlight real-life issues and themes relating to politics, ethics, philosophy, culture, individualism and human nature. Rand herself grew up in Soviet Russia and

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*

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developed a hatred of collectivism, so *Anthem* presents Rand's ideas about the functioning of society and the concept of society itself.

This paper is relevant to cultural studies, in which it shows the flip side of socialism. Rand however, had witnessed socialism at its most repressive stage. *Anthem* engages in the analysis of transition culture and it also questions about group identity vs. Individual identity, and shows how any society, no matter how lofty its goals, has the potential to be overrun by mass ideology and repression.

Key Words: Individuality, cultural studies, escapism, ethics, philosophy, socialism, mass ideology, repression.

Ayn Rand



Ayn Rand

Courtesy: <http://www.famousauthors.org/ayn-rand>

Ayn Rand born Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum on February 2, 1905 is a Russian American Novelist, Philosopher, Play Wright and screen writer. Ayn Rand explored **Language in India** www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017 T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues* S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily
The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

contemporary cultural issues and questions of regression of future collectivist society and identity in her 1937 novella *Anthem*. Her books portray a future in which individuality and free will have been stamped out. Sci-fi works are interesting from a cultural studies perspective because they are not just about fantastical adventures and escapism. Instead, she used the genre to highlight real-life issues and themes relating to politics, ethics, philosophy, culture, individualism, collectivism and human nature.

Anthem

Anthem is a dystopian Fiction novella published in 1938 in England. It takes place at some unspecified future date when mankind has entered another dark age. Technological advancement is now carefully planned and the concept of individuality has been eliminated. Rand, as a teenager living in Soviet Russia, initially conceived *Anthem* as a play. After migrating to the United States, Rand didn't think of writing *Anthem*, but reconsidered after reading a short story in "The Saturday Evening post" set in the future. Seeing that mainstream magazines would publish a "fantastic" story, she decided to try submitting "Anthem" to them. She wrote the story of *Anthem* in the summer of 1937, while taking a break from research she was doing for her next novel, "The Fountainhead". Rand's working title was *Ego*; Leonard Peikoff explains the meaning behind this title. "Rand is implicitly upholding the central principles of her philosophy and of her heroes: reason, values, collectivism and individualism." (Peikoff's *A critique of the philosophy of objectivism*, 314). Thinking that the original title was too blunt, unemotional and would give away too much of the theme, Rand changed the title to *Anthem*. The present novel, in Miss Rand's mind was from the outset An ode to man's ego. It was not difficult therefore, to change the working title: to move from 'Ego' to 'Ode' or 'Anthem', leaving the object celebrated by the ode to be discovered by the reader.

A Solemn Hymn

An *Anthem* is a solemn hymn- ordinarily, a hymn to God. Rand did not believe in God; yet as her title suggests, she is trying to project the secular correlative of intense religious feeling. When a new world comes to life in *Anthem*, it is created not by a literal God but by a Godlike human being. According to Rand, every culture has mythic stories that identify its values and

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues
S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily
The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition
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dramatize its ideas of the way things happen in the World. Anthem is an outstanding introduction to Ayn Rand's philosophy of human nature. The novella's theme and central conflict – the individual versus the collective – occurs in all her novels and is an important element of her moral and political philosophy.

Hero, an Inventor

According to Rand, it is important to note that the hero is an inventor. He has been enthralled by the phenomena of nature since childhood. He loves the "science of things." He desires above all to be a scholar, a scientific researcher. He is so committed to this dream that he faces hardship and endures every difficulty to accomplish it. He is a genius, a Thomas Alwa Edison of the future who in the teeth of every form of opposition, re-invents the electric light. The essential point is that "Equality" is a man of the mind. He is a thinker, a man of reason. An invention such as the electric light is a product of the mind.

Focus of This Paper

This paper analyzes how Rand argues that all aspects of progress - scientific research, medical advances, inventions, technological improvements, industrial production are achievements of the mind. Such accomplishments are not brought about by faith in the supernatural or, primarily, by manual labour, but by the rational mind. Historically, individuals such as Equality thinkers have been responsible for humankind's greatest advances. Men like Copernicus and Galileo, who established that the sun is the centre of the solar system, Charles Darwin, who proved that human life evolved from simpler life forms, the Wright Brothers, who pioneered man's ability to fly, and many more are real-life examples of individuals such as Equality. These are men whose minds have discovered vital new truths that significantly improved human life on earth. The overall principle is that human well-being depends on the reasoning mind.

The Question of Social Condition and Equality

The question Ayn Rand raises in *Anthem* is this: "Is some social condition necessary for the creative mind to function properly? Can the thinkers perform their inventive work under any

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

type of political system? Or is rational productivity possible only under certain political conditions? The answer she resoundingly provides is that the independent mind needs freedom.”

Equality discovers a new force of nature. He does not realize that it is electricity; he calls it the "power of the sky" because he knows that it is the same force that is responsible for lightning. His identification of this power, and his ability to harness it to create the light, require his unswerving dedication to the laws of nature and the facts of reality. Society's beliefs are irrelevant to this creative process; in this case, they are mistaken. Equality, if he is to succeed in his endeavour, must allow him to be ruled exclusively by the scientific facts of the case. “Nature, not society, sets the terms in all such research and scientific investigations”. (Ayn Rand, *Anthem*-31). The independent mind commits itself to truth, facts, and the laws of nature. If the beliefs or laws of society contradict the scientific facts, then the independent thinker dismisses such beliefs as mistaken, which is exactly the case with Equality.

Viewing Good and Evil

Scholars, as the leading spokespersons for society, regard the electric light as evil. But Equality has come to understand some truths regarding the nature of electricity and knows, from his research and experimentation, that this force can be harnessed to light cities and homes. Part of his proof is the glass box that he shows the Scholars, the light that glows under his control. The beliefs of his brothers are erroneous. The light is not evil; nor is it dangerous in the hands of a man knowledgeable regarding its power. Equality is a man whose mind is committed to the facts. He is not swayed by the irrational beliefs of his brothers. When society denounces Equality's thinking and opposes the electric light, he does not bow to their commands. He is committed to truth and to the scientific facts, not to the beliefs of others. He has the nature of an independent thinker.

Views of Rulers of the Society

But the rulers of this society have no interest in scientific research or truth. They are interested exclusively in power. In order to maintain their grip over society, they have to control the thinking of their citizens. They cannot allow the mind to function freely. The acquisition and

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition
in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

retention of dictatorial power requires the suppression of free thought. Therefore, real-life dictators whether Fascist, National Socialist, or Communist always ban freedom of speech that is, freedom of thought and expression. They know that independent thinkers will disagree with their suppressive policies and, by speaking out, rile the masses against them. Dictators recognize that their most implacable foe is the reasoning mind; for thinkers are concerned solely with truth, not with the arbitrary commands of power-hungry rulers.

A dictator's suppression of the mind necessarily extends to scientific research, as well. Equality is consigned to the Home of the Street Sweepers and denied admission to the ranks of the Scholars because the authorities recognize his brilliant mind and independent spirit and relegate him to the task of unskilled manual labour. They will not encourage the development of his thinking even if restricted to scientific questions because they recognize that it is impossible to limit such a mind to science. The dictators are not themselves brilliant men, but they sense in some instinctual way that the mind is their enemy specifically, that "The mind capable of inventing the electric light or formulating the theory of evolution is just as capable of questioning the moral legitimacy of the dictator's regime." (Ayn Rand, *Anthem* 9)

Personal Morality and Political Philosophy

Great minds are not necessarily limited to technical questions and concerns; as individual members of the human race, they are often concerned with matters of both personal morality and political philosophy. The common expression, "The pen is mightier than the sword," is true, because the pen is an instrument of the mind. The deeper truth is, "The mind is mightier than the sword," that is, the mind is mightier than brute force. Ayn Rand's point in *Anthem* is that dictators necessarily stifle the mind. In order to maintain their power, they must do so. This is why Equality is refused admittance to the Home of the Scholars and why, later, he is imprisoned, his light threatened, and his life endangered. A great scientist has no chance to flourish in a totalitarian state. In real life, for example, the brilliant physicist, Andrei Sakharov, was persecuted and imprisoned in the Soviet Union for his outspoken moral condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

Global Dictatorship

If the entire world is a global dictatorship as in *Anthem*, if freedom exists nowhere on earth, then the mind can seek no haven, no example such as the United States to which one can emigrate in order to gain an independent life. In such a case, the author shows, the mind will be stifled everywhere. There will be no creative thinking or innovation, no scientific research, no technological progress or industrial advance. In a worldwide dictatorship, human society will not move forward. But the author shows that the implications are even worse. It is not merely the case that humanity will not progress, but that it will regress into a second Dark Age. Society will lose the great accomplishments of the past. If common individuals are to learn from great minds as they do they, too, must engage in rational thinking. The successful student, as well as the teacher, must be a thinker. It takes rational thought to learn to operate computers, to service and rebuild airplanes, to perform surgical techniques, to administer plants supplying electrical power, and so on. One does not fly or repair an airplane by rote memorization; one must understand the process.

Individualism

Those who learn from great inventors and discoverers of knowledge are also individuals of the mind. A society that suppresses the mind, that ruthlessly punishes its most independent thinkers, will soon degenerate into a state of primitive barbarism. When the mind is stifled, a society cannot hold onto the technological achievements of the past. An individual, as well as a society, must prove worthy of the achievements inherited from great thinkers of the past. Innovations are the product of freedom and thinking. If humans are no longer free to think, they will lose the creations of the free mind. To see that, Ayn Rand depicts an accurate picture in *Anthem*, one can look at the historical Dark Age.

Reason in Classical World

The achievements of the Classical world were many. Plato and Aristotle were extraordinary philosophers, and their schools the Academy and the Lyceum flourished for centuries. The dramatists Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes wrote their brilliant plays in Athens, and the poets Virgil, Horace, and Catullus their great works in Rome. The

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

ancients made advances in medicine, in physics, in mathematics, and in astronomy. Athens was the world's first democratic political system, and its standard of living and life expectancy were both relatively high. Both Greece and Rome, though marred by endless wars and political violence, were essentially civilized societies. Because these societies emphasized reason, they provided freedom, education, and a good life for many citizens.

Dark Age

All this ended in the Dark Age that existed between the fall of Rome and the beginning of the Renaissance. The invading barbarians were men of brute force, not advocates of the mind. They sacked the centres of civilization and, in some cases, burned them to the ground. The barbarians were eventually converted to Christianity, but religion emphasizes faith, not reason. During the period in which the Catholic Church held cultural and political power in Europe, unquestioning obedience to religious dogma was required, and freethinkers were often burned at the stake. Independent thinking was stifled, scientific advance was non-existent, and illiteracy was rampant. Europeans of this age fell far below the knowledge level, standard of living, and life expectancy that had been attained centuries earlier. They lost the advances that the Classical period had reached. "Because the culture stifled the mind, it lost the rational achievements reached by freer men of the past." (Ayn Rand, *Anthem* 19) In this regard, the Dark Age of the historical past is an accurate model to one of the fictional future portrayed in *Anthem*.

Rand shows the unrelieved evil of a collectivist society the thought control, the necessity to surrender one's mind and life to the state, and the utter lack of individuality and freedom.

Despite the authors' agreement regarding the stifling evil of totalitarianism, an important difference exists. Rand depicts a future collectivist dictatorship as a society that has made great scientific and technological progress. The state employs an ultra-sophisticated technology to engage in mind reading and thought control.

Collectivism

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily

The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

Rand's depiction of collectivism is regression to ignorant savagery. Rand believes in the mistake of believing that the mind can continue to function under compulsion. She does not realize that great achievements are the result of independent thinking by humans such as Equality, who recognizes only the truths of nature and who conforms neither to society's irrational beliefs nor to the state's arbitrary commands. In the Dark Age, the independent thinkers were burned, leaving the Church authorities with no one but lackeys following blindly the prescribed dogma. Rand argues that the recent collectivist states, such as the modern Nazis and Communists, are more suppressive of independent thinking than the medieval Church ever was. Therefore, thinkers such as Equality, have even less chance to flourish. A global collectivist dictatorship will sink to a lower standard of living than even that of the Dark Ages.

Communist Society

Ayn Rand grew up in the Communist dictatorship of Soviet Russia and stayed in touch with friends and family in her homeland for as long as possible. She saw firsthand, and fled from, the murderously suppressive policies of Stalin. She knew that any who dared think for themselves, any who criticized the regime, were dragged off by the secret police never to be heard from again. The most independent thinkers, the best creative minds, lived in terror, knowing they dare not speak out. With the best minds murdered or stifled, the country was utterly unable to achieve progress or prosperity. Even with massive help from the free societies of the West, the Soviet dictatorship subsisted in miserable squalor until finally collapsing from its own destitution. Rand had predicted such an apocalypse even decades earlier in *Anthem*. A collectivist world, she shows, in the absence of freedom anywhere on earth, will permit no independent thinking and will inevitably backslide into primitive conditions. When thinkers such as Equality are suppressed on a global scale, there can be neither scientific progress nor industrial production. The backwardness and poverty depicted in the novel *Anthem* are the only possible results.

To Conclude

Despite inciting a number of vehement and critical commentaries, Rand's controversial, original and systematic philosophical positions should be taken seriously and **Language in India** www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues
S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P.Mythily
The Regression of a Future Collectivist Society into a Second Dark Age and Cultural Transition
in Ayn Rand's *Anthem*

treated with respect. Rand presented the cultural transition and the regression of a future collectivist society into a second dark age as an integrated new system of thought with an organized, hierarchical structure. Whatever one's ultimate evaluation of her theories, Rand's unique vision should be considered worthy of comprehensive, scholarly examination.

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S. K. Arathy, Ph.D. Research Scholar

Government Arts College (A)

Salem 636007

Tamilnadu

India

dreamteambuddies@gmail.com

Dr. P. Mythily, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English

Post-graduate & Research Department of English

Government Arts College (A)

Salem 636007

Tamilnadu

India

mythusadha@gmail.com

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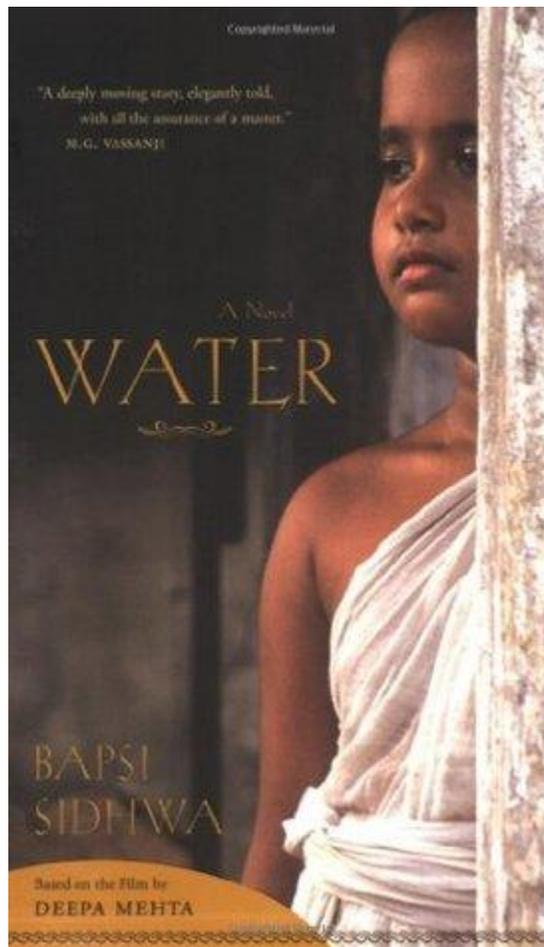
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

S. K. Arathy, M.A. & Dr. P. Mythily

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Post-Colonial Perspectives in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*

Dr. N. Geethanjali, and S. Jayalakshmi



Abstract

Post colonialism is a post-modern intellectual discourse, which is an analysis of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. The post-colonial direction was adopted as colonial countries became independent. Post-colonial powers came from foreign states and may

have destroyed a small part of native tradition and culture. They replaced them with their own ones.

Bapsi Sidhwa has been called Pakistan's leading English language novelist. The stories of her five novels take place in the homeland, exploring the post-colonial Pakistani identity.

Water is set in 1938, when India was still under the colonial rule of the British and when the marriage of underage girl children to older men was commonplace. Following Hindu tradition, when a man died, his widow would be forced to spend the rest of her life in a widow's ashram.

Post-colonial is a convenient critical term in current literary studies. It has come to replace terms such as "Commonwealth Literature", "Anglophone Literature", "New Literature in English", "Third World Literature", and "Literature of the Developing Nations". Each one is problematic in some way or the other. Even the term post-colonial has its own train of complexities. The very meaning and scope of the term is debatable. Its use can be narrowed down for the purpose of this study to an unequal relationship between the rich and poor nations in various domains - social, psychological, political, economic and cultural practices and patterns and the articulation of the same in literature.

Post-colonialism is an offshoot of colonialism; in whatever manner the post is interpreted. Post-colonial literatures come into existence, when the writers tried to create a new form of fiction within the English language by incorporating new images and above all new rhythms. The major features of postcolonial texts are concerned with placement and displacement, shifting of location and resulting in, "the crisis of identity into being". Often, the protagonists of a post-colonial work will find themselves in a struggle to establish an identity, feeling conflicted between two cultures - one their own native culture and the other an action culture. Therefore, a central theme in post-colonial writing is the transformation of the native into something other than herself - a classic native, or at least one who is in a crisis regarding one's own cultural identity.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*
Dr. N. Geethanjali, and S. Jayalakshmi
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Key words: Bapsi Sidhwa, Water, struggle to establish identity, transformation of the native.

Parsi/Zoroastrian Minority

Sidhwa belongs to a microscopic minority community called Parsi/Zoroastrian which is nearing its extinction as a result of its rigid doctrines and intense exclusivity. Parsis were the originally natives of Iran and the followers of prophet Zarathustra, following the Arab invasion of Iran in the 7th century A.D. who undertook a hazardous voyage and settled in Gujarat in India. In the pluralistic Indian society, very quickly they flourished due to their diligence and integrity. They became a very prosperous business community.

In post-colonial India and Pakistan they had to lose their hegemony over business, politics and education and inculcated a feeling of insecurity and fear following the unprecedented political happenings and the increasing communal violence. Accentuated by the external threats and the plights of the dwindling community, standing on the verge of extinction, contemporary Parsi writers like Boman Desai, Farrukh Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry and Bapsi Sidhwa vociferously assert their ethnic identity and earnestly attempt to reconstruct their racial history in their writings.

Bapsi Sidhwa



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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*
Dr. N. Geethanjali, and S. Jayalakshmi
Post-Colonial Perspectives in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*

Bapsi Sidhwa

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bapsi_Sidhwa

Bapsi Sidhwa was born in Karachi in 1939. She was brought up and educated in Lahore. She had been a volunteer in many social work organizations. She immigrated to the United States in 1983 and became a naturalized American citizen in 1993. She has produced five novels in English which reflect her personal experience of India the sub-continent, the partition, abuse against women and immigration to the U.S.

She has published five novels, *The Pakistani Bride*, *The Crow Eaters*, *Ice-Candy-Man*, *An American Brat*, and *Water*. She was awarded the *Sistara-i-Imtiaz*, Pakistan's highest national honor in arts. She has also received a variety of grants and awards for her fictional creations.

Sidhwa's first three novels focus on Parsi families and the Parsi community. Her fourth and fifth novels deal with post-colonial writings which are based on Indian tradition.

The Novel *Water*

The novel *Water* is a brutal examination of the lives of widows in colonial India, is riveting from the word go. The potency and emotional impact of the story is probably why Deepa Mehta refused to let go of her dream of making the film. And one must add that there's great intensity and passion in Sidhwa's story telling that grips the audience.

Water is set in 1938, when India was still under the colonial rule of the British, and when the marriage of girl children to older men was so common, following also the Hindu tradition, when a man died, his widow would be forced to spend the rest of her life in a widow's ashram; These ashrams were the institutions for widows to make amends for the sins from their previous life that supposedly caused their husband's death.

A Useful Chronicle

The novel itself is a useful chronicle in understanding a certain stinging reality elevating it from a fictional level is the 8-year-old Chuyia. Between Sidhwa and Deepa Mehta, they've

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come up with a character rarely seen before; Chuyia is spirited, feisty, rebellious and daring to go. But as convention would have it, she is hurriedly married off and then widowed in a few months. Her in-laws send her to an ashram meant for widows, a sort of ghetto where they are supposed to lead pathetically austere lives.

Chuyia and Kalyani

Chuyia's befriend Kalyani who is forced into prostitution to support the ashram, Shakuntala, one of the widows, and Narayan a young and charming upper-class follower of Mahatma Gandhi and of Gandhism were residing in the ashram. There are fourteen women who live in the small, dilapidated two-story house, sent there to expiate bad karma, as well as to relieve their families from financial and emotional burdens. The ashram is ruled by Madhumati, a 70 year old fat and pompous lady.

Other Characters

Madhumati's only friend is the pimp, Gulabi, a sprightly hijra who not only keeps Madhumati supplied with Ganga, but also with the latest gossip. The two also have a side business. Gulabi helps Madhu to prostitute Kalyani. Now the second youngest of the widows, by taking her across the water to the customers.

Shakuntala is a quiet and reserved type of widow. She is caught between her hatred of being a widow and her fear of not being a sincere, dedicated widow. She is a very devout Hindu who seeks the counsel of Sadanada, a gentle-looking priest in his late forties who recites the scriptures to the pilgrims who throng the ghats of the holy city. It is he who makes Shakuntala aware of her situation, eventually giving her the necessary intellectual input to separate true faith from the hypocrisy and superstition that makes her and the other widows' lives a misery.

Shakuntala is attached to Chuyia, because deprived from her liberties and freedom of choices from a young age, she sees herself reflected in Chuyia and strives to give her what she lacked. Chuyia is convinced that her stay is a temporary one, and that her mother will come to take her away. With that thought firmly tucked in her mind while most other widows tolerate the

stubborn behavior in the young girl. She quickly adapts to her new life. Chuyia's feisty spirit never dulls until a very long time. Part of the reason for this is her warrior like attitude and die-hard optimism.

Ironic and Touching

Sidhwa goes on to survey and describe the impartial scenes, the child-like curiosity, thereby also dispelling some of its solemnity. Her ironic and touching words are seen when the 8 year old girls innocently asks, "Didi, where is the house for men widows". (110) Bapsi's racy style of writing ensures that there is not a single dull moment in the novel.

Madhumati sends Chuyia away with Gulabi, to be prostituted as a replacement for Kalyani for a waiting client (Narayan's friend's father). Shakuntala finds out and runs out to prevent the worst, but she only arrives at the shore in time for Chuyia's return. As a result of being raped, the child is deeply traumatized and practically catatonic. Shakuntala spends the night sitting at the shore. The fact that Chuyia manages to escape a life of drudgery and other ills associated with the widowhood in the ghetto, symbolizes a ray of hope even for those caught in the most helpless circumstance. And it is exactly this feeling of redemption, running throughout the novel, that prevents it from ever getting morose and depressing. She is supported by Narayan without whose effort her success could not have been possible.

Depicting the Post-colonial Survival

Sidhwa's *Water* is a post-colonial play that vividly presents the struggle of the post-colonial survival against the superstitious belief. But the humanistic playwright has opted to reiterate her faith in the female creative spirit, which protects itself from self-destruction. The post-colonial perspective of the play reveals that the post-colonial self assertions, struggles and survives in the girl Chuyia.

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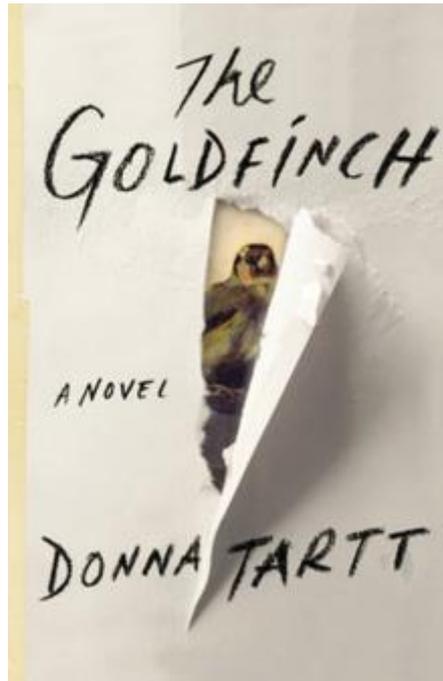
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Dr. N. Geethanjali,
Associate Professor of English
Periyar EVR College
Race Course Road
Kajanagar, Edamalaipatti Pudur
Tiruchirappalli 620023
Tamil Nadu
India
ngeethanjali66@yahoo.com

Ms. S. Jayalakshmi
Associate Professor of English
Periyar EVR College
Race Course Road
Kajanagar, Edamalaipatti Pudur
Tiruchirappalli 620023
Tamil Nadu
India
venkat.goals@gmail.com

Adherence to Adolescence:
A Psycho-analytical View on Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*

L. S. Jerry Gracia, M.Phil. Scholar



Courtesy: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Goldfinch_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Goldfinch_(novel))

Abstract

This paper unveils the aftermath of the terrorist attacks faced by the victims and their families. The struggle faced by the young people who are forced to become adults quickly to survive in the world for their living. The victims of the attacks become traumatized physically and mentally. Their struggle to overcome the fear and pain caused by the attacks with courage is a struggle to victory. Donna Tartt in her novel *The Goldfinch* brings out the struggles of the victim and the social issues. The protagonist Theo faces the hurdles of the survival at the young age of thirteen after the death of his mother in the Museum bombing. It explains the guilt and pain caused by the happening and his overcoming them with courage.

Keywords: Bombing victims, Trauma, Fear and pain, Loss of family, Courage to overcome

The Goldfinch

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The Mississippi-born American writer Donna Tartt is famous for her portrayal of the real world of social class, social stratification, guilt and aesthetic beauty. The novelist brings out the realistic life of the bourgeoisie and their day to day struggle to cope up with the society. All her novels bring out the pain and the search of the protagonist's lost love and hope. Tartt creates her novel from common issues which deploy the reality of the world. The Pulitzer winning novel *The Goldfinch* is a clear portrayal of the aftermath, the terrible life of the victims of the bomb blast, those who had lost their loved ones. It shows how the protagonists struggle to survive the unknown world which is filled with mystery and struggles.

“*The Goldfinch* is a novel of shocking narrative energy and power. It combines unforgettably vivid characters, mesmerizing language, and breathtaking suspense, while plumbing with a philosopher's calm the deepest mysteries of love, identity, and art. It's a beautiful, stay-up-all-night and tell-all-your-friends triumph, an old-fashioned story of loss and obsession, survival and self-invention, and the ruthless machinations of fate.” (Lit lovers)



Donna Tartt

Courtesy: http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/8719.Donna_Tartt

Theodore Decker in 9/11

The Goldfinch is a depiction of the 9/11 terrorist attack where numerous lives were destroyed. The aftermath of this is seen in the victims' lives who lost their family and loved ones, living with the physical and mental pain. In this novel, Theo (Theodore Decker) is the one who faces the pain at the age of thirteen after the terrorists' bomb attack. The novel

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portrays the teenager's way of survival and the pressure to mature, to know more about the society. This paper brings out the young protagonist's pain and struggle to survive the dehumanized world and his ability to overcome the dehumanized world. Theodore Decker who is forced to grapple with the world alone after his mother... [is killed]. Tartt's narrative is in essence an extended footnote to that horror, with his mother becoming ever more alive in memory even as time recedes.... (Kirkus Reviews)

Survival within a Society

Theo faces three different circumstances where he learns about surviving within a society. Though he learns he could not let go of the memory of his mother and the art which he got from the old man in the museum during the blast, these two things play a vital role in the growth of Theo. After the incident Theo runs back home to find his mother whom he believes is not dead. He waits for his mother's phone call instead he receives a phone from the hospital conveying the news of mother's death. "I missed her so much I wanted to die: a hard, physical longing, like a craving for air underwater. Lying awake, I tried to recall all my best memories of her—to freeze her in my mind so I wouldn't forget her—but instead of birthdays and happy times I kept remembering things like how a few days before she was killed she'd stopped me halfway out the door to pick a thread off my school jacket. For some reason, it was one of the clearest memories I had of her: her knitted eyebrows, the precise gesture of her reaching out to me, everything. Several times too—drifting uneasily between dreaming and sleep—I sat up suddenly in bed at the sound of her voice speaking clearly in my head, remarks she might conceivably have made at some point but that I didn't actually remember, things like 'Throw me an apple, would you?' and 'I wonder if this buttons up the front or the back?' and 'This sofa is in a terrible state of disreputableness.'"

Traces of His Mother Everywhere

The young boy finds the traces of his mother everywhere; then he accepts his fate to move on with his life with a burdened heart. He never gets any support from his grandparent's family and he is fostered temporarily by Barbour's family. The family think him as a responsibility, whereas, all that the thirteen year old Theo needed was love and care. Theo was taken to the counselling to help his mental stability: "I accepted all this counsel politely, with a glassy smile and a glaring sense of unreality. Many adults seemed to interpret this numbness as a positive sign; I remember particularly Mr. Beeman (an overly clipped Brit

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in a dumb tweed motoring cap, whom despite his solicitude I had come to hate, irrationally, as an agent of my mother's death) complimenting me on my maturity and informing me that I seemed to be "coping awfully well." And maybe I was coping awfully well, I don't know. Certainly I wasn't howling aloud or punching my fist through windows or doing any of the things I imagined people might do who felt as I did. But sometimes, unexpectedly, grief pounded over me in waves that left me gasping; and when the waves washed back, I found myself looking out over a brackish wreck which was illumined in a light so lucid, so heartsick and empty, that I could hardly remember that the world had ever been anything but dead."

Finding No Love

Though the Barbour's family was considerate to him, he still found no love and care in that family. Then he found Hobie (Hobart) who was told by the old man Welty in the museum to visit him with a ring. Theo found his individuality and happiness in that place. He found that love can be found only with hearts not with money. In his novel, Hobie plays a vital role in the life of Theo. He is like a guardian to him, he helps Theo to survive the world and he allows him to free himself from all pain.

When One Chooses the Right Path

Hobie is one of the main characters in the novel where he shows survival in the world is not tough when one chooses the right path. "Hobie's reassuring hand on my shoulder, a strong, comforting pressure, like an anchor letting me know that everything was okay. I hadn't felt a touch like that since my mother died—friendly, steadying in the midst of confusing events—and, like a stray dog hungry for affection, I felt some profound shift in allegiance, blood-deep, a sudden, humiliating, eye-watering conviction that this place is good, this person is safe, I can trust him, nobody will hurt me here." The Barbour's family took Theo inside their house to show off their charity and the how open hearted they were. Their love for Theo was unreal. Theo finds happiness with Hobie who allows him to do things the way he wishes and corrects him whenever its needed. Hobie shows the real role of a father and a family which Theo could rely on. Theo finds that the value of love is more than money. From then on he spends most of the time with Hobie.

New Life in Las Vegas

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The second incident where he learns about survival was when his father Larry Decker returns with his girlfriend Xandra to take his son back to Las Vegas. Theo has hatred towards his father because of his past actions towards his mother. He ran away leaving his mother in grief and pain, but Theo and his mother found happiness after that incident. Theo was not happy to go with his father but the Barbour's family was not ready to accept him back. So Theo bid his farewell to everyone. He found a new life in Las Vegas with his new friend, Boris. Boris is "gloomy, reckless, hot-tempered, appallingly thoughtless. Boris pale and pasty, with his shoplifted apples and his Russian-language novels, gnawed-down fingernails and shoelaces dragging in the dust. Boris — budding alcoholic, fluent curser in four languages — who snatched food from my plate when he felt like it and nodded off drunk on the floor, face red like he'd been slapped." Theo even thought Boris had some bad habits, but he found happiness with him as he found with Hobie. Theo tried new things everyday with Boris and he was very happy to do so. Theo was happy with Boris he found a new life in the barren land. Theo was unable to believe his father's love and care. But Theo finally finds out the true colour of his father's love when he finds out that Larry took him in because of the money that Theo's mother saved up for him.

Betrayals and Pain

Larry was in debt due to gambling and he thought of settling the debt with that amount. Theo was happy that he had a family, wanted by his father and the pain would go away, but fate played a violent game. Larry was after his money and not for the love of his son. The act of the father affects the son because the huge trauma caused by his mother's loss is again stimulated by his father's act. Boris' betrayals affect the mind of Theo; first he leaves Theo for the sake of his girlfriend. He follows with many betrayals, but Theo doesn't lose his trust for Boris. But the final confession of Boris breaks Theo's trust completely, that is the selling of the painting without the knowledge of Theo. The painting of the Goldfinch had great impact in the life of Theo. The painting has lived with him all the time after the bombardment. The painting replaced the place of his mother but not the presence of his mother. The painting has seen his tears, anger and every soul emotions of the young protagonist. When he hears that Boris has sold the painting he finds a real betrayal on the spot which he receives from the most trusted person and loved one in his present life. Theo loses his trust in everyone and he gets back to Hobie after these incidents.

When Theo returned, he found Hobie was in debt and he decided to help Hobie. So Theo started selling the fake portraits made by Hobie to many foreign people. Through that he settled all the debts of Hobie and started to live happily with him.

Original The Goldfinch Painting - Trauma

One day he found the Barbour's family and found that Andy was dead. He felt sorrowful because the only person in the Barbour's house who shared empathy with him was Andy. Theo accepted the proposal and agreed to marry the Barbour's daughter Kitsey. On the day of engagement, Boris arrived at the party, and conveyed the message that he found the painting of The Goldfinch.

Fate again played a trick through the character of Lucius Reeve who found out the illegal business done by Theo. Hobie felt bad about the wrong manner he had chosen to pay off the debt. Theo had guilt in his heart and he ran off from the place with Boris. Boris and Theo went to fetch the painting from a gang and they caused a commotion. The commotion finally ended up in the death of the gang member, which again resulted in stimulating the trauma in the mind of Theo.

Theo was alone left in the hotel for days and Boris was nowhere to be seen. Theo one day dreamt of his mother and it made him have a heart change. “[S]he came up suddenly beside me so I saw her reflection in a mirror. At the sight of her I was paralyzed with happiness; ... [S]he was smiling at me, ... not a dream but a presence that filled the whole room ... I knew I couldn't turn around, that to look at her directly was to violate the laws of her world and mine; ... our eyes met in the glass for a long moment; but just as she seemed about to speak ... — a vapor rolled between us and I woke up.” This brought a heart change in the mind of Theo. He planned to confess the truth about the painting to the officials and receive the required punishment. When Theo was about to go out of the hotel, Boris called him out and handed out a lump of money. Boris said that the painting has been given to the officials and this was the reward money. Theo decided to get back all the painting that he has illegally sold as compensation.

Theo understands “That life — whatever else it is — is short. That fate is cruel but maybe not random. That Nature (meaning Death) always wins but that doesn't mean we have to bow and grovel to it. That maybe even if we're not always so glad to be here, it's our task

to immerse ourselves anyway: wade straight through it, right through the cesspool, while keeping eyes and hearts open. And in the midst of our dying, as we rise from the organic and sink back ignominiously into the organic, it is a glory and a privilege to love what Death doesn't touch.”

Pain in the Heart

The painting was the real reason for the pain in the heart in addition to the loss of his mother. The guilt that he had after stealing the painting and the fear he had, increased the pain in his heart instead of reducing it. Theo was full of guilt; he thinks that he was the reason for the death of his mother. His mother would not have died if he did not get called by the school for his mischief. The death of the mother affects Theo at the age of thirteen and gives him a lot of responsibility. The age which is meant to be happy becomes a burden in the life of Theo. He is pushed to become a responsible young teenager to survive in this dehumanized society. Theo starts his life with endurance and innocence. But these did not help him in any way, it deceived him. Later he finds happiness with his loved ones, but he chooses the wrong path to make them stay in their life.

Theo, to save Hobie from debts and make him happy, makes the wrong choice of selling Hobie's fake painting to the upper class people. He realises his mistake when Lucius opens up about the illegal business he has been doing. He finds himself guilty and runs away from the party. Theo's fear and guilt were the ones which suppressed him from everything. Theo did not try to overcome them, instead he tried to escape from them. Every time he suppresses his fear he falls into the deep black pit of pain. The dreams were the only hopes he had in his life to overcome the negative elements of his life. Tarrt brings out the real problems faced by the people who are affected by disasters and bombardment. The life after becomes a struggle to live in the unknown society with all sorts of responsibility on their shoulders. The character Theo wants to develop a new hope with which he can live in peace. It took nineteen years to find his long lost hope and his living in the society. Throughout the novel he finds trouble more than love and hope, but he finally finds the strategy to live in the real world through the dream of his mother.

Struggle and Pain Endured by the Victims of the Disasters and Terrorist Attacks

Tartt depicts the struggle and pain endured by the victims of the disasters and terrorist attacks, who have lost one of their family. Picking up the issues that are prevailing in the society, she brings out the positive and negative aspects of the society. The life struggles affect the people and force them to take responsibility to survive the society. Troubling are the emotions in the hearts of young kids who lose their loving family and are forced to become responsible for the sake of survival. The terrorist attacks and war cause great impacts in life, they change the fate of people within seconds. The decision of certain individuals causes collisions in the life of many people and makes them face struggles that they never faced before in their lives.

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L. S. Jerry Gracia, M.Phil. Scholar
PG & Research Department of English
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Extension Centre, Nakkalmadam
Therakalputhur
Nagercoil
Tamilnadu
India
vanameyellaidude@gmail.com

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Cultural Studies and Diasporic Literature

Kanchana Devi. G.

Abstract

All forms of literature interpret life for us, console us and sustain us. Each country has its own national literature bearing national and cultural identity. Cultural influences such as social strata, education and religious belief shape an individual's personality. But diasporic writers' cultural identity is debatable. Diaspora has been in existence since time immemorial. Displacement or migration takes place due to historical, political and economic reasons. History of Indian diaspora has coursed through three phases. Indian diasporic literature deals with themes -- nostalgia, memory, sense of alienation, globalization and hybridity. A study of Rohinton Mistry's novel, "A Fine Balance" shows his treatment of multiple identities, doubles consciousness and ethnic assertion. This novel is parallel to that of the migrant's life in the host-land. Modern diasporic writers assert their 'otherness' as a source of positive change. They are seen as 'brilliant improvisers'. Homi Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity' will lead us to read history anew. Literature should unify us beyond cultural and geographical limitations.

Keywords: Indian diaspora, Nostalgia, Sense of Alienation, Ethnic identity, Hybridity.

Value of Poetry

The renowned poet and critic, Matthew Arnold, in his critical work, "The Study of Poetry" extols high order poetry as one that 'interpret life for us ... console us, ... Sustain us'. This fact is true and applicable to all forms of literature. Each country has its own national literature bearing the national and cultural identity. An intensive reading of any literary work will unravel the author's feelings, thoughts and attitudes towards life.

Diaspora and Culture

Cultural influences such as social strata, education and religious belief, historic moment (time) and geographic location (space) play a vital role in shaping an individual's personality which ultimately reflects in his work of art. His sense of identity is grounded in his cultural identity. But what forms the cultural identity of a diasporic writer is a matter of political and intellectual debate.

Diaspora or displacement of a community or culture into another geographical and cultural region is said to have been in existence since humans inhabited earth. To begin a study of diasporic literature is to place it in the historical context. Migrations always take place due to historical, political and economic reasons which had led to Cross-Cultural encounters. The diasporic writing is thus 'both an individual story and explicitly a cultural narrative'. Diaspora writers are more concerned with spaces, landscapes and journeys.

Three Phases of Indian Diaspora and Diasporic Literature

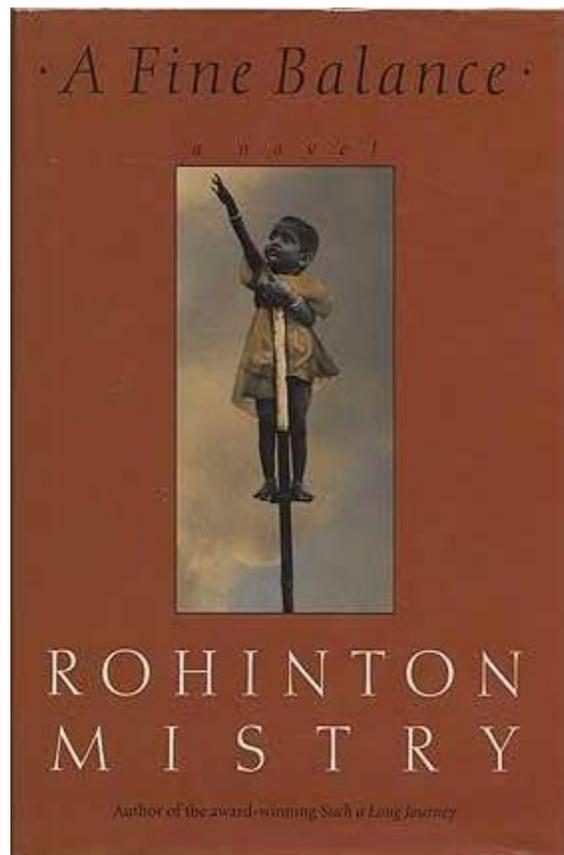
The history of Indian diaspora has had its course through three phases. The first phase began at the end of the nineteenth century when uneducated people were forcibly taken as indentured labourers to British colonies. During the second phase that began in the middle of the twentieth century, educated people travelled abroad to experience independence and economic development. The third phase comprising the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century saw people moving out of their homeland for the sake of education and employment.

The Diasporic literature of India is an offshoot of the immigrants who had access to education. They write in relation with the culture of their homeland, negotiating all along with the cultural space of their host-land. These diasporic writers live on the periphery and create 'new cultural theories'. Their works deal with themes such as nostalgia, sense of alienation, fragmentation, globalization, cosmopolitanism and hybridization.

While first generation writers concentrated more on cultural clash, the second generation portrayed the problems of identity and intergenerational gap. Due to the progress in communication technology, the second generation writers face the dilemma of dual identity, and their sense of dislocation creates existential angst upon their psychology. At the same time, they are also empowered to intervene in the transmission of cultured inheritance rather than passively accept the host culture’.

Hybridity

One of the themes of diasporic writing is ‘hybridity’, a term used by the postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha. It deals with doubles consciousness, multiple identities and ethnic assertion. Socio-cultural issues are stated in glaring tone as well as a series of discrete navigations that sets in motion the process of hybridity though never complete.



A Fine Balance, a novel by the Indian born Canadian writer, Rohinton Mistry could be analysed for the theme of hybridity. The author himself is an example of multiple identities.

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Kanchana Devi. G.
Cultural Studies and Diasporic Literature

Being born in a Parsi community within India and later settling in Canada, he faces double displacement. The title of the novel itself suggests a fine balance between different identities.

The novel deals with the lives of four protagonists - Dina Dalal, Maneck Kohlah, Ishwar Darji and Omprakash Darji. It explores the relationship between Hindu and Parsi communities. Dina Dalal born in an affluent Parsi family falls into bad times and becomes a widow, who is forced to sew clothes for living. Unable to pay the rent for her flat, she decides to take a boarder, Maneck Kohlah, a Parsi boy from North India who had come to the town for higher studies.

Since Dina's eyesight begins to fail, she hires the help of two untouchables, Ishwar Darji and Omprakash Darji. They belong to the Chamaar community who tan leather, but they learn the trade of tailoring to escape from hardship. They had escaped from their village due to the constraints of the caste system and hence readily accept Dina's offer.

In spite of initial hostilities towards each other, this group slowly bridges their social, cultural and religious differences to support each other. When adversity strikes them, they face it stoically and move on with their lives accepting the new turn of situation that occurs. Their capacity to adapt is highlighted in the novel.

Parallels

Though the novel is set in India, we find parallelism between the condition of the characters' lives to that of the immigrants' lives in their host-land. The novelist had deftly found balance between fiction and reality. Hybrid identities are perpetually in motion pursuing unpredictable routes and open to change as depicted in the novel. Thus Rohinton Mistry's portrayal is both autobiographical and communal at the same time.

Cosmopolitan Writers

Today's diasporic writers are viewed as 'Third World' or Cosmopolitan writers who map their experiences in their work which stands for the whole of their community. They seek

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues
Kanchana Devi. G.

narration itself as a return to Selfhood. They also view their state of marginality, plurality and ‘otherness’ as a source of energy and potential change. Hence they are termed as ‘brilliant improvisors’ rather than ‘pure inventors’.

Key concepts such as ‘Third Space’, ‘in-between space’, ‘enunciation’ and ‘hybridity’ from Homi Bhabha’s work, “The Location of Culture” mirrors the present scenario of diaspora where there is no claim of culture as ‘pure’ and ‘holistic’ but intermingled and manifold. His assertion that culture should be ‘rehistorised and read anew’ holds the possibility of the emergence of new cultural forms and diasporic literature aids the same.

As art grows out of life, literature should unify us beyond cultural and geographical limitations.

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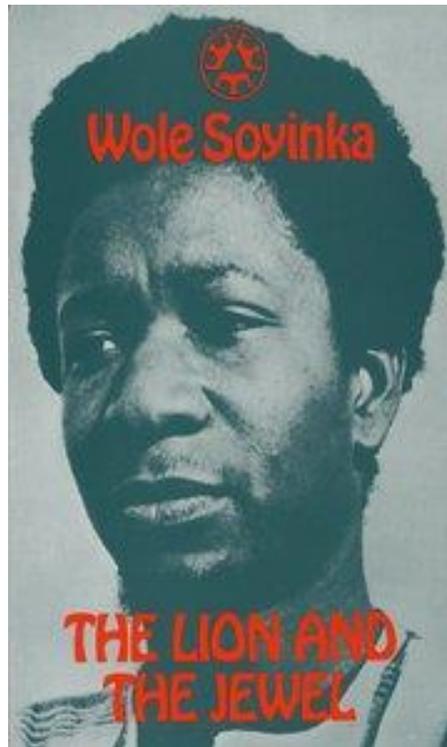
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Kanchana Devi.G., M.Phil. Research Scholar
National College
Dindigul Road
Tiruchirappalli 620001
Tamil Nadu
India kanchanahari1975@gmail.com

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*
Kanchana Devi. G.
Cultural Studies and Diasporic Literature

The Cultural Conflicts in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*

Dr. V. Latha



Abstract

Wole Soyinka, the highly acclaimed Nigerian writer was the first African who won the Nobel Prize in 1986 for his great writings. His writings reveal his ardent attachment towards Yoruban roots. His desire for tradition and his longing for the growth of his own kinsmen show the conflict between tradition and modernity in all his works. He brings out the colonial and postcolonial sufferings of his own country. Soyinka's popular play *The Lion and the Jewel* was published in 1959 on the verge of Nigerian independence. This play reveals the internal psychic dilemma of his clan whether to accept the new future or to live in the past. This paper

concentrates on the plot, characters and themes while focusing on the cultural conflicts in the play *The Lion and the Jewel*.

Keywords: *The Lion and the Jewel*, culture and modernity, conflict, clans, colonial, postcolonial, dilemma, sufferings, Yoruba.

Conflicts between Cultures

This study analyses Wole Soyinka's play *The Lion and the Jewel* in the light of conflicts between cultures. The main conflict is between the so-called westernized school teacher Lakunle and the tradition bound village head Baroka. This conflict can also be viewed as the conflict between modernity and tradition as well as the conflict between new and old. The choice of Sidi between Baroka and Lakunle represents the choice between traditional values and modern social changes and hopes. The confrontation between the tradition and modernity is the conflict in Nigerian minds either to choose the British influence or to continue with their years old traditional life. Sidi's selection of Baroka reveals that her people, the Nigerian mind inclines only towards the traditional way of life. Soyinka, the famous postcolonial writer always supports his native culture which is portrayed clearly in his play.

Four Main Characters

The four main characters in the play exhibit the playwright's excellence in presenting conflicts on various levels. Lakunle, a school teacher of the village who is twenty-three years old presents himself as a representative of western culture and wants to impose it on the villagers of Illujinle. Sidi, the village belle who knows about her own beauty only after she has been captured by a photographer and her photo was published in a magazine. She is portrayed as a jewel in the village. Baroka, the village chief is known as a Lion. He has several wives and many women to attend to him. The fourth major character is Sadiku, Baroka's head wife. The playwright focuses on the cultural conflicts not only among the individuals but also among the various sectors in the society.

Impact of Society and Community

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*
Dr. V. Latha

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LeBaron expresses that “Culture is always a factor in conflict, whether it plays a central role or influences it subtly and gently. For any conflict that touches us where it matters, where we make meaning and hold our identities, there is always a cultural component”. (1) The differences in values and behaviours among people are the main cause for the cultural conflicts. Culture has a great impact on day to day activities and conflicts between individuals can rise to conflicts between societies. The play *The Lion and the Jewel* presents the attitudes, attraction, social values and environment that are the root cause for the conflicts in culture.

Man is a social animal, therefore the impact of society and community play vital roles in shaping his culture and life style. The main reason for the conflicts is the change in the attitudes and acceptance of the people who have created their own norms. They want to modify the dimensions of their opinion and ideas during past years. This leads to discrimination between the citizens and there comes the loss of integration. Cole says, “The customs of a society reflect its culture”. (136) Thus when the customs of the society exhibit changes which are ultimately reflected in the culture of the individual and society. Cultural changes cannot be wiped out, but the attitude of acceptance results in solving the conflict.

Difference in the Attitudes of Major Characters

Soyinka presents the difference in the attitudes of these major characters. The characters differ in their ideas and acceptance. Their way of thinking is different from each other. The aspects like generation gap, communication and perceptions are the major factors for their conflicts. LeBaron says that. “culture is inextricable from conflict, though it does not cause it. When differences surface in families, organizations, or communities, culture is always present, shaping perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and outcomes”. (1) The contact between different groups or individuals aims to understand and observe another culture. This acceptance leads to the growth of civilization.

Baroka, the Aged Man

Baroka, the aged man, the lion of the village sticks to the old tradition and customs of the society. He feels proud to possess many wives and pleased to prove his manhood even at the age

of sixty three. His suppression of women and humiliation of other gender is a mark of his dominance in the society. The power of patriarchy is projected through the character of Baroka. Lakunle who wants to present himself as a man of western culture tries to impress not only Sidi but also the audience through his wonderful loving words and helping Sidi while bringing water. He wants her to be a modern girl and expects to behave like an English lady. His fight against giving bride price is a mark of his respect for women. His ideas are not accepted by Baroka and there is a gap of understanding between the two. This gap leads to conflict which is mainly due to lack of education. Education makes the new generation think and react to the transformation in the society and assimilate the new culture. However they are controlled and confronted by the restrictions enforced by tradition.

The clash between the new generation and the age old tradition and misunderstanding as a result of which leads to identity crisis and later towards cultural conflict. The play *The Lion and the Jewel* is set in the Nigerian village of Illujinle. The play takes place under the heads of morning, noon and night. The conflict in the play is between the traditional Nigerian Yoruba and the western influence of Nigerian colonizers. The playwright Wole Soyinka excellently presents the two great worldviews namely the Afro-centric view and Euro-centric view. The play explores the value of traditional Yoruba ways against the European standard of living. Lakunle, the naïve school master believes in modernity and accepts the European ideologies without proper understanding.

Baroka, the village leader accepts the tradition without doubts and looks at modernity with the eyes of suspicion and thinks it a threat to the society.

Lakunle

The play opens with a humiliating comment on Lakunle who inclines towards westernization. He pours out his love for Sidi but she does not pay attention to his proposal. She is stubborn in her traditional values and stresses that she will accept him if only he pays bride price for her. But Lakunle considers bride price is a barbaric and outdated custom. He feels that it is a kind of disrespect to womanhood. But Sidi comments his approach is full of stupidity. She

calls his speech nonsense. But Lakunle is willing to dedicate himself to Sidi. Though she snubs and humiliates him, he expresses his love for her. He says, “Nonsense? Nonsense? Do you hear? Does anybody listen? Can the stones bear to listen to this? Do you call it nonsense that I poured the waters of my soul to wash your feet? (6) His westernized ideas of respecting and helping wife at need are considered as a matter of nonsense by Sidi.

Sidi

Sidi becomes popular and proud of her beauty when her photograph covers three pages and Baroka’s photograph appears in a corner of a page. Her dilemma to accept the proposal of a modern man, Lakunle and the traditional old man, Baroka shows the inconsistency in her mind. The bride price is a traditional African custom of marriage. This is a kind of honour to the bride. If a girl marries without the price, it is assumed that she is not a virgin. This is the reason why Sidi insists Lakunle give the bride price to prove her chastity. But Lakunle believes that this custom is an outdated barbaric system. He opposes this custom because of the influence of the western concept of gender equality. He says, “To pay price would be to buy a heifer off the market stall. You would be my chattel, my mere property”. (22) But Sidi does not pay attention to this idea and rejects Lakunle. She thinks that Lakunle is a miser and considers his idea as, “a cheating way, mean and miserly”. (10)

Preference for African Traditions

Wole Soyinka shows his preference for African traditions in many places in the play *The Lion and the Jewel*. On the one hand the play shows the influence of the modern British in the minds of Africans and on the other the failure to impose it. Kronenfeld writes, “the comedy clearly operates in terms of the characters adjusting ideology (tradition or modern), or selecting convenient aspects of it, in accordance with their situation and their psychological needs”. (307) The cultural conflict reveals a confrontation between the two ways of life. Baroka’s movements and actions prove his stand for traditional life. He expects respect from his men and wants to stop spreading of western civilization in Ilujinle. He is against the public works that has been carried out in the village. When the public works department sends in workers and surveyors to clear the jungles in order to lay a railway track, Baroka bribes the surveyor with money, a coop of hens

and a goat and stops the work. He aims to keep the village in its own traditional form with no progress at all.

Clash between Generations

The play portrays the clash between the octogenarian village head and a young school teacher. Soyinka has presented a young man who is a caricature of a modern human being representing vulgarity and superficiality. Baroka is the mouthpiece of Soyinka expressing his love for traditional culture of his country. His love is not the uncritical patriotism or romantic nostalgia but a strong and deep understanding of Nigerian heritage, which have permanent values. Soyinka manages to expose societal mistakes focusing on youth and the problem of self-definition. This play is a challenge and criticizes the African life through European conventions of dramatic representations. Soyinka presents the customs and traditions in his Yoruban country.

Soyinka shows the polygamous society through Bale, the village head who marries as many girls as he wants. He can change his favourite when his pleasure is over with her. Baroka plays a trick to get Sidi through Sadiku, his head wife. He wants to have Sidi as his last favourite. Therefore, he laments that he has become impotent and spreads this news to Sidi through Sadiku with an idea that he will surely get her. In Nigeria marrying multiple wives is legal and it is regarded as a feature of traditional life. Falola indicates that, "...the function of the family as an economic unit of production, especially for those in agrarian production, a large family provides the labour necessary for the maintenance and growth of the business" (56) and he further adds, "the woman and her children remain under the economic and social care of the family". (58)

The successor of dead Bale marries the last and favourite wife of the dead Bale, as his first wife. According to the custom, the first wife becomes the senior and receives all honours in the family. Baroka too has many wives in his harem from Sadiku to his favourite wife Ailatu. At the age of sixty two his desire for Sidi clearly states his hunt for girls. Maclean calls the play "a Nigerian bedroom Farce for its convention of polygamy". (51) According to the customs of the village, the first wife has to persuade the girls to marry her husband as a kind of her duty to ensure her husband's happiness. To ascertain this Kumar says, "by this act, the society

emphasizes that wives have to obey and do furnish all sorts for the fulfilment of his desire. It is settled in the minds of the women in the society”. (5)

The dead Bale’s son becomes husband to his step-mother. In Sadiku’s case he reveals that she is the bare witness of Okiki’s, father of Baroka, impotency. “I was there when it happened to your father, the great Okiki! I did for him, I, the youngest and freshest of the wives”. (30) By means of this dialogue she reveals that she was the favourite wife of Baroka’s father and after his death she becomes the senior wife of Baroka.

As custom suggests, Sadiku the senior wife of Baroka, attracts and gets women whom Baroka wants to obtain. In this regard, she approaches Sidi and persuades her to accept Baroka her husband. Lakunle begs Sidi not to agree, but she has to assert herself to put an end to his clowning. Sadiku is rather happy about Baroka’s confession of his impotency. Sidi goes to see Baroka on the grounds that she did not intend to reject his invitation and proposal knowing well that he would not be capable of doing anything. In an unexpected turn of events, but as expected by Baroka, he seduces Sidi. This play tells about the contrasts: old versus new and culture versus change. Since the lion bit the jewel, Sidi has lost her chastity, she decides to marry Baroka. Though Lakunle offers his hand for Sidi after she was seduced by Baroka, she refuses his proposal and joyfully goes to marry Baroka.

Adherence to Modernity Does Not Mean Turning Our Backs upon Tradition

Soyinka insists that the one who adheres to modernity, is not the one who turns his back upon tradition, but rather the one who reinterprets it creatively and rationally. He also accepts that tradition helps people go into the future without being uprooted or alienated from the past. The blind imitation of the glamour of the modern world and forgetting all the traditional values can make the society hollow like husk. But an unintelligent sticking to tradition also reduces a human being to the status of an early man. Soyinka argues that British establish their colonies in the name of developing the undeveloped nations but they occupy the soil of others only to plunder and prosper their own country. He uses the themes of disparity between immaturity and

maturity and traditional victory over modernism. Soyinka satirizes the dangerously superficial concept of progress in the name of westernization.

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Dr. V. Latha
No.6, Sri Sai Illam Samudhayam, Near Check Post Trunk Road, T.V. Koil
Trichy 620 005
Tamilnadu
India
lat.harini@gmail.com

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

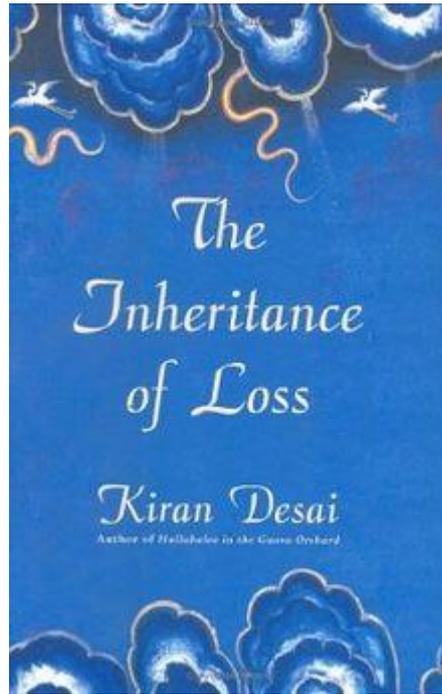
Dr. V. Latha

The Cultural Conflicts in Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion and the Jewel*

**Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to
Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss***

C. Nesavathy

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Abstract

This paper explains how people's adaptation of western culture leads to their dissolution. The paper also explains how westernization has greatly affected our traditions, customs, our family and our respect and love for others. Kiran Desai speaks of the hybridization of Indian culture resulting from the contact with colonial world. The novel partially represents both the western and eastern cultures. In between the two it centres round the people, who don't have their own identity in either part of the globe. It explains how Indians run at the back of western culture and neglect the Indian culture which is unique.

The Process of Westernization

Westernization is a process whereby societies come under or adopt Western culture in areas such as industry, technology, law, politics, economics, lifestyle, diet, clothing, language, alphabet, religion, philosophy, and values. “Westernization has been a pervasive and accelerating influence across the world in the last few centuries, with some thinkers assuming westernization to be the equivalent of modernization” (Chauhan 124). Regarding westernization it has also been observed:

Westernization can also be related to the process of acculturation or enculturation. Acculturation refers to the changes that occur within a society or culture when two different groups come into direct continuous contact. Westernization can also refer to the effects of western expansion and colonialism on native societies. (Teggihalli 112)

The Inheritance of Loss

In *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai presents all the characters in one way or the other having colonized minds and their lives are tormented by the seeds of westernization and the blind directions towards the west, resulting in immigration. Desai depicts the characters living in a small village but facing the global questions. All the characters face the same problems of globalization, westernization, racial discrimination, and colonized mindset. Most of her characters display a constant obsession with western thought and a deep investment in western institutions. Even the minor characters like Noni, Lola, Mrs. Sen, and the cook live with their consciousness trapped by the thoughts of western countries like America and England.

Blind Appreciation

The characters in the novel blindly appreciate everything that is related to the western countries. Immigration to the countries like UK and US is considered as a matter of pride and is associated with status elevation. The cook says to everyone that his son has a new job in the USA. In fact, he, himself, has the desire to fly away to America. However, the reality is bitter that Biju has to shift to a new job because he is not allowed to continue or because he does not want to suffer the pain of the previous job. His life in America as an illegal immigrant is like that of a beggar, without home and a proper job.

But in India, the cook is proud of his son’s achievements which are hollow in nature.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

C. Nesavathy

Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*

Desai attacks the ignorance of the people of India and their blindness of accepting everything related to the western countries.

Comical Situation

Desai presents a comical situation out of the women's habit of boasting about their daughters' success in western countries. Anglophile Lola boasts of her daughter's success of becoming a news reader in the BBC world channel. And Mrs. Sen's daughter gets the same job in CNN News Channel in America. Mrs. Sen tries to prove that America is the best country in the world and Lola tries to prove that England is the best country in the world. However, their daughter's success and their boasting of the western countries seem futile when compared with the exploitation and suffering of Biju in America and the racial discrimination of the Judge in England.

Colonial Mindset

Desai keeps on highlighting the colonial mindset in India. People in countries like India have great regard for everything associated with Britain or America. The Judge always envies the English people and loathes the Indian people. In Britain he was racially discriminated and was an outcast and even in India he was hated for his Anglophilic attitude. People like the cook celebrate every moment which resembles that of the English. He happily says, "AngrezKeTarah Like the English, AngrezkeTarahAngrezJaise" (Desai 105). Sai and the Judge, for example, immediately thinks of American films instead of popular Bollywood movies. The cook has a fetish for modern western appliances.

Jemubhai Patel, the Judge

One of the major characters of the story is Jemubhai Patel, the Judge. He, being westernized, recoils from everything Indian. He was born in India but went to England to receive the college education. The Judge's life in London was one of loneliness and humiliation and "he retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow" (39). He felt himself to be hated and mocked at by the English who said, "Phew, he stinks of curry. The young and beautiful were no kinder; girls held their noses and giggled" (39).

And he became so introvert that he started hating himself, his skin colour, and anything

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

C. Nesavathy

Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

that made him Indian, his true identity. The Judge's hatred grew to such an extent that "He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both" (119).

The humiliation and suffering which is thrust on the Judge in England made him suspicious towards his life; he would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny days. "He sat alone because he felt ill at ease in the company of English" (119). The Judge's encounter with the English culture is so humiliating and filled with such strong feelings of resentment and anger, that he becomes doubly displaced when he returns home. When the Judge returns home, it becomes clear how terribly his encounter with the English altered his cultural identity. He is neither European nor Indian, and becomes an immigrant in his own self. The Judge remains "a foreigner in his own country" (29) and never opens himself up to the human world. He does not even love his granddaughter, Sai. The only creature whom the Judge loves immensely is his dog, Mutt. When it is stolen by two wandering beggars, the Judge gets terribly upset. While searching for her, the Judge sentimentally calls her, "Please come home, my dear, my lovely girl, Princess Duchess Queen, Naughty girl, sweet heart! Muffin, chicki, Diamond Pearl" (293). The Judge has never had such emotional attachment even with his wife. The inhuman nature of the Judge makes Sai comment, "Grandfather more lizard than human, Dog more human than dog" (32).

Self-Centered Cynicism

Influenced wrongly by the western culture, Jemubhai fails to adhere to the traditional Indian culture. He despises Indian culture and the way of life, including his apparently backward Indian wife, whom he had abandoned along with his daughter. He gradually regenerates into a self-centered cynic. The English culture has made him more of a coward. The Westernized and Anglophile Judge detests Nimi's ignorance and typical Indian qualities. The Judge's failure in seeing her from his English vision frustrates and infuriates him beyond any limit. Unable to give up his contempt for Indian heritage and hatred for Indian culture, he treats his wife cruelly.

Fail to Acculturate Wife

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017
T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues
C. Nesavathy

Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

All his attempts to educate his wife, Nimi, in western etiquette and manners, drastically fail. Being a typical Indian woman, Nimi always contradicts the Judges' English expectations. The judge asks her, "Why do you have to dress in such a gaudy manner? Yellow and pink? Are you mad?"(172).He takes her head and pushes it into the toilet bowl, once he finds her footprints on the toilet seat. Moreover, he asks her not to show her face outside when she gets pustules on her face. The narrator observes, " He did not like his wife's face, searched for his hatred, found beauty, dismissed it...An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (168). His beastly behaviour with his wife proves to be a mockery of all his English education. He beats her severely and sends her to her parental home after learning that she is responsible for blocking his promotion by being part of the committee that has welcomed Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru at the local railway station. Even the birth of a child does not soften him. Finally, Nimi commits suicide. The Judge treats it as an accident.

Struggle with Cultural Identity – The Case of Sai

All the characters struggle with their cultural identity and the forces of westernization, while trying to maintain their emotional connection with one another. Sai is the chief protagonist in the novel. Sai speaks English and no other local language; she knows only the English method of making tea and she cannot eat with her fingers. She never squats down on the ground and used paper to clean her bottom and has never been to the temple. Sai has adopted the British culture as being superior to India. Sai does not know her own culture and believes in British culture:

The system might be obsessed with purity, but excelled in defining the flavor of sin. This underneath, and on top a flat creed: cake was better than laddoos, fork spoon is better than hands, sipping the blood of Christ and consuming a wafer of his body was more civilized than garlanding a phallic symbol with marigold. English was better than Hindi. (29-30)

In fact, Sai has become absolutely a foreigner to her own culture and country of her origin. Though she has never been outside India, she speaks only English. Her convent education has made her lose touch with the native tradition and culture.

Gyan and Sai

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*

C. Nesavathy

Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

The impact of westernization is noticed in the relationship between Gyan and Sai. Gyan and Sai bear a lot of differences between them. Sai follows a western life style, whereas Gyan follows a traditional one. Therefore, there is already an unbridgeable gap between them. Sai is a true representative of the globalized world. She is a westernized Indian brought up by English nuns. She represents a type of “estranged Indian living in India” (210). By birth, Sai is part of the upper class or at least upper- middle class. She celebrates western holidays like Christmas, eats English food, and lives in Cho Oyu, which is a fairly nice home with modern conveniences. Sai speaks English as her first language, instead of a more indigenous Indian language. She cannot relate with anyone outside her social strain. Sai is caught between two cultures that are different from each other, the Indian and the Western. She feels herself an exile like her grandfather. Gyan, however, has a different mother tongue and eats more indigenous food.

Gyan disdains and criticizes Sai’s blind acceptance of westernization. Gyan shouts at Sai calling her a slave since she is ready to clasp the western way of living as her grandfather. Gyan dislikes Sai celebrating festivals like Christmas is seen when he asks,” Why do you celebrate Christmas? You are Hindu and you don’t celebrate ID or Guru Nanak’s birthday or even Durga Puja or Dussehra or Tibetan New Year” (163). But Sai wants to have a bit of fun and doesn’t mind celebrating Christmas Day. Gyan attacks Sai by calling her copycat and tells her that “THEY DON’T WANT YOU” (164). Gyan disapproves of her slavery towards the western culture. With Gyan’s reincarnation into a revolutionary man with the aim of attaining a separate state called Gorkhaland, his love-affair with Sai is affected since he becomes more and more conscious of the foolishness in Sai’s imitation of western lifestyle.

Colonized Psyche and Subsequent Westernization

In both the love stories, between the Judge and his wife and between Gyan and Sai, it is the colonized psyche and the subsequent westernization that separate the couples. Western concepts are corroding the traditional life style of the Indians. Gyan’s hatred for westernization and Nimi’s inability to adapt the western culture destroy any further hope of reconciliation. Hence, the forces of westernization have infiltrated into the lives of even those who do not intent to settle abroad. The writer clearly shows the impact of westernization on common people and their relations. This can be clearly seen

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

C. Nesavathy

Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*

in the case of Gyan and Sai. On the one hand, Gyan's egoistic feeling of martyrdom does not allow him to stoop to the girl's demands, and on the other hand, Sai continues to attack him by calling him a hypocrite who likes to eat cheese and at the same time dislikes westernization, "Hundreds of pieces of cheese toast you must have eaten. Let alone the chocolate cigars....So greedy, eating them like a fat pig. And tuna fish on toast and peanut butter biscuits!"(259).

A Return Journey

Desai, ironically, presents the return journey of Biju from the States to India. Indians still have high regards for foreign things and refrain from questioning the western policies. Desai shows a remarkable difference in the Judge's behaviour before and after his studies in England. In his early days the judge used to love his wife. But once wounded by the west, the judge completely changes into a stranger to his family. He boycotts his family and the whole caste for the same reason.

Noni and Lola are well known in Kalimpong for belonging to the same westernized Indian class as Sai. They are two comical and wealthy ladies who live in a spacious cottage with all sorts of comfort, and keep multiple servants, including a maid, a sweeper, a gardener, and a watchman. The sisters greatly admire the British and adopt as many English customs as possible. They grow western vegetables like broccoli in their garden; they only wear Marks and Spencer garments, they drink English tea, eat English jam and pastries, love manor house novels, and have the complete works of Jane Austen. Part of their obsession with the British is due to Lola's daughter, Pixie, who lives in England and works for the BBC. Lola beams with pride, when her daughter's voice comes over the radio. Lola and a neighbour, Mrs. Sen, whose daughter Munmun lives in the United States and works for CNN, participate in intense battles over which country, America or England is superior. "Instead of identifying with their Indian culture, these women take on western identities so completely that they battle against their fellow Indians in favour of the western cultures they can never truly join" (Pooja 89). Sai, Noni, Lola, Uncle Potty and father Booty went to the library in Darjeeling to exchange their library books. At the library they picked out some books which were written by English writer about England. All of them are unanimous in the opinion that they do not like English writers writing about India. Sai picks out an old book that states

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

C. Nesavathy

Westernization Leading to Dissolution with reference to Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

that an Indian can be civilized but can never be as good as the English. This makes her furious. The narrator comments:

They didn't like English writer writing about India; it turned the stomach; delirium and fever somehow went with temples and snakes and perverse romance. English writer writing of England was what was nice: P.G. Woodhouse, Agatha Christie...Reading them you felt as if you were watching those movies in the air-conditioned British council in Calcutta. (Desai 199)

The Indians run at the back of western culture and neglect the Indian Culture which is unique. The Judge willingly tolerates Sai only because she is westernized. He accepts her not as his granddaughter but only for her fluency and flair for English. One common factor among almost all the characters is that their minds are colonized. The minds of the rich and the poor are equally colonized. They have high regards for foreign things, irrespective of their quality. A kind of unquestioned belief or blindness is to be found among the characters.

Should Adopting Alien Culture Accompany Hating One's Own?

Kiran Desai, with *The Inheritance of Loss*, challenges the dominance of the west. The novel gives a graphic account of westernization of Indian society in characters like Jemubhai Patel, a former judge, his teenaged granddaughter Sai and their cook, PannaLal, who live in a house in the north East Indian town Kalimpong, Biju, the cook's son, Gyan, Saeed, Haresh-Harvy and the two sisters, Lolita and Nonita. All these figures are the inheritors of loss, in terms of dislocation of place, wealth and progress. They are all transformed from their 'native' identity into something quite different, a 'Westernized native'. Caught between the two cultures, the characters are all haunted by the questions regarding their identity. Most of the characters in Desai's novel have their respective experiences, roles in which their identity comes in contact with other cultures which is foreign or alien to them and ultimately resulting in a strong negative reaction.

Biju is specifically the only character in the novel that questions the ideas of culture and ethnicity. His encounter with foreign culture is more positive than most of

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the other characters encounter in the novel. However Biju meets, at a restaurant, some Indian girls westernized in dress and speech, but still clinging onto their caste system. Biju gets disheartened and feels that he has lost his identity, belonging neither here nor there. Almost the entire novel is dark in its description of colliding cultures, but the last pages show a new side to the theme, when Biju returns home penniless and broken; Biju seems to have returned for the better and it is seen in Sai's feeling when she sees Biju, and his pitaji (father) 'leaping at each other' in joy. People's adaptation of western culture leads to their dissolution.

There's no harm in taking good things from the west, but this does not mean that one should completely adopt it and pretend to be western and misrepresent his or her identity. It is understandable that India is growing in every field and assimilating different cultures and their traditions. To some extent it is fine but one should not go to the extent of adopting the alien culture and hating one's own. One has to preserve his or her own identity bearing in mind an outsider's view of India as a land of rich cultural heritage.

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C. Nesavathy
Assistant Professor
Department of English
St. John's College of Arts and Science
SH 46, Ammandivilai 629204
Tamil Nadu
India
Sindhudhas16@gmail.com

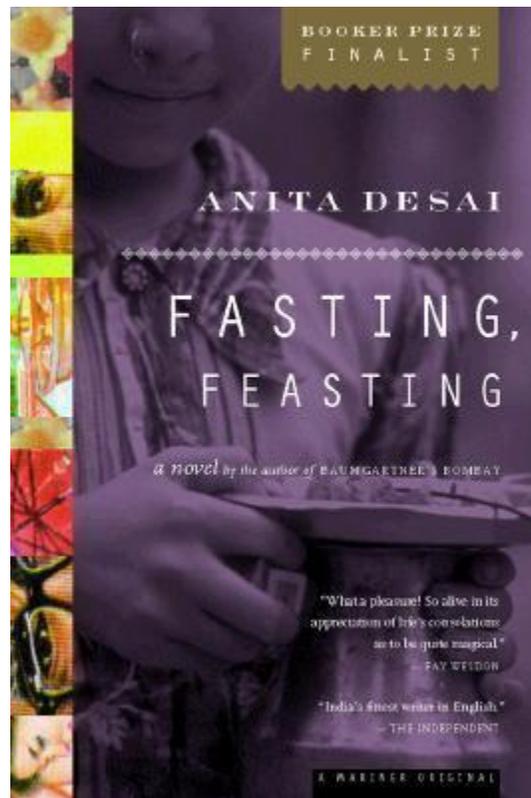
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Silent Suffering in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*

Dr. R. Sumathi & R. Priyadharsini



Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the concept of women's suffering, their untold ache and their irreparable loss. Anita Desai is a representative Indian woman novelist in English. Her contribution to fiction is more significant than the other Indian women novelists. Desai's novels all highlight the emotional turmoil, depression and agonies of her oppressed women characters. As a keen observer of life, she has portrayed the inner life of her female characters. Desai's novel *Fasting, Feasting* deals with the agony of the women characters and the clash of two different cultures.

The novel *Fasting, Feasting* depicts the miserable life of the protagonist, Uma. This paper critically examines how Uma suffers quietly and tolerates her neglected state in her family. She is made a victim of her circumstances and a victim of her fate. Like other women, she also has wishes and desires but she is not able to express everything in her life. This paper critically analyses the entrapped condition of Uma and her sister Aruna.

Keywords: Fasting, Feasting, Suffering, Agony, Emotional turmoil, Entrapment of women, patriarchal society

Introduction

Anita Desai is one of the most significant contemporary Indian novelists in English. Her contribution to fiction writing has been quite praiseworthy and substantial. In her novels, Desai explores the mute miseries of married women and their existential problems. Most of her novels deal with the theme of unhappy married life, alienation, loneliness and the agony of existence. Swain in his study on *Note of Existentialism in the Novels of Anita Desai*, comments on Desai's depiction of this novel, "The terror of facing single – handed the ferocious assaults of existence". (Swain 167)

Desai's protagonists are independent, agonized and frustrated. Desai closely examines the emotional world of her woman characters. She examines the social and emotional bonds that shackle women. She is concerned with the inner climate of women characters. Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly observes:

Since her pre-occupation is with the inner world of sensibility rather than the outer world of action, she has tried to forge a style supple and suggestive enough to convey the fever and fretfulness of the stream-of-consciousness of her principal characters. (Iyengar 16)

Fasting, Feasting

Desai's novel *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) deals with the intricate web of family conflict. The novel is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the family of Mama Papa and the second part covers Mr. Patton's family in America. The title of the novel is a highly symbolic one. The novel highlights the theme of rootlessness and alienation. Desai has portrayed the contradictions through the characters as well as the situations. Anita Desai remarks, "I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated or been driven into some extremity of despair and so turned against, or made to stand against, the general current." (23) The title *Fasting, Feasting* signifies Uma's 'fasts' in India and Aruna's feasts in America. Here 'Fasting' refers to the miserable existence of Uma and 'feasting' refers to the unwanted life style of Aruna in the United States.

Mama Papa and Their Children

Fasting, Feasting is about the traditional couple Mama Papa and their children, Uma, Aruna and Arun. In this novel, Desai portrays the oppression of woman characters and their miserable lives. She depicts Indian society and Indian socio-cultural milieu through man and his circumstances. R. S. Singh in his study on *Aloneness Alone: Anita Desai and Arun Joshi* rightly comments on Anita Desai, "Anita Desai is undoubtedly among the most gifted Indian Writers today who are expressing through their writings the psychic reverberations of a whole generation". (Singh 177)

Uma

Uma who is the protagonist of the first part of the novel lives under the demanding rule of her parents. She is plain, short-sighted, clumsy and a terrible embarrassment to her family. She is trapped at home and she is smothered by her overbearing parents and their customs. She is a gray-haired spinster living under the control of Mama Papa. In her childhood days she loved to go to school. Uma's school-going was a pleasant attempt to escape from the claustrophobic conditions at home. Through the character of Uma, Desai exposes the common scenario of oppression of women in Indian society.

Uma's only joy in her childhood is to go to school. After every vacation she looks forward to its reopening. Mama's plan of dropping Uma's school education is shown when Mama says, "We are not sending you back to school, Uma. You are staying at home to help with Arun". (18)

Uma's desire for going to a convent school is stopped by her mother Mama. When Mama gives birth to the third baby, Arun, Uma's state is reduced to a baby-sitter in her early years. When Uma shows her disagreement, she is manipulated and threatened by her mother. Thus Uma's joy of going to school is crushed by her mother's traditional outlook. This unfavorable situation turns her life for the worse and she is treated as an unpaid servant by her parents. Being the eldest of the three children, Uma is expected to change the diapers of her baby brother and she is ordered to share in the household chores of her family. Her childhood is lost by these demands of her parents. Her wishes and desires are denied in her family. She finds no escape from the unfavorable situation. She feels as if she is put in prison. She is not allowed to express her wishes.

Uma looks forward to her marriage. She believes that her marriage would give her the much – needed relief. All the efforts of Mama Papa to see Uma happily married are turned to failure and all their hopes are shattered. Though Papa does not hesitate to arrange the dowry for his daughter, the suitable match for Uma is not easily fixed by her papa. She remains unwedded and finally her parents arrange her marriage with a man who is much older than her father. The second attempt of Papa too proves to be a failure, when she is brought back home from her husband's house. All Uma's expectations are shattered when immediately after marriage she discovers that her husband is already married and also having four children. So she returns home in permanent disgrace. After the failure of her married life, her existence is confined to the verandah, bedroom and kitchen of her parents' home. Here Desai highlights how the hypocrisy of the marriage system affects the life of an innocent woman in our society.

After she discovers the truth she becomes a victim of her cultural traditions and a victim of patriarchal society. As a divorcee Uma is treated as a mere burden in her parents'

House and Mama says, Uma was considered ill-fated by all, and no more attempts were made to marry her off". (98) Being a mother of Uma , Mama does not understand the pain of her daughter and she expresses Uma's desire to "dispose of Uma". (88) Uma's suffering increases when she is neglected by her family members. Jasbir Jain in his study on The Novels of Anita Desai comments, "Uma's life becomes a series of furtive flights, attempts to escape from the fate which seems to be enclosing upon her life". (Jain 188)

Unlike her younger sister Aruna and her younger brother Arun , Uma does not have the privileges. Instead, she is committed with all household chores. Mama too suffers before the birth of Arun. Since she has given birth to two daughters, she is neglected in her family. Though Papa has two grown up daughters, he desires to have a son. When a male baby is born to Mama Papa, Papa feels very happy and is proud to be a father of his son Arun. The unwanted state of daughters indicates clearly when Papa says, "A boy... A boy! Arun, Arun at last !" (17)

Papa and Mama

Andrew Robinson comments on the character of Mama Papa :

In Papa and Mama, the Indian parents, she (Anita Desai) creates two monsters of almost Gothic proportions, locked into irreparable marital disharmony, determined to inflict on their two daughters and only son every ounce of the prejudice and disappointments of their own lives, as a respectable barrister and his wife in an undistinguished town .(Robinson 39)

Mama is not respected by her husband until she gives a birth to a male baby. After the birth of Arun, Mama gets the status of woman in her family and is proud to have been able to produce finally a male offspring. Her all sufferings are vanished after she gives a birth to a boy baby. Here Desai explores the conventional belief of society that is bound to the value of woman. Through Mama, Desai highlights the sufferings of mother in male dominated society and how she is treated in a family

Uma's attempt at going to a job is also denied by her parents. When Dr. Dutt provides a chance to go out and work as a nurse, Uma is denied by her parents. Uma feels friendless and lonely. Even when she is at home, she is surrounded by her Mama Papa and she is left with humiliation. Her frustration and isolation make her to think of writing a letter to a friend to share her heartache and she says:

She could write a letter to a friend – a private message of despair, dissatisfaction, yearning; she has a packet of notepaper, pale violet with a pink rose embossed in the corner – but who is the friend? Mrs. Joshi? But since she lives next door, she would be surprised. Aruna? But Aruna would pay no attention, she is too busy... (137)

Arun

Arun is unable to free himself from the clutches of his father in terms of his education. After getting a foreign scholarship he goes to America to fulfill his Papa's unfulfilled dreams. He is sent to Massachusetts against his wishes. Arun's entrapment is revealed when Uma notices his state:

Uma watched Arun too, when he read the fateful letter. She watched and searched for an expression, of relief, of joy, doubt, fear, anything at all. But there was none.... There was nothing else...not the hint of smile, frown, laugh, or anything else ... This blank face now stared at the letter and faced another phase of his existence arranged for him by papa. (124)

Arun struggles to establish his individuality in America. His letters from America are devoid of any emotion. Arun is not able to adjust to the alien food and develops a sense of belonging with the Patton's family in Massachusetts. Though Arun is given more privilege than his sisters to go abroad, his dream of a better life is shattered. Arun's disappointment increases his sufferings when he faces the cultural conflicts. Asha Kanwar remarks, "The hall mark of Desai's fiction is to focus on the inner experience of life". (Kanwar 71)

Anamika

Anamika is the first cousin of Uma. She gets a scholarship from Oxford University for her studies. But her scholarship is used only for her marriage. After she gets married she is tortured and beaten by her mother-in-law and her husband. Anamika's miserable life is revealed when one of her relatives says, "Anamika had been beaten, Anamika was beaten regularly by her mother-in-law while her husband stood by and approved – or at least, did not object." (71) Anamika tolerates this prison life for twenty five years. Her miserable life comes to an end when she is burned to death by her husband and mother-in-law. Here, Anamika is a victim of her cultural traditions as well as a victim of male dominated society.

Conclusion

Anita Desai has portrayed the predicaments of Indian middle class women. She has an innate ability to delve into the inner psyche of her characters. Her women characters suffer privations and humiliations, neglect and silence, aloofness and alienation. The unhappy situations of women in Indian society are depicted in all her novels. The novel *Fasting, Feasting* depicts the plight of Uma who is a victim in her North Indian typical middle class family set up. Through this novel, Desai highlights the precarious situation of the married woman. Uma, Arun and Anamika are the defeated dreamers who experience failures, frustrations and rejections in the journey of their life. Uma and Anamika are compelled to sacrifice their lives. Uma survives not because she is weak, but because she knows that she is weak.

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Dr. R.Sumathi
Associate Professor
Kongunadu Arts and Science College
G N Mill
Coimbatore 641029
Tamil Nadu
India
sumenglit@gmail.com

R. Priyadharsini
Kongunadu Arts and Science College
G N Mill
Coimbatore 641029
Tamil Nadu
India
dharsinisjc@gmail.com

Teaching English as a Second Language

J. Priya, Ph.D.

Vishnu Chander, I EEE
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Abstract

English is the universal lingua franca of the world. English is used as the second language in majority of the countries in the world. Though English is the second language, many of the learners do not have enough grasp of the language and lack the ability to use it to suit their purposes with ease. In other words, many learners do not have the spoken and written language fluency required for the spoken and written communication in their day to day activities and professional and academic life. This is because they learn English as a subject rather than as a language. The second language acquisition theories throw light on the nature of the English language and how the language can be acquired effectively by learners. The theories include the acquisition – learning distinction hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis and the pleasure hypothesis. Knowledge of these theories will play a great role in helping the English language teachers to guide their learners to acquire the required English language knowledge. This paper throws light on these theories of SLA and also discusses how these theories can be incorporated by the teachers in language classrooms.

Keywords: lingua franca, second language acquisition, the acquisition – learning distinction hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis, pleasure hypothesis

Introduction

English is the universal lingua franca of the world. The term ‘lingua franca’ means a bridge language, a common language or a vehicular language. In earlier days, *lingua franca*

meant the language of exchange between traders for commercial purposes. Nowadays, it means the language meant for exchange of ideas and knowledge other important information between individuals belonging to various countries in the world. The universal lingua franca is English. The term 'lingua franca' has its root in the Arabic 'lisan-al-farang' meaning an intermediary language used by speakers of Arabic with travelers from Western Europe. Crystal's definition of 'lingua franca' as "a medium of communication for people who speak different languages" and McArthur's definition of the same as "a language common to, or shared by, many cultures, and communities at any or all social and educational levels, and used as an international tool" describes the actual role of English in this age of globalization. As a result, English is learnt as a second language in many countries throughout the world.

Teaching English as a Second Language

English as a second language is taught in schools and colleges in countries where English is not the native language. The teachers and learners take strenuous efforts to teach and learn English as the second language; but in spite of the efforts taken by the learners to learn the language and the teachers to help learners learn the language, there has been no ground breaking or phenomenal improvement in English. This is because of two reasons. First, English is viewed as a subject rather than as a language in many of the educational institutions. To state in other words, the teaching of English takes place in a rule based manner and not in the context base. Secondly, the problem lies with the methods adopted for teaching English language.

Ineffectiveness of the Current Teaching Trends

Analysis of various teaching methods that primarily focus on teaching language to learners did not impact any real language development among them. The Grammar-Translation method, the first and foremost method used for teaching a language to learners, focused on making them learn grammatical rules through strenuous drills and practices and make use of the learnt rules for translating from first language to the second or foreign languages and vice-versa. The Audio-Lingual method, also referred to as the Army Method or the New Key method, was modeled on the Behaviourist theory and to some extent similar to the Direct Method of language learning. Its underlying philosophy of teaching was that any language can be effectively learnt through repeated reinforcement, through drills and practices, and feedback. Teaching language

using a context is believed to greatly impact language learning of learners and hence methods that focus on both language and content were expected to help learners acquire the required discipline specific academic English language knowledge. Research into methods that focused on teaching both language and content appeared to indicate that Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is an effective method for teaching specific academic language through discipline specific content. Studies show that though Content-Based Instruction appear to teach both language and content to learners, actual focus is on teaching language rather than content and that content is used as an instructional platform to teach the required academic language. Further, effectiveness of instruction itself is questioned when we consider Duff & Anderson's claim that the "mentors are not always effective, successful or available to provide timely mentoring".

A Possible Solution for Learning English as a Second Language Better

First, the teachers and the learners must realize that English is not a subject but is a language. Languages cannot be learnt but only acquired through receiving exposure to meaningful content either in the form of listening or speaking.

Reading is found to an effective source for acquiring any language and reading in English will help learners to acquire the English language required for both speaking and writing. Reading is not a novel but an age old concept with its origin dating back to before the invention of printing press. It began with cavemen's drawings, continued with the discovery of papyrus and flourished after the invention of the printing press.

Reading served as the primary form of leisure time activity long before the advent of television, computer and cinema. In those days, people had a passion for reading as they had realized books were their windows to outside world and indulged in it a lot as it both expanded their knowledge and enhanced their understanding of their society in particular and of the world at large. In addition, the underlying motive of education those days was gaining mastery in chosen disciplines and complete knowledge of the world around by learners through experience, exposure and clear understanding of various concepts; and reading books and materials on specific disciplines and meaningful interaction with experts and masters of chosen disciplines were considered the surest way to achieve this end.

As a result, reading was given primary importance and both adults and youth alike considered it a great pride to possessing books and reading them. But with numerous advancements in science and technology and along with the possibility of getting access to the needed knowledge at the tap of a finger, the passion for reading and the need for it have been greatly reduced. But now, the habit of reading has deteriorated and people, irrespective of their age, consider it a boring and a time consuming chore.

In reality, reading can never be done away with as it is the part and parcel of our everyday life. People are expected to read something or the other ranging from name boards, restaurant menus, pamphlets and manuals to academic texts, research articles and subject related books.

Though it is believed that scientific innovations and technical improvements have reduced the need for reading, they, in fact, have increased the opportunities for more reading. In tune with the development of science and technology, the method or way of reading has changed. For example, there are e-libraries instead of just libraries and people have the benefit of reading a book or a newspaper on their mobiles or laptops instead of carrying a book or a bunch of papers around. Today learners neither need to go in search of books and materials nor do they have to waste their time searching for a book on a particular topic among a wide collection of books. Similarly, they also need not wait for a longer period of time to get a book published in some other part of the world to reach them, for internet has made it possible for learners to update themselves in a matter of few seconds. But, the main concern here is learners of this generation do not only prefer or enjoy reading but also do not realize the importance of it. As a result, much research is done on reading as to enlighten both learners and teachers of the current generation about the importance of reading.

Theories of Second Language Acquisition

Knowing about the theories of second language acquisition will help the teachers and the learners to redefine their methods of learning English as second language. The theories of second language acquisition include the Acquisition - Learning Hypothesis, the Comprehension

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. *English: Literature and Social Issues*

J. Priya, Ph.D. and Vishnu Chander, I EEE

Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis and the Reading Hypothesis.

The Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis

It is the first and foremost of the SLA theories and it postulates that acquisition and learning are two different and independent ways of gaining knowledge of a language. Acquisition is a subconscious process and learning is a conscious process. Acquisition is referred to as incidental learning, implicit knowledge and natural method of learning while learning is referred to as explicit learning and intentional learning. Language, both oral and written, can be acquired by reading meaningful and comprehensible texts and this indicates that by receiving comprehensible input through reading in L1 and L2, which is English, learners can acquire the language.

The Comprehension Hypothesis

It is the most frequently tested of the five SLA theories and it lays down the condition to be met for effective language acquisition to take place, by postulating that acquisition will happen only when learners receive comprehensible input in the form of either reading or listening. Acquisition of English as second language through reading is possible only when learners comprehend texts they read. In other words, learners will acquire language only by reading texts that are comprehensible and easy to understand. Acquisition of language and knowledge will occur only when learners comprehend the texts they read. Acquisition of language includes knowledge of grammar which is responsible for error free output production, in other words, speaking and writing.

The Natural Order Hypothesis

The hypothesis postulates that acquisition of grammatical structures takes place in a predictable order. Learners acquire certain structures very early and some structures very late. This order of acquisition is not exactly the same but is similar among learners. This is an indication that the order of acquisition is determined by the difficulty level of the learners and the order of acquisition and the order of difficulty is more or less the same.

English as second language too have a natural order of grammatical structures acquisition. This order is similar among learners of English as second language where as it is different from that of the learners from whom English is the first language.

Learners do not acquire the correct grammatical structures immediately. They take their own time and during the acquisition process, learners make mistakes while using those structures and in course of time, they start using the grammatically correct sentences. This is a subconscious and an automatic process which the learners themselves are not aware of them happening. For instance almost all learners in the process of acquiring English negation, irrespective of whether English is their first or second language, will commit the error of placing the negative marker outside the sentence and often at its beginning.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

It shows how various affective filters influence the acquisition of English as a second language. The affective filters include (i) Motivation, (ii) Self-confidence and (iii) Anxiety. Learners who have a high level of motivation and self confidence tend to succeed in acquiring a language whereas learners with high anxiety levels fail to acquire it. Based on the nature of these affective filters, motivation and self - confidence can be categorized as positive affective filters while anxiety can be brought under negative affective filters. The Affective Filter hypothesis postulates that when negative affective filters are high, acquisition will be low and when these filters are, low, acquisition will be high. From this, it can be inferred that when positive affective filters are high, acquisition will also be high and when these affective filters are low, acquisition will also be low. In other words, the process of second language acquisition is either facilitated or impeded by the nature and the strength of the affective filters These affective filters are attitudinal in nature and their actual impact can be verified only in situations where there is availability of ample comprehensible input to learners.

The affective filter hypothesis postulates that language acquisition will be high when the affective filters are low. The affective filters are barriers to effective language acquisition and its use. The factors such as stress, anxiety and fear affect learners' ability to acquire language. Language can be acquired only when the mind is relaxed and when the learners are motivated, interested and eager to receive input. These affective filters create a mental block which

prevents the input from entering the mind. For example, the fear of tests while reading for exams will not improve or facilitate acquisition because the learners' focus will be on rote memorizing the facts or information rather than meaningfully experiencing the language. Moreover, tests themselves create a sense of anxiety in learners which again will greatly hamper the reading process itself. In the same way, complex texts create a sort of stress and anxiety among learners because of their inability to understand them. It may develop a sense of dislike towards particular texts and when compelled to read them for a period of time may develop hatred towards reading itself. When these affective filters removed far away from learners, they will acquire language easily.

The Monitor Hypothesis

It postulates that there are three conditions to be met for effective use of monitor. Monitor is the knowledge of grammar gained through explicit learning. The three conditions include (i) Focus on form (ii) Time to apply the rules and (iii) Know the rule. The hypothesis holds that it is difficult to satisfy the three conditions while writing and speaking indicating that the role of monitor is very limited during output production. Monitor helps in editing the output rather than its production. Implicit grammar knowledge rather than monitor, that is, explicit knowledge of grammar is responsible for producing output; it develops a "feel for correctness" which actually makes speaking and writing possible, fluent and accurate. In fact, this hypothesis subtly limits the role of monitor by showing that actually the "feel for correctness" plays an important role even in editing the output.

The Reading Hypothesis

It postulates that reading leads to acquisition of all measures of language competence including content, vocabulary, spelling, syntax, fluency and writing style. The habit of reading greatly improves learners' reading writing skills. Reading improves writing and more reading leads to better writing. It makes learners autonomous language acquirers and hence, it needs to be introduced in the early stages of the learners and it promotes literacy and language development in addition to developing an interest and a love for more reading which in turn paves way for more language development. The amount of time spent on reading influences learners' vocabulary growth, comprehension, fluency and knowledge.

Conclusion

The analysis of the theories of SLA indicates that English as a language can only be acquired cannot be learnt. There is a difference in learning a language and learning about a language. The methods and practices involved in teaching and learning English as second language lead to learning about a language rather than knowing a language. Learning about language provides information about how a language works whereas knowing the language involves using the language for communicative purposes. English language can be effectively used by learners if they acquire it by receiving comprehensible input in the form of reading. The language classrooms can be both successful and enjoyable if reading is incorporated into the syllabus and classroom activities.

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Dr. J. Priya
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Saranathan College of Engineering
Venkateswara Nagar, Madurai Main Road,
NH 45 B, Near Edamalaipatti Pudhur
Panjappur, Tiruchirappalli 620012
Tamil Nadu
India
priya-eng@saranathan.ac.in

Mr. Vishnu Chander
First Year Student
EEE Department
Saranathan College of Engineering
Venkateswara Nagar, Madurai Main Road,
NH 45 B, Near Edamalaipatti Pudhur
Panjappur, Tiruchirappalli 620012
Tamil Nadu
India

Ngugi's African Language in *Decolonising the Mind*

A. Syed Rehanas & Dr. P. Mythily



Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

Courtesy: <https://abagond.wordpress.com/2011/12/28/ngugi-wa-thiongo-the-language-of-african-literature/>

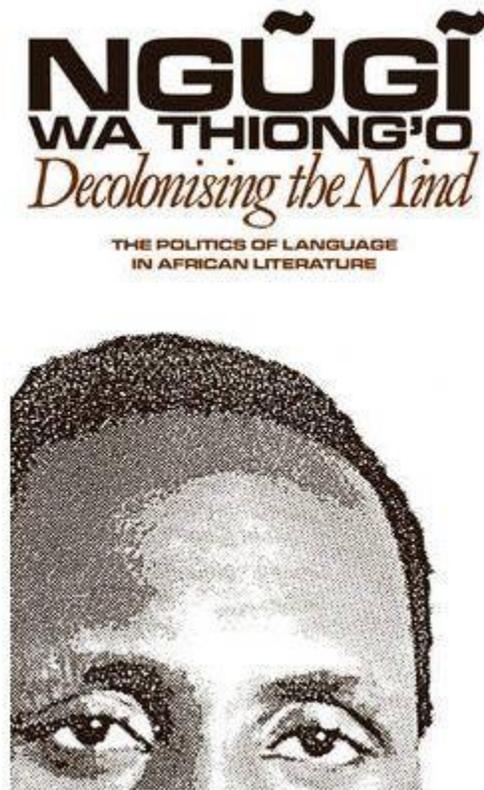
Abstract

Language as communication and as culture is a products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication. In this context, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o makes the call to African writers to begin writing literature in their own languages, and to make sure that literature is connected to their people's revolutionary struggles for liberation from their (neo) colonial contexts.

Keywords: Amalgam, language and culture, African language, language and communication, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature

Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature is written by Kenyan novelist and post-colonial theorist Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o. It is a collection of non-fiction essays about language and its constructive role in national culture, history, and identity. The book, which advocates linguistic decolonization, is one of Ngũgĩ's best-known and most-cited non-fiction publications, helping to cement him as a preeminent voice, theorizing the "language debate" in post-colonial studies.



Ngũgĩ describes the book as "a summary of some of the issues in which I have been passionately involved for the last twenty years of my practice in fiction, theatre, criticism, and in teaching of literature..."

Four Essays

Decolonising the Mind is split into four essays: "The Language of African Literature," "The Language of African Theatre," "The Language of African Fiction," and "The Quest for Relevance." Several of the book's chapters originated as lectures.

Apparently this format gave Ngũgĩ "the chance to pull together in a connected and coherent form the main issues on the language question in literature.... The book offers a distinctly anti-imperialist perspective on the "continuing debate...about the destiny of Africa" and language's role in both combatting and perpetrating imperialism and the conditions of neocolonialism in African nations. The book is also Ngũgĩ's "farewell to English," and it addresses the "language problem" for African authors. Ngũgĩ focuses on questions about the African writer's linguistic medium (should one write in one's indigenous language, or a hegemonic language like French or English?), the writer's intended audience, and the writer's purpose in writing.

Multi-dimensional Focus on a Variety of Features

Decolonising the Mind is a meld of autobiography, post-colonial theory, pedagogy, African history, and literary criticism. Ngũgĩ dedicated *Decolonising the Mind* "to all those who write in African languages, and to all those who over the years have maintained the dignity of the literature, culture, philosophy, and other treasures carried by African languages."

Resistance to the Use of Native Tongues

Many post-colonial scholars and writers detail the colonial practice of imposing the colonizer's own native languages onto the peoples they colonized, even forbidding the use of the colonized people's native tongue. They examine this practice as part of the systematic oppression of imperialism in neocolonial societies, and they investigate its ramifications on the psychological, physical, and cultural well-being of colonized peoples. Within the context of post-colonial studies, language is a weapon and a site of intense neocolonial conflict.

Some post-colonial theorists advocate for, if not a complete abandonment of the English language, at least a conscious and pronounced preference for indigenous languages as a literary or scholarly medium. Ngũgĩ sits firmly on this side of the debate. Others, however (Salman Rushdie, for example), see the practicality of utilizing hegemonic languages like English and French as too immediate to permit the abandonment of such languages. On this side of the argument, writers and activists see using the colonist languages as a practical alternative, which they can employ to improve conditions of colonized peoples. For example, a colonist language can be used both to enhance international communication (e.g. people living in Djibouti, Cameroon, Morocco, Haiti, Cambodia, and France can all speak to one another in French). This side also views the subversive potential of the appropriation of a colonist language by an indigenous people; it is seen as a “counter to a colonial past through de-forming a 'standard' European tongue and re-forming it in new literary forms.”

Renouncing Writing in English

Ngũgĩ's contribution to the language debate is widely known and studied, and he has theorized on the topic extensively. He passionately advocates for the overall development of African languages and their use in African literatures—in 1992 he founded the Gikuyu-language journal *Mũtĩri*, and continues to edit it—and he famously renounced writing in English. First, he committed to abandoning English in his fiction writing, and in a note on *Decolonising the Mind*, he bids a final "farewell" to English in all of his writings.

Products of Each Other

Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through oration and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their places politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world —*Decolonising the Mind* (16)

Human Consciousness

Communication between human beings propels the evolution of a culture, he argues, but language also carries the histories, values, and aesthetics of a culture along with it. As he puts it, "Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next". (15)

Furthermore, in *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ sees language, rather than history or culture, as the enabling condition of human consciousness: "The choice of language and the use of language is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending social forces in the Africa of the twentieth century". (4)

Ngugi describes language as the carrier of culture. Written, spoken, and "real life" or body-language is all used in harmony to define different cultures. Language conveys a culture's standards and values, something that can't be picked up by someone who doesn't understand the language. When English was imposed into Ngugi's culture, textbooks and teachings made his culture look inferior. The use of language can be used to convey complex messages, as in with the stories told, or used to control, as seen with colonization. Language is an extremely powerful tool that defines the human race, and its use can create amazing literature/media, or can be used to manipulate and control.

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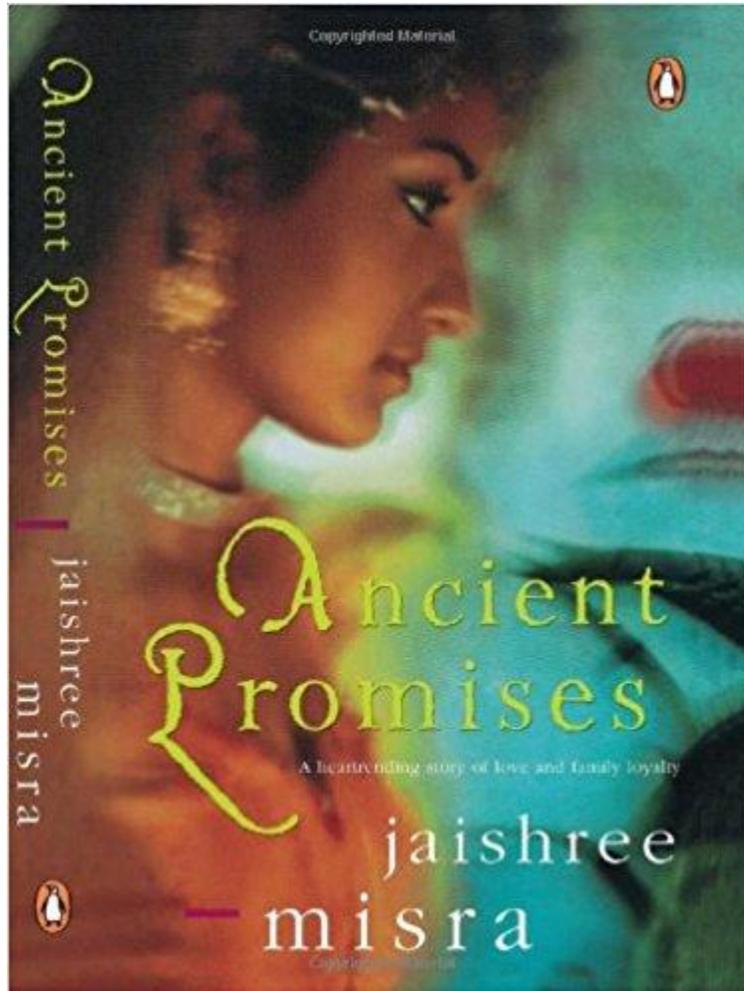
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A.Syed Rehanas, M.A., M.Phil., Research Scholar
Government Arts College (Autonomous)
Salem-636007
Tamil Nadu
India
zasr1979@gmail.com

Dr. P. Mythily., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
Government Arts College (Autonomous)
Salem-636007
Tamil Nadu
India
mythusadha@gmail.com

From Small Things to Big Promises

Dr. S. Rema Devi



Abstract

Women have been the forerunners of the story telling tradition. The stories by the earlier writers have been spun around the patriarchal system of society. They presented the unidimensional views of the male-chauvinist hegemony. Gradually, the women writers started presenting a multidimensional view of society and the struggles of women in society. The

writings by contemporary women pursue to bring to the forefront the hidden voices of the various women of society. They are also instrumental in identifying the marginalized and exposing their latent grievances. They pioneer in recovering the lost voice and in analyzing the efforts of these marginalized individuals who have shaped the present world. The tradition of women's writing is consistent. The contemporary women writers present before the readers, a world of radical female resistance against the patriarchal norms. They protest against the concept of normality. The woman writers widely explore the sociological and the economical realms. They portray a large range of skills of women in the changing Indian society.

The present paper aims at analysing the portrayal of Ammu, the protagonist of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and Janu, the protagonist of Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*. Ammu, the unloved wife of a drunkard and mother of two children, dies the silent death of a subaltern, when she is denied her rights to love Velutha, the untouchable. Ammu's destiny is designed by the patriarchal rules of the society and casteism. She is the image of a suffering woman who is usurped by her inner domain, her frustration and her existence in a male-dominated society. However, Janu, representing the contemporary women, succeeds in walking out of the threshold of marriage, when she longs to live her life with Arjun, her former crush. She is exhibited with boldness and lack of inhibitions. The paper highlights the transition of the image of contemporary woman from the silent sufferer to the new woman.

Keywords: male-dominated society, contemporary women, *The God of small things*, female resistance

Women as Traditional Storytellers

Women have been the forerunners of the story telling tradition. The stories by the earlier writers have been spun around the patriarchal rules of the society. Being the pivotal theme, literature is pervaded with her presence in every nook and corner. However, when a man describes the life of a woman, the internal aspects are either missing or do not have internal momentum. A man's description of a woman is what he sees of her from a distance and what he sees externally. This has been one of the reasons that alerted the women writers. The

contemporary women writers have started exploring the various stereotypical images that society has inflicted upon women. When a woman writes, she portrays every inch of woman's life, both externally and internally. Thus, the contemporary women writers have succeeded in portraying the emergence of women in literature through their writing.

The earlier writers of Indian fiction have shaped the ideologies based on the patriarchal system and its rules. In those days, women used to write about women's perception and experiences within the enclosed domestic arena. Anuradha Roy says:

In order to establish their claims as significant writers, they have to battle with certain deeply-ingrained critical prejudices: one of these is prominently gender-based. Patriarchal assumptions of the superior worth of male experience have contributed to a systematic devaluation of their work, in common with that of women writers all over the world. (9)

Focus on Women as Readers

The first phase of writing by women focused on women as readers. They presented the unidimensional views of the male-chauvinist hegemony. The women writers, in the earlier phase, started writing on enclosed domestic life. The themes of these novels were spun around the domestic life. The intention of these writers was to stress the importance of reading with a realization as an experience by a woman, because the first phase literature portrayed stereotypical pictures of women. These stereotypical women were embodied as selfless angels with purity, docility and self-effacing qualities.

Women Writers dealing with Socio-psychological Problems of Women

In the 19th century, more and more women actively participated in India's reformist movement depicting the psychological suffering of the frustrated house wife. Gradually, the women writers started presenting a multidimensional view of the society and the struggle of women in the society. As a consequence, the second phase of women novelists started dealing with socio-psychological problems of women. On the march to delve deep into the themes, they

have reached new levels. They dealt with ethos and multi-cultural elements. They inverted the literary scene competing with their men counterparts in writing fiction in English.

Contemporary Women Novelists

The contemporary women novelists have given a new dimension to contemporary literature. They write, without fear, and come out through the written medium. This artistic independence has motivated women writers to write their experiences and to give vent to their thoughts. When a woman transcends herself as a contemporary writer, she redefines the female individuality. She does this with the help of the potential she gains from the female aesthetics. This strikes a change in the mode of creativity – she transcends from stereotypical creativity to direct creativity. She actively creates a sequence of her subjective experiences, which she wants to be heard by the public. The contemporary women writers present before the readers, a world of radical female resistance against the patriarchal norms. They protest against the concept of normality. The woman writers widely explore the sociological and the economical realms. They portray a large range of skills of women in the changing Indian society.

Ammu in *The God of Small Things*

The present paper aims at analysing the portrayal of the pictures of Ammu, the protagonist of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and Janu, the protagonist of Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*. The socio-economic structure of the Indian society is male oriented. Therefore a woman finds the minimal scope of empowerment. She is guided through each and every aspect by the norms scheduled by the men and so she has lost her identity, having fumbled for generations in this society which is steered by patriarchal rules.

Roy paints the picture of Ammu, the single parent of dizygotic twins and segregated daughter of an Orthodox Christian family. She is born to Pappachi, an entomologist and Mammachi, a mother who comprehends her son's needs but neglects her daughter's. Ammu's brother Chacko marries a white woman named Margaret, who mothers Sophie Mol, but divorces him and marries Joe. Ammu is neglected by all for having been separated from the Hindu man, of her own choice whom she marries. She receives solace in the company of her twins Rahel and

Estha. She dreams of Velutha, an untouchable carpenter, and longs to be with him. The novel ends with the consequences of Ammu's wish.

The Psyche of Janu

Misra probes deep into the psyche of Janu, the daughter of a Malayalee family. She is born and brought up in Delhi. She is forced to get married to Suresh Maraar, in spite of her love for Arjun, a Punjabi boy. She has to put aside all her wishes and be a good bride. She is neglected by all in the Maraar household. The situation of Janu is worse, when she is blessed with a mentally challenged daughter, Riya. Janu is fed up with the struggle in the Maraar household and finds her way out, at the starting point of which she happens to meet Arjun, her former lover. She has to undergo a long struggle to unshackle herself from her chains and Misra ends the novel on an optimistic tone.

Love as Mark of Husband and Wife Relationship

A man and a woman, though married, cannot be husband and wife, until they love each other from the depth of their hearts. Both of them need love and warmth from each other. This harmony is absent in the life of Ammu, in *The God of Small Things*. She put up with her husband's drinking. However, when her husband goes to the extent of bartering her to his manager, for ensuring his getting a job, Ammu hits him and leaves him to return to Ayemenem, the town which she leaves with the thought that anywhere other than the town would be nice, to escape from the wrath of Pappachi, who thrashes his wife regularly. When disgusted with no one to love, her attention turns towards Velutha, the untouchable carpenter of Mammachi's pickle factory, and he nurses a secret love for her. Having recollected the earlier days when Velutha had gifted her with tiny objects carved out of wood, she loves to be in his world. To her he is "the God of Loss, the God of Small Things". (*The God of Small Things* 220) Her children too love Velutha a lot and play with him. She loses herself to him and their clandestine meetings last for thirteen nights. She rows across the river Meenachal, in a boat. Roy says, "The boat that Ammu would use to cross the river. To love by night the man her children loved by day." (*The God of Small Things* 202)

Janu's Love for Arjun

Similarly, in *Ancient Promises*, Janu's love for Arjun is described in a poignant manner. If Ammu has been relishing a thirteen-day innings, Misra paints the ninety-eight day happiness of Janu with Arjun. Like Ammu, Janu too nurses her love for Arjun, secretly. She has never had secrets before. However, she realises that the thought of Arjun should be nursed secretly. Janu says, "... I hugged these new, unfamiliar thoughts to myself with a secrecy that both puzzled and thrilled me." (*Ancient Promises* 23)

Roy gives a precise picture of the dreams of Ammu, when she longs to be with Velutha. Roy writes, "That afternoon, Ammu travelled upwards through a dream in which a cheerful arm with one arm held her close by the light of an oil lamp." (*The God of Small Things* 215) The dream for Janu is her longing to be with Arjun. She says, "I wanted to be able to get into his head and wander around in it, exploring his innermost thoughts." (*Ancient Promises* 23)

Patriarchy Rules

However, the dreams of women hardly turn true, provided the society follows its patriarchal rules. The rules designed by patriarchy are male-oriented and hence classify women as the other gender. A woman is torn apart in her attitude, her way of life, her culture and her civilization. These factors have marked a thick line of segregation between a man and a woman. This line of segregation is very lucid in the life of Ammu. She had married a Hindu earlier; and later, she and her twins had started loving an untouchable man, as the line of segregation gets thickened. Roy says, "They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much." (*The God of Small Things* 31) The segregation is visible throughout the novel. However, the line of isolation is apparent when Mammachi comprehends her son's physical needs, which she terms as "a Man's Needs" (*The God of Small Things* 168), but is raged at the thought that her daughter is in love with an untouchable. Roy shows this demarcation clearly in her words when she writes of Mammachi as, "Her tolerance of 'Men's Needs' as far as her son was concerned, became the fuel for her unmanageable fury at her daughter." (*The God of Small Things* 258)

Misra, too writes in a similar manner, of the laws of segregation that are forced on Janu by her parents. On hearing of Janu's love for Arjun, she is warned by her mother. Janu recollects her mother's words. She says, "Later Ma said that was because these things were always less worrying for boys' families. The reputations of families were carried on the shoulders of their daughters, she said. And parents of boys didn't have to worry about things like..." (*Ancient Promises* 47)

When women are perpetually weighed down with the rules of patriarchy, they start thinking of their state of existence. When psychologically analyzed, the state of transition is traced in them as a developmental achievement of the ego. The idea of emergence is sowed in a woman when she analyses the sensations and the emotions experienced by her ego. The internal and external forces that determine the status of a woman in the different domains, help in the achievement of her emergence. Swati Shirwadkar comments that "Changes in certain components of culture such as values, norms, ideologies etc. bring about, in turn, changes in the social structure, i.e., patterns of social actions and interactions". (25)

Transitions

Roy records such transitions in Ammu, when she is in an urgent need to despise friends and relatives who sympathize with her about her divorce. It is to escape the "ugly face of sympathy" that Ammu slowly enters another world. Roy records,

A liquid ache spread under her skin, and she walked out of the world like a witch, to a better, happier place... Even her walk changed from a safe mother-walk to another wilder sort of walk. She wore flowers in her hair and carried magic secrets in her eyes. She spoke to no one. She spent hours on the riverbank with her little plastic transistor shaped like a tangerine. She smoked cigarettes and had midnight swims. (*The God of Small Things* 44)

The same transition is recorded in the life of Janu when she studies that her husband Suresh practices the art of escapism every time she wants to tell him something or she wants him

to spend time with her or Riya. Suresh seeks the company of whisky rather than Janu's and so she has to suffer the jibes of the Maraar household and suffer with Riya, who fails to be at the receiving end of her mother's thoughts or sufferings. It is at this juncture that Arjun again enters her life and she loses herself to him. When she has successfully planned the second stage of her life that she is to spend with Arjun and Riya abroad, Janu asks Suresh for a divorce. Suresh is shocked to see the transition in her. She recollects, "With every word I uttered I knew I was taking one more unreturnable step into the territory previously trodden only by very foolish or very bad women." (*Ancient Promises* 219)

However the transitions recorded do not mean that the society accepts these transitions, without questioning the existence of a woman. This is revealed from the death of Velutha, in *The God of Small Things*, when he is beaten to death by the police for the fabricated case of an attempted rape of Ammu, filed by Ammu's aunt Baby Kochamma. Ammu has to return Estha to his Baba and leaves Ayemenem to work for meagre wages. After her last visit to Ayemenem, she is found dead in a lodge at the age of thirty-one, "Not old. Not young. But a viable die-able age." (*The God of Small Things* 3) The consequences of Ammu's death are awful; she is denied proper burial by the church, on account of her relationship with an untouchable. Ammu's body is transported to the electrical crematorium. When Ammu's body is fed into the incinerator, Roy describes the pitiable situation through Rahel's eyes. "... Rahel's Ammu was fed to it. Her hair, her skin, her smile. Her voice... All this was fed to the beast, and it was satisfied." (*The God of Small Things* 163)

Changing Situation

The situation undergoes a change when Misra helps her protagonist break the shackles of society and come out of the patriarchal boundaries. Unlike Roy's Ammu, Misra's Janu does not want to lead a pessimistic hopeless life. Misra sketches a plan to help Janu seek a divorce from Suresh, after a long struggle, to lead a happy life with Arjun and Riya, in England. Janu knows that she would bear the tag of "a divorcee with a child" (*Ancient Promises* 304), however, she does not want to "keep some relentless old promise". (*Ancient Promises* 304) When she is divorced, she looks forth to fulfil some ancient promises. When she is set free again and finds

solace in the company of her mother and her daughter, she says, “It was strange that I’d had to come back to her to be set free again”. (*Ancient Promises* 4)

To Conclude

Thus, the paper analyses the hypothesis that contemporary women writers portray the “New” woman, validating her through the incidents in the life of Ammu and Janu. Ammu, the protagonist of *The God of Small Things*, has to suffer as a consequence of her love for an untouchable in a patriarchal society. However, Janu, representing the contemporary women, is able to break the shackles and succeeds in emerging as the New Woman with clear sketches of life, to be lived in the way she likes.

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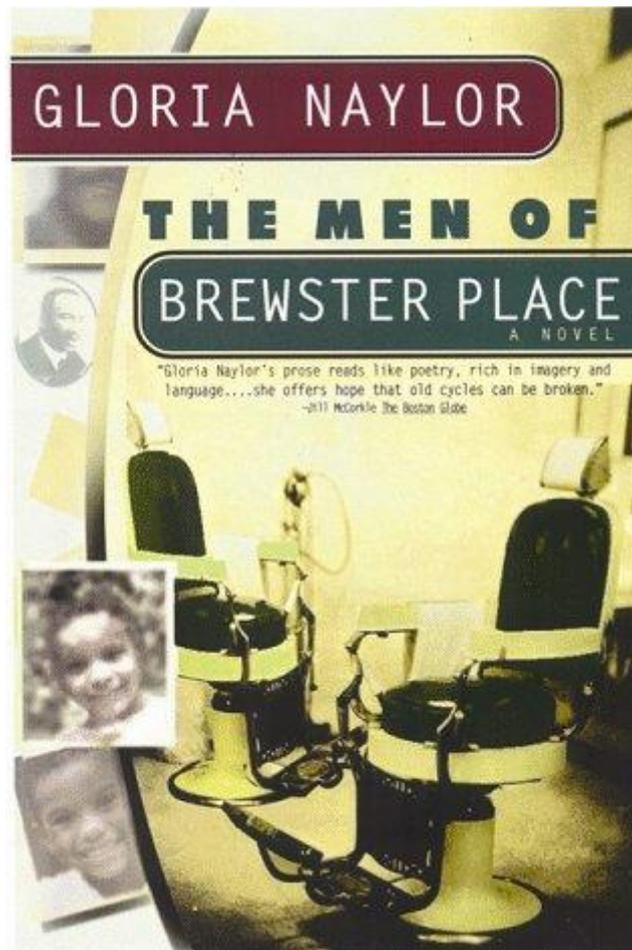
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Dr. S. Rema Devi
Assistant Professor of English
St. John’s College of Arts and Science
Ammandivilai 629204
Kanya Kumari District
Tamilnadu
India
remagopu@gmail.com

Self-Condensation for Atonement in Gloria Naylor's
The Men of Brewster Place

Dr. N. Geethanjali
T. Sangeetha, Ph.D. Research Scholar



Abstract

The element of strong desire for an apology is an internal reflection on one's action towards others which may bring them to punish themselves by way of atonement. *The Men of Brewster Place*, Naylor's fifth novel reflects the same intention of the male characters who want to confess their abandonment and ill-treatment of their women and repent towards that abuse of women, including mothers, wives, daughters and beloved ones. Although the male

characters are self-condemned, they also fight against the injustice and atrocities happening in the society. Naylor has portrayed the black men's failure as caused by their discrimination against women, which make them regret and choose to punish themselves for the exploitation of the women. Therefore, this paper makes an attempt to highlight the issues that are appropriate to the life of these miserable and unfortunate men.

Keywords: Self-condemnation, Black men, Black women, redemption, white society, injustice, atonement.

Gloria Naylor – Exploring All the Surfaces of Black Life

Gloria Naylor, a significant American storyteller, and a brilliant novelist has provided valuable social commentary on the life of blacks. Her novels focus on the African-American culture and its marginality in the American streams. The changing political circumstances in America made her focus richly on the interpersonal and familial relationship. As a feminist, Naylor undoubtedly caters her strong voice showing support to the abused women in a male chauvinistic society. In order to cope up with such a stereotyped society, each of her community women emerges, sustaining, enabling and enriching the lives of one another. Despite the fact that Naylor was influenced by other black writers, she wanted to explore all the surfaces of black life.

Masculine Threads of the World

Naylor returns to Brewster place to pick up the masculine threads of the world in the novel *The Men of Brewster Place*. It is a profound work that explores the other side of the gender issues. The novel represents the black men who are struggling to correct their faults and also trying to make sense of their lives as individuals. Through her narrative structure, Naylor's masculine street of Brewster place becomes evident. In her interwoven stories of seven men, Naylor compels the characters to confess and repent their exploitation of women.

‘Three buildings on the east; three on the west; and the wall blacking light from the south. A dead-end street. Full of shadows. It always feels like dusk on Brewster place’
(TMB-2)

Atonement

Atonement is the theory that broadly views the disturbed relationship between humanity and God by the cause of human sin. It emphasizes the benefits of forgiveness, redemption and eternal life of humanity. Similarly, Naylor's male characters are condemning themselves for their earlier faults, certainly against women. Each character wants to remit his/her sins of their past errors resulting in their choice of atonement. In this novel, the women are still present, but the primary focus is on men. It is also refreshing to see the men's problems and complexities of relationship and community. The story denotes the absence of women in the men's lives become crucial to push them toward taking responsibility for their actions.

Narrator Ben, the Deceased Janitor

Ben, the deceased janitor, once again appears to narrate the story of men who are in various moods and shades. As an incapable family man, Ben faces disaster in the form of isolation. Brother Jerome is a musician who always figures out the community men's blues. 'For his blues receive 'Amens' from the apartment where individual men turn bitter about their lives' (3). Although he is labelled as a retarded child his music gives the messages that men should struggle against the whites' discrimination.

Basil

The next character is Basil, who tries for atonement for his abandonment of his mother Mattie in the novel *The Women of Brewster Place*. After his mother's death, Basil becomes serious and is determined to marry a woman like his mother to make her life prosperous.

'I can't undo the past, but I would find some woman, somewhere, and make her life happy. I would be the father I never had; I would act like the man I'd finally grown up to be' (46).

However, he is left alone in a state of confusion when things do not turn out as he wishes. The next character is Eugene an unfortunate and jobless man who abruptly leaves his family when he fails to fulfil his own dream. Finally, he is condemning himself for his past acts when he is attracted towards a male transgender named, Chino. 'Eugene will repeatedly return to Chino for subsequent floggings searching always to pay enough for his role in Ceil's pain Serena's death'. (9)

Reverend Moreland T. Woods

Ben introduces one of the ministers of Sinai Baptist church, Reverend Moreland T. Woods. He is basically not a religious person, but his regular services to God inspired him to do something for the church and persons around him. After settling himself up in the Baptist church as a preacher, Moreland leisurely starts his old act of seducing women. For his misdeeds and injustice, women are all stirred to rallying towards the church. Among them, ninety percentage of women are pregnant and with the baby carriage.

‘WE WANT JUSTICE—NOT REVENGE read one placard. DADDY, WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME? read another. Moreland Woods looked as if he’d stepped into a bad dream’. (151)

Drug Runner C.C. Baker

The next one is C.C. Baker, who is portrayed as a local drug runner and also the murderer of Lorraine. He has also murdered his brother Hakim but shows complete ignorance about his death. At last, he confesses the truth and seeks god’s forgiveness. ‘For the first time in his life, C.C. begins to pray. Please, God let me do this right. Give me a chance--for once--to be a real winner’. (129)

Revolutionary Character

The only revolutionary character of the novel is Abshu. In this novel, Naylor enhances the connection between Abshu and the community.

Abshu continues his battle against injustice by encouraging youngsters with Shakespeare’s play. He is a playwright as well as the head of the community centre. So, he is always determined to eliminate Moreland from the Sinai baptise church at any cost. With the help of B.B, Abshu organized a meeting which gathered fifty women in the community to protest against Woods. As a result, Moreland Woods realizes his bad dream and resigns his post. The complete support of the women folk eliminates Moreland’s power and objectives. In the last section of the novel, Naylor introduces the barber shop as a gathering place for the community men.

‘these chairs done seen many a good man as well as the bad and the ugly. They done seen rejoicing and they seen grief. Although a man grieves different from a woman a whole lot more is kept inside to bite him a little here, a little there, until the blood begins to flow’. (163)

Effects of Socio-Economic Psyche On Black Men

Even though the barbershop is the communal space of emotional exchange, it cannot prevent the effects of socio-economic psyche on black men. Naylor inscribed Greasy’s character as very relaxed in nature that made others feel ashamed of their stereotype notions. Being powerless and considering themselves to be the miserable ones in the society, the individuals are forced to be unlawful. Under such pressure, the community males are supposed to leave their family and sometimes even their life. Naylor’s work not only explores the African-American tradition but also gives insights into the life of blacks. So, it is an attempt to hint at the sufferings of black men in society. The positive depiction of the novel shows that the men struggling to correct their faults as individuals, are trying to make sense of their lives.

A Means of Survival

Ben, the narrator has learned a lesson in his isolation of being silent towards the white society as a means of survival. Despite his incapability of remedying his daughter’s sufferings, Ben turned out to be an alcoholic to question God about his manhood.

‘So I settled on killing myself---slowly with booze--- and on God understanding that I’m fighting for my man-memory, as she said, He laughed, Daddy. He laughed. And laughed’. (28)

By once again confronting failure in his life, Basil compromises with the situation to leave the family and to start his new life. Eugene’s mistake towards Ceil made himself to lash himself daily with the leather whip for redemption. Moreland’s continued assaults on women brought humiliation towards his post. All women gathered to accuse Woods in front of Sinai make him resign and apologize to God. Finally, C.C. accused of Hakim’s murder made him feel guilty and ask God for another chance to be a successful man in the society.

Realizing Their Sins Against Women

Gloria Naylor's heroes' struggles made them realize their sins against women. The novel at first cites the character's struggle then presents them as an evolving personality. The characters like Ben, Greasy, Abshu highlight their protest on injustice and white dominance. Although Naylor has undergone a lot of problems and hindrances by either black or white society, she positively reflects the community rules and traditions through her male characters. When these unfortunate tragedies become a part of their life, the men in the novel are helpless to protect their family. The characters' powerless condition is the main cause to search for atonement. Therefore, the novel *The Men of Brewster Place* is a sequel to Naylor's earlier work *The Women of Brewster Place*, where the men are given a chance to redeem themselves by apologizing for acting abusively, violently and selfishly.

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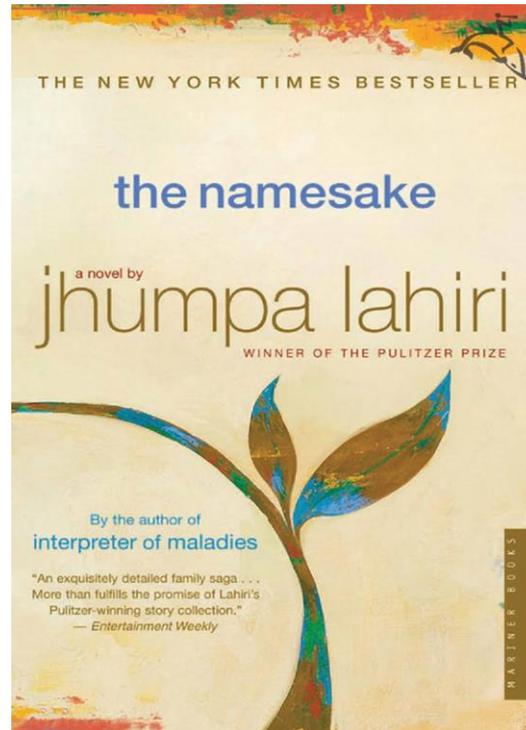
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Dr. N. Geethanjali
Associate Professor of English
Periyar EVR College
Race Course Road
Kajanagar, Edamalaipatti Pudur
Tiruchirappalli 620023
Tamil Nadu
India
ngeethanjali66@yahoo.com

T. Sangeetha, Ph.D. Research Scholar
Periyar EVR College
Race Course Road
Kajanagar, Edamalaipatti Pudur
Tiruchirappalli 620023
Tamil Nadu
India
sangeemaj@gmail.com

Diasporan Souls in *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

J. Sheela & Dr. N. Geethanjali



Abstract

The term 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek word meaning to "scatter about." Diaspora refers to the movement of the people from one country to another and the diasporans refer to the people undergoing the movement. The diasporans migrate to different countries across the globe in search of greener pastures. Wherever they go, they take with them a profound sense of home land (native land) with them. Either they have gone there for economic settlement or permanent settlement, they have their roots in their native land. They are highly patriotic towards their mother land. These diasporans are called as first generation immigrants. They have split souls and they try to etch a space for themselves. But on the other hand their children, called as second generation immigrants could not confront with reality and they refuse to accept their parents as their saviors in their diasporic sickness. Jhumpalahiri, a second generation immigrant acts as a

true representative of displaced voices and dislocated identities. This paper focuses on the diasporan souls in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Name Sake*.

Key words: Diaspora, rootlessness, migration, identity crisis and immigrants

Jhumpa Lahiri

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London, as the daughter of Bengali Indian immigrants. When she was three, her family moved to the United States. Lahiri considers herself an American stating, "I wasn't born here, but I might as well have been." she grew up in Kingston, Rhode Island, where her father works as a librarian at the University of Rhode Island. Lahiri's mother wanted her children to grow up knowing their Bengali heritage, and so her family often visited relatives in Calcutta.

Her real name is Nilanjana Sudeshna and her teacher called her by pet name 'Jhumpa' because it was easy to pronounce. Lahiri recalled "I always felt so embarrassed by my name ... you feel like you're causing some one pain just by being who you are." This ambivalence of Lahiri was the inspiration for the ambivalence of Gogol, the protagonist of the novel *The Namesake*.

Diaspora

A Diaspora is a large group of people with similar heritage or homeland who have been scattered across the world. This immigration can have many reasons. It can be economical, political or social. The Indian diaspora is a general term to describe the people who migrated from India. Globalisation across the world has taken many Indians to move for greener pastures. These people are often displaced or dispersed from their homelands. They also share a collective memory and nostalgic reminiscence of "home" ("Imaginary home lands "to use Rushdie's term) They inherit the ideology of 'home' and it becomes a personal identity. They are not rooted in the location they live. Instead they negotiate their culture and that of the host nation. The term 'diaspora' refers to the movement of the people and the people who migrate from country to country. In this paper the people who undergo this movement is referred as 'diasporans'. The souls of these diasporans are found to be divided and they live the sense of loneliness.

Autobiographical

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J. Sheela & Dr. N. Geethanjali
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This novel taken for study is an autobiographical one. The novel opens with Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli's shift to the United States after their marriage. Ashoke reaches there when he is about to complete his doctoral studies in Engineering at the MIT. Initially, the details of their married life, birth of their son are explained. The baby is named 'Gogol' by his father Ashoke, since the letter from Ashima's grandmother never reaches them. The baptizing of the name 'Gogol' is due to the train accident for Ashoke, where he was saved by his book by the Russian author Gogol.

The Namesake is a novel rendering the conflict of Americanism and Indianism. Ashoke and Ashima belong to the first generation diaspora whereas Gogol and Sonali (Gogol's sister) belongs to the second generation diaspora. The parents long for their home, feel rootless and displaced but the children being born and brought up in the host country feel less intense. They keep struggling for cultural identity which sways between the host land and motherland.

Alienation is one of the burning problems of the diasporans. Once Ashok and Ashima land in the Massachusetts they start experiencing alienation. Ashoke manages this situation to a certain extent, because he is the breadwinner of the family. He meets many companions in his work place. Ashima Ganguli, on the other hand is confined to the kitchen and bedroom more in the early stages of their married life, experiences the trauma more. As an expecting mother she was hospitalized. There was no one to be with her. Had it been in India, there would have been more relatives beside her. Lying in the hospital she wonders "she is the only Indian person in the hospital" (TNS 03). Her watch, gifted as a *bon voyage* one, by her parents remind her loved ones. "Twenty-Six members of her family" (TNS 04) bid her a warm welcome. Dr. Ashley, gauntly handsome obstetrician tells her. "Everything is looking perfectly normal" (TNS 05.) But nothing has been normal to Ashima. The couple had arrived eighteen months before and from that time everything was abnormal to her. She was very much worried to undergo "mother hood in a foreign land" (TNS 06).

Most of the Indian American characters are caught between the two worlds. One of the native land (India) and the other the alien land (America). They are unable to enter the cultural heritage of the host land as they have strong and indelible ties to their native visions. Finally they learn to understand and retaliating the alien voices in order to preserve and cultivate their cultures. Their diasporic identity is inevitable in every stage of their life and they have to decide

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J. Sheela & Dr. N. Geethanjali

Diasporan Souls in *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

their future. The first generation diasporans have the dilemma and they finally confront with reality. When Ashima was admitted for delivery in the hospital, she was astonished by her body's ability to bring out a new life into the world just as her mother and grandmother have done. Her worry is that it is "happening so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those who loved." (TNS 06). She is frightened "to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she know so little, where life seems so tentative and spare" (TNS 06).

Ashoke having obtained a Ph.D in Boston, has been researching in the fibre optics. The emotion of the diasporic state of Ashoke is not expressed in the novel. But the emotions of Ashima and Gogol Ganguli is portrayed by Jhumpa Lahiri at every stage. There is no Assimilation and cultural conflicts in Ashoke as he spends much of his time in research. The only trauma he undergoes is his train accident, in which he thought he was dead in such event. When his train mate was dead, he was surprised to be alive. In the moment of crisis "He remembers believing that he was dying that perhaps he was already dead" (TNS 18). At that time some rescuers say "Let's Keep going" (TNS 18). This became a driving force for Ashoke. The diasporan soul learns to live lonely even in a strange atmosphere is a remarkable thing. Ashima, another diasporan soul face the loneliness, to the wonder of everybody when her husband gets a research grant and moves to Ohio from Massachusetts, everybody thinks that the Ganguli's would rent out their houses to the university students and move to Ohio. But Ashima stays there itself with her son Ganguli. To her "being a foreigner, is a sort of life long pregnancy a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts." (TNS 49). She accepts the diasporic state and stays all alone in the house.

Lead a Double Life

Diasporic individuals are destined to lead a double life - living a Bengali life in foreign land. The first generation preserves their culture, and teaches their children the Bengali tradition, language and history. The baby grows with the circle of Bengali acquaintances. The families drop by one another home on Sunday afternoons." "They sit in circles on the floor, singing songs by Nazrul and Tagore" (TNS 38). The occasion of Gogol's annaprasan - his rice ceremony is one such example of the first generation preserving their culture in a foreign land. Time and space slowly transform the diasporic individuals towards a perfect understanding of the settled country.

Adopting New Names, Customs and Systems

Gogol, another diasporic soul after matriculation, gets a fellowship. His parents think that he will choose MIT, like his father, but he chooses Columbia University for his architectural programme and moves to New York. The novelist Jhumpa Lahiri shares the same dejection of her own having a peculiar name. Gogol realizes that his name is quite unusual and he refuses to accept as a name. Annoyed by the Bengali customs of his parents, Gogol totally embraces American popular culture. The pains he undergoes because of his peculiar name, the burden of heritage are explained in detail. The summer before he leaves to attend college at Yale, he officially changes his name to Nikhil. Everyone but his family called him Nikhil.

Ashoke Ganguli gives the name Gogol to his son after the Russian author whose book had saved his life. He and his wife had to give a name for the discharge from the hospital. They were unaware that the name would become an official name. Gogol gets a new identity with his new name and gains girlfriends. This identity is short lived because he had to return to his family on his father's sudden demise. Finally he returns to his cultural heritage, searches his roots and finds it.

Diasporic Souls

The Namesake deals with the life of the diasporic souls. Diaspora is a journey of realising, recognising and defining their own selves. Through the characters Ashima and Gogol, Lahiri brings a crystal clear message that displacement of people demands greater adaptability in terms of both climate and culture.

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J. Sheela
Research Scholar
Periyar EVR College
Race Course Road
Kajanagar
Edamalaipatti Pudur
Tiruchirappalli 620023

Tamil Nadu, India sheelarajkumar28@gmail.com

Dr. N. Geethanjali
Associate Professor
Periyar EVR College
Race Course Road
Kajanagar
Edamalaipatti Pudur
Tiruchirappalli 620023
Tamil Nadu
India
ngeethanjali66@yahoo.com

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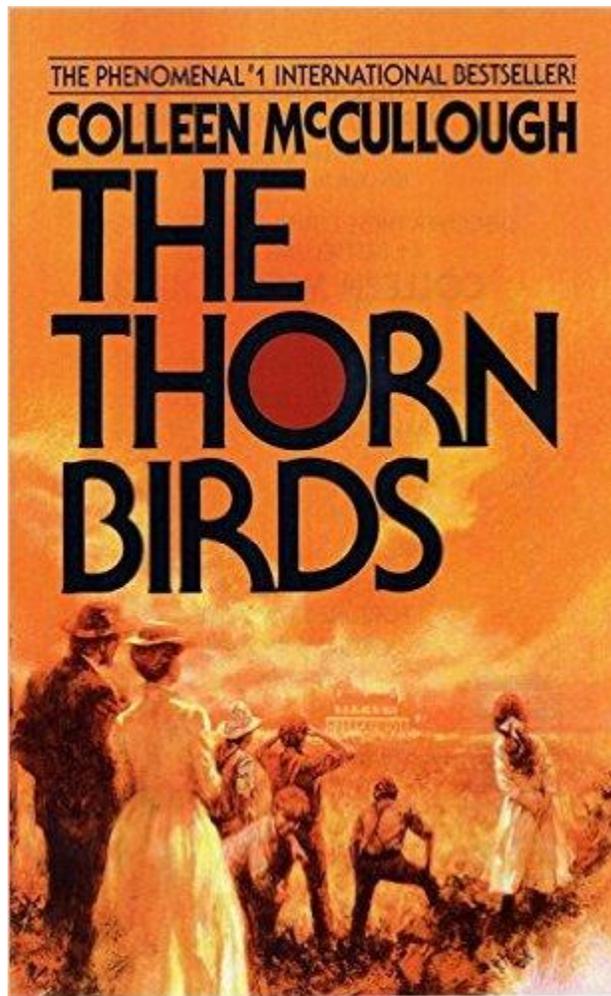
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English: Literature and Social Issues

**Metamorphosis of Meggie Cleary in Colleen McCullough's
*The Thorn Birds***

S. S. UmaSundara Sood, M.A., M.Phil.

Dr. P. Mythily, Ph.D.



Abstract

The Thorn Birds by Colleen McCullough is a popular generational saga set in Australia. It spans the Australian continent and three generations of Cleary descendants between 1915 and

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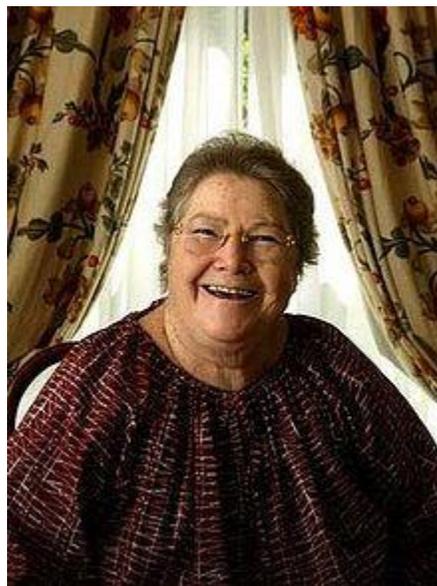
S. S. UmaSundara Sood, M.A., M.Phil. and Dr. P. Mythily, Ph.D.

Metamorphosis of Meggie Cleary in Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds*

1969. The central character is Meggie Cleary, whose frustrating life-long suffering dominates the plot and underscores the theme of female suffering in the novel. Colleen McCullough substantiates the cruel effects of women's exclusion from men's worlds and of the harm done by relegating women to subordinate roles and to suffering. She points out how literature examines the ways in which women have been exploited and suppressed. Meggie Cleary, the protagonist of this novel is the first woman in the Cleary family who is able to get rid of the marital bond of women and to transform herself from the meek and docile subordinate, to the strong, self-reliant and independent woman. This paper shows the Metamorphosis of Meggie Cleary from a dependent girl to an independent woman.

Keywords: suffering of women, human predicament, Colleen McCullough, *The Thorn Birds* independent women, empowerment of women

Colleen McCullough



Colleen McCullough

Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colleen_McCullough

Colleen McCullough is a renowned Australian writer. Her novels are stuffed with human predicaments that prompt her male and female characters to confront and extricate themselves from those predicaments. *The Thorn Birds* is her second novel and her most widely read work to date. Its publication propelled her to immediate literary stardom and ensured her status as a widely read author. She has written this novel with great intensity and learning, leaving the reader with a thirst to read unperturbed, as well as awakening the consciousness of the society for transformation.

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S. S. UmaSundara Sood, M.A., M.Phil. and Dr. P. Mythily, Ph.D.

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The Thorn Birds expertly explores the empowerment of women by enhancing their status ascribing to familial, societal and economic independence. The women characters are portrayed as more powerful individuals who rewrite their predicament as dependent souls and emerge as self-reliant women. This novel particularly focuses on the protagonist Meggie Cleary, the central character and the only daughter in a family of six sons.

Meggie

Meggie was born in the year 1911. Meggie's life is filled with depression and disaster, which clearly shows the living predicament of Australian women at that time. Meggie is quite conventional, and has never thought of struggling for her own contentment. The only thing that young Meggie longs for is to have her own family and her own children. As it is mentioned in the novel, "No rebel, Meggie; on the contrary. All her life she would obey, move within the boundaries of her female fate." (*The Thorn Birds*, p.107)

As the only daughter of the Cleary family, Meggie has never received any special care. She is often disregarded by her mother Fiona for the simple reason that she is a girl: "Fee cast her no more than a passing glance before leaving; there was no mystery to Meggie, she was female. Fee knew what her lot would be, and did not envy or pity her. The boys were different; they were miracles, males alchemized out of her female body." (*The Thorn Birds*, p.21) Due to her traditional ideas, Fee has paid little attention to her only daughter.

Meggie's Depressed Life

Meggie's depressed life is a reflection of all women's life at that time. Meggie is a traditional woman who embodies every perfect female character. In spite of all the bitterness she has tasted, she never complains. It can be said that Meggie has never realized the unfairness in her life. All she does is to accept whatever befalls her. However, being silent and submissive has never brought her any kind of happiness. On the contrary, it deepens her bitterness and misfortune.

The Priest and Meggie

Meggie is just a common woman who cannot get rid of her love emotions. The first big collision that Meggie experiences in her life comes from her love and admiration towards Father Ralph de Bricassart. Meggie met Ralph at the age of nine. During her childhood, Ralph has always accompanied her, which made the young girl Meggie, to gradually fall in love with Ralph. At the same time, Ralph also falls in love with this beautiful, lovely girl. The love between Meggie and Ralph is pure, but it is hopeless from the start for the simple reason of Ralph's identification as a Catholic priest. Ralph could not accept her because Catholicism demands its priests to remain chaste. It is advocated by Christian ideology that men, especially the monks, should get rid of their carnal desires in order to serve God better. Catholic priests

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have to obey their vows and cannot get married in their life. Because of this exclusion, Meggie can never marry her dearly loved Ralph.

As McCullough points out in *The Thorn Birds*, “That no earthly things come between the priest and his state of mind—not love of a woman, nor love of money, nor unwillingness to obey the dictates of other men.” (*The Thorn Birds*, p.69) Obviously, for Ralph, there is a contradiction between his vow as a priest and his love towards Meggie. In Ralph’s life, he is always trying very hard to suppress his love. Here, celibacy becomes an obstacle for the growth of human nature. It not only leads to Ralph’s bitterness and struggles in heart, but also brings the greatest blow to Meggie.

Passive

Meggie, the traditional woman, is not aware of being her own master. When Ralph is leaving, all she does is to accept silently. “No outcry, no weeping, no storm of protest. Just a tiny shrinking, as if the burden sat askew, would not distribute itself so she could bear it properly. And a caught breath, not quite like a sigh. (*The Thorn Birds*, p.196). Although very sad, Meggie says nothing, no complaint. Teased by fate, she has no power to struggle, nor the right to make her own choice. She has not realized that as an independent human being, she also has the right to chase her own happiness. Being “passive yet enormously strong”, (*The Thorn Birds*, p.107) she accepts all the misfortunes and goes on with her life.

Patriarchal Marriage with Luke O’Neill

In order to get over her love for Ralph and to realize her dream of her own family, Meggie decides to marry Luke O’Neill, who, ironically looks like Ralph. But it is a pity that while Meggie is looking forward to a brand new life, much more unpleasantness is waiting for her. In order to get rid of her admiration for Ralph, Meggie finally decides to marry Luke. Through this marriage, she also wants to get her own family and babies which she has always been longing for. Eventually, Meggie becomes Mrs. O’Neill and leaves Drogheda with Luke. However, like most of the women in her time, Meggie does not get her own pleasure in marriage. On the contrary, marriage brings her a lot of miseries. Luke O’Neill is a clever, arrogant, extremely hardworking man with a strong craving for money. With the hope of marrying a rich girl, he sets his eyes on Meggie, the only heiress in Drogheda. Shortly after marriage, Luke suggests to her to sign over all her money and property to him. Meggie, without any clear understanding or self-confidence as an independent woman, immediately accepts Luke’s suggestion. Luke treats Meggie just as an accessory.

In this patriarchal marriage, Luke has the total ownership over his wife Meggie and her property. Simone de Beauvoir has said, “In marrying...she becomes his vassal. He is the economic head of the joint enterprise, and hence he represents it in the view of society. She takes

his name; she belongs to his religion, his class; she joins his family, she becomes his better half' (Beauvoir, 449). Meggie is also trapped in this situation, but she is unable to question the unequal treatment inflicted on her. Luke does not want to take the responsibility as a husband. After marriage, Luke immediately finds a job for her so that he need not provide the money for her living. And all her wages will be paid straight into Luke's bank account. Luke absolutely controls their life after marriage. He decides their lifestyle without discussing it with Meggie.

Life Change

When Meggie sees Luke in his true colors, she decides to modify her life completely. After all her struggles and bitter feelings of resentment toward her husband for years, Meggie's self-esteem finally awakens and in the following days of her life, she becomes more active and mature.

The unhappy marriage with Luke makes her become more aware of her situation. When she sees Ralph leaving her again after the birth of Justine, she begins to understand it is the Church and God that prevent her from having Ralph. Meggie complains: "It isn't fair! ... because of the celibacy of priests I have had to go away from Ralph, make my home and my life with some else, have someone else's baby...I resent the Church's implication that my loving Ralph or his loving me is wrong!" (The Thorn Birds, p. 372-373) Meggie learns to think independently, and begins to question the religious norms which subjugate her. Moreover, she even begins to question God. Her former reverence towards God gradually turns into hatred and condemnation. She is no longer the little girl who was seized helplessly by fate, but is becoming an independent woman with a strong will and a spirit to fight.

Meggie Meets Ralph Again

Meggie meets Ralph again during the holiday on Matlock Island. This reunion is quite important as it scripts her transformation. Meggie finally gets Ralph's love. Anne Herrmann once pointed out that "In the series of love scenes, Meggie was always in the dominant situation and Ralph was the object of her love desire". (Herrmann, 4) Meggie has changed her passive role and has become a dominator. When Meggie is pregnant with Ralph's child, she considers her pregnancy as a beginning of her fighting against God. Disregarding all those secular bonds, Meggie resolutely leaves her husband Luke, and bravely ends the unhappy marriage. Back at Drogheda, Meggie begins her brand new life, and soon gives birth to Ralph's son Dane. From this, one can see that Meggie's self-consciousness as an independent human being has awakened. As an adult female, she finally begins to control her own life.

Autonomous Facing Patriarchy

Meggie's life is completely autonomous in Drogheda. She raises her two children alone and takes care of herself well. She devotes all her sincere love towards Ralph and to their son

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues

S. S. UmaSundara Sood, M.A., M.Phil. and Dr. P. Mythily, Ph.D.

Metamorphosis of Meggie Cleary in Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds*

Dane, whom she thinks she had stolen from God. Thus she wages a battle against the patriarchal God and the unfair fate of women. In the latter part of her life, Meggie is able to get rid of her miseries all by herself and she gains a lot of happiness from her wise decision. However, Meggie's happiness does not prevail for long. On a holiday in Greece, Dane is drowned while performing a sea rescue. Dane's death might be a reflection of McCullough's idea of fatalism, but on the other hand, it also reflects the deficiency of women's growth in Meggie's time: "But there was never a woman born who could beat God. He's a Man." (The Thorn Birds, p. 541)

In the field of Drogheda, Meggie confronts the hegemonic patriarchy alone. Her story shows her great transition from a dependent girl to a brave, independent woman. Meggie has not been able to beat those social bonds as a common woman yet.

Women's Gain and Loss in Their Way To Independence

McCullough is not a typical feminist writer, but *The Thorn Birds* objectively shows women's gain and loss in their way to independence and growth. Meggie is the female protagonist of this novel. Her life is a metamorphosis from unawareness to revolution. She is the first woman in the Cleary family to free herself from the entanglements of marital bond. Compared to her ancestors, she has made a great progress. Meggie's development and battle are not quite complete; it is reasonable to say that Meggie has become an icon for the women to emulate. And the task of women's metamorphosis will continue in the future. *The Thorn Birds* is undoubtedly a history of women's hard journey of growth.

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S. S. Uma Sundara Sood, Ph.D. Research Scholar
PG & Research Department of English
Government Arts College (A)
Salem-636007
Tamilnadu
India
ssumasundarasood@gmail.com

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T. Vembu, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., (Ph.D.), Editor. English: Literature and Social Issues
S. S. Uma Sundara Sood, M.A., M.Phil. and Dr. P. Mythily, Ph.D.
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Dr. P. Mythily
Associate Professor of English
PG & Research Department of English
Government Arts College (A)
Salem-636007
Tamilnadu
India
mythusadha@gmail.com