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# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 15:11 November 2015  
ISSN 1930-2940

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## A Coherent Scrutinization on Syntactic Categories for Tagging Tamil Lexicon

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### Abstract

The arrangement of words based on rules is termed as Syntax. Natural languages have their renowned syntactic rules that demonstrate their latent features. It is attributed in a form of free word order and some have conditions on the word order arrangement. As a consequence, the smallest unit in a sentence called word or lexicon has its unique function which determines the nature of the sentence. The categorized groups of functionalities of the words are termed as syntactic categories. The syntactic categories are also termed as Parts of Speech. Numerous NLP application benefits from this syntactic information, but for morphological rich languages like Tamil, the problem of tagging the every word in a particular part of speech remain a exigent task. This paper reports about the various approaches used for developing POS tagging and the developed POS taggers particularly for the Tamil language is discussed.

**Keywords:** Tag Set, Suffix, Prefix, Parts-of-Speech, Tagging, Morphological Analysis, Hidden Markov Model (Hmm).

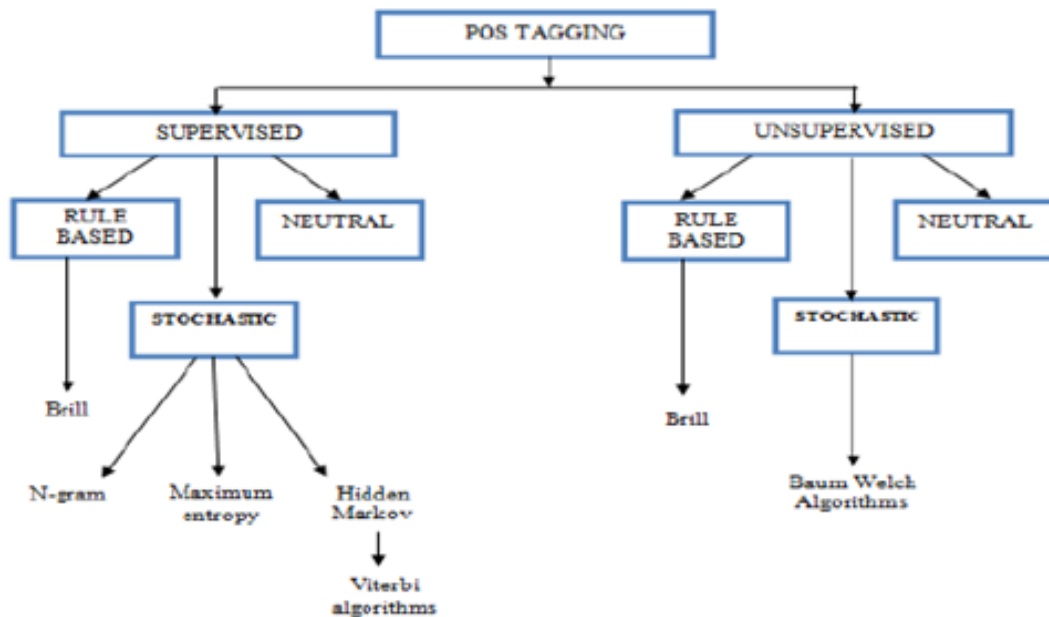
### Introduction

The importance of parts-of-speech for language processing is about the detailed information it gives to the word and their neighbors. It is also termed as POS, word classes, morphological classes and lexical tags. The computational methods used in assigning parts-of-speech categories of words are termed as parts-of-speech tagging. Syntactic categories or parts-of-Speech tagging is defined as the process of marking the word [1] in a text in a particular part of speech according to a context. This plays a predominant role and serves as a preprocessing step in most of the NLP applications like information retrieval, Word disambiguation, Speech recognition, Machine translation, Name entity recognition, Text to speech, etc. Since numerous NLP applications rely

on the syntactic categorical information, the need for developing an efficient POS tagging is important. Although the tagging of Indian languages gained interest in recent times the usage of tag sets by different research scholars leads to a chaotic situation. Standardization is the only dimension that can solve this discrepancy. Dravidian languages like Tamil are morphological rich in content and agglutinative in grammatical nature. Deep analysis is required at appropriate levels [1] to understand the feature of the languages. `

### **Taxonomy of POS Tagging**

POS tagging is broadly classified into supervised and unsupervised tagging. The following (figure. 1) demonstrates the different POS tagging used for natural language texts [2] linguistic rule, stochastic and a combination of both. Supervised tagging is a method that helps the system to learn the rules of tagging. It is based on pre-tagged corpus. Unsupervised tagging is an alternative method that uses algorithms to tag automatically the tag sets. It does not require a pre-tagged corpus. They are further divided into two distinct approaches for POS Tagging-Rule based and Stochastic approach [1]. The use of large database which consists of manual written linguistic rules to order the morphemes and the relative contextual information is termed as Rule based approach. The Stochastic approach involves the usage of unambiguously tagged text, which estimates the probabilities in selecting the most likely sequence.



**Figure 1: Various approaches of POS tagging**

## Tagging Methodologies

### *Tnt-A Statistical Part-of-speech tagger*

TnT tagger is a Hidden Markov Model, using the second-order form involving supervised tagging technique. This statistical model [7] consists of states representing tags in which the output word is predicted. The transition probabilities mainly rely on the pair of tags in which the output probabilities depend on the current category. This transition and output probabilities are based on the tagged corpus. Based on the relative frequencies, maximum likelihood probabilities were calculated. The contextual and lexical frequencies of words are handled relatively according to their presence in the lexicon.

### *Shallow parsing with conditional random fields*

Conditional random fields (CRFs) is a probabilistic framework [3] for segmenting, labelling sequences, trees and lattices. The conditional probability distribution gives a particular observation sequence over the label sequence rather than a joint distribution over both label and observation sequences. The predominant [8] feature of CRFs is that their conditional nature. It

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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outperforms the HMM in the factor of relaxation of the independent assumptions which is the basic requirement for the HMM to ensure tractable inference. CRFs inhibit the bias caused by labelling. As a result, CRFs claims for the better result from the field of Bioinformatics, computational linguistics and speech recognition when compared to the maximum entropy Markov model (MEMMs) exhibiting labelling and the conditional Markov model of directed graphical models.

### ***Maximum entropy model***

Maximum Entropy Model is a probability framework [9] as it involves linguistic modelling. This model involves a flexible technique which is defined as  $H^*T$  where H set of possible words, the context of the tags and T is the set of allowable tags. For a given training data, sequence of words  $\{w_1, \dots, w_n\}$  and tags  $\{t_1, \dots, t_n\}$  based on the available histories the unseen word is predicted. The relevant parameters are chosen based on the maximize likelihood of the training data. Thus the POS tags are predicted simultaneously based on many contextual features.

### ***A simple rule based tagger***

The rule based parts-of-speech tagger tends to automatically acquire the rules and tags. This simple tagger doesn't need a large storage allocation. It predominantly relies on the [10] reasonable, meaningful rules. Rule based tagger can be deployed on any corpus with different tag sets. These taggers efficiently learn the rules which encourage the researchers for a creation better rule template. Recognizing and remedying from the learnt rules the tagger incrementally improves its accuracy.

### ***SVM tool***

The SVM tool is based on Support Vector Machines. This software package consists of three main parts. Initially, the learner also called as SVM learner followed by the tagger termed as SVM tagger proceeds by an evaluator named as SVM teval. These SVM models [11] learn the component through the SVM learner upon the Training corpus. At the time of tagging appropriate strategy can be utilized, which can suit the need and purpose of the scenario. Initially, the SVM teval component displays the output based on the trained corpus to that of the

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predicted annotation of the SVM tool. This tool is an effective, efficient and flexible parts-of-speech tagger that perfectly fits into any environment. Adaptability Features of the SVM tool perfectly blend to the configuration that can match accurately to build most of the applications.

## **Tamil Language**

Dravidian languages are spoken by more than 250 million people, primarily residing across the southern parts of India. There are four major languages Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu [12]. Among them Tamil language is considered to be the longest surviving language. This language stands for its rich literary tradition. It consists of three periods [2] of literature values categorized as Old Tamil (300 BCE-700CE), Middle Tamil (700-1600) and Modern Tamil (1600-present). From linguistic part of view Tamil language has verb final and a free word order form to some extent.

### **Challenges Faced in Understanding the Structure of Language**

Tamil is a classical language that is spoken by more than 66 million people all over the world. It is a morphological rich content and complex in structural notes. It inflects to person, gender and invariably joins with auxiliaries to indicate mood, aspect, attitudes, etc. It takes both lexical and inflectional morphology [13]. The noun form of the language takes up almost five hundred word forms inflecting based on the post positions. The verb form inflects with the auxiliaries taking up approximately two thousand word forms. To incorporate this language in the machine understandable mode the words are needed to be tagged at the root level to build a successful language application.

### **POS Tagging in Tamil**

Labeling a part of speech or lexical case marker for every word in a sentence to denote its grammatical notions is termed as parts of speech (POS) tagging. This process is analogous to the tokenization process of understanding computer languages. Dravidian languages like Tamil which are morphological rich in content and agglutinative in nature faces a complex issue in tagging their word content. Almost all lexemes in Tamil language incorporate bounded morphemes which are structured as inflectional and derivational morphology. High rate of complexity is faced in tagging Tamil lexicons. Ambiguities in words and to resolve the

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complexity of Tamil lexicons deep analysis have to be done, which remains a demanding chore for Tamil POS tagging.

Examples: **Noun ( + number ) ( + case )**

**Paravai-kaL-ai <NN>**

**‘Birds’ -plural-accusative case suffix**

**Verb stem ( + Tense ) + ( Person-Number ) + ( Gender )**

**Nata +nt +En**

**‘I walked’**

### **Parts of Speech Taggers for Tamil Language**

Many approaches have been used to build an efficient Parts-of-speech tagger for the Tamil language. The following are the various methodologies deployed in building a POS tagger.

#### ***Rule based POS tagger***

This rule-based POS tagger targets the major tags and the sub tags based on the meaningful rules. A hybrid POS tagger using HMM [14] techniques is also used for tagging. The out frame of these models can be divided into three stages: Pre-editing, automatic tag assignment and manual post-editing. The corpus is converted into a suitable format based on the POS tags during the pre-editing stage. After the initial assignments, the words are manually corrected for accuracy.

#### ***Projection and Induction Techniques***

Well defined morphological rules are used to build this POS tagger for the Tamil language. Projection and induction techniques are used in these systems. Application of alignment and projection techniques for the process of constructing POS tag incorporates the induced root words from English-Tamil alignment, lemmatization followed by morphological induction techniques. In the experiments, rule based morphological [4] analyzer and POS tagger were built with 85.56% accuracy. Based on the English via alignment across a sentence aligned

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corpora the required categorical information and root words are obtained. Improvements are made in rule based morphological analyzer and POS tagger based on the categorical information; root words are obtained from POS projection and morphological induction respectively via sentence aligned corpora. This method generated nearly 600 POS tags in the POS tagging process.

### ***Lexical phonological approach***

The tagTamil [14] is based on this lexical phonological approach. Tagging and generation are done by these tagTamil. It targets the verb forms by morphotactics, by morphologically processing them using an index method.

### ***Morpheme based language model***

This model [16] consists of information about the stem type, last morpheme and previous to the last given morpheme. According to the information gathered in the language model categorization of part of speech is developed. The Generative scaling technique is used for estimation. It deems to the stem word along with their lexical category and morphological components. Output is the best tag for each word based on the strings of words and tag sets given as input.

### ***Hierarchical POS tagging***

This tagging method [5] identifies the categorical ambiguities by deploying a hierarchical structure for the tag set at the grammatical category and feature level of the words. SVM tools were used to annotate the corpora to generate this POS tagger model.

## **Conclusion**

Tamil is a morphological complex structure which needs deep feature understanding to integrate it in a machine understandable form. Morphological analysis is needed for complex structured languages. Parts-of-speech tagging is an important pre-processing step in the morphological analysis. The Parts-of-speech tagging plays a vital role in building any Natural language processing applications. Therefore, from this study, it is found that due to the less availability of resources, developing an efficient tagger for Tamil language remains a challenging task. Though a considerable amount of machine learning approaches is used in

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developing POS taggers, there is no remarkable development for Tamil POS tagging. Therefore, different approaches can be used in the future for building efficient POS tagging.

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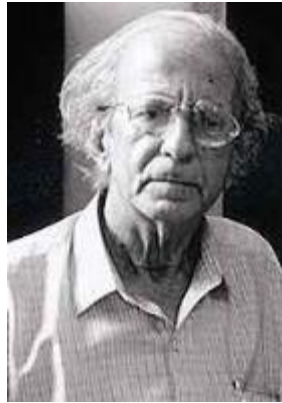
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## Selected Themes in Nissim Ezekiel's Poems

M. Archana Devi, M.A., M.Phil.

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Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004)

Courtesy: <http://www.poemhunter.com/nissim-ezekiel/>

### Abstract

### Key words:

### Nissim Ezekiel's Poems

Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most productive talents and is one of the most distinctive poetic personalities of modern India. Having produced seven volumes of poetry, he is acknowledged as an established Indian-English poet of the post-Independence era. He provided an example of a poet intellectually and morally concerned with making poetry out of experiences. In his poetry, there is the truth of acknowledging what is felt and experienced in its complexity, contradictions, pleasures, fears and disillusionments without preconceived ideas of what poetry should say about the poet and life.

### Modernizing Indian English Poetry

Ezekiel's place in Indian English poetry is permanent and assured. His greatest contribution lies in modernising poetry, in giving it themes and technique in consonance with the

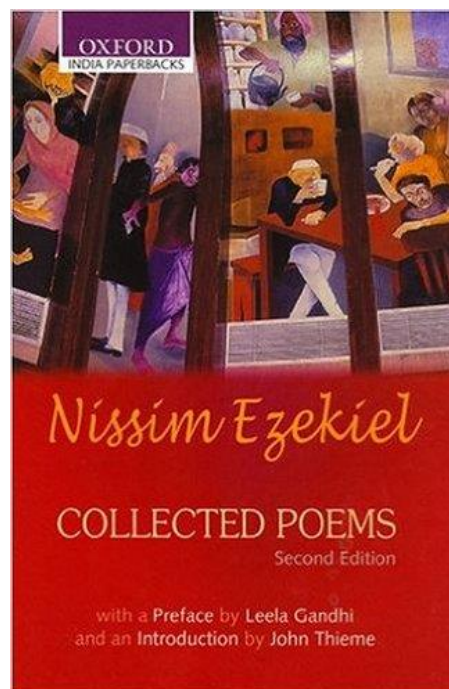
spirit of the age. His poetry is the main link between pre-Independence and post-Independence Indian poetry in English. He brought an urban touch to poetry and with the help of irony and mild satire exposes the evils of urban society. Michael German rightly comments on his contribution to poetry:

He brings to the established traditions of love, religion  
and the passing hour, the modern attitude of the need  
for a commitment, an existential plunge into life,  
and of old analytic disgust, becoming more ironical  
and detached as he develops.

(Satish Kumar, SIEP 193)

### **Indian Presence in Nissim Ezekiel's Poetry**

The post-Independence Indian English poets are basically committed to probe into and present the prevailing situations in the subcontinent to which they belong. The Indian milieu and ethos provide the superstructure as well as the infrastructure for the post-Independence Indian English poetry. The Indian presence in Ezekiel's work is deeply rooted in the physical reality of the country.



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Selected Themes in Nissim Ezekiel's Poems

## **Detachment**

His ancestry perhaps accounts for the detachment that he can afford to cultivate while simultaneously practising inwardness in his understanding and absorbing the experience of the situation in India. He is a poet whose Indianness has lent a special interest to the work of a Jew who was a foreigner settled permanently in this country. He has exposed in his poems the follies, foibles, weaknesses, and deficiencies of the Indians. The typical strength of his poetry arises from the fact that he had ideas firmly rooted in the Indian soil.

## **Independence and Individuality**

It is generally believed that Indian poetry in English, having passed the phase of imitation and national self-consciousness has attained maturity through independence and individuality. This self-consciousness and awareness played an important role in the writing of modern Indian poetry in English. Much of the critical commentary on Ezekiel's poetry is centered on a study of his craftsmanship and his treatment of modern urban life.

## **Skeptical Self**

Ezekiel's poetic impulse is to pattern the experiences in terms of his self. At the centre of his poetry, from his earliest work *A Time To change* (1952) to his last volume of poems *Latter-Day Psalms* (1982), there is the same dominant, skeptical self perceiving and ordering the experiences of modern urban life. The urban experience constitutes an important segment of Ezekiel's work. So does rural experience. Ezekiel was the first poet to allow the significant entry of realistic rural experience into Indian poetry in English. His poetry reveals his primary concern with the understanding of the meaning of his life and attaining self-realization. Poetry seems to be the means to this goal.

Chetan Karnani observes: "Ezekiel treated life as a journey where poetry would be the chief source of discovering and organizing one's life, and that there is a very close connection between his life and life and his poetry."

(Raghu, PNE 61)

## **Rooted in Native Soil**

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Ezekiel has endeavored to identify himself with his environment and he has proved that the roots and stems of great poetry are found in the native soil. But the poet with the immaculate perfection of his art universalizes his environmental ethos.

### **Themes**

Love has occupied a central position in the realm of Indo-English poetry and Ezekiel has used it with superb artistic excellence. He has beautifully portrayed love and sex in his poems. With all frankness and openness, he express suitably in the Indian situations and contexts. He describes from *A Time To change* to *Latter- Day Psalms* his journey from lustful passion to serene feelings of love.

All great Indian English poets during the post-Independence era - K.N.Daruwalla, Arun Kolatkar, Kamala Das, Gauri Deshpande, and O. P. Bhatnagar have followed the Ezekiel tradition of urbanity, identification with environment, art and irony and the importance of flawless form.

Shashi Iyer comments on his abiding contribution to Indian English poetry:

Ezekiel of course has been a kind of law-giver to the young poets writing in Indo-English tradition. He has taught them to avoid sentimentality, looseness of structure and abstract sublimities which all seem to be peculiarly Indian traits.

(Satish Kumar, SIEP 193)

### **Cynicism**

To sum up, Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most significant poets who has enriched our contribution to English poetry. He was a gifted Bombay intellectual, who poured forth his feelings to come to terms with himself, scornfully, and sorrowfully with overtones of mocking cynicism.

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## **An Exploratory Study in Educating High School Children towards Maintaining an Eco-Friendly Environment**

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### **Abstract**

An exploratory study in educating high school children towards maintaining an eco-friendly environment was conducted as a part of Bhavya's Doctoral research by Dr. K. Purnima and Smt. Bhavya N. Children are the citizens of tomorrow and a great responsibility of protecting the environment rests on their young shoulders. Hence, this study evolved. The objectives were: To compare the pretest and posttest knowledge of the high school children about environment, its pollution and conservation; To compare the pretest and posttest attitude of the high school children about environment, its pollution and conservation; To compare the pre test and posttest practices of the high school children about environment, its pollution and conservation; To compare the knowledge, attitude and practices of the high school children of the five schools about environment, its pollution and conservation. Four hypotheses were formulated stating that there is no difference between the pre test and posttest knowledge of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation; there is no difference in the pre test and posttest attitude of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation; there is no difference in the pre test and post test practices of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation and there is no difference in the pre and post test knowledge, attitude and practices of the respondents of the five schools. The five schools taken for the study were Mangalavada, Mugadalabetta, CK Pura, Gujjanadu and KT Halli, which were randomly selected in Pavgada Taluk, Tumkur District, Karnataka. adolescent boys and girls studying in 9th standard, numbering 300 were selected using the Purposive Random Sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as tool, developed both in English and Kannada, which consisted of basic information about the respondents followed by five sections in which a total of 119

objective type questions were framed and distributed. The experimental group consisted of 152 children from all the five school together.

Very interesting results have been observed from the present study undertaken for 9<sup>th</sup> standard children from the five schools in Pavagada Taluk.

The mean scores and t value of the pre and post tests under different dimensions of the environment regarding the experimental group showed high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pre test and post test analysis under the five dimensions - eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception, and also attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment.

The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pretest, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to the experimental group.

The standard deviation of almost all the dimensions and attitude and practices were significantly lesser in the post test, showing that the post test values were more homogenous, since they showed less variability than the pre test scores.

The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices in all the five schools towards the eco-friendly environment.

The above study gives a clear picture of the improvement regarding knowledge, attitude and practices about the eco-friendly environment and has inculcated better knowledge, positive attitudes and better practices among the children.

**Key words:** adolescents and knowledge of environment, eco-friendly concept of environment, attitude and practices towards eco-friendly environment.

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## **Introduction**

The environment in which we live in is a complex and a dynamic one in which all forms of life are interdependent on each other. Deep and harmonious relationship exists between man and environment.

The term environment means the surroundings of an organism. It includes both living and non-living components such as land, air, atmosphere, water, and by living components like plants and animals. Further, the environment includes the pollutants, and other factors that adversely affect our life. Environment refers to the sum total of all the forces, materials and influences around us at a given point of time and place.

Ecosystem is essentially a technical term for 'nature'. Ecosystem is a self-regulating and self-sustaining structural and functional unit of the biosphere. This system depends upon the sun for its energy.

Environment is the sum total of all conditions and influences that affects the life and development of organisms.

The earth is the only planet known in the entire universe capable of supporting life. The three basic amenities for living organisms are air, land or soil and water-which are found in our mother earth. But in his quest to improve the quality of his life, man has polluted all these essential components of earth.

Man is considered as an integral part of nature and there should be harmony & not hostility between man and environment. Man started interfering with the environment since the human civilization evolved. With the increased human tendency of exploitation of natural resources for economic development, the environment is facing serious threats to its conservation.

According to UNESCO and UNEP (United Nations Environment Program)"Environment education is a sustained process in which the individuals gain awareness of their environment and acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to act individually as well as collectively to solve environment problems". (Kurukshetra, 2004)

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## **Need for the Study**

The results of the pretest and post test of the intervention are presented in this study to create awareness about the impact and influence of the intervention programme on school children.

## **Review of Literature**

Environmental Awareness Among Secondary School Students a study conducted by Tejpreet Kaur Kang and Asha Chawla (2011). Environment has become the concern for all; the academicians, intellectuals, scientists, policy makers and government across the continents. The UN World Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Global Forum, 1992 and the activities organized by the International NGO Forum show that environment is on the agenda of the international community. People have become more concerned about the environment. The environmental movement has focused attention on the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink, on how new dam construction harms wildlife and how strip mining devastates the landscape and causes floods. We are beginning to realize that virtually all aspects of the world around us can have profound and potentially negative effects on our health and well-being. The relationship between environment and human kind is indeed deep and has been recognized from the Vedic period. Therefore, awareness and education of environment is the paramount concern of all the citizens of society. Environment protection starts by creating awareness among the people so that it becomes part of their lifestyle. The key to achieving this goal lies in environmental education and its related programmes. The objective of environmental education includes awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and participation of people in protecting the environment. Present study was conducted on 60 senior secondary students (30 boys and 30 girls) belonging to the age group of 15 to 17 years. Environment Awareness Ability measure by Jha was used to assess their environment awareness. Majority of the students were found to be having average to high level of environment awareness. Significant gender differences existed in environment awareness.

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**A Study of Environmental Awareness Among Higher Secondary Students And Some Educational Factors Affecting It - a study conducted by Prashant Kumar Astalin (November 2011).**

In this study investigator has tried to find the environmental awareness among higher secondary students and some educational factors affecting it. Total 608 students were selected from different board by using cluster random sampling technique having 280 male and 328 female students. For collecting data the tool "Paryavaran Jagrukata Prashnavali" constructed by investigator was used. Post Hoc Tests, F-test and t-ratio test had been used for analysis of data. Main findings of this study are the students of 11th and 12th standard were identical as for as their environmental awareness was concerned. Science stream students had more environmental awareness in comparison to arts stream students. The CBSE students had more environmental awareness in comparison to UP Board students. Parent's group of students belonging to literate, undergraduate, post graduate and research had more environmental awareness in comparison to parent's group of students belonging to high school and intermediate. Finally the male students had also more environmental awareness in comparison to female students.

**Environmental Knowledge and Attitude among Students in Sabah - a study conducted by Rosta Harun World Applied Sciences Journal (2011).**

Environmental awareness among students is highly influenced by their background, knowledge, attitude and sensitivity towards the environment. The objectives of this study are to identify level of knowledge on environmental literacy and attitude towards environmental issues that are occurring in Malaysia presently among students in Sabah, Malaysia. Multi-stage stratified sampling was used to select the samples. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire which was developed by expert panel which consisted of lecturers and teachers through two sessions of focus group discussions (FGD). The items developed for the questionnaires took into consideration the environmental problems which have existed locally as well as cultural sensitivities of local community. Pilot test among 50 form four secondary school students show moderate level of internal consistency of knowledge (Cronbach Alpha -0.68) and

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attitude (Cronbach alpha 0.72) domains. 1106 (95%) of 1200 sample responded the study. The result show that in general, students in Sabah particularly from Form 4 level have high level of environmental knowledge except for several items which measure the current environmental issues in Malaysia such as Carbon dioxide and climate change. Their attitudes are influenced by the level of knowledge that they have concerning the environment.

### **Objectives of the Present Study**

1. To compare the pretest and posttest knowledge of the high school children about environment, its pollution and conservation.
2. To compare the pretest and posttest attitude of the high school children about environment, its pollution and conservation.
3. To compare the pretest and posttest practices of the high school children about environment, its pollution and conservation.
4. To compare the knowledge, attitude and practices of the high school children of the five schools about environment, its pollution and conservation.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no difference between the pre test and post test knowledge of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation.
2. There is no difference in the pre test and post test attitude of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation.
3. There is no difference in the pre test and post test practices of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation.
4. There is no difference in the pre and post test knowledge, attitude and practices of the respondents of the five schools.

### **Scope of the Study**

The findings of the present study will be an eye opener to other rural government schools who, on the same lines can promote the knowledge of an eco-friendly environment among the students. It will also inculcate a positive attitude and better practices of the eco-friendly environment.

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## **Methodology**

The study was carried out in the following phases.

### **Phase - I**

To conduct a survey on five Government Aided High Schools from each of the five different villages, randomly selected in Pavagada Taluk, Tumkur Dist. Karnataka, India, which are listed below.

- 1) Mugdalabetta (Fig.1)
- 2) K.T. Halli (Fig.2)
- 3) Gujjanadu (Fig.3)
- 4) Mangalawada (Fig.4)
- 5) C.K. Pura (Fig.5)



Fig.1 - Rastra Pragathi High School, Mugdalbetta.





Fig.2 – Sri Rama Rural High School, K.T. Halli.



Fig. 3 - Netra Vidya Peeta High School, Gujjanadu





Fig.4 - Thirumala Raghavendra High School, Mangalawada.



Fig. 5 - Sri Siddeshwara Swamy High School, C.K. Pura.

**Phase - II**

**Identification of the sample:**

Adolescent boys & girls studying in 9<sup>th</sup> standard in the 5 Government Aided High Schools in Pavagada Taluk numbering 300 were selected using the purposive random sampling.

**Phase - III**

**Development of the Tool**

A Questionnaire on adolescents' knowledge about the environment, its pollution and conservation was developed both in English and Kannada, since Kannada is the medium of instruction followed in the rural schools. It consisted of the basic information about the **Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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respondents, followed by five sections in which objective type questions were asked. A total of 119 questions were framed for the questionnaire and 20 statements each regarding attitude and practices towards environment were distributed to the respondents.

**Part-A** Consisted of statements true/false, multiple choices and matching the items under the following heads:

1. Eco- system and environment
2. Air
3. Water
4. Land
5. Energy, environment and resource conservation management.

**Part-B** consisted of one section on picture perception.

A total of 119 questions were framed for the questionnaire.

#### **Phase - IV**

#### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted on hundred 9<sup>th</sup> standard High school students, selected randomly, 20 each from the 5 schools.

#### **Phase - V**

**Pretest:** The respondents were administered the developed tool to elicit information about their existing knowledge, attitude and practices followed to maintain an eco-friendly environment.

#### **Phase -VI**

**Development of the Module:** After assessing the existing knowledge, attitude and practices followed by the respondents, the intervention module was developed to educate adolescents in gaining more knowledge, to develop positive attitude and better practices regarding the eco-friendly environment.

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## Phase -VII

### Intervention Phase

The developed module of the intervention program was implemented for an academic year in the schools using appropriate audio-visual aids and teaching strategies.



Creating Environmental awareness regarding air pollution at K.T. Halli High School.

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Activity conducted at K T Halli School regarding Eco-system and Environment.





Activity conducted at K T Halli School regarding Eco-system and Environment.



Creating Environmental Awareness Regarding Solar Energy and Water Conservation at C K Pura School.





Creating Environmental awareness through Tree planting at Mugadalabetta School.





Creating Environmental awareness for school children and Teachers of five schools by conducting exhibition at K.T. Halli School with charts and miniature models prepared by school children on pollution and conservation.

### **Phase-VIII**

**Posttest:** The developed tool was re-administered to the respondents to assess their knowledge, attitude and practices followed in maintain an eco-friendly environment. A pre and post test data analysis was made to study the influence of the intervention program in enhancing the knowledge, positive attitude and better practices of eco-friendly environment among the adolescents. The purpose of the intervention program was reassessed using the same tool, keeping an interval of one month between intervention and the reassessment.

**Comparison between Pre and Post Mean Scores under Different Dimensions of Environment (Experimental Group), Mugadalabetta Village**

Place	Dimensions	Pre test (Mean ± SD)	Post test (Mean ± SD)	Significance of t value
<b>MugadalaBetta (n = 11)</b>	<b>Eco-System &amp; Environment</b>	9.36 ± 1.91	14.09 ± 1.22	6.3910**
	<b>Air</b>	7.90 ± 2.34	13.63 ± 1.28	8.3154**
	<b>Water</b>	5.45 ± 1.75	13.63 ± 0.92	19.3649**
	<b>Land</b>	5.63 ± 2.24	13.54 ± 1.12	12.3782**
	<b>Energy &amp; Resource Conservation</b>	10.54 ± 2.73	23.54 ± 2.16	17.3459**
	<b>Picture Perception</b>	9.90 ± 1.70	23.00 ± 1.34	20.0465**
	<b>Overall</b>	48.81 ± 5.07	101.45 ± 4.43	35.7435**
	<b>Attitude</b>	19.00 ± 4.73	34.72 ± 0.90	11.0661**
	<b>Practice</b>	19.09 ± 4.67	29.81 ± 2.71	7.4809**

\*\* Significant at 1% level

### **Interpretation**

The analysis shows high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pretest and posttest analysis under five dimensions- Eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception; attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pre- test, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to the experimental group. The standard deviation of all the dimensions and attitude and practices were significantly lesser in the post test, showing that the post test values were more homogenous, since they showed less variability than the pre test scores.

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The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. Especially with regard to water, energy and resource conservation, picture perception and attitude towards eco-friendly environment, the **t** values were found to be much higher than the other dimensions and practices.

**Comparison between Pre and Post Mean Scores under Different Dimensions of Environment (Experimental Group), K T Halli Village**

Place	Dimensions	Pre test (Mean ± SD)	Post test (Mean ± SD)	Significance of t value
<b>K. T. Halli (n = 26)</b>	<b>Eco-System &amp; Environment</b>	6.57 ± 1.67	13.57 ± 0.94	19.0245**
	<b>Air</b>	9.46 ± 2.35	13.03 ± 1.07	6.6098**
	<b>Water</b>	4.73 ± 1.58	12.76 ± 1.17	19.8160**
	<b>Land</b>	7.76 ± 2.53	13.80 ± 1.16	11.2592**
	<b>Energy &amp; Resource Conservation</b>	9.23 ± 2.15	26.23 ± 2.31	26.7766**
	<b>Picture Perception</b>	11.42 ± 1.87	22.92 ± 1.49	20.3049**
	<b>Overall</b>	49.19 ± 5.86	102.34 ± 3.35	36.4615**
	<b>Attitude</b>	22.46 ± 3.08	34.57 ± 1.62	19.3561**
	<b>Practice</b>	20.34 ± 4.86	30.84 ± 2.76	13.7598**

\*\* Significant at 1% level

**Interpretation**

The analysis shows high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pretest and posttest analysis under five dimensions- Eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception; attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pre- test, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to

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the experimental group. The standard deviation of all the dimensions except energy and resource conservation and not so significantly lesser with regard to water and land in the post test showing that except for energy and resource conservation, the posttest values were more homogenous since they showed less variability than the pretest scores.

The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. Especially with regard to eco-system and environment, water, energy and resource conservation, picture perception and attitude towards eco-friendly environment, the **t** values were found to be much higher than the other dimensions and practices.

**Comparison between Pre and Post Mean Scores under Different Dimensions of Environment (Experimental Group), Gujjanadu Village**

<b>Place</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Pre test (Mean ± SD)</b>	<b>Post test (Mean ± SD)</b>	<b>Significance of t value</b>
<b>Gujjanadu (n = 28)</b>	<b>Eco-System &amp; Environment</b>	8.03 ± 2.02	13.60 ± 1.02	11.1471**
	<b>Air</b>	7.60 ± 2.54	13.39 ± 1.10	11.1184**
	<b>Water</b>	5.92 ± 2.60	13.89 ± 0.98	15.6032**
	<b>Land</b>	6.03 ± 2.64	13.67 ± 1.12	12.7788**
	<b>Energy &amp; Resource Conservation</b>	9.50 ± 4.46	22.32 ± 2.84	29.1650**
	<b>Picture Perception</b>	10.00 ± 2.44	22.67 ± 1.18	31.2920**
	<b>Overall</b>	47.10 ± 9.51	99.57 ± 3.41	32.2643**
	<b>Attitude Practice</b>	22.42 ± 2.89 22.35 ± 4.06	33.89 ± 1.81 31.28 ± 3.14	19.0790** 15.2291**

\*\* Significant at 1% level

## Interpretation

The analysis shows high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pre test and post test analysis under five dimensions- Eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception; attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pre- test, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to the experimental group. The standard deviation of all the dimensions and attitude and practices were significantly lesser in the post test, showing that the post test values were more homogenous, since they showed less variability than the pre test scores.

The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. Except for eco-system and environment, air and land, the **t** values were found to be much higher in the other dimensions, attitude and practices.

### Comparison between Pre and Post Mean Scores under Different Dimensions of Environment (Experimental Group), Mangalawada Village

Place	Dimensions	Pre test (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Post test (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Significance of t value
Managalwada (n = 40)	Eco-System & Environment	8.50 $\pm$ 2.55	13.60 $\pm$ 1.05	14.1170**
	Air	8.70 $\pm$ 2.63	13.55 $\pm$ 1.15	14.9995**
	Water	7.32 $\pm$ 3.02	13.15 $\pm$ 1.43	17.3532**
	Land	6.72 $\pm$ 2.35	13.12 $\pm$ 1.15	24.5986**
	Energy & Resource Conservation	11.02 $\pm$ 4.52	21.47 $\pm$ 4.03	33.7115**

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	<b>Picture Perception</b>	11.47 ± 2.31	19.35 ± 2.37	32.7181**
	<b>Overall</b>	53.75 ± 11.83	94.25 ± 6.57	39.4039**
	<b>Attitude</b>	24.17 ± 3.38	66.72 ± 9.66	42.2278**
	<b>Practice</b>	23.15 ± 4.04	30.70 ± 3.42	18.3565**

\*\* Significant at 1% level

### Interpretation

The analysis shows high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pre test and post test analysis under five dimensions- Eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception; attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pre- test, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to the experimental group. The standard deviation of the dimensions eco-system and environment, air, water, land and energy and resource conservation were significantly lesser in the post test.

The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. Especially with regard to land, energy and resource conservation, picture perception and attitude towards eco-friendly environment, the **t** values were found to be much higher than the other dimensions and practices.

### Comparison between Pre and Post Mean Scores under Different Dimensions of Environment (Experimental Group), C K Pura Village

Place	Dimensions	Pre test (Mean ± SD)	Post test (Mean ± SD)	Significance of t value
<b>C. K. Pura (n = 47)</b>	<b>Eco-System &amp; Environment</b>	8.38 ± 2.06	12.44 ± 1.20	18.2835**
	<b>Air</b>	8.10 ± 2.67	12.85 ± 1.38	16.4011**
	<b>Water</b>	5.31 ± 2.16	12.89 ± 1.33	32.4923**
	<b>Land</b>	6.19 ± 3.08	12.78 ± 1.14	17.0034**

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<b>Energy &amp; Resource Conservation</b>	10.03 ± 3.13	13.10 ± 2.16	13.1641**
<b>Picture Perception</b>	10.78 ± 2.88	19.53 ± 2.48	21.9566**
<b>Overall</b>	49.04 ± 6.90	80.78 ± 5.14	44.3771**
<b>Attitude</b>	25.31 ± 3.42	33.29 ± 1.14	17.1311**
<b>Practice</b>	23.38 ± 4.58	64.23 ± 12.51	35.0675**

\*\* Significant at 1% level

### Interpretation

The analysis shows high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pre test and post test analysis under five dimensions- Eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception; attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pretest, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to the experimental group. The standard deviations of all the dimensions except practice towards eco-friendly environment were significantly lesser in the posttest.

The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment. Especially with regard to water, picture perception and practices towards eco-friendly environment, the **t** values were found to be much higher than the other dimensions and attitude.

Seeing to the interpretation of the comparison between pre and post mean scores, standard deviation and **t** value under the different dimensions of environment pollution, among the five schools taken for the study, first, second and third hypotheses stating that: There is no difference between the pretest and posttest knowledge of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation; There is no difference in the pretest and posttest attitude of the respondents about environment, its pollution and conservation; There is no difference in the pretest and posttest practices of the respondents about environment, its pollution and

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conservation have been disproved. The fourth hypothesis that there is difference in the pre and post test knowledge, attitude and practices of the respondents of the five schools has also been disproved. In fact, the findings of the study show a lot of difference between the mean scores of pre and posttests, the posttest mean scores being much higher than the pre test mean scores.

## **Conclusion**

Very interesting results have been observed from the present study under taken for 9<sup>th</sup> standard children from the five schools in Pavagada Taluk.

The mean scores and **t** value of the pre and post tests under different dimensions of the environment regarding the experimental group showed high significant difference in mean scores with regard to pretest and posttest analysis. Under the five dimensions - eco-system and environment, air, water, land, energy and resource conservation and picture perception, and also attitude and practices towards the eco-friendly environment.

The overall mean scores were significantly much higher in the post test analysis than the pretest, showing that the intervention program was extremely useful and educative to the experimental group.

The standard deviation of all most all the dimensions and attitude and practices were significantly lesser in the post test, showing that the posttest values were more homogenous, since they showed less variability than the pre test scores.

The **t** values were significant at 1% level for all the five dimensions as well as attitude and practices in all the five schools towards the eco-friendly environment.

The above study gives a clear picture of the improvement regarding knowledge, attitude and practices about the eco-friendly environment and has uncalculated better knowledge, positive attitudes and better practices among the children.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 **15:11 November 2015**

Bhavya. N., Ph.D. Scholar, Dr. K. Purnima and Krishna Murthy K.N.

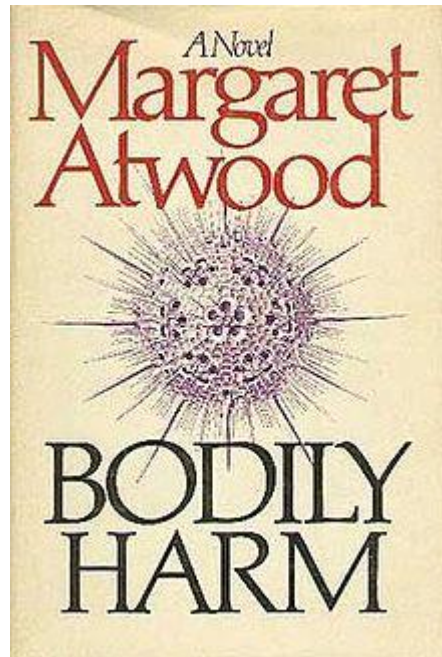
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Canadian Feminist Consciousness in Margaret Atwood's  
*Bodily Harm* and *The Handmaid's Tale*

S. Banupriya, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.

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**Abstract**

Canadian women's writing played a key role in setting in motion many radical ideas in terms of women's individuality and power and politics through own language. The aim of Canadian women's fiction is to make women critically conscious of their own roles in conventional social structures. Many of the women's stories narrated by these writers are about the lives of girls and women. They are concerned with the exploration and survival, crossing boundaries, challenging cultural and psychological limits and glimpsing new prospects. Thus, women's writing in Canada is committed to bring about remarkable changes in the lives of Canadian women and society. Margaret Atwood is one of those few modern Canadian novelists in English, who have tried to understand intimately the predicament of their female protagonists. Her writings are based on the feminist consciousness of her female protagonists through her novel. Margaret Atwood's fiction is often organized thematically around images of both cultural

and individual issues of survival; she has sought to portray the entrapment of women in patriarchy. In this paper I will try to present the above factors through the analyzing of two of her novels.

**Keywords:** Margaret Atwood, Canadian women, cultural and psychological limits, feminist consciousness.

### **Women's Encounter with the World**

Margaret Eleanor Atwood throws light on the women's encounter with the world in *Bodily Harm* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Atwood places her female protagonists in conflict with the patriarchal or sexist society with prejudices on the basis of gender, depicts her struggle to assert her individuality and to gain acceptance. In her fictional world, Atwood reflects various modes of gender victimization of women in the name of tradition, modernity, technology, and marriage. The protagonists in the two novels which form part of this study emerge from the elite section of the society. In the course of their interaction with the world around them - nature, men and women their experiences are enriched; their enlightenment is sharpened and their horizons of understanding are widened. Thus they open "the doors on their prisons, and take truer control of their images of self and their future directions." (Anna parsons 109) They learn the cruel lessons of life and subject themselves to a careful scrutiny in order to derive lessons for their future. The rebellious streak in each of the protagonists checkmates effectively the designs of male-centered society to manipulate and exploit her.

### ***Bodily Harm* – Power and Sexual Politics**

In *Bodily Harm*, Atwood focuses on the contrast between affluent thinking and the brutal reality of power and sexual politics. The protagonist Rennie is a 'lifestyle journalist' who has just had a mastectomy. Atwood traces her internal torment in dealing with this, her troubled childhood, her relationship with men and a violent society at large. Looking back on her life, Rennie realizes that all the men she has known have been oppressors in one way or another. She remembers her grandfather from her childhood and now understands that he had been a tyrant towards his daughters. Her boyfriend Jake engages in sadistic sexual pranks with her, and Paul, her lover in the Caribbean, where she goes on a vacation, is inhumanely remote and

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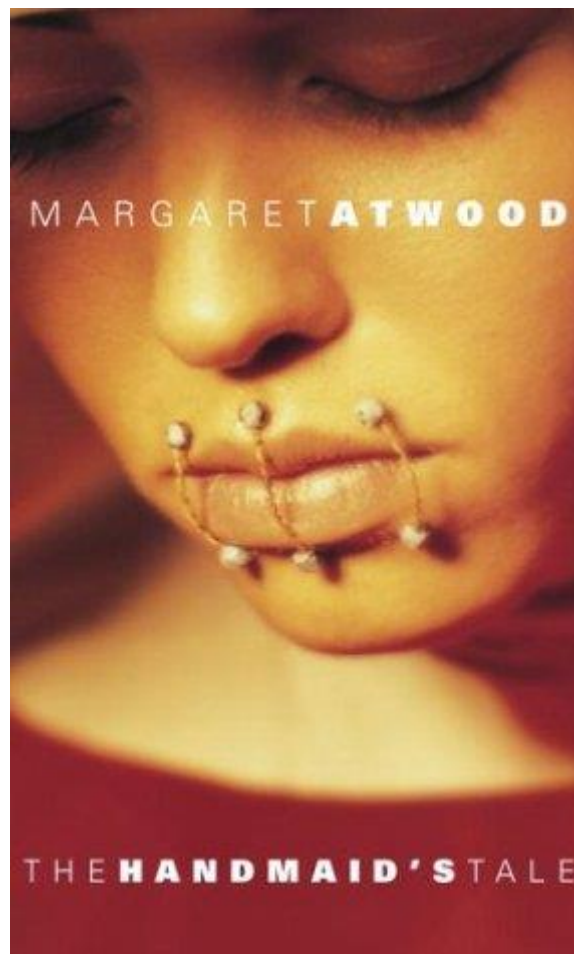
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uncommitted. In Toronto she visits an exhibition of pornographic pictures that is held in a police station. One picture is of a nude woman with a live rat in her vagina. Male sexual violence and sexism are shown with merciless realism in this novel, with Atwood wanting to expose the full horror of it. Threatened by a rapist in Toronto, Rennie goes south to the island of St. Antoine, only to encounter more violence, sexual and otherwise. She becomes involved in the political turmoil on the island, and ends up in prison along with Lora. She looks down on Lora, but is gradually forced to realize that her behavior contains an element of generosity and that she, Rennie may have something to learn from her. In prison both Rennie and Lora feel lonely and victimized by the male. Thus throughout the novel the main character of the novel Rennie is victimized by the male in the patriarchal society.

### **Offred in *Handmaid's Tale***



In the same way Atwood's other female character Offred in the novel *Handmaid's Tale* victimized by the patriarchal society called Gilead. Offred is a Handmaid by her profession treated as a child-bearing machine by the commander of the Gileadean Army. Offred is denied the use of language, writing is a forbidden act for women in Gilead. In Gilead, The segregation of women, and their further division into classes, prevents them from forming a unified front. The female groups hold the least power among the various classes. All individual women hold some trivial form of power over other women, which is channeled into further dividing women, rather than into building a common front. In particular, Aunts are used to control other women. Thus, among women in similar positions, there is conflict. Written and oral female traditions are effectively prevented. Women's power of procreation is devalued through couvades. Where alienation might lead to rebellion, controls are instituted. Handmaids and Jezebels, who are reproductive and sexual prostitutes, are the most dissatisfied female classes. They are the most alienated women, so they are controlled the most tightly, and victimized by the authorities. Even they do not know their real name, they are known only by their commander's name with the prefix Of like Offred, Ofglen, Ofwarren, etc. The protagonist compares her life to that of pigs cooped up in Pens, rolling coloured balls around in order "to have something to think about... I wish I had a pig ball." (HMT 86) According to Margaret Atwood:

### **The Most Lethal Weapon – Human Mind**

The most lethal weapon in the world's arsenals is not the neutron bomb or chemical warfare, but the human mind. In Gilead, personal identity is determined by functions and especially gender functions. To be a person is to inhabit one of the functions and the differences between people are given hierarchical status depending upon their function in the society. Male infertility in Gilead is unthinkable as the protagonist says: "there are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law." (HMT 75) In this society women are divided into groups: a group of women who are recruited for 'breeding purposes' are called "Hand Maids" and these hand maids, are according to Rigney, "personification of a religious sacrifice, temple prostitutes doomed to a kind of Purdah in perpetuity." (Barbara Hill Rigney 117) These Hand Maids are not allowed to knit, smoke, read, write, listen to music or go for walk. (HMT 85) They are in total social isolation, women with viable ovaries. The novel, therefore, depicts the separation of women into rigid, subservient gender roles and deprivation of basic Human rights.

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Carole Pateman argues that the notion of “ownership” of one’s body can lead to a variety of “social relations of subordination” including prostitution and surrogate motherhood. (Carole Pateman 148)

### **With Courage and Fortitude – Atwood’s Strategy**

But at last, Atwood’s protagonists confront all the adversities with courage and fortitude. They are involved in a grim struggle to attain “freedom and full human status after millennia of deprivation and oppression.” (Kate Millet 367) they are conscious of their own power and proclaim that they are no longer victims. Thus the reader can find unprecedented growth and release of energy in Atwood’s protagonists who had been long suppressed. Their feminist consciousness articulates the hidden and suppressed voice there by generating power in the victimized women out of their own victimization. They also have a reverence for life. Through these protagonists Atwood suggests the following strategy for women’s liberation:

Ignore your victimization, and sing a song like “I enjoy being a Girl”

Think it’s the fault of Biology, or something, or you can’t do anything about it; write a literature on How Awful it is, which may be a very useful activity up to a point.

Recognize the source of oppression; express anger; suggest ways for change.  
(Atwood critical prose 145)

In other words, Atwood teaches women to

refuse hobbles and deformity and take possession of their body and glory in its power, accepting its own laws of loveliness.... have something to desire, something to make, something to achieve, and at last something genuine to give....to claim the masculine virtues of magnanimity and generosity and courage. (Germaine Greer 328)

### **Guides to Help Follow the Right Direction**

Thus Atwood attempts to instill pride, confidence and dignity in women through her novels. She pleads for the need to create a conducive atmosphere for the development of the personality of a woman corresponding to her tastes, interests, and sensibility. She also castigates the social system that assigns roles to women. In that way Atwood in *Bodily Harm*, portrays the

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protagonist Rennie. Though she is a victim, but also guilty of passivity and detachment, she meets various guides who point her in the right direction, so to speak. The beggar is one, Minnow another, and he encourages her to write about the corrupt conditions on St. Antoine and thus contribute something to a solution. Lora also is one who opens up new vistas for Rennie and broadens her horizons. The key word, the thing that all of these people have in common is expressed in the word involvement, and Rennie uses the phrase “massive involvement”. (BH 34) This refers to the spreading of a cancer, but also, as she begins to understand, to the general need for a person to become involved with others, the world and its problems, in a serious way. Only by becoming more active can Rennie break out of her inactive role and do something about her neglect of her talent as a journalist author. She has tended to shy away from the important issues and has dealt mostly with trivia and superficialities in her work. However, the world refuses to let Rennie alone, and she is forced into closer contact with reality as the political unrest develops. She sees people being tortured and knows that some are murdered, but at the same time she also discovers human faithfulness and charity. Rennie knows whose side she is on, but she hesitates for a long time before finally taking the leap, so to speak, into the depths, beneath the surface of things.

### **Change Does Come**

The leap, or change, occurs at the end of the novel, in a scene charged with symbolic meanings. Lora has been beaten almost to death by the dictator's soldiers, or guards, and is thrown into the cell occupied by herself and Rennie. The latter, who for so long has preferred to look the other way, now helps Lora the best she can. It is suggested, not stated directly, that she licks Lora's bloody face, and she gives her all the love and support she can muster. Now she has realized that “there's no such thing as a faceless stranger” (American studies 299), and that the people who resist oppression, sexist and otherwise, must stand together.

Significantly, Rennie takes Lora's hand, trying to pull her through, as it were, saving her life. “She holds the hand, perfectly still, with all her strength. Surely, if she can only try hard enough, something will move and live again, something will get born”. (BH 299) Rennie has abandoned her detachment, become involved. This means that she has returned to life, the

essence of which is love, relatedness. If she succeeds, Lora will return to life again, be reborn, and Rennie herself will be born, or reborn, into life. This also means a reawakening of her talent.

Rennie is eventually released, and on the plane back to Canada she decides to take up controversial issues in her writing and thus try to do something about the world's ills: "In any case she is a subversive. She was not one once, but now she is a reporter. She will pick her time; then she will report". (BH 301) She realizes that it is her duty to report on the evils perpetrated on St. Antoine, the sexist and political oppression and injustice. The victims, as always, are women and people who are exploited and thus share in the condition of women.

Rennie's determination to resist, to make her own decisions, is also exemplified concretely. As always, the end of the text finds the Atwood heroine poised for a new kind of life, a new independence and creativity.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the protagonist Offred also gets out of her subjugation through her usage of language, even though speaking and writing is forbidden to the women in Gilead. Through some incidents like scrabble game with the commander, and the secret messages passed between the handmaids, Offred discovers the power of language and she rediscovers herself also. She also recalls more of her past life even when she is trapped in the sitting room or anywhere else in Gilead. In her own room, Offred learns to preserve her body with the butter, which further indicates her instinct of maintaining her own body like in the old times.

Through these gestures of self-preservation, Offred reveals her strong intention of retaining her old identity, not as Offred, but as herself with a real name that identifies her as an individual. Her thoughts, views, memory and what happened to her have all been textualized as tapes, and that has somehow become a latent threat to and a possible obsolete of Gilead society. That is to say, through Offred's story-telling, she has turned her mouth into a tool of resistance because narration can be taken as an act of reconstruction and imagination; Offred becomes willing to identify with the rebellious organization at the end of her story. She rediscovers her strength and manages to move beyond the limited space where she is trapped.



Against a powerful society like Gilead that she may have confronted, Offred struggles to find a way for her to withhold her identity and escape subjectivity under an absolute patriarchal sovereignty. Atwood cynically presents the politically powerful patriarchs, who believe in literal interpretations of the Bible, as power-hungry hypocrites; in fact, the most cynical men in *The Handmaid's Tale* are also the ones who hold the most power.

### **Recognize and Reject Victimization**

The novel is a warning against what could be if women fail to recognize and reject victimization. Atwood has displayed excellent ability of narrative art in both novels to support the feminist consciousness in both the novels.

Atwood uses symbolism in both of the novels. The mirror stage is one of the most effective techniques used by Atwood; in *Bodily Harm*, the characters Rennie and Lora do not have any mirror in their prison cell, so they depend upon each other to reflect their faces through their eyes.

But in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred has no such partner, so she saw her face only through the reflective surfaces of windows.

### **Metaphoric Camera**

Atwood uses metaphoric camera images in *Bodily Harm*. Rennie carries a camera bag throughout the novel, which symbolizes her tourist vision. Then she used comic book images to compare the characters like Daniel as Rox Mergan, and M.D. Paul as Tarzan.

Like in *Bodily Harm*, Atwood frequently uses metaphors, symbols and images in *The Handmaid's Tale* also. Offred playing scrabble is a symbol of reading and writing, and it is also functions as a spatial metaphor of the freedom for Offred in the novel. Offred's empty room is a symbol of her own empty inner space. The Ibsenite image of a doll is a symbolic representation of women's estrangement in an alienating environment. The rug space of her room is a metaphor of the occupant's struggle to make something meaningful out of her life. Then Atwood uses pearl references in *The Handmaid's Tale* to render character elucidation and crystallize the central

issue of the novel. Atwood uses flashback technique in both novels; this technique takes the reader back and forth in time. Atwood uses magic realism as a technique to insinuate the presence of a climax as a realistic one. Atwood's techniques cover the entire range of her experience on which she paints her subject matter. The strength of her fiction lies in the mimetic presentation of her experiences.

Atwood brilliantly explores the sufferings of women in a patriarchal society and how they become powerful by their own feminist attitude, overcome their struggle, assert their identity through language and other feminist attitudes, through her novels *Bodily Harm* and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

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## Societal Changes Viewed Through Bollywood Lenses

Mita Bandyopadhyay, M.A. English, NET



### Abstract

Bollywood, the Hindi film industry of India, has been entertaining the global population through its music, songs and dances shot in picturesque and exotic locations. These films generally revolve around a powerful male protagonist involved in different activities and females encrypted only to enhance the position of these males. The females tend to glorify the movies with their looks, gorgeous dresses, music and dances. Though, this may be the prevailing scenario of the women in the industry, there are films where a story is scripted around a female. This paper of mine intends to go through some of the movies of Bollywood so as to highlight how along with the metamorphosis in the life of the real Indian woman, there comes a very subtle modification in the depiction of females in these female centric movies.

**Key Words:** societal change, Hindi film industry, female centric movies, Indian women

## **Portrayal of Females in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Movies:**

### **Director Mehboob**

On turning the pages of Bollywood film industry, the first movie which had an actress in the leading role is *Mother India* by Mehboob in 1957. This film had Radha (Nargis Dutt) in the lead role but here she is not an individual woman. Here she is the prototype of India viewed as a mother to all. Dr. Soma Chatterjee says in an interview: “Mother India is a strong political statement on a woman who could do anything to establish that justice has been done even while remaining within the framework of marriage and motherhood. She defies the micro state of being a biological mother in order to fit into the framework of becoming the mother of the nation when she shoots down her own son to save the honour of a woman of the village.”

### **Director Shyam Benegal**

The other director who has depicted women in roles that are different, making a shift from the contemporary stereo-types, is Shyam Benegal. A few of his films in this setting would be *Nishant*, *Bhumika*, *Hari-Bhari*. *Nishant* portrays two women, Rukmini and Susheela the former the legal wife of Vishwam and Susheela the concubine of Vishwam, each dealing with their situations in life in their own ways. *Bhumika*, portrays the life of an actress Usha as she keeps shifting from one male to the other in search of contentment and *Hari Bhari* brings to light the condition of a woman who could not bring forth the male progeny to the family.

Thus, he puts these women in different situations of life and shows us their reaction to it. Irrespective of the social class to which the woman belongs, her problems creep into her life with the onset of family life where she is either the dumb sufferer (as Rukmini in *Nishant* or Gazala in *Hari Bhari*) with none to alleviate her pains, or the one who tactically uses her position as a woman to gain something out of the men folk (as is done by Susheela in *Nishant* or Usha in *Bhumika*). It is so because the woman was never allowed to desire anything beyond the four walls of her house and her family. Her life was epitomised in her duty of making herself into a successful home maker. All her equations of life had to be settled within the four walls of the house and among the members of that family, especially the males and even if justice had to be meted out to her it could only be done by some menfolk. As for the men, none could judge them. All their actions seem to be always

justified. At the end, all we get to see is the all-powerful male under whose shadow lurks the woman without even knowing that she is being unjustly treated. She accepts all that she gets as her DESTINY. She cries but none see those tears. So, this being the contemporary situation films mirrored them.

### **Films by Rajkumar Santoshi**

Films like *Daman*, *Lajja* both by Rajkumar Santoshi have portrayed women in the lead roles and she is not the 'voiceless' here, but defenceless. These two films make her somewhat of a better human being, for now the sense of the prevailing might of right and/or wrong descends on her. She shouts, she cries, she does it loud enough this time to gain the public attention, but she alone cannot defend herself. She has not become strong enough to stand alone for herself; still she needs someone and so comes the powerful male character. But, this time only to stand as her support. Thus, we see a very slow growth in the feminine character in the films. This growth is the obvious outcome of the changes in the outlook of the people of the society.

### **Portrayal of Females in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Movies**



Courtesy: <http://www.hiff.org/content/bollywood-nights-hiff-spring-showcase/>

### ***Astitva***

Winds of change began to be felt with the production of films like *Astitva* by Mahesh Manjrekar, where the mother and the wife denounces her family after 25 years of marriage on

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being accused of infidelity. Here she doesn't stay back to bear the insult of her husband or beg for his mercy for the rest of her life. Before leaving she confesses her love for her son and husband, but does not stay back anymore. Though aged and only a housewife for all these years, she is confident enough to give herself a solo but respectable existence. Here she is also a victim of the evil discrimination on the gender basis but she is neither the voiceless nor the defenceless. She is capable enough of giving an apt answer to the situation and for this she does not depend on anyone.

### *English-Vinglish*



Courtesy: <http://www.koimoi.com/reviews/english-vinglish-review/>

Films with this new outlook where the woman is confident, determined as well as aware of her role as a mother and a wife are being seen and felt. An example of such a movie is *English-Vinglish* where Sridevi, a simple homemaker who lacks English speaking capabilities, with time learns English and gives a speech on 'family' in English. She not only proves her capabilities of learning English, but through her speech shows her love and respect for the same family which once mocked at her for her shortcoming. Here again emerges a

new confident mother and wife who by proving her worth regains the respect which she might have lost once.

### ***Queen and Highway***

Films like *Queen* and *Highway* too have shown the new, confident, determined women who alone is self-sufficient to give herself what she requires. She is unlike the heroines of the past century (to be specific *Pakeezah* and *Andhi*) and do not cut a sorry figure in the movies, for not having a well settled family. There are films too where women are having roles at par with the men like *No One Killed Jessica*, *Kahaani*, *Mary kom*, *Satta*, *Mardaani* and the latest being *Jazbaa*. All these films portray the new female altogether unknown all these days and with the release of *Jazbaa* she is the women trying to balance her life between her job and family. Rightly has Anshoo Sharma (2009:117) said: “In conclusion one can say that like phoenix she rises from her ashes- stronger, more capable. It is the rebirth of Durga, the Poroma, who has realized her ‘shakti’ but in a new form, a different context’. Today woman may be in any walk of life, but whichever field she chooses to be in, she shows a much higher level of confidence and seeks respect for the part she plays, which the film makers of this generation are trying to put up.

### **Alterations in the Women Centric Roles**

These alterations in the women centric roles of the movies reveal that Indian women too have undergone a good amount of transformation. Her thoughts are no more unidirectional as it used to be in the earlier century. Social awareness has brought about an up-lift in the position of the women. No more do the four walls circumscribe her. She now tries to be at par with males of the society.

Another important thing that has changed is the general audience’s look out for films. People these days want to see movies whose story lines are different from the traditional ones. They watch movies irrespective of the central role being portrayed by either the hero or the heroine. Somewhere the demand of the beautiful singing heroine clad in beautiful dresses has stopped appealing to the people and the new type of heroine who is smart, vociferous and wants to get her things done in her own way is more welcome to the society.

### ***Tanu Weds Manu***





The film *Tanu Weds Manu* proves this point. In the title of this film Tanu is a girl who weds Manu the boy as against the popular belief in India where the boy marries the girl. The character of the hero and heroine as shown in the movie are almost a total reverse of what was shown in the past century. This movie being a deviation from the normal set pattern not only landed with a huge success, but also has a second part to it by the same name, starring the same hero and heroine. So, we do see some changes in the way people are thinking.

### Meagre Changes?

Changes in the role of women have taken place, but may be this change is very meagre and at times not noticeable without proper lens. But, on thoroughly comparing and scanning the heroines of the past century and the present a shift will be noticeable in the **Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015 Mita Bandyopadhyay, M.A. English, NET Societal Changes Viewed Through Bollywood Lenses

female centric role of Bollywood. This shift from the traditional thinking is an evidence of the changing scenario of the position of women in India.

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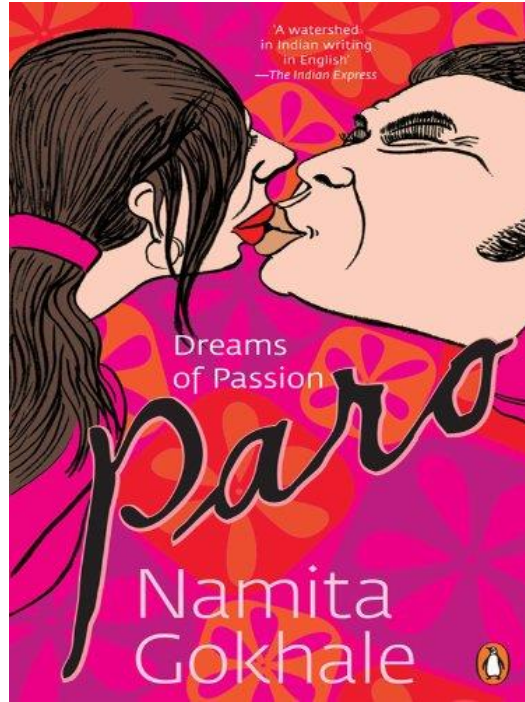
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Theme of Self-realisation in Namita Gokhale's  
*Paro: Dreams of Passion and Gods, Graves and Grandmother*

R. Kanimozhi, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil.



**Abstract**

Namita Gokhale has seen human life in her novels from the perspective of a woman. She has tried to redefine the feminine role in society. In *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, the protagonist Paro is a representative of an aristocratic class, where everything is acceptable in the name of modernization. She has used the feminine power for earning money, status and goodwill of the various men she comes across in her life. Through the narrator Priya, the author condemns Paro's immoral deeds. Paro has intuitively realized the truth which many women are able to only after a consummate life-long struggle. Finally, Paro commits suicide. Her intention is merely to present herself as a liberated woman but the liberation she chose for herself was hollow and false. In *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, the protagonist Gudiya suffers from repression of emotions and desires. She is also under great psychological stress and nervous tension, and feels the burden of loneliness and confusion weigh down upon her



without any proper support and guidance from her grandmother. Apart from that Gudiya suffers as her husband Kalki drinks and beat her up. Gudiya has no one with whom she could share her problems. But Gudiya carries the fighting spirit of her grandmother Ammi within her and she becomes more confident and self-assured individual. She leaves her past and looks forward to the bright future of her daughter. Namita Gokhale is the champion of feminine psychology. She very boldly depicts the psychological effects caused by external agencies or factors upon the protagonists Paro in *Paro: Dreams of Passion* and Gudiya in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*. Women struggle to get their freedom while living along with other members of society. They are not directed by others. They themselves struggle hard to lead a life of their own and they are conscious of their self. This consciousness leads them towards the realization of their autonomous selves.

**Key words:**

**Namita Gokhale's Novels**



Namita Gokhale

Courtesy: <http://www.penguinbooksindia.com/en/node/351.html>

Namita Gokhale is a leading Indian novelist. The novels of Namita Gokhale reveal her keen concern for welfare of women. Women in her novels make an attempt to shake off the shackles of social convention. Gokhale's characters are sourced from all walks of life. Namita Gokhale projects the image of a new woman with a difference. Her female

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protagonists refuse to remain shadowy beings, and utilize their sexuality, gender identities and their inner strength to come out of the man's shadow and achieve identity of their own.

### ***Paro: Dreams of Passion***

In Namita Gokhale's novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, Paro is an educated and economically independent woman, in search of her identity. Her struggle leads her to discover the hidden strength in her 'self' as well as in other human beings. Paro is presented as a proud, audacious and self-confident, ambitious woman. While in a boarding school, Paro had an affair with the art master Marcus and was consequently expelled from the school. In college at Delhi, Paro meets B.R., who is unaware of her affair with the art master. He fell in love with Paro and they have a love-cum-arranged marriage. These two incidents changed the very course of Paro's life. The character Paro goes to any height in fulfilling her desire and finally fell in to the deepest depths. This way she succumbs to death. Her freak-outs lead her to a trap. From the beginning, Paro has been presented as a proud, audacious and self-confident, ambitious woman. Her fatal flaw was vanity. She loved self-dramatization.

### **A Heroic Temptress**

The Protagonist Paro is a heroic temptress, alluring and rapacious, the stuff of legend. Wandering through the world of privilege and Scotch whiskey that the rich inhabit, she is observed constantly by the narrator Priya, eternal voyeur and diarist, who identifies strongly with the heroine of her favorite novel, Rebecca, and vicariously follows the melodrama of Paro's life. Priya herself is in love with her boss, the irresistible BR, sewing-machine magnate and the Housewife's Friend. Paro inevitably marries him, to Priya's fury. But B.R. is merely one among a whole string of admirers. Paro has seduced many.

### **Interplay of Reality and Fantasy**

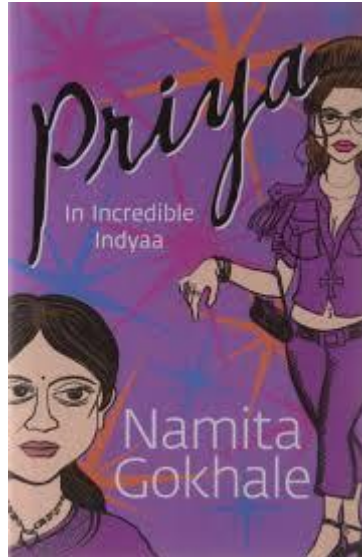
Here the novelist Namita Gokhale tries to tell that the modern life is a life of anxiety and it is the outcome of their way of life. There is an interplay of reality and fantasy; there lies its strength. The marriage of B.R and Paro does not last long. After their separation both Paro and B.R. engage in different affairs.

### **Priya and Suresh**

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Being hurt to see the marriage of B.R. and Paro, Priya wants to change her life style. She consciously observes Paro and behaves like her. This leads Priya to become an important role in Paro's life throughout the novel. Priya marries Suresh. She does not like him but due to societal norms continues with him. But after her miscarriage due to Paro's revengeful behaviour that Paro had gifted Priya and Suresh with an art picture, her life became deserted. The gift was scary, and on seeing the picture Priya aborted and says,

I lost my baby. Never before, and never after, have I known such pain. I am referring not to the physical pain, which was negligible, but to the desolation, the sudden emptying out of reason and beauty and hope from life. In fact, even today, I can hardly bear even to write about it. The sheets of our sturdy double bed were stained red with murderous congealed blood; I went in a rickety ambulance, dark as the night, to the noisy nursing home, where the bored doctor on duty aborted me. (PDP 68)

After the incident, Priya's husband Suresh is very nice to her outwardly. The unspoken feelings of Suresh related to the loss of their baby hurts Priya. This situation worsens as Suresh engrosses himself in his work to become busier, leaving Priya alone with her grief. Suresh by involving himself in his work tries to forget the loss. Mandlebaum says "a person's family is a major focus of his life expectations and activities. Children are one's chief source of lasting pleasure and prime goal of affection; they are the means of attaining respected status, the avenue for creativity and achievement (23).

Suresh's great expectation fails to materialize in the form of the child and hence he moves away from Priya. He moves not only away from Priya but from himself too. Priya and Suresh are alienated from each other. They have their separate aloofness. The love and attachment gradually disappear from their life. The warmth between them turns into cold feelings and the harmony develops into discord.

### **Confessional Diary and the Story of Relations**

Suresh's work keeps him away from Priya for longer hours and he reaches home late at night. Priya feels that her married life is getting upset. She changes her attitude towards Suresh and her marital life. She tries to find a solution to her loneliness by taking up a part time job in a book shop. The job at the book shop could provide no comfort to Priya. Suresh persuaded Priya to abandon writing a confessional diary in which she had been expressing every aspect of her life and about the people around her. That diary contains matters related to Paro and her illicit relations, Suresh and his personality, B.R. and Priya's sexual relations.

Priya tries to hide her relationship with B.R. from her husband but is unable to hide her longing for B.R.'s company from him. Priya continuously indulges in a double strategy and tries to keep both the men enwrapped in a relationship with her. For materialistic prosperity she needs Suresh and for her sexual satisfaction she needs B.R. But when Suresh reads Priya's diary, the truth is revealed to him. Priya accepts that she has never loved Suresh. In desperation Priya tries to move away from wedlock but again returns.

### **Paro's Life after Divorce - From One Man to Another as Liberation**

The protagonist Paro is not afraid of the life that she will have after the divorce. She is not ready to maintain silence over the sexual affairs of her husband in order to maintain the social prestige of the family. She leaves B.R. and as a part of her divorce settlement takes money and property from him. She defies moral orthodoxy of patriarchal social system and redefines the predicament of a single woman by challenging the conventional values and codes. She decides to pay back B.R. in his own way.

Paro also chooses the path of faithlessness. Paro had many suitors namely B.R., (her ex-husband) Lenin, Avinendra, Sambhunath Mishra and so on. Paro is not the kind of woman who shall remain in the wedlock just for the sake of home, food and social status. She demands equality in her relationship. She believes in herself and is not ready to accept the

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ways of her husband or allow him to dominate her. She never longs for security and emotional attachment from her husband. Paro thinks that B.R. is fully responsible for shattering her dreams of happiness in marriage and sets herself free from the loveless trap. She moves from one man to another and forms illicit relationship with many men. She tries to overthrow B.R.'s authority upon her by her various illicit relationships and considers it as her liberation.

Paro's eyes narrowed even more in an attempt to conceal and suppress her triumph at this declaration of love. Mockery and self-satisfaction clashed in their green depths. Then, suddenly, she switched roles. She was now the free woman, symbol and prototype of emancipation and individuality. 'I am myself,' she said theatrically, 'and no one else. I depend on nobody. I am my own person. (PDP 48)

### **Yearning to Find True Self**

Paro yearns to find her true self, and in her quest she moves towards theatre. She is going to play the role of Clymnestra in a play. She compares her life with the life of Clymnestra, and realizes that this male dominated social network has degenerated her.

### **Fulfilment of Spirit**

The narrator Priya realizes that only sensual love is not the ultimate love but fulfilment in spirit is also must. Priya's return to her husband's home is the realization of herself in the form of the ideal Indian married woman. Priya says "I am an Indian woman, I told myself, and for me my husband is my God" (PDP 129). Paro has intuitively realized the truth which many women are able to only after consummate life-long struggles.

### **Paro Commits Suicide**

Finally, Paro commits suicide. Her intention is merely to present herself as a liberated woman but the liberation she chose for herself was hollow and false. Paro realizes her mistakes and repents the part she had played throughout her entire life. Later, she changes, and welcomes her ex-husband B.R. The quest for identity, however, does not end on a positive note for Paro; she commits suicide. Her death is a plea to society to think positively about a new kind of existence for its women by bringing reforms that would liberate the women from the clutches of tyrannical conventions. Paro dies during her struggle for existence.

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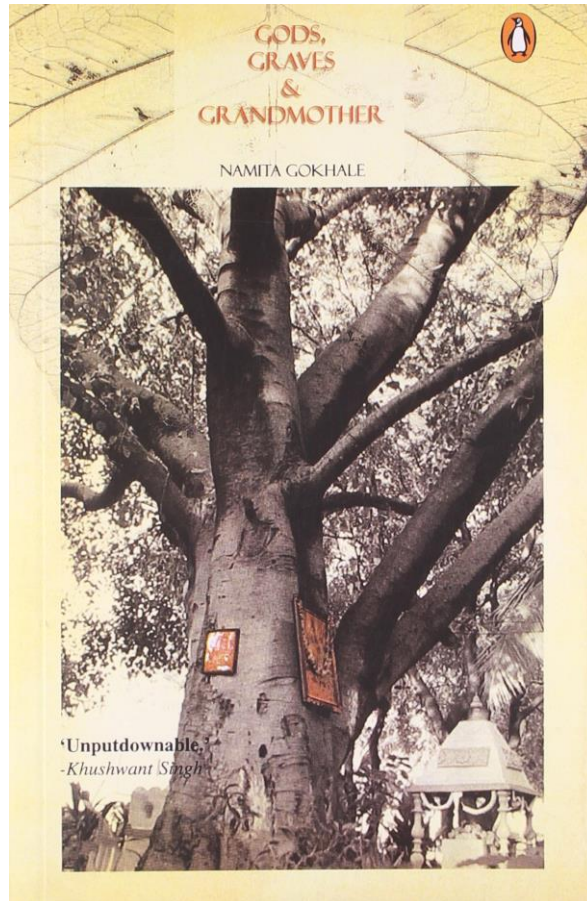
At last, Paro realizes that a world earned through sex, glamour, wine, jewels, and food is not the real world. The world that she had created for herself is a world of senses and illusions. Her urge to assert her 'self' finds the wrong path for it is self-deprecating. To escape the binding tentacles of the male dominated patriarchal society she in fact plays to its very tune; she objectifies herself in the same mould that she intended to break. Though she declares herself to be independent and her own person, yet her attempts at self-mutilation that is her suicide attempts indicate her vulnerability and dependence on male acceptance; and indication of the emptiness she carries within her 'self'.

### **Paro and Priya - Struggle, Exploitation and Compromise**

Paro and Priya put up with struggle, exploitation and compromise to assert their choices, but are unable to execute them effectively. In order to realize their ultimate goal of liberated self-hood women often employ strategies, to overcome their insecurities, ineptness, and fears, they often employ their sex; yet find it impossible to defy the traditional conditioning and constraint.

“To prevent an inner life that has no useful purpose from sinking into nothingness, to assert herself against given conditions which she bears rebelliously, to create a world other than that in which she fails to attain her being, she must resort to self-expression”. (qtd in Gaur Rashmi 110)

### **Gudiya in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother***



The protagonist Gudiya in Namita Gokhale's *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* is left by her mother. Gudiya and her grandmother are all alone. Gudiya is denied parental affection and love even from her grandmother. Gudiya suffers from repression of emotions and desires. She is also under great psychological stress and nervous tension, and feels the burden of loneliness and confusion weigh down upon her without any proper support and guidance from her grandmother. Apart from that Gudiya suffers as her husband Kalki drinks and beat her up. Kalki does not change his behaviour. Gudiya has no one with whom she could share her problems. This state of bitterness with confusion leads Gudiya to realise her own self.

### **Gudiya's Grandmother Ammi**

Gudiya's grandmother Ammi is a Muslim courtesan converts herself into a Hindu saint. Previously a rich kothewali, Ammi entertained nawabs and Englishmen, and earned money through prostitution. Her family consisted of her brother, her daughter and the child of her daughter, Gudiya. A turn of fate rendered the family poor and destitute with tragic consequences. Gudiya's mother ran away with Riyasuddin Rizvi, Ammi's brother committed

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suicide, and Ammi was left alone with Gudiya. The involvement of Ammi and Gudiya's mother in prostitution ends in the escape of Gudiya's mother with a beggar.

### **Ammi's Influence**

Ammi's profession of courtesan inspires her daughter to link herself with the profession of prostitution. The lack of emotional bond brings to the forefront the conflict inherent in the mother-daughter relationship. So Gudiya is left without her mother, and the grandmother acts as the surrogate mother to Gudiya. Ammi is a resourceful and very practical woman. Being without money she utilizes and manipulates the situation in order to survive.

### **To Survive - A Semblance of Virtue**

Gudiya and Ammi are without money and live in Delhi slums. She steals a marble slab and places it beneath the peepal tree along with five rounded river stones and a few marigold flowers, to complete the hurriedly improvised shrine. In one simple gesture, she bids farewell to that part of her life when she enjoyed a rich status as a kothawali singer. Her instinct tells her that in order to manipulate the system she must present a semblance of virtue and in her case, virtue means obliterating her past altogether. As the owner of the newly created shrine, she becomes an entirely new person. She abandons her burqua and consigns it to her trunk along with the sequined ghararas and beaded reticules. Her personality changed as a god woman. Ammi forms a relationship of authority and reverence with the people in the neighbourhood as well as the people who come to visit her temple.

### **Ammi's Shrine**

Ammi hides her identity as a Muslim woman because purdah is essential for a Muslim woman. Ammi through her practical knowledge manipulates the notion of God. It is also the fact that if Ammi discloses her true identity as a Muslim prostitute to the people around her, then people would never allow her to run the Hindu temple. Ammi's temple is illegally built and in the name of God, she gets other facilities illegally from the government employees. The natural incidents take the form that it was the curse of God. When the man from the municipal corporation came with a demolition order for the pucca cement structure, he finds a Durga temple in its place. He begs forgiveness from Ammi for his blasphemy and says, "What does the department know of the ways of God?" (GGG 13) and leaves a fifty rupees note in the donation box.

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The shrine serves as a place of shelter, protection and money to many people. Many lepers and beggars make their living because of the temple. The lepers are generous enough to contribute a sum of five thousand and one rupees for the grand ceremony of grandmother's statue installation. Lila, the ardent devotee of Ammi leaves her son and family and takes shelter in the shrine. It provides income and life to Phoolwati, Pandit Khailash Shastry, Sundar Pahalwan, Gudiya and many others.

### **Slow Detachment from Granddaughter**

Grandmother devotes herself for the development of the shrine. In this pursuit, she even detaches herself slowly from Gudiya. She spends more time and effort in the shrine. Some miracles also happen in the premises of the temple. People who come to demolish the house are punished. Electricity was taken illegally, from the street pole. It burst on the head of the departmental chief. A scorpion bites a man who spits to dishonour the temple, while Phoolwati's husband Shambhu finds a wallet full of money outside his tea stall. This way, it seems, God curses the ones who oppose the temple while those who respect are kept his benign care. Sainthood has some restrictions also, which affects the relationship between the grandmother and grand-daughter. Ammi keeps a distance from Gudiya.

### **Gudiya's Loneliness**

Abandoned by her mother, Gudiya hardly finds any solace in the detached relationship with her grandmother. Ammi and Gudiya face communication gap. The grim reality compels Gudiya to reassess her relationship with Phoolwati, the widow of Shambhu who owns a flower shop at the gate of the temple. Phoolwati plays the role of Gudiya's mother. She forms affectionate and cordial relationship with Gudiya and is exceptionally careful about Gudiya's well-being.

Gudiya knows nothing about her father and speculates that her pale-gold skin was a legacy of some Afghan or Phirangi customer. She thinks of her unknown father and refers to her mother as her wicked waylaid mother. This parental distance and deprivation has a deep impact on Gudiya's persona.

After the death of grandmother, Gudiya feels depressed, lonely and sick. Gudiya sheds more tears at Ammi's death than she did when her mother abandoned her. Roxanne, the principal of St. Jude's Academy, where Gudiya studies, takes her home and provides all comforts. Though Gudiya is sophisticated, she is not happy there and comes back to Phoolwati's house and decides not to get back again.

### **Husband's Exploitation**

Gudiya's relationship with her husband Kalki is one of exploitation. He used her sexually without any kind of emotional attachment. Kalki lost interest in Gudiya after exploiting her sexually. It is only under the pressure of Sundar Pahalwan that Kalki marries Gudiya, but even after marriage their relationship is hardly compatible. He treats her badly, which leaves Gudiya feeling tired and depressed. Kalki's callous behavior, harshness and complete disregard of her feelings ultimately wear Gudiya down to the extent that she completely loses her confidence and her strength to resist his abuse. Kalki's habit of gambling and drinking became a great problem for Gudiya and she finds herself unable to adjust to the situation. Miss Barot comments about marital adjustment between couples: "the emotional components of the marital relationship, which satisfy emotional needs of affection, belongingness, security and adequacy ranked very high as sources of satisfaction, the cognitive and economic aspects of marriage and relationship... accorded to a lower degree of importance"(64).

Phoolwati advises Gudiya after the marriage that she should consider her husband as a disposable being and not to waste her time on him as the child has the legitimate father. Gudiya is symbolic of her confidence in herself. She is ready to accept the challenges of life alone without any male support.

### **The Fighting Spirit of Her Grand Mother to the Rescue**

Gudiya carries the fighting spirit of Ammi within her and became a more confident and self-assured individual. Gudiya says,

Sometimes I go through the photographs of my marriage – the assembled band and Kalki in his dark suit. It all seems far away and unreal. In actual fact, I have all but forgotten him. When enough time passes, and the dust settles on



those troubled memories, perhaps I shall be able to embellish them with a veil of fabulism and mystery. Rendering the past acceptable, if not accountable, is a talent I inherited from my Ammi (GGG 239-240)

Overcoming her weakness and immaturities she evolves into a strong, confident woman who does not cling to her man of survival. She leaves her past and looks forward to the bright future of her daughter.

### **The Internal Problems That Torment Characters From Within**

Namita Gokhale writes much about the internal problems that torment her characters from within. She does not try to strike a balance between the tradition and commitment. She very boldly depicts the psychological effects caused by some external agencies or factors upon the protagonists Paro in *Paro: Dreams of Passions* and Gudiya in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*. The protagonists Paro in *Paro: Dreams of Passion* and Gudiya in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* are epitome of sensuousness and female vitality. It is the women protagonists who govern the plot and are presented as central figures. They refuse to accept the narrow and conventional role assigned to them. They establish authoritative defiance and retard men in their own terms, without caring for its effects. Namita Gokhale's women are always in search of their righteous place in the family and society right from their childhood. They do not hesitate to raise their voice against the age-old traditions and customs oppressive in nature, which built the patriarchal society where man is considered to be of prime importance. Women struggle to get their freedom while living along with other members of society. They are not directed by others and are conscious of their self. The protagonists Paro, Priya, and Gudiya are conscious of atrocities and humiliation imposed on them. This consciousness leads them towards the realization of their autonomous selves. Through the protagonists Paro, Priya, and Gudiya, Namita Gokhale has dealt this theme of self-realization in her novels *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, and *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*.

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**A Study of the Existential Dilemma in Arun Joshi's  
*The Strange Case Of Billy Biswas***

**Prof. Manminder Singh Anand**

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**Abstract**

Existential quest and coming to terms with reality have been the ruling passions of protagonists in Arun Joshi's novels, starting with Sindi Oberoi in 'The Foreigner'. Arun Joshi's second novel, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) is "yet another variation on the paradigmatic pattern of the doomed existential quest for values in a mad, bad, absurd world" (Guruprasad 161). The theme of anxiety, frustration and resultant alienation, which first appeared in *The Foreigner*, is further developed here, though with different orientations—through the "experience that boarded on the traumatic" (123) of its protagonist Bimal Biswas affectionately referred to as Billy by his friend Romesh Sahai, the witness narrator of the story. This study is intended to explore further the depths of alienation and anxiety and to see how, in *Billy Biswas*, Arun Joshi comes up with a protagonist who tries to harmonise the existential dilemma with the Indian ethos of acceptance.

**Keywords:** Billy Biswas, Arun Joshi, existential, angst, anxiety, foreigner

**Introduction**

The novel '*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*' by Arun Joshi has in it many echoes of *The Foreigner*, though the two novels differ in their major themes, and their locales and techniques. Both the novels are single-character based, and are mainly preoccupied with the sensibilities, beliefs, quests and the destinies of their heroes. To begin with, Sindi Oberoi and Billy Biswas both feel alienated from the environment in which they have been brought up. But whereas Sindi seems to be more or less a foreigner and an alien till the end, Billy is at least able to find a meager amount of fulfillment in his escape to primitivism. Hence, it may be said that the writer's vision in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is not so bleak, dark, pessimistic and cynical as to make his hero feel alien to his world. Billy at least feels a sense of belongingness in the tribal and primitive way of life. But even here the vision cannot be regarded as quite optimistic, for the writer is considerably bitter about the civilized world.

Billy has to pay a heavy price for giving up his so-called cultured life. The book ends with the hero realizing the insensitivity of the civilized world towards a gesture of conscientious dissent. And yet there are affiliations that show unmistakable family connections between the two books. For one thing, the central characters in both the novels have one foot in India and the other outside India. Both are, for another thing, first an alien to their native sensibility and then get absorbed and directed by the native, Indian, ethos.

### **Clash of Cultures**

The clash of cultures in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is something different from that of *The Foreigner*. Sindi and the Billy are two different poles with Billy's quest deeper than the quest Sindi Oberoi had undertaken. Moreover, Billy's concern is not intellectual like that of Sindi's. It is grounded in his deep roots in family traditions and a fixed set of values. He has a standing and that is the position of an Indian saint who is less concerned with external world than the internal self realization in life.

*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is a movement from the almost contemplative world of Sindi to the dynamic, vital and active world of Billy Biswas. Like *The Foreigner*, this novel explores the “mysterious underworld of the human soul. Arun Joshi appears in full control of his material. The novel grips the reader from start to finish as Joshi is in full command of his material lending a new dimension to the history of Indian fiction in English. The novel, to D.R. Sharma, shows the “insensitivity of the civilized world towards a gesture of conscientious dissent” (104). Meenakshi Mukerjee had very early found it as “a compelling novel about a strange quest, drawing upon myth and folk-lore to reiterate its elemental concerns”. In both *The Foreigner* and *Billy Biswas*, Mukerjee says, “renunciation is a dominant theme and... make[s] the reader disturbingly aware of the many levels of reality” (203).

The strange case of Billy, writes O.P. Mathur, may be taken as “an allegory of the realization of one's true self, the final resolution of one's life, the meaning of which lies not in the glossy surfaces of our pretensions but in those dark mossy labyrinths of the soul that languish forever, hidden from the dazzling light of the sun” (31). This contrast between the superficial and the real informs the whole work. The necessity of leading an authentic life is often theoretically admitted. But only rare sensitive souls like Billy are attuned to its calls.

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## **Valley beyond the Hills: Hills beyond the Valley**

Billy has a very good ancestral background seeded in Bengal. His grandfather had been the Prime Minister in Orissa and his father practised law at Allahabad and Delhi. When Billy was in America his father was a Judge of Supreme Court in India. But even when he was abroad Billy had gained a sound knowledge of Indian society and culture. The primitive people interested him very much. The conversation between two sophisticated and cultured minds, Billy Biswas and Tuula Lindgren, is significant. Tuula had come to America for advance training in Psychiatric social work and was going to work in a mental hospital in Topeka. Billy wanted her close contact as a tutor in Anthropology. Tuula asks his choice for a job. He puts it as follows:

The other side. You know what I mean, don't you? Most of us are aware only of the side—on which we are born, but there is always the other side; the valley beyond the hills; the hills beyond the valley (18-19).

Billy belongs to a well-to-do family and that is why he has to face many difficulties. He is unable to fulfil his wishes because he does not want to tie up the secret of his wish fulfilment. He feels something within and has no courage to divulge it. He is afraid of it. Meena Chatterjee, who belongs to a Bengali family, comes in contact with Billy and gives her identification entirely in English accent. Talkative to a fault, she gives a lengthy philosophy on horse riding and later on goes on to talk about horsemen and sportsmen.

On the marriage proposal with Meena, Billy does not have self-confidence. He does not know about Indian social life. He wants to take advice of his friend, an I.A.S. Officer getting training at Simla. His friend knows enough of the world and is aware of the men who want to impart confidence but for Billy his general ideas are outweighed. As a matter of fact there is a great change in the atmosphere. The friend discourses to Billy about the importance of a wife's necessity, socially, sexually and for a future life. According to Hindu mythology a man's duty is to marry and beget children. He analyses the needs for marriage in this way:

I offered him the usual amalgam of Western pragmatism, a wife is so necessary socially, sexually, for a fuller life and Hindu dharma.

Man's duty to marry and reproduce; there is a time for everything

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that is the conventional wisdom of the Indian middle class (42).

The irrepressible call of "a great force, *urkraft*, a primitive force" makes him lose his identity (23). He says: "Layer upon layer was peeled off me until nothing but my primitive self was left trembling in the moonlight" (121). Not sure whether he belongs to "the wilderness" or to "the marts of the Big City" (96) he feels that his soul had all along been clamouring for that other thing, "something like" God (189). After finally becoming one with wilderness, he is assumed to have attained magical powers which also point towards the necessity of some sort of faith in this rationalistic and mechanistic society which has changed men into robots. Incidentally, the name Bimal Biswas means 'pure faith.'

### **Mental Turmoil of Billy**

Billy is not satisfied with his wife Meena because, he dislikes commercial people like her and his parents. He wants permanent peace but is unable to find it in the surroundings in which he lives. He shows annoyance with Meena. He wants to be in a company far from these people with whom he has nothing to adjust but when he shares this inclination with Meena, she gets into a mood fluttering like a crushed butterfly:

‘Oh, God! I wish I were dead. If I even open my mouth I bore you. If I speak what is in my mind, I am being silly. Why did you marry such a boring silly girl?’ (80)

A large envelope is handed over to Mr. Old Chap by Dr. Kundt of Swedish Embassy in Delhi. It contains letters written by Billy to Tuula that were written about a year after his return to India and the last nearly six months before his disappearance. These letters make an investigative approach and also show the mental abnormality of Billy arising out of cultural clashes in his mind. He is struggling with himself and wants to go to a peaceful world of imagination where he could be capable of realizing the real meaning of life. He hates those "cultured" men who are busy earning and spending money and remind of the women in the "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" talking of Michelangelo. Some remarkable extracts of his letters are sure to throw light on his views about the people:

I sometimes wonder whether civilization is anything more than making and spending of money. What else the civilized men do? And if there are those who are not busy earning and spending the so-called

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thinkers and philosophers and men like that--they are merely hired to find solutions, throw light, as they say, of complications caused by this making and spending money. What need would there be of psychiatrists, research foundations, learned societies, great scholars, scientists, ministerial adviser, ambassadors, generals, had the world not initially been hung on this peg of money (96-97).

Billy finds peace and happiness in the woods and with the tribals. The sounds and smells of a lonely forest life echo in his ears even when he comes back to the city life:

When I return from an expedition, it is days before I can shake off the sounds and smells of the forest. The curious feeling trails me everywhere that I am a visitor from the wilderness to the marts of the big city and not the other way round (96).

He likes to live with the tribal people on Maikala Hills and wants to be a primitive pilgrim, a wanderer in the woods, a self seeker with the tribal folk. He describes his strange journey and expresses his thoughts towards tribal people, their appearance, their living and their management.

The conflict of cultures arises in his mind. The complexity of his thoughts compels him to think a lot for his being in that very society where he is disappointed to reach his goal. Billy is satisfied with the tribe's culture. He is happy because he is far from the world that hangs on the peg of money. Here he is found talking about the supernatural, violent death, trees, earth, ruin, dust storms, rivers, moods of the forest, animals, dance, singing and a lot about women and sex. Bilasia consoles his despair and makes him happy:

I told my Sajan: sing to me all night. Life was meant to be sung and we were meant to be singers. But my Sajan went away. O, my Sajan went away (117).

Billy, now, is going to be attached with the hills, forests, tribal people and each and every object of Nature. He has a quest for self-realisation with the missing part of his soul.

This interest of Billy in primitivism is not an interest he had 'borrowed' one but is

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inborn, Once, when he was in New York, he had chosen to live in the places where the negroes lived. He had been sent to read Engineering but he had chosen Anthropology. It appears from his choice that he has a dislike for an organised life or the life of a cultured man. His standard of living in Harlem apartment also shows his dislike for an organised life. He does not display dexterity in any of the indoor games.

As he had done in *The Foreigner*, Joshi probes the depths of human psyche in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* too. But the narration here takes place through the mouth of the Collector, the bosom friend of Billy.

Billy tries to impress Romi that he is in a trance and gets inspiration from the sources unknown to him. She is very close to Tuula because she has primitive force in her and is far from the tinsel life of modern civilization. In her company he feels plenty of happiness. He proposes to study the mental working of deranged people because he finds more meaning in their reactions than in those cultured men. His study of Anthropology brings him closer to the life he likes to lead. Earlier, he needed stimulus like alcohol or dance or folk song or drum beating to transport him to the life he dreams of but now he has clear visions without any stimulus. He narrates his vision in the following lines:

It would be like a great blinding flash during which I would be totally unaware of anything else. And invariably it left me with the old depressing feeling that something has gone wrong with my life. I was not where I belonged (181).

Sometimes Billy complains of hypocrisy and dishonesty and fears that he has been ignoring his soul in favour of material joys and pleasures but he does not tolerate the remarks of his friend made in a picnic party that “the banjaras are thieves and their wives are whores.” (121). That remark of his friend shakes his faith and he gets ready to marry Meena.

Since he is a stranger to the civilized society Billy has an intense hatred for city people. To him civilization is a monster, a degradation of the human soul. Simply earning money and spending it is not culture. Our thinkers, philosophers and spiritualists can only complicate the culture. His dislike for money is intense. The reason why he was attracted to Tuula was that she too does not hanker after money. This was also the case with Bilasia.

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It is due to these pulls and pressures that marriage with Meena does not unite his body or soul. Meena fails to satisfy his thirst. Romi finds him a changed man, and discovers bitter secret in his transformation, when she feels, “he had either turned banal, ..... or... he was turned upon some obscure segment of himself, fretting out a bitter, secret, settling an old score (70).

Billy's vision is stronger than the sense of harmony in his surrounding, family life and the life with his wife, Meena. He gets introverted, retires within himself, and opts for the life of a pilgrim. He feels a gap of communication between his wife and himself. Since sex cannot satisfy him to release his tension he leaves Meena's company for many months – for she too is a product of modern civilization. Billy needs some one who can share his thought and apply himself to inject a new lease of life in him. He is now attracted to Rima Kaul, who loves him passionately.

He is fed up with strangers, with unresponsive people, with statues like Meena and with corruption of soul in which Rima Kaul is living. While he gets a glimpse of Bilasia in Dhunia's hut, her glimpses give him a powerful pull. Her charm being sensual gives him thrill and also overpowers him. He finds in her the right woman, one who can quench his thirst, enlighten his senses, and save him from corruption and material civilization. He can now renounce all—Meena, Rima and the civilized world. This transformation of Billy is not the transformation of sex, or sympathy or sublimation but is a mixing of self. Bilasia fulfils his choice of life. Her enormous eyes, “only a little foggier with drink, poured out a sexuality that was nearly as primeval as the forest that surrounded them” (141).

Thus, Billy meets Bilasia and is unified with her and her culture. He finds his real self in her and gets liberation from his own corrupt culture. He proves himself the saviour God of the tribals. To this aspect of his changes Dhunia tells Romi: “He is like rain on parched lands, like balm on a wound. These hills have not seen the like of him since the last of our kings passed away” (159-60).

The important point to note, nonetheless, is neither Billy's scholarship nor a tendency to only skim the surface world but a passion to penetrate the human psyche.

Both by training and natural aptitude, Billy is an anthropologist. The subject of studying man is the greatest passion for him. He is an engineer who has the intelligence to construct. He is also an anarchist. Surely man needs to pull down the moth-eaten structures when he is convinced to effect radical overhauling of existing structures. He is in possession of right faculties and abilities to undertake the examination of his existential situation. He makes a number of conscious choices of his situation. A person with extraordinary abilities, one who does not conform to the general norms, he likes to map his own world. To the majority, he is exasperatingly unorthodox, he fights with every other person and sees the general response as unheroic even though it is the majority's attitude. He finds Harlem, the home of the Black Americans to be an oasis of humanity in the desert of civilization of white American society, and prefers to be "human", by which he suggests the need to live life at a more subcutaneous level. His identification with Harlem symbolizes his courage and conviction in choosing to be isolated from the common run of humanity of the civilized society, where, as Tillich says, "man is drawn into the world of objects and is lost or is continuously losing" (154). Billy's preference for jazz music is symbolic of tribal aspiration for freedom and liberation from shackling tendencies imposed by the civilized society. He has always been critical of the so-called civilized society for possessing "the social order difficult to redesign" (Sharma 1977, 3). Romi is scared by the prospect of his ability to see into the nature of things. He could only conclude with incredulity "There were many things that I did not see which Billy saw and which, step by step, led him to the only end that awaits those who see too much" (39). Billy chooses not to be others-oriented. His pursuit is more in the manner of the ancient ascetics of India who experimented with different philosophical schools of thought and different cultural practices. He resembles a Yogi whose pursuit to arrive at a clearer understanding of life is disciplined by the attitude about work and actions. He shows courage to bear the demands of such an intellectual examination of his existential position, and realizes that he is in a world that "conspires towards a philosophy of meaninglessness, boredom, and the absurd" (Ghosh 1996, 5). He would rather be a butterfly in search of the nectar of experience in the garden of life. To people like him, the world is not one monolithic entity where everybody wants to be like everybody else in a shameless acquiescence to the general order.

### **Billy, The Existential Struggle**

The butterfly in Billy makes him realize that the world is not a given homogenous and

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satisfactory entity. With greater commitment to unravelling the meaning and coherence of existence he would understand “there are worlds at the periphery of this one, above it and below it, and around it, of which we know nothing until we are in them” (54). His marriage with Meena is doomed for the reason that the individual's freedom is infringed upon by the spouse. She occupies a world that is not risk taking. It is a world which insists on social positions and respectability at all costs. He finds her to be less involved with him and realizes that she does little to offer him any succour in his search for meaning. Made of a different temper, he is convinced that the constructions of society cannot sustain his search for the meaning of life. Societies, however, refuse to understand such individuals, nevertheless, such a hero emerges as a prophet figure, one who goes beyond his time and place on the strength of his convictions. Billy records his contempt for civilization whose *raison d'etre* is making and spending of money. In this dispensation, he feels that he is “swiftly losing grip on life” (98). Deep in the forests, life for Billy is without the affectation of order, false sophistication and bogus decorum. The tribals are people who live a life where there is no schism between the precepts and the practices of life. The forest which is the antithesis of civilization has its own order, its own essence, and a purpose, and symbolizes for him his destination, where he will make his tryst with destiny. His wait for Bilasia, who stands for “a dark unresisting energy” is an epiphanic moment when he is able to see clearly the synthesis emerging out of the intellectual evaluation of the civilized society and the tribal society” (Chingre 156). When he meets Bilasia and becomes the possessor of “the essence of life [which] can be communicated only in the language of visions” (142), his metamorphosis gets complete.

One of the most important dialectical opposition in the novel is the one between the “civilized” city and the “uncivilized” jungle. What such a dialectical argument foregrounds towards the end of the novel is the subject of fertility. Regeneration, perpetuation of the generation, and the transmission of vital elements through a continuous flow of life are defining aspects of life in the jungle. The savage jungle privileges fertility over the functional convenience of the city. Billy, as the city-dweller, is experiencing the first intimations of real fertility through his contact with the forest, of which Bilasia is an essential representative and the element itself.

Another aspect vehemently represented by Arun Joshi in the novel is that the longing for natural mode of existence is no mere fantasy or sentimental whim; it is in consonance

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with fundamental human needs, the fulfilment of which (although in different form) is the pre-condition of our survival. In this state one can remain pure, sensitive and mystically linked with Nature, its authentic humanity and instinctive spontaneity. Rousseau, too, considers man innately good and pacific in his 'natural state', but when he enters into contact with society he is bound to become impure, materialistic in attitude, corrupted by codes and conventions man is incapable to understand the real meaning of life.

### **Layers of Billy's Existential Encounter**

The novel is as a record of a romantic nostalgia for the simple mode of life – the kind Rousseau, Thoreau, Gandhi and Wordsworth talk about. Billy has a dislike for the elite class and its character, for to him all the people around him are “hung on this peg of money” (97) and are nothing more than a “heap of tinsel” (141). He expresses his distaste for the money-mindedness of the civilized people leading to the degradation of their souls.

The novel severely condemns the spiritual dislocation of the post-Independence westernized Indian society. Billy is totally fed up with the superficialities of the grossly materialistic and sterile Indian society. He finds himself trapped Willy Loman-like in the cobweb of money-centred relationships. To escape this disintegration, he flees from the hollow world of Delhi and enters the pristine uncorrupted tribal world of Maikala hills.

The very epigraph of the novel, taken from Arnold's "Thyrsis": "It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest", makes the thematic direction of the novel clear. Like Arnold's Scholar Gipsy, Billy too flees from the so-called civilized society and seeks shelter in the idyllic Maikala hills. In the Arnoldian vein, the novel makes a scathing attack on the materialistic civilized society and an exaltation of the past ancient culture for it is here that the panacea for the ills of the modern society lies. The situation is the same everywhere, be it India, or be it any other corner of the world. The first section of the novel had established the character of Billy and his degraded and sterile surrounding, as such his escape is convincing. His decision to leave the civilized world is not made on the spur of the moment; it is rooted in what he was and what he wanted.

## Billy's Existential Dilemma

Billy's case is a strange case as his personality is split between the primitive and the civilized. To him the modern civilization is degenerate, shallow and self-centred:

What got me was the superficiality, the sense of values. I don't think I have ever met a more pompous, a more mixed-up lot of people. Artistically, they were dry as dust. Intellectually, they could no better than mechanically mouth ideas that the West abandoned a generation ago (128).

Misfit in this plastic world, and in search of a place where he could fit in and feel at home, Billy finds himself "itching to be back" (27) in India. He returns to India but experiences only a change of scene, and, finds Delhi as spiritually dead and emotionally empty as materialistic America. If the ghost America was a *cul-de-sac*, the unholy Delhi is a dead end. To him, the people everywhere are the same, artistically dry and intellectually barren. He marries Meena Chatterjee who is "quite usually pretty in a western sort of way" (37), loquacious and hollow. But this hurried marriage, as he later realizes, is a blunder. Meena's money-centric outlook leads to the marital fiasco. With every passing day, the estrangement between the two mounts and their conjugal life turns into the "most precarious of battle-fields" (81). This leads to his total sense of alienation and isolation from his wife, family and his own self.

One of the excerpts of the letters he wrote to Tuula is a scathing attack on west-centric Indian upper-crust society and its materialistic value system. The animal-imagery used to describe the so called civilized people stands as an objective correlative of Billy's deep-seated hatred for the society. He wrote:

Returning home one evening, finding myself in a state of considerable agitation, I stopped at a temple. It was the hour of the evening *aarti*. I stood before the idols my hands folded, my head bowed, incense of *dhoop* tickling my nostrils.(97)

In order to escape from the agonies of life, he takes to anthropological expeditions to the various parts of India with his students. Once he takes his students on an anthropological expedition to the tribal areas of the Satpura Hills in Madhya Pradesh and gets enamoured of

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the idyllic surroundings and its inhabitants. “His quest for identity originates here in search of which he bids farewell to the civilization” (Saxena 77).

### **Bilasia: The Existential Connect**

A great change overtakes him when he reaches Dhanias hut and sees Bilasia. He gets totally ensnared by Bilasia’s sensuality. She enlivens his soul that had been deadened by Meena Biswas and Rima Kaul. Unlike Meena and Rima, Bilasia is not sophisticated and shallow. She is an integral part of the rhythmic life of Nature. She is the right woman to satisfy his soul. There is a conflict between his present identity in the civilized world and his soul’s longing for ‘Return to Nature’. All the phenomena of nature, its flora and fauna, seem to be waiting for him and calling him to join them:

Come to our primitive world that will sooner or later overcome the works of man. Come. We have waited for you ... come, come, come. Why do you want to go back? . . . This is all there is on earth. This and the women waiting for you in the little hut at the bottom of a hill. You thought New York was real. You thought New Delhi was your destination. How mistaken you have been! Mistaken and misled. Come now, come. Take us until you have had your fill. It is we who are the inheritors of the cosmic night” (88).

While sitting on the rock, ‘God’s Plenty’ he feels as if he was undergoing a deep metamorphosis. He renounces the sophisticated Delhi urban society in favour of tribal life of the Maikala forest. This is not an escape from reality but an escape *into* reality on the lines of Prince Siddharth. He renounces a life of hypocrisy and deceit to accept a life of noble savageness. Like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, Billy forsakes civilized human society and like Scholar Gipsy returns no more. Arun Joshi may have been influenced by Conrad’s novella, but he goes beyond it for Billy’s quest for identity and his search of the meaning of life make him turn against civilized society. His mistress, Bilasia, unlike Kurtz’s mistress, plays a very significant role in his self-realization. For the sake of his longing to return to Nature he forsakes even his life. He reminds us of the White Lady also, the protagonist in D.H. Lawrence’s *The Woman Who Rode Away*, where the White Lady, in the wake of her degradation and her utter confusion about spiritless life around her, decides to ride away to the primordial nature in order to escape from the disastrous civilization. It would be apt to

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quote here what Hari Mohan Prasad says:

The novel articulates, almost the intensity of Lawrence and Conrad, human craving for the primordial, the *elan vital* of our anthropological heritage. In retreat of Mr. Billy Biswas from the modern wasteland of Delhi to the ancient Garden of Eden in Maikala Jungle, from the smothering clutch of Meena to the primeval possessiveness of Bilasia, *Purush* meets *Prakriti* serving the two ends of evolution, outlined by *Sankhya*, enjoyment (*Bhoga*) and liberation or *Sansara* as well as *Kaivalvya* (46).

This concern of Joshi for Nature impresses upon the readers the fact that in a conflict between the civilized and primitive ways of living, it is the latter that prevails. Bilasia and Maikala Hills attract Billy more than the artificial and sophisticated atmosphere of Delhi. Real peace, pleasure and perfection can be found in the natural and primitive atmosphere rather than in the din and bustle of big cities Delhi. His magnificent obsession with primitive life is produced from the feeling that the outer governed life is only an imitation.

Really, the novel opens a case of fictional discourse which epitomizes man's longing for 'Return to Nature' against the technological verifiable constituents of present modern society. Tremendously concerned with pretentiousness, hypocrisy snobbery of the modern civilized society, Joshi gives a message that simplicity, quietness, tranquillity and spirituality of natural primitive life are the only means of achieving sublime living.

### **Indian Framework of the Existential Quest**

Billy's Indian sensibility and primitive streaks which are associated with it can be seen in his accommodation and humble abode at Harlem and his migration to another world after listening to the drum beats. A man of brilliant intellect, profound sensibility and extraordinary obsession, Billy is a misfit in the contemporary world, is in an environment torn between sense and sensibility. G.A. Ghanshyam rightly opines in this connection:

Arun Joshi has placed, both directly and subtly, two opposite forces in the novel. On the one hand, there is the superficial, hollow and materialistic society which represents, and is symbolic of sense and of consciousness directed by sense. On the other hand, Billy Biswas

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represents sensibility. He is misfit in society, in the quest for self-recognition and salvation. For him, primitivism is a better "means to an end" than the modern, civilized society. It is a spiritual quest, not for God but for "something like that" (62).

His invested interest in primitivism is a straight case of Indian sensibility which lies in people of mythical gods and their rhythm. His assumption that one can find "something like that," if not God, is based on the Indian sense that is exemplified with mythical characters who find divine presence in their secluded and tranquil life away from the hum-drum of civilized world. But this, disrupts his whole being and keeps on pricking his soul till he is dead.

More importantly, the story becomes terribly fascinating and convincing because of Billy's brilliant, rational outlook and the *urkraft* that triggers off his creative energy and which prompts him to do what he does. The way he argues with his Justice father about ordinary human laws being inadequate to judge people who live and act under extraordinary and non-human circumstances as well as his letters to Tuula bear testimony to his seemingly eccentric but inwardly rich life.

The most important act of Billy in the novel, however, is his disappearance from home and the civilized world and whatever he says or does earlier is but a movement in that direction. One receives confirmation of Billy's motives in escaping into the jungle from the following extracts from Billy's letter to Tuula:

A strange woman keeps crossing my dreams. I have seen her on the streets of Delhi, nursing a child in the shade of a tree or hauling stone for a rich man's house. I have seen her buying bangles at a fair. I have seen her shadow at a tribal dance, and I have seen her, pensive and inviolable, her clothes clinging to her wet body, beside a tank in Benaras. And once I saw her, her face strangely luminous in the twilight, loading a freight train with sulphur on a siding in one of our eastern ports. Yes, this woman keeps causing in me a fearful disturbance, the full meaning of which I have yet to understand. (97)

Hari Mohan Prasad rightly observes that “It is Bilasia who causes explosion of senses—the proper medium to reach soul. Billy renounces the civilized world and its symbols in Meena and Rima. From Meena to Rima and from Rima to Bilasia is not a mere trifling in Billy’s file; it is a development from sex to sympathy and from sympathy to sublimation” (58).

## Conclusion

In his interview with Purabi Banerjee, Arun Joshi clarified that the novel is “about a mystical urge, a compulsion which makes Billy go away. . . . In a number of Indian legends and religious texts people go away to forests to heal themselves spiritually. Possibly that’s what he is suggesting though not consciously”(3). The novel, in fact, depicts a metaphysical quest and is concerned with a deeper exploration of the human soul. The vision that haunts Billy in the novel has haunted the seers, the mystics and the visionaries in all ages and in all countries. Through his novels, Arun Joshi shares with us the doubt and despair arising out of the awareness that, notwithstanding unprecedented scientific and technological advancements, which have added immensely to his physical pleasures and comforts, contemporary man finds himself in a tragic mess. No wonder, Joshi is intrigued by acute, trying situations in human life. He has been experimenting with the medium of literature to delineate man's predicament, particularly the feelings of loneliness, and meaninglessness that have come as emotional fallout of worldly success, material prosperity and disintegration of the bonds of love and solidarity.

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## Minority Voices in a Multicultural Context: Jhumpa Lahiri

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Jhumpa Lahiri

Courtesy: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/aug/19/jhumpa-lahiri-book-club>

### Abstract

The Objectives of the study is to analyses the significance of minority writing in a multicultural context. Does it offer a corrective/ validation to mainstream representation of sub-cultural groups in America? How does Jhumpa Lahiri confront the issue of her own specific heritage and diasporic identity? How does Jhumpa Lahiri explore the cultural collision of Indian immigrants with America and how does she address the questions of cultural integration and exclusion in her stories.

**Key Words:** diasporic group, female writers, Indian immigrants, Jhumpa Lahiri, minority writing, multicultural society, and United States.

## **Introduction**

In today's world the marginalized groups and Minority voices are increasingly assuming the centre stage. They are gaining ascendancy in the literary sphere too, resulting in a questioning of present power equations and refashioning of present hierarchies. For example, the demographic and cultural fabric of a multicultural American society is being re-formed and re-defined by sub-cultural groups like Native Indians, Blacks and other immigrant and ethnic minorities. Significant creative writing from the United States in recent years has come from these sub-cultural groups unprecedented visibility who are gaining. Writing has been used by them as a solid medium to assert their presence, reclaim their racial history and cultural heritage and examine hegemonies prevailing. Present theoretical focus is also on the patterns and dynamics of cultural act of including or excluding. Relationships between historical, political, and cultural aspects of society are being rethought and re-analyzed while issues related to individual and communal identity are being debated.

## **Growing Population of South Asian Writers in the United States**

In America's diverse population a significant ethnic group comprises of South-Asians. Lured by American Dream, over the years millions of South Asians have migrated to the 'land of opportunity.' They too have altered the complexion and character of the United State, like other immigrants, and have been altered in turn.

From this diasporic group creative writers have tried to explore what Bill Ashcroft calls in another context "the relationship between self and place." These writers by concerning themselves largely with the relationship of South Asians with America have opted to chronicle the highly nuanced and complicated process of acculturation. Remarks' Ketu H Kartark that, "South-Asian American writers in English are among the newest voices in multi-ethnic Asian America".

## **South Asian Women Writers and Their Creative Fiction**

The novel and short story in general terms have been predominant though greater dramatists and poets are emerging. In particular, South Asian women writers in America have produced a greater impact than their male counterparts. Some of the South-Asian women writers

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who have gained international recognition are Bharti Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, Uma Parmeshwaran, Bapsi Sidhwa, Chitra Banerjee and Tahira Naqvi.

The writings of these women writers come up from and charts those vibrant moments where “a diasporic aggregation of flows and convergences” occurs frequently. They engage with the adaptations, transformation and translations associated in their work with the immigrant experience and address the issue of representation in mainstream White American writing.

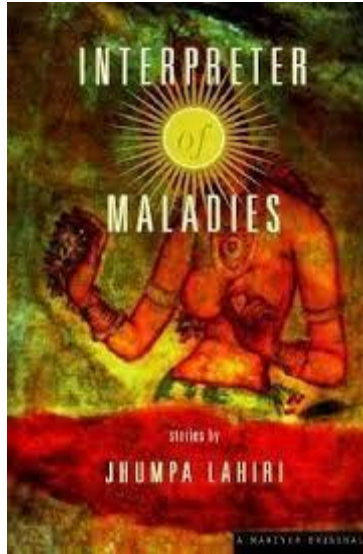
### **Jhumpa Lahiri’ Place**

As a South Asian American writer Jhumpa Lahiri has won acclaim who navigates a double identity at a personal and creative level. Straddling two cultures, Jhumpa Lahiri explores the experience immigrant, tries to deal with the problems of adjustment in the New World and voices the predicaments accompanying physical and cultural relocation and dislocation.

Jhumpa Lahiri, of Indian origin, grew up in America. Her short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and addresses the problems in the lives of Indian immigrants. Her first novel *The Namesake* (2003) moves on with an exploration of an Indian-American identity. *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) achieved the rare distinction of debuting at number one on *The New York Times* best seller list. Her latest novel *The Lowland* (2013) was a nominee for the Man Booker Prize and National Book Award for Fiction. Here again, she concerns herself with two worlds---America and India.

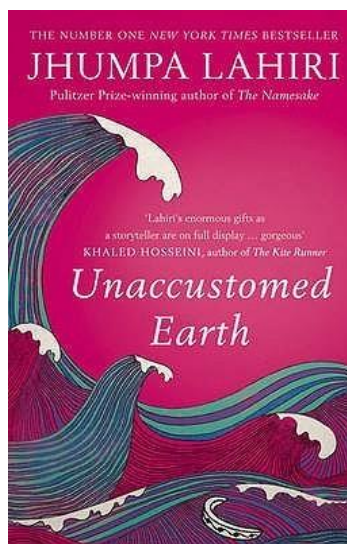
### **Importance of Minority Writing in USA**

The importance of minority writing in multicultural America cannot be overemphasized. It provides not only important cultural-specific information and perspectives but also reveals the present power relations in multiethnic, Pluralistic, and multiracial American society. The writing emerging from minority groups challenges the stereotypical representation of the ‘other’ by the majoritarian discourse, besides providing a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience and the ensuing cultural encounter.



### ***Interpreter of Maladies and Unaccustomed Earth***

The two short stories *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth* of Jhumpa Lahiri explore the complex process of identity formation in a host culture and expose the dilemmas of immigrant consciousness caught between cultures. Both these anthologies *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth* depict characters who find themselves in a culturally mixed world in which they try to grapple with ‘dual’ identities- Indian and American. Remarks Lahiri about her fictional subject, “When I just started writing I was not conscious that my subject was Indian-American experience. What drew me to my craft was the desire to force the two worlds I occupied to mingle on the page...”



Lahiri's stories, thus dramatize the encounter between two cultures when 'two worlds mingle'. She focuses mainly on first-generation Indian American immigrants, in *Interpreter of Maladies*, who struggle to raise a family in the new topography amidst alien traditions. *Unaccustomed Earth* continues to focus attention on second and third generation Indian Americans who have become largely assimilated into the American culture. she transcends her specific heritage with this collection and the problem related to immigrant experience and engages herself with larger questions of life, death, and the inevitability of loss and the demerits of human experience.

A detailed examination of these two anthologies could prove worthwhile for the insights it can provide regarding cultural identity in a multicultural context. The study can also help reader to gauge Lahiri's evolution as a writer. Not been taken up together, the two anthologies, from these perspectives as the following review makes clear.

### **Critical Attention**

A large readership Jhumpa Lahiri has earned and her fiction has been read from varied viewpoints. Literary Critics have paid attention to the issues of diaspora, family or marital relations, cross cultural – conflicts, identity crises and intergenerational relationships in Jhumpa Lahiri's works, is found in the form of articles in journals or in edited books. *Interpreter of Maladies* to have garnered the most critical attention, although *The Namesake* and *Unaccustomed Earth* are also being addressed.

In "American Spaces in the Fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri" Judith Caesar discusses "The Third and the Final Continent" from *Interpreter of Maladies* and "Nobody's Business" from *Unaccustomed Earth* to reveal the development of personal and imaginary spaces in Lahiri's stories. Judith discusses the use of setting and shows how home can be both a safeguard against the outside world, and also a prison for those inside.

Laura Karttunen groups Lahiri with Salman Rhusdie and Arunditi Roy in her article titled, "A Sociostylistic Perspective on Negatives and the Disnarrated: Lahiri, Roy and

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Rhusdie”.Karttunen defines the disnarrated in a text as those events that do not happen, but are referred to in a negative or hypothetical mode. Negatives are related constructs that show characters breaking with norms and expectations.

Ann Marie Alfonso-Forero’s “Immigrant Motherhood and Transnationality in Jhumpa Lahiri’s Fiction” focuses primarily on Ashima Ganguli, the central figure in *The Namesake*. Alfonso-Forero describes immigrant motherhood as a lifelong pregnancy, a state of continuously feeling out of sorts.

*Naming Jhumpa Lahiri: Canons and Controversies* is a collection of essays edited by Lavina Dhingra and Floyd Cheung which provides insights into Jhumpa Lahiri’s fiction. The essays foreground how Lahiri creates spaces where identities shift and coalesce in unexpected but surprisingly true ways.

Suman Bala’s *Jhumpa Lahiri: The Master Storyteller* is a critical response to the *Interpreter of Maladies* and offers varied response to Lahiri’s art of storytelling.

In *Immigrant Experience in Jhumpa Lahiri’s Interpreter of Maladies* Ashutosh Dubey says that,“ The immigrant experience is complicated as a sensitive immigrant finds himself or herself perpetually at a transit station fraught with memories of the original home which are struggling with the realities of the new world”. Chitrleka Basu in her review of *Unaccustomed Earth* opines that Lahiri shows the mutability of human relationships in her stories and exhibits great skill in the detailing of human emotions.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of minority writing in multicultural America cannot be overemphasized. It provides not only important cultural-specific information and perspectives but also reveals the present power relations in multiethnic, Pluralistic, and multiracial American society. The writing emerging from minority groups challenges the stereotypical representation of the ‘other’ by the majoritarian discourse, besides providing a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience and the ensuing cultural encounter.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

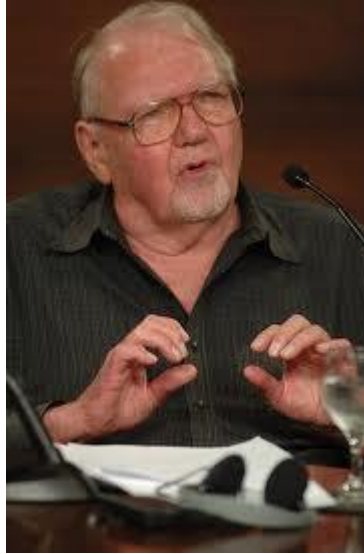
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## Postmodernism Marxist Critiques

M. Habib, Research Scholar

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Federic Jameson

Courtesy: <http://wallpaper222.com/explore/fredric-jameson-quotes/>

### Abstract

This article argues how postmodernism is covertly ideological. The article presents a critique. This work will attempt to examine Eagleton, Jameson and other Marxist theorists, their approaches to postmodernism. Sketch the ambiguities and contradictions in their claims and to outline the influence of postmodernism in their writings. The present study is analytical and qualitative in nature.

**Key words:** Eagleton, Jameson, Marxist theorists, Marxism, post Marxism and postmodernism.

### Introduction: Postmodernism versus Modernism

Postmodernism marks the destruction of magnificent narratives that controlled the human life. Modernism had been nostalgic for the values of the past. Postmodern logic calls this

nostalgia as a miscalculated idealistic extravaganza. The aesthetic of postmodern is flat: it is a time not of nostalgic concern but of the joyous celebration of chaos. The old distinction between 'high and low', 'vice and virtue', 'nature and culture', are dissolved and boiled down to empty images aimlessly wandering in the newly made homogeneous solution. Postmodernism is confusing and baffling to define, there is at the heart of it what Ihab Hassan called 'to become intimate with chaos' or Francis Fukuyama's notorious proclamation of 'the end of history'.

### **Marxist Theory**

On the contrary, Marxist theory believes that human experience is always temporal and that all types of human consciousness arise from the material conditions. It claims to be a scientific theory of changing the society of human beings. Marxist theory and Postmodernism are draggers drawn at each other. The Marxist theory rules out the Postmodernism claim to drain out history and its belief in the historical continuum. It is a perversion of what might be termed as historical naturalism, as per the Marxist theorists.

### **Focus of This Study**

The study will examine how Jameson, Eagleton and other Marxist theorists appropriate the Continental tradition in philosophy to present a nuanced understanding of Marxism. The study aims at understanding the most perceptive Marxist response to postmodernism in the English-speaking world.

### **Postmodern Literary Theory and Its Relevance to the Present Political Reality**

Many intellectuals, during the last few decades, have done a considerable amount of work on postmodern literary theory and its relevance to the present political reality. A buzz word Postmodernism has become.

In his *Postmodernism and Politics*, Jonathan Arac, encourages us to consider once again many privileged objects of human enquiry: the criticism discipline, the reader of a book /viewer of a film, the leading intellectual, the artist, and even itself the notion of experience. He speaks of the ways through which the late capitalist culture can be interpreted and how to transform it. The

leftist intellectuals should concern themselves with the ideological conditions of the critical discourse and its origin in the material conditions, he adds that too.

Andrew Ross also raises a crucial question. Culture in which we all live is a Postmodernist culture, it hardly matters how unevenly its effects are felt across the jagged spectrum of gender, class, color, region, and nationality. In his *Universal Abandon: The Politics Of Postmodernism*, Andrew Ross asks when postmodernism has abandoned the Universalist foundations of enlightenment thought, we must ask ourselves, whose interests are served by this universal abandon? Thus he also makes postmodern culture complicit with power structures.

### **Genealogy of Postmodernism**

As we know, Postmodernism is dependent of time, but it is the sour fruit of time. Its genealogy is traced back to its roots in the late 18th century romantic tradition, in *Postmodern Literary Theory* of Niall Lucy. In that belief, the literary was conceived as inseparable from the literary theory. But, he says, for postmodernism what was once the romantic space of the literary becomes a general plane existence of humans. He uses the work of Johnson, Rousseau, Hobbes, Kant, Freud, Nietzsche, and Heidegger to historicize his analysis.

Similarly, in *The Origins of Postmodernity* Perry Anderson talks about the rise of ideas around postmodernism. Where does the postmodernism idea come from? Who first conceived and developed it? How have its meanings changed? These are the various questions posed and answered. He argues, besides, about the importance of explaining literary texts from a political perspective. The publication also makes no secret of Jameson's admiration.

### **Jameson's Ideas of Marxism and Their Application**

Robert Adams examines the key ideas of Jameson in his *Frederic Jameson*. He examines, moreover, the sources and contexts of Jameson's writing. He deals, largely, with his Marxism and the critical analysis of postmodernism. Same work has been done in his masterpiece, *The Fiction of Postmodernism* by Stephen Baker. He talks, besides Frederic Jameson, about Lyotard, Adorno, and Baudrillard. He offers an explanation of postmodernism from both the perspective of post Marxism and from the Marxist critical tradition. In relation to works of contemporary

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fiction, issues relating to the development of a postmodern politics and the postmodern representation of history are also addressed.

In their seminal work Douglas Kellner and Sean Homer, *Frederic Jameson; Critical Reader*, track Jameson's career from the "New left" and the rethinking of Marxism in the 1950s and 60s through the rise of postmodernism.

James Smith in his *Terry Eagleton: A Critical Introduction* gives a close look to Eagleton's works, sketching out their arguments and implications, traces the development of Eagleton's theoretical positions and an assessment of Eagleton's contribution to Marxist literary criticism and cultural theory.

Byron Clarke in his article, "Minimum wage is an objective truth: how Postmodernism hurts the working class" castigated Postmodernism. Clarke says that post-modernism masks itself in obscure and pretentious language. By this, he says, it keeps the general masses in oblivion while serving its own interests.

Gopal Balakrishnan in his article, "The Coming Contradiction", examines *Frederic Jameson's Valences of the Dialectics*. He says that in the postmodern atmosphere of ontological and epistemological uncertainty, Jameson is wonderful in establishing a Hegelian-Marxist grounding of postmodernism. He says, In an atmosphere of growing suspicion towards 'totalization', Jameson can be seen to have pulled off an improbable intellectual coup, establishing a broadly Hegelian-Marxist understanding of a widely, if in chaotically, experienced postmodernism, while conjoining this mutation in the superstructure to a new phase of capitalist expansion and intensification.

Christopher Norris in his review on Eagleton's *After Theory* says that the story Eagleton has to tell is one of successive accommodating moves between the literary-academic 'institution' and those critics, schools or ideas which begin by challenging its cultural hegemony, and end up by merely extending its powers.

The same book is reviewed by Albert Colon .He studies the development of Eagleton’s thought and says that this book is not merely a disavowal of postmodernism. It exists as an example of the theory that Eagleton espouses throughout the book. It is a theory that allows for the reader and the practitioner to engage the fundamental questions that lie at the center of our existence.

### **Eminent Exponents**



Terry Eagleton

Courtesy: <https://robertarood.wordpress.com/2013/08/10/nobody-would-have-an-orange-juice-with-oliver-twist-if-they-could-share-a-beer-with-fagin-how-to-read-literature-by-terry-eagleton/>

In the English speaking world most eminent exponents of Marxist theory are Frederic Jameson and Terry Eagleton. We observe them, every now and then, targeting postmodernism in its various forms. Frederic Jameson attacks the various anti-historical formalisms, for these abstract language and knowledge from the temporal change and distorts their relation to the lived experience. He makes available a framework for analyzing the connection between art and the historical circumstances of its meaning---in particular how cultural artifacts repress, distort, or transform their circumstances through the abstractions of aesthetic form. This analysis provides a stark alternative to empiricism and humanism. It would later provide a compelling alternative to

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post-structuralism and deconstruction as they became dominant methodologies in aesthetic criticism. His groundbreaking work was to discover the historical roots of postmodernism itself. As he says, Postmodernism is not a timeless gesture but a logically historical derivation of late capitalism, just as modernism was the culture of monopoly capitalism. According to him it is safest to grasp the concept of postmodern as an attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place. He once described it as the specialization of culture under the pressure of organized capitalism.

Eagleton, too, castigates the non-Marxist theory by exposing its complicity with the power structures. According to him Non-Marxist theory is part of the ideological and political history of our epoch. Non-Marxist theory is less an object of intellectual enquiry in its own right than a particular perspective in which to view the history of our times.

Eagleton believes, pure literary theory is an academic myth. So it had better been abandoned in the interests of a practical, transformative involvement in cultural politics. Such a work is done by Marxist theory. It addresses the important issues that are shunned by the recent cultural theorists i.e. truth, objectivity, morality, revolution and fundamentalism. He believes the aesthetic philosophies of the early capitalistic period had been ideological and the contemporary theory is the latest phase of the history of this relationship between aesthetic and ideology.

**Conclusion:** Many intellectuals have done a considerable amount of work on postmodern literary theory and its relevance to the existing political reality, during the last few decades. Postmodernism and Marxism are draggers drawn at each other. The latter rules out the former's claim to drain history out and its belief in the historical continuum. It is, as per the Marxist theorists, a perversion of what might be termed as historical naturalism.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

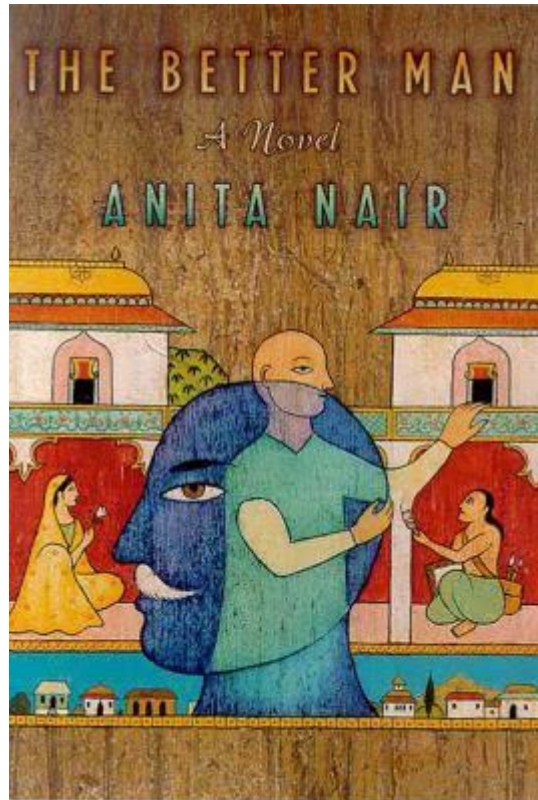
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Anita Nair's *The Better Man* -  
A Symbol of Weakness, Cowardice and Lack of Integrity

N. Gunasekaran & S.Revathi

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**Abstract**

Anita Nair's *The Better Man* represents the theme of self discovery. The protagonist of the novel, Mukundan, seems to be an escapist, who runs away from responsibilities and is afraid of the society. But he dominates his disposition is his deep rooted fear of his father imbibed by him right from his childhood. He is governed by societal pressures, does not live for himself but for others. *The Better Man* unveils the reality of Indian women who are still deprived of their rights in love and marriage. Marriage is still a social necessary, where women seek security and men respectability. Domination is the significant in an analysis of the man-woman relationship where the male characteristics are ones coupled with mental thought and positive activity, at the same time as the woman is regarded as basically submissive, her role to be the respectable of male sexual drive for the subsequent

reproduction of the species. *The Better Man* asserts their individuality and tries to liberate themselves from the clutches of man.

**Key words:** Man Women Relationship, Betrayal, Individuality.

### **Mukundan – An Escapist**

Four years old, Mukundan, who has seen his father only in the photograph, is scared, when his father turns up all of sudden from Burma. Dressed in black, he appears tall and when he starts talking to him, Mukundan gets more afraid and starts calling his mother. When Mukundan is eight years old, the relationship between father and son does not improve. It has become worse, for Achuthan Nair chooses to settle in Kaikurussi after resigning his job. Achuthan Nair always ends his talk with a question and Mukundan is expected to answer not on his own, but merely repeats his father's last words. "Mukundan is tortured by hatred of his father, Achuthan Nair, who bullied him and intimidated him since his childhood" (Sengupta, 21).

With an overbearing father and a docile mother, he was forced to lead an uneventful life. So he decides to escape from his house by acquiring the job of a clerk in Trichy. He does not take his mother with him though she pleads with him to do so. He even conveniently forgets Meenakshi, his cousin, who had always entertained a desire of marrying him.

These factors go to prove Mukundan is basically an escapist who fails to undertake responsibilities. Mukundan's mother is said to have fallen down from the steps and died but there is a hint she was killed, probably by her own husband, who, forsook her for his concubine, Ammini. Mukundan often visits his ancestral house even while at his place of work and brings gifts for his father. This shows he still is trying to find a means to enter his father's heart. "Mukundan, a recently retired government employee, beset by bitterness and self doubt, who returns reluctantly to his tyrannical father and his ancestral taravad in the village of Kaikurussi" (Sengupta, 21) from where he had fled when he was eighteen, abandoning his suffering mother.

### **Valsala – Eye on Enjoying Life**

Valsala, wife of the ageing schoolmaster Prabhakaran Nair, is engaged in her daily household tasks, the maintenance of the compound wall and watching television every evening. She is the lonely person in her house and there were no surprises in her life. She falls in love with Sridharan, who first appears in her life as a neighbour and then becomes her lover. Soon after the realization of her inner self she decides to free herself from her husband. She enters into a sexual relationship with Sridharan as a natural partner to her emotional involvement. She decides to be his mistress. Since Prabhakaran master went to school they enjoyed freedom emotionally and physically. She sets her hearts on enjoying her life with Sridharan, as her gandharva. As a matter of fact, she is aware of the fact that every woman needs the energizer of love, freedom, equality and sex. But she is also certain, that is quite impossible to get from hostile men. Accordingly, she is willing to trap the new system against the backdrop of traditional concept of Indian Womanhood. She stirs the entire society with her liberal views and attitude, and puts forth the new issues of woman's sexuality and gender. She justifies herself as, "I am just forty years old. I don't want to be pushed into old age before it is time. I want to live. I want passion. I want to know ecstasy, she told herself, night after night" (130). As a consequence, Valsala's quest emerges as a battle, of course, the battle of the female psyche.

All of a sudden, Prabhakaran was missing and later found dead. Circle Inspector Devasiya, who dropped in Mukundan when the case was filed, explained what he had pieced together as the grand plan. Six weeks later, when Prabhakaran Master had still not returned, Valsala would have filed a complaint. Bhasi told to Mukundan, the murder suspects Sridharan, accused in the Prabhakaran Master Murder case, was finally captured by the police.

### **Power House Ramakrishnan**

Mukundan discovers that what should have been his rightful place in the village had been usurped by an upstart, Power House Ramakrishnan. "Power House Ramakrishnan is utterly un-real and superfluous" (Thomas, 31). In the first few weeks of his return home, "he meets Bhasi, 'One-screw-loose-Bhasi', house painter and self appointed emotional healer of the village" (Sengupta, 21). Despite Bhasi's compassion for him, Mukundan betrays him when he seeks his intervention in fighting against Power House Ramakrishnan's attempt to

build a community hall in the village on Bhasi's piece of land. When Bhasi refuses to sell his land, Power House Ramakrishnan threatens to throw him out of the village. Mukundan sets out to save Bhasi's land but is completely won over by Power House Ramakrishnan who makes Mukundan a member of the community hall committee and makes him feel important. Mukundan also withdraws himself from Anjana, a married woman and a school teacher with whom he is in love.

### **Anjana**

Anjana is the niece of Mukundan's friend K. M. Nair who remains unmarried till she is twenty seven. Just when she considers herself as "one of those old maids destined to remain at home. Unloved, unwanted, unfulfilled. Long in the tooth, sunken cheeks and vacant eyes" (223), her marriage with thirty five years old Ravindran is fixed. After marriage, Anjana is shocked at her husband's indifference. "She wishes there was some way she could discover his likes and dislikes. All what she wanted to do was to please him" (227).

Even after three months he remains "a man who used her body when impulse took him. There was little conversation between them and hardly companionship" (228). She desperately needs someone to share her agony, to console her, and she thinks of Mukundan. She expresses her anger against Ravindran to Mukundan: "Just because we are man and wife in the eyes of law, he thinks he can treat me as he pleases. As far as he is concerned, "I am merely a servant who doubles as a whore" (243). She feels happy in the company of Mukundan: "I feel married when I am with you" (244). She files a divorce suit so that she would formally marry Mukundan. But Mukundan, who values his reputation as a member of the community hall committee rather than his commitment to marry Anjana, withdraws from her. "You are a coward" (323), Anjana tells him and moves on to face the world all by herself.

### **Mukundan's Realization**

But after his father's death Mukundan decides to mend his ways. "The portrayal of Achuthan Nair's character is so life-like and convincing, one feels almost sorry that it is wasted in the failed totality" (Thomas, 31). He understands, "He had betrayed the only two people who had loved him and given all of them to him - Bhasi and Anjana. He had used them and discarded them because it suited him to do so" (344) and realizes, "He was no



better man than his father had been. Perhaps, he was the lesser man” (344). He now remembers his father’s dictum that if one has to be successful in life, he has to be selfish - that is what is meant by the survival of the fittest. Only such men thrive in society. Realization dawns on Mukundan that, though notorious for his licentious ways, his father was never afraid of society and followed only his own mind. Mukundan decides to become a ‘better man’ than he is at present.

## Conclusion

Mukundan gets into the jar in the attic, exorcises the remaining ghosts haunting him and comes out, but now breaks the jar, for he knows his journey of self-discovery is now complete and he no longer will need the jar in future. As a compensation for what he has done to Bhasi, Mukundan gives him his land, for he realizes the part played by Bhasi in his self discovery. He knows here he will be compared with his father, but knows he too, like his father, will oppose all obstacles. The only thing that remains to be done now is the destruction of the Community Hall, which stands for the failure of Mukundan as a man, as an individual and whose construction is under progress. Mukundan decision is to light fire using gunpowder to destroy the building. Once it is destroyed, Mukundan’s journey of self discovery will be complete and then he will not simply be the ‘better man’, but the ‘perfect man’.

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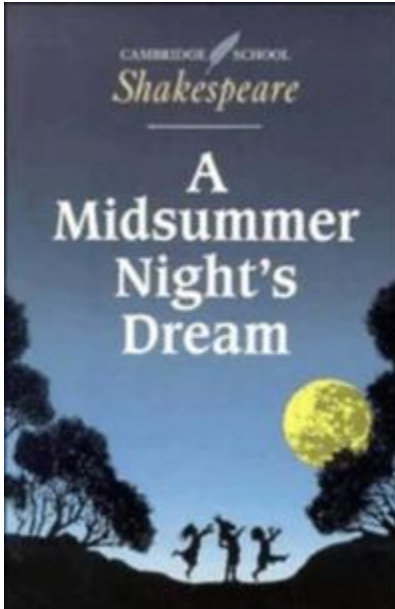
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## *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Fiction or Truth?*

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### **Abstract**

Most probably written in 1595-96, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an enticing and enchanting play written by a master playwright William Shakespeare that still offers so much to intrigue, bewilder, and allure the readers and audience simultaneously. Even after the four hundred years of its publication and production, critical interpretations seem to strive to interpret this play from every possible angle. The play presents three freakish worlds in front of the people where characters of this play are acting and reacting absurdly and grotesquely. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* records the events and incidents of three different worlds dexterously: the world of duke of Athens; the world of fairies; and the world of six amateur artists, how these three different worlds are entwined with each other is the hallmark of this play. This *Dream* is an amalgamation of the world of deception and the world of reality and Shakespeare has interweaved fiction with truth in such a way that on the surface level, this play is a comedy but on a deeper level, the play depicts tragic insights into the characters and situations.

**Key words:** Dream, Night, Athens, Fairies, Love

### **Three Worlds of *A Midsummer Night's Dream***

The play is opened with the world of Athens, where we see authoritative Theseus, the duke of Athens in his court who is proud of his recent conquest of Amazon and is all set to marry occupied Hippolyta, the Queen of Amazons. His utterance “I wooed thee with my sword/and won thy love doing thee injuries” (Act1, Sc1) confirms his authority as a ruler. Egeus brings his daughter Hermia in the court of Theseus and complains about his daughter’s behavior who is in love with Lysander and both want to marry, but Egeus likes Demetrius for Hermia to marry. Helena, a friend of Hermia is in love with Demetrius, but Demetrius starts doting on Hermia after he sees her. Egeus’ complain and Theseus’s order to Hermia that “Either to die the death or to abjure forever the society of men” (Act1, Sc1) give a clear description of patriarchal society of an Elizabethan age. Both lovers Hermia and Lysander find refuge in the woods, where Helena and Demetrius also join them. In the same woods, they are entangled with the world of fairies where the fairy King Oberon is in clash with his fairy Queen Titania over the custody of an Indian boy whom Titania has adopted, but Oberon wants to make him his henchman. Oberon is another authoritative figure of this play who affirms the existence of male dominance over females. The play portrays six amateur artists also who are preparing a play to perform at the wedding ceremony of their duke, Theseus.

In this perspective, Garber in *Shakespeare After All* (2004) asserts that “This play presents the audience with three parallel worlds, and three rulers or stage managers who try to dictate action and choice: Theseus, who rules the court world of Athens; Oberon, who rules the fairy world of the wood; and Peter Quince, who rules, or rather tries and fails to rule, the equally disordered world of the ‘rude mechanicals’ or artisans – a world of fiction and of art. Each of these “worlds” is a reflection and a refraction of the others. If Theseus’ world is based on reason and law and rank and hierarchy and a father’s authority and – on slow moving time (how slow/ this old moon wanes, Act1, Sc1) – Oberon’s world, the fairy world, is in many ways its opposite. The fairy world is a world of instantaneous time, in which Puck can circumnavigate the globe in less than an hour (I’ll put a girdle round about the earth/in forty minutes, Act2, Sc1) in pursuit of love-in-idleness. “Shakespeare is not far wrong. The first Russian Sputnik encircled the earth in

forty-seven minutes” (Kott, 216). It is a world of enchantment, magic, music, mischief, in which Puck is the principal actor and agent, for Puck is to Oberon what Bottom is to Peter Quince” (221). Shakespeare’s genius has the ability to recognize both tragedy and comedy; borrowing from classic tragedies while adding new complexity to characters and to make them his own creation.

### **The Fairy World of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream***

The world of the woods is a quagmire where there is no escape. Four lovers are wandering and roaming around the woods and their confrontation with the fairy world brings chaos in their lives. Puck’s use of love juice for the eyes of Lysander makes him fall in love with Helena suggests the transitory nature of male love. Both girls in love are reliable and don’t change their suitors, but male love has been presented with the manifestations of ups and downs. This fairy world is a free world where everyone has a liberty to do anything he or she wants to do. Oberon’s cunning attempt to make his wife Titania fall in love with Bottom is a satire on human jealousy and human lust. Though Oberon and Titania don’t represent human beings but in nature they do possess human characteristics: anger, jealousy, and lust. All these happenings together create a topsy-turvy world in the woods and this world is being ruled by Oberon and his assistance Puck. The whole play with its each and every ingredient is so impressive and persuasive that it compels us to read between the lines. Therein lie some hidden truths and unnegotiable realities about fairies and human nature and Shakespeare has negotiated all these with such subtlety that have marveled the literary critics since centuries.

### **Love, Eroticism, and Sex**

Jan Kott mentions in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1961), “The metaphor of love, eroticism, and sex undergo some essential changes in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. They are completely traditional to start with: sword and wound; rose and rain; Cupid’s bow and golden arrow” (223). Titania’s lust for Bottom is degradation and implies her desperate desire in a state where she is at clash with her king Oberon. It seems as due to conflict with her king, her sexual desires remain unfulfilled and therefore, she is inclined towards Bottom. It does not matter for her that he is half human and half animal. Bottom’s transformation into ass has been a crucial issue to interpret for critics. This transformation and Titania’s infatuation convey dark and

dismal outlook on human predicament. Kott has used the word 'translation' in his essay *The Bottom Translation* as a metaphor that is quite perfect to look at Bottom from different perspective. A person whose identity is changed from human to ass now is providing with more space to translate him as a desire. He evokes desire in Titania for lust and lascivious Titania dotes on him.

### **Male Dominance in *Dream***

Male dominance is one thematic element found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In *Dream* Lysander and Hermia escape into the woods for a night where they are not required to obey laws of Theseus or Egeus. Upon their arrival in Athens, the couples are married. As a matter of fact, there are no two opinions that marriage is seen as the ultimate social achievement for women while men can go on with many other things outside domestic life. In his book, *The Purpose of Playing (Chapter: The Imperial Votress)*, Louis Montrose (1996) draws attention to male and female gender roles and norms present in the comedy in connection with Elizabethan culture. In reference to the triple wedding, he says that the conclusion of this play is three marriages and none other than these marriages could be the proper end of this *Dream*. The play starts with a dispute over matrimonial matters and ends also with resolving of the very matters. This festive conclusion in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* depends upon the success of a process by which the feminine pride and power manifested in Amazon warriors, possessive mothers, unruly wives, and wilful daughters are brought under the control of lords and husbands. He says that "the consummation of marriage at the end of the play is the showcase of male power as husband takes physical and symbolic possession of wife. A connection between flowers and sexuality is drawn elegantly. The love juice employed by Oberon represents menstrual blood as well as the sexual blood shed by virgins. While blood as a result of menstruation is representative of a woman's power, blood as a result of a first sexual encounter represents man's power over women" (151-179).

Though *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy, Shakespeare has pointed out some critical and serious issues in the veneer of this comedy play. Egeus dislike of Lysander and his insistence upon her daughter Hermia to marry Demetrius is the showcase of his power in a patriarchal society. Theseus' marriage with the Queen of Amazons is another type of showcase



of the male power, nonetheless, Hippolyta is not an ordinary women, but she is compelled to obey Theseus. Oberon is stubborn and wants a child custody to make him his henchman and cast spell on Hippolyta to make her fall in love with the first thing she will see upon awakening. He is delighted on seeing her infatuation for Bottom. The male dominance is a recurring motif of the *Dream*.

### ***A Midsummer Night's Dream with reference to The Bottom Translation***

*The Bottom Translation: Marlowe and Shakespeare and the Carnival Tradition* is a unified analysis of the “carnival tradition” in the work of William Shakespeare as a far-ranging continuation of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1964). This *Translation* is a deeply influential study and offers meditations on the art and thought of Shakespeare and several of his contemporaries.

Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* provides an example of a play inextricably rooted in carnival, which typically turns the world upside down. “The union of the bewitched Queen Titania and Bottom the Weaver, transformed into a beast, is a perfect image of the meeting of high and low, a theme that recurs throughout the play. Kott echoes this scene in the title of his book, not only to call attention to the importance of metamorphosis in Renaissance drama but also to emphasize that these plays must be read, from the bottom, from Bottom’s perspective also” (*The Bottom Translation, Literary Masterpieces*).

### **Reflection of an Elizabethan Age**

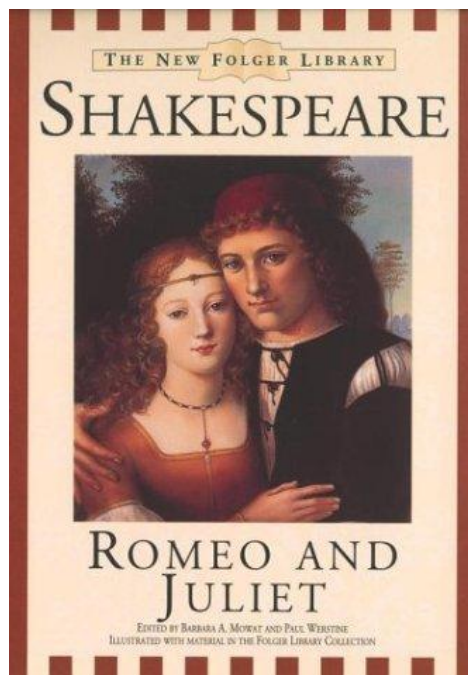
*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is not a play that just offers lovers, their escape, fairies in the woods, and the union of lovers, but it figures the social relationship between sexes in courtships, marriage, and parenthood in a serious manner. Thus, *Dream* highlights not only the cultural values but also the cultural politics of England of that time. No one can completely disconnect him/herself from cultural, social, and political environment of the time. Shakespeare plays are heavily influenced by the elements of Elizabethan culture and politics. Marriages were decided by parents and marriage was the most favorable condition both for males and females to live together, therefore, family institution was strong. Though in the *Dream*, permission is granted to the four lovers to marry according to their wishes, but it happens after a long struggle

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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and couples wait for this permission until the end of the play. This play emphasizes the importance of marriage and at the same time in history, the marriage of Elizabeth I was a hot topic in England. She had no exception, despite this fact that she was the daughter of the king. Hence, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* mirrors exactly what was occurring in the age of Elizabeth I. In a nutshell, it is said that this play is a social, cultural, and political document of an Elizabethan age.

### **A Connection between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet***



It is conjectured that both plays have been written in the same year and it is surprising to note that both play have a great deal in common to discuss in the light of each other. In Garber's words (2004), "we could say that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is *Romeo and Juliet* turned inside out, *Romeo and Juliet* transformed into a comedy" (213). Both plays have striking similarities in the form of authoritative fathers who want their daughters to marry according to their choice. Both plays have authoritative rulers, the prince of *Romeo and Juliet* is not different from Theseus, duke of Athens. Both daughters choose their partners and are not willing to marry where their fathers want. In addition, "In both plays the disobedient and rebellious daughter is

threatened with the life of a nun and both plays strongly emphasize the difference between night, which transforms and changes, and day, which is rigid, inflexible, and associated with law” as Garber mentions in *Shakespeare After All* (2004). The only difference is the end where characters live happily ever after in a *Dream*. Despite this fact, this difference does not undermine the somber effects that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* carries from the beginning to the end. This close resemblance imparts *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a touch of tragedy.

### **A Play within the Play**

Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* around the same time he penned *Romeo and Juliet*, a play that's heavily influenced by the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. Throughout *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a humble group of Athenian craftsmen (the Mechanicals) practice a play-within-the-play that they hope to stage at Theseus's wedding celebration. The play is Pyramus and Thisbe and it is adopted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. By including this play-within-the-play technique, Shakespeare has given us ample time to reflect upon life as a parody of bad theatre. Indeed, life is a theatre and to face the odds of life requires crafts and a set of skills of successful actors. Though during their nocturnal adventures, there is no lion, no blood, and no death like in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but the fear of death hovers over the couples all the time. In this connection, Kott in *The Bottom Translation* has given us an interesting calculation by stating that 'Death' and 'dead' are uttered twenty-eight times; 'dying' and 'die' occur fourteen times. The field of 'death' appears in nearly fifty verses of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and is distributed almost evenly among the events in the forest and the play at Theseus' wedding. The frequency of 'kill' and 'killing' is thirteen and 'sick' and 'sickness' occur six times. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which has often been called a happy comedy of love, 'kiss' and 'kissing' occur only six times, always within the context of the burlesque; 'joy' occurs eight times, 'happy' six, and 'happiness' none (55).

### ***Dream: Fiction or Truth***

People take *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a play full of slapstick humor, light hearted entertainment, fantasy fairy world in the woods where lovers are chasing each other and where moon night romance is in full blossom. It is true that fairies sing and dance, enchant and mesmerize us, and keep the lovers busy in absurd activities. The transformation of Bottom gives

this play an impression of grotesque play and while reader and audience are enjoying this grotesquery but this is not the real picture. A deep ironic contrast exists in the fabric of this *Dream* that is connected with the appearance and reality of the characters; what they say and what they do. It is ironic that they talk logically but behave irrationally and what the audience do, they do laugh. It is not surprising that a close reading reveals that most of the laughs are generated by someone's pain, humiliation, and plight. There will be always remain two interpretations of this play, the light one and the dark one. This *Dream* has a unique juxtaposition of fiction and truth and it is left to us that how do we perceive and interpret this *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015  
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## **Comparison of Rate of Speech and Diadochokinetic Rate in Nepali and Malayalam Adult Native Speakers**

**Shanta Dhakal, Keziah Merin Chacko, Vishnu V.K. and Sreelakshmi R.**  
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### **Abstract**

Fluent speech is the production of speech at a normal level of skill, which is continuous but in addition to flow of sounds and syllables, flow of information should also be continuous. Rate of speech is a dimension of fluency which can be defined as the number of words or syllables uttered per unit of time. Diadochokinetic rate refers to an assessment tool which measures how quickly an individual can accurately produce a series of rapid and alternating sounds. In general, it is the ability to repeat a segment of speech at high speed.

**Need:** Studies on rate of speech are very few. Recent cross linguistic studies are also very rare. The correlation between rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate is unclear. Malayalam language was found to have the fastest rate of speech among the southern states of India. Nepali language was chosen to compare with the Malayalam language to check which one has faster rate of speech. There is a need to conduct a study on the Diadochokinetic rate in normal Nepali speaking adults since it has not been investigated yet.

**Aim:** The purpose of this study was to compare the rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate of adults between Nepali language and Malayalam language and check the correlation between rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate within and across language.

**Participants:** Forty participants i.e. twenty each in both the languages, with equal number of both the genders were included in the study. All the participants were having normal speech, language and hearing skill.

**Method:** In this study, samples were collected in monologue, oral reading and picture description for attaining the rate of speech in both the languages. It was measured in terms of words per minute. Diadochokinetic rate was measured and both Alternate Motion Rate (AMR)

and Sequential Motion Rate (SMR) were calculated by using count per time method. The samples were recorded using PRAAT software.

**Result:** The results revealed that there was a highly significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) in rate of speech and no significant difference in DDK results between Malayalam and Nepali speakers. Even though, Nepali speakers were found to have faster rate of speech but their Diadochokinetic rates were similar to those of Malayalam speakers. Results showed that DDK results were independent of rate of speech.

The study clearly indicates that there is a significant difference in many parameters of speech across languages. Hence, there is a requirement of separate normative for the speech assessment in different languages.

**Key Words:** Nepali, Malayalam, Rate of speech, Diadochokinetic rate.

## **Introduction**

Speech is the audible manifestation of language where the motor and neuro-motor behaviors of human sound production are used for the purpose of communication. Fluency is a speech pattern that flows in a smooth and rhythmic manner. Fluent speech is the production of speech at a normal level of skill, which is continuous but in addition to flow of sounds and syllables, flow of information should also be continuous. Rate of speech is an important dimension of fluency which can be defined as the number of words or syllables uttered per unit of time. Speech rate is estimated from samples of connected speech spoken spontaneously or read. A sample of the clients connected speech is necessary to screen for any fluency disorders. Speech rate can be calculated by various methods which are either syllables per minute or words per minute. Factors which can affect the rate of speech are stylistic effects, biological demands on the speech system, cognitive processing, frequency and duration of hesitations and pauses, emotional state of the speaker and type of speaking situation. Rate of speech is slower in shorter utterances than in longer ones. There is more of a rate decrease during short utterances than there is a rate increase during longer ones. This implies that it is the amount of information in the utterances that affects the rate (Malecot, Johnston and Kizziar, 1972; Starkweather, 1981). Abnormal speech rate affects not only articulatory precision, but also speech intelligibility, so either increasing or decreasing the speaking rate is an objective in therapy for various motor speech disorders.

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Rate of speech doesn't have a fixed value, so it is generally expressed in range. The speech rate of English language has a range of 115 to 165 words per minute (Andrews and Ingham, 1971), whereas reading rate has a range of 150 to 190 words per minute (Darley and Spriesterbach, 1978).

Diadochokinetic rate refers to an assessment tool which measures how quickly an individual can accurately produce a series of rapid and alternating syllables. In general, it is the ability to repeat a segment of speech at high speed. Diadochokinetic rates help to determine any problems in the speech mechanism that control motor skills or speech planning functions in the brain. The two ways to obtain these measures are, counting the number of syllable repetitions in a given period of time and counting the number of seconds to repeat a predetermined number of syllables. Alternating Motion Rate (AMR) and Sequential Motion Rate (SMR) are used to assess the Diadochokinetic rate. Syllable repetitions performed as fast as possible gives a valid probe of the maximum speaking rate being an important measure of articulatory performance. West and Ansberry (1968) stated that "the person who can negotiate rapid shifts of inhibition of muscle contraction is, generally speaking, possessed of the high speed of diadochokinesis and, correlatively, of the ability to make rapid articulatory movements."

The correlation between Diadochokinetic rate and ordinary rate of speech is unclear (Lass and Sandusky, 1971). The absence of evidence for a phenomenon does not mean that it is the absence of that phenomenon. So attempts to find such a correlation should be made. Therefore, this present study attempted to compare the rate of speech between Nepali and Malayalam native speakers. And to check whether the Diadochokinetic rate and speech rate correlates with each other.

## **Review of Literature**

“As soon as human beings start to make systematic observations about one another's languages, they were probably impressed by the paradox that all languages are in some fundamental sense one and the same, and yet they are also strikingly different from one another language” (Charles A. Ferguson, 1978).

Rate of speech is influenced by the type of syllable, length of utterances, type of speaking situation and perception of information transmission.

The degree of coarticulatory overlaps and speed of articulation movement determines the rate at which syllables can be continuously produced.(Gay, 1978; Starkweather, 1981). Adult speakers of English speak at an average rate of 5-6 syllables per second (Walker and Black, 1950).

Speech rate can be defined as the speed at which speakers shape and configure their oral cavities to perform articulatory movements necessary for speech production (Crystal & House, 1982; Pellowski, 2010).

Rathna and Bharadwaja (1977) attempted a cross linguistic study for various Indian languages. Their study concluded that the rates of speech in words per minute for languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, Kannada, Tamil and Marathi in reading task were 198, 163, 193, 127 and 131 respectively. Deepti and Anuradha (2011) did a study on the rate of speech in 20 Punjabi speakers aged 18-40 years. Their study revealed that the rate of speech in reading is higher than picture description for both males and females.

Broglio et al (2013) did a study on rate of speech and speech disruptions in individuals who clutter, and to compare with individuals who do not clutter. Their study revealed that persons who clutter present a rapid speech rate.

Emma Rodero (2012) did a study which seeks to compare broadcasters' speech rates and the number of pauses in 40 new bulletins from the BBC (U.K), Radio France (France), RAI (Italy) and RNE (Spain). The findings indicate that the extent to which the individuals surveyed experience subjective assessment varies according to the speech rate.

### **Need of the Study**

The correlation between rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate is unclear. Malayalam language was found to have the fastest rate of speech among the southern states of India. Nepali language was chosen to compare with the Malayalam language to check which one has a faster rate of speech. Few research works are done in rate of speech as well as cross linguistic studies

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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are also very rare. There is a need to conduct a study on the Diadochokinetic rate in normal Nepali speaking adults since it has not been investigated yet.

### **Aim of the Study**

The objective of the study is to compare the rate of speech in Nepali and Malayalam native speakers and check the correlation between rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate within and across language.

### **Methodology**

#### **Subjects**

Participants were selected based on inclusion criteria in which individuals with normal Maximum Phonation Time, no history of any communication disorders, adequate speech intelligibility, medically fit and literate native speakers of each language were chosen for the study. Forty participants were selected which includes 20 Nepali and 20 Malayalam native speakers aged 20-25 years, with equal number of both the genders.

#### **Method**

Tasks included were monologue, oral reading, picture description and Diadochokinetic rate. Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was done in six subjects from each group for checking the feasibility of the study.

#### **Monologue**

Each of the participants was instructed to speak about their 'daily activities' in one minute, as they speak in their daily lives.

#### **Oral Reading**

Unfamiliar passages were used from both the languages to elicit reading samples from the subject. Participants were instructed to read the given passage and the sample was recorded for one minute.

#### **Picture Description**

Same standardized picture was given to both the groups and they were asked to describe the picture given to them for one minute.

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The entire samples were recorded on the PRAAT software. Prior trials were not given to nullify the effects of familiarity. The total number of words per minute was counted in all the tasks.

### **Diadochokinetic Rate**

Both the Alternating Motion Rate (AMR) and Sequential Motion Rate (SMR) were calculated. In Alternating Motion Rate, subjects were instructed to utter the syllables /p<sup>^</sup>/, /t<sup>^</sup>/ and /k<sup>^</sup>/ separately and repeatedly as fast as possible for 10 seconds, whereas in Sequential Motion Rate, they were instructed to utter the combination of the syllables /p<sup>^</sup>t<sup>^</sup>k<sup>^</sup>/ repeatedly as fast as possible for 10 seconds. The samples were recorded using PRAAT software and the number of syllables produced in one second, were then calculated by dividing total the number of syllables by 10.

### **Data Analysis**

Verbatim transcription was done for all the collected speech samples.. Rate of speech can be assessed mainly at the word level, syllable level and morpheme level. Here, speech rate was measured in terms of words per minute. The data were subjected to statistical analysis to obtain the mean and standard deviation.

### **Results**

The study attempted to compare the rate of speech between Nepali and Malayalam native speakers aged 20-25 years. This study also aimed to find out the correlation between Diadochokinetic rate and speech rate. The graphical representation of speech parameters are as follows:

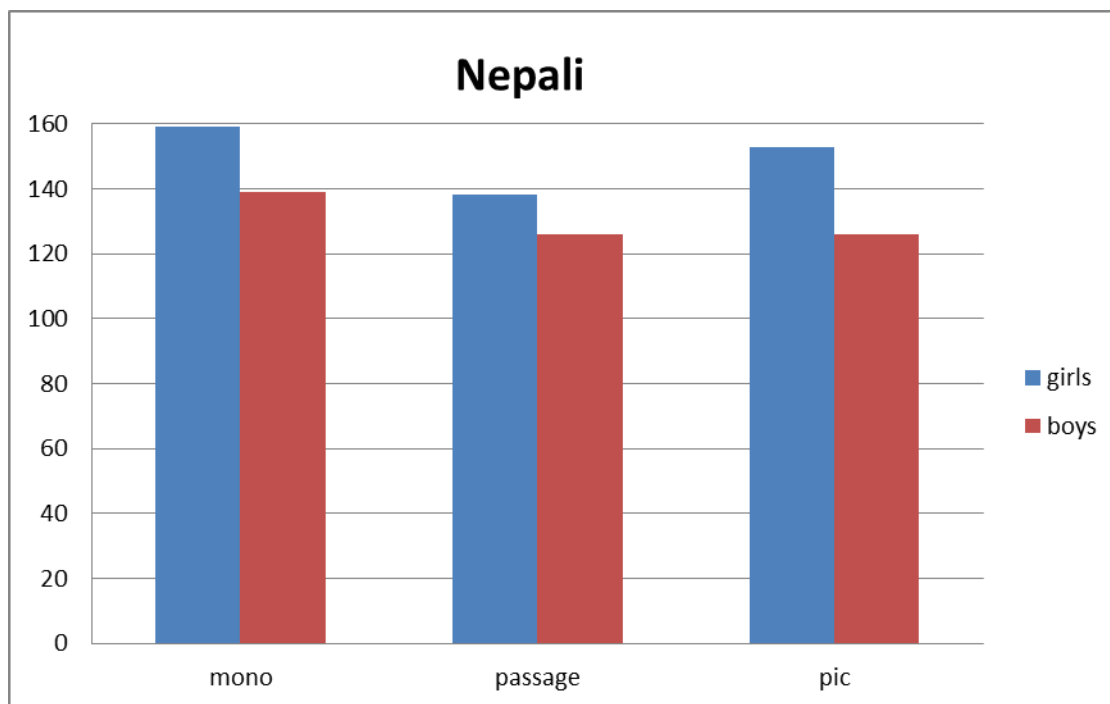


Fig1. Showing the rate of speech in words per minute for monologue, passage reading and picture description.

In the above graph, Nepali girls have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 159.20 WPM), compared to picture description (mean: 152.60 WPM) and the least was in passage reading (mean 138.10). Nepali boys have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 139 WPM), followed by a picture description (mean: 125.80 WPM) and passage reading (mean: 125.80 WPM). From this result Nepali girls were found to have more rate of speech than boys.

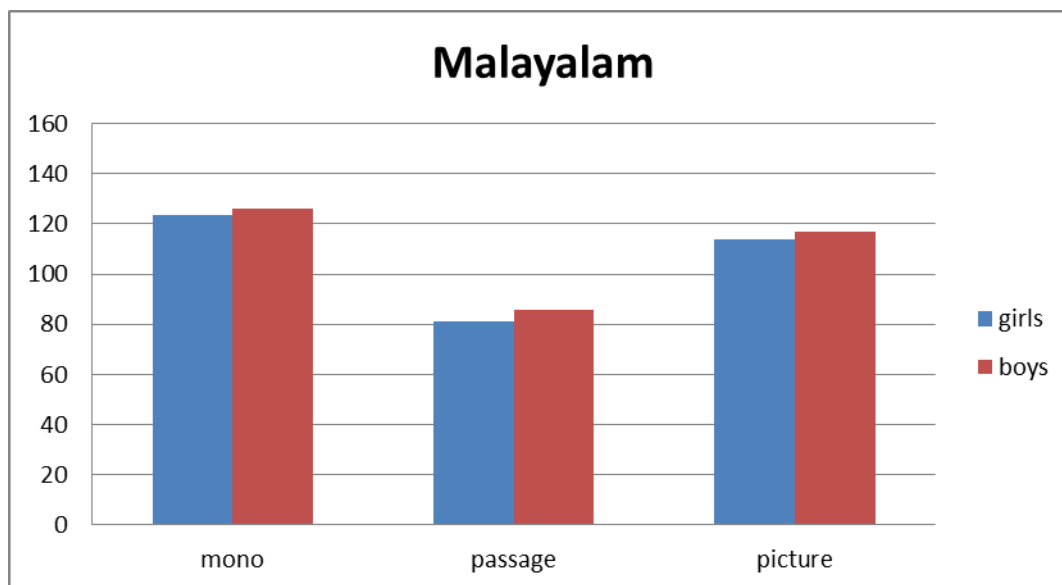
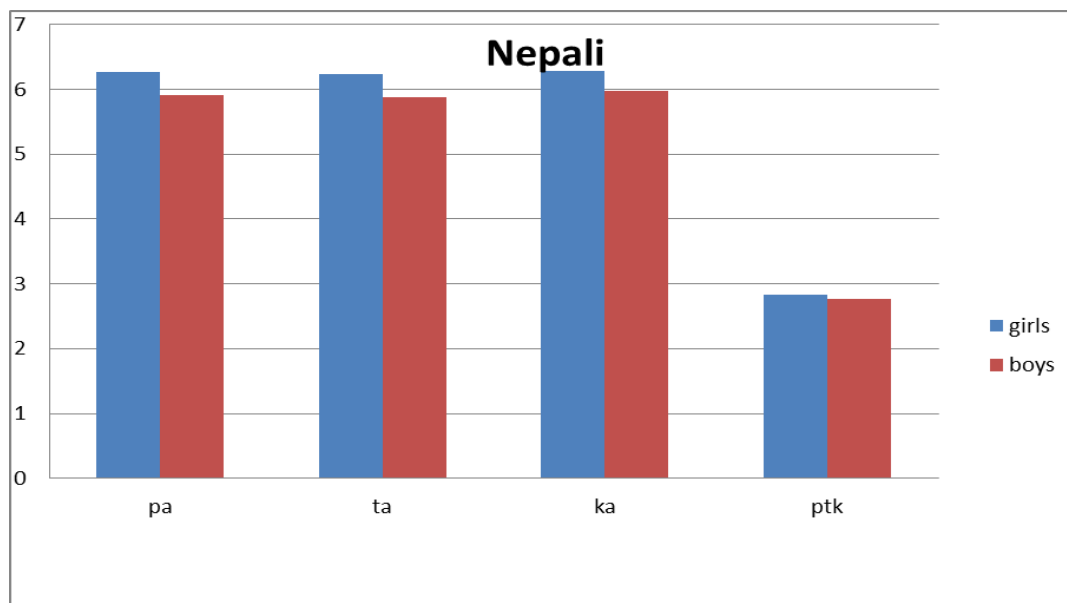


Fig 2. Showing the rate of speech in words per minute for monologue, passage reading and picture description.

In the above graph, Malayalam native girls have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 123.80 WPM), followed by a picture description (mean: 113.80 WPM) and the least was



obtained for passage reading (mean: 81.10). Malayalam native boys have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 126.30 WPM), followed by a picture description (mean: 117



WPM).The least was obtained in passage reading (85.8 WPM). The obtained data reveal that Malayalam native boys have a slightly more speech rate than girls.

Fig. 3: showing the AMR and SMR in Nepali boys and girls.

In the above graph, the Alternating Motion Rate (AMR) for /p^/, /t^/ and /k^/ is 6.27, 6.23 and 6.29 repetitions/Sec respectively and Sequential Motion Rate is 2.83 repetitions/Sec, for Nepali native girls. In boys, AMR for /p^/, /t^/ and /k^/ is 5.91, 5.87 and 5.98 repetitions/Sec respectively and SMR is 2.76 repetitions/Sec.

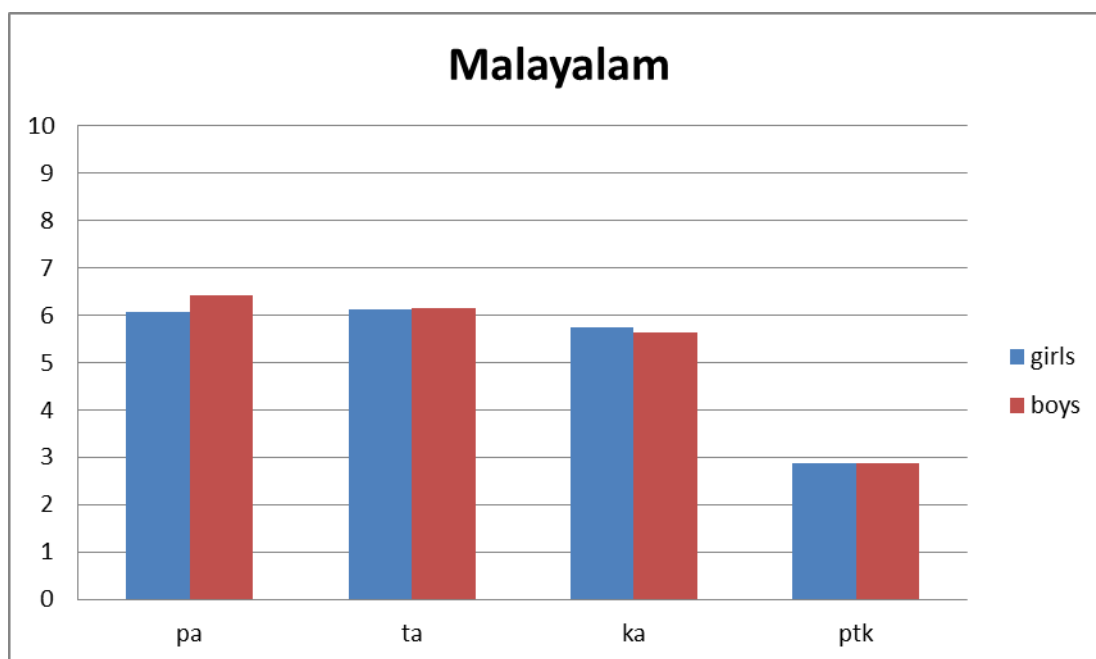


Fig. 3: showing the AMR and SMR in Malayalam boys and girls.

In the above graph, the Alternating Motion Rate (AMR) for /p^/, /t^/ and /k^/ is 6.07, 6.11 and 5.73 repetitions/Sec respectively and Sequential Motion Rate is 2.88 repetitions/Sec, for Malayalam native girls. In boys, AMR for /p^/, /t^/ and /k^/ is 6.41, 6.14 and 5.63 repetitions/Sec respectively and SMR is 2.88 repetitions/Sec.

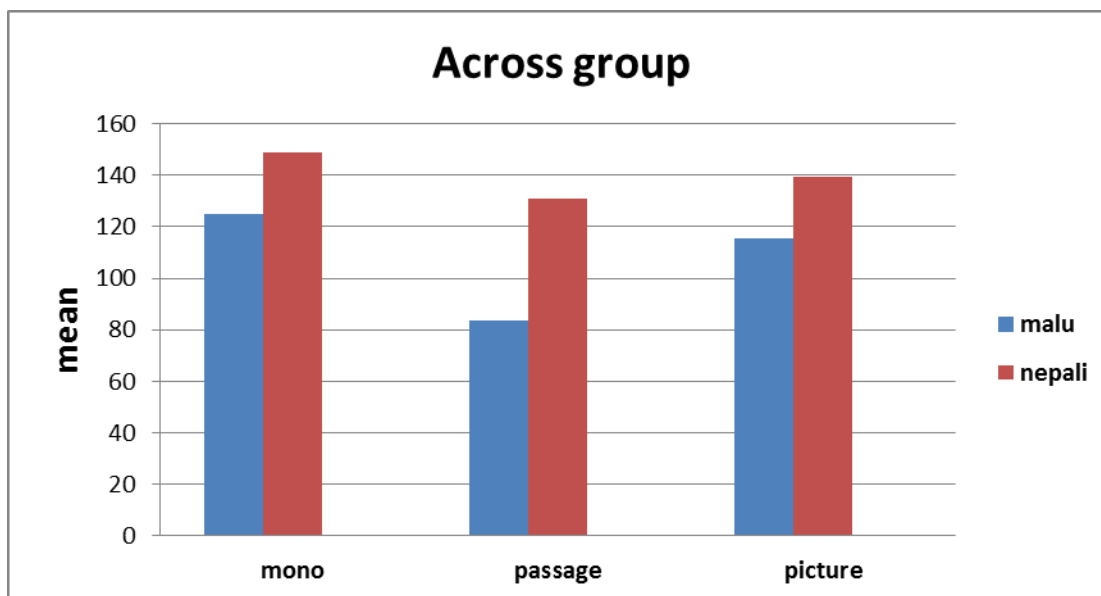


Fig 5. Comparing the rate of speech in monologue, passage and picture description in both the languages.

In the above graph, Nepali speakers have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 149.11 WPM), followed by picture description (mean: 139.20 WPM) and passage (mean: 130.70 WPM), whereas Malayalam speakers have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 125.05 WPM), followed by a picture description (mean: 115.40 WPM) and passage (mean: 83.45 WPM). This data reveals that Nepali native speakers have more rate of speech than Malayalam native speakers.

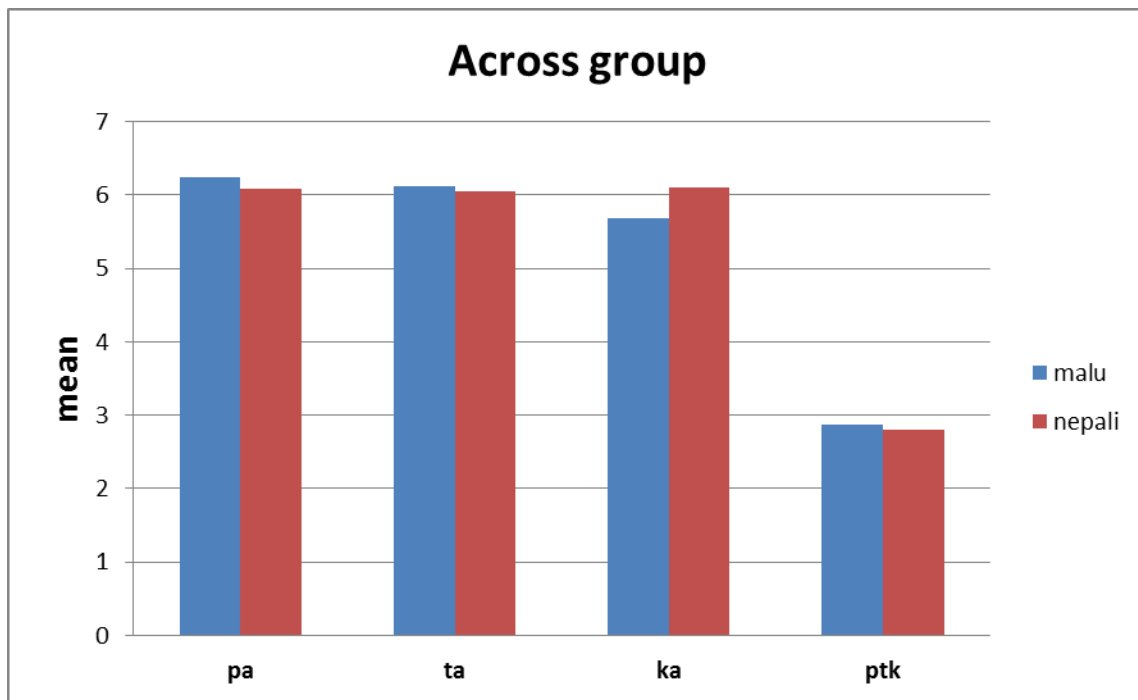


Fig 6: showing the AMR and SMR in both the groups.

In the above graph, the mean AMR of /p<sup>^</sup>/, /t<sup>^</sup>/ and /k<sup>^</sup>/ is 6.24, 6.05 and 6.14 repetitions/Sec respectively in Nepali speakers, whereas 6.09, 6.13 and 5.68 repetitions/Sec respectively in Malayalam speakers. The mean SMR of Nepali speakers is 2.80 repetitions/Sec and in Malayalam speakers is 2.88 repetitions/Sec respectively.

The results revealed that there was a highly significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) in rate of speech and no significant difference in DDK results between Malayalam and Nepali speakers. Even though, Nepali speakers were found to have a faster rate of speech, but their Diadochokinetic rates were similar to those of Malayalam speakers. Results showed that DDK results were independent of rate of speech. These results can be used for identification and diagnosis of deviation in rate and for the intervention for speech timing disorders.

## Discussion

Speech rate is the term given to the speed at which we speak, i.e., the number of words spoken in a particular time. The rate of speech can depend on the language competence, age of the speaker, complexity of the task, situation, familiarity, gender, education, interest, and cognitive factors. Despite of that fast rate of speech or slow rate of speech can help to draw the conclusion of the various communication disorders. The clinical importance of finding the rate of speech is

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being a focused assessment tool in both the screening and diagnostic assessment protocol. The Diadochokinetic rate is an assessment tool which measures how quickly an individual can accurately produce a series of rapid and alternating syllables. It is the ability to repeat a segment of speech at high speed. The implication of Diadochokinetic rate is, it helps to determine any problems in the speech mechanism that control motor skills or speech planning functions in the brain. The rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate provides validated information about the person's speaking rate and ability to control the articulators.

There is no evidence based research on the relationship between the rate of speech and the Diadochokinetic rate, hence there is a need to find the dependency of DDK rate in rate of speech i.e., whether the DDK tends to more who speaks faster .

The present study aims to find the rate of speech in two different languages. Nepali and Malayalam languages were selected and the participants were selected from the same native language speakers for both the groups. Nepali girls were found to have more rate of speech than boys. The result reveals that Malayalam native boys have a slightly more speech rate than girls. Nepali speakers have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 149.11 WPM), compared to picture description (mean: 139.20) and passage reading (mean: 130.70 WPM), similarly, Malayalam speakers have maximum words per minute in a monologue (mean: 125.05 WPM), compared to picture description (mean: 115.40 WPM) and passage reading (mean: 83.45 WPM). This data reveals that Nepali native speakers have more rate of speech than Malayalam native speakers. The mean AMR of /p^/, /t^/ and /k^/ is 6.24, 6.05 and 6.14 repetitions/Sec respectively in Nepali speakers, whereas 6.09, 6.13 and 5.68 repetitions/Sec respectively in Malayalam speakers. The mean SMR of Nepali speakers is 2.80 repetitions/ Sec and in Malayalam speakers is 2.88 repetitions/sec respectively. There is not much difference in mean DDK rate across the groups.

There are significance variation in rate of speech in Nepali language and Malayalam language ( $P < 0.001$ ) but the statistical evaluation shows the DDK rate across the groups are not significance. The formulation of language , length of the words, taking style, pronunciation, knowledge of language, styles of talking, grammatical structure, cultural aspects etc. might have different from each language for across the group, because of this factors Nepali speakers might have faster rate of speech compare with Malayalam speakers. There is not much difference in

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Diadochokinetic rate across the groups so from this present study we can conclude that Diadochokinetic rate is independent from rate of speech.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The speed at which a person speaks is the rate of speech. Usually rate of speech is calculated by two ways, those are words per minute and syllables per minute. DDK rate is the rate at which a person can repeat a syllable rapidly, loudly, clearly, and rhythmically. AMR and SMR will provide information regarding the person ability to control his/her articulators. The study aims to compare the rate of speech between Nepali language and Malayalam language speakers as well as to find the relationship between rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate. From the result we conclude that Nepali native speakers had faster rate of speech compare to Malayalam native speakers. But there is no co-relation between rate of speech and Diadochokinetic rate. DDK rate is a subsystem of rate of speech where the subject has to move his articulators as much as fast he can and produce the syllables loudly, clearly, rhythmically, and rapidly. Rate of speech depends on language proficiency, familiarity of the task, interest of the speaker, length of the words, cultural aspects, cognitive aspects etc. So from this study we can conclude that Diadochokinetic rate is independent on rate of speech.

### **Limitation**

Only twenty subjects from each of the group were included.  
The passage which used for this study was not standardized in both the language.

### **Further Suggestions**

- More number of subjects can be included.
- The rate of speech can be calculated in syllables per minute.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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## Meeting the Challenges of Reconstructing English Proficiency to the University Students Fossilized By the Inapt CLT Implementation at School and College Levels in Bangladesh

Sharmin Sultana Mitu, M.A. (English), B.A. (Honors)

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### Abstract

In Bangladesh, the state of English is rather in puzzling position as the context for using it cannot be fully termed as either ESL or EFL. On one hand, the social context allows for no use of English in everyday communication, and English is taught as a subject in schools and college rather than being used as a language for medium of education which defines it as an EFL context. On the other hand, English is used as a means of education in the universities and communication in the offices which gives it more of an ESL status. Now, in schools and colleges the CLT based syllables have been included with an objective of improving learners' communication skills. However, paradoxically, this has resulted in disrupting students' language proficiency even worse than before for the inappropriateness of various factors. As the students have long been exposed to a wrong learning environment till college level, it has caused to the fossilization of their learning process. When these students get into universities, where they have frequent exposure to English, it becomes really difficult on the part of the teachers, to deal with them as to which way their proficiency in English can be improved.

Therefore, my paper focuses at identifying various aspects, affecting the students at school and college levels and consequently, leading to the challenges faced by the teachers at university level to improve their proficiency in English. Accordingly, it provides probable solutions by which the challenges can be met.

**Key Words:** EFL, ESL, CLT, fossilization, motivation, grammar, Task- Based Language Teaching, Integrated Skills, UGC (University Grants Commission).

## **Introduction**

Being parts of global world, Bangladesh and many other countries use English either as a foreign language or as a second language. But unfortunately the state of English in Bangladesh is still in confusing position as it can be called neither a foreign language nor a second language here. The reason is that, though it is used as official language and as a language for means of education in universities, it is not at all used for communicative purpose as the second language of Bangladesh. Despite the fact that English is taught from the primary stage, very few students can acquire the knowledge of communicating in English as there is no real life usage. With a motto to improve students' communicative competence in English, English Syllabus has been designed by concentrating on CLT in both school and college level. But, paradoxically, learners' efficiency in English has been more in alarming position than before since the inclusion of CLT in the curriculum. The problem arises from the facts that the syllabus is not designed for communicative purpose as a whole and though recently Communicative English has been added to the syllabus, it is much focused on examination rather than using in real life situation and most importantly the teachers are not well-trained to create contexts for motivating the students to communicate.

As a result, the students cannot develop their communicative competence. The poor quality of the teachers at remote or rural areas due to the lack of proper training for teaching English for the communicative purpose leads to the poor learning scopes for the students. These very students when enter into university level, the university teachers meet with a real challenge to improve their English for such a really high context which is in true sense communicative. Here also, for the lack of time and inappropriateness of the syllabus assigned, the teachers, though competent enough, cannot execute their own strategies and methodologies to improve the condition of the students. In countries like Bangladesh, where there is no communicative context for using English in real life situation, it is the responsibility of teachers to make the students interested in acquiring English as a second language to communicate with rather than only to focus on passing the exams and to establish Communicative English syllabus accordingly and they can be successful in reaching their goal if supported by the policy maker.

### **1. Objectives of the Study**

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My paper aims at identifying the problems related to teaching CLT based English Syllabus at school and college levels in Bangladesh context where there is no exposure to English as a second language for communication purpose and as a consequence how students are adversely affected in achieving their proficiency in English and how the teachers at university level find it difficult to improve their English to be benefitted in the long run. For this reason, the objectives of my paper are discussed under the following subtitles:

- To give a contrastive analysis of teaching CLT in a communicative context and without communicative context.
- To identify the problems related to teaching English for communicative purpose in countries where there is no real-life situation of using English for communication with special reference to the present state of teaching Communicative English in Bangladesh.
- To establish a syllabus specially designed for teaching Communicative English in situations without having context for using English.
- To discuss various strategies for developing teachers' aptitude in creating contexts and motivating the students to acquire communicative competency in situations where there is no real-life usage of English.

## **2. The Difference between Teaching CLT in Communicative Context and Without Communicative Context**

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001:155), Communicative Language Teaching is now seen as an approach that “aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of Language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.” The focus of teaching CLT has not only been on ‘what to teach aspect’, rather the emphasis has been shifted to ‘how to teach aspect’. And this very aspect of CLT approach, as stated by Harmer (2001:85), is “closely related to the idea that language learning will take care of itself and that plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it are vitally important for a student’s development of knowledge and skill.” (cited in Kalanzadeh, Bakhtiarvand, 2011, p 4)

Therefore, the Communicative language Teaching is effective where there is communicative context because students get the opportunity of performing whatever communicative competence they have achieved or learned. Through regular performance in the communicative context, they gradually develop their skills which in turn reach to the acquisition level. And they naturally acquire the language on which they are exposed to. But in a situation where there is no communicative context, students do not have any exposure to any particular event where they can use their learning. And for the lack of exposure they gradually become inefficient or pidgin in using their learning which cannot be turned into competence for lack of performance.

### **3. Problems Related to Teaching Communicative English in Situation Without Having Communicative Context: With Special Reference to Problems in Bangladesh**

Therefore, problems related to teaching CLT in contexts like Bangladesh, where there is no scope for using English in real life communication, are not one faced, rather they are many faced, which can be described under the following categories :

Problems with:

- # The syllabus
- # The teachers
- # The assessment
- # The students

#### **3.1. Problems with the Implication of the CLT Based Materials in English Syllabus**

As already mentioned above, English had been taught to the students by Grammar-translation method for a long time before the implication of CLT based syllabus. CLT based syllabus was established without proper consideration whether it would be a successful method for teaching English in such a context where English is not at all used for communication. And it was wrongly interpreted by many as having one-to-one oral communication and not including grammar though Littlewood (1981: 1) states, “One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as

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structural aspects of language” (Cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p 155). Savignon clarifies the misinterpretation of CLT by saying that “CLT is not concerned exclusively with face-to-face oral communication. The principles of CLT apply equally to reading and writing activities that involve readers and writers engaged in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning; the goals of CLT depend on learner needs in a given context...Finally, CLT does not exclude a focus on metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness” (Savignon, 2006, p 213). But, due to lack of proper understanding of what CLT implies, unfortunately syllabus and materials both were taken from the sources, based on ESL contexts which are not at all relevant for the students in our schools and colleges who actually cannot get or relate to those contexts and, grammar was highly ignored in these materials.

#### **4.2 Problems with the Teachers**

Teachers in Bangladesh had been in practice of teaching grammar and translation. They themselves were not much exposed to Communicative context, and for this very reason, most of these teachers lack in their communication skill in English. Therefore, they themselves feel stress to speak or guide the students for communication. They were not prepared enough to implement CLT based syllabus in their classes because most of the school and college teachers were not given any training by the Government before including it in the syllabus. As a result, though they were initially positive about the CLT approach, when they got practically involved in teaching, they found it very difficult to execute, and gradually distanced themselves for the lack of creative methods and materials to apply for making it successful. As Li (2001) and Carless (1999, p.23) both stated, “Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by problems in implementation and eventually turn against the project” (cited in Koosha, Yakhabi, 2012).

The most problematic issue with CLT is that the materials should be prepared in such a way so that all the skills can be simultaneously made practice. And for that, teachers are encouraged to prepare their own materials. But due to unfamiliarity with the approach and the lack of time they cannot prepare such materials for the students. Based on a study that assessed



the attitudes of Hong Kong educators toward using CLT in the local context, Chau and Chung (1987) reported that teachers used CLT only sparingly because it required too much preparation time. In rural areas, they are not even provided with logistic supports to aid themselves and the learners. As a result, they base their evaluation on written exam and become lenient by overlooking the mistakes the students repeatedly make. Therefore, they cannot properly teach students what they ought to teach. They cannot engage students in various activities for the purpose of communication. They cannot properly assess students whether they have developed their communication skill. All these resulted in affecting the students in a negative way.

#### **4.3 Problems with the Ways Students are Evaluated**

If we carefully observe the examination papers of English at PSC, JSC, SSC and HSC levels, we can easily notice that the examinations are based on written test, there is no separate question for evaluating students' listening and speaking skills. These exams do not allow for correcting the mistakes and showing them to the students with proper explanations which could be an effective method of paving the way for improvement. For example, many students in Horwitz's study (1988: 290) "found it difficult later to correct the errors they are allowed to make in the beginning stages." (cited in Savignon, Wang, 2003, p 225). This very picture reflects the ways students are taught English as their target language in school and college levels despite the fact that the syllabus is based on CLT. Though the aim is to improve all the communicative skills, it largely ignores the other three skills. The written copies are also checked liberally overlooking the grammatical mistakes. As this becomes a long time practice, students are ignorant of the mistakes they make and consequently cannot make improvement.

#### **4.4 Problems with the Students**

Whatever problems arise out of the CLT based syllabus, these all end up in affecting the students negatively. Ultimately, students are made the scapegoats. As stated above, CLT is most effective, where there is plentiful exposure to the language which is taught. But in countries like Bangladesh, where Bengali is the only language for communication, there is hardly any scope for students to use English for communication purpose in school and college level. Moreover, they do not have to face any situation where they can use English. In schools and colleges, the medium of education is also Bengali. They are not given any proper context to use English by

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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the teachers. Though in some renowned schools and colleges, CLT based syllabus is taught with proper supervision by the teachers, but in most schools and colleges, students are not properly guided by the teachers. Students do not feel interested for communicating in English for the lack of contexts, supervision and knowledge of the language. Adi (2012) pointed out that “In a setting where English is a foreign language, students usually learn with low intrinsic motivation; English may be deemed irrelevant with students’ needs because the language is not part of their everyday life.” Apart from that, due to some misconceptions regarding CLT, grammar is ignored for the proper understanding of the structure. They cannot develop their competence in any of the skills. Though reading and writing are done to some extent, listening and speaking are totally ignored. As a result, though they are exposed to the language from their childhood, yet, cannot acquire it. Ultimately they become shy, frightened to use English lest they should make mistakes.

#### **4. Changing Scenario Resulting from the Inclusion of CLT Based English Syllabus: Negative Impact on the Students**

In Bangladesh, Grammar Translation Method had been in long time practice for teaching and learning English. The teachers were more concentrated on teaching all the grammatical rules through deductive method and students were compelled to memorize all the rules. Though there was no practical usage, yet it was advantageous in a way that students had scopes for practicing or drilling a lot of exercises in writing, based on those rules. The evaluation was done by focusing on their writing skill as there was only written exam. In this way, they might not have achieved communicative competence, but grammatical accuracy in writing was there. They at least had knowledge of the basic sentence structure of the language i.e. English. But to go with the trend of using English for communicative purpose like most of the countries,

In Bangladesh also CLT based English Syllabus was included in the curriculum with the objective of improving students communicative competence without taking into consideration whether it is an effective method for improving learners’ English proficiency in a context where it is used only occasionally. To go along with the syllabus, the paradigm of teaching English then shifted from teaching grammar to teaching CLT based materials. But the problem was that the teachers were not prepared enough to implement this syllabus in effective manner and also there

was lack of materials and scopes for using it by the learners. As a result, teachers along with the students lost track of what and how to teach and learn. Earlier, students at least knew how to construct a sentence correctly, but now they cannot even write a proper sentence because grammar is not taught seriously or with least importance. It seems difficult to incorporate all the skills or teach all the four skills simultaneously due to lack of materials, proper training for implying creative methods of learning, and though the objective is to improve all the skills, evaluation is done based on written exam. Therefore, the teachers also focus on completing the syllabus within the limited time-frame by focusing on written materials and overlooking other skills. Since, the grammar is not strictly taught as before, their writing skill also cannot reach to the proficiency level.

##### **5. An Increase in Further Difficulties after the Enrollment in the University**

When these very students enter into University, their problems amount to multiplicity. They step into a more difficult situation. Since, the medium of education is shifted to English, they are put more to an ESL context than to an EFL context. They have to write applications in English for various purposes, they have to listen to the class lectures in English, they have to understand the texts and materials they read in English, they have to communicate with the teachers in English, most importantly they have to develop their proficiency in English considering their future career, where they have to face Interviews, deal with foreign delegates or to make reports in English. But for long time detachment from English as a means for communication, they really cannot cope up with the situation. Another problem is that this much English is only needed for their education and to some extent for their career, but not again for their everyday real life communication. Therefore, the exposure to English is not wholly for communicative purpose in real sense, but partially centered in their education and career. And here also they feel least motivated as stated by Koosha & Yakhabi (2012) "Without an English-speaking environment, motivation becomes more a product of curricular demands, pressure from exams, and academic and professional success, instead of demand for communication." One of my students nicely described the situation by saying, as if they were thrown in the sea to swim without being taught how to swim. Therefore, it becomes really difficult to motivate them, to make them understand and to develop their proficiency as they lack in very basic knowledge of English.

## 6. Challenges that a University Teacher Faces Dealing with These Students

University education is the last stage for students' learning which forms the ground or the base of their knowledge and leads them to a possible future. Now the present situation demands students' excellent communication skills both in English and Bengali. Bengali, being their mother tongue, is not needed to be taught extensively. But English should be taught in such a way that students can meet the present demand. At least, they should have competence in productive skills i.e. speaking and writing skills. Therefore, in most of the universities in Bangladesh, some preliminary English courses are made compulsory to improve students' communicative English. And it is the duty of teachers, teaching these preliminary courses, to develop students' proficiency in English. But generally, most of the students' English background knowledge is very poor due to the negative impact of CLT based SSC and HSC syllabus. Therefore, the university teachers are put in real challenge to develop students' English proficiency because they had long been exposed to inappropriate learning environment where most of the language elements they learnt are incorrect. Teachers are in real dilemma of what to teach or from which point to start. Some samples of students' level of poor English knowledge are provided in Appendix 1.

Now the challenges, that a university teacher can face while teaching English to these students, are discussed below:

1. In schools and colleges the students are mainly from the same locality and mostly the students study in the same institution for a long time. Therefore, teachers, learners and teaching environment remain constant and there, teachers do not have to deal much with the variety. In contrast, students enrolled in both public and private universities come from different parts of the country, and their basic knowledge in English also differs. Specially, in writing, some may lack in vocabulary, some may lack in basic sentence pattern, some may lack in grammar usage, or some may lack in all the skills. As a result it becomes very difficult for the teachers to teach from one fixed point or to focus on individual problem to improve learners' writing skill as a whole.

2. In respect of teaching listening and speaking skills, it becomes very difficult to boost up their motivation. Though the students find it interesting to listen, they cannot comprehend it. Ultimately, the teachers end up in telling them all the information. When it comes to their speaking, the situation becomes worse as the students feel least interested. As many researches find “Although all aspects of using and learning a foreign language can cause anxiety, listening and speaking are regularly cited as the most anxiety provoking of foreign language activities” (Horwitz; Horwitz ; Cope, 1986 ; MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994) (as cited in Koosha, Yakhabi, 2012). So, on the part of the teachers, it is a tough job to trigger them out. Teachers, after constant effort, when fail to make someone speak on a specific topic, become impatient and frustrated and at one point, start speaking themselves.
3. Though reading is meant for reading comprehension, teachers cannot get enough time to practically teach the reading strategies in details and make the students practice accordingly so that the students can implement those strategies while reading.
4. The syllabus of these preliminary English courses, though meant for improving students’ English proficiency, paradoxically, include more or less the same materials, which they already learnt in SSC and HSC levels. Though the students may not have achieved competence in using these materials, yet they become bored and discouraged to learn the same material. By seeing the negative approach of the students from the very beginning, university teachers also become frustrated, although they may come up with creative methods to effectively teach the materials.
5. The syllabus is also meant for exam purpose and focused in scoring grade. Therefore, the teachers are under stress to complete the assigned syllabus within the limited time-frame by the authority and the students. Ultimately they cannot implement their own materials and own strategies for improving learners’ communication skill which might otherwise take time.
6. The time provided for these courses is not sufficient to improve their English. Each course span is four months a semester. And in one semester if one teacher is assigned, then for the next semester another teacher is assigned. Therefore, teachers do not get enough time to focus on individual student’s weakness and every semester they have to

deal with different students. So they never can properly start and properly finish with a specific target to improve their skills.

7. As the students did not have exposure to English medium teaching environment, it becomes really difficult to make them understand each and every point through English, sometimes teachers are compelled to use Bengali in their classes which actually hinder the ways for their self-improvement.
8. Students' acquisition of a language is a long time process as suggested by the Critical Period Hypothesis in which Penfield and Roberts (1959) argued that "the optimum age for language acquisition falls within the first ten years of life. During this period brain retains plasticity, but with the onset of puberty this plasticity begins to disappear."( cited in Ellis,1985, p 107) Therefore, most part of language is acquired from their childhood to till adolescence, the period which they spend in schools and colleges. But, unfortunately, during this long period of almost 12 years, they acquire nothing , or wrong language elements, which in effect fossilize their learning ability as fossilization is " (in second or foreign language learning) a process which sometimes in which incorrect linguistic features become a part of the way a person speaks or writes a language. Aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar may become fixed or fossilized in second or foreign language learning."( cited in Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985, p 111) . And it would be almost a herculean job on the part of the teachers if they are expected to improve learners' English proficiency in three semesters which is in length one year only.
9. Teachers, though wish to engage students in real life activities where they can have exposure to English, cannot execute as planned, because of the learners' tendency to skip extracurricular activities, the lack of co-operation from the authority and most importantly ,the lack of context.
10. Teachers are not given freedom by the UGC (University Grant Commission) to create their own syllabus and follow their own strategies with the only objective of improving learners' English proficiency. Teachers are only subjected to the fulfillment of the University laws and orders though these might not be appropriate for a healthy teaching-learning environment for both teachers and learners.



## 7. Possible Ways, the Teachers can Meet the Challenges

Now in this critical situation the university teachers should make the best use of all probable methodologies and strategies to make the learning of the students most effective. They should keep in mind that this is the last place where the students can learn the best and the most. And if the students can place themselves by showing their caliber, obviously the credit goes to the teachers. In the present context, though the students have knowledge, if they cannot express through good communication skill, they cannot get a better job. We cannot expect that a student will achieve native –like competence in the target language i.e. English. But teachers while teaching basic English courses should teach it such a way that students can manage to have the language skills necessary for their better understanding of the courses they study and for their better future career. Therefore, teachers should come up with the effective materials and implement them successfully. They should also be well-focused of what to teach i.e what will be the syllabus like, how that syllabus can be taught within the time-frame so that the end result can be achieved that is after certain time they will be able to acquire the skills they need to communicate in target language. And the university authorities, UGC should aid the teachers in every possible ways.

Ellis (2005) suggested some general principles for successful instructed learning which the teachers can follow:

**Principle 1:** Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.

**Principle 2:** Instruction needs to ensure learners predominantly focus on meaning.

**Principle 3:** Instruction needs to ensure learners also focus on form.

**Principle 4:** Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of L2 while not neglecting Explicit knowledge.

**Principle 5:** Instruction needs to take into account learners’ “built-in syllabus”.

**Principle 6:** Instruction needs to require extensive L2 input.

**Principle 7:** Instruction needs to also requires opportunities for output.

**Principle 8:** Instruction primarily focus on creating opportunities for interaction in L2.

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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**Principle 9:** Instruction needs to take into account learners' individual differences.

**Principle 10:** Instruction needs to assess learners on the ground of Examine free as well as controlled production.

Therefore, for meeting the challenges, following steps should be taken:

1. To follow the natural order of acquisition of a child of his/her mother tongue in acquiring the second language as Ellis(1985) suggested through the L2=L1 hypothesis which states that second language acquisition is quite similar or paralleled to first language acquisition where in they are first exposed to a variety of language input, and then gradually produce.
2. To design the syllabus, of these preliminary courses, according to the Natural Order Hypothesis, which suggests “that children acquiring their first language acquire linguistic forms , rules and items in a similar order, which shows a natural order of development,... and in Second Language and Foreign Language learning grammatical forms may also appear in a natural order.( cited in Richards, Platt & Weber , 1985, p 189). Syllabus should also be designed in such a way so that all the four skills can be simultaneously taught.
3. To develop materials freely from any sources. No specific book or material should be recommended or used. Teachers should be given full freedom to use or create their own materials appropriate for the purpose. While selecting the materials, teachers should incorporate all the four skills to be taught. A sample material of integrative task is given. (Appendix 3)
4. To implement techniques and activities in the classroom by following the Natural Approach of Second Language Acquisition as “the Natural approach adopts techniques and activities freely from various method sources which can be regarded as innovative only with respect to the purposes for which they are recommended and the ways they are used. Krashen and Terrell (1983) provide suggestions for the use of a wide range of activities, all of which are familiar components of Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, and other methods.” (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 188)

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5. To make the learners familiar with the language in such a way so that they can understand the message conveyed in the target language which will enable them to acquire the language. As Krashen and Terrell (1983) pointed out "acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language." (p. 19)
6. To recognize and make groups of students according to the level of their anxiety in learning foreign language and treat accordingly so that they can get rid of their anxiety and enjoy learning/ acquiring the target language i.e. English. Teachers have to keep in mind that learners' acquisition may be hindered resulted from these anxieties as Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests "the learners with low motivation, little self-confidence, and high anxiety have high filters and so receive little input" (cited in Ellis, 1985, p. 285) and use Horwitz'(1983) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).(cited in Horwitz; Horwitz;& Cope, 1986, p.129). The questionnaires for identifying the students' Foreign Language Learning Anxiety are provided.( Appendix 2). By working on these issues teachers have to make the teaching-learning environment stress-free so that students really can enjoy the process of acquiring the language.
7. To make opportunities for the students of such activities which will engage them for communicating in the target language for a longer period of time such as working with a foreign customer in any international organization, dealing with foreign guests, guiding the tourist to visit Dhaka. We should also promote presentations, seminars, and workshops to enhance students' participation. As Savignon (1972) suggested that spontaneous conversational interactions play a vital role in developing communicative competence, and this communicative competence, in her opinion, can be observed, developed, maintained and evaluated only through performance.
8. To provide them list of vocabulary and the various contexts in which they can be used. Then we have to provide such materials, which will be combination of sounds and action and in which they can find many of the words. Vocabulary should also be taught with correct pronunciation and spelling as Ur (1996) pointed out "the learner has to know what a word sounds like (its pronunciation) and what it looks like (its spelling). These are fairly obvious characteristics, and one or the other will be

- perceived by the learner when encountering the item for the first time. In teaching, we need to make sure that both these aspects are accurately presented and learned.”( p 60)
9. To make them practice more on productive skills i.e. speaking and writing. For example, “Wang (1990) reports “...the success of communication-based teaching with particular attention to oral competence in a foreign language school in China. Although the goals of communicative language teaching are not limited to spoken language, Wang reports that in this particular setting an emphasis on oral communication was seen to contribute to learners’ development of skills in not only listening and speaking but also in reading and writing.” ( as cited in Savignon, Wang, 2003, p 224)
  10. To teach grammar and spelling with reference to the context. Grammar in no way can be ignored specially while teaching writing. And for improving learners’ grammatical competence along with communicative competence, Nunan (2003), suggested that teachers should integrate both inductive and deductive methods into teaching, use tasks that make clear the relationship between grammatical form and communicative function and focus on the development of procedural rather than declarative knowledge.
  11. To correct as well as show the mistakes to the learners and make them drill till they reach to the level of accuracy as this will pave the way for students’ feedback and improvement. “Ramsden (2003) argues that effective comments on students’ work represent one of the key characteristics of quality teaching. Hounsell (2003, p. 67) notes that ‘it has long been recognised, by researchers and practitioners alike, that feedback plays a decisive role in learning and development, within and beyond formal educational settings. We learn faster, and much more effectively, when we have a clear sense of how well we are doing and what we might need to do in order to improve’.”(As cited in Carless, 2006). Most language learners, in Horwitz’ (1988) study and Kern’s study (Kern 1995; Yang 1993) on students’ views on language learning and teaching, expressed a desire for error correction, that is, they wanted

- teachers to note and correct their “errors”.( cited in Savignon, Wang, 2003, p 225). They should also encourage the learners to review, edit their own writing.
12. To extend the time limit according to the necessity of both the teachers and learners as the teachers need to move step by step to achieve the goal of improving English proficiency. And the time may differ according to the level of students’ comprehending and adapting the skills.
  13. To teach them professional languages relevant to their courses.
  14. To create English speaking environment at least within the campus.
  15. To make the evaluation independent of any examination because that will add to the anxiety or pressure both to the teachers and learners. Rather teachers have to evaluate each of them on the basis of monitoring their everyday performance.
  16. Last but not the least, to develop the system, supported by the UGC and the university authorities. The government and university authorities should have real interest in supporting the teachers in all possible ways that will help them developing students’ competence in communication because that will make the way for their better future career. Wang (2002) , based on her study describing the use and teaching of English in Taiwan summarizes that for attaining the goal of communicative competence, “ further improvements can be stratified into three interrelated levels related to teachers, school authorities, and the government. Each is essential to the success of the other efforts (Wang, 2002:145)( as cited in Savignon, 2007).

## 8. Conclusion

In Bangladeshi context, it is quite difficult to teach students English after they enter into universities after long been taught CLT in an inappropriate matter from childhood to till adolescence which actually resulted in affecting them adversely. However, it is not impossible as the recent research suggests that second language acquisition can be made at any stage and it does not require the students to have much exposure to the target language. As pointed by McLaughlin (1992) “The research suggests that younger children do not necessarily have an advantage over older children and, because of their cognitive and experiential limitations when compared to older children, are actually at a disadvantage in how quickly they learn a second

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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language--other things being equal.” And “Over the length of the program, children in bilingual classes, where there is exposure to the home language and to English, have been found to acquire English language skills equivalent to those acquired by children who have been in English-only programs (Cummins, 1981; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991).” (as cited in McLaughlin, 1992). Therefore, being teachers of ELT at university level it is our responsibility to take the initiatives for making our teaching process fruitful so that the learners can achieve or acquire English for communicative purpose they need, after entering into the university or tertiary level. We should make the learners interested in considering English as another language which they can acquire for communication purpose as they acquired their mother tongue. And therefore we have to prepare our syllabus in such a way which will fulfill all the demands of techniques, teachers training program, materials, etc., so that the learners, though having no exposure to the language can acquire it for communication purpose.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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## Appendix 1

Some Samples of writing from the students of the first semester when they were asked to write paragraphs on either “Our Country” or “ The Person I Like Best” in the First Midterm Exam:

Our Country  
Our country name is Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the most population country in the world. Most of the people in our country is poor. They don't get proper education from the nation. Most of the people in our country they don't know how to read and write. In our country traffic jam is another problem. In our vast population our land is not sufficient to live. Our country have many rivers the name of Padma, Meghna, Jamuna, Surma. Our have a sea that name is Cox's bazar. This is the most beautiful place in the world. In our rural area most of the people are poor. Their prime work is farm. They cultivate rice, paddy, Jute, vegetables etc. our main food is rice. So we are dependable to our farmer. Our have many industries. Most of the industries located in industrial area. Our have many universities which are popular in the world. Bangladesh cricket team is known in the world day by day. Our education

Our Country  
Our country name is Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the most population country in the world. Most of the people in our country is poor. They don't get proper education from the nation. Most of the people in our country they don't know how to read and write. In our country traffic jam is another problem. In our vast population our land is not sufficient to live. Our country have many rivers the name of Padma, Meghna, Jamuna, Surma. Our have a sea that name is Cox's bazar. This is the most beautiful place in the world. In our rural area most of the people are poor. Their prime work is farm. They cultivate rice, paddy, Jute, vegetables etc. our main food is rice. So we are dependable to our farmer. Our have many industries. Most of the industries located in industrial area. Our have many universities which are popular in the world. Bangladesh cricket team is known in the world day by day. Our education



Ans. to the Q. NO-3

## My Country

My country is a very beautiful country.

There are many people and small

country. There are many many

village and town. Dhaka is all

city's father. When Dhaka is my

city Rajdhani of my country.

My country is very nice. My

country discovered ~~199~~ 1971. and

my country name Bangladesh.

Bangladesh out country is ind

Bangladesh is beautiful

Ans. to the q. no. 03

(a) our country

~~Our country is most~~

Ans. to the q. no. 03

(a) our country

Our country is very wonderful country of ~~the~~ world. our country is the small country. but now are here many people of our country. our country of area 1,47,570 ~~and~~ but now are here ~~for~~ fifteen billion people.

then are my country is ~~power~~ are people is honesty. our country



country but there are many  
problems. my country is small  
But problems is not low when  
Big big problems in my country.  
Roads, traffic jam is on of  
them. my country all year yes  
Summer is many times go for  
go all times bidut. no lait no  
Pakha denzar life divert. or on  
big problems is in my country.  
This is a traffic jam. traffic  
jam is big problems is big  
city's and town's. Dhaka city's  
is must one of them.

Ans to the Q. No-3  
The Person I Like Best  
I like most and best of my parents. In my life which are I am now that's help only my ~~parents~~ parents. I am not a well students but I am other thinks are good. When I am child that time my parents are give me all everything what I need that time. ~~my~~ Nowadays Few students, few people are go the wrong way. But I go and meet some of them but never do anything. actually my ~~parents~~ parents are give or teach something the real world world. They say me must come a honor when sunset. they have help to my

## Appendix 2

The 33 questionnaires provided for identifying students' anxiety level measured by FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) ( Collected from Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope,1986,p.129)

TABLE: FLCAS Items provided with five alternatives to choose from, to identify the criteria and the extent of their anxiety level and accordingly make groups of the students to treat them differently as per their needs:

\*SA\* A \*N \*D \*SD

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class. 9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

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20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

\*SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

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### **Appendix 3: Sample material for teaching integrated skill**

There is an audio about interviewing a ghost hunter named Carlene Belfort. The material is collected from [http://www.examenglish.com/FCE/fce\\_listening4.html](http://www.examenglish.com/FCE/fce_listening4.html)

#### **Teaching Listening**

Pre listening task: First of all we have to engage them in an open discussion about what they understand by ghost hunting as in Asian subcontinent it is a very common phenomenon that people tend to believe and many people also claim to experience the presence of ghost. Therefore it is an interesting topic for the learners to hear about and also to discuss. We can also discuss briefly of different listening strategies they can employ for listening to any specific information or getting a general idea.

While listening task: Now we will ask them to listen to the audio and answer some multiple choice questions while they listen to the audio.



Cambridge English First (FCE) Listening Part 4 - free practice test.mp3

1. How did Carlene become a ghost hunter?
  - she wanted to contact her dead grandmother
  - she grew up in a haunted house
  - her parents encouraged her
  
2. What, according to Carlene, do ghost hunters need most?
  - a special gift
  - equipment
  - an adventurous mind
  
3. Who does Carlene mostly work for?
  - people who want reassurance
  - people who want to contact loved ones
  - people who want to find a ghost
  
4. How does Carlene detect when ghosts are present?
  - She feels cold.
  - She gets evidence from her equipment.
  - She feels them touching her hair.
  
5. When is Carlene most afraid?

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- when her equipment breaks
- when things move on their own
- when bad spirits are nearby

6. What does Carlene think about people who don't believe her?

- She doesn't understand why they think that.
- She thinks they don't have enough evidence.
- She wants them to experience it for themselves.

7. What does Carlene feel about her business?

- She realizes she is taking advantage of customers.
- She feels she is providing a service.
- She wants to expand and make more money.

### **Speaking Task**

After they listen to the audio twice or thrice, I again engage them in discussion of what they listened, I ask them to tell the summary, or any information they gather or collect from the audio or even whether they can relate to any of their experiences about ghost hunting. They really feel interested to share their experiences or any story they hear about ghost hunting. Although, the students are not that much efficient in expressing their experiences fluently and accurately in English, and sometimes they even shift to Bengali, yet I ask them to share the experiences using fragments or incorrect sentences. This really helps them to overcome their shyness. Gradually, they develop their speaking skill.

Or, I can ask them whether they believe in ghosts and divide them in two groups of who believe and who do not. Then I can engage them in argument in favor of their belief. This can be an open ended discussion in which individual opinion can be shared.

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## Teaching Reading

Then, I provide the students the script of the audio they listened, and ask them to look for the information they missed. They really feel engaging or interested to find out whether the audio, the way they listened, could match or to what extent they matched or which point they missed.

## The Script

**Interviewer:** Well, we're privileged to have in the studio with us today Carlene Belfort who is a professional ghost hunter! Carlene, that's an unusual hobby, how did you get into it?

**Carlene:** Well, when I was about 8 years old, my grandmother died and my family moved into her house. And I kept hearing all sorts of strange noises in the night. I told my parents, and they told me I was imagining things, but I knew it was ghosts. So you could say I started ghost-hunting whenever I walked around the house alone at night!

**Interviewer:** So, what do you need in order to be a ghost hunter? Do you have some special psychic powers?

**Carlene:** Well, some people, mediums that is, have the gift to communicate with people who have passed away, or at least they claim to do that. But, no, I don't claim to have any special powers. Ghost hunters aren't the same as mediums. We use audio recorders, cameras and electromagnetic devices to detect the presence of ghosts. But I think it helps if you have an open mind and a spirit of adventure.

**Interviewer:** So what sorts of people ask you for your services?

**Carlene:** Well, as I said, I don't claim to communicate with ghosts. I do get phone calls from bereaved people who want to communicate with their lost ones, but I have to turn them away. That's not what I do. No, my clients are those people who hear or see things in their homes and are worried they might be going crazy. They call me in, and I can put their minds at rest. Of course I also get the odd few who are desperate to have a ghost in their homes and interpret every creak in their house as a possible visitor.

**Interviewer:** So you don't find ghosts everywhere you look.

**Carlene:** No, not at all.

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**Interviewer:** So how do you detect the presence of ghosts?

**Carlene:** Well, sometimes it is just a feeling. Something that makes you hair stand on end, or there may be a sudden drop in temperature. But the most conclusive way to do it is to get some sort of proof, so we take photographs, voice recordings and meter readings.

**Interviewer:** And what has been your scariest moment?

**Carlene:** Oh, there have been so many! I mean, there was one time when I was with my team, and my team-mate's camera stopped working. My camera was still functioning, so I took a picture of my colleague so that we could find out whether it was spirits causing the malfunction. When we looked at the pictures later, we could see three streams of energy attacking the camera around my colleague's neck! That was certainly very spooky, but of course we didn't know that was going on when we took the picture, and when we looked at the photograph we were far away. There are some hair-raising moments when you see things flying across the room on their own accord. But to tell the truth, there's nothing more frightening than being in the presence of true evil.

**Interviewer:** So there are evil ghosts out there?

**Carlene:** Oh yes, most definitely.

**Interviewer:** Now, as I'm sure you're aware, there are a large number of sceptics out there, and I'm sure there'll be people among our listeners, who believe that ghost hunting is a lot of nonsense and that you have no scientific basis for your work. What do you have to say to them?

**Carlene:** Well, I can see why people with more scientific minds are unconvinced, as there have been a lot of hoaxes in the past. But now, with better technology we're able to take a lot more data and evidence to back up our sightings, although I realize that some scientists are still not convinced by that. But, well, if they're not satisfied with the data, well I'd like to invite them on a ghost hunt and see how they explain furniture flying across a room!

**Interviewer:** So it's not just a big con? You're not just filling up people's mind with a lot of nonsense in return for their money?

**Carlene:** Well, I realize that some people see it like that, and that's a shame. But as I see it, I'm no different from a plumber or an electrician. If someone has a problem in their house,

they call me, and I come over with the right equipment and some skills, and I can solve their problem and put their minds at rest.

**Interviewer:** So what do you recommend that people should do if they feel their house is haunted?

**Carlene:** They can contact me via my website and arrange for a consultation. And I'm also happy to take people out on hunts if they want a spooky experience!

**Interviewer:** Well, Carlene, it has been most interesting talking to you. Thank you very much for coming in.

Then I also give them some questions from the script to evaluate students' reading comprehension.

For example:

1. When did Carlene Belfort start hunting ghost?
2. How does Carlene detect the presence of ghost?
3. What was the scariest experience faced by Carlene?
4. What does Carlene say about the scientific basis of her work?
5. How can people contact with Carlene?

### **Teaching Writing**

Then I ask students to write the summary or the experience or story they heard about ghost hunting or to relate to any movie they watched on ghost hunting.

So, in this manner, I can make the learners practice and also check their level of competence of all the four skills.

### **Teaching Grammar**

We can ask them to enlist the wh- questions from the script. And also ask them to notice how they are formed and what they mean and how the answers are given accordingly.

### **Teaching Vocabulary**

We can ask them to enlist all the words and phrases like privileged, spooky, hoaxes, con, malfunctioning, of which, they do not know the meaning. Then we can tell them the meanings

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with proper reference to where they are used. And then can ask them to use those words in similar situations to which they can relate.



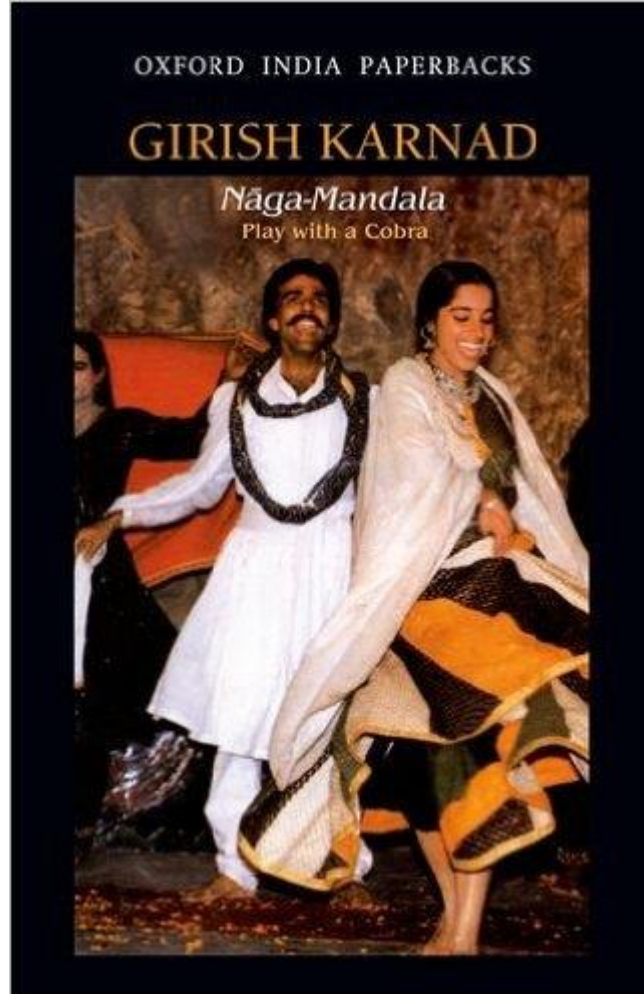
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## Power Structures in Karnad's Play *Nagamandala*

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### Abstract

This paper aims at highlighting the power structures operating in the various realms in Girish Karnad's play '*Nagamandala*'. The effect of power on the lives of men and women is elicited through this work. The condition of a society without power relations has become a matter of dispute among intellectuals. The need for establishing power is also discussed in this work.

**Key words:** Power structures-myths and superstition-patriarchal society-language-sexuality-legal authority-medicines-male hegemony.

## **Introduction**

The play *Nagamandala* by Indo-Anglian playwright Girish Karnad has succeeded in unraveling the power structures that underlie the relationships prevailing in society. The effect that these elements of power have on the mindset of human beings and their identity is analysed here.

Michel Foucault is of the view that a society without power relations is a general idea, but it is impractical. As is explained in his work *Subject and Power*, power is exerted over others to maintain certain privileges, to outsmart others, to maintain one's status or position, to show one's competence, for making profits, financial benefit, approval, recognition, authority, etc. Power can be exercised by instilling fear, using force, abusive language, threat, enforcing rules, etc. (*Subject and Power*. pg.223) Thus, the system of social network is tightly held in these shackles of power relation. The power structures in the play *Nagamandala* are dealt with in this article.

## **Power of Myths on Human Beings**

The play begins with the scene of a temple in a dilapidated condition and the broken idol adds to the feeling of an ill omen looming over the play. The scene occurs at night time, which is once more a sign of an unpleasant event. The night which is a symbol of death evokes fear and anxiety in the readers. The dilapidated temple, the broken idol, the night time and the foretelling of the man's death by the sage maybe treated as the curse brought about by the pitiable condition of the temple. The dejected writer sitting in the temple announces his death that is likely to occur in the next few hours. The foretelling of the man's death by the mendicant is dealt with seriously both by the man as well as by the readers. The man's fault is revealed by the saint as follows

Saint: You have written plays. You have staged them. You have caused so many good people, who came trusting you ,to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs, that all that abused mass of sleep has turned against you and become

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the Curse of Death. (Nagamandala, pg. 2)

We also get glimpses of mythology being uttered by the simple Rani. She compares herself to a helpless bird which looks into the eyes of a cobra and gets mesmerized by the moving colours in the eyes of the cobra. It stands stunned with its wings half opened and the snake strikes it at once. Here, the cobra is none other than Naga. There is a reference that a snake is a powerful being and that all other living beings are created only for satiating the snake's whims. An object of power instills fear in the mind of people and this fear in turn transforms these objects into symbols of worship. Myth and superstition play a very vital role in gripping the society in its strict powers and they impose constraints and prohibitions on the society.

### **Power of Superstition on Human Beings**

Rani unfolds her superstitious self before Naga when she tells him that if one utters the word 'Naga' at night, it would come into the house. Rani forms the mouthpiece of the superstitious Indians. The belief nurtured by Indians that a snake can take any form is presented in the play when Naga takes the form of Appanna to court Rani. Moreover, no matter whichever form it takes, its reflection in the mirror will be that of the snake itself. We are reminded of this belief when Rani looks into her mirror-box and is alarmed at the sight of the Naga.

The Naga cult forms the foundation of the play. In the same way, rituals also have a vital role in *Nagamandala*. Rani demands that her son has to perform the funeral rites of Naga every year. She develops a strange logic for this act by stating that the Naga had saved the life of her son by not biting him while he was asleep and it was indeed a fatherly act. Appanna has no alternative but to bend according to the desires of Rani.

### **Power of Husband over Wife**

Karnad's women are the products and subjects of the patriarchal society. Man's power over woman is considered to be the elementary power relationship in human society. In the initial part of the play, we come across Appanna who over rules his wife, Rani. His power over the innocent, docile and timid Rani makes us abhor the pure husband-wife relation. He orders

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her to cook for him, imposes isolation on her and behaves brutally towards her. He treats her as a slave and a subject, somebody whom he is expected to rule.

‘Power is exerted only on subjects who are free.’(Subject and Power, Pg.221)

Maybe that is why Appanna tries to exert his power over his wife. Apart from depriving her of her rights of a wife, he ill treats her, abuses and slaps her and has no remorse in humiliating her in public. His torture becomes so unbearable that Rani addresses him as ‘the demon’. She has no place in his heart. Rani’s parents are not assigned any role since the day of her marriage. This situation leaves her a lonely and abandoned individual who can be easily susceptible to any degree of torture. The play makes no mention of her parents coming to visit their only daughter.

His attitude towards Rani is that of one towards a material object. This cruel man is not ready for a self evaluation whereby he keeps illicit relation with a concubine of the village and on the other hand expects total commitment from his wife. He locks Rani within his house which reminds us of the old legends where a beautiful maiden is kidnapped by a demon and is kept totally isolated from the world. Such is the nature of power that a tyrannical husband exercises over his life-partner.

### **Power of Language over People**

It has been noted that language also has the power to subordinate and exclude people. Appanna’s use of abusive language forces Rani to be afraid and submissive. The writer within the play makes use of unimpressive language which leads to monotony among the readers. They went off to sleep so often that they cursed the man with death. Appanna calls his wife a harlot, whore, etc. When Appanna learns of Rani’s pregnancy, he abuses her by saying

‘Aren’t you ashamed to admit it, you harlot? I locked you in and you managed to find a lover! Tell me who it is? Who did you go to with your sari off?’(Nagamandala, p. 32).

He uses other obscene terms like slut, harlot, bastard, etc. Often the use of such words imparts a sort of power to the people who articulate them.

### **Power of Women over Men**

The only realm where women are expected to exhibit their power is in terms of food and sexuality. Rani is approached by her husband Appanna for lunch only. Lunch is the only bridge between the husband and wife in the beginning of the play. But, it may be noted that the same Rani has her influence on Naga because of his sexual involvement with her. Otherwise, he too behaves as a male chauvinist by preventing Rani from asking questions and enforcing a number of rules over her. She dares to speak out her mind to Naga only after learning of her pregnancy, as if intercourse and pregnancy form a license for a woman's opinion. She protests and questions Naga as she has become bolder. The yakshi's power over Kappanna is also mentioned in the play. The identity of this spirit is a matter of concern among critics but it can be interpreted as the invisible control that a ravishing beauty has over the panic-stricken Kappanna. The concubine has a strong control over Appanna which has emerged as a result of their sexual relationship and the intensity of her influence is symbolized by the lack of effect of the magical root on Appanna. Even the timid and docile Rani is elevated to a stature of power after she has slept with Naga. She assumes more power when the Village Panchayat proclaims her as a Goddess.

### **Power of Law over Public**

The play introduces us to the Village Panchayat when Appanna raises his complaint against his wife. The Elders of the Panchayat elevate Rani to the position of a goddess just to keep alive the Naga myth. The same Panchayat would have depreciated the stance of Rani to that of a fallen woman had she failed in the Naga ordeal. When the snake slides down her shoulders and forms a garland around her neck, the villagers and the law maker's superstitious beliefs regarding Naga's magical powers are flattered. They at once hail her as their goddess.

Even, Appanna becomes forced to obey the verdict of the Panchayat. Knowingly or unknowingly, Rani acts as an instrument to subvert the patriarchal structures. She expressed her mind and claimed her chastity boldly and relies on the Naga for the Panchayat's verdict. Holding Naga in her hand, she announces

Rani: Since coming to this village, I have held by this hand, only two. My husband and this Cobra. Except for these two, I have not touched any one of the male sex. Nor have I allowed any other male to touch me. If I lie, let the Cobra bite me. (Nagamandala, p.39)

She had made up her mind to face the adverse condition in spite of her fear of being shamed and humiliated in the public. The verdict of the Panchayat that Appanna was to serve her throughout his life and that his concubine was also to spend her entire life attending to the needs of Rani turns to be a compensatory reward for Rani. Here, the legal body pronounces a judgment which subverts the patriarchal norms and it comes to Rani's aid and the public is satisfied by this decision. Finally, she wins her husband, her lover, husband's concubine and her son, all to herself. Here, we can visualize legal forces overpowering society. Members of the society are obliged to abide by the decision irrespective of their personal likes or dislikes. Just as we see in the case of Appanna, he does not require any conviction in the matter that the child that Rani is carrying is not his but he has no alternative other than to accept the situation with a smile on his face.

### **Power of Medicines over the Sick People**

Often, the sick people are devoted to the doctor because of the doctor's power to free the sick from the clutches of illness. But, there are others who are too vain to feel enslaved by medicines.

According to the blind Kurudavva, Rani's husband is suffering from a chronic case of obsession for his concubine. So she advises Rani to feed Appanna with any of the three pieces of the magical root that was suggested to her by a sage. In her youth, Kurudavva fed the middle sized root to her relative and he at once fell in love with her and married her in two days. He did not resist being confined in a relationship. As per the blind woman's advice, Rani feeds her husband with the small piece of the root but his invulnerability to this medicine proves his resistance in being over powered by any other force.

## **Power of Stories on Audience**

The play gives us an insight into the negative effect that the playwright in the story made on his audience. His monotonous work made people crouch in their chairs and go to sleep.

The message conveyed by this instance is that a playwright ought to be dedicated and his commitment can make the audience spell-bound.

## **Power of Death**

No matter how much ever powerful one is, every mortal has to succumb before the all-pervading Death. Physical death, death of vices like pride, cruelty, immorality, etc., are vividly portrayed in this play. The night time at the opening of the play symbolizes death. The writer anticipating his death with fear makes him take an oath that he will not write any more plays to annoy the viewers. We learn about the demise of an old woman from the conversation of a flame. Kappanna's disappearance can be interpreted as death since he gets glimpses of a beautiful woman springing out from a haunted well and at another instance, from a cemetery.

Then, the climax of the play disappoints us with the suicide of Naga. The passing away of the old woman is natural but the death of Kappanna and Naga are tragic ones. Besides the physical death, we witness the end of Appanna's male hegemony on Rani. After getting the verdict from the Panchayat, Appanna's immoral life was also strangled to death. The power exercised by Death over the trivial and insignificant human beings is presented in the play.

## **Conclusion**

Everybody is in the strong grip of some kind of power and the power effects are created by age old traditions and rituals of our society. A number of anti authority struggles are brought up by the characters of *Nagamandala* to fight these power structures. In the very beginning, we are introduced to the writer trying to resist death by staying awake. He also forcibly makes the Story to narrate her tale so that he can remain awake throughout the night. When Rani comes running to Appanna with an intention to speak sweetly to him, he glares at her and thereby stops her from being friendly to him. Similarly, he shows his resistance to medicines by not imbibing the desired effect of the magical root. In short, the play is rich in illustrations of power relations.

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**Allusions to the Passion of Christ in William Shakespeare's  
*Romeo and Juliet***

**Song Cho**

**Key words: Passion, Christ, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Biblical Allusions, Geneva Bible, Romeo and Juliet**

Early in the play Benvolio says, "Put up your swords. You / know not what you do" (1.1.61-62). Naseeb Shaheen compares these lines with two biblical passages that recall the last days of Jesus: Matthew 26: 52 and Luke 23:34 (512). A closer scrutiny of the tragedy suggests that there are other biblical references to the Passion of Christ— particularly from the Gospel of Matthew— that may not have been previously pointed out.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this note, then, is to simply list a number of passages from the play that may have borrowed biblical language from the passion narrative. All scriptural verses are quoted from the 1599 Geneva Bible and every bolded emphasis is mine.

**Matthew 26**

1. Juliet: "What if it be a poison which the friar / *Subtly had ministered to have me dead* / Lest in this marriage he should be dishonoured / Because he married me before to Romeo?" (4.3.23-26).

Then assembled together the chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders of the people into the hall of the high Priest called Caiaphas: And consulted together that they might *take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him*. (Matthew 26: 3-4)

2. Romeo: I have a *soul of lead* / So stakes me to the ground I cannot move" (1.4.15-16).

Then said Jesus unto them, *My soul is very heavy*, even unto the death (Matthew 26: 38)

<sup>1</sup> For biblical allusions in *Hamlet* see "Echoes of John the Baptist in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" (November 2014) and "Further Biblical Allusions to John the Baptist in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" (June 2015) of this journal.

3. Lady Capulet: “*Do as thou wilt*” (3.5.203)

So he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, *but as thou wilt*. (Matthew 26: 39)

4. Juliet: *How cam’st thou hither*, tell me, and *wherefore*? (2.1.104)

Then Jesus said unto him, Friend, *wherefore art thou come*?  
(Matthew 26: 50)

5. Juliet: “It was the nightingale, and not the lark, / That *pierced the fear-full hollow of thine ear*” (3.5.2-3)

And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high Priest, and *smote off his ear*.  
(Matthew 26: 51)

6. Friar Lawrence: “And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced / Above *the clouds as high as heaven itself*?” (4.4.100-101).

Jesus said to him, ‘Thou hast said it: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man, sitting at the right hand of the power *of God*, and come in *the clouds of the heaven*’.  
(Matthew 26: 64).

7. Nurse: “A perilous knock, and it *cried bitterly*” (1.3.56).

Then Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which had said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. So he went out, and *wept bitterly*.  
(Matthew 26: 75)

### **Matthew 27**

8. Prince: Romeo slew hi, he slew Mercutio. / Who now the *price of his dear blood* doth owe?” (3.1.181-182)

And the chief Priests took the silver *pieces*, and said, It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasure, because it is *the price of blood*.  
(Matthew 27: 6)

9. Prince: “Capulet, Montague, / See what a *scourge is* laid upon your hate, / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love” (5.3.290-292).

Thus let he Barabbas loose unto them, and *scourged Jesus*, and delivered him to be crucified.  
(Matthew 27: 26)

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10. Romeo: “Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, / Too rude, too boist’rous, and it *pricks like a thorn*” (1.4.25-26).

And platted a *crown of thorns*,  
(Matthew 27:29)

11. Juliet: “To move the heavens to smile upon my state, / Which— well thou knowest— *is cross and full of sin*” (4.3.4-5).

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they *compelled to bear his cross*.

(Matthew 27:32)

12. Tybalt: “I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall, / Now seeming sweet, convert to *bitt’rest gall*” (1.5.90-91).

“There the soldiers gave Jesus some *wine mixed with gall*.”

(Matthew 27:34)

13. Romeo: “By the *hour of nine*” (2.1.214).

“Now from the sixth hour was there darkness over all the land, *unto the ninth hour*.”

(Matthew 27: 45)

14. Friar Laurence: “Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear, / *So soon forsaken?*” (2.2.66-67).

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, *why hast thou forsaken me?*”

(Matthew 27:46)

15. Juliet: “Or bid me *go into a new-made grave* / And hide me with a dead man in his tomb” (4.1.84-85).

“So Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And put it *in his new tomb, which he had hewn out in a rock*, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.

(Matthew 27: 59-60)

## Matthew 28

16. Nurse: “’Tis since the *earthquake* now eleven years” (1.3.25).

And behold, there was a great *earthquake*: for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

(Matthew 28:2)

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

Song Cho, M.A.

Allusions to the Passion of Christ in William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*

17. Juliet: “It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden, / *Too like the lightning* which doth cease to be / ere one can say it lightens” (2.1.160-162).

“And his countenance was *like lightning*,”  
(Matthew 28: 3)

18. Juliet: “For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night / *Whiter than new snow* on a raven’s back” (3.2.18-19).

“and *his raiment white as snow*.”  
(Matthew 28:3)

19. Romeo: “Call me but love and I’ll be new *baptized*” (2.1.93).

“Go therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the holy Ghost,”  
(Matthew 28: 19)

20. Juliet: “And all my fortunes at thy foot I’ll lay, / And follow thee, my lord, *throughout the world*.”

“Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, *until the end of the world*, Amen.”  
(Matthew 28: 20)

The Nurse’s vivid description of Tybalt’s death is worth considering: “I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes, / God save the mark, here on his manly breast— / A piteous corpse, a bloody, piteous corpse— / Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood, / All in gore blood; I swooned at the sight” (3.2.52-56). In light of the above, one cannot help but recall another bloody, gory scene of a man crucified on a cross whose last words included: “Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34), which are echoed by Benvolio. At the same time the play also brings to mind a central tenet of Christianity, namely that of the resurrection. It is noteworthy that one encounters such words as *Easter* and *Lent* embedded in the tragedy in addition to all the biblical allusions centered on the death and resurrection of Christ.

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## **Expression of Socio-Cultural Rituals in Gojri - An Ethnolinguistic Study**

**Syed Iram Bashir & Humaira Khan**

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### **Abstract**

The present study explores Gojri as a storehouse of the socio-cultural rituals of the Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir. It examines the specific terms used in their language to describe religious and cultural rituals. The study is based on the data collected through participant observation and interview by the researchers.

**Keywords:** Socio-cultural rituals, Gujjars, Ethno-linguistics

### **1. Introduction**

An ethno-linguistic study involves a description of culture, sub-cultures of the group of people with distinctive lifestyles. It is that part of anthropological linguistics which is concerned with the study of the interrelation between a language and the cultural behavior of those who speak it.

Several controversial questions are involved in this field: Does language shape culture or vice versa? What influence does language have on perception and thought? How do language patterns relate to cultural patterns? It describes the people, their customs, the events in which they participate, and their conversations. It also describes the things they use like food, clothing, shelter and utensils in their day to day life. Other aspects of life that could be examined include – kinship structure, religious rituals, behavior, political systems and leisure activities and the use of language in various domains of situations. Other aspects of daily life including social interactions and conversations are also studied by ethno-linguists. Most ethno-linguistic studies attempt to provide some interpretations of the meaning in cultural forms.



## **2. Culture and Language**

Culture has been defined in a variety of ways by anthropologists which, most of the times, includes notions of shared values, beliefs, expectations, customs, jargon, and rituals. Quinn and Holland (1987:4) defined culture as shared knowledge, what people must know in order to act as they do, make the things as they make, and interpret their experience in the distinctive way as they do. Language, on the other hand, is the set of common sounds and symbols by which individuals communicate. Both language and culture are symbolic systems. The lexemes of a language convey the meanings which in turn are representations of the cultural entities (material as well as non material).

Language is the mirror of culture, in the sense that people visualize culture through their language. Many linguists have explored the relationship between language and culture. Nida (1998: 29) holds the view that language and culture are two symbolic systems. Whatever we say in language has meaning be they designative or sociative, denotative or connotative and so on. Culture is represented in language by the content words, the connotative use of the words, the ideas in the discourse for instance in text or speech, the preconceptions behind a speech act, the sociolinguistic conventions and so on.

## **3. Methodology**

The data for the present paper was collected as per the proper ethnographic guidelines. The major research techniques involved were participant observation and key informant interviewing. Participant observation allows a deeper emersion into culture studied, hence resulting in a deeper understanding of a culture. Intense open ended repeated interviews were conducted for the investigation of cultural patterns. Also well informed and reliable informants were chosen for the strict assurance of the representative sample. The informants were trained to systematically report cultural data and recognize significant cultural elements and inter connections as the interview sequence unfolds. Both open and close end interviews were conducted. The close end interviews were based on properly formulated questionnaire. The data recorded was then analyzed carefully and formally written down.

Our primary research was carried out in the area of Fakir Gujjari (Harwan- dara, which comes under the district Srinagar). Fakir Gujri is situated in the footsteps of the beautiful hillock of Mahadev and 25 kms. from the main city of Srinagar (Lal Chowk). This colony is spread over 50-60 sq kms. of land.

#### 4. The Gujjars

‘Gujjars’ constitute a separate ethnic group with absolute conservatism in the preservation of their identity. The Gujjars who are settled in Kashmir are not originally from Kashmir. It is believed that they were basically Rajputs who have migrated for various reasons from Kathiawad region of Gujrat and Hazara district to Jammu and Kashmir. The ethnologist Ibbetson writes that a Gujjar kingdom existed in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Gujrat around 5AD up to 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. With the Muslim invasions from 11<sup>th</sup> century AD onwards the Kingdom disintegrated and many Gujjars were converted to Islam, forcing others to flee to the foot hills of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, etc. and led nomadic lives. Gujjars are settled in various parts of Jammu and Kashmir like Poonch, Rajouri, Tangdar, Gurez, Srinagar, Uri, and Pahalgam. Rahi, J. (2011).

Gujjars speak Gojri which is a classified language. ‘Gojri’ is the identity of the ‘Gujjars’ which separates them from other people and makes them ethnically different. Apart from their indigenous language (Gojri also known as Gojir

bu’l) Gujjars are also proficient in other languages as well and hence show multi-lingualism. They are proficient in Kashmiri, Pahari, Bakarwali and Urdu. This multi-lingual nature is due to the language contact. Gujjars are very poor and backward. They are not indulged in any fixed occupational activity, nor are they into any government jobs, except a few, among the educated younger generation, who work in educational sector. Traditionally Gujjars were pastoralists, but now most of them practice settled agriculture and animal husbandry rearing cattle. ‘Gujjars’ were mostly believed to be herdsmen; many of them possess minor pieces of land on the mountain foothills. Most of them own barrack-type shelters made of wooden logs called ‘dhokes’ on the upper reaches, but they differ from ‘Bakerwals’, (who belong to the same ethnic stock, and largely depend on sheep and goats for their livelihood) who are nomadic.

## 5. Socio-cultural Expressions

Culture is the idea, custom and belief of a community and language is the verbal expression of culture. The linguistic utterances of language help us to understand the culture of a speech community. Language is used to express one's ideas thus expressing the worldview of that culture. Culture and language are deeply related in that language can be used to reflect the culture of a particular society or the language can reflect the culture and its world view. Language is used to express and sustain culture and cultural associations that exist in a given society. Different ideas result from the use of different languages within a culture. World view is a structure consisting of ideas and beliefs through which a person interprets the world around him and also the world view determines how the person interacts with it. World view can be shaped by the culture and language that is common in a particular society. This is because people in a society use their language to express their culture thus expressing the world view in that society.

The present study is a preliminary one which attempts to describe socio-cultural rituals among Gujjars through their language. Gujjar culture is reflected through various folk custom practices like birth, marriage and death. The paper is an attempt to understand the social and cultural meaning creation processes. The socio-cultural expressions described in this paper are the expressions associated with the rituals of Birth, Marriage and Death.

### 5.1 Marriage Rituals

b<sup>h</sup>and<sup>o</sup> sut<sup>fo</sup> kar-un  
pot fix do-INF  
'To fix a pot'

The actual meaning of the above expression is fixing up the marriage. This custom is performed by the family of the boy and girl who are going to get engaged. In this custom the in-laws of the girl deposit an amount of eleven hundred rupees which is a symbolic exchange of their son and daughter. The utterance *ri<sup>fo</sup> humne usko le lijo* is used by the groom's family, meaning that they have fixed the marriage.

lakɽi kar-an tʃal-ijo:  
Wood do-PRS go-PST  
'Went for wood collection'

*lakɽi* in Gojri means wood and *karan tʃalijo* means to collect. Thus the utterance *lakɽi karan tʃalijo* means collecting the firewood from the jungle which is to be used in the marriage ceremony. In this ritual friends and relatives take part. They form a group known as '*le:tri*' in 'Gojri'. They collectively go to the forest to collect firewood (*dʒujã karan*) to cook food for marriage ceremony.

vah ma: sadan tʃal-ija  
Marriage LOC invite go-PST  
'went to invite'

*vah* in Gojri means 'marriage' and *sadan tʃalija* means 'to invite'. Thus the utterance *vah ma: sadan tʃalija* means 'to invite for marriage'. It defines an invitation ceremony. In olden days, the trend of sending invitation cards was not a part of their culture. In those days the invitation was given by paying a personal visit to the houses of relatives, neighbors and friends.

bətʃfo tʃoɽi tʃoli me rak<sup>h</sup>-ã:  
Child 2SG.GEN lap LOC Keep-PST  
'Kept the child in your lap'

There is a tradition of keeping a small child in brides lap called */bətʃfo tʃoɽI tʃoli me rak<sup>h</sup>ã:/*. */bətʃfo:/* means child, */tʃoɽi tʃoli /* means your lap, me *ra<sup>h</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ã:* means to keep. The bride's mother-in-law makes the child to sit in her lap. Doing this is considered a good omen. The bride is blessed with the wishes of conceiving soon.

## 5.2 Birth Rituals

is-na: gədra dʒam gi-o:

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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She-ERG son freeze do-PST

‘She has given birth to a son’

It means the female has given birth to a baby boy.

dʒam gʲo in normal situations means “froze”.

But its meaning is culture specific in the present context which in other words means that this meaning is created specifically by the Gujjar socio-cultural context.

satmoh ko paṅi kal-a

Seventh GEN water pour-PST

‘Poured seventh water’

The first bath after the child birth is a major event.

This is done after the seventh day of delivery.

The pouring of water on the seventh day is known as *satmoh ko paṅi kala:*. The bath on seventh day is considered to be the ceremonial bath and was originally purification rights in the ancient times.

This bath is taken to protect the new mother and baby from the diseases and other harms

paṅi pakko ho g-*io*

Water ripe happen go-PST

‘Water was ripe’

When the mother of the newly born child has to take her first purification bath, special preparations are made.

The water to be poured at the time of purification bath is boiled along with some wild herbs (lous gas).

Then a spade known as /*dedʒ*/ (an iron instrument with wooden handle, used to dig the land) is immersed into this boiling water, as they believe that by doing so the water is purified.

When the water is ready for the bath the utterance/ *paŋi pakko ho gio* /is used

/tʃa:li doh pa:t za:r ka:s-an/

fourty day after hair shave.PRS

‘to shave the hair of new born child’

The utterance /*tʃa:li doh pa:t za:r ka:san*/ means to shave the head of the newly born baby after forty days.

The head shaving ceremony is known as /*za:r ka:san*/.

The cultural belief associated with this ritual is that shaving the hair of the head provides the child with strength and opens up the pores of the skin.

It is believed that by doing so it is beneficial for eye sight, hearing and sense of smell

### 5.3 Death Rituals

pa:ŋi tu kaʃ-jo:

Water LOC remove-PST

‘Removed water’

The utterance/ *pa:ŋi tu kaʃjo*/ is used when the corpse is given final purification bath. The purpose of this is to physically cleanse the corpse. It is an essential ritual of the Sunnah among the Muslim Gujjars.

mezma:n a:-ja ta:zijat ko:

Guest come-PST condolence ABL

‘Guests came for condolence’



The mourners who visit the bereaved family are referred to as /mezma:an a:ya ta:zijat ko:/ For a period of three days the food and the tea for the bereaved family is arranged by the relatives or neighbors. The utterance /tre din ka:r roti nai pakaṇi /is used meaning food is not to be cooked for three days. On the fourth day (tʃɔ:tʰ) the bereaved family prepares tea (tʃɔ:tʰ ki: tʃa:).

## Conclusion

The paper presents an ethnolinguistic approach to study meaning creation by culture. Word or an utterance is taken as a symbolic form which acquires culture specific meanings when placed in specific cultural utterances. This study shows how culture imparts meaning to words or utterances which is different from the literal or denotative meaning. It also demonstrates how meaning generation is culture specific that is something can symbolize one thing in one culture and another thing in another culture.

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## **Personal Reflections on the Concept of “Language Teaching as an Art,” Based on a Critical Evaluation of In-class Presentations, Discussions, and Practical Exercises**

**Talal Musaed Alghizzi, Ph.D. Candidate**

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### **Abstract**

This study describes, evaluates, and reflects upon the in-class presentations, discussions, and practical activities that took place in the course Language Teaching as an Art. This elective course was part of the Applied Linguistics Master’s Degree curriculum at the University College Cork, taught by the pioneering scholar of drama in education, Prof. Manfred Schewe.

**Key words:** Drama, teaching methodologies/approaches, reflection, critical evaluation, education.

### **Introduction**

Around the world, the prevailing perspective considers teaching to be a science whose optimal goal is to elevate the efficiency and productivity of learners at both the pre-university and university levels. This belief has been promulgated and perpetuated in most educational research papers which, for instance, accept the methods of the natural sciences as the standard paradigm for investigation and hypothesizing. The findings of such papers have had a two-fold effect, both on the types of curricula (i.e., textbooks) used in schools and on the kinds of teaching methodologies available for teachers in pre-service and in-service training courses. Unfortunately, the application of such methods has not yielded remarkable outcomes. Instead, their effects can be considered disastrous, as the “results of national and international tests in regard to the basic skills of reading and mathematics along with a clear deficit in pupils’ scientific knowledge have made educational reform one of the most pressing issues” (Lutzker, 2007, p. 10). Some educational authorities have even suggested changing the current understanding of teaching as a science to that of an art.

The viewpoint that teaching is more of an art than a science is based on the belief that “teaching demands sensitivities and skills which are far closer to those required of artists, than

those of scientists” (ibid, p. 12). In other words, if teachers believe in the theory of multiple intelligences, which states that students can have distinct learning abilities (for example, while some rely on visual analytical processing ability, others are dependent on phonetic analytical ability [Haley, 2004]), this implies that they will seek to design lessons that integrate multiple teaching approaches/activities such as drama which comprises "role-play, simulation, scenario, enactment, mime, song, and the writing and performing of plays or sketches" (Borge, 2007, p. 3). Thus, such teachers would focus on each of their student's strengths to reach to their ultimate goal of enabling all students to attain impressive outcomes.

### **The Art of Teaching**

One example of an educator who supports the revised view of understanding teaching is Elliot Eisner. In his book ‘The Educational Imagination’ (1985), he allocated a chapter — ‘The Art of Teaching’— to set forth four reasons that made him define teaching as an art:

First, it is an art in the sense that teaching can be performed with such skill and grace that, for the student as well as for the teacher, the experience can be justifiably characterized as aesthetic...Second, teaching is an art in the sense that teachers, like painters, composers, actresses, and dancers, make judgments based largely on qualities that unfold during the course of action...Third, teaching is an art in the sense that the teacher's activity is not dominated by prescriptions or routines but is influenced by qualities and contingencies that are unpredicted...Fourth, teaching is an art in the sense that the ends it achieves are often created in process...it is in these four senses—teaching as a source of aesthetic experience, as dependent on the perception and control of qualities, as a heuristic or adventitious activity, and as seeking emergent ends—that teaching can be regarded as an art. (pp. 175-177)

Teaching foreign languages (L2s) has gradually come to be seen as an art rather than a science (i.e., drama has become accepted as a subject both to be included in the curriculum and as a method of teaching). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Grammar Translation* was the preferred method of foreign language teachers, who regarded language learning as a mental exercise and reading skill rather than including speaking skills (Lutzker, 2007; Morales-Jones, 2002/2007/2011). This kind of teaching approach sees no advantage to involving dramatic activities in the classroom (Lutzker, 2007). However, toward the end of

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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the 19<sup>th</sup> century, teaching students to speak modern languages gained popularity as a result of the emergence of the *Direct* method (Lutzker, 2007; Morales-Jones, 2002/ 2007/2011).

For Vietor (1882, as cited in Lutzker, 2007, p. 225) L2 teachers should seek to improve of their students' language capabilities, rather than language knowledge, by making the L2 the sole medium of instruction. "This opened up new possibilities for the inclusion of dramatic elements in foreign language learning" and paved the way for other teaching approaches to follow (Lutzker, 2007, p. 225). According the latter author and Morales-Jones (2002/2007/2011), such humanistic approaches, including *Audio-lingual*, *The Silent Way*, *Suggestopedia*, *Community Language Learning*, *Natural*, and *Total Physical Response*, started in the 1970s. In spite of the differences between these methods, they share some similar underlying characteristics, one of which is a focus on naturalizing language acquisition through various types of communication activities rather than structured language learning. Even though these activities did not necessarily include dramatic elements, they were often held in natural and convenient settings to help teachers enhance learners' self-confidence and creativity.

### **The Role of Drama**

Dramatic elements started to play an increasing role and were incorporated into communication activities when the communicative approach ascended in popularity in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, some scholars considered a number of these activities to be not "connected to the underlying principles of educational drama" but rather to "behavioristic approach [principles] to language learning" in the sense that they were constructed for ad hoc situations and required a "pre-planned use of language" (Lutzker, 2007, p. 229). Schewe (1993, p. 144, as cited in Lutzker, 2007, p. 229), who examined a large selection of dramatic exercises in textbooks for teaching German, stated that "dialogues that have no blank spaces, create no tensions and present no mysteries are un-dramatic. There are too many of this sort in our textbooks." The gradual but increasingly rapid development and popularity of the communicative approach in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, which focused on "more open forms of learning," also heightened interest in using "dramatic techniques in language teaching" (Lutzker, 2007, p. 230). Thus, Schewe and Scott (2003) maintained that from the 1990s on, drama has been recognized as an accepted "reference discipline [in the teaching of]...the modern languages" (p. 60).

However, Makedon (1990) stressed that the transition from viewing teaching as a science to seeing it as an art is still challenging in that teachers are inclined to regard teaching as a matter of either/or rather than a combination of both. It is true that whether a teacher sees teaching as an art or a science depends on what definitions they adopt and what goals they articulate, but effective teaching combines both science and art and teachers have to know how they might work in tandem. Makedon (1990, p. 11) further explained that the art and science cannot exist in separate spheres in any creative activity—an artist must employ the curiosity and observation of the scientist to express his or her ideas and feelings, and a scientist must incorporate the imagination and passion of an artist in the pursuit of truth. An artist observes objective reality but is not so much concerned with why the world is that way it is as in transforming it through the filter of subjective intuition. Thus, artistic creation is from the inside out and is primarily egocentric. A scientist, on the other hand, works with outside facts and then adds what is learned to mankind’s store of knowledge. Hence, scientific creation is from the outside in and is primarily altruistic. A teacher must partake in both method because they must be both egocentric and altruistic. For an artist, whether mankind profits from his work is largely irrelevant. What is important is that the subjective transformation of the external world is true to the artist’s belief about what lies beneath the objective facts. Yet, a teacher who is only an artist would have little or no concern as to whether or not his or her students were learning. For a scientist, improvement is the main goal, but scientific methods are formalistic and exclude personal feeling—a teacher who is only a scientist would want students to learn but would be unable to motivate them or instill enthusiasm (ibid, see also Marzano, 2007).

In addition, Weisman (2012) emphasized the fact that,

There is both an art and a science dimension to effective teaching. The science dimension is concerned with a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, including its historical foundations and research on the frontiers of the discipline. The art dimension, which is likely to be the more elusive of the two, is the ability to convey complex material in terms that are readily understand-able to willing and sometimes unwilling students. (p. 113)



## **My Personal Experience and Dynamic Shift in Thinking**

I have to admit that before taking the elective course Language Teaching as an Art with Prof. Manfred Schewe, one of the many valuable course options in the curriculum of the Master's degree program in Applied Linguistic at University College Cork, 2012, I used to hold traditional perspectives toward teaching, not knowing about the existence of any alternatives. In fact, my view of teaching as a science had been formed during my experiences as a student in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where English is the most prominent second language and is still taught using the same old structural methodologies. Similarly, as a pre-undergraduate and undergraduate student EFL teacher, I taught using such long-established approaches because they were the only ones that I had learned. While not intending to imply that learning communicative teaching methods and activities was the only benefit I gained from the course, I will reflect on the practical exercises, in-class presentations, and related discussions; the items I will analyze will necessarily be selective, due to the word count limit of this paper.

In the introductory lecture for the course, Prof. Schewe raised two general questions: first, "What are the concepts of effective teaching?" (i.e., What should we postgraduate students expect from teaching if it is applied as an art and as a science?); second, "What is a good teacher?" We then discussed in small groups, three groups with two students and one group with three students.

Discussing the questions in small groups and then supplying the teacher with our answers consumed almost 40 minutes for the first question and around 30 minutes for the second one. During the discussions, I sensed that not only was Prof. Schewe "withholding information...[to] arouse...[our] curiosity and interest," but also that he wanted to "enable [us] to refer to [our] experiences and understandings [of the world of teaching] before [he] suppl[ied his] (factual) teacher knowledge" (Schewe, 1998, pp. 206–220). That is probably why his role, to a large extent, consisted merely of writing our answers on the board. Only at the end of the class, did he offer his own answers and then read some extracts from Lutzker (2007) to elucidate the disputes that had been going on between scholars in the field for almost three decades. Because the students in the class came from different cultures and educational backgrounds, our answers varied. Yet, in general, our responses led me to later conclude that we all had suffered from old-fashioned ways of teaching L2. Had our previous instructors viewed themselves as artists, our fluency and productivity in the target language would likely have been enriched and our motivation might have been stronger.

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In the second lecture, there was a dramatic, abrupt change in the type of course material presented in class. At the postgraduate level, you would normally expect the teacher to supply book titles for further reading and to discuss the major issues—mostly the ones that remained unresolved—in the field of teaching as an art to spark students’ eagerness to search for their own answers. However, Prof. Schewe began the lecture with the children’s story *Fredrick* by Leo Lionni (1973). The tale is about a group of mice who work in the field gathering grain and nuts for the winter. Frederick, instead of working with the group, sits on a sunny rock and tells them one day that he is gathering the sun rays. Another day he claims to be gathering colors, and then words. When the food runs out during the winter season, it is Frederick, the dreamer and poet, who warms the hearts of his fellow mice and feeds their spirits with his endless store of creative supplies. For me as a postgraduate student, this class was unexpectedly full of joy and laughter. On the other hand, it was very hard to draw a link between the story and the subject I was studying. The teacher clarified by saying, “Let your imagination guide you.”

In so doing, I discerned several similarities between the characters in the story and real-life teachers. For example, Frederick could symbolize the few teachers who see the power and effectiveness of applying artistic elements to teaching modern languages, while the other mice could symbolize the many other teachers who are still in sympathy with the old approaches. Both types of approaches have potential, but to me, the only reason the former has been underestimated is that it has not yet been successfully applied to large populations of students in different countries. Another thing that crossed my mind as I was writing this is, “What if teachers managed to combine dramatic elements with the old approaches?” My supposition is that this combination would not only improve students’ language fluency but also their self-confidence.

Prof. Schewe integrated several kinds of practical, dramatic activities into his lectures. And in some of them, we all had to take part. The purpose of these activities was to show us, postgraduate students who had almost no previous experience with such methods, at least at a university level, how to apply them. In addition, they allowed us to experience the benefits of using them to teach a foreign language and its culture.

Prof. Schewe contended elsewhere (1993, as cited in Weiss, 2007, p. 24) that the perennial problem for language teachers and learners is that they work on literature, culture, and language in isolation. For me, the most effective way to integrate these components was through "Multiple Hotseating" activity, a variation of which was developed by Even (2011, p.

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1) in which one student takes the hot seat in the middle of the class and impersonates a particular character from a story, an image, or a film clip. The other students sit in a circle around him/her and ask questions. The application of multiple hotseating by Prof. Schewe was very dynamic in the sense that six students participated and there was a short story included in the activity. Three female students were in the hot seats in front of the class first, two Irish and one Chinese. The scenario proposed by the teacher, from which the rest of the students had to form their questions, was that of a famous football player who had recently broken up with his girlfriend. Thus, the three women had to imagine themselves as athletic men. To me, the most interesting question was one that I asked, “How many girlfriends do you have?”

The response of the Chinese participant was very typical of what a woman, especially a Chinese one, might answer, “Oh, what kind of a question is that...not right, not appropriate, Talal!” Surely, it was not the answer of a man since men in general have different, innovative ways for handling such questions. Having said that, I think the inappropriateness she saw in my question was driven by the fact that she had trouble seeing herself as a Western man, perhaps due to her cultural background. Moreover, there is the fact that the most prominent reasons for the break-up of relationships in Western society are either betrayal, losing physical attractiveness, or doubts about faithfulness, which she did not seem to be aware of.

Next, the teacher asked three male students: one Irish and two Saudis—I was one of them—to imagine themselves as the broken-hearted girlfriend. What was amazing about this procedure was that my Saudi male friend, who was mostly silent in class, provided the most effective answers. Also, because he and I came from the same cultural background, one distinct from that of our Irish colleague and one in which such impersonation would be regarded as unethical and unacceptable, we relied on our Irish friend to initiate the answers. Our role consisted of adding information that we thought would be culturally relevant and suitable. I think the overall benefit for me was that, for the first time in my whole process of learning the English language, I witnessed how inevitable it is that the target language is linked to its culture and that this needs to be taken into consideration when teaching.

With respect to the in-class presentations, each student was requested to take one single article from the Scenario Journal for analysis. The analyses were to discuss and identify the major points and the problems, if any, in the articles. With the weekly presentations and discussions, I noticed that my theoretical and practical knowledge was increasing tremendously.

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I gained three main benefits from the theoretical part of the course. First, I have become familiar with dramatic concepts such as “playback theater dramaturgy” (Feldhendler, 2007, p. 49) and gained knowledge about using theater in language learning (i.e., its model, developments, and objectives [Aita, 2009]). Second, I have realized how flexible drama is in its potential application for teachers to shape it to suit their lessons’ objectives. For example, Giebert (2011) described a project at Reutling University for teaching business English to university students whose majors were either in business or in modern languages. This was done by means of producing a play or “several short[s].” This drama project was flexible in that it was voluntary and the scripts of its play(s) (e.g., Macbeth) were adapted “to include business-related situations and vocabulary” (p. 1). Although there was no formal evaluation of the participants’ performances, the informally feedback gathered (e.g., the conversations of some students, a guideline-based group interview of four students, and a short online evaluation questionnaire distributed to 16 students), proved a number of the researcher’s inductive inferences, such as the improvement of students’ linguistic, personal, and work-related skills (e.g., improving their English and presentation skills, gaining confidence, and learning how to work in teams).

Third, I have become aware of what might hinder the success of drama in teaching modern languages. For instance, Dunn and Stinson (2011) described two studies that were conducted with high school students in Singapore in 2004 (Drama and Oral Language) and in 2005 (Speaking Out). The studies shared some similarities in the sense that both of them used English as the target language in drama classes and the students had had no prior experience with such classes. The studies differed in that the students were in different grades in high school and the procedures used to collect the data were different. Still, the first study was successful while the second was a failure. The researchers explained that the reason for the former’s success was that the classes were conducted by trained drama experts “who are aware of the nuance of both language learning and drama learning” (p. 360). Likewise, the failure of the latter was because the teachers were not experienced in the sense that they lacked creativity, eschewed risk-taking, were unable to effectively combine language and drama, and exhibited a reluctance to let go of familiar teaching methods.

For the practical part of this course, I chose Weiss’ (2007) article “And who says it doesn’t make sense? Drama in third-level language classrooms,” which described how to design and implement drama in real classrooms. The article explained the theoretical features of drama in education (DiE), “DiE in language teaching...structuring and internal

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coherence...and leading a group in DiE” (pp. 25–26). It also discussed techniques such as the fun factor; using a short story at the university level; using non-dramatic elements (e.g., drawing a house plan); the conventions (e.g., "role on the wall' and 'tableau'" [p. 27]); students' structured improvisations, and teaching culture, literature, and language as a unified unit, some of which have been underestimated or criticized by other teachers. However, the researcher used all of the above-mentioned techniques when designing her three 50-minute drama classes for “fourth year German language students, including Erasmus students, who graduated at the end of the academic year 2005/2006” (p. 28). The results showed that although the drama classes did not significantly increase students' motivation to learn writing and speaking skills, their interpretations and understanding of the characteristics of German short stories improved, as did their writing and speaking skills in the German language.

My only criticism of the in-class presentations is that neither my colleagues nor myself had the opportunity to apply what we had learned in our presentations. While the purpose of the presentations was to enhance our theoretical understanding of the subject, it would have been a good idea if the teacher demanded that we be creative in implementing dramatic elements within our presentations. Those elements could have been taken from the articles themselves or from other sources.

## **Conclusion**

Upon reflection, it is my belief that dramatic elements have a lot of potential, not only to decrease language learners' anxiety and increase their proficiency, engagement, and motivation but also to make their learning journeys full of long-lasting joy and amusement. I would further claim that dramatic methods could be effective in all aspects of language teaching if they were appropriately adopted (cf. Weiss, 2007).

Nonetheless, like in other Arab countries, the teaching of English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) can be described as “dominated by a traditional top-down, text-oriented, teacher-led methodology” (Al-Hazmi, 2006, p. 38) that primarily adopts the grammar translation and audio-lingual methods (Seghayer, 2014a, 2015; Alharbi, 2015; Alresheed, 2008). What is worse is that these methods are often executed with ineffective teaching techniques, including translation, explanations and copying of vocabulary words, texts, and grammar; making corrections and comments; structural analysis; chorus work; repetition, memorization; and reading passages (Al-Seghayer, 2014a, 2015). Therefore, as a consequence of recruiting ill-equipped EFL teachers, Saudi EFL pre-university learners' outcomes remain

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unsatisfactory. To substantiate this, Al-Seghayer (2011) cited a study conducted by the Ministry of Education in KSA that proved that Saudi EFL teachers at the intermediate and secondary school levels were “neither competent in English nor in the affair of teaching it” (p. 23). The research linked such weaknesses to the lack of proper training courses when those EFL teachers were English major undergraduates. Khan (2011) and Al-Seghayer (2014a) also emphasized that other variables, such as learners’ experiences, perceptions, and psychology toward learning the language; aspects of the curricula, pedagogy, and language policies; and administrative processes, approaches, assessments, and strategies, led to weak language attainment for the students. These factors would be resolved if the teachers were more proficient in English and better trained. As such, following an in-depth examination of pre-service and in-service preparation programs for future and current EFL teachers, Al-Hazami (2003) and Al-Seghayer (2014b) both called for the updating, refinement, and reform of such courses. Some of their recommendations were that these programs should educate EFL teachers on how to adopt new teaching methodologies and technologies, use assessment and time management for each language skill they teach, and effectively design lesson plans and activities.

However, the above-mentioned suggestions are insufficient. Training courses need to be made more effective by incorporating relatively new teaching methods (e.g., drama in education) that link the target language with its culture; that intensify the learning of vocabulary, grammar, and other aspects of the language; and that motivate students to practice both inside and outside classrooms. Otherwise, education authorities will continue to observe the undesirable result of producing Saudi EFL learners whose knowledge of words and syntactic rules remain in their “heads and not in [their] arms, mouths, eyes or feet,” that is, “[who are] able to read newspapers, [and] understand writers—but [are not] able to order a sandwich once abroad” (Jensen & Hermer, 1998, p. 178). In conclusion, if the educational authorities in KSA and in similar countries want to promote success for all students in learning foreign languages, they have to conceptualize teaching as both a science and an art.

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## Courtallam: The Spa of the South

Dr. S. Thanam

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**Courtallam Water Falls**

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses various aspects tourism relating to Courtallam water falls located in Tirunelveli District of Tamilnadu, India. Courtallam region located in the Palani range of Western Ghats has nine water falls, accessible to tourists. Hundreds of thousands of tourists visit these falls every year and take baths in these water falls to enjoy the beautiful scenes of nature and to receive medicinal values through their baths. The paper presents the aspects of medical tourism pursued in Courtallam.

**Key words:** Courtallam water falls, medical tourism, herbs.

## **Introduction**

Courtallam, ‘the Spa of the South’ is situated in the Palani range at an elevation of about 167 meters on the Western Ghats. The temperature that prevails here is moderate and cool. Most of the region of Courtallam receives the rainfall during the month of October to January with the onset of the north east monsoon.<sup>1</sup> Courtallam, “the spa of the South” is a boon to Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu.

## **Meaning of SPA**

International Advanced Deluxe Dictionary gives the meaning of spa as follows. Spa is a place where there is mineral water. In general it is a place where there is a spring of mineral water having medicinal properties. The Western Ghats forest which is found in the region of Courtallam possesses botanical wealth rich in medicinal value.

## **Courtallam and Medical Tourism**

The endless scope of ‘Medical tourism’ in Tamil Nadu is largely because of its diverse topography and climate on land and water. In Courtallam a variety of plants, trees and medicinal herbs are found in plenty.<sup>2</sup>

## **Uniqueness of Courtallam**

Courtallam is in TamilNadu state and is a wonderful tourist spot in Tirunelveli district. It is 9 km from Tenkasi railway station. On the Southern Railway it is connected by Virudhunagar-Tenkasi chord line. The town is connected to all the important main roads. It is a well-known and excellent health resort.

## **Historical Perspective of the Study Area**

According to Archaeological Survey information, the study area begins with the Microlithic age. The Microlithic civilization flourished in the area by 4000 B.C. The burial urns unearthed in Courtallam show the existence of the Megalithic people here. This may be dating back to 500 B.C. or a little later.<sup>3</sup>

## **Objectives of the Study**

- ❖ To highlight the natural resources which refresh a human being.
- ❖ To create awareness about the medicinal value of the waterfalls of Courtallam.

- ❖ To promote health tourism in Courtallam, a hill resort.
- ❖ To safeguard the natural resources for future generations.
- ❖ To explore the historical background of Courtallam.

### **Nine Water Falls**

Courtallam is a synonym of waterfalls. The river Chittar and its tributaries during their course make nine waterfalls. The falls of Courtallam originate from Pothigai hill. 'Pothigai' literally means a place where many things have been concealed. The spa of the South situated at an altitude of 167 meters on the Western Ghats just beside the Shenkottah gap in the range known as 'Aariyangavu pass'.<sup>4</sup>

The picturesque surroundings with the backdrop of cloud capped spurs of the Western Ghats lend an unusual charm to the falls. The chill water of the falls, water of Courtallam gives thrill and fun to the people along with physical satisfaction.

The rapturous scenes of the falls get heightened by the cool breeze that wafts in during seasonal months, from June to September. From February to September the sky becomes clouded with mild drizzle which is very enjoyable to all the ages.

From the last week of May onwards, the special rain which is called "SaraI Mazhai" starts. It is considerably good for all living beings; Courtallam falls has medicinal properties, Since the water runs through forests of herbs and the water has therapeutic value and cure physical ailments.<sup>5</sup>

The waterfalls of Courtallam pour down torrentially with varying velocity and force. During the seasonal months the cool breeze along with the intermittent drizzle and sunlight heightens the rapturous scene of the falls. Some of the falls are of 90 feet height. They are Main falls, Chitraruvi, Shenbagadevi falls, Thenaruvi, Five falls, Orchard falls, New falls, Tiger falls and Old Courtallam falls.

### **Bath, Medicinal Value**

During the season times, thousands of tourists from far and near visit this falls from dawn to dusk. The special significance of taking bath here at any time in a day would not bring people sneezing or cold as the water is said to possess medicinal qualities. A lengthy



stay at Courtallam cures the rheumatic pain, chronic headache, nerve disorder and the like. Trekking facility is also available here, and it promote health condition.<sup>6</sup>

The waterfalls in Courtallam not only have charm but also contain medicinal value. The force of the waterfalls over the body tones up the muscles and nerves and cures physical ailments. Courtallam is the only place in Tamil Nadu bestowed with natural and medical properties in all areas from hill top to the floor.<sup>7</sup> The natural habitat of diverse flora and fauna spread over acres of evergreen forest. The rugged terrain of this land, harbouring a fragile eco-system packs plenty of adventure activities. Nature trails dotted with delightful waterfalls and enchanting picnic spots attract naturalists, conservationists, sick people and adventure seekers. With its forests and falls it provides the perfect background for leisure activities.<sup>8</sup>

### **Dense Forests**

Amazing dense forests, awesome hills, wonderful atmosphere, a variety of natural herbs and gigantic waterfalls here attract different kinds of people. Bathing in the waterfalls of Courtallam nourishes the mind and soul.<sup>9</sup>

### **Herbal Medical and Healthcare Services**

At Courtallam, a person suffering from physical ailment is taken care of by the well trained staff providing guidance and information about the various facilities enabling one to experience the unique destination. They are well placed sign boards, direction jointers and information boards which facilitate people to explore the significant spots of this area. It is famous for herbal medicinal plants. The Department of forest conserves the rare herbs in and around the Courtallam area. There is a strong belief that taking bath in the falls of Courtallam, one can get cured of many diseases, especially skin diseases. So Courtallam is called “The spa of the South” because of its climatic conditions at par with the city of spa at Belgium.

In Courtallam tourists can avail of a wide variety of medical and healthcare services from rejuvenating Ayurvedic and Yoga massages. The tourists seek to mix health care and holiday pleasure. They acquire medical benefits by taking bath in the falls and also utilize various therapies that can be found only in very few places like Courtallam. People from all over the world visit here to enjoy traditional therapies like Yoga, Meditation, Ayurveda,

Siddha and other traditional systems of medicine. Just residing in this area provides remarkable pleasure to both mind and body, and hundreds of people with various ailments realize this fact.<sup>10</sup>

### **Endemic Species of Plants**

The unique feature of Courtallam is the occurrence of numerous endemic species of plants. The following are some of the species: Aglaie elalgnoba, Banth, Var, Bourdilloni. Among the large number of endemic herbs, shrubs and climbers allocated to this area, are Piper Barberi, Camble senerio, Calcudensis and Ramas. Some of the rare species in Courtallam cannot be found in any other place in TamilNadu.<sup>11</sup>

### **Forest Management**

A significant aspect of the forest management of the district which needs mention is the step taken by the government to conserve the rare medicinal herbs in and around Courtallam. This is the only place which has been bestowed with such natural resources. A lengthy stay at Courtallam cures ailments like rheumatic joints, chronic headaches and nerve disorders.

Apart from being an important picnic spot and popular for its natural beauty and salubrious climate, the falls here attract the tourists as well as the people who suffer with numerous physical ailments.

### **Medical Plants and Herbs**

Courtallam is known for its medical plants and variety of herbs. The Aromatic plants like patchouli, sureachbasis, lemongrass and litronella are some of the plants which grow here. Cinnamon Kaempferia known as Kacholam, Sugandhavacha are some of the plants that exist in the hills of Courtallam. The sacred basil which has been regarded as a holy plant is often used in home remedies. It rejuvenates the mind, keeps the body resistant to diseases and its oil provides protection against Gamma radiation.<sup>12</sup> The essence of various medicinal plants mix with the water of the Falls which remains as a remedy to various diseases. People believe that the water has sacred value and consider it as holy because the water passes through Hindu salpheres.

### **Benefits of Bath in the Water Falls**

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Courtallam: The Spa of the South

The water of Courtallam Falls has the capacity to cure tonsillitis, blood pressure, cough, cold, skin diseases, etc. Taking bath in the falls provides relief even to the lunatic patients. There are so many asylums which offer treatment to the mentally retarded. Every morning, the affected persons are taken to the falls for bath. The water here passes through lot of valuable medicinal herbs and it has the capacity to cure such ailments.<sup>13</sup>

Courtallam is noteworthy for its climate, scenic beauty and provides a holy atmosphere. People can witness the panoramic view of Courtallam hills while they are taking bath in the falls. The areas in Courtallam are very beautiful with verdant forest and plantations. The soaring hills form a magnificent backdrop to the serene rural setting. The eco-system provides the ideal habitat for a huge variety of bird species. Unknown flowers, trees, plants add to the beauty and importance of this place.

## Conclusion

Courtallam, the ‘Spa of the South’ is special in so many aspects. It highlights the uniqueness of the water falls which possess medicinal value. This spot reduces tension and facilitates peace and harmony to the afflicted as well as the healthy person. Protection and restoration of this valuable region will favour sustainable tourism development.

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## Study of Inferential Ability in Primary School Children

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### Abstract

The inferential ability of typically developing second and third standard children has been explored in this study. There is a need to study about the inferential ability in reading of children as it would predict their comprehension abilities. This area has received very little attention in Indian context. This cross sectional study aimed to investigate the inferential ability of second and third standard participants, to find the differences in the performance between both the standards, between the gender and finally between good and poor readers. A total of 80 participants with 40 from second standard and the other 40 from third standard maintaining equal gender ratio were selected for the study. The participants were categorized as good and poor readers. The causal inferential ability was explored using developed reading passages where the participant had to select the target word as the appropriate option after reading the passage.

On statistical analysis, it was found that all the participants made some amount of inferences but no significant differences were found between the inferential ability of second and third standard participants and also between the genders. Although statistically there was no significant difference between standard wise performances but qualitatively differences was present. That is there was a steady increase in the performance of third standard participants. The percentage of high inferences increased for third standard indicating their inferential ability is improving. Significant difference was found with a 'p' value <0.05 in the performance between good and poor readers.

**Key words:** Inferential ability, causal inference, reading comprehension

### Introduction

Inference is an assertion relating to the text that is directly connected to the representation of the text and that was not given in the text itself. Inference making ability is

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Study of Inferential Ability in Primary School Children

the core of understanding process. Inferencing ability develops with experience and age. Oakhill (1982, 1984) found that inability of making inferences as a cause of reading comprehension difficulty. It is important to study the inferential ability of children as it would let us predict their comprehension abilities also this skill is very important in achieving academic proficiency. Also this area has been less explored in the Indian context. Due to these underlying reasons there is a need to explore the inferential ability in children.

Reading comprehension is a process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning. Inference making and reading comprehension are deeply interwoven with each other and inference making is very crucial for reading comprehension to happen. Suh and Trabasso (1993) found that when readers try comprehending the text, they would make a representation of that text which requires integration of the information across the sentences. This integration happens by the individual who reads the text, by linking the text read to the experiences and relevant knowledge. In order to comprehend the text that is read, inferences are made. Therefore it can be said that without making inferences an individual cannot understand the text or the meaning implied by the author/writer. In 1999, Cain and Oakhill investigated the relation between comprehension and Inferencing ability in 6 to 8 year old children while reading narrative stories. The study mainly investigated whether good comprehenders had a better ability to draw inferences or if the ability to draw inferences aids comprehension. They found that poor comprehenders were able to answer for literal questions, but they were not able to answer many inference related questions when compared to good comprehenders. When the poor comprehenders gave a wrong answer assistance was provided, and they were allowed to search for the correct answer. On providing assistance the children were able to correct their mistakes but were not able to do it spontaneously.

### **Types of Inference**

There are several types of inference that an individual makes while he/she reads. Each type of inference has a different purpose in comprehending the text. Among the other types of inferences one category of inference is causal inference also known as backward inference and predictive inference also known as forward inference. This study focuses on causal inference. In order to comprehend ongoing text and to maintain coherence causal inferences are required. Making coherence is important for reading comprehension. To make causal inferences prior knowledge or experience in that respective area is required. Causal inference

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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has four components namely: temporal priority, necessity, operativity, and sufficiency. Temporal priority means cause should precede the consequence (where inference has to be made). Operativity means cause should remain active when inference has to be made. Necessity means the consequence cannot happen without a prior cause and sufficiency means the presence of cause is sufficient for the presence of consequence (Millis and Graesser 1994). For example: “*Sita had aspirin. Her headache went off*”. The reader reading these sentences has to form coherence between these sentences by making a causal inference that aspirin is a medicine used to cure headache. Whereas predictive inference is where the information being read currently has to be used to make an inference on what may happen later or next, based on their world knowledge.

### **Factors Affecting Inferential Abilities**

Ackerman in 1986 had suggested some reasons on why there is age related differences in inferential abilities. One of the factor, is younger children do not integrate much information which affects their ability in making cohesive inferences. Matthew Quirk (2002) did a study on second and third grade children’s ability to make causal inferences while reading expository texts. The children had to read a set of passages aloud and after that they had to choose the appropriate inferential word among the three choices. The results of this study indicated that no causal inferences were made regardless of their age or skill.

The other factor responsible for the age related differences in making inferences is comprehension abilities. Poor comprehenders would have difficulties in making inferences. Also there are studies that indicate inferential abilities are reduced in poor comprehenders (Cain and Oakhill, 1999).

The other factors affecting inference making is prior knowledge, personal experience and memories which is also known as world knowledge. Certain types of inferences require these factors. For example, in order to infer, for digging a hole a shovel will be required, the individual should have prior knowledge or an experience of using a shovel to dig a hole. Thus he should be able to go beyond the text and make a explicit inference. Thus these all informations will be dependent on world knowledge and in young children this knowledge is developing in younger children. Thus, there are age related differences in making inferences.

Also text recall is found to increase world knowledge. Text recall increases with age (Brown and Smiley, 1977; Mandler and Johnson, 1977).

### **Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension**

Some of the factors affecting reading comprehension are as follows; the first factor being word decoding, has an impact on comprehension, which is if word decoding is slow and effortful then it will affect comprehension as it affects the short term memory. Decoding skills becomes better with practice and age. That is the reason for older children and adults spending less time in decoding and more time in integrating information. Vocabulary development is the second factor. Though the meaning of the word can be guessed from the contextual cues, but it may not always be helpful thus without knowing the meaning one cannot comprehend the text.

The third factor contributing is syntactic development. Syntactic knowledge is needed to find out the meaning of the syntactic construction. Implicit and explicit knowledge is required for syntactic knowledge. Willows and Ryan (1986) stated that syntactic awareness is related to decoding and reading comprehension. syntactic awareness is used to correct and recognize errors made while reading and this in turn helps in comprehension monitoring. It also aids word recognition.

The last factor important for reading comprehension is inference making. Both these components are closely interlinked and making inferences is one of the crucial components for comprehending. Kyle and Cain in 2015 compared the reading comprehension and inferential skills of hearing impaired children with normal hearing children; age matched control group and word reading matched control group and eventually with poor comprehenders. On comparison they found out that the reading comprehension of hearing impaired children are similar to those of poor comprehenders. It was found that the deaf children were able to make inferences but it was poorer when compared with the age matched control group and the word reading matched control group.

### **Aim of the Paper**

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This study aimed to find out the ability of second and third standard children to make causal inferences while reading and compare the same of second and third standard children.

## **Objectives**

Four objectives were formulated in this study. The first was to explore the inferential ability of second and third standard students and the second was to find if there is any difference in the inferential ability between second and third standard participants. The third objective was to find if there is any difference in the inferential ability between good readers and poor readers. The last objective of the study was to find out the differences in the performance of inferential ability between the genders.

## **Methodology**

### ***Materials used***

Grade Level Assessment Device (Jayanthi Narayanan, 1997) was used to assess the academic performance and to group the children as good and poor readers.

To assess the inferential ability, reading passages were used. Eight passages were used for assessing the inferential ability and two passages were used for demonstration. These ten passages were adapted from a study done by Mathew Quirk in 2002. The content of these passages were modified to suit the Indian population culturally and linguistically. The modified passages had five sentences each. For each passage, three options were given to the participants to select the appropriate response. Among the three words, one word was the inferential word (the correct option); of the remaining two words, one was an associate word; and the other word an unrelated word. The passages had been field tested, by giving it to two experienced speech language pathologists (speech language pathologists with an experience of 4 to 7 years) and two teachers of class (teachers with an experience of six to seven years) two and three respectively and the modifications suggested by them for vocabulary and instructions were incorporated in the test passages. The modifications done were in terms of the nouns and grammatical structure used.

For hearing screening Graphic portable audiometer was used and hearing was screened at 40 dBHL (frequencies tested were 500Hz, 1000Hz and 2000Hz). Milestones of

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Early communication Development was used to rule out speech and language disorders. The scale enlists the development happening from birth to 18 years of age [as cited in Paul, 2007].

### ***Procedure***

This study was done to investigate the type of inferences made by second and third standard children while reading and it has been approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) committee. This present study follows a cross sectional research design.

A total of eighty children studying in second and third standard, attending English medium matriculation regular schools were included in the study. They were selected using simple random sampling maintaining equal gender ratio. The participants were in the age range of six to nine years (79 months to 105 months). The selected participants were then divided into two groups, based on the standard they were attending. One group consisted of 40 participants studying in second standard with a mean age of  $86 \pm 5$  months and the other group consisted of 40 participants studying in third standard with a mean age of  $96 \pm 6$  months. All the participants were from urban matriculation schools and most of them hailed from a lower socio-economic group. Participants scoring 50% and above in their academics were only included. Participants studying in other than English medium schools, having any hearing and speech language disorders were excluded from the study.

Initially permission was sought from the principal of four urban matriculation schools. Only two schools permitted for data collection. For the selection of participants, initially hearing loss was ruled out by doing hearing screening. Children passing the hearing screening test were administered Early Communication Skills checklist to rule out speech and language disorders.

The consent was procured from selected participants using an assent form (Appendix 1) wherein, they were initially explained about the study. Following that, their demographic (such as age, parent's occupation, academic performance) details were collected (Appendix 2) by interviewing the participants and the teachers.

Grade Level Assessment Device (GLAD) test was then administered to each participant individually to find out if the participant's ability were in the respective standard as he/she is studying at school (for example to find out if a participant studying in grade two is able to do all the tasks under the respective standard given in GLAD). The participant was considered as a good reader if he/she was able to perform the task correctly for the respective standard while the poor reader performance was one standard below the respective standard. On average good readers took 45 minutes to complete the test whereas poor readers took more time to complete the test.

After the administration of GLAD inferential ability was evaluated using the developed reading passages (Appendix 3). Initially each participant was given the example passages and instructed to read and choose the correct option. Irrespective of correct or incorrect response the participants were explained, why the selected option was correct or incorrect. Following this the printed test passages were given to the participants.

Once the participant had completed the task, the answers were analysed giving score of '1' for the correct response and score of '0' if they had selected the associate word or unrelated word. The scores were then totalled for each participant individually and a maximum score out of 8 was given. On average good readers took 30 minutes to complete the test whereas poor readers took one hour to complete the test

The raw data was collected, compiled and computed for descriptive and interpretative statistical analysis using SPSS software (Sigma plot 11.2; SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). To find out the significant difference between the groups Pearson's chi square test was used.

## **Results and Discussion**

In order to assess the inferential abilities four objectives were formulated. A total of 80 children had participated in the study. The age of the children ranged from 6 years to 9 years (79 months to 105 months).

The statistical analysis evaluating inferential abilities showed that none of the participants had obtained the maximum score but many participants had chosen the associate

word (as the response) including some of the poor readers too. The maximum score obtained was 7. The results and discussion are discussed as follows;

### ***Overall Performance of Second and Third Standard Participants***

The first objective of the study was to explore the inferential ability of second and third standard students. For the purpose of analysis, mild inference group meant the participants scored 0 to 3 on the inferential ability test. Whereas moderate inference meant the participants' scored 4 to 5 on the test. And high inference meant the participants' scored 6 to 8 on the test. Figure 1 explains about the percentage of children making mild, moderate and high inferences. Only few that is 12.5% percent of the participants had made high inferences (scores ranged from 6 to 8), whereas, 51.3% of the participants made mild inference (scores ranged from 0 to 3). Moderate inference was made by 36.3% of the participants (scores ranged from 4 to 5).

The few participants who made high inferences mostly chose the association word as a response when the target response was not chosen. It was found that, half of the second and third standard population made only fewer causal inferences.

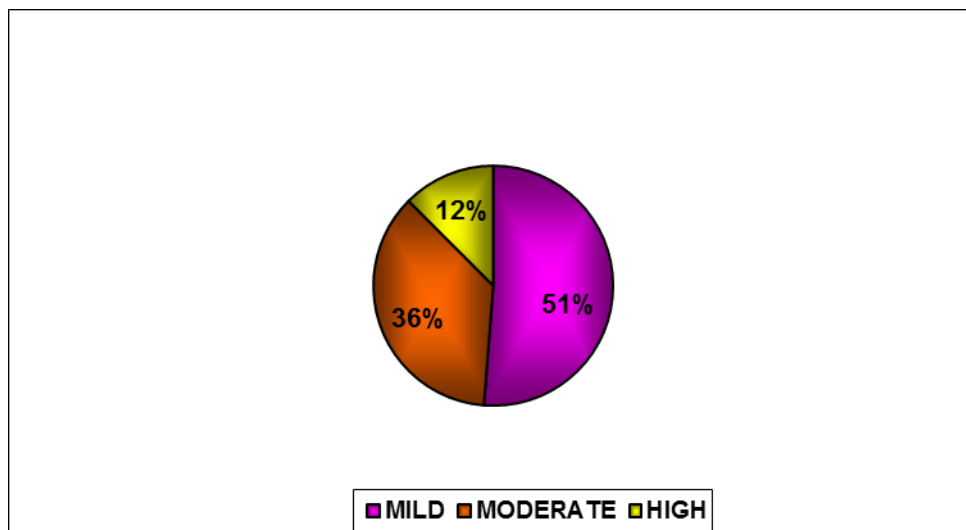
Although none of them have obtained maximum scores, but overall the results indicate that all the participants have made some amount of inferences. This finding falls in line with other studies (Paris and Lindauer, 1976; Paris, Lindauer and Cox, 1977). Paris and Lindauer (1976) did their study on first, third and fifth standard children where they asked the participant to act out the sentences, whereas Paris, Lindauer and Cox (1977) did their study on first standard children where the participants were asked to explain text in detail. Both these studies have stated that even younger children made inferences only when questioned or forced to.

The reason for fewer participants making high inference can be due to the fact that, younger children make fewer inferences and it is also not spontaneous. Younger children make inference only when they are asked to (Casteel and Simpson, 1991; Omanson, Warren and Trabasso, 1978; Paris and Lindauer, 1976; Paris and Upton, 1976). The reason attributed



in this context can be the general teaching strategies used in schools. The teaching strategies used are less analytical.

The other reason for fewer participants making high inference can be attributed to word decoding skills. It has been stated that word decoding skills are slow and effortful in young children (Oakhill and Cain, 2003). The vocabulary development can also be a factor contributing to make fewer inferences, as vocabulary growth increases with age and experience (Werner and Kaplan, 1950). Vocabulary development is one of the best predictors for comprehension skills. If the vocabulary knowledge is limited then they would not be able to understand the meaning of that word thus making it difficult to make inferences as integration of text information cannot happen.



**Figure 1 Overall performance of second and third standard participants**

### ***Standard Wise Performance of Inferential Ability***

The second objective is to find if there is any difference in the inferential ability between second and third standard participants. Table 1 compares the inferences made by second and third standard participants. Here the scores are compared among three categories that are mild, moderate and high inference. It was found that there was no significant difference between second and third standard participants in making inferences.

**Table 1 Standard wise performance of inferential ability**

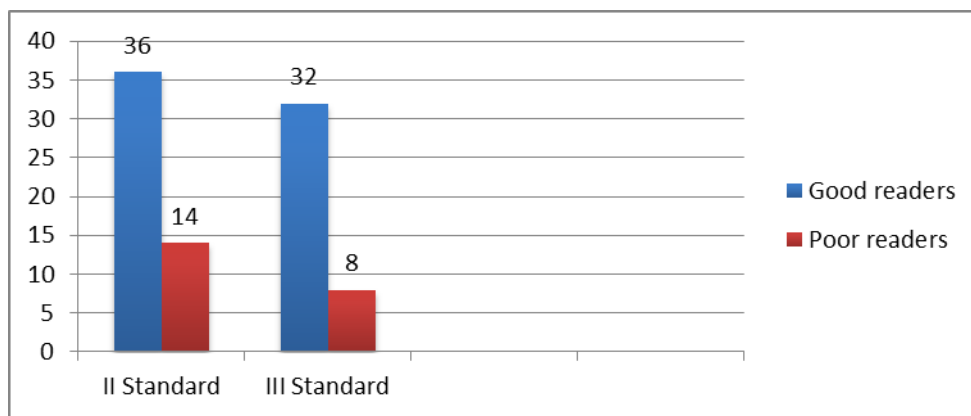
			OVERALL SCORE			Total
			MILD	MODERATE	HIGH	
GRADE	II	Count	23	14	3	40
		% of Total	28.8%	17.5%	3.8%	50.0%
	III	Count	18	15	7	40
		% of Total	22.5%	18.8%	8.8%	50.0%
Total	Count	41	29	10	80	
	% of Total	51.3%	36.3%	12.5%	100.0%	

Even though statistically there is no significant difference but qualitatively there are differences between the standard wise performances. In the table, it is shown that high inference or more number of inferences, which is 8.8%, is made by third standard participants, whereas only 3.8% of second standard participants made high inference. Similarly the percentage of moderate inferences, which is 18.8%, made is more for third standard participant when compared to second standard which is, 17.5%. On the other hand 28.8% of the second standard participants made mild inferences but only 22.5% of third standard participants made mild inference. Though there is no significant difference among the groups but still there is a notable increase in the number of participants making high inference as the standard increases. Along with the increase there is also a decrease in the number of mild inference made by third standard participants; this indicates the number of high inferences made by them increases with the standard. This steady increase in making inference is supported by many other studies (Oakhill and Cain, 2003; Paris and Carter, 1973; Paris and Lindauer, 1976; Paris and Lindauer and Cox, 1977).

The reason for the increase in making inference with increase in grade can be due to several reasons some of which are decoding skills, vocabulary development, syntactic development, understanding text structure, identification of main ideas. It has been found that as age and experience increases decoding speed, vocabulary knowledge increases. Also children start identifying the main idea of the text and also they start integrating text and understanding the meaning of the syntactic structures in the text. These all skills help in improving inferential skill (Oakhill and Cain, 2003). Whereas the reason for absence of statistical difference between the both standards may be because the ability of immediate standards were compared that is why there were no major difference present.

### ***Inferential Ability in Good and Poor Readers***

The third objective was to find if there are any differences in the inferential ability between good readers and poor readers. Table 2 discusses the ability of good and poor readers to make inference. Figure 2 depicts the number of good readers and poor readers in each standard. As shown below, there are 36 good readers from second standard and 32 from third standard. Regarding the number of poor readers, there are 14 poor readers from second standard and 8 from third standard.



**Figure 2 Number of good readers and poor readers standard wise**

Table 2 compares and explains that good readers (n=59) made more number of inferences compared to poor readers (n=21). On doing Chi-Square test it was found that there is a significant difference between the groups in making inferences with a ‘p’ value of, < 0.05, indicating that more number of inferences was made by good readers when compared.

**Table 2 Inferential ability in good and poor readers**

			OVERALL SCORE			Total
			MILD	MODERATE	HIGH	
READER	GOOD READER	Count	20	29	10	59
		% of Total	25.0%	36.3%	12.5%	73.8%
	POOR READER	Count	21	0	0	21
		% of Total	26.3%	.0%	.0%	26.3%
Total		Count	41	29	10	80
		% of Total	51.3%	36.3%	12.5%	100.0%

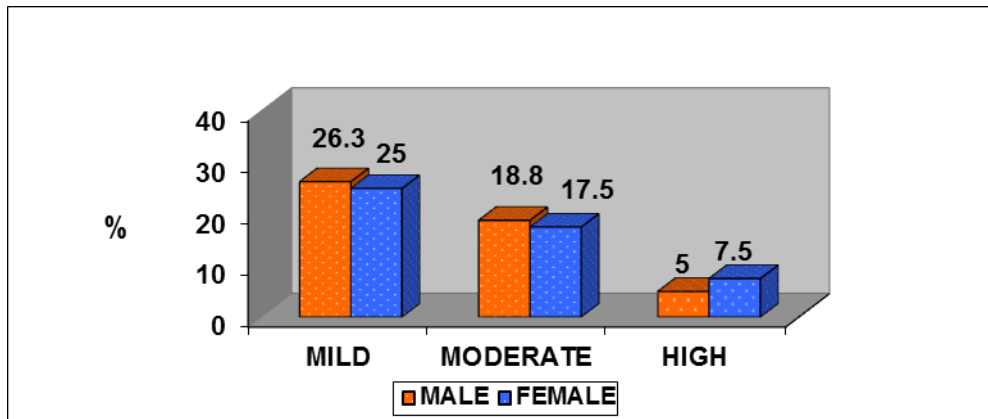
The table shows that mild inferences were made by both the groups that are 26.3% poor readers (the total population of poor readers) and 25% good readers. Also on considering academic performance, the poor readers performed poorly in their academics (as per the schools test report card) and the good readers academic performance was good (as per the schools test report card). Whereas, good readers made more number of inferences, that is 73.8%. Among the good readers, 25% of the participants made mild inferences, 36.3% of the participants made moderate inferences and only 12.5% of the participants made high inferences. Most of the good readers made moderate inferences. Thus indicating, good readers perform well when compared to poor readers.

These findings are comparable to the findings of many studies (Olson, 1985; Hansen and Pearson, 1983) which supports that poor readers make reduced inferences while reading. There are many reasons for poor reader making fewer inferences (mild inferences). One of the reasons can be slow and effortful word decoding skills which affects comprehension (Oakhill and Cain, 2003) and also if the word decoding skills are slow there will be rapid loss of information in the short term memory. The loss of information makes it difficult to integrate the first read information with the last read information in the text as they would have forgotten what was read initially. This would affect the reading comprehension (Smith, 1975). Only if the sentences read are integrated with each other, coherence inferences can be made and the text can be comprehended. Thus without good decoding, skills inferences cannot be made and thus there will be no improvement in reading comprehension and in listening comprehension too (Oakhill and Cain, 2003). The above factor may be a reason for poor readers to make fewer inferences in this study.

The other factor that may contribute in reading comprehension is syntactical knowledge and vocabulary development. Reading comprehension and vocabulary development are closely interlinked. Only when the meaning of the word is understood individuals can integrate the text and generate inferences. For good comprehension abilities, the vocabulary knowledge should also be good (Oakhill and Cain, 2003). Thus it can be suggested that poor readers would have poor vocabulary knowledge. On the contrary study by Eldredge, Quinn and Butterfield (1990) have reported that comprehension abilities improve vocabulary development.

### *Gender Wise Performances in Inferential Ability*

The last objective of this study was to find out the differences in the performance of inferential ability between the genders. Figure 3 compares the inferential scores between the gender groups. Even here the comparison is done in the three categories; that is mild, moderate and high inference.



**Figure 3 Gender wise performances in inferential ability**

The results indicated that there was no significant difference in the scores between the genders. The figure 3 depicts that the performance across the gender are almost similar in making mild, moderate and high inference. Thus there are no differences in the performance between the groups.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the present study has provided baseline data of only causal inferential ability of second and third standard children. The results suggest that good readers make more inferences compared to poor readers, thus indicating that reading skill has a major influence on making inferences while reading. It also suggests that even though statistically no significant differences were found between the performance of second and third standard children but qualitatively there is an increase in the number of inferences when the standard increases, indicating that inferential ability increases with age and with standard. The absence of statistically significant difference can be due to the fact that, inferential abilities of immediate standards were compared. It was also found that there were no differences between

the inferential ability of boys and girls. On analysing the overall results it was found that very few participants made causal inferences and association. The unrelated word option was mostly chosen by poor readers. On the whole this study indicates that there is a need for professionals to focus on developing inferential ability for achieving competency in reading comprehension skills.

## Implications

The present study has provided a detailed profile regarding the inferential abilities in second and third standard children, so this database can be used as a reference for assessment and intervention of inferential ability in higher standard children and also in disordered population. It also encourages professionals, to focus on developing strategies for improving reading comprehension skills in slow learners, children with learning disability and other language disordered population by teaching in a structured manner.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**ASSENT FORM**

- We are doing a study to learn what type of skills second and third standard children use to understand what they read. We need your help in studying about school going children like you.
  
- If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to read 10 passages and you will have to write down the answers for them. The questions asked will be related to the passage you have read out. There is no right or wrong answers because this is not a test.
  
- You can ask questions about this study at any time. If you decide at any time not to finish, you can ask us to stop.
  
- If you sign this paper, it means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign this paper.

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Name:

Age/Gender:

D.O.B:

Father's name:

Father's occupation:

Mother's name:

Mother's occupation:

Grade:

School name:

General health and associated health conditions (hearing loss, misarticulations, dysfluencies, language problems):

Academic performance:

## APPENDIX 1

### PASSAGES FOR EVALUATING INFERENCE ABILITY

Every dolphin is different.	Ocean
Some are shy.	Grass
Some are naughty.	Hurt
One dolphin liked to pull the tail feathers of a pelican.	
The pelican didn't think it was funny.	
A bird's beak helps it get food and eat it.	Fly
Parrots have short, sharp beaks.	Crack
They use their beaks to open hard nuts.	Stone
Robins have small, pointed beaks.	
They use their beaks to catch worms.	
Dolphins can be smart.	Line
One day a man came to watch her.	Night
The Dolphin flipped her ring to him.	Remember
Two years later, the same man came back.	
The minute the Dolphin saw him she tossed the ring right to him.	
A baby whale cannot swim very fast.	Real
A big hungry shark is waiting for a chance to attack.	Protect
Mother whales can swim fast.	Father
When his mother sees the shark, she rushes straight at it.	
The baby whale is safe again.	
Sea otters live and sleep in the sea.	Float
They just close their eyes and go to sleep on their backs.	Ice
The water where the sea otters live is cold.	Sick
They like being in cold water.	

They race and chase each other.

Even small bugs can be strong enough to fight their enemies. Escape

Some of them can run or jump quickly, while others can fly away. Bee

A bug may be able to sting enemies, or have strong jaws to bite them. Road

Even though, lots of bugs are killed.

Bugs are born by the thousands.

Some spiders spin tangled webs. Food

When an insect is trapped, the spiders quickly run to get it. Black

Other spiders weave sheet webs. Fast

The spider hangs upside down under the web

When an insect enters the sheet web, the spider quickly pulls it through.

In winters the days grow short. Tall

The nights grow long. Walk

Leaves have fallen from the trees. Die

There are no berries on the bushes.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Study of Inferential Ability in Primary School Children

## Women as Revolutionaries in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*

M. Vijayalakshmi, M.A. M.Phil.

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Amitav Ghosh

Courtesy: [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

### Abstract

The article proposes to study Ghosh's revolutionary women characters with special reference to *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*. Ghosh through his women characters has attempted to explore the emotional world of women that helps the readers to understand the feminine sensibility as well as psychology. His women characters are unique as they do not come under the term 'stereotypes'. In *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*, women are presented as courageous as men since they fight the challenges of widowhood, poverty and injustice. In the novel *The Shadow Lines*, Tha'mma is a revolutionary character. She has strong nationalist feelings. During the time of Indo-Pakistan war she becomes very patriotic. She condemns all those who choose to live beyond the border. Ila, a woman of modern civilization, has a different concept of freedom. She is stubborn and lives in her own world. She chooses to live in London, for she wants to be free of the rigidities of Indian tradition and culture. May is another



revolutionary character in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. In *The Hungry Tide*, Kusum is a revolutionary woman fighting for the rights of Dalit refugees. She protests against the government until the last moment and sacrifices herself for the underprivileged sections of the society. Nilima, as a revolutionary, raises her voice against the corrupt prawn traders whose business thwarts the livelihood of local fishermen. Like Nilima, Piya also as a revolutionary works for the fisher men by joining hands with Nilima's Badabon trust. Thus in the novels *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh presents women as revolutionaries and makes them stand out as leading spirits.

**Key words:** Amitav Ghosh, women characters, *The Shadow Lines*, *The Hungry Tide*,

### **Amitav Ghosh's Fiction**

Amitav Ghosh's fiction is characterized by themes that go side by side with post colonialism and it may be labeled as historical novels. His fiction reveals that the novelist's involvement with history is his prime obsession. His fiction is imbued with both political and historical consciousness. He is a novelist who virtually bends his novels to the needs of history; they largely derive their purpose and shape from it. He shows great depth in dealing with history, myth and contemporary events.

### **Women Characters in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction**

In his novels, Amitav Ghosh portrays women as leading spirits. They neither fight against men with their feminine sensibility nor live as subjugated women in the male dominated society. But they try to assert their rights as human beings in the society with the help of education, employment and their rebellious attitude towards life. Amitav Ghosh through his women characters has attempted to explore the emotional of women that helps the readers to understand the feminine sensibility as well as psychology. world His women characters are unique as they do not come under the term 'stereotypes'. They fight for various causes and eventually have become revolutionaries. Amitav Ghosh's women characters in his novels, *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide* are portrayed as revolutionaries.

Amitav Ghosh portrays his women sensitively; in fact they are the leading spirits in his fiction. They are distinct portrayals of a cultural construction. Cultural

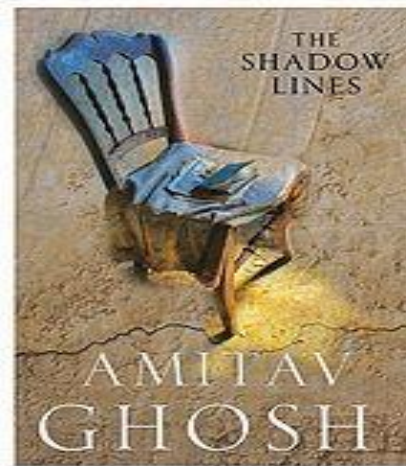
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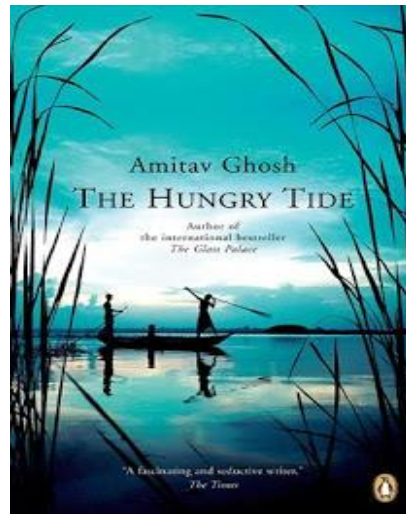
constructs also help to juxtapose feminine positions, and feministic interpretations can emerge even through absence and negation. He presents his women neither as overt radical feminists nor as the stereotypical images of Sita and Savitri.

(Jaishree 264)



### **The Story of *The Shadow Lines***

Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is a story of a middle class Indian family based in Calcutta. The boy narrator presents the views of the members of his immediate and extended family, giving each a well defined character. Tha'mma, narrator's grandmother represents the idea of the idealism and the enthusiasm with which the people worked towards nation building just after independence. It is chiefly through her character that Ghosh delivers the most powerful message of the novel - the futility of creating nation states, the absurdity of drawing lines which arbitrarily divide people when their memories remain undivided. Ghosh gives adequate space to the British Price family and unlike most authors, he does not stereotype them.



### **The Story of *The Hungry Tide***

Amitav Ghosh's another novel *The Hungry Tide* tells the story of Indo-American cetologist Piyali Roy, who comes to the tide country of the Sundarbans in Bengal to study river dolphins. She is drawn into a curious love triangle involving the local fisherman Fokir, who helps her to locate dolphins in remote Garjantola pool; and Kanai Dutt, a Delhi dilettante, who is visiting his aunt, Nilima. Years earlier, Nilima's husband, the Marxist teacher Nirmal, had become involved in aiding and assisting a displaced refugee population who had settled on the Sundarbans island of Morichjhapi. Among these refugees was Kusum, mother of an infant Fokir. In another love triangle of sorts, Nirmal had been motivated to help the refugees out of love for Kusum, who was being assisted by Horen, a boatman. *The Hungry Tide* is surely concerned with more personal division between men and women. This novel is also marked with journeys, visits and human movements across time and space. It also captures the problems and concerns regarding borders such as nationality and gender.

### **Tha'mma in *The Shadow Lines***

In *The Shadow Lines* Tha'mma is a very important character. She is the grandmother of the narrator. "In her fierce moral standards, Spartan outlook of life, intolerance of any nonsense—real and imagined, she is as real as any patriarch or matriarch worth the name" (Dewani 15). While Tha'mma was studying at College in Dhaka, she had wanted to work for the terrorists – to run errands for them, to cook their food, to wash their clothes and to render some help—because

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the terrorists were working for freedom. Tha'mma had known the terrorist movement among the nationalists in Bengal.

The terrorist societies like Anushilan and Jugantar recruited their cadres from among her fellow students to assassinate the British officials and police officers. She tells her grandson the story of how one of her classmates was arrested during a police raid in their college. He seemed an unlikely terrorist, shy and beard, but while being arrested he does not show his fear. She adds that she had dreamt of him:

If only she had known, if only she had been working with him, she would have warned him somehow, she would have saved him, she would have gone to Khulna with him too, and stood at his side, with a pistol in her hands, waiting for that English magistrate.... (SL 39)

When the astonished narrator asks her whether she would have killed the English magistrate, she replies, "Yes, I would have killed him. It was for our freedom. I would have done anything to be free" (SL 39). Though she does not become a revolutionary in the literary sense, she nurtured a desire to help those who were fighting for India's Independence.

### **Tha'mma as the Main Motivating Force in the Novel**

Tha'mma is the guardian angel of her family and it is due to her watchfulness that the family enjoys a good life. She wants to give certain moral values to her family. She wants her family not to make compromises with self-respect. She is a conservative and reactionary. She thinks that anybody who does not live according to the old accepted principles of life is degraded. "Tha'mma's character is a tribute to so many unrecognized women in this country who are holding the world of their children and near and dear ones together by their toil and labour" (Tiwari, 34).

Tha'mma is the main motivating force in the novel. When her relative shows her the post-card, she has received from Jethamoshai, her uncle, she becomes so emotional that tears starts rolling down her cheeks. She comes to know from the card that Mrinmoyee, one of Jethamoshai's sons is living in Calcutta with his family. She decides to contact him, forgetting her differences with that family. "It does not matter whether we recognize each other or not. We

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are the same flesh, the same blood, the same bone and now at last, after all these years, perhaps we will be able to make amends for all that bitterness and hatred” (SL 129). Her uncle, Jethamoshai is still living in Dhaka, his own ancestral house. She plans to meet him and to bring him to India. She loves Dhaka and cherishes memory of her paternal home all her life. When she goes to Dhaka to fetch her uncle Jethamoshai, she becomes excited to see her birth place. But when she enters Dhaka, she searches her house in Dhaka:

My grandmother, thrown into a sudden panic, began to protest. This couldn't be it, she cried. It can't be our Lane, for where's Kana babu's sweet shop? That shop over there is selling hammers and hardware: where's the sweet shop gone? (SL 206).

When Tha'mma enters Dhaka, she comes to know that the place has become a part of another nation, Pakistan. The big political event – the Partition in 1947- makes Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan and divided her from her native city.

Dhaka has been Tha'mma's place of birth, but her nationality is Indian. As a young girl, she had thought of fighting for freedom in East Bengal. But those very same people for whom she had been willing to sacrifice her life are enemies now in 1964. Her disillusionment increases when she has to mention 'Dhaka', East Pakistan, as her place of birth on the passport – form and then state Indian as her nationality. As a revolutionary, Tha'mma brings light to the line on the map that do not actually cut one part of the land off from the other or destroy cultural unity between the people. She raises the important question of boundaries between India and Pakistan and is surprised to learn that there are not any trenches or soldiers or guns pointing at each other or even just barren strips of land, like no-man's land.

Pakistan is carved out of India on the basis of two-nation theory which created ill-will between Hindus and Muslims. Both India and Pakistan reacts with identical sense of horror and outrage.

Ghosh demonstrates how national identity is created in an international context that demands that we conform to our nationality. Because India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are newfound nationalities that were previously united, Ghosh's text

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dramatically demonstrates how quickly people are separated by the creation of borderlines. (Halloran 47)

Therefore, national feelings still continue to inspire Tha'mma. She still identifies herself with the country she belongs to. When the narrator's father explains to Tha'mma that there is nothing that divides East Pakistan and India, Tha'mma is further puzzled and asks that if there is no difference, both sides will be the same: "If there aren't any trenches or anything, how are people to know? I mean, where's the difference then? And if there's no difference both sides will be the same, it will be just like it used before" (SL 151). When Tha'mma persuades Jethamosai to go to India, he is not ready to leave his place.

### **Indo-Pak War**

During the time of Indo-Pakistan war Tha'mma becomes very patriotic. She gives away her chain with ruby pendent, which she prizes above all things because she wears that chain as a memento of her late husband, to the war fund because she has been inspired by patriotism. She tells to her grandson, "I gave it away... I gave it to the fund for the war. I had to, don't you see? For your sake; for your freedom. We have to kill them before they kill us" (SL 237). Going to Dhaka was her sole plan and so she is responsible for the loss of her own blood relations. Despite the huge loss, she cannot cope up with the reality and so donates her gold chain to the war fund. Tha'mma is also ready to donate her blood for the war fund. "I must get to the hospital... I mustn't waste all this blood. I can donate it to the war fund" (SL 237).

### **A Fine Revolutionary**

Through Tha'mma's character, the novel delivers the most powerful message that the futility of creating nation states, the absurdity of drawing lines which arbitrarily divide people when their memories remain undivided. In spite of all that, Tha'mma remains a fine revolutionary in the novel. She says "I would have done anything to be free" (SL 39). Though she is an old woman without strength, she fights for her country. Her blind love for her country makes her a revolutionary in the novel. "Tha'mma is another pillar of this novel ... Ghosh depicts all the peculiarities of a suffering, braving middle class Indian. For all her extremes, she is a real life heroine" (Tiwari 33).

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### **Ila – Another Character in *The Shadow Lines***

Like Tha'mma, Ila is another important character in the novel. As a woman of modern civilization, she wants to be free of commitments, of relationships, of duties and of everything. She is stubborn and lives in her own world. She is very positive, firm and determined to preserve her marital relations.

Ila is a typical drawing of a modern, beautiful, attractive girl. She wears the western dresses and looks like a foreigner. She lives life in full measure, without caring about the Indian traditions. It makes her to delink from her people both in thought and culture. She finds that life in Calcutta is dull and boring. In order to relieve herself of that boredom she takes Robi and the narrator to a night club. If she is in a mood to dance, she does not feel any compunction in dancing with a stranger. She does not even care how her uncle Robi will feel. When her uncle does not permit her to dance with a stranger, she cries out, "Do you see why I have chosen to live in London? ... it's only because I want to be free ... free of your bloody culture" (SL 88).

Ila is very strongly concerned with the welfare of the people. It makes her to affiliate with the Anti-Nazi League group. The members of that group are also very fond of her and will talk of her as their own upper class Asian Marxist. They see her as a link with the Fabians. Ila works in an organization called Save the Children Fund and is fighting for Indian Immigrants in London. She lives in London in a frugal manner in a tiny room in a house which she has to share with five other students. She has to cook and clean and do all kind of things though she has a dozen of servants at home to do all the things for her and works for Indians in England.

### **May: Another Revolutionary in the Novel**

Like Ila and Tha'mma, May is another revolutionary in the novel. She is bold and practical in her statements. She is actually conscious of her duties and faults. She is outright in expressing her emotions. As a British woman, her interpretation of people, places and events of India is different. She does not understand that the statue of Queen Victoria belongs to Indian history and its people. But when she is confronted by a beggar, she gives money to her. She also has the thought; "it was an act of helplessness. She wasn't used to being helpless" (SL 166). This

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poverty and illness in India shocks her. Her idealism will not permit such injustice to exist, but she understands that she can do little for the poor.

May has a heart full of love for all living beings. She cannot see anybody writhing in pain. For example, while going on a drive with Tridib, she sees that a dog is writhing in pain. She asks Tridib to stop the car and asks him to relieve the dog of its pain. When Tridib says that they will not be able to do anything, she scolds him. “Can’t you help a bit? She said. All you’re good for is words. Can’t you ever do anything?” (SL 173) She takes out her pen-knife and stabbed the dog. So the dog gets free from its pain. Tridib accepts that she does the right thing and that she need not be apologetic about the inconvenience she causes. She also becomes a part of an Orchestra about which the narrator read in the Guardian. She admits that she is working with the Orchestra because she has to make a living somehow. Then she is however actively engaged in the work of relief agencies. She is also working on a project for providing houses for the survivors of an earthquake in Central America.

May Price went along with Tridib to bring Jethamoshai from Dhaka when there had been a communal riots going on. While they were returning in a car, Jethamoshai was brought in an auto rickshaw. When the rickshaw was attacked by frenzied rioters, May cries in horror that they are acting selfishly and saving themselves while endangering Jethamoshai. Tridib gets down from the car to save Jethamoshai and he is cut ear to ear by Muslim rioters. The riotous mob kills Tridib when he follows May to save the old man. His end is brutal. In an act to save others, he dies.

May is on a penance ever since Tridib’s death. For a long time she held herself responsible for the death of Tridib. She asks the narrator, “Do you think I killed him?” (SL 251). She sleeps on floor. She fasts. She works for earthquake relief. She collects money from streets with all her banners and posters for social welfare. She suffers his death like hell. She is literally on a self-torturing spree. At the end of the novel she realises the meaning of Tridib’s sacrifice. She frees herself from the burden of guilt. “He gave himself up; it was a sacrifice. I know I can’t understand it, I know I mustn’t try, for any real sacrifice is a mystery” (SL 251-252). To Tiwari,

May is a girl with an extra edge. Her sense of justice, right and wrong is developed. In a very simple explanation to Tridib's death, I wish to say that May's desire to save the weak worked as a catalyst on Tridib's mind when he got out of the Mercedes in Dhaka among rioters to save the old, invalid Jethamoshai. (28)

May is a virtuous, innocent and pure woman. She is friend to all and has malice for none. It makes her a revolutionary in the novel. She helps others wherever she gets chance and has a positive attitude towards her life. "May embodies the qualities of a savior, nurturer and a protector – she is politically active in a positive way... one of the few characters who takes responsibility for her action" (Multani 165).

### **Impact of Women Characters in *The Hungry Tide***

All the three main women characters – Tha'mma, Ila and May - have played very important roles in *The Shadow Lines*. Even the male characters also have been influenced by these female characters in this novel. Likewise in *The Hungry Tide* also Amitav Ghosh presents women as revolutionaries. Mainly Kusum, Nilima and Piya come under the term revolutionaries because they fight for the betterment of human society in the novel.

### **Life of the Refugees in *The Hungry Tide***

In the novel *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh shows the condition of the refugees who have flooded into the state of west Bengal. The dalit refugees, being penniless and backward, threaten to be a bigger burden on Bengal's meagre resources. Therefore they are dealt with severity. The representative leaders of the refugees have been promised some land in Sundarbans for the rehabilitation of East Bengal refugees, when the communists acquire people's mandate in upcoming elections. But when they come to power they do not put their words into practice. Believing their words to be true they start to migrate from Dandakaranya to West Bengal. In their migration, some refugees find their way to Morichjhapi, one of the islands of Sundarbans. They settle there and put their effort and work hard to reconstruct their world on their own accord. They clear the land for agriculture and begin to fish and farm.

### **A Woman Refugee Character Kusum**

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Among the refugees, there is a woman called Kusum. Though her life represents the fate of migrant marginal community, she makes herself a revolutionary and fights for the sake of the refugees. Born in Sundarbans, she was orphaned and left under the care of Nilima's Trust. When fate chased her, she left Lucibari for Dhanbad, then in Bihar. In Dhanbad, she married Rajen, a station vendor and she gave birth to a son, Fokir. After Rajen was killed in a train accident, she came to settle down in Morichjhapi along with other refugees, putting her faith in the basic goodness of the people who symbolise government. But the government declares that the refugees have violated the Forest Acts and have occupied a territory reserved for Royal Bengal Tigers and thereby disturbs the habitat of the species and endangering the ecological balance of the region. When they confront their opposition, the police open fire which is leading to the death of many islanders. Kusum, an Indian deciding to fight for the cause of the refugees, feels aghast at the irrationality of the nation state, which is willing to butcher people to save animals.

Hunger does not leave Kusum a weak person. She decides to protest the government until the last moment. She not only earns the bread for her family but participates in a risky adventure against the government. It makes her to unify with a place and the psychic unity with the needy. It becomes her hub of freedom. This self-assertion leads her to the tide country and makes her to stretch out her helping hands to the refugees. "... the author forces us to perceive what otherwise our chauvinism refuses to admit: that every man has a bit of the woman in him just as every woman has a bit of the man in her" (Roye 82)

According to Kusum, home stands out to be that place from which one cannot separate oneself. During the Morichjhapi massacre, the police attacked the defiant settlers with a heavy hand and Kusum is killed in the encounter. Thus Kusum lives and dies for the upliftment of the refugees in the tide country. She never draws back in her decision and in her work for the settlers. She fights for them till the last moment in her life. Eventhough she is a victim of the Morichjhapi massacre, her life reveals woman's active role in the society. She also shows woman's participation, involvement and revolutionary attitude towards the oppressed society.

### **Nilima Working for the Better Life of the People**

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Like Kusum, Nilima also serves to the people of Lusibari through her Badabon Trust. She is the wife of Nirmal in the novel. Even though she is very old and wants to be a revolutionary in her life. As a revolutionary she works for the better life of the people who are living in the tide country, Lusibari. She says, "I am not capable of dealing with the whole world's problems. For me the challenges of making a few little things a little better in one small place is enough. That place for me is Lusibari" (HT 387). She does not take the whole tide country for her revolutionary attitude; instead she chooses the island of Lusibari. In the process she is stern and strict.

The services of the Trust initiate a process of transformation in Lusibari. Nilima starts a "barefoot nurse" program to provide medical assistance to the people. The nurses trained in basic hygiene, nutrition, first-aid, midwifery and other things educate the villagers. The training helps them to fight the adverse conditions of the tide country. Then she starts a well-equipped hospital to provide medical aid on nominal charges. The hospital leads to the growth of a small service industry – tea shops, guest houses and stands for cycle vans. Thus, indirectly the hospital provides employment to a large number of the inhabitants of Lusibari. So her social service and welfare projects help the poor to earn with dignity. The support system for women which Nilima has created over the years is also her achievement.

### **Piya, the Dolphin Scientist, Becomes a Social Activist**

Piya is another important character in the novel, *The Hungry Tide*. Piyali Roy, an Indo-American cetologist comes to the tide country of the Sundarbans in Bengal to study river dolphins. As a cetologist, she studies the Gangetic dolphins. During her research she is saved by a fisher man, Fokir from her death by giving his life. That incident totally changes her attitude towards life and also she realises the bitter condition of the people who are living in the tide country. At the same time she becomes responsible to save Fokir's family. Thus at the end of the novel Piya also turns her life to help the people who are living in Lusibari. She realizes the sufferings of these fishermen and man's cruelty to the natural habitat of Orcaella. Realising the condition of refugees after partition and Bangladesh war, she sympathises with them in their existential dilemmas, and political and cultural dislocations.

The report on Piya's dolphin sighting sparks a lot of interest and several environments groups assure funds to her. She also seeks the sponsorship of the Badabon trust for consultation with the local fishermen for her project work. She rents the upper floor of the Guest House to set up a data bank, a small office where Moyna could work after her duty at the hospital and also to teach the language of the tide country to Piya so that she can mingle with the people. Piya's perseverance and courage thus help her to accomplish her task. As the profit from the project would be shared between the trust and Piya, Moyna and the fishermen can also get some financial help. Piya says to Nilima: "If I was to take on a project here, I'd want it to be under the sponsorship of the Badabon Trust, so it could be done in consultation with the fishermen who live in these parts. And the Trust would benefit too of course. We'd share the funding" (HT 424).

Piya thus makes a space for herself and also gives the people their due space. At the end of the novel, she also identifies Nilima's house as her home saying that "... for me, home is where the Orcaella are: so there's no reason why this couldn't be it" (HT 427). The idea of home for Piya is not constructed by territorial boundary but by love and sympathy. Both Piya and Nilima join hands with each other and work for the upliftment of the people in the tide country as revolutionaries in the novel.

### **Women Characters as Revolutionaries**

Thus Amitav Ghosh presents his women characters as revolutionaries. They have become revolutionaries in their respective spheres. They also have the courage to fight for the upliftment of the people. Women having self-determination become synonymous with purity and self-control. "... Nirmal, Nilima, Kanai, Moyna, Piya all endeavour to work towards an ideal which they feel would help them contribute constructively towards civilization" (Mahanta 115).

In the novels, *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide* women are characterized as active, rebellious and responsible human beings. They strive hard to cross all the obstacles in their personal life as well as in the society and try to come up in their life. They can survive the world by the tool of education, employment and their rebellious attitude towards life. They not only assert their places in the society but they try to help others by their revolutionary attitude. Thus



Amitav Ghosh creates his women characters as revolutionaries in the novels *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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## Critical Thinking Skills among EFL/ESL Learners: A Review of Literature

Pezhman Zare, Ph.D. Candidate

### Abstract

This paper reviews the literature on critical thinking skills in general and in the field of ESL/EFL learning in particular. It starts with a brief introduction. Then, a number of definitions of critical thinking are discussed in details. Critical thinking skills and sub-skills are illustrated. Afterward, characteristics of critical thinkers are presented. Next, the association between critical thinking skills and dispositions are discussed. After that, it is discussed how critical thinking started to appear and play a significant role in learning English as a second/foreign language. Finally, a brief conclusion closes the paper.

**Keywords:** Critical Thinking Skills, Dispositions, Language Learning, Teaching

### Introduction

Academic journals and the mass media have presented critical thinking skills as being essential for the growing workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Critical thinking skills have been also recognized as vital for students' academic success. Currently, there is a growing demand for superior critical thinking skills, problem solving, and negotiation skills as well as highly developed communicative competence (Gerverey, Drout & Wang, 2009; Halpern, 2004; Zare & Moomala, 2013, Zare & Mukundan, 2015). Critical thinking skills have been identified as a logical, purposive deep thinking approach (Rudd, 2007) and/or as a doubtful or skeptical approach (Mason, 2007) employed in making decisions, mastering concepts as well as solving problems. Those who possess critical thinking skills demonstrate behavioral dispositions which are required and acknowledged in both academic and vocational contexts (Kosciulek & Wheaton, 2003; Mason, 2007; Rudd, 2007).

### Definition of Critical Thinking

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Critical thinking is a broad concept and has generated many different definitions and terminologies. The distinguished educational expert Dewey (1933) refers to critical thinking as reflective thinking, and proposes that it must be one of the aims of education. Norris (1985) defines critical thinking as deciding rationally what to or what not to believe. One of the most frequently referred to definitions of critical thinking is one used by Ennis (1987), who has similar views to Dewey and Norris. Ennis defines critical thinking as “reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” (p. 10). For Dewey, Norris, and Ennis, critical thinking is about being careful and reflective when making decisions to believe something or do something.

According to Lipman (1991) these and other current definitions are not satisfactory for they fail to consider the outcomes of critical thinking, its characteristics and the connection between them. Thus, he suggested the need for a functional definition of critical thinking instead of defining critical thinking skills as discrete skills. This is essential to ensure that the approach taken to teach critical thinking is holistic not otherwise (Brandt, 1988). For instance, by defining critical thinking as a skill, teaching critical thinking becomes similar to teaching concepts of content subjects such as physics. In such a case, it is sufficient to merely make the students understand the concept of what thinking is or teach a skill such as repairing a radio. On the other hand, teaching critical thinking involves getting students to think critically. Therefore, it is not enough to merely tell or preach what to think but the students need to be shown how to think critically, rationally, consistently, and to think well. The students need to have models, which show explicitly how to think well. This can be done by showing, among others, the act of inquiring or arguing. In this thinking process the students will come to know which argument has good and/or poor reasoning.

At the same time, students need to be involved in the very process of thinking and be given practice in doing critical thinking. There is a need to create an environment in which critical thinking flourishes. According to Lipman (1988), teaching critical thinking is similar to teaching moral values. It is not enough to tell or inform since the individual needs to be in the context where the very people around him are upholding the values. The individual observing the people practicing these values as a part of their lives will unconsciously adopt these values. The

same goes with critical thinking skills. It is not just a discrete skill. To Lipman (1988), it is a skillful responsible act of thinking that involves reasoning and good judgment because they rely on criteria. Similar to teaching moral values, critical thinking is also self-correcting and is sensitive to context. Lipman (1993) defines critical thinking as “thinking that facilitates judgments because it relies on criteria and self-correcting, and is sensitive to context” (p.683). Self-correcting refers to knowing consciously a good or a poorly developed argument or thought.

However, another perspective on critical thinking involves the use of intellectual standard. Paul and Elder (2002), for example, refer to critical thinking as an art through which an individual can make sure that he/she makes use of the best thinking in any kind of situations. “The general goal of thinking is to figure out the lay of the land. We all have choices to make; we need the best information to make the best choices” (p.7). Paul and Elder (2002) stated that critical thinkers have a basic ability to take charge, to develop intellectual standards, and to apply them to their own thinking. They suggest there are nine criteria generally used: Clarity, Relevance, Rationality, Accuracy, Depth, Significance, Precision, Breadth, and Fairness. Critical thinkers should apply these criteria as minimal requirements when they reason.

Other educationalists consider critical thinking to be about skepticism. McPeck (1981), for example, suggests that the essence of critical thinking is “the propensity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism” (p.8). Similarly, Sofo (2004) believes that thinking critically is about doubting and starting to reconsider what we normally take for granted. Sofo (2004) sees critical thinkers as people who evaluate their habits to improve the way they do things. They are people who are open-minded and who take various perspectives into consideration.

One of the most comprehensive and the biggest studies on reasoning and critical thinking was released by the American Philosophical Association (APA) in 1990 (Boghossian, 2006). The research employed a Delphi method to reach an agreement on critical thinking definition. Facione (1996) described the Delphi method and how it was administered in the APA study:

A central investigator organizes the group and feeds them an initial question (In this case it had to do with how college level critical thinking should be defined so that people teaching at that level would know which skills and dispositions to cultivate in their students). The central investigator receives all responses, summarizes them, and transmits them back to all the panelists for reactions, replies, and additional questions. The central investigator summarizes the arguments and lets the panelists decide if they accept them or not. When consensus appears to be at hand, the central investigator proposes this and asks if people agree. If not, then points of disagreement among the experts are registered (p. 9).

This study lasted around two years to be completed. Forty six experts in the United States and Canada were nominated as the panel of experts. Facione (1996) stated “The experts represented many different scholarly disciplines in the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and education” (p.7). Moreover, all the scholars were “widely recognized by their professional colleagues to have special experience and expertise in critical thinking instruction, assessment or theory” (APA, 1990, p. 4). Finally, the participants reached an agreement on the definition of critical thinking and its main components. The statement from the study describes and provides a detailed definition of the best critical thinker, along with the core elements of critical thinking. The definition of critical thinking which was agreed by the experts is presented below:

We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based (APA, 1990, p. 3).

The experts agreed that critical thinking has six main components which are illustrated in the following table:

**Table 1: Critical Thinking Cognitive Skills and Sub-Skills (Facione, 1990, p. 6)**

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Sub-skills</b>
1. Interpretation	categorization, decoding significance, clarifying meaning
2. Analysis	examining ideas, identifying arguments, analyzing arguments
3. Evaluation	assessing claims, assessing arguments
4. Inference	querying evidence, conjecturing alternatives, drawing conclusions
5. Explanation	stating results, justifying procedures, presenting arguments
6. Self-regulation	self-examination, self-correction

### **Characteristics of Critical Thinkers**

Ennis (1985) presents a prominent framework for teaching critical thinking skills. He offers thirteen characteristics of individuals who benefits from critical thinking skills. Such people are more likely to be:

1. “Open minded,
2. Take or change position based on evidence,
3. Take the entire situation into account,
4. Seek information,
5. Seek precise information,
6. Deal in an orderly manner with parts of a complex whole,
7. Look for options,
8. Search for reasons,
9. Seeks a clear statement of the issue,
10. Keep the original problem in mind,
11. Use credible sources,
12. Stick to the point, and
13. Exhibit sensitivity to others’ feelings and knowledge level” (p.46).

In addition, Lipman (1988) distinguishes between ‘critical thinking’ and ‘ordinary thinking’. The latter is simple and lacks criteria; while the former is complex and based on criteria such as objectivity, usefulness and consistency. He says teachers need to help students change their thinking behavior,

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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1. From guessing to estimating
2. From preferring to evaluating
3. From grouping to classifying
4. From believing to assuming
5. From inferring to inferring logically
6. From associating concepts to grasping principles
7. From supposing to hypothesizing
8. From offering opinions without reasons to offering opinions with reasons and
9. From making judgments without criteria to making judgment with criteria.

### **Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions**

Moreover, experts argued that there is a positive correlation between critical thinking skills and the intrinsic motivation (dispositions) to think critically, and that specific critical thinking skills are matched with specific critical thinking dispositions (Facione, 2000). John Dewey provided a detailed description of critical thinking disposition as “personal attributes” (Dewey, 1933). Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) see the disposition to think critically as the tendency, willingness, and/or internal motivation to use critical thinking skills. Critical thinking disposition consists of seven conceptual elements which are inquisitiveness, truth seeking, open-mindedness, confidence in reasoning, analyticity, systematicity, and maturity of judgment (Yang, Chuang, Li, & Tseng, 2013; Pithers & Soden, 2000). The professionals and experts believe that a good critical thinker include both thinking skills and dispositions. Individuals with superior critical thinking skills who fail to employ those skills properly cannot be recognized as good critical thinkers. These individuals are believed not to be good critical thinkers as they fail to include the dispositional dimensions (Facione, Sanchez, Facione, & Gainen, 1995; Facione, 2000; Ennis, 1994; Paul, 1990).

The experiential classification of thinking skills and dispositions tends to support the philosophical difference between them as people try to measure their critical thinking (Taube, 1997). Though, some experts take in the disposition to make use of critical thinking skills as part of their definition of critical thinking (Paul, 1990; Esterle & Clurman, 1993). It was explained that, “we wanted to get in the willingness as well as the ability because a person can master CT



skills without being the least bit disposed to use them” (Esterle & Clurman, 1993). Perkins, Jay, & Tishman (1993) stated that being able to practice a specific thinking skill is a part of the meaning of being disposed to make use of that skill.

Facione (2000) also refers to the descriptions of self-examination and self-correction, sub-skills of self-regulation (one of the cognitive skills of critical thinking), and state that there are dispositional components to critical thinking. Facione (2000) believe that each cognitive skill, if exercised appropriately, would be associated with the cognitive disposition to do so. However, being experienced in critical thinking but failing to use them habitually and suitably disqualifies the individual from being identified as a critical thinker at all (Facione, 2000). Experts believe that a competent critical thinker is consistently disposed to get involved and also to support other people to practice critical thinking skills and critical judgments. The competent critical thinker is capable of making such judgments in a variety of situations and for different objectives.

Experts recommend that people should be taught from early childhood to practice reasoning, to look for related facts, to reflect on multiple alternatives, and to recognize different viewpoints of other individuals. It is practical and also reasonable to require the system of education to train young learners the habits of mind that support those practices, characterize the good critical thinker, and lead learners through the pathway toward achievement (Siegel, 1988; Paul, 1990; Esterle & Clurman, 1993; Facione, 2000).

### **Critical Thinking in ESL/EFL Context**

The term ‘critical thinking’, as Day (2003) notes, began to appear in ESL/EFL literature in the 1990s. However, a discussion of aspects of critical thinking in language learning probably started earlier than that, in the late 1970s when the communicative approach was introduced to the field of English language teaching.

Critical thinking in the ELT literature may have emerged, at least partially, from the fact that the number of international students studying in English speaking countries were growing fast. In Australia (Thompson, 2002), as in North America and the United Kingdom (Briggs, 1999), international students needed a high level of language proficiency, but they also needed to

adjust their discourse style to suit their new situations and cultural contexts. They needed to apply their critical thinking in new and different ways. In addition, with more linguistic and rhetorical conventions to consider, the use of L2 to communicate can be very challenging for students. In addition, English teachers often hear students complain that they know what to say but cannot put it into English.

The students may have a wide vocabulary and theoretical knowledge but they may not be able to construct grammatically correct sentences. This seems to be primarily a linguistic problem.

When students have to use L2 to present their ideas and feelings, as they do when undertaking a number of tasks that are required of them in an academic context, they need to use the ability to think critically as well as their linguistic skills. While developing their L2 competency, students face tremendous challenges in exercising critical thinking in L2. From the socio-cultural perspective, when learners express their thoughts in L2, either through spoken or written language, they are not only translating their thoughts from L1 to L2, but also redefining their identities (Lantolf, 1993; Kramsch & Lam, 1999).

Expressing one's critical thinking in L2 may require that one adjusts one's ways of saying things. In short, it requires both lexico-grammatical competence and socio-cultural competence, which is in accordance with the aims of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Three major research areas contribute to our assessment of the significance of critical thinking in language learning. These are communicative language teaching, metacognitive learning strategies, and L2 speaking ability, especially in reference to academic setting.

#### ***a) Communicative Language Teaching***

Nunan (1981) described some characteristics of communication in the real world. He stated that, first, individuals communicate for many reasons, to find out information, give vent to their emotions, describe their world, and get things done and so on. Very rarely, they communicate to display their linguistic or rhetorical virtuosity. In other words, they

communicate to fulfill certain needs, and this is achieved, partly through linguistic and partly through non-linguistic means.

Another consideration is that the communicative act is intimately tied to its setting. Nunan (1981) stated that there are at least three elements involved in the communication process: the audience, the communicative aims of the speaker, and language forms. Similarly, Littlewood (1981) discussed two kinds of communicative tasks and activities: social interaction and functional activities. He stated that language instructors need to develop communicative activities which would assist learners: (1) to employ the target language for communicative purposes and manage to get meanings across as effectively as possible; and (2) to use the language in a way that is appropriate to the social setting in which the communication takes place.

The teaching of English for communication necessarily includes many elements of critical thinking because it focuses on form as well as meaning. Thinking critically in language learning is about using the target language to make meaning; this includes using the language to explain, reason, argue, and also to express the reasoning process.

According to Jacobs & Farrell (2003), the communicative language learning environment can provide a useful venue for students to gain and use thinking skills. Group activities within the communicative language learning environment require students to communicate with their peers, to provide each other with help and constructive criticism, and to challenge each other's views.

According to Sofo (2004), group activities commonly employed in CLT can bring out many facets of thinking in students: mental-total awareness, observation skills, how differences are valued, capacity for empathy, openness to new ideas and values, and ability to balance emotion and cognition. Language learners can use critical thinking to decide how to use language most effectively to achieve their desired communicative aims. Utterances are successful when the aim of having the audience properly understand the intended messages is

achieved. In short, communicative language activities provide students with opportunities to test their ideas and reasons in order to determine their positions (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003).

### ***b) Metacognitive Learning Strategies***

Studies in the psychology of learning also address issues relating to critical thinking in language learning. Students can be trained to use learning strategies that are helpful to language learning, and there are many types of strategies that are thought to be useful (Wenden, 1985; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Chamot, 1995; Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Zare, 2010; Zare & Nooreen, 2011).

Metacognitive learning strategies, if used properly, enable students to become reflective learners. In general, such strategies involve three steps: (1) planning, (2) monitoring, and (3) checking outcomes (Wenden, 1985).

According to Oxford & Nyikos (1989), successful language learners take several steps in managing their own learning and each step requires that learners be critical thinkers. Metacognitive strategies are generally self-reflective activities. Poor performance may result from lack of self-monitoring and proper planning. Many studies have suggested that language students should learn how to use such strategies. Students who are active users of metacognitive strategies, therefore, are likely to be more effective learners and good critical thinkers (Zare, 2012).

### ***c) Research on L2 Speaking***

In an ESL/EFL context, the four macro skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, all require students to perform complex tasks that demand the use of cognitive and metacognitive skills. L2 academic speaking, in particular, requires that the students exercise a great deal of critical thinking and this process has proven to be very challenging for most students (Atkinson & Kaplan, 1994; Atkinson, 1997; Wilson, 1998; Thompson, 2002; Zare & Moomala, 2015).

Studies suggest that students, especially from Asian countries, have been either failing to integrate critical thinking skills into their speaking skill or employing different and inappropriate

styles of logic (Ugla, Ilianis, & Mohamad Jafre, 2013). Yet, some analysts argue that such students are as capable of promoting and demonstrating critical thinking skills as native speakers (Briggs, 1999; Carnarajah, 2002).

Integrating the appropriate critical thinking skills into oral communication activity plays a critical role in the efficacy and usefulness of the activity. Successful and effective communication can take place if the communicator infuses elements of critical thinking into her communication.

In this regard, Cooper & Simonds (2003) stated that competent communicators are concerned with enlarging their repertoire of communication acts, selecting criteria for making choices from the repertoire, implementing the communication acts chosen, and evaluating the effectiveness of communication employed. As it can be noticed, all these characteristics of competent communicator are also consistent and very close to critical thinking skills. In other words, individuals who carefully employ criteria and intellectual standards while communicating with others are more effective and successful in their communication.

According to Cooper & Simonds (2003), regardless of the circumstances surrounding your interactions, the more competent a communicator you are, the more effective you can be. The basis of communication effectiveness is the appropriateness of the communication act. The competent communicator uses critical thinking skills in which she carefully and critically examines the components of the communication situation; the participants, the setting, the topic, and the task. Based on an analysis of these components, the competent communicator chooses the appropriate communication act.

As Paul & Elder (2002) explained, “The general goal of thinking is to figure out the lay of the land to make choices” (p.7). Accordingly, it can be concluded that to be more effective, the communicator needs to use her critical thinking skills while engaging in communication to analyze and examine the situation, make choices, implement them, and finally evaluate the effectiveness of the choices she made. Poor, careless, hasty, and uncritical choices and/or responses will have negative influence on communication and may also cause failure. If you respond inappropriately to a classmate, for instance, you may foster defensiveness or hostility

that the classmate, intentionally or not, may communicate to you or other peers. This, in turn, affects how the students behave in the classroom and how interact with each other, and ultimately will result in the break-down of communication. Thus possessing a large repertoire of communication acts and using them critically and appropriately will enhance interaction with others in the educational environment (Cooper & Simonds, 2003).

In sum, effective communicators are critical thinkers who understand their audience and use the language appropriately. They apply appropriate reasons. Above all, they are objective and open-minded and use self-reflection in their language learning.

### **Conclusion**

Halpern (2004) stated that employers nowadays show more value for member of staffs who think critically and are capable of solving complicated issues. Such being the case, training learners to think critically must be one of the most important goals of education. Experts, educationalists, and/or instructors have to put more emphasis on this area and continue to support and facilitate the development of students' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills and sub-skills must be clearly understood by instructors so that they can impart that knowledge to learners. The purpose of critical thinking instruction (becoming a competent critical thinker) needs to be clearly defined and established. Instructors must not only teach learners critical thinking skills but also demonstrate these skills through their teaching activities and behaviors to set an example and act as role models. They also need to get learners involved in activities which force them to practice the skills. Last but not least, it must be realized and practiced that critical thinking does not only entail being critical towards other individuals, but also reviewing, revisiting, and reassessing critically and constantly one's own beliefs, mentality, way of thinking, attitudes, and behaviors.

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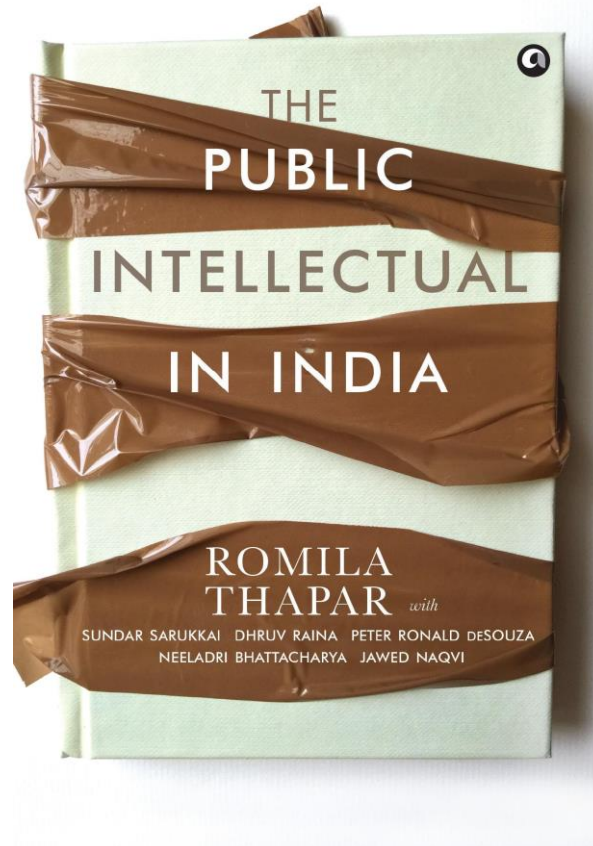
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*The Public Intellectual in India –  
A Review*

**Binu George**

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**Abstract**

A review of Professor Romila Thapar's book *The Public Intellectual in India* (2015) is presented. The book is a collection of essays by five well known writers (Sundar Sarukkai, Dhruv Raina, Peter Ronald deSouza, Neeladri Bhattacharya, and Jawed Naqvi) and Thapar herself. The book is based mainly on certain developments in India and the role of the contemporary public intellectuals.

**Keywords:** Public individuals, colonialism, politics, religious affiliation

## **Romila Thapar**

Renowned Indian historian Romila Thapar started her career at Kurukshetra University as a reader in Ancient Indian History and is known as the author of a number of books, essays, articles, and as editor of a handful of books. She is awarded with honorary doctorate from both regional and foreign universities and the prestigious Kluge Prize. Her recent book, published in 2015, *The Public Intellectual in India*, a collection of essays by five well known writers excluding Thapar is based mainly on developments in India and the role of the contemporary public intellectuals here. *The Public Intellectual in India* consists of six essays besides a long introduction and conclusion by Thapar. The contributors are Sundar Sarukkai, Dhruv Raina, Peter Ronald deSouza, Neeladri Bhattacharya, Jawed Naqvi, and Thapar herself. In the note about the book, Thapar tells about how she was invited to deliver the third Nikhil Chakravartty Memorial Lecture by the Book Review Literary Trust and the lecture titled “To Question or Not to Question, That is the Question” is expanded in the form of a book including the responding essays by five other people who were invited to do so.



Romila Thapar

Courtesy: <http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/prize/thapar.html>

### **The Introduction in the Book**

The introduction by Thapar analyses the role played by Chakravartty as a fearless and committed journalist and thinker who was concerned about happenings around him and the disappearance of such voices in the contemporary society that unquestionably demands such

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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people. She warns against the shrinking of the individual spaces of the intellectuals in Indian society at large, leaning of the critical mass, disappearance of public debates and discussions, and the withdrawal and deviating symptoms, something undesirable, given away by the public intellectuals. Thapar has given a historical glimpse of colonialism that started divisions based on caste and religion among Indians and the continuation of the same even after decades by reception of histories written by colonialists and neglecting any call for reassessment of the social, political, and religious systems and which in turn nurture intolerance, violence, religious and political extremism. She hopes that these essays will necessarily expose the inevitability of public intellectuals and their active involvement in the Indian society.

### **First Essay “To Question or Not to Question? That is the Question”**

The first essay of the book titled “To Question or Not to Question? That is the Question” by Thapar gives ample evidence for the existence of predecessors of public intellectuals – the term, of course, is a nineteenth century development with Dreyfus Affair where Emile Zola played the key role – in ancient times, in Greek, Roman, western, and Indian civilization like Socrates, Cicero, Enlightenment thinkers, and Buddha who questioned the authority (political, social, and religious) when they went away from the desired path. She refers to Patanjali, Aryabhata, Nagarjuna, Amir Khusrau, Ekanath, Bulleh Shah, and women teachers like Andal, Akka Mahadevi, and Mirabai, and contemporaries like Ram Mohun Roy, Serfoji II, Jyotiba Phule, and Periyar, Nonetheless they are public intellectuals in the modern sense. Thapar speaks about emergence of the public intellectuals in the anti-colonial and nationalist movements in India and later people like Chakravarty stood for alternative voices in the land when such voices were muted and imposed censorship. References to Right and Left Liberals are available in the essay and she sees how intellectuals who turned as professionals and academics prefer to remain silent on various reasons even at most challenging developments in the country. Instead of a secular society, according to her, ours is becoming more and more political and religious where equality, justice, peace and truths are violated, infringed, and edged out, and bureaucracy wields power in education, science, and public sphere while the intellectuals remain aloof from the citizenry and restrain themselves to the comfort zones.



## **Second Essay, ‘To Question and Not to Question: That is the Answer’**

In the second essay, ‘To Question and Not to Question: That is the Answer’, Sarukkai, a Philosopher and Director of Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities responds to Thapar’s essay mainly from a philosophical perspective. He takes up the very term “question” and explicates it in order to come to his argument on the functionality of intellectuals in the society and seeks the help of different Asian philosophical branches like Nyaya and Jaina. He treats “doubt” as the starting point of questioning and asserts the fact that attitude plays a major role in “questioning” more than cognitive skill. Again Sarukkai has gone through points such as ideology, skepticism, and habits (intellectual habits) in developing the very idea of questioning. According to him, ignorance often renders a barrier to meaningful questioning and it is also used by authority. He emphasizes that the public intellectuals must primarily be members of the public and that will lead to intellectual honesty which is a prerequisite. He refers also to “ethical dimension of critical questioning” and distinguishes between questioning and engaging the “other” and sees how important it is to go beyond the normal perceptions. According to him, intellectual must reduce his task in the society gradually by enabling the public itself to ask questions.

## **“Science and Democracy”**

In the essay, “Science and Democracy” Raina points out institutionalization of science, a historical transformation in which the entire system is changed into “instrumentalized commoditized production” due to many political reasons which keep science away from its societal commitments. He foregrounds political involvement in science that compelled it to be agents of authority and naturally left behind many of its original, purported interests such as welfare and growth of humanity. This shift, combined with professionalism and lack of internal autonomy led to the “prostitution of science” and admits science’s alienation from public and how silent it is on some basic social questions pertaining to humanity.

## **“Living between Thought and Action”**

De Souza distinguishes between autonomous thinker and advocate of social justice while dealing with the public intellectual. He divides his essay titled “Living between Thought and Action” into three. First part covers the life of three public intellectuals, viz. Priya Pillai,

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and Avijit Roy who fearlessly let their voices be heard by questioning and speaking truth to power. The second part deals with various kinds of censorship that pervade the public sphere such as public authority, social groups, one's peer community, and the self and each of which prevents the public intellectuals to involve actively in public affairs. In the last part De Souza analyses the Indian scenario where these factors prevail with the help of two landscapes – knowledge production and Hindu Rashtra. He also briefs six vantage points from which the public intellectuals speak in the changing domestic and global situations.

### **“Framing A Question: Questioning a Frame”**

“Framing A Question: Questioning a Frame” by Bhattacharya sounds more like a critique of essay by Thapar. He brings forth the other side of history and specially Enlightenment which Thapar has referred mostly to substantiate her argument. Bhattacharya criticizes Thapar for depending more on past and depicting the current situation as dismal. He even provides various faces of silence which is seen as offending when it is from the public intellectuals.

### **“The Indian Intellectual and the Hindu-Muslim Trap”**

Naqvi, as an experienced journalist and column writer, in his essay “The Indian Intellectual and the Hindu-Muslim Trap” points out the communal and religious bigotry against the Dalits and other downtrodden. He criticizes media which according to him lacks social commitment. Naqvi points out the misuse of power by ministers to contaminate people's mind with various kinds of emotion. He acknowledges the assistance of different Muslim individuals to build up fraternity among Hindus and Muslims and their contributions to translate Hindu religious texts into English. However he sees the preponderance of elitism among Indian intellectuals irrespective of their religion. He points out why the Dalits support Ambedkar more than Gandhi and he points out the tendency among sections of the Indian elite intellectuals to be supporters of the Hindutva.

### **Thapar's Conclusion**

In the conclusion, Thapar answers many of the questions brought forth by the essayists and clarifies their doubts. She, however, declares the necessity of public intellectuals in India in

the changing political and religious scenario and urges them to speak up mainly by means of questioning.

*The Public Intellectual in India* is informative, imaginative, provocative, and demands action from the public intellectuals and even from the readers. It doubtlessly deserves a special attention in the social, political, religious, and anthropological arena of contemporary India.

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## A Comparative Analysis of Emotion Conceptual Metaphor in English and Bangla

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### Abstract

The discussion and analysis here will crosscheck the Theory of Conceptual Metaphor by finding out possible conceptual similarities between emotion metaphors found in English and Bangla. Even in Bangla we can notice the use of same source domain expression to express the intended meaning. Undoubtedly, such study will lighten up our understanding of metaphorical mapping in construction other than English and show up in this process the conceptual similarity of Bangla in parallel or contrast with English. This study thus could facilitate us to strengthen the idea of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural universality and pervasiveness of conceptual metaphors.

**Keywords:** Conceptual metaphor, orientational metaphor, emotions, happiness, sadness, Bangla, Lakoff.

### Introduction

This study has taken into consideration some non-English expressions from Bangla which belongs to the Indic group of Indo-Aryan (IA) branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Before going into detail it is noteworthy to keep in mind that overall linguistic structures of these two languages are not similar so far as the typological aspects are concerned, they both are also dissimilar in cultural and environmental or ecological scenarios. Apart from these, even in the conceptual choice of domains they vary a lot. In this context, if we begin to find similarities in conceptualisation by deriving the resources from the same source concept (which is ‘body’ here) during metaphor processing, then the similarities in conceptual schema of metaphorical construction would be found as partial as such. But, we know that cross-linguistic metaphor studies have given the source domain of bodily references the first place in priority over other metaphorical domains, because these source domains reflect the “near-universal aspects of the human body” (Kövecses, 2002, p. 165).

Languages differ from one another structurally and could be acceptably classified into three basic categories, namely isolating, agglutinating and inflecting or fusional (Lyons, 1968, p. 187). Bengali or Bangla (bangla) is more or less an inflected type of language whereas English can be displayed as a ‘fairly’ mixed kind of language which shows features of all the three types of languages. Lyons suggested this to be “a matter of degree” in his typological classification of languages which had been usually done according to the status of morphological structure of words and their syntactic relations, the degree of variability in usages, use of inflections etc. Features of inflected type of word structure could be marked easily by exemplifying from English like variation in regular plural forms of nouns (e.g. ‘men’) or variation in regular tense forms of verbs (e.g. ‘sang’ and ‘sung’) etc.

Despite these visible differences, both of English and Bangla have common conceptual resources to organize their thoughts categorically. This kind of comparative or contrastive analysis will justify further the growing importance of cross-linguistic metaphor study to ascertain the authenticity of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by suggesting more corpora study of unrelated languages in future. Lakoff primarily focused upon the metaphor used in the English language; now it is the high time to verify its strength by considering the other languages. The concern here will then rest on metaphorical expressions generally found in Bangla. I will limit my investigation only on *emotion metaphor* (a kind of ‘orientational metaphor’<sup>1</sup>) as in the case of ‘structural metaphors’<sup>2</sup> there are differences in terms of their origin or invention on account of ‘cultural situatedness’.<sup>3</sup> I like to show the near-universality of the emotion metaphors in these two languages by exemplifying from two sub-domains of emotion, i.e. happiness and sadness as formally categorized by Kövecses (2000) in his *Metaphor and Emotion*. Kövecses originally introduced the concept of universality of metaphor across cultural diversity. Now this little effort is to find out whether

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<sup>1</sup> Orientational metaphors are processed by orienting the features of one domain in relation to the domain of some spatio-temporal or bodily dimensions (such as, up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral etc) based on influences of environmental and physical experiences. Generally these metaphors are so automatic that one doesn’t need any conscious effort on his part to deliver it or understand its meaning. Naturally they are found uniformly in different cultural usages, e.g. MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN, HEALTH OR LIFE IS UP and SICKNESS OR DEATH IS DOWN etc (Lakoff, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, by the term ‘metaphor’ only the structural metaphor is considered. In this type, the structural properties of one domain are mapped onto the structural properties of another domain. Generally their operation needs the speaker’s conscious effort. This mapping system between two domains could be exemplified by the conceptualisation of life in terms of a journey in LIFE IS JOURNEY metaphor (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 3).

<sup>3</sup> Because, structural metaphors are sometimes resulted from influential cultural uniqueness which generally follows from same inherent homogeneous tradition isolating it from other communal specificities and creating much cultural disparity (Emanatian, 1995).

there is any striking consistency between Bangla and English in the particular expressions of emotions.

This study looks into the issues which suggest the sharing of some compatible domains in the creation of a particular metaphor in both of the language of English and Bangla. Keeping this objective in mind, though we can notice some incongruities in domain sharing we can conclude that by sharing some of the common grounds in construals<sup>4</sup> they both shape their speakers' *reality* in understanding the world in the same way.<sup>5</sup> For this, I will focus on the universal metaphorical schema shared by the body-based emotion metaphors in English and Bangla not considering the structural metaphorical differences between these two languages. As such, the 'embodiment'<sup>6</sup> phenomenon is the sole cause of similarities in the case of orientational metaphors. Opposed to this is the ecological factors of influences which structure the structural or epistemological metaphors on the other hand. Although, there are certain structural metaphors in one language which could be found to be keenly equivalent to the expressions available in another language.

It is to be noted that the translations done here from source English sentences to target Bangla sentences are possibly close to the source as I have tried to avoid the oddly translated sentences, given the accepted characteristic limitation that conceptually as well as lexically a source language could not be fully translatable into target language. Naturally there may be some 'oddity' in translated expressions which are to be understood with careful consideration.

It is also to be noted in passing that this is not a discussion on emotions or emotion concepts; rather the metaphorical mapping found in the emotional expressions is only discussed. But it is sure that this study of emotional language will serve to understand the origin and comprehension of emotion in general. I have taken into discussion essentially the highly-schematic and generic-level universal structure across two languages which is supported by the experientialists. Although, considering the culture-specific variations, we can simply expect that there might be some dissimilarities in metaphor constructions regarding emotions. But, this study will highlight only the similarities between the

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<sup>4</sup> Langacker coined the term 'construal' to denote speaker's conceptualisation of the different dimensions of an object or event.

<sup>5</sup> See Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativism for further elaboration.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson's *The Body in the Mind* (1987) discusses in elaborate details the idea of conceptual metaphor theory as an extension of this ever-encompassing model of 'embodiment' on the relation of body and cognition and their successive parallel evolution.

expressions of these two languages avoiding the possible dissimilarities. In this context, I would not go into much detail of the evidences of dissimilarities caused by the specific-level cultural construal in these two languages by which we can come to know cultural specificities, their characteristics and uniqueness thoroughly propagated by social constructionists. But, the embodied cognition can also make a rapport with the socio-cultural constructions and this could be led to the extended version of the *embodied cultural prototype view* (Kövecses, 2000) in which both of the universal embodied view of the concepts as well as their cultural constructs are synthesised together in harmony. This means that different cultures define these near-universal concepts of metaphor in their own relative terms, since metaphors are found to be universal in the conceptual domains only, not in the diverse linguistic fields in which concepts are lexicalised.

### **Conceptualisation of Emotions: Comparing English and Bangla**

In Bangla theory of literature, metaphor is formally termed as *rupak* which is mostly known for its rhetorical use. As such, Bangla usages have not been taken primarily into serious account in the light of CMT so far if compared with much-researched languages like English. For example, the recurrent pattern of metaphor ANGER IS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER is already found by an extensive study (Kövecses, 2002, p. 165) in languages like English, Hungarian, Chinese, Zulu, Polish, Wolof, and Tahitian. The present study could then find out possible parallelism between these two languages so far as metaphorical expression is concerned. Knowing this similarity or dissimilarity may have an additional benefit to the field of language teaching and learning process as researches showed that second language acquisition through similar conceptual metaphors available in both of the languages can boost up or enhance a learner's ability to understand new language in faster and effective way. In this discussion, a shared mapping model<sup>7</sup> could be resultantly found in both languages for expressions of emotions.

#### **A. Emotion Is Liquid**

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<sup>7</sup> *Mapping* efficiently selects the overlapping features of two *domains* and is thus capable of expressing that specific sense in a comprehensive manner. The approach that metaphor is not just epiphenomenon of lexical structure, rather a conceptual reality per se is justified in terms of different psycholinguistic evidences which had verified its conceptual status and its projection in language.



Firstly, I present here a limited set of sentences generally following from the source-to-target domain mapping of EMOTION IS LIQUID<sup>8</sup> metaphor in English as well as in Bangla:

<u>LIQUID</u>	→ <u>EMOTION</u>
1. container of the liquid	→ body as container of the anger
2. act to take the liquid into the container	→ act to fill the happiness into the mind
3. feeling the need of the liquid	→thirsty for love
4. physical state of liquid	→burning in anger
5. amount of liquid	→amount of emotion

Mapping 1: “Ram *burst out* in anger”- ram rage *p<sup>h</sup>eṭe porlo*

Mapping 2: “His mind was *filled with* happiness”- ṭar mən anonḍe *b<sup>h</sup>ore gelo*

Mapping 3: “He is *thirsty* for love”- je b<sup>h</sup>alobafar *kaṅk<sup>hi</sup>*

Mapping 4: “He was *burning* in anger”- je rage *jolc<sup>h</sup>ilo*

Mapping 5: “He hasn’t *a drop* of compassion in his mind”- ṭar mənē *ek binḍu mōmoṭa nei*

In the above examples, verbs like *p<sup>h</sup>eṭe porlo* (‘burst out’), *b<sup>h</sup>ore gelo* (‘filled with’), *jolc<sup>h</sup>ilo* (‘burning’) specially denote the formation of emotional states of the person. Noticeably here Bangla makes use of postpositions -e (‘in’), -ar or -er (‘of’) etc as in *rage*-e (‘in anger’), *anonḍ-e* (‘in happiness’), *b<sup>h</sup>alobafar*-r (‘of love’), *mən-e* (‘in mind’) to imply the containment of the emotions. Thus, emotion metaphors are sometimes thought to be oriented in the form of container-content relationship, i.e. it is motivated by the three-dimensional space of an open or closed container which is nothing but the orientation of the body with the outer space itself. The container contains the content liquid or substance like emotion and the top of the container is the top of the body or its outlet part. This concept of containment can evoke other types of orientational structures too like activities or events. It is notable that Bangla postpositions in association with the emotion words serve to the orientational makeup of the metaphors. In the following examples, these metaphors get expressed:

- a. ṭar mən *janṭiṭe b<sup>h</sup>ore gelo* (“His mind was *filled up* with peace.”)

<sup>8</sup> Following the Lakoff-Johnsonian tradition (1980) here the letters are written in uppercase to denote the metaphorical use.

- b.  $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{ar}$   $\text{cok}^{\text{h}}\text{gulo}$   $\text{j}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{le}$   $b^{\text{h}}\text{ore}$   $g\ddot{\text{e}}\text{lo}$  (“His eyes were *welled up* with tears.”)
- c.  $\text{ma-ke}$   $\text{dek}^{\text{h}}\text{e}$   $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{ar}$   $b^{\text{h}}\text{alobafa}$   $u\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{le}$   $u\text{t}^{\text{h}}\text{lo}$  (“He was *brimmed with* love at the sight of mother.”)
- d.  $\text{je}$   $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{ar}$   $\text{anon}\ddot{\text{d}}\text{oke}$   $\text{r}$   $d^{\text{h}}\text{ore}$   $\text{rak}^{\text{h}}\text{te}$   $\text{parlo}$   $\text{na}$  (“He couldn’t *hold* his joy anymore.”)

In the first sentence, the word  $\text{jan}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{i}$  (‘peace’) denotes the content and  $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{ar}$   $\text{m}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{n}$  (‘her mind’) indicates the container as if his mind is fairly compared to a three-dimensional container filled with peace.

In this way, emotions follow the features of liquid-like flowing, overflowing or rising in volume, welling up, bursting out etc which can be mapped to the same reference points of the emotion in the speaker’s mind. But there is descriptive difference also in the way of expressing emotions as we can see that Bangla native expressions usually tend to use the eyes, heart, bosom, chest or other body parts as the container of the good emotions like happiness or joy. These body parts seem to have metonymical connection with the body, thus representing the whole body itself. In the following examples,  $\text{hri}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{y}$  (‘heart’) and  $\text{buk}$  (‘chest’) are considered to be the seat of all good emotions. We can find partial similarities in English translations:

- a.  $\text{prar}^{\text{h}}\text{ona}$   $\text{jon}\ddot{\text{g}}\text{it}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{i}$   $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{ar}$   $\text{hri}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{yke}$   $\text{anon}\ddot{\text{d}}\text{e}$   $u\ddot{\text{d}}\text{beli}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{o}$   $\text{korlo}$  (“The prayer song makes his heart *overwhelmed* with joy.”)
- b.  $\text{je}$   $\ddot{\text{t}}\text{ake}$   $\text{buk-}b^{\text{h}}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{ra}$   $b^{\text{h}}\text{alobafa}$   $\text{janalo}$ , Lit. “He conveyed *love filled in the chest* to her.” (i.e. “He conveyed his intense love to her.”)

To clarify this with one of Tagore’s poems  $\text{d}\ddot{\text{u}}\text{i}$   $\text{big}^{\text{h}}\text{a}$   $\text{jomi}$  (‘Two Bighas of Land’), we can also see that  $\text{buk}$  (bosom of the lady) is imagined as the container which is full of content  $\text{mod}^{\text{h}}\text{u}$  (‘honey’ denoting the lady’s affection):

*buk-}b^{\text{h}}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{ra}* *mod}^{\text{h}}\text{u}* *b}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{nger}* *bod}^{\text{h}}\text{u}* *j}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{l}* *loye}* *jay}* *g}^{\text{h}}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{re}*

In literal rendering, this means “The belle of Bengal whose *bosom* is *full of honey* used to carry water to home”. So, it is obviously understood that comparatively Bangla tends to use more body parts in expressing emotions unlike its English counterpart.

It is an interesting fact to point out that speakers of both languages tend to use BLOOD essentially as the major flowing liquid in the body to denote the negative emotion

ANGER unlike the other cases of emotions like HAPPINESS or SADNESS for which no specific liquid is generally mentioned.

## **B. Emotion Is Vertical Entity**

In grammatical structure, English and Bangla are different to a large extent. But at the basic conceptual level of forming emotion metaphor, Bangla can be seen as identical to English. We know from the previous discussion that metaphorical entailment of the master mapping EMOTION IS VERTICAL ENTITY can generate specific contrastive metaphors like HAPPINESS IS UP or SADNESS IS DOWN. These metaphors explain the orientation of vertical domain with the domain of being in a happy or sad state of mind. Actually in real life we don't take care of these metaphors as they have been so conventionalised to be termed as 'metaphor' in the traditional sense of the term. These are 'universal' because human beings have an upright body posture and this bodily uprightness has favorably an effect on both of the physical and mental or emotional state. Now, the following discussion will focus mainly on the comparative study of expressions of two basic emotion concepts in the concerned languages, namely HAPPINESS and SADNESS for a systematic investigation.

### **a. Happiness**

We can derive following expressions from the HAPPINESS IS UP metaphor:

- a. *je k<sup>h</sup>uʃiṭe ujǰəl hoe ut<sup>h</sup>lo* ("He is brightened up with *joy*.")
- b. *je k<sup>h</sup>ub b<sup>h</sup>alo mejaje ac<sup>h</sup>e* ("He is in a *good mood*.")
- c. *ganṭi ʃune je caṅga holo* ("He became *fresh* hearing the song.")

In the above examples, the emotion words or phrases like *k<sup>h</sup>uʃiṭe* ('in joy'), *b<sup>h</sup>alo mejaj-e* ('in good mood'), *caṅga* ('fresh') are orientationally meant for indicating some upward movement and therefore they have positive connotation in their meanings. These emotional states have to be synchronised with some of the spatial dimensions to be successfully communicated.

Apart from these, HAPPINESS could also be expressed by the more specific metaphorical structure HAPPINESS IS OFF THE GROUND:

- a. *je k<sup>h</sup>uʃiṭe nece ut<sup>h</sup>lo* ("He *danced up* with joy.")
- b. *je anonḍe akaf c<sup>h</sup>ulo* ("He *touched the sky* with joyfulness.")

- c. *je tʃəkʰon haoay bʰaʃcʰe* (“He is then *floating in the air.*”)

But unlike English, in Bangla the concept of being OFF THE GROUND may also convey the superior or snobbish behaviour of the person concerned. This concept carrying this sense is rarely used or not so much elaborately available in English expressions. Instances of such kind can be:

*ʃar pa maʃite porcʰe na*, Lit. “His feet are *not touching the ground.*” (i.e. “He has become snobbish.”)

Other than this, feeling HAPPINESS may be expressed in terms of blooming FLOWERS in Bangla:

*kʰəborʃi ʃune ʃar mone ekʃi aʃar pʰul pʰuʃlo*, Lit. “Hearing the news a *flower of hope blossoms* in his mind.” (i.e. “Hearing the news he has found a new hope.”)

## b. Sadness

In the case of negative emotion, sadness comes first. Now we know that most of the time, sadness appears to be the opposite of happiness. Then we may surmise that it is also processed in the same vertical relationship in contrast with happiness. Often, we make use of it to indicate someone’s sad mood. Naturally, a wide range of conventional expressions could be derived from the metaphor SADNESS IS DOWN:

- a. *je hoʃafay nimojjito holo* (“He had *sunk into depression.*”)  
b. *je ʃukkʰe bʰeʃge porlo* (“He was *broken down with sorrow.*”)  
c. *kʰarap kʰəborʃi ʃune je aʃahəto bodʰ korlo*. (“Hearing the bad news he felt *disappointed.*”)

Words or phrases like *hoʃafa-y* (‘in depression’), *ʃukkʰ-e* (‘in sorrow’), *aʃahəto* (‘disappointed’) are orientationally expressed to evoke a sense of downward movement of the speaker’s body or mind and thereby denote negative connotations. By looking closely into the words used here like *nimojjito* (‘sunk’), *bʰeʃge* (‘broken down’) we can crucially point out the related negative situation or state of affairs aroused by sadness. This is borne out of our physical positioning. The straight erected posture of the body is linked with the positive emotions like happiness or health and the drooping posture is simply targeted to produce our negative attitudes, emotions and perspectives.

But, sometimes metaphor like INTENSE SADNESS IS TOP may be projected to happen in both of the languages when the direction of being sad is the reverse, e.g.

‡ar ‡ukk<sup>h</sup>o s**o**b fima c<sup>h</sup>aralo (“His sorrow *crossed all limit.*”)

SADNESS is also sometimes compared to DARKNESS in both languages, e.g.

- a. ami k<sup>h</sup>ub bi**f**o**n**no bod<sup>h</sup> kor<sup>h</sup>i (“I am feeling *gloomy.*”)
- b. ‡ar muk<sup>h</sup>‡a ‡ukk<sup>h</sup>e o**n**d<sup>h</sup>o**k**ar hoe g**e**lo (“His face turned *dark* in grief.”)
- c. ‡ar b<sup>h</sup>o**b**i**f**f**o**t ni**f**pr**o**b<sup>h</sup>o d**e**k<sup>h</sup>acc<sup>h</sup>e (“His future looks *dim.*”)

Words like bi**f**o**n**no (‘gloomy’), o**n**d<sup>h</sup>o**k**ar (‘dark’) or ni**f**pr**o**b<sup>h</sup>o (‘dim’) in the above sentences amply specify the mood of sadness.

But there are also dissimilarities between expressions of these two languages as in Bangla expressions sadness is frequently reflected by the metaphor SADNESS IS PAIN IN THE BODY PART, e.g.

- a. ‡e ‡ar bu**k**e be<sup>h</sup>a ‡i**l**o, Lit. “He *hurt his chest.*” (i.e. “He made him feel saddened.”)
- b. ‡e ‡ar h**r**i**d**o**y**e a**g**<sup>h</sup>a**t** ko**r**lo, Lit. “He *struck his heart.*” (i.e. “He disheartened him.”)

Words like bu**k** (‘chest’), h**r**i**d**o**y** (‘heart’) act like the container which holds the pain inside it. Since sadness caused by pain is commonly kept hidden by most people, it cannot be communicated unless people express them through metaphorical terms.

## Conclusion

Therefore, the cross-linguistic similarities in the conceptualisation of emotions like happiness or sadness through the same source domain elements are easily observable by this comparative study of English and Bangla expressions except in some occasional cases. In short, comparing these languages on the basis of orientational emotion metaphors, this study corroborates explicitly that emotion metaphors are universal or near-universal and could be found uniformly in languages which are markedly differentiated by distinct social, cultural and ecological salience or scenarios. There is no doubt that some emotion metaphors which are of orientational kind are truly common at least for these two languages. It is sufficient to believe that these metaphors happen to co-exist in both of the languages. This fact also provides strong support for the conceptual nature of fundamental human thought regarding certain metaphors, that they are not arbitrarily selected or originated in linguistic or pragmatic

context. Though it could not be denied that language faithfully reflects the related culture and metaphorical structure of a language stands for unique linguistic and cultural richness, it is comprehensively clear that bodily correspondence is dominant in any language whether or not they belong to same language group.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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A Comparative Analysis of Emotion Conceptual Metaphor in English and Bangla

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## **Kannagi and Desdemona - A Comparative Study**

**Prof. L. Lakshmanan and Dr. D. Nagarathinam**

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### **Abstract**

Kannagi, the epic heroine of Silappathikaram in Tamil Literature and Desdemona the heroine of Othello, one of the greatest tragedies of Shakespeare, are compared here with the internal evidences about their characterization.

**Key Words:** Desdemona, Love-marriage, Platonic love, Anklet, Handkerchief, Revenge, Pathetic end.

### **Introduction**

**Silappathikaram**<sup>(2,4-7)</sup> is a long epic story in which ‘Kannagi’ the protagonist represents the Tamil people of 2<sup>nd</sup> century. She lives among a Tamil community, especially in southern India where three kings (‘Chera’, ‘Chola’, and ‘Pandiya’ ) ruled. It is the long poem, written with songs and dances blended with prose. We find in this epic prose, music and drama. It is called in Tamil as ‘Iyal’ (prose), ‘Isai’ (music) and ‘NaDagam’ (drama). It is written in poetic form interspersed with prose and Lyrics. The major characters are not kings or nobles; they belong to the merchant class in the trade city of Poombukar. Hence, it is called a ‘people’s Epic’.

The epic ‘**Silappathikaram**’ resembles one of the major tragedies of Shakespeare-Othello. The un-heroic hero **Kovalan**, leaning towards fun and frolic, is lost in sensual pleasure with ‘**Madhavi**’ - a shadowy character. She plays the role of the villain.

**Desdemona** is the heroine of Othello<sup>(1,3)</sup>. The story was written roughly before 1604 by Shakespeare. Desdemona was born to Duke Brabantio in Venice. In the tragedy ‘**Othello**’, a valiant warrior and leader Othello is misled by the poison of jealousy injected into his mind by **Iago**, an un-paralleled villain in any literature. The hero is dragged into hell with a thread of envy tied in the nose, like a donkey.

## Comparison of Kannagi and Desdemona

KANNAGI	DESDEMONA
She was born to a rich Merchant	She was born to a Duke
She was twelve years old.	She was sixteen
Brought up in a protected and traditional family.	Brought up in a Duke's protected family.
She was exquisitely beautiful.	She was extraordinarily beautiful.
Arranged marriage.	Love marriage (romantic love).
She married a handsome rich husband.	She married a black moor aged about 42 years.
Equal in status, caste and creed.	Loved his bravery and battle-field adventures.
Dutiful, devoted, and submissive.	Dutiful, devoted, and submissive
She was smart and wise.	She was extra ordinarily innocent.
She parts with her fortunes to please her husband	She ignores her father's fortune and goes with her husband
She fights for justice defying the powerful king, when her husband is killed unjustly.	She does not fight with her husband to prove her innocence, when she was accused of infidelity.
She avenges her husband's death and dies a heroic death.	She peacefully dies a tragic death.
'Kannagi': a champion stands for justice.	She stands for innocence and for obedience.
She becomes a heroine and is welcomed as a guest by the women in heaven.	A pathetic figure provoking pity draws our tears.
Kannagi is a spirited, fiery character.	A gentle, sweet character with no fire.
Love, happy married life, separation through husband' infidelity, melancholy, loss of husband, taking revenge on the king who punished her husband, and dying willingly.	Full of romantic love, ready to elope, happy to be wife of her hero husband, a victim of jealousy-inspired murder, loving, blaming herself, and dying a tragic death.

Kannagi, the protagonist character in the epic Silappathikaram, and Desdemona, the heroine of Othello, one of the greatest tragedies of Shakespeare, are compared here with internal evidences.

### **Is Silappathikaram an Epic?**

‘**Silappathikaram**’ is an epic written by the Jain-poet Ilango Adigal - the younger brother of the king, Chera Senkuttuvan 1800 years ago -2<sup>nd</sup> century.

It can be translated ‘**an epic of the ‘ankle bracelet’ or the epic of the anklet**’.

### **‘Epic’**

Let’s cite a Greek classification. ‘An epic is a long heroic story - an individual who represents a people and in some cases founds a community, especially a nation.’

Epic heroes often have encyclopedic adventures including military adventures, experiencing all parts of the land, all levels society, and each aspect of the culture. The researchers find Silappathikaram as a connecting point for **Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism**.

Kannagi, the heroine has many encyclopedic adventures moving from the Chola kingdom - Poombukar-merchants-city, to Madurai- the great city of the Pandiya kingdom and the Western Ghats - Kerala- (Marayoor) of the ‘Chera’ kingdom. She travels over all parts of the land, meets people from all levels of society, experiences each aspect of the culture. So, she is called an epic heroine.

### **An Immortal Character**

Kannagi is an immortal character in Silappathikaram. As Ilango Adigal states through an envoy: “It is time that even the gods adore her who adores no god but her husband. A jewel among the women of the earth, Kannagi-’ she became a goddess and a guest of the women of heaven”.

Kannagi is worshipped as a goddess of chastity ‘the Patthini Deivam’ and ‘Karpukku Arasi’ (the queen of chastity) called by the Tamil speaking people. There are temples in Kerala built to commemorate her story.



**The statue of Kannagi on the Marina Beach in Chennai.**

### **The Global Symbol of Justice**

A statue stands in the Marina Beach in Chennai - the capital of Tamilnadu, on the sea-shore of Bay of Bengal. It stands as the ‘**Global Symbol of Justice**’, holding an anklet in her hand, seeking justice in the court of the Pandiya king who erred in his judgment which caused her beloved husband Kovalan’s death. We find the fury of Kannagi - a ‘**righteous anger**’ fighting alone for justice.

### **A Brief Story of Silappathikaram**

The story is brewed in love, jealousy, infidelity of the husband, a crack in love, misjudgment, melancholy, and the tragic end.

Kannagi, the heroine of this epic Silappathikaram was the daughter of a wealthy ‘Vanigan’, merchant of pearls and diamonds in ‘Poombukar’ a harbour city in Tamilnadu. She was brought up in a rich traditional family with all protections. She was extraordinarily beautiful. She weds ‘Kovalan’- the son of a rich merchant ‘Masaathuvaan’- It was an arranged marriage celebrated in a pompous way. The ideal couple leads a happy wedded life with all comforts. It doesn’t last long.

### **Extra-marital Life of Kovalan**

Madhavi - an intruder (a dancer and seductress) meets Kovalan in a festival. Kovalan falls in love with Madhavi. Her arresting beauty and scintillating dance and captivating singing have attracted the attention of Kovalan. His unquenched thirst of aesthetic sense was well fed by Madhavi. He forgets his wedded wife Kannagi. He becomes an estranged husband. He departs from Kannagi not because Kannagi was less beautiful than Madhavi, but

because, he finds extra sensual pleasures with Madhavi, with which Kannagi could not feed the aesthetic senses of Kovalan. He was lost in the extra-marital-adulterous life with Madhavi. He loses all the fortunes and jewels of Kannagi for the petty pleasures. Kannagi becomes a grass-widow.

### **Separation from Madhavi**

Once Kovalan developed a squabble *over* a song sung by Madhavi. The song was misunderstood by Kovalan. He suspects the fidelity of Madhavi and comes back home to have a reunion with his lawful and devoted wife Kannagi. He realizes that all the fortunes were lost for his sensual pleasures. Forgiving his past life, Kannagi readily gives away one pair of silver anklets, the only remaining jewel to sell and start a business again. The remorseful Kovalan decides to start a business in Madurai. Kannagi with her innate submissiveness and charity, accompanies her husband to Madurai without any fuss like the chaste women of that period. Life with their husbands whether they were good or bad, was heaven for them. Kannagi hopes to start a new life and a new trade thereafter in Madurai.

### **Kannagi's 'Karpu'**

In that period, the dutiful wives observed three duties which were a meek obedience, tolerance of the misbehavior of their husbands and without any fuss receiving them with warm welcome when they come back as repenting husbands. These disciplines were called 'Perunkarpu' (the biggest chastity) of wives. As Kannagi observed those disciplines she was called 'a Patthini Deivam' (the goddess of chastity) or Karpukkarasi (the queen of chastity). The extra-marital life of the husbands was accepted by the society of that period. 'Karpu' did not mean only the sexual term what we mean now; it also meant the moral character of a woman.

### **On the Way to Madurai**

Kannagi walks along the stony and thorny paths along which she had never treaded on her tender feet. Her feet never stepped on the land out of her house in Puhar, as 'Kavanthi Adigal'- a guide and helper remarks about her tender feet and advises Kovalan to avoid such paths.

The relevant lines report:

The beautiful feet of Kannagi was never known by earth) or In other words Kannagi never came out of her house as she was brought up in a traditional way by her rich father.

### **In Madurai, the Killing of Kovalan**

Crossing the rich forests and the Vaigai river, Kovalan and Kannagi reach Madurai. In Madurai, Kovalan meets a goldsmith and hands over the anklet for selling. The culprit goldsmith had already robbed one of the anklets of the queen Koperundevi, wife of the king. To hide his theft, he makes use of this opportunity, rushes to the palace and tells a fabricated story that he has retrieved the robbed anklet and kept the thief in his custody. The king Pandian Nedunchezhiyan passes an order without any proper enquiry to kill the thief and recover the lost anklet of the queen. The innocent Kovalan is unfortunately killed by the lies of the goldsmith and the hurried judgement passed by the king.

### **In the Court of Pandiyan Nedunchezhiyan**

This scene is parallel to the 'bed chamber scene in Othello.

The horrible and horrendous news of her beloved husband's killing comes as a terrible shock to Kannagi. She rushes to the palace with the other anklet she had kept with her. She storms into the court of the king Pandian Nedunchezhiyan and points out the king's misjudgment which caused the killing of her husband's death. To prove her argument she throws down the anklet she was holding in her hand. The anklet is broken and an embedded emerald piece strikes the lips of the king. The king realizes that the anklet of the queen was filled with pearls not the emerald stone of Kanangi's. He feels ashamed of his wrong judgment believing the words of the culprit- goldsmith.

The king Pandian Nedunchezhiyan was well-known for the fairest justice, and feels at this moment that his scepter (symbol for fairest judgement.) was bent by his hasty and faulty judgement.

He admits to himself, "I'm the thief, Kovalan is not the thief".

He falls down with a broken heart and dies. As soon as the king dies, his queen Koperundevi faints, falls down on his body and dies on the spot.

The king and the queen die together to straighten out the bent scepter which was the symbol of the fairest justice of the Tamil kings.

### **The Fury of Kannagi**

The infuriated Kannagi fights alone with the powerful king in the court and succeeds, by proving her husband Kovalan was free from guilt. She does not plead, but she demands justice. She appears just like a wounded wild tiger. She wrenches her left breast off and flings it against the wall. The tears flood in her eyes and the blood from her body floods the spot she stands at. The fiery look of her eyes becomes a flaming fire. She burns the whole city of Madurai where her innocent husband was killed.

Having witnessed the fury of Kannagi and the destruction, the goddess of Madurai, Meenakshi descends and intercedes with Kannagi, appeases her and pacifies her anger; the fire with her is abated; she stops any further damage of the city.

### **Boarded in ‘Pushpagavimanam’**

The grieved Kannagi ascends the nearby hills of Western Ghats ‘Marayoor’ and stops there. Due to the excessive bloodshed from her amputated breast, Kannagi becomes exhausted with unbearable pain and becomes tired physically and mentally, falls down and dies. Then her spirit boards ‘a pushpagavimanam’ – (a mystical flying chariot) in which the spirit of Kovalan comes; she joins Kovalan and enters into heaven. Kannagi never worshipped any God but her husband. The people, who witnessed this miracle, have elevated Kannagi to the level of goddess of chastity (- a ‘**PatthiniDeivam**’).

Born in Chola kingdom-Poompugar, Kannagi moves to Pandian kingdom and dies in Chera kingdom. Her journey covers the three parts of Tamil territory. The researchers also find Silappathikaram as a connecting point for **Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism**.

### **Kannagi Epitomizes Chastity and Justice**

Her story is brewed in love, betrayal, melancholy, and revenge. Kannagi is unquestionably a conformist to chaste living. Her encyclopedic experiences elevate her as **an epic heroine** who met all levels of society, each aspect of culture.



The epic silappathikaram has “grim force and splendor unparalleled elsewhere in Indian literature - it is imbued with both the ferocity of the early Tamils and their stern respect for justice” - **Prof. L. Bashyam**

## **Desdemona**



### ***A Brief Story of 'Othello'***

The story was written roughly before 1604 by Shakespeare. Desdemona was born to a Duke-Brabantio in Venice. She was brought up in a traditional way with good education. She enjoyed the fullest freedom. She has grown up with exquisite culture.

### **A Romantic Love**

Several suitors of her own clime and complexion were shunned by the fair and gentle Desdemona. She regarded the mind more than the features of men. She had chosen a moor, a black warrior Othello who had profound experiences in the battle field. The gallant general Othello was frequently invited by her father to listen to the heroic deeds of the battles. Desdemona leaving her household chores, used to sit before Othello to hang breathless on Othello's tales with a greedy ear. She was captivated and entertained by Othello's wondrous narratives. Her compassionate disposition was interested in- all the disastrous chances, hair breadth-escapes, and moving accidents by flood and field, of which he has to tell, and her exceeding gentleness and timidity, and her domestic turn of mind, render her more easily captivated by the military renown, the valour, and lofty bearing of the noble moor. She fell in love and marries secretly and elopes with Othello.

### **Summoned before the Solemn Council of the Senate**

Her father, Brabantio did not accept their love and marriage. He accused the moor Othello, saying he had by spells and witchcraft seduced the affection of his daughter Desdemona to marry him. He was called upon before the solemn council of the senate. Othello's artless eloquence, recounting the whole story of wooing was quite impressive. The

Duke who sat as the chief judge believed Othello's honest words of a man in love, the only witchcraft which he had used, his ability to tell a grand tale to win a lady's ear.

Appearing in the court, Desdemona confirmed the statement of Othello.

"That I did love the 'moor', to live with him

My downright violence and storm of fortunes may trumpet to the world"

... "My heart's subdued even to the very quality of my lord..."I saw Othello's visage in his mind

And to his honours and his valiant parts did I my soul and fortunes consecrate." (Act I scene iii)

She accepted a duty to her father for life and education; asked leave of him to profess a yet higher duty to her lord and husband, just as her mother had shown in preferring him (Brabantio) above her father. Then leaving Venice, Othello moved to Cypress on duty.

### **Jealousy**

As a general, Othello promotes a young soldier Cassio to be the lieutenant who once served as a go-between in the courtship of Othello. This promotion gave great offence to Iago, a soldier who was aspiring for the promotion. He also had a suspicion Othello had a liking for Emilia who was to marry Iago. With these provocations Iago conceived a horrid scheme of revenge. Iago was artful and had studied human nature deeply. He sowed a poison seed of jealousy in the mind of Othello. He hinted to Othello, the young and handsome Cassio was having an affair with his beloved wife Desdemona. The horrible lie was flamed into raging fire by adding more fuel in the form of suggestions and cooked up details of misconduct on the part of Desdemona and Cassio. The sting of revenge was laid strongly in Othello's heart and it had made Othello a beast.

### **A Disastrous Night**

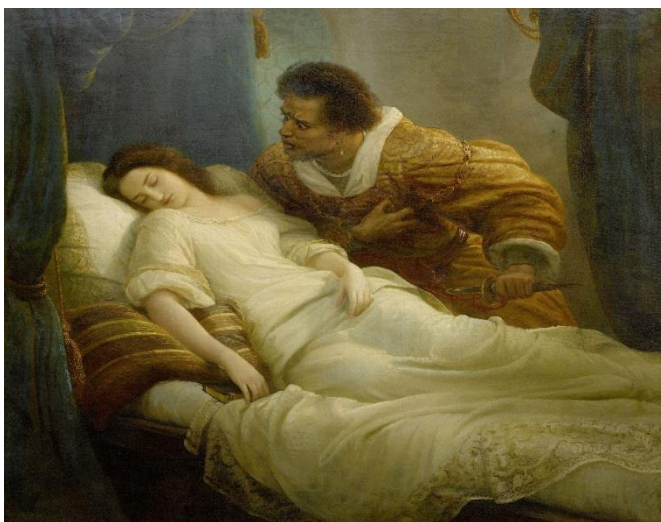
To mark the dispersion of the enemy's fleet on their arrival at Cyprus Othello declared a holiday. Everybody enjoyed themselves feasting and making merry. Wine flowed in abundance. Cassio was instructed to keep the soldiers from excesses in drinking. Unfortunately, Cassio was subjected by Iago to swallowing glass after glass poured by Iago. Cassio was found to be excessive in drinking. Cassio's tongue ran over in praise of

Desdemona. To make it worse, Cassio wounds one Montano, a worthy officer in a scuffle in the drunken mood. The result was that Cassio was punished by Othello, taking away his place of Lieutenant from him. Iago succeeded in his secret plan to trap Cassio in that disastrous night.

### **The Handkerchief - the First Gift to Desdemona**

Desdemona innocently mediates for Cassio with her husband Othello. To widen the crack of suspicion, Iago makes use of the handkerchief which was the first gift given by Othello. The kerchief was lost by Desdemona once. Iago, picking it up, drops it in the path of Cassio. Cassio keeps it with him. Iago instigates Othello that the possession of the handkerchief by Cassio was the token of love given by Desdemona. Othello strongly believed the illicit intimacy after many subtle suggestions by Iago. Without any inquiry Othello passed sentence for the death of Cassio. As Lord Byron says, 'Anger is a short madness'. The untrue suspicion had driven Othello insane. He burst into anger, fell down and wept. On the recovery of his fits he decided to kill the innocent Desdemona. He stormed into the chamber of Desdemona and openly accused Desdemona about the infidelity, hurling the word 'cuckold', and he left. The innocent Desdemona was stupefied with wonder at her husband's untrue suspicion of her. To prove her exemplary innocence she asked the meaning of the word 'cuckold' from her maid Emilia. Before her reply, she affirmed to herself that there was no such disloyal wife on this world. With the fatigue of the heavily troubled spirit Desdemona fell into slumber.

### **Othello - an Uxoricide**



Othello entered the bed chamber, full of the black purpose to put his lady to death. He thought he would not shed her blood, nor scar that white skin of hers, whiter than Alabaster. He desired to suck the honey from the fairest flower without plucking. While Desdemona was fast asleep, he kissed her for the last time (as he said) and that kiss was so sweet. He kissed again and

wept with cruel tears. Desdemona was awakened and saw him gnaw his under lip, roll his eyes, and she knew he was always dangerous when he looked so. Covering her up in the bed clothes Othello stifles the guiltless Desdemona till she dies. Othello becomes an uxoricide (a man who murders his wife).

### **Realized His Misjudgment**

At that instant of time, when Cassio was wounded and bleeding. Iago had sent a fellow to kill Cassio. Othello discovered the truth from a letter from the pocket of Iago. This discovery was as a horrible blow to Othello, who now realized that his wife was ever faithful to him. With extreme anguish, Othello, falling upon his sword, throwing himself upon the body of his dear fatally injured lady, died with a heavy heart.

### **Similarities between Kannagi and Desdemona**

Kannagi and Desdemona both are dutiful, dedicated, faithful, and domesticated wives. They lived and died for their husbands/at the hand of their husbands respectively.

‘Duped’ of Kannagi-’ and the handkerchief of Othello are the major instruments for the deaths of the protagonists.



The ‘anklet’ of Kannagi causes the deaths of Kovalan, the king Pandian Nedunchezhiyan and his queen Koperundevi. The powerful king, Pandian Nedunchezhiyan, was duped by the words of a culprit. He passes the death sentence upon Kovalan without proper enquiry.

Similarly, the handkerchief given to Desdemona as the first gift by Othello found at the hand of Cassio deepens the crack of suspicion in Othello and causes the death of Desdemona without proper enquiry and Othello’s death as a consequence. The valiant warrior Othello was simply duped by the words of the villain Iago. Without finding fault with the



king and the gullible Othello, we have to accept that the evil in the goldsmith and in Iago caused the tragic deaths of all four characters.

### **Dissimilarities**

Kannagi becomes an epic heroine. Desdemona stands for romantic love and for loyalty to her husband and reminds as a pathetic house wife - a gentle, innocent woman without blemish created by Shakespeare.

Desdemona's love marriage differs from Kannagi's arranged marriage. But both of their married lives ended in failure, extremely pathetic. But one cannot forget they did have a short time of married bliss.

In her family life Kannagi is portrayed as a submissive house wife. After the death of her husband Kovalan she becomes a vengeful woman with a terrible anger.

The fury and the vengeful anger of Kannagi are never found in Desdemona. She remains devoted and dutiful, passive and submissive house wife until she breaths her last. Anger and vengeance were never felt by the fair Desdemona. She dies without any resistance as a helpless and hapless woman. She forgives her husband who turned to be a wife-killer and blames only her fate. She bids farewell with the words,

“Nobody, myself, farewell commend me to my kind lord, O, farewell” (V.ii.133-134). Shakespeare has depicted Desdemona as a self-effacing, and faithful wife.

### **Paradoxical**

Against the acceptance of her father Brabantio who had brought her up with good education and the fullest freedom. (...free and bounteous her mind') Desdemona '*so opposed to marriage that she shunned the wealthy curled darlings of Venice*' and having chosen her husband 'the Moor-Othello. We find her independence and freedom to take a bold decision and the sense of duty in her words:

'My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty,

To you I'm bound for life and education  
 My life and education both do learn me  
 How to respect you,  
 You are lord of all my duty  
 I am hither to your daughter  
 But here is my husband  
 And so much duty as my mother show'd  
 To you, preferring you before her father  
 So much I challenge that I may profess  
 Due to the Moor my lord' (Act.1.iii.184-185)  
 ...'that I did love the Moor, to live with him  
 My downright violence and storm of fortune,  
 May trumpet to the world...' (Act.1.iii.247-249)  
 ...'my hearts subdued even to the very quality of my lord.  
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind  
 And to his honors and his valiant parts  
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate? (Act.1.iii.278-282)  
 So that,' dear lords,  
 If I be left behind,  
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war  
 The rites for why I love him are bereft me,  
 And I a heavy interim shall support by  
 His dear absence, Let me go with him'.

The same strong lady at times turns into a submissive character, with supple knees, most notably in her willingness to credit blame to herself for her own murder. The play then depicts Desdemona contradictorily as a self-effacing, faithful wife, as well as a bold, independent personality. This contradiction may be intentional, meant to portray the way Desdemona herself feels after defending her choice of marriage to her father. (Act, 1.iii.)

#### **A. C. Bradley's<sup>(1)</sup> Comment**

"The sexual jealousy brings a sense of shame and humiliation. Othello becomes insane and he is driven to murder his own beloved wife. Such jealousy as Othello's



comments on human nature turning in to chaos....the blow to Desdemona and the bed-chamber scene where she is treated as the inmate of a brothel, a scene far more painful than the murder scene, is another cause of the special effect of tragedy (Othello)” A. C. Bradley<sup>(1)</sup> (London: Macmillan and .co.1919)

Desdemona is helplessly passive. She can do nothing whatever. She cannot retaliate even in speech, no, not even in silent feeling. The suffering of innocent Desdemona is an intolerable spectacle. Her helplessness makes the sight of her suffering far more exquisitely painful. She is helpless because her nature is infinitely sweet and her love absolute.

...We watch Desdemona with more unmitigated distress, we are never wholly uninfluenced by the feeling that Othello is a man contending with another man; but Desdemona’s suffering like that of the most loving of dumb creatures tortured without cause by the being it adores. Othello strikes Desdemona, (Act.iv.i.251) where he affects to treat her as an inmate of a house of ill-fame. (iv.ii.)

‘We find **‘madness of revenge’** in Othello’s mind.

We find **‘indignation for revenge’** is found with Kannagi when she bursts into the court of Pandia king holding an anklet in her hand. With the fury of Kannagi - ‘a righteous anger’, Kannagi tore off her left breast and flung it against a wall. She burnt the great city - Madurai where her husband was killed without any guilt. We witness an angry, fierce and vengeful woman who becomes destructive.

The same Kannagi was portrayed earlier so submissive and passive even though her husband deserts her and was having an extra-marital life with Madhavi – a mistress. Being a grass-widow, Kannagi’s life was very miserable. Without any grudge, she gave away all her jewells and her happiness for the happiness of her estranged husband. She was infinitely patient, sweet and loving. She always spoke kindly to her husband, never once nagging or contradicting him even in the depth of her loneliness and despair. When her husband comes back as a prodigal son, Kannagi readily accepts him, forgiving and forgetting all past misbehavior. She accompanies her husband to Madurai to start anew life and a trade. The people in that period accepted the extra-marital life of their husbands. Kannagi was one



among the people to adopt the selfless service to her husband. So, she was called as 'Karpukku Arasi' (the queen of chastity)

## Conclusion

A comparison of Desdemona and Kannagi may include the following aspects.

\*Desdemona's **romantic love** which was based on many factors, was not merely based on the features of a man. Her secret love and marriage against the will of her father, a powerful Duke - Brabantio of Venice, having rejected several suitors of her own clime and complexion in Venice in a romantic union. It is highly romantic.

Prof. Dowden has observed that, "In the love of each there was a romantic element and the romance is not the highest form of the service which imagination renders to love. For mere romance disguises certain facts, or sees them as it were through a luminous mist"

\***An exemplary character of Innocence** – Desdemona: She doesn't know the meaning of the word 'cuckold' used by her husband Othello in his fury. She asks Emilia, her maid, "That there be a woman do abuse their husbands in such gross kind?" "I don't believe such a woman even exists"

\***The fierce sense of revenge** - the righteous anger' found in Kannagi is not found in Desdemona.

### \*Forgiveness

When Emilia asks her who the offender was for her suffering, the gentle Desdemona replies, "Nobody, 'myself, farewell/commend me to my kind lord farewell," (Act V.scene.ii.133-134).

**Prof. Bradley**<sup>(1)</sup> speaks of Desdemona's choice of Othello as rising "too far above our common level, and he adds, 'There is perhaps certain excuse for our failure to rise to Shakespeare's meaning, and to realize how extraordinary and splendid a thing it was in a gentle Venetian girl to love Othello, and assail fortune with such a downright violence and storm as is expected only in a hero."

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## **The Status of Wisdom in Firdausi's *Shahnameh***

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to discuss the status of wisdom in Firdausi's *Shahnameh*. In general, *Shahnameh*, Firdausi's book relating to Iranian epic, has been discussed by researchers and teachers not only in Iran but also all over the world. When the epic is discussed, Firdausi's great name touches Iranian people's minds and souls. The epic, patriotism and national pride were created as the three sides of the charter which Firdausi made, based on the wisdom, knowledge and faith. *Shahnameh* is the greatest epic book admired for wisdom and is considered the base of life. According to Firdausi's point of view, a wise man is a person who has a regular program for his life. He always tries to reach the perfection stages of humanity dynamically. Thus, Firdausi also offered some solutions in this regard. He admired wisdom and described some characteristics for the past and present man. Firdausi considered wisdom as the base of a successful personal and social life. Therefore, he introduced religious wisdom and he believed that wisdom is the most important of every good deed. In addition, he believed in wisdom as the basis of perfection.

**Key words:** Firdausi's *Shahnameh*, wisdom, wise, man.

### **Introduction -**

#### **The Status of Wisdom in Firdausi's *Shahnameh***

Before inquiring directly the status of wisdom in Firdausi's *Shahnameh*, let us investigate briefly the history of Persian language. Persian is as one of the most important of languages of the world. Khansir and Mazafari (2014) indicated that in human history, Persian language is recognized as one of the oldest languages. This language is directly related to Indo-European languages family and is recognized as a branch of Indo-European languages. Aryan group is an old group of this family which arrived in Persia area from western Asia. Firdausi's *Shahnameh* is the largest Persian poems book which admired wisdom. In this book, wisdom is considered as the basis of doing every affair and as one of the most important features of human beings.

### **Focus on Wisdom**

Wisdom is a specific topic and different languages have discussed it through various meanings and vocabularies. Throughout human history and in all cultures, people have paid much attention to it. The English word "wisdom" has been derived from the Indo-European word "ueid" (see and find out). It is also close to the Greek word "idein" and later "Idea" and Latin word "videre" (look at something). In German language, this concept and its diversity are still used. The German word "Weisheit" means "reason", the word "wissen" means "wisdom" and "wissenschaft" means "knowledge". The Arabic and Syriac word "hok hmah" means "skill and ability". The Arabic word "hekmat" originated from the same root. The term "Sophia" in Greek means "intelligence or skill" (Mohajerani, 1993, p.87).

Thus, all of these terms and concepts such as wisdom, ability, knowledge, reason, etc., are written in the introduction of *Shahnameh* book. Therefore, Firdausi considered wisdom as the most precious divine gift which the Lord gifted and bestowed only on human beings. *Shahnameh* mentions the words "intellect" more than 500 times, " wise " 300 times and "wisdom" 20 times.

### **Firdausi's Ideal Man**

From what has been mentioned above it is clear that Firdausi paid more attention to wisdom. Jawanshir (2005, p. 64) mentions that "deciding the fate of mankind according to the wisdom, and depending "his both lives" on his increase and decrease of reason, is Firdausi's main linchpin". Firdausi considered "wisdom" as the highest symbol of creation (Ranjbar, 2000, p.71). Torabi (1997, p.43) also said, " Firdausi's ideal man is a human who has these features all

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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together: goodness, purity, faith, determination, challenge, gentleman, wisdom. He must also be away from any perversity and shortcomings." Mokhtari (1989, p.126) indicated that : "one of Firdausi's specification is to praise the superiority of the wisdom, the functional aspect of wisdom, which tends as a balancing factor in the "spiritual purity" promptly to the sacred aspect of super humanity, the aspect which Persian literature praised uniquely and excellently."

### **Wisdom – Basis for Living, What Is Wisdom?**

Wisdom is praised and mentioned in *Shahnameh* book more than any other Persian books. Thus, in this book, wisdom is also considered as a basis for living. A question arises, what is wisdom? It is taken from human experiences to show humans the right way from the wrong one. It is the density of thoughts and experiences which must leads to man's success. The basic life of man is that he lives worthy and suitably in order to respect the natural joy of life without getting it at any cost. In this world, man has a series of transactions of wishes. Therefore, here is the point that wisdom comes to help him make good selections. Human's wishes constantly run into each other and this is the wisdom which guides man to choose the best. Wisdom chooses the spiritual demands which are more stable, and those which do not have these characteristics are excluded (Islami Nadushen, 2002).

### **Salvation through Wisdom**

"Intellect" and "wisdom" are human's guidance in his life, and man can reach salvation through them. "Progress and retrogression, sorrow and joy, comfort or discomforts of life, achievement of spiritual and material ambition, status, or loss. ... depend on wisdom ... As a wise man's life is very regular, he is always evolving and gradually reaching the pinnacle of humanity which is the ultimate goal" (Ranjbar, 2000, p.72). About the concept of wisdom, Islami Nadushen (2002, p. 13) states that: "In *Shahnameh*, wisdom is a fundamental base for every activity. It has many excessive concepts and it is the abstract of the doctrine of all human's right knowledge and experiences. Human's right knowledge and experiences will gather in him and form his wisdom. These collections shape the society's wisdom totally. It means that the approach that should be adopted for the continuation of a society is the practical experiences (wisdom) compacted and formed in the shape of instructions".

## Lord of Life and Wisdom

Firdausi began his great epic with the name of the Lord of life and wisdom. This is a point that Firdausi invited the readers to think about carefully. In this book, human being has been trying hard to reach to a suitable degree of wisdom, while remembering Lord in this way is a kind of literary art. "Life" itself is the most important thing that man has to work hard to get it in this world; for "Life" will not be limited to the area of animal life or brutality, nothing will be more useful than wisdom to guide man in this world. If life is not under the control of reason and wisdom, it will be an animal life. Therefore his life activities will create neither epic nor history (Zarrinkoob, 1997).

## Age of Firdausi

Firdausi lived in an age during which various kinds of wisdom and reasoning were propounded such as Iranian reasoning, Greek reasoning, Mu'tazilites' reasoning, etc. Mohajerani (1993, p. 33) also made reference to this issue and believed that "Firdausi linked three streams of thoughts: Islamic, Greek and Persian ideas to each other in the introduction of his book. Without any doubt it is clear that the origin of his thought is Islamic one and Islamic wisdom, he paid attention to the other major contemporary currents of thought too."

Iranian history has been divided into two eras: (1) the pre-Islamic era and (2) the post-Islamic era. It is not such that Iranians had totally set aside their cultural heritages and civilization. Iranians kept and maintained their ancient national culture even after accepting Islam, so they were Iranian Muslims. It means that in the fourth and the first half of the fifth centuries, being Iranians and Muslims were features of Iranian culture. Firdausi's *Shahnameh* linked the pre-Islamic Iran to the Islamic era. If the past history of Iran was not rich, it would be impossible to influence the next era. Iran's culture found its way from the ancient time to the modern one (Falah Nezhad, 2002).

There is no doubt that Firdausi took advantage of his resources, reviews and researches of Pahlavi's literary texts and Iranian mythologies and heroes, since he was also familiar with the Iranian philosophy. In other words, Firdausi did not ignore Iranian wisdom and philosophy in the

processes of his stories which were considered as the spirit and essence of mythology (Mohajerani, 1993).

### **Zoroastrian Wisdom**

In *Avesta* (name of Zoroastrian book), we faced two kinds of wisdom: "wisdom in the human world is divided in two forms and man has both types, but his success depends on his understanding of them:

1. Inborn wisdom (Assen wisdom), inherited in the nature of all human beings, Demon of lust (Verne) is its enemy. Ahura Mazda's wisdom, all, is inborn and heavenly wisdom.

2. Acquired wisdom (Gushan Sorude wisdom). After perceiving and understanding the human innate wisdom that has been molded in his essence, man will add his wisdom through righteousness and his experience. This is called acquired wisdom.

Thus, by the help of these two forms of wisdom man can achieve their liberation and reach to his ultimate goal "(Rezaei Rad, 2000). He also stated that "there is a difference between Holy Urmazd wisdom which related to Firdausi's creativity of words and philosophical wisdom. Wisdom as the most original questioning and trust finding drive has an important philosophical position. Through wisdom (Logos), a philosopher can draw a distinction between truth and doubt. So, there is always an image of doubt in the philosophical wisdom.

### **Ormazd Wisdom**

In the Zoroastrian religion, philosophical wisdom does not have any relation to the Ormazd wisdom, and it could be the beginning of series of innovations and religious misunderstanding. Man should try to close his wisdom to the overall wisdom of Ormazd because movement of man is an imitation of Izad (Lord). Ormazd with his sacred wisdom knows the final outcome. He will be able to create and in general, he is wise and powerful (Rezaei Rad, 2000).

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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Falah Nezhad (2002, p.25) mentioned that "wisdom in Divine wisdom and Firdausi's Shahname are both religious and they both endeavor to bring the bliss not only in this world but also in Judgment day". Kuyaji (1992) stated that "Firdausi referred to a certain anonymous author who wrote about wisdom in two cases. Therefore, Firdausi himself clearly was inspired by the anonymous author's work. He also mentioned that there were much more worthy and important subjects that he could quote from the same source:

خوردد بر او زگفتار دانا که هنر مرد خردمند آن گفتم چه

And later he added:

آفرین رازجهان داندیم چه زین دگرگ و زده دانا ز شدیم

It can explicitly be said that the author of Pahlavi book (wise and divine wisdom), a certain example of these characters since the author was the most famous anonymous Iranian author who wrote a book about "wisdom". So it is fair enough that prior to anyone else, the author reaches to the title of "the man of wisdom" (Kuyaji, 1992). Mohajerani (1993, p.72) believed that "Firdausi's ideas originated from Islamic texts," although in the texts of Pahlavi, some notions of similarity to Firdausi's ideas can be pointed out. It is clear that the base of his thought was taken from Islamic, Holy Quran and the traditions". Firdausi lived in an era during which Greek's thought and philosophy was widespread. He even mentioned in his book, Shahnameh, about Aristotle and Plato in the story of Filghus' death, Alexander's father. Firdausi addressed Aristotle like these:

بوس چند یک بود اندرون روم به یوسف گه چند آن اندر بر مرد  
 بدست را بدی دست و جست بهی بدست بر نیاخت به سه سکندر  
 بوم و مرز هه آن بد شادک زو روم به گه آن بد نامداری یکی  
 نامک گس ترده و بیدار و خردمند نام ار سطلایس بد که حکیمی  
 جای بد گرفت و گویاک رد زب ان رای پاک آن شد سکندر پیش به

### Greek Philosophy in Iran

Thus it can be said that Firdausi was quite familiar with the ideas of the Greek philosophers, but he did not call himself a philosopher and he would like to call himself a wise man. He did not like philosophers (Firdausi, 2003):

مپوی گوی کی راهی به به پویم گوی بد سیار دان فله ای سا

گوی و گفـت این هـرگـز بـن بـه نـیاد گـو سـخـتـه سـخـن شـوای سـخـتـه گـر تـو

Falah Nezhad (2002) believed that Iran was the first Asian country which fought against Greece. Iranians knew about the ideas of great Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle many years even before accepting Islam. Later through translation, Greeks' ideas entered into Islam's world. However, it is not clear that whether Greeks' thinking was accepted or not. What is certain is that Greek's rational thinking did not have a serious influence among Iranians. Iran and Greece had two different ways of thoughts. If Iranians accepted Greek's rational thinking, it was not clear what would happen to the religion which was the origin and base of policy and government. The Greeks did not insist on teaching their own thinking to the other nations. Perhaps, they exclusively considered rational thoughts just for their own dignity. Iranians neither wanted nor could abandon their own principles of thinking and instead embrace another philosophy.

"Firdausi not only derived the benefits' of Greeks' thought and wisdom, but also he got the advantages of Iranians' thought and thinking currents too. He formed and integrated different thinking currents of thought in the context of monotheistic wisdom "(Mohajerani, 1993, p.47).

Firdausi (2003) considered wisdom as the cornerstone of creation:

پاس سه آن و است جان ز گنج بان  
شـنـاس رـا رـدخـ آف رید نشـنـد خـست  
گـمان بـی بـد و نـ یـک بـود سـه کـزین زبـان و گـوش و سـت اچـشم تـو پـاس سـه

However for establishing an ideal individual and social life, Firdausi considered "wisdom" as the firm cornerstone which would be a secure foundation of life. So, in 'the Holy Quran' and 'Islamic Hadith', the discussion about wisdom has been the most important anthropological issue. Late Koley in his book, *Osule Kafi*, which is one of the four main Shia's books, discussed about wisdom as the first valid argument. It showed the importance of this issue in Islamic Studies (Choobineh, 1998).

In the *Dictionary of Philosophy*, this is the definition of the word "wisdom": "the word *wisdom* lexically means to forbid and prohibit, because it looks like a camel's reins, since wisdom forbids his owner from being far from the right way." Firdausi paid more attention to the practical reasoning issues than theoretical ones. From Firdausi's point of view, Obligations include wisdom, righteousness and goodness, knowledge, patience, and giving ... and what should not to be done include being far from jealousy, greed, doubt, stupidity, envy and so on. According to the mentioned issues, what can be seen in Firdausi's ideas are more related to the Islamic teachings and the wisdom which he talked about is a religious wisdom.

Firdausi (2003) talked about wisdom as the first valid discussion which shows its importance. He also considered wisdom as the top of all goodness and everyone who is trying to reach the perfection, must be rational:

مهمان و که تران فـ روزنده                      جهان اندر نـ یست خرد از فـ زون  
 نـ سد پرد بـ سد کردار به را جهان                      خرد از شد شاد او که که س آن هر

### Important Features of Wisdom in *Shahnameh*

The most important features of wisdom in *Shahnameh*

1- Wisdom is God's gift (Firdausi, 2003):

داد راه از به را خرد سد تایش                      بـ عداد ای زد چه هر از به تر خرد  
 سرای دو هر به گـ یرد دست خرد                      دل گـ شای خرد و رهنمای خرد

2- Wisdom is liberating and Savior (Firdausi, 2003):

مـ بـ تلا بـ —لا در کـ سی مـ بادا                      بـ لا از ار مرد خرد رهنماد

3- Wisdom guides man (Firdausi, 2003):

سرای دو هر به گـ یرد دست خرد                      دل گـ شای خرد و راهنمای خرد

4- Wisdom decorates our body and soul (Firdausi, 2003):

مـ گرد یـ پیش شاهن آیـ بین از                      مرد خرد مند بـ اجز رای مزین

5- Wisdom protects man (Firdausi, 2003):

سید پاه اب رزگ دارد بر سرش      نیکخواه و باشد پاسبان خرد

6- Wisdom is the best knowledge (Firdausi, 2003):

راه نماند نده نیکویها سوی      شاه که دامست ده زین گفتم بدو  
بگذرد گمان بی دانشی هوز      بر دگر راه که پاسبان داد چنین

7- Wisdom brings happiness (Firdausi, 2003):

نسد پرد بدک ردار به را جهان      خرد از شد شاد او که که س آن هو

8- Wisdom is man's armor (Firdausi, 2003):

است روشن زو دهادن جان و دل      جوشد دست خرد دیوان شمشیر ز

9- Wisdom is the Tree of loyalty (Firdausi, 2003):

پادشاست دل جسد تن بهار زو و      وفاست درخت چون جهان در خرد

10- Wisdom keeps people away from being greedy (Firdausi, 2003):

بسد تردد دلت از تاج آزمگر      خرد دارو و پندست تو پز شک

### Features of a Wise Person

1-A wise person does not set his heart on instabilities and temporary world (Firdausi, 2003):

رای پاک مردم یاف ته خرد      سرای سپنجی اندر دل نبدند

2- A wise person is patient (Firdausi, 2003):

خوار جهاندار چشم به نه باشد      بر دبار کند دل کو خردمند

3- A wise person is humble and modest (Firdausi, 2003):

پرورد خرد در هی سد پهرش      خرد دارد که هو بد و دف روتر

4- A wise person does not worry about past events (Firdausi, 2003):

نزد بگ که زو آن غم ندارد      خرد دارد که که س هو آنک نخست

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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5- A wise person is a clever counsellor (Firdausi, 2003):

مگر د پ یشی شاهن آیدین از      مرد خردمند با جزرای مزن

A wise man's words are valuable. He is always hopeful and happy. He is not following any senses of desire or whimsy.

Firdausi believed that "What is based on wisdom is divine and what is out of reason belongs to devil and madness. Boundaries of being right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable is wisdom. The rational systems and behaviors will be accepted; while, the irrational systems and behaviors won't be accepted. All of the time, Firdausi considered wisdom as the best criterion for judging especially about kings and their governments. He supported governments which obeying reason and wisdom and criticized and rebelled irrational ones. The best attribute of kings and heroes are wisdom and justice and their worst traits are madness and wickedness (Jawanshir, 2005).

Firdausi emphasized and praised wisdom in the fifth century (A.H.), in the period in which nobody either dared enough or had the necessary knowledge to talk about reason. The value and validity of Firdausi's judgment about the conditions of his era would be far more eloquent than words suggested by historians and biographers. He analyzed the spirit of his time in which wise people lived in darkness. Social knowledge was not so common that wise people could talk about and, also for the sake of their lives, people did not even listen to the words of the wise. (Mohajerani, 1993).

Firdausi not only took the man of his time to the pinnacle, but also invited today's man to get wisdom. He was invited to the wisdom that originated from the teachings of the Islamic religion. Firdausi's ideal man is a person who is adorned with the ornament of wisdom and knowledge and understands his own personal status (Firdausi, 2003):

اند ب پرورده میاند جی چندین به      اند آورده برگ یتی دوازت را  
مدار بازی به را خوی شد تن تویدی      شمار پ س دین فطرت نخستین

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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## Conclusion

In the history of Iranian literature, some great poets have been grown up such as Firdausi, Hafez Shiraz, etc. are identified. Mozafari, et al (2015) mentioned that *Shahnameh Firdausi* is known as part of the history of Persian literature and it is one the most important epic books considered by literary experts not only in Iran but also all over the world. Firdausi is a poet who admired wisdom and knowledge. He considered some features and attributes for the past and present man. He emphasizes that in making a strong personal and social life, wisdom and knowledge are the first fundamental cornerstones. His expression of wisdom is a religious one. He believed that wisdom is the summit of all kindness. He overemphasized that in the way of human's evolutionary development, man must be rational.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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## English for Engineering Students in Tamilnadu - Listening: Speech Recognition Complexities

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### Abstract

This brief note discusses making arrangements for engineering students to develop adequate listening skill in English. They have the need to understand a number of varieties of English they may come across while studying and at work. Most of these students come from small towns and rural areas where English is not spoken on a regular basis. Listening to English utterances is almost nonexistent. Writing in English may be used in offices more than speaking and listening (English used in the latter two categories may be mixed with local language). Reading in English is also not very strong. Most of these students get exposed to listening in English only through classroom activities. Person to person conversational listening is also not frequent and adequate. The note offers some suggestions to improve speech recognition skills of engineering students in Tamilnadu.

**Key words:** Varieties of English, listening, writing, speaking, reading, rural students, classroom English.

### Classroom Use as the Major Part of English Usage in College

Most students in engineering colleges in Tamilnadu come from small towns and rural areas. Most engineering colleges are also located in rural parts, adjacent to small towns and major cities in Tamilnadu. Opportunities to learn and use English are available for individual students mainly through classroom instruction and classroom activity. Even students coming from English medium schools have difficulty in engaging themselves in conversation through English. Progressively over the years they overcome their shyness and hesitation or reluctance to

speak in English. Yet their performance at the end of their senior year in the engineering college is not adequate for work situations in private companies.

### **Nature of Classroom Listening**

Classroom listening is, more often than not, unidirectional. Students listen to the lecture or small and extensive talks delivered by the lecturer/teacher, with some intervening questions raised both by the students and the teacher. Answers are sometimes expected from the students, but not all the students are expected to raise questions, answer questions, or even express some opinions. Only a small number of students participate, but all the students are expected to listen and follow the dialogue mostly in English. Both the teacher and the students are often from the same linguistic background – home language or mother tongue of these individuals may be the same. So, the manner in which English is uttered and listened to, understood and interpreted is similar.

### **Person to Person Listening**

The above mentioned exposure to English listening in classrooms may be adequate for the moment. But students may have to go outside the state of Tamilnadu for work or work in companies within Tamilnadu where there may be a number of non-Tamil engineers. The students thus will be required to develop and master interpersonal conversational listening which would demand recognition of speech features employed in English spoken by people from other states. There are many similarities between the varieties of English spoken within India, but at the same time there are many peculiarities in every regional English spoken in India. The type of English spoken by Tamil speakers is different from the type of English spoken by the Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada speakers. Likewise English spoken by Hindi native speakers has its own peculiarities. In other words, listening here includes the skill to recognize and comprehend the peculiarities of English of the region in which the engineering students may be employed. Personal oral interviews, face to face communication with other employees and officials, and day to day communication with others in the region through English will require some speech recognition skill. Failure to listen and comprehend correctly what is spoken could lead to some problems.

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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## **Listening Contexts**

We suggest that we consider the following contexts to help develop or identify materials to improve listening in English:

1. Listening in Tamil versus Listening in English.
2. Listening in Tamil-English Context.
3. Listening in Pan-Indian English Context.
4. Listening in International Context.
5. Listening to Native English Varieties such as American Standard English, British Standard English, Australian Standard English.

Since there are really not many Tamil-English context movies, or even Tamil-English context news broadcasts, students in engineering colleges in Tamilnadu have to depend upon All India Radio news, leading TV channels such as NDTV, etc. to develop and sharpen their listening skill using Indian materials. Continuous and regular watching TV news should help students to acquire skill in listening and comprehending Pan Indian English. Unfortunately, most news is politics-oriented. There are a few non-news features , such as Indian mythological stories for children. Cartoon English uses rather rapid delivery and has its own idiom. Yet, TV and radio programmes in English should help engineering students to achieve elementary speech recognition.

Although we may argue that primary focus should be on listening, not necessarily listening to varieties of speech materials based on regions or nations, ultimately we need to take care of developing skillful listening of both native English and international varieties.

## **Group Listening**

Classroom listening is some sort of group listening. But in most group listening, we are part of a gathering in which some invitees deliver their lectures, etc. This happens in colleges on many occasions such as college anniversary, hostel day, special celebrations, convocation gathering, inaugural and valedictory addresses in conferences and seminars, etc. Students

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constitute the audience. Some students may listen and some others may be busy with their smart phones, even texting during the address. There is some disruptive behavior noticed all around, and yet the speech continues. Listening to such speeches demand some dedicated listening. If the speaker is well known and has been a person of inspiration, all attention is given to the address delivered. Emotion may play an important part here. What is listened to and retained would depend upon the “devotion” of the listener to the topic under consideration as well as the speaker.

### **Some Basic Elements**

In the context under discussion(engineering students in Tamilnadu), listening needs to focus on at least a few basic elements, to begin with: Tense, Gender, Singular/Plural, Proper names (masculine/feminine), Lexical choice, Technical terms and engineering and technology jargon. There are other items as well which we will take up for discussion in our future notes. Students should be taught to recognize correctly the connotation (literal and idiomatic meanings) of utterances they listen to. Tone must be interpreted correctly. Note that the correct use of tense, gender, lexical denotation and connotation continues to be a problem with first year as well as junior and senior year engineering students in Tamilnadu.

Listening is not simply hearing. It involves some higher order skills. Recognition of sounds and dialectal features are only one aspect of the listening skill. Since after graduation students may have to deal with the varieties and comprehend them correctly it is important to give some exposure to these speech recognition aspects.

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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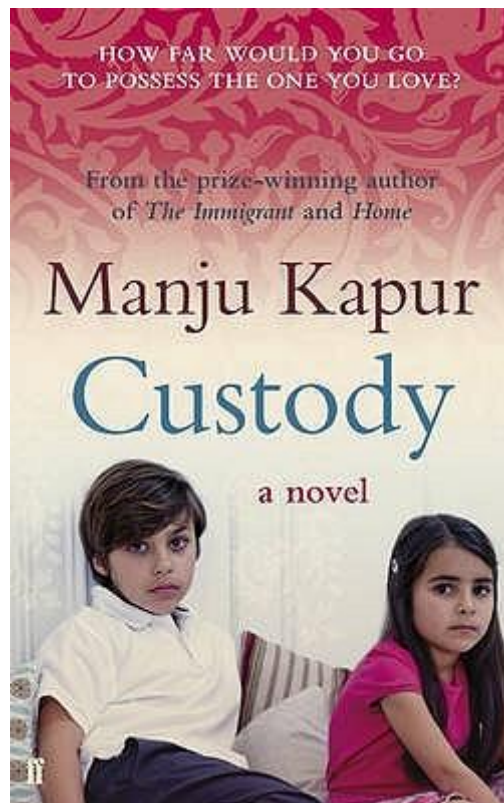
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## Demystifying 'Mother' and 'Daughter' in Manju Kapur's *Custody*

Jitender Singh

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### Overthrowing Age-old Conventions

An anti-establishment attitude to overthrow the age-old conventions has gripped the conscience of the contemporary writers. It has become a common motif to look beyond what has been in prevalence. To question and inquire is something which adds critical flavour to creative writing these days. But there are a selected few who do not confine their approach to mere questioning; rather they take a bolder step to subvert what is given on the basis of what might have been hidden during the construction of the text. The other side of the coin is considered more significant than the one present easily before the reader. It is under this kind of perspective that in this paper the changing contours of woman as mother and daughter are studied to unravel the gap between ideology and reality.

## Probing Women's Experience

Manju Kapur is one such novelist who tends to probe the deep recesses of women's experience in order to question the conventional modes of perceiving and treating them. But her vision is sometimes found fragmented and lacking coherence. The positions where she places woman as mother and daughter are both traditional as well as modern. Without merging the gap, on the one hand, she tries to preserve the conventional concept of motherhood and on the other, seeks to glorify daughter as an individual self in a modern context. Therefore, to understand and explore the multiple dimensions of 'mother' and 'daughter' a deconstructive approach is needed since deconstructionists believe in exposing the loopholes existing behind the idea of such identities. Nicholas Royle aptly contends:

Deconstruction – which is never single or homogenous, but . . . at least provisionally, be identified with 'the work of Derrida' – is concerned with the lucid, patient attempt to trace what has not been read, what remains unread or unreadable within the elaboration of concepts and workings of institutions.  
(160)

## Questions Raised

When thought upon from a deconstructive angle, certain questions begin to wobble. Whether to be a mother or daughter is one and the same thing? If not then, is it motherhood that leads to daughterhood or the concept of daughterhood that tempts a woman to be a mother? And if they are two distinct positions, can they be termed as identities or are they mere two roles that a woman has to perform? And finally if these are two different roles, then every woman will play them differently according to her individual characteristics and situations. How can her different experiences as mother or daughter be homogenous? But since centuries, woman's experiences have been confined to a few socio-cultural constructs and sacredness is attached to keep it out from the reach of further inquiry and scrutiny.

## Notion of Mother in India

In India, the word 'mother' reverberates with many connotations. "The word 'mother' connotes love, affection, selfless devotion and all that is noble in human nature" (Chaubey 107). The role of the mother has been extolled even in ancient epics and scriptures. Swami Vivekananda has eulogized motherhood in these words:

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The ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood that marvelous, all suffering, unselfish, even forgiving mother. The wife walks behind the shadow, she must imitate the life of the mother; that is her duty. But the mother is the ideal of life, she rules the family, she possesses the family. (58)

### **Motherhood and Motherly Love**

Thus motherhood has been glorified and celebrated since times immemorial. Even the Gandhian movement in India, which had the objective of emancipating women, projected mother as a self-effacing, sacrificing person. Mother is considered a source and fountain-head of incessant love. Motherly love has been represented in both religious and social documents in the limelight, as uncompromising and consistent. Through such representation of woman as mother, a very strong stereotype is born called motherhood.

The ideology of motherhood is to show mothering as innate or natural to women by its ceaselessly glorified representations. The responsibility of mothering and its tenderness are considered as the principal defining attributes of a woman. Such types of stereotypical representations are strengthened by their recurrence in literature and carried out from generation to generation.

Even on social front, the nation is perceived as a motherland and the society shows more respect on a woman as mother than as a daughter. The individuality in a daughter is thought to be a severe threat for the concept of motherhood which demands a sense of devotion, care, submissiveness and obedience. Therefore, there has been an ongoing conflict between society versus individual, and in case of woman, this conflict proliferates with more divergences.

### **Changing Representations of Motherhood and Daughterhood**

But with the emergence of intellectual and philosophical revolutions, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, representation of motherhood and daughterhood has also radically changed. Recent observations of feminist writers have questioned and challenged the socially constructed phenomenon called motherhood. It is realized that such sacrificing image ties women to the role of a mother and she herself is expected to forget her individuality. The fact that the mother is an ordinary human being with her daughterhood

wrapped around her unconsciously is miserably ignored in the patriarchal society. In this context, K.R. Sujatha and S. Gokilavani hold the view:

The nature of motherhood is dependent on the cultures and societies that have moulded them. Indian motherhood is inculcated in the woman from the day of her birth. She is raised to look forward to nothing else and she rates her worth by her efficiency to fulfil this role. (147)

### **Motherhood as Source to Access Respect in Male-Dominated Indian Culture**

Therefore, sometimes, mothering is considered a woman's sole way to access respect and status. But do all women want to be mothers? Perhaps the answer is no. In that case, the halo around the motherhood shrinks to a mere blink. The sacredness is shattered the moment a woman begins to detest her status as a mother. This is because women's experiences of motherhood are profoundly alienating from their experiences of daughterhood within patriarchal societies. Moreover, mothers are seen as goddesses and goddesses are seen as mothers. "It is this idealization of women's child-bearing capacity that has not translated itself into rights and entitlements for women as mothers in society" (Poonacha viii). It raises an important question: is mother really a goddess or an individual trapped in goddess figure?

### **Manju Kapur's Nove *Custody***

Manju Kapur's recent novel, *Custody*, sheds light on many such complex issues regarding motherhood and daughterhood as identifying mechanisms when they fraught with various drawbacks. The mother is considered a goddess for the goddess neither speaks nor reacts. But the moment a mother in human form raises her voice for her certain basic rights, the image of goddess begins to lose its hold and her existence becomes complicated. This duality of experience towards motherhood is the aftermath of the divorce which exists between ideology and reality. Though, the novelist is, at places, critical of this dual attitude but sometimes it seems that Manju Kapur herself attempts to preserve the all forgiving, loving and caring image of the mother, simultaneously presenting an individual counterpart in the form of a defiant daughter. As in the context of deconstruction, According to M.A.R. Habib:

While Derrida himself has insisted that deconstruction is not a theory unified by any set of consistent rules or procedures, it has been variously regarded as a

way of reading, a mode of writing, and, above all, a way of challenging interpretations of texts based upon conventional notions of the stability of the human self, the external world, and of language and meaning. (240)

### **Multiple Meanings in any Text**

According to deconstructionists, there are multiples meanings of texts, ideas or concepts, and it is in the wake of this multiplicity that the final or absolute meaning is rendered complicated. The critic witnesses uncertainty to claim the one as the final meaning of something. In the same way, this novel of Manju Kapur tends to present a variety of mothers and daughters who are trapped in these false identities in their different respective ways. Thus making is difficult to seek a homogenous phenomenon either of motherhood or daughterhood.

### **A Story of Law - Intrigues and Family Disputes**

The novel *Custody* seems, at the first instance, a story of law intrigues and family disputes. But between the lines, there is a large chunk of images and arguments that claim it to be a book concerned with the question of what it means to be a mother or to be a daughter, and both mother and daughter at the same time. What this paper intends to do is to critique such categorization of women as ‘mother’ or ‘daughter’ not opposing them with each other, but by examining their effectiveness in the ways they fight against the social relations of inequality and hierarchy. Steph Lawler aptly remarks:

Knowledges about the self, about mothering, about childhood, about mother – daughter relationship, do not, as it were, fall from the sky: rather, they are produced and reproduced in specific relations of social and political power, and in response to specific social and political preoccupations. Some knowledges gain their status as ‘truths’ through the ‘expert’ status of the individuals and the disciplines which produce them. (3)

### **Knowledge Ties Us in Ever More Closely with the Workings of Power**

What this observation of Lawler hints at is a very crucial realization: knowledges or ideas behind the formation of categories like ‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ may be motivated by some expert individuals who hold a seat of authority or by the institutions. If this remark is viewed more critically then it results in a path breaking conclusion that for this matter

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 15:11 November 2015

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‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ are social and political categories rather being some objective truths about women. These are merely two ways to categorize, divide and rule them. And thus Lawler makes a similar blunt statement that “Further, it is my argument here that these knowledges, while claiming to liberate us by revealing the ‘truth’ about human nature, actually tie us in ever more closely with the workings of power” (3). In this context, the mother – daughter relationship thus gradually becomes a site of contest where both social and individual interests raise conflicts and any possibility of reconciliation is subsided just to keep the show goes on for it renders women divided and vulnerable.

### **Daughter-centric with Focus on Mother**

Though a daughter-centric text, the present novel does have an aura of motherhood gleaming throughout the book. Shagun is the single daughter of her mother referred as Mrs Sabharwal. She brings up Shagun single-handedly as a single parent. There is no one else to look at and look after; Shagun becomes the centre of her attention. This aspect of their relationship turns Mrs Sabharwal from a protective mother to a fond mother of her beautiful looking daughter when Shagun enters adolescence. In the beginning of the novel, Manju Kapur clearly states, “When he first knew Shagun she had wanted to be a model, but her mother was strongly opposed to a career that would allow all kinds of lechery near her lovely daughter” (11). But to Shagun all such attempts of her mother to protect her from the outside world seem unfair since society demands from a woman as daughter a pinch of anger towards her creator, so that the conflict persists and the gap keeps on widening. Unconsciously conditioned in the patriarchal milieu, Shagun feels revulsion when her mother asks her to respect her husband. “Such useless questions. That was the trouble with mothers. Their eyes were like those of a lynx, their gaze tried to pierce your being, their interference in your life knew no limits” (Kapur 36). But this is the result of the ambiguous personality of the mother. She pretends to be protective but her fondness of her daughter overpowers her when she comes to know Shagun’s relation with Ashok Khanna outside her wedlock. And this leaves her wretched:

What choice did the mother have? She had to agree to keep silent, without having accomplished her goal of making Shagun follow the path of virtue. Now she was an accomplice to the crime. Society could point its finger at her and say, she knew and did nothing. (Kapur 41)

## **Mother as Nuisance**

This act of fondness leaves Mrs Sabharwal merely as a nuisance in the life of her daughter. Her individual interest to see Shagun happy breaks down the web of motherhood and from that point, it is the daughter who guides and controls their relationship. Their social roles change and turn their categories upside down. Now Shagun looks like more of a dominating mother to her obedient daughter, Mrs Sabharwal. “In the meantime she had five clear days in which to indulge herself. And nights, nights that she would ask her mother to come and spend with the children. Only a few hours, she would be back in the morning. No matter how disapproving, she knew her mother could not refuse her” (Kapur 50). This is one instance of how ‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ are not stable identities but mere roles which may change according to situations and anyone may play them, no matter who is called mother and who is called daughter. These are intersecting categories based on social or political foundations which try to keep women away from the realization that they are one at the core.

## **A Contrast: Essentially a Daughter in Every Mother**

The sub-plot in the novel concerning Ishita’s life and her brave encounters with both daughterhood and motherhood are in sharp contrast to the relationship shared by Shagun and her mother, and thus more informative and enlightening. Like Shagun, Ishita is the single child but unlike her, Ishita is brought up by her both parents. She is in direct contrast with Shagun in matters of looks as well as in daughterly and maternal qualities.

Whereas Shagun lives a life of secrets, Ishita clearly states, “How am I supposed to keep this information from my in-laws? My husband? I don’t keep secrets from him” (60). Shagun’s womb is fruitful; it delivers her a son and a daughter. But Ishita lacks this ability to bear children to her husband. One is full of maternity and the other is replete with the mothering instinct.

On the one hand, Shagun neglects her children to have a life of her own, and on the other Ishita longs to have a baby to feel the bliss of motherhood. Along with such diversified aspects of motherhood and daughterhood, the novel also challenges the categories like ‘biological mother’ and ‘biological daughter’.

Shagun being the biological mother of Roohi rarely identifies herself with her daughter. “Right from the beginning it was clear that Baby Roohi was a carbon copy of her

father” (Kapur 18). For her, Roohi seems more of a burden than her own replica in flesh and blood. But later in the course of the novel Ishita takes care of Roohi and becomes the foster mother of the neglected child.

This shows that mothering ability and mother’s love cannot be confined between categories like being biological or not. The instinct to mother a child is too vast to be summarized within the biological sphere. When Ishita proves herself a woman with a mother’s heart even without being the biological mother of the child she is taking care of, it emphatically brings forth the view that the qualities of being a mother may gush out from a daughter too. Without giving birth to a child, one may be a caring and loving mother. Therefore, to categorise women as ‘mothers’ and ‘daughters’ is just a systematic way to keep them apart from their shared experiences.

Essentially, there is always a daughter in every mother and every daughter carries the traces of her mother’s self within her attitude and behaviour. Rather than being contradictory, they are complementary to each other. What makes this relationship unique in its own right is the fact that mothers and daughters are usually seen as having a closer social, psychic or emotional identification than mothers and sons. Moreover, ‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ may be the same person. All mothers are also daughters. Even if the mother is absent, her very absence is likely to assume significance in the daughter’s life.

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