

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's  
*A Change Of Skies and The Pleasure of Conquest*

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Yasmine Gooneratne, Pic ChinthakaKumarasinghe

Courtesy: <http://archives.sundayobserver.lk/2007/10/28/plus06.asp>

### Post-colonial Literature and Feminism

Post-colonial literature reflects the effects of colonialism. The word post refers to the end of the formal colonial rule. If one articulates the word colonization, his mind will first remember the word *British* and by uttering the term 'Post-colonialism', one readily looks at the world created after the end of British colonization. The situation started when British conquered different continents by using different tools. British colonization is a grand process because it took a long time to establish its dynasty. The British Empire was at one time, referred to as "the Empire on which the sun never sets".

Post-colonial feminism is a form of feminism that developed as a response to the fact that feminism seemed to focus solely on the experiences of women in western culture. Postcolonial

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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies and The Pleasure of Conquest*

feminism seeks to account for the way that racism and the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white, non-Western women in the post colonial world. Women continue to be disproportionately assigned the task of ‘preserving nation’s culture and traditions’, comments Uma Narayan in her analysis of the position of third world women within the host diasporic cultures. Sri Lankan authors writing in English, too, strive to explore these multiple “differences” and have gained increasing critical attention in recent times, both from within the country as well as from around the world.

### **Diasporic Novel**

The diasporic novel is entirely explicit in its reflection of hybridity of cultures. Positioned on the margins or interstices of two antagonistic national cultures, it claims to open up in between space of cultural ambivalence. In “The Location of Culture”, Bhabha sets at the conceptual imperative and the political consistency of a postcolonial intellectual project. In a dazzling series of interdisciplinary essays he explains why the culture of western modernity must be relocated from the postcolonial perspective. “The Location of Culture” discusses writers as diverse as Joseph Conrad, Toni Morrison, Nadine Gordimer, and Derek Walcott. Bhabha provides a theory of cultural hybridity and the translation of social difference that goes beyond the polarities of self and other, East and West. This is a unique and exciting volume bringing together for the first time some of the most seminal writings in the field of literary theory and cultural criticism. As Homi Bhabha writes in “The Location of Culture”, such writing refuses to oppose the pedagogy of the imperialist noun to the inflectional appropriation of the native voice, preferring instead to go beyond such binaries of power in order to recognize our sense of the process of identification in the negotiation of cultural politics. The well-known diasporic writers are V.S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Kazuo Ishiguro, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, and Yasmine Gooneratne and so on.

### **Yasmine Gooneratne**

Yasmine Gooneratne is one of the most prominent women writers in post colonial literature. She belongs to the large and influential Dias Bandaranaike family which dominated the social and political life of Sri Lanka for several generations. She could write an account of

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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne’s *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

the elegant and westernized lifestyle in her works because of her inherited acquaintance with it. She received the first higher doctoral degree of Doctors of Letters at Macquarie University. She holds the personal chair in English Literature at Macquarie University, which is located in New South Wales. From 1989-1993 she was the Foundation Director of Postcolonial Literatures and Languages Research Center. She has been a visiting professor or specialist at many different places around the world including the following: Edith Cowan University in Western Australia, University of Michigan in USA, Jawaharlal Nehru University in India and the University of the South Pacific. She won the Samvad India's Foundation's 2001 Raja Rao Award, and the 2008 Sahitya Rama Lifetime Achievement Award.

She has proved herself a consummate artist in her novels and her contribution in this respect in the direction of postcolonial fiction is remarkable and cannot be denied. As a portrayer of the life of Sri Lankan, she is unique. Gooneratne has managed to pierce through the political and ethical attitudes of the people to the human depths beyond.

Gooneratne has published twenty books that include critical studies of Jane Austen, Alexander Pope and contemporary novelist and screen writer Ruth PraverJhabvala. She also wrote poems, novels, short stories and personal essays. Her work has been presented on television, radio and at public readings around Australia and many other parts of the world. Her writings engage with various themes. One theme that continually appears in her works is a reflection upon how the past affects the future. She relays many of her own memories of her own experiences to make her points more personal and more real to the reader. She also holds the theme of immigration and adjustment to new lands. This exemplified in *A Change of Skies*, which deals with a Sri Lankan family moving to Australia.

### ***A Change of Skies and The Pleasure of Conquest***

Among the novels of Yasmine Gooneratne, *A Change of Skies and The Pleasure of Conquest* are taken for this paper. Through these novels Gooneratne attempts to picture how people search for their identity and how the immigrants get experienced in an adopted land. These two novels published at the end of the twentieth century, deal with postcolonial themes

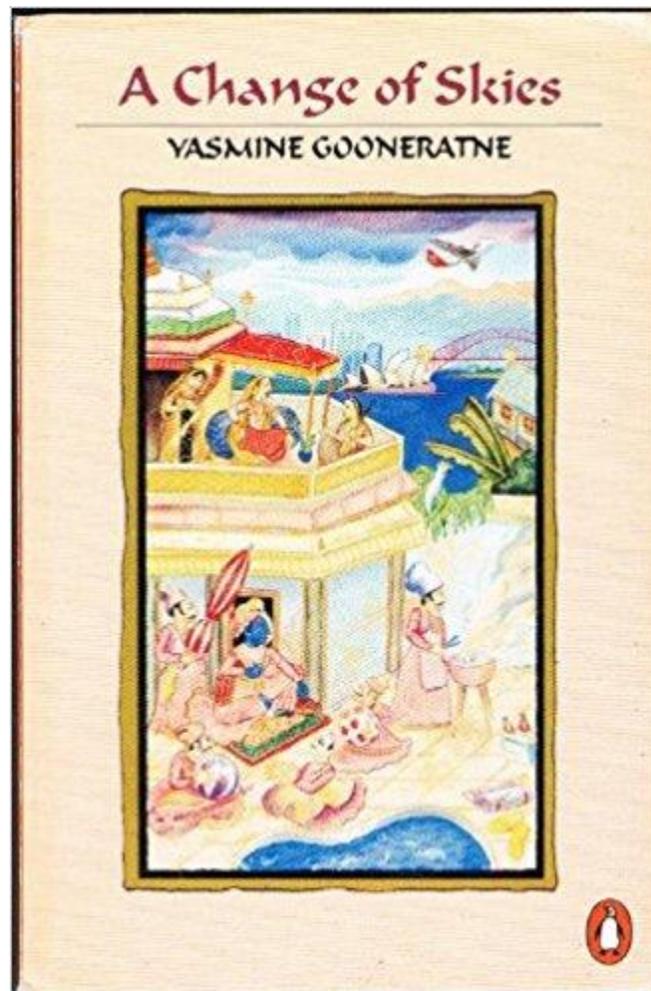
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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies and The Pleasure of Conquest*

such as cultural conflicts, dislocation, quest for identity, immigration etc. Both the novels have been short-listed for the Commonwealth prize and the first one received the Marjorie Barnard Literary Award in 1992. The second novel was shortlisted for the Commonwealth writers' prize in 1996.

*A Change of Skies*



Gooneratne's personal experience as an Australian immigrant is one of the factors that contributed to the success of her first novel, *A Change of Skies*. It is a smooth and sparking debut novel of Yasmine Gooneratne. It developed from a shortstory entitled "How Barry Changed His Image" which indicated that change and adaptation are among its central theme. She experiences the new post colonial world shifting cultures and migrant people with wit, sophistication and understanding. *A Change of Skies* juxtaposes two societies and two cultures Sri Lankan and

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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

Australian. The characters in both the novels are placed in familial, cultural and ideological positions that prevent them from stepping outside their fixed assumptions and attitudes. Yet both novels suggest that breaking away from one's ethnicity and absorbing the new culture is the only way for survival.

This novel also describes in tragic-comic fashion the experiences of a Sri Lankan couple who come to reside in Australia. The novel centers on the life of a Sri Lankan couple- Bharat MangalaDevasinha, a solemn young Asian Linguistics expert and his wife Navaranjini who migrate to Australia as Bharat takes up professorship in Southern Cross University on a five year contract. They eventually fall in love with the country and decide to stay on. Gooneratne fuses two stories encompassing two centuries, two continents and two generations. The story of Edward, the grandfather and the story of Bharat, the grandson run simultaneously. The author adopts a complacent tone and links these two stories of the grandfather's and that of the grandson's till the end of the novel.

The novel *A Change of Skies* written in a predominantly postcolonial perspective. *A Change of Skies* is smooth and sparking debut novel of Yasmine Gooneratne. It developed from a short story entitled "How Barry Changed His Image", which indicated the change and adaptation are among its central theme. The novel consist of a chapter which is entitled as "Worlds Apart", "Departure", "Old World, New World" that deals with the protagonists' most decisive step in assimilation to Australian society. Clash of cultures and adaptation are the popular themes in this novel. Gooneratne being an immigrant to Australia, she relates her own experience to the characters in the novel. She experiences the new post-colonial world shifting cultures and migrant people with wit sophistication and understanding. Yasmine Gooneratne has been living in Australia for the last twenty years and her personal experiences as an immigrant have coloured the protagonist. She is able to project the cultural confusion and confrontation of a multi-racial society. The clash of cultural and need for adaptation is a part of all expatriate experience.

The seven main chapters of the novel as well as the prologue and the epilogue are preceded by observations on foreign travel or otherness from a madly of writers and writing of the past three hundred years. The subject of cross cultural experience is developed in three steps: the first chapter of the novel entitled “Worlds Apart” deals with the question of how the reader learn or gather information about a foreign culture from a distance. The second and the third chapters titled as “Departure”, “Old World, New World” deal with first impressions and observations in the new surroundings which are compared to the immigrants’ preconception. The remaining four chapters focus on processes of acculturation and on the centre issue of change.

The novel begins with Bharat and Navaranjini ready to move to Australia for five years. Bharat’s wife Navaranjini is the first one who recognized the true nature of Bharat’s grandfather Edward’s manuscripts. Through his manuscripts they come to know that Bharat’s grandfather already visited Australia in his family and he also wrote about the life experience and culture of Australia. Bharat had a chance to meet one Australian woman through his mother-in-law. Through her he came to know some Australian customs and slang. Despite their ignorance of the country, both Bharat and Navaranjini are strongly determined to make a great success of their five-year stay in Australia. Navaranjini tries to equip herself for the stay by taking driving lessons and obtaining a driving license. Marina, one of her former schoolmasters reminds her that Australians are fond of swimming. She therefore takes swimming lessons at the Colombo.

The experiences of Bharat and Navaranjini provide the main substance of the novel. Bharat is an intellectual who reflects on his experience. Bharat and Navaranjini already ‘know’ what to expect in Australia and their first encounter with Australia leaves Navaranjini breathless. The fast traffic, the stickers on the rear windows of the vehicles, being winched at by the ‘ginger-haired driver of a monster truck’, the slogans “ASIANS OUT” and “BASH A PAKI A DAY” startle them and add to their unease. The first look at Sydney traffic makes her wonder if she would ever be able to drive there and exchange her Sri Lankan driving license for an Australian one. She finds people driving very fast with tense and grim faces, shoulders hunched eyes focused straight ahead and not glancing sideways, mouth unsmiling. People hang out of bus windows and stand on the footboards, nobody takes any notice whatever of Zebra crossing.

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J. Anitha

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Navaranjini reads about the Devonshire storming through Edward's diaries. She mistakes a hail storm on the first night of their arrival in Australia to be similar attack on them. So she describes this situation to her husband as:

It's the Australian...the Australians have come. They're throwing stones on the roof, and breaking all the windows...the stone struck the roof of our new house with a tremendous clatter. Then they hit all the front windows. The panes were shattered into great big jagged places, the carpet was covered with splinters of broken glass. (ACS81)

Like the grandfather Edward, Navaranjini also has the adaptability and to accept another culture. Bharat changes his name to Barry Mundy and Navaranjini changes her name as Jean. The name change signals an ambiguous reaction to the hegemony of Australian culture. But there is a sense of loss-loss of identity. Because 'Barry' in Sinhalese means "impotent" and Mundy is the "remains or dregs". From MangalaDevasinha, Bharat 'degenerates' to a Mundy to suit the American climate. Any long name is almost a short story to Australians. Edward also shares a similar experience. He arrives at Kanngara station at Badagini in Australia. Badagini, an Australian name is Fire in the Belly translated into Sinhalese. Names are unique feature in a person's identity and culture and hence untranslatable. There are many similar experiences shared by Bharat and Edward. Jean successfully retains her native identity. In the beginning Bharat and Navaranjini have been involved in the clash of cultures and are treated as newcomers in the strange land of Australia. But in the course of their five year stay they began to feel that Australians have Asian identity.

Barry finds an opportunity to make his own choices and adopts the role of cultural communicator. Barry learns many skills like fast driving, fluent in language customs and tradition of Australia etc and starts making note of them from the moment he lands on the foreign soil. Jean also considers the question of immigration in the course of her narrative. She talks of the various reasons given by her acquaintances from India and Sri Lanka, Pakistan and

Bangladesh. Barry and Jean have no reason to migrate like they had no children to educate or was there any racial or religious discrimination against them which made them flee to Australia.

Naavaranjini observes everything in Australian. She observes the taxi driver and wonder how he drives very fast and knows about the place where the people want to go. She also observes that in Australia, Australians avoid looking each other, For the communication takes place by the way of the stickers on the rear windows of the vehicles. Both Bharat and Navaranjini understand the need to be on their own guard against hostile attacks from the society in which they find themselves.

Bharat and Navaranjini select Mr. Koyako as their guide. Mr. Koyako is regarded as something of a leader of the Sri Lankan community in Australia. As an engineer working for a government department he is much respected. Despite his stay in Australia for ten years he could retain the moral values and traditions of his homeland. He is very strong minded in protecting and preserving the values which support civilization. He feels that the children of Sri Lankan families in Australia are put in situations of cultural danger. Mr. Koyako guides them to a great extent. Jean and Barry also observe Mr. and Mrs. Koyako life style. Mrs. Koyako is a very good cook. She never serves anything to her guests other than Sri Lankan savories and sweets. Mr. and Mrs. Koyako are very religious, devoted supporters of three temples and wholehearted participators on alms-giving and other ceremonies. They are kind enough to involve both Barry and Jean in these ceremonies. They live by their principles.

The assimilation of Australian culture is complete when Barry resigns his job as Professor of Linguistics to help Jean who makes herself a career. Jean and her husband Barry together own and run the newest and most exotic dining experience to tempt the Aussie palate; Baba-G and Baba- Q where Barry presides expertly over the finest Barbecued seafood. The food served the wholesome synthesis of East and West.

Jean tries to learn the Australian way of exposition in the society. She keeps listening to the talks of Professor Blackstone. She even keeps a note pad open while listening to the extempore of the professor over the Asians. She thinks that Blackstone is a jingoist. , Jean still

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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

decides that Australians are really Asians. Their appearance of insensitivity merely conceals their true nature.

At the end of the novel Barry chooses to set up a school to teach English to other newcomers. Jean provides the true meeting point of cultures by establishing a restaurant and school of cuisine. The change of her own skies has changed her soul and she is now ready to change the skies, or at least the horizons of her new compatriots.

The author portrays the central characters Barry and Jean live their life in Australia till their death with their new identity. Gooneratne presents the perspective of understanding the cultural clash. Barry and Jean have a daughter now. They named their baby as Edwina. Barry takes it a pride to become a father. Jean believes that though their marriage was an arranged one there relationship is bound on love and faith.

Jean thinks that Barry is her property, and she has every right to protect it and to keep it for herself. Barry has always believed in the power of individuality. He feels very happy about his new career as well as the new arrival of his family Edwina. When Edwina is growing up, Barry and Jean develop the habit of discussing the things in a frank and an unemotional way. Barry always suggests Jean that they try to keep their thought of their homeland in the course of his discussion. Thus the novel promotes better human relationship .The sweetest couples Barry and Jean die in a plane crash while going to see Bruce and Maureen during the festival Christmas. This makes Edwina to be distress and she feels very sad. At the same time Bruce and Maureen feel that they are responsible for Edwina. They continue to take care of her.

The sudden death of Barry and Jean does not prevent the progress of the novel. Gooneratne links the setting to Edwina in the epilogue Edwina becomes the responsibility of Maureen and Bruce. They continue their kindness and spontaneous friendship towards Edwina. She also have the habit of visiting Maureen and Bruce's Christmas celebration as was practiced by her parents. She feels more at home in the company of Maureen and Bruce. Though she appears only in the epilogue the reader can understand her expansion of the cultural horizons

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 17:10 October 2017

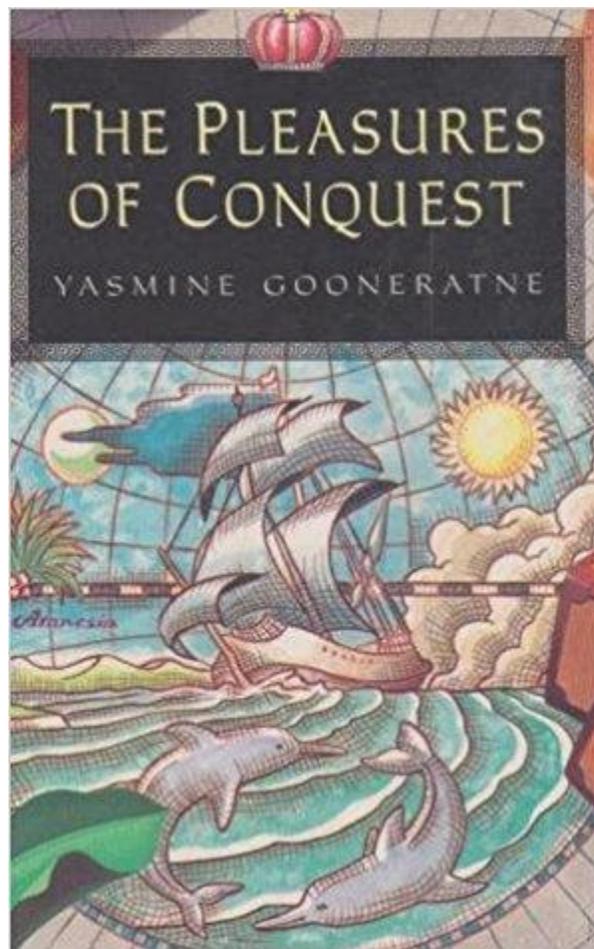
J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

started by her great grandfather, Edward. Similarly, she too is trying to shake herself clearly about the colonial burden.

*A Change of Skies*, which began as a light-hearted hilarious description of the acculturation process of Barry and Jean, towards the end becomes a profound reflection of deeper aspect of change, identity and adaptation. The dubious nature of people has been clearly visualized by the writer. Koyako, another Sri Lankan expatriate is a subtle portrayal of people who outwardly cling to customs and traditions of their own homeland, at the same time trying to become part of their chosen land and in having the best of both the worlds.

### *The Pleasures of Conquest*



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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

Yasmine Gooneratne's second novel *The Pleasures of Conquest* is a postcolonial novel. It deals with the impact of the British colonial encounter on the native societies. It is a sheer exposition of the resistance that the native societies project against the colonizing influences. The novelist succeeds in presenting the experiences of the characters that relate to the colonial Diasporas of nostalgia, fantasy, and cultural affiliations with an undercurrent of irony and satire. She portrays a social scene from a space of detachment which is made possible only by a migrant's positioning.

*The Pleasures of Conquest* is a more ambitious and a more scathing venture -its satiric barbs aimed at different aspects of global academia, the cultural, sexual and environmental politics of neo-colonialism and much else. It is a tale of new buccaneers coming to reconquer the old colony in insidious ways. This is interwoven with that of an old colonial Englishman of a previous century whose passionate relationship continued with the local "Amnesians" making them 'Asian Europeans' adding a lyrical dimension to the novel.

Gooneratne deals with relationships between Europe and Asia Ceylon undergoes a transformation from a British colony to an independent Sri Lanka. The setting of the novel is in the democratic republic of Amnesia which was once under the British rule. The novel *The Pleasure of Conquest* engages in the re-writing of the national narrative of a tropical island nation called Amnesia which by implication is quite obviously Sri Lanka. The novel contains within itself not one but several texts. The novel interweaves four stories with a central tale of romance or mystery that has historical roots as the author's note reveals at the end.

Yasmine Gooneratne's second novel *The Pleasures of Conquest* deals with the impact of the British colonial encounter on the native societies. This novel is in the re-writing of the national narrative of a tropical island nation called Amnesia which by implication is quite obviously Sri Lanka. The central component of such a novel must necessarily be the written text. The novel contains within itself not one but several texts. It is this that facilitates its analysis as a metatext. *The Pleasures of Conquest* is a literature that makes literature itself the object of its

study. The literature of any post-colonial nation cannot be considered a purely aesthetic entity. It posits cultural, political and ideological paradigms.

The novel interweaves four stories with a central tale of romance or mystery that has historical roots as the author's note reveals the end. Despite the fact that one fleetingly but intermittently is left to wonder whether that tale itself based on two notable nineteenth century writers like Dora Isabella Cornelia Perumal also known as Gajaman Nona (1759-1814) and Sir John D'Oyly, Baronet (1774-1824) is worthy of bearing the weight of the novel, the satellite stories are interesting enough in themselves to make the book a good read. Perhaps it would be more correct to say therefore that the four stories that constitute the novel are linked by the vagaries and mysteries that go to make the "pleasures" of "conquest" in the old colonial world as well as in the present, ironically titled.

All the major character in the novel are writers, each the practitioner of a different genre. There are Stella Mallinson, the American novelist, Phil Destry, an American academic researching for writing a biography, Angela Forbes, a British journalist and Kumari, an Amnesian writer and translator. Each of their texts attempts to negotiate its way through and penetrate into other texts sat king a claim to superiority until ultimately to use Julia Kristeva's words, "every text is absorption and transformation of another text". (TPC55).

*The Pleasures of Conquest* is centered on historical and contemporary relationships between East and West. Gooneratne believes in the worth of human beings as individuals. Different aspects of immigration are continually mentioned in her works. It would be difficult to single out the chief protagonists of this novel without doing a certain injustice to the conception of it as a maelstrom of characters, events, histories, literary outpourings and most important- link ages, but even so, the figures of Stella Mallinson and Rohan, Philip Destry and Leila Tan can be traced as the most prominent along the spine of the tale. The lives of these characters, disparate though they are interconnecting within a common Amnesian context which is that of the colony.

The novel opens with Stella Mallinson's arrival in Amnesia. Her mission in the island involves writing and championing the politically correct environmental cause. She stays in the Ambassador suite of the New Imperial Hotel of Amnesia. She continues with her mastermind production of *Nine Jewel Rice*. It was an exotic and ethnically flavored literary coup. By this literary coup Mallinson and her publishers have planned to satisfy the literary hunger of the western audience. Mallinson takes up the collection of the native writing of the Orientals simultaneously.

Her project to write a novel having the native tradition, culture and social setting as the back ground was aimed at bringing their existence, their historical importance and their picturesque attributes to the attention of hitherto uncaring and opening them up to tourist development. She gives 'opportunity' to nine local writers each to take up writing a chapter for *Nine Jewel Rice*. Stella is a patient. In her sessions with her team of collaborators, she carefully teaches the art of creative writing. Though her writers do their best to execute her advice, her American accent often confuses them.

Stella identifies Rohan, the chief masseur at the Salon Ajanta, to be unexpectedly knowledgeable about the ins and outs of the hospitality industry. She is moved to the new bridal suit and Rohan is appointed to oversee her comforts and to tend massages to her. There develops a gamut of relationship between Stella and Rohan. Stella invites him to spend his nights as well as his day in her suit at the New Imperial.

Stella is fifty five years old. And she adopts seventeen years old Rohan with whom she enjoys an amorous relationship. By trading for Rohan with his Uncle, Stella has displayed the power that the dollar can wield in an economically backward Asian Community. Stella likes Rohan for many reasons. Rohan is constant civil and faultlessly prudent like any other formal English Butler. He is modest young man. He can do the most unexpected and provocative things with a detached and almost abstracted air. Stella much admires Rohan because he possesses the Asian sensibility. She is used to the celebrated 'American directness'. She values the American style of communication. Rohan teaches her the Asian method of communication.

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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

While Stella is interested in the island which is located in the contemporary. Phil Destry, the professor and colleague of Stella is interested in the study of the colonial past. His research is based on the life of a British civil servant Sir John D'Esterey who lived in Amnesia in nineteenth century. Phil Destry's biography of Sir John may be seen as being guilty of the politics of iconicity through the workings of which the figure of Sir John is idolized. Leila Tan, his Asian research assistant brings an element of skepticism through her inferences to the character of Sir John. Leila understands and analyses John's life from the oriental approach that spawns the racial and gender biases. The supremacy of his text over that of Leila Tan is upheld through the sheer assertiveness of male over female and West over East.

The texts of Phil Destry and Leila Tan are to a large extent shaped and influenced by the text of Sir John D'Esterey. His impressions of the island and its people are recorded in his journal and letters to his mother and brother in England. When the Journal appears to carry documentary evidence of his experiences, his letters contain truth as his family would like it to be. His early letters home are akin to the narratives of travel books. Like any enchanted traveler, Sir John writes about the flora, fauna, local habits and customs. Others texts like that of a letter of his Cambridge associate intervene with Sir John's attempt to reveal his notarization on the island with details of Sir John's mastery of the local language. This letter is the earliest recording of his adaptation to the ways of the island. The most intriguing part of Sir John's text is the absence of a piece of information gathered from other sources by Phil and Leila. He also celebrated the poet of his times, Dona IsbellaCorneila. Gooneratne presents Stella and Phil as the embodiments of the highlighting status of USA as a neo-colonizing power.

The third part of the novel shows thematic concerns with place and displacement. The episodes of Angela Forbes and that of Edith Crocker are other examples of Colonial representation. Angela Forbes spends her earlier life with her husband Peter in Amnesia. As her divorce causes a trauma, she comes back to Amnesia along with her son Julian. Her episode deals with the common problems of bomb blasts, insurgency, rising prices of real estate and over-crowding in urban areas applicable to many Asian countries. Gooneratne makes the novel a

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J. Anitha

Post-Colonial Reading in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change Of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*

mix of social, political and humanistic issues. Edith Crocker chooses to remain in Amnesia even after the death of her husband, because the happiest moments of her life are connected to the island. Gooneratne makes her a representative of the 'Amnesiac Europeans' who forgot to go home.

Angela Forbes who has spent the best part of her life on the island moves to England later along with her son Julian. In an unusual representation of the colonizer by the colonized, the Europeans which mean the Amnesian European those who forgot to go home are portrayed sympathetically. The Amnesiac Europeans are absorbed into the pluralistic and syncretic post-colonial society of Amnesia even if they are anachronisms in the rapidly changing setting of the island.

Angela Forbes and her son experience discrimination in racist England. Angela attributes Julian's truant behavior to reterritorialization. Angela Forbes returns to Amnesia after many years in order to recover from the trauma of her divorce. Her narrative shifts pendulum like resulting in severe temporal dislocations. Coming back to the very place she had met her husband, Peter, for the first time produces a cathartic effect on her:

Angela's memories of Amnesia were still unblurred by time and distance. That clear upcountry air, sharp and fresh with a delicious chill to it, the scent of pine trees, the mist on the mountains, the gorse bushes crowned with golden blossom, the names of the surrounding tea estates-Glen Loch or Dundee-that must have spoken of home to generations of lonely Scottish tea planters. (TPC196)

Angela's episode in the novel offers a commentary on contemporary Amnesian with its references to bomb blasts, insurgency, rising prices of real estate and over-crowding in urban areas, all of which are problems common to many Asian countries.

The novel culminates in the story of Mallika. She belongs to the Amnesia. Though she was ill-treated her life was coined by her father, her husband and her sons. She is the major character of Native Island Amnesia around which the entire novel revolves:

A Woman and naturally, therefore, guaranteed the care and protection of the men folk of her family, her financial interests would be well looked after at each successive stage of her life: first by her father, next by her husband and, if she outlived by her sons. (TPC263)

Mallika is an ordinary character. Her autobiography achieves the 'success' Mallika trains Kumari who was the collaborator of Stella's project *Nine Jewel Rice*. Mallika teaches Kumari how to incorporate one's soul in their writings. She stands as legendary for the ancient history of Amnesia. Her text heralds the birth of national literature. This originality makes her book successful.

Mallika's autobiography as narrated to her employer Kumari is the site within which notions of history are reconstructed. Mallika, an illiterate Amnesian woman is the store-house of the island's ancient literary and cultural heritage. She carries within her the entire oral tradition of Amnesia

Mallika is characterized as the legend of the ancient literature and cultural heritage of Amnesia. She carries within her the entire oral tradition of Amnesia. Gooneratne highlights the originality and importance of folklore literature. Mallika's employer, Kumari had been one of the collaborators in the writing of Stella's *Nine Jewel Rice*. Kumari learns from Mallika that the genesis of literature in most Asian countries is in folklore. Unlike Stella, who taught her the technique of writing like teaching of manufacturing a car, Mallika teaches Kumari the art of writing from one's soul. This is an important step in the production of an indigenous literature.

Yasmine Gooneratne's four principal characters seem to move on well-oiled wheels, each unique in disposition and composition. She does not deny the colonial links, the old well-built infrastructure. She raises her Amnesia on the pillars of the colonial past, seeking as the Amnesians do, areas of reconciliation and common agreement. According to the Amnesian,

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history is not a mere documentation of past events. It lives on the past percolating down into the present ingests it fully.

The texts of Stella and Phil Destry turn out to be artificial, for they lack the touch of 'nativity'. Through Mallika and Rohan Gooneratne seems to rewrite the history of Amnesia, using the key categories of literature and religion. By making Mallika's work successful Gooneratne indicates that the 'Asian Identity' is complete when seen only from its own perspective.

The individual identity and existence as given by the 'Supreme Nature' cannot be bent according to whims and fancies of mankind. What mankind is supposed to identify the underlying threat of 'love' that interlinks everything in the universe.

### **Yasmine Gooneratne, a Consummate Artist**

Yasmine Gooneratne has proved herself a consummate artist in her novels and her contribution in this respect in the direction of postcolonial fiction is remarkable and cannot be denied. As a portrayer of the life of the Sri Lankan, she is unique. Gooneratne has managed to pierce through the political and ethical attitudes of the people to the human depths beyond.

Gooneratne is the most skilful in manipulation of various narrative techniques. She is a superb story teller. She is so conscious of minute details that very often the most trivial incidents are described in an elaborate and detailed manner. While analyzing events and characters she rises above the personal level and is quite objective. Gooneratne's art of characterization is superb. A character can be presented in various ways, by a psychological analysis of character, by dialogue, by action and the reaction which is very closely connected with the main concern of the narrative. Yasmine Gooneratne characters are not types but are individuals with strongly defined personalities. Her style is characterized by lucidity, precision and control, quickness, confidence, eagerness and masterly control over vocabulary. It is as if her own life of action and drama has been transposed into the pattern of her novels.

As a literary critic her attempts to explore histories of exile and expatriation, the effects of imperial domination and it's an aftermath encapsulates the concerns of postcolonial experience. She is handling of various narrative techniques such as Back story, Frame story, cinema photography technique etc in her novels *A Change of Skies* and *The Pleasure of Conquest*. She is a writer who makes of her thoughts a celebration of words. The casual reader and there should never be such a one who would read her will always be deprived.

Everyone in the world is caught by more than one culture. In that way Gooneratne also shares the experience about immigrant, culture, patriotism through these two novels. In the first novel the central characters Barry and Jean willing to accept the host culture of Australia and at the same time shows their love to their home culture Sri Lanka. In her second novel *The Pleasure of Conquest*, all the writers are written about the Island Amnesia. But Stella Mallison and Phil Destry belong to other country. But they write about the good qualities and persons in Amnesia and they also give respect them. At first Stella gives importance to the American language when the novel progress she change herself and respect the Amnesian language. The other writer in the novel is Angela Forbes explains her pathetic feeling about her home town Amnesia. Mallika who is the most prominent writer stands for her Amnesian culture and identity throughout the novel. Though all are followed with more than one culture everyone loves their home land and its culture. Some of them willing to accept the host culture and some of them unwillingly accept. For all must respect all the cultures. This is the main theme focused in these two novels.

The author Yasmine Gooneratne has proved herself as a great post-colonial woman writer in Asian-American literature. She is not just the woman writer who talks about female suppression, women identity, the conflict between male and female, etc. She writes her work based on what she saw and experienced in her life. This makes her works greatly appreciated by all.

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J. Anitha

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