Singularities

a transdisciplinary biannual research journal

Vol. 2 Issue 2 July 2015

Postgraduate Department of English

Korambayil Ahamed Haji Memorial
UNITY WOMEN'S COLLEGE
Manjeri, Malappuram, Kerala.

www.kahmunityenglish.in/journals/singularities/

Editor's Note

The Singularities is into its fourth issue since it was launched in the January 2014 as a transdisciplinary biannual research Journal. The team of teachers at the English Department of KAHM Unity Women's College, Manjeri, has ensured that the Journal is issued promptly within the time frame we have set for the Journal. Not only have we stuck to the mission, but we have contributed to building writing skill and awareness to Research Writing organising workshops and training sessions in quality writing. The current issue with its core on Film, Women and Literature, carries a range of articles connecting the theme at various nodes.

The surge of interest in Films and Women seems to offer a lot to complement each other. There appears to be a lot of interest in Cinema but it seems this is slow in getting translated fully into quality writing from the youngsters. Though we have explorations which indicate the young intellectual trajectories that offer lot of enthusiasm and vigour thought, some of the input, stuck at thematic speculations, we were able to break free with the nudges and prompts. It delights us to add that the next copy will be the International Conference issue with Power as the theme.

P. K. Babu., Ph. D
Chief Editor

Contents

1.	**Kazeem. H. Fola** Entrenching the Status Quo: The Idea of Immunity In The Yoruba Cultural Experience	7 - 14
2.	**Dr. Kunhammad. K. K.** The Rhetoric of Disease : J. G. Farrell's Troubles and the Eclipse of Empire	15 - 19
3.	**Sahdev Luhar** Departments of English and Literary Syllabi: Notes on Cultural Reproduction	20 - 33
4.	**Vishaka Venkat** A Feminist Inception in Disney Movies: A Move Away from Hegemonic Masculinity?	34 - 40
5.	**Srividya. S.** (Un)faithful Adaptations: the Road from *Udakapola* to *Thoovanathumbikal*	41 - 45
6.	**Teresa J Heloise** Myriad Man's Vision of the New Woman	46 - 50
7.	**Shivshankar Rajmohan A. K.** Redefining the Homosexual Discourse: A Reading of Yukio Mishima's *Confessions of a Mask*	51 - 57
8.	**Shahina Mol A. K.** (In)Appropriate Femininity and Popular Media: Reading the Performative Identities in Recent Malayalam Film Songs	58 - 61
9.	**Sajna. P.** Exploring the Biafran Experience in Chimamanda NgoziAdichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*	62 - 67
10.	**Rukhaya. M. K.** Reduplication of Diaspora in Gauri Shinde's *English Vinglish*	68 - 72
11.	**Poornima. S. Unni** A Discourse on Egalitarian "New" Indian Woman of *Salam Namaste* and *Ta Ra Rum Pum*	73 - 81
12.	**Jouhar. K.** The Poetics of Pain: Reading *Achanurangatha Veedu* in the light of Trauma Theory	82 - 85

13. **Duna Liss Tom** 86 - 90
Rhetoric, Metaphor and Performance:
An Analysis of Sarah Joseph's *Aathi*

14. **Ajayi, Olawale Taju** 91 - 103
Contemporary Nigerian Poetry in English:
Context and Form

15. **Ramesh.V. K.** 104 - 107
Moyin Kutty Vaidyar:
The Poetic Genius in Arabi-Malayalam

16. **Dr. Arunlal. K.** 108 - 115
Dr. Sunitha Srinivas. C.
Memetic Carnival:
Indian Commercial Cinema and
Cultural Genetic Phenomena

Kazeem. H. Fola

Entrenching the Status Quo: The Idea of Immunity in The Yoruba Cultural Experience

Abstract:

Every people the world over is distinctly defined by the ownership of a distinct culture which comprises a set of practices. A people and its culture also presupposes governance which is itself a function of class whose interest(s) is sub served by the laws and ordinances of the land. The thrust of this paper is the examination of the forms of immunity (protection) around the Royalty in the traditional Yoruba society and the implications on the socio-political structures, bearing in mind that the Yoruba nation located within the defunct Oyo Empire, in the present South-West Nigeria had variously experienced both absolute and non-absolute monarchical regimes in her history. This paper concludes that whatever system of government practiced in a place is primarily a function of the culture of the people. By a similar token, the instruments for sustaining such system must also have been sanctioned by them and so jealously guarded so that a once admired heritage of a people is not disparaged.

Keywords: Empire, Immunity, Protection, Yoruba, Monarchy.

Introduction

To properly understand the making and the running of societies, either ancient or modern, we must first understand the social contract concept. The arguments of such philosophers as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are invaluable in this regard. While this theory could be considered as modernistic in time and presentation, the manner it has facilitated our understanding of history, or better-still, precedence cannot be over-emphasized.

The social contract theory is very important to the understanding of the establishment of states and the nature of their control. Of importance in this connection is the relationships among the constituent components on the one hand and on the other, the rights and privileges available for the people to enjoy (which must not discountenance their limitations) as well.

Indeed, from Thomas Hobbes' postulations in *Leviathan*, John Locke's arguments in *Two Treatises on Government*, to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's treatise- *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men*, 'society' just as the name implies was a creation of social consensus. In other words, the state came into existence following agreement by people to surrender themselves to a central authority which they vested with some far-reaching powers.

Fundamentally, having invested authority in a given body, the powers to make laws, of adjudication, and, enforcement thereof have been transferred. Such body of person(s) whose the power of the state to make laws for the protection of the people is reposed, would naturally, possess the ability to extend the law to spell out his/her own self protection and preservation. This indeed is the argument for the emergence and subsistence of immunity in governance.

Kazim. H. Fola, Department of English, O.O.U, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Empire and the Imperative of Immunity

Empire is a rather difficult concept to define. This is because of the more sweeping metaphorical usage of the term (Scheidel 2006: 2). Therefore, the term has been variously misappropriated to underpin other such political expressions as "republic", "hegemony", "city-states" and the likes. Noticeable within the realm of the foregoing description is the use of empire to denote a large-scale business enterprise (i.e. a transnational corporation).

In its strictly politically narrow definition which reflects its original Latin source- "imperium" (power, authority), empire is '…a state that is endowed with particular properties'. The term 'state' may require further clarification to differentiate it from some unconventional unions. It is, as used here,

> …a differentiated set of institutions and personnel, embodying centrality, in the sense that the political relations radiate outwards from a center to a cover territorially demarcated area, over which it claims a monopoly of binding and permanent rule-making, backed up by physical violence. (Weber 1978: 56)

Another definition which exemplifies traits different from the above in the manner it emphasizes the dual elements of 'hierarchy' and 'heterogeneity' is that of Michael Doyle which sees empire as,

> …a relationship, formal or informal in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political; …a system of interaction between two political entities, one of which, the dominant metropole, exerts political control over the internal and external policy- the effective sovereignty- of the other, the subordinate periphery . (1986: 45, 12)

Most indirect rule systems find expression within the context above. This is the system under which the imperial powers, most especially Britain, held most African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana during the colonial era. This system was characterized by the use of elites of the colonies (kings, chiefs and some influential but greedy personalities) to run the day-to-day administration of their areas. They make decisions on sundry matters while vital political decisions of sensitive nature are left to the 'final authority' of the empire capital.

Another fundamentally important definition of empire is that of Stephen Howe. It is so described because of the manner it incorporates hierarchy and cultural diversity. To Howe, empire is,

> …a large, composite, multi-ethnic or multinational political unit, usually created by conquest, and divided between dominant center and subordinate, sometimes far distant, peripheries. (2002: 30)

While it could be affirmed that center-periphery category is basic to the determination of empire, same cannot be said about cultural diversity. This is in the sense that while cultural diversity is consequential to conquest, it is not a precondition for the making of empire. It is not all empires that are established by the act of conquest. Otherwise, empires whose domination was not predicated on war, for example, may find easy classification impossible. In discussing empire therefore, the de-facto leadership must not be mistaken. Such leadership may be variously named as king, queen, emperor, empress or an oligarchy.

Given the above, it could be seen that empire as geo-political expression is a work in progress. This is because it cannot be passed as an end in itself; it is a stage or phase of state formation. It is for this reason that most ancient empires have today disintegrate.

The Place of Immunity

Perhaps some conjectures need be attempted here. In doing this, it becomes necessary to take a look at the theory of Divine Right of Kings eloquently expressed by Robert Filmer in *Patriacha*. It claims that a king's authority was invested in him (or, presumably, her) by God, that such authority was absolute, and therefore that the basis of political obligation lay in our obligation to obey God absolutely. Closely associated with this claim is the belief that "the sovereign does no wrong".

Having been entrusted with such huge responsibility as making laws for the protection of lives and property of the people, the authority as a matter of necessity must be capable of entrenching in the law certain circumstance that would guarantee its own preservation. Indeed, the recurrent factor which runs through the theses of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau is that the authority must be invested with a measurable coercive power for it to be successful. In exercising the coercive powers as vested, the authority must neither be shy nor be afraid. This is where the necessity for its own protection comes in. This is called immunity.

Immunity concept is multidisciplinary both in application and practice. It could be located in Medicine, Agriculture and Politics, to mention only very few. Essentially, it may prove rather difficult to pin down to a single definition as such would vary as one moves from one field of human endeavour to another.

In a limited context, the concept as it applies in politics and law boarders on the notions of exemption and protection as they apply to person(s), group(s), and institution(s) of authority. It means in essence that the sovereign authority within a defined geo-political space will not be subjected to court process or be made answerable before any person or institution of the land for whatever decisions carried out by him or through his agent.

The practice of immunity is as old as society itself. The reasons behind the practice arose from the belief that sovereignty belongs to the people and whosoever that power is reposed in must be protected just as s/he must be respected. Moreover, such individual should be allowed to concentrate on solving societal problems- a responsibility of the general populace- rather than being distracted with unimportant matters. Also, immunity helps to strengthen the resolve of the sovereign on sensitive matters of state. It makes whoever is in a position of authority becomes resolute once he is conscious that he cannot be subjected to any form of questioning because of his decisions.

This last point in favour of immunity has generates so much criticism against its continual retention. It has been argued in some quarters that it is capable of making an absolute sovereign descend into an anarchist. However, in modern times many constitutions have had to be reviewed to spell out the breadth of immunity that the sovereign can enjoy.

The Yoruba Experience of Empire and the Political Structure

The singular experience of the Yoruba nation of empire is that of Oyo. Oyo Empire was established in the Fourteenth century and spanned across what is today known as Western

and (partly) Northern Nigeria. The empire was founded by Oranyan who was the first "Oba" (meaning 'king' or 'ruler' in Yoruba language). The centre of metropolitan Oyo was its capital at Oyo-Ile, (also known as Katunga or Old Oyo). The two important structures in Oyo-Ile was the 'aafin' or palace of the Oba, and his market. The palace was located at the centre of the city close to the Oba's market called 'Oja-Oba'. Surrounding the capital was a tall earthen wall for defense, with seventeen gates. The importance of the two large structures (the palace and the Oja-Oba) signified the importance of the king in Oyo.

The old Oyo empire dominated all Yoruba kingdoms namely Ife, Ijesa, Egba, Ijebu, Sabe, Owu and even beyond, all of which contributed 'isakole' (tributaries) for the maintenance of the royalty, and, able bodied men as soldiers for the reinforcement of Oyo military strength. This military power enabled the old Oyo to maintain its dominance over the innumerable vassal territories. This military command structure was headed by a generalissimo called Aare-Ona-Kakanfo.

The Oyo Empire developed a highly sophisticated political structure to govern its territorial domain. These include the Alaafin of Oyo (the King), the Councils (consisting of the Oyo Mesi (political) and Ogboni (religious) in council, and the Military.

Alaafin of Oyo

This is the Oba (king) at Oyo who was referred to as the Alaafin ('owner of the palace' in Yoruba language). He was the head of the empire and the supreme overlord of the people. In him was combined both political and religious powers of the lands. He was responsible for keeping tributaries safe from attack, settling internal quarrels between sub-rulers, and mediating between those sub-rulers and their people. The Alaafin was expected to give his subordinates honours and presents. In return all sub-rulers had to pay homage to the Oba and renew their allegiance at from time to time.

The Alaafin of Oyo was a very powerful institution of the Oyo Empire. He was highly revered and regarded. This explains why the position was keenly contested and it was not meant for a weakling or an unpopular candidate. The position was initially hereditary but that was later changed such that competition, following its vacancy, became open to everyone (male child) belonging to the ruling house. The selection was also very rigorous. It was done through the process of consultations and intrigues.

The position of Alaafin was highly feared by every subject within the empire and this explains the reason for certain appellations by which the king was known. These include- "Alase Ekeji Orisa" (owner of authority second only to God), "Iku baba yeye" (Death personified), "Oba ti n gba'dobale oba" (king to whom other kings prostrate), "Kabiyesi" (the unquestionable) etc. The office was highly protected.

The Councils

The main function of the councils was to provide some check mechanism against the possible excesses of the Alaafin. The councils comprised 'Oyo Mesi' and the 'Ogboni'. While the Oyo Mesi spoke for the politicians, the Ogboni spoke for the people backed by religious powers. Because both bodies were important in the processes of selection and removal of the king, it required the combination of good personal character and shrewdness on the part of

the Alaafin to maintain his continued acceptance by them.

Oyo Mesi: It consisted of the seven principal councilors of Oyo which included Basorun, Agbaakin, Samu, Alapinni, Jagunna, Akinniku and Asipa. The Alaafin was required to consult with them regularly on vital state matters as they represented the voice of the nation and had the responsibility of protecting the interests of the empire. Each of them had a state duty to perform and must be in the palace morning and evening daily. The Basorun was the head of the council; he was a sort of prime minister and was the commander-in-chief of the army. He was a potential threat to the Alaafin because he could cause the king to be removed just as he was instrumental to his appointment to the throne.

The Ogboni: The power and influence of the Oyo Mesi was never an absolute one as the Ogboni wielded an equally powerful influence. The Ogboni represented the popular opinion backed by the authority of religion and could therefore moderate the view of the Oyo Mesi. The Ogboni was a powerful secret society of freemen noted for their age, wisdom and importance in religious and political affairs. Its members enjoyed immense power over the common people and had a widespread presence at nearly all sub-courts within Yoruba land. The Ogboni was responsible for the worshipping of the earth and also for judging cases dealing with the spilling of blood. This group was headed by the Oluwo who possessed the unqualified right of direct access to the Alaafin on any matter.

The Military

The military in Oyo Empire enjoyed an army with a high degree of professionalism. The success recorded in military campaigns by the empire was largely due to its large cavalry as well as the leadership courage of Oyo officers and warriors. There was an entrenched military culture in Oyo where victory was obligatory and defeat carried the duty of committing suicide. This do-or-die policy undoubtedly contributed to the military aggressiveness of Oyo's generals.

In fact, the old Oyo Empire paraded more institutions and organizations but the discussion in this paper would the limited to the three above as their understanding would facilitate a better exploration of Royal immunity concept in Yoruba culture.

Royal Immunity in Yoruba Culture: Past and Present

Having discussed in detail, among other things, the institutions of the state in old Oyo Empire, it is necessary to re-emphasize that the Alaafin was the supreme overlord over and above all. He was the most endangered personality and therefore required the attention and protection of all and sundry. In fact, all other institutions and organization within the empire worked for the protection of the royalty and its interests.

For example, whenever there was uprising, rebellion or aggression affecting the kingdom, the Alaafin as well as his household was the first target. For this reason, the Oyo palace was thoroughly fenced and the estimate of its area of coverage is six hundred and forty (640) acres. This provided enough courtyards for the offspring and the harem of the king to freely move about, hunt games and play. To this extent, the palace courtyard was not a place where anyone could freely have access. There were palace guards everywhere to ward off trespassers.

Another protective measure for the Alaafin is that he was not to eat or drink in public. The reason for this was to save him from being poisoned. The Yoruba saying that “Oju l'ari ore o de'nu” (meaning: Humans relate only on face value, no one knows his enemy) was instructive enough than for the king to be carefree.

Also, the Alaafin was not allowed to dance in public (except during rituals and festivals), and he was not to dance to any drum-beat except that of 'gbedu' (a ritual drum). The expression “gbedu ni Oba n jo” (It is only gbedu beats that the king dances to), emphasizes the extra ordinary nature of the king who must not be seen engaging in the casual practices like ordinary men.

Moreover, the people's respect for Alaafin was sacrosanct to the extent that insulting any member of his household or behaving in any manner suggestive of casting aspersion on him/her was deemed as challenging the king. The punishment for such was at times punitive. The Yoruba people would say that “eni ba f'oju di Oba awowo a wo” (whoever confronts the king would be crushed). 'Crushing' for an offender may range from severe punishment to death.

In the same vein, the check mechanism constituted by the councils of the Oyo Mesi and the Ogboni was by no means a rebuttal of the supremacy of the Alaafin; they were not to query the decisions of the king's authority. Instead they prevented the Alaafin's possible descent into anarchy. No high handed king in the history of Oyo Empire ever worked in the interest of the people. Otherwise, the Alaafin's title of 'Kabiyesi' or 'ka bi e ko si' (that who cannot be queried) would have become an empty phrase.

Equally, as part of the strategies of the Oyo Empire to keep the Alaafin safe was the decision not to allow the Aare-Ona-kakanfo (the generalissimo of the empire) to live within the same domain as the king. In fact, except he was summoned, he cannot see the king at will. This was done so as to avoid mutiny unexpectedly against the king.

Finally, no one was allowed to remove the Alaafin except otherwise the Alaafin had become unpopular or unnecessarily high handed. In the event of such happening, the intention was not to embarrass the king but to peacefully transit from one character to another. For this reason, the incumbent would be declared persona non grata with the pronouncement by the Basorun that “Awon alale ko o, Oyo ko o, ile ko o” (meaning: The gods reject you, the people of Oyo reject you, the land rejects you). After this, the king would be allowed to go through the ritual of suicide by opening the calabash. Even when the Alaafin refused to kill himself, his death would be carried out, secretly, through the combination of 'oro' and 'egungun' cults. He will not die by the hand of any individual.

As had been said, the old Oyo Empire comprised both Oyo township and all Yoruba kingdoms. Following the total annihilation of the Oyo Empire, all the kingdoms, including those that already revolted, became well established alongside their Obas (kings), having smaller villages and settlements under them. The system of government that was applicable in the old Oyo Empire was replicated in most of these places. Most of these kingdoms were able to make laws that protect their kings such that decisions made on certain issues such as lands, minor feuds among the people, etc. will be respected. Some of the immunity noticeable in the old Oyo Empire and many more are also applicable in the various kingdoms.

Limitations of Royal Immunity in Yoruba Traditional Culture

Change is the only factor that is constant and nothing can be said to be absolute. Indeed, no situation will ever remain the same under the sun. Everything is in a state of flux as the universe is an ever changing terrain.

So much has been said about various kinds of immunity which provide protection for the royalty in traditional Yoruba culture. However under certain conditions, some of these protections could fall short of being realized. Such situations that could jeopardize the protection of the king are as follows.

A war situation, for example, is no respecter of status. In fact, the king being the head runs the risk of being a priced captive. It is a situation of 'every man unto himself. During a rebellion or war the king's palace was usually the first target. His harem would be broken into (2 Sam. 16: 21-22) and the daughters defiled. That was the sign that the incumbent king had been subdued. It was after these that property could be carted away.

Again the major criticism against immunity is that it is capable of making an absolute sovereign descend into an anarchist. This indeed was the undoing of some kings who had for that reason lost popularity and allegiance of their subjects. Alaafin Majeogbe in the old Oyo Empire became so power drunk that he beheaded his father-in-law because the daughter who was one of the queens threw banters at him about his highly dreaded diminutive stature. He then promised to show the queen the reason why people feared him. Thus he beheaded the father. This cost him his throne and invariably, his life.

Observations

As desirable and attractive as immunity appears in the quest for the protection of the kingship institution, its main criticism is that it is capable of producing tyrannical leaders.

While the above can hardly be argued, modern realities have proven otherwise. This is because kingdoms, in the modern times, have become subsumed under the various levels of government namely Federal, States and Local of governments rather than the king. The royal authorities have thus become so much involved in politics that they now pledge loyalty to political leaders. Most of them are on the pay roles of governments. It has therefore become the case of 'who pays the piper dictating the tune'. Even the selection process has become so politicized such that if a sitting governor installs a king today, he could be removed the very next day by a succeeding governor.

Another dimension to the insecurity haunting the kingship institution today has to do with the roles of the judiciary. Many kings have been installed and deposed through litigations, thereby making courts and judges overturning or usurping the roles that should have been legitimately performed by kingmakers. With alleged corruption of the judiciary at the moment, one was not sure whether some of the recorded victories at courts were not won by inducements.

Not until kings stopped seeking undue favouritism and patronage from politicians will they regain their pride of place as fathers to the people they are supposed to be leading. And not until then will politicians stop seeing their palaces as extensions of their offices where they must extend control.

Conclusion

Kingship has remained an important part of the heritage of the Yoruba race with its beginning dated back to the fourteenth century Oyo Empire. It was part of the wisdoms of the progenitors to protect the institution from undue distractions and influences. These were the reasons for putting in place such body of rules capable of insulating the king from violations.

The fact that this invaluable cultural practice has influenced the modern day kingship institution, the involvement of royalty in politics today has robbed the occupier of the position his pride of place because most kings are, in the modern times, being subjected to the dictates of political office holders.

References

Abraham, R. 1985. *Dictionary of Modern Yoruba*. London: University of London Press

Aromolaran, A. & M. Oyebanji (ed.) 1976. *Akomolede Ijinle Yoruba*. Lagos: Macmillan

Collins English Dictionary- Complete and Unabridged. Harper Collins Publishers, (1991) 2003.

Doyle, M. 1986. *Empires*. NY & London: Ithaca

Filmer,R. *'Patriacha' and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (1991).

Hobbes,T. 1651a. *Leviathan.* C.B. Macpherson (ed.). London: Penguin Books (1985)

Howe. S. *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (2002).

Locke, J. *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Yale: Yale University Press (2003)

Rousseau, J. *The Basic Political Writings*. (Trans. Donald A. Cress) Hacket Publishing Company (1987)

Samuel, J. *The History of Yorubas: from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate* (Obadiah Johnson ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (1928).

Schidel, W. 'Republics between Hegemony and Empire: How Ancient City-States Built Empires and the USA doesn't (anymore)', Princeton/Stanford Working Paper in Classics. (2006)

Weber, M**.** *Economy and Society: An outline of Interpretative Sociology*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London.(1978).

On-line Sources

Alaafin of Oyo. 'A Brief History of the Old Oyo Empire', The Official Site. (2013).

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: A Peer Review Academic Resource

Dr. Kunhammad. K. K.

The Rhetoric of Disease : J. G. Farrell's Troubles and the Eclipse of Empire

> *... [I]t is hardly possible to take up one's residence in the kingdom of the ill unprejudiced by the lurid metaphors with which it has been landscaped.*
>
> Susan Sontag, *Illness As Metaphor*

Disease forms a dominant factor in the structural organisation of J. G. Farrell's Empire fiction and constitutes a major rhetorical technique whereby Farrell foregrounds the political and personal pressures in the cultural moments of the colonial experience. Farrell's obsessive pre-occupation with the theme of disease and decay in his Empire fiction can be seen to be closely bound up with his serious and sustained engagement with the eclipse of British imperialism. As a writer constantly plagued by illnesses and disabilities in his real life, Farrell's novels are steeped in extrapolations from his own personal life which become, in the larger context of his fictional world, rhetorical catalysts for a powerful commentary on the 'dis-ease,' decay and the eventual demise of the Empire. J.G. Farrell's *Troubles* presents a brilliant critique of the imperialist ideology through a masterful use of the rhetoric of disease. The effect of disease in Farrell's novels is not only the realistic subject of his novels but becomes a metaphor for the larger sickness of the body-politic. Farrell makes use of fatal illnesses for imagery. While cancer is the dominant image in *Troubles*, cholera recurs throughout *The Siege of Krishnapur.* As Sontag has aptly put it, "the subjects of deepest dread (corruption, decay, pollution, anomie, weakness) are identified with the disease. The disease itself becomes a metaphor. Then, in the name of the disease (that is, using it as a metaphor) that horror is imposed on other things .... Something is said to be disease-like, meaning that it is disgusting or ugly" (1988:58). Though Farrell is not the only writer who has exploited the metaphorical fecundity of illnesses, Farrell is undoubtedly the first novelist who used disease as a controlling metaphor to explore and expose the colonial pathology. The scourge of imperialism which is a brutal expression of the primitive instinct of the strong to subjugate and exploit the weak is shown to carry within itself the cancerous viruses of its own destruction. Such a subtle diatribe against imperialism can only be the result of acute dissatisfaction with the imperial idea and the regime of political corruption and exploitation which it turns out to be once the idea is put into practice.

The 'troubles' of *Troubles* refer to the first Irish civil war of 1919-1921, though recently the term has come to be used in connection with the internal disturbances in Northern Ireland which started in 1968 and continued till the recent promulgation of cease-fire by the militant outfits. The novel covers the two-year period from July 1919 to July 1921. In 1919, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and governed by the British from Dublin Castle. With the formation of the Irish Republican Army (or IRA) in January, the imperial authority had to face sporadic acts of IRA violence. IRA continued its guerrilla war against the British

Dr. Kunhammad. K. K is Assistant Professor in English, Kannur University, Kerala, India

administration. As the war raged on, the British Government brought in the Black and Tans and the Auxiliary Division who had a taste for fighting and brutality, who became an autonomous terror squad" (Taylor 1975:206). The novel ends with July 1921, the month which witnessed the signing of a truce which put an end to the fierce fighting and led eventually to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.

Troubles begins with an elaborate description of the decrepit and rotting Majestic—a rambling hotel which functions as a powerful metaphor for the decaying state of the Empire. Though some reviewers of the novel were really thrilled by the metaphorical implications of the 'diseased' Majestic, no attempt has yet been made to read the Majestic's steady disintegration in terms of a telling commentary on the gradual disintegration of the Empire itself. According to Ronald Binns, "In *Troubles*, the transience of life and the collapse of health are implicitly connected to the condition of Ireland and of the Empire," (1986:58). As the novel opens, the Majestic is in an advanced stage of disintegration. In other words, the Majestic is seriously ill. Though the disease is never explicitly mentioned, Binns is of the view that in metaphorical terms, the Majestic has cancer (1986:58). If the Majestic suffers from cancer, the Majestic does not merely stand for the Empire; the Majestic *is* the Empire. Susan Sontag defines cancer as follows: "In cancer, the patient is 'invaded' by alien cells, which multiply, causing an atrophy or blockage of bodily functions" (1977:18-19). And significantly, Farrell describes the Majestic in terms of a living organism:

> the rooms they had been staying in for twenty years were dotted here and there over that immense building and, though whole wings and corners of it might be dead and decaying, there would still be a throbbing cell of life on this floor ... slowly, though, as the years went by and the blood pressure dropped, one by one they died away" (*Troubles* 11).

The picture of the 'throbbing cells' of the Majestic, 'dying away as years went by' runs parallel to the Empire's gradual loss of the colonies. Farrell reminds us that the Majestic had a glorious past. "Here and there among the foundations one might still find evidence of the Majestic's former splendour" (7). Quite significantly, Sontag uses the colonial metaphor to describe the effect of cancer: "cancer cells 'colonize' from the original tumour to far sites in the body, first setting up tiny outposts…" (1977:64). Through a skilful employment of disease symbolism, Farrell throws light on the corrosive and corrupting impact of imperialism. With meticulous care, Farrell continues to describe the Majestic in terms of a living organism which, as it 'invades' and is invaded by the multiplying 'alien cells,' gets atrophied.

An important image that recurs in the novel is that of an 'abscess'—a cankerous tumour which threatens to bring down the whole building. The Major Brendan Archer is quite disturbed to find the wooden blocks of parquet flooring 'bulging ominously like a giant abscess' *(*25). Horrified at the dire consequences of such a cancerous growth, ("one shudders to think what it may be doing to the foundations" (251)), the Major and Sarah inspect the Majestic and go looking for 'suspicious bulges'—an exercise which finally turns into a 'marvellous game' of sinister significance. Farrell adds: "Although a number of these bulges proved imaginary, once one started looking for them at the Majestic, there was no shortage of genuine ones" (251). Even the Majestic's "rusting drain-pipes bulged on the southern walls *like varicose veins"* (201 Italics mine).

The Majestic's illness steadily aggravates as 'troubles' become rampant in Ireland. Occupants begin to move from one room to another as plumbing or furniture fails. Even the 'Do More' generator which was installed to restore the Majestic's 'reputation' goes out of order. The amenities of the hotel go from bad to worse. Mirrors everywhere become more 'fogged and grimy than ever'; the gas mantles that have been burning on the stairs and in the corridors stop working. The quality of the food goes down. Edward Spencer, the owner of the Majestic, decides to announce an 'economy drive.' The Empire's plea for financial aid from the country's citizens for colonising weaker nations of the world is symbolised in the economy drive enforced in the Majestic while the Majestic continues to disintegrate.

'One unseasonably warm day,' the giant letter 'M' of the Majestic detaches itself from the facade of the building and demolishes a small table. The Major who is effectively given the weight of the author's voice knows for sure that the Majestic is beyond diagnosis and recovery. The poisonous 'abscesses' have come to stay and the demise of the Empire is only a matter of time. Tired of 'comprehending a situation which defied comprehension,' the Major reconciles himself to the tragic fate of being forced to live in constant fear of disease and death under 'the spreading umbrella of decay.' When Boy O'Neill says that the Auxiliary terror squad would cure the Sinn Feiners' disease, the Major profoundly replies that "the cure may be as bad as the disease" (158).

Edward Spencer is the King of the 'Majestic' Empire and significantly the disintegration of Edward's sanity coincides with the disintegration of the Majestic. Even as Edward goes ahead with his futile efforts to cure the Majestic (by calling in a mason to inspect the structure etc.,) Farrell reminds us that "nothing is invulnerable to growth, change and decay, not even one's most fiercely guarded memories" (259). Edward wants to fight for the English dominance of Ireland and his insanity which leads to the murder of an innocent Irish boy symbolises the failure of the military ideal and the barbarism within the Empire.

'Bulges' and 'Sinn Feiners' are not the only 'abscesses' on the structure of the Majestic as far as Edward is concerned. To him, anything that affects the general health of the Majestic is an abscess which must be lanced to allow the poison to escape. On an earlier occasion, the Major lists out the potential threats to the safety and security of the Majestic: they are the proliferation of cats in the upper storeys, the lamentable state of the roof, the 'ivy advancing like a green epidemic' and the poor state of the foundations. As Farrell develops these 'abscesses,' it is impossible not to notice their significance. The proliferating cats weaken the state of the Majestic's roof while the malignantly spreading vegetation threatens to pull it down by the foundations. The political overtones of the spreading vegetation and of the proliferating cats are incontestably powerful. Throughout the novel, cats symbolise a sinister force which is potentially capable of undermining the Majestic. When Sarah comes to the Majestic, she is disturbed by the 'frightful smell of cats' and Miss Stavely finds, to her dismay, a 'litter of kittens' in her knitting basket. As the disturbance caused by cats continues, Edward keeps the doors and windows shut. But still the infiltration of cats continues unabated. Finally, when an 'evil, orange, horridly whiskered' cat comes out of a rent in the side of the sofa and leaps into Mrs. Rappaport's lap, everybody is taken aback. And Edward begins to smell a rat in the proliferation of cats. The Majestic thus becomes a scene where disturbing elements are hatched just as the Empire disperses the seeds of militant discontent in its 'endless forest' of colonies. But Edward is all- out to defend his Empire by hook or crook. As the proliferating cats worsen the already deteriorating health of the Majestic, Edward

undertakes a 'grim harvest of cats.' He goes upstairs and shoots down all cats:

> So one day Edward had steeled himself to climb the stairs with the revolver. The eucalyptus reek of cats was overpowering, so long had they dominion over the upper storeys. *Ah, the shrieks had been terrible, unnerving, as if it were a massacre of infants ...but it had to be done in the interests of the Majestic"* (300 Italics mine).

Edward justifies his inhuman cruelty in terms of his sincere concern for the health of the Majestic while the whole scene re-enacts, in purely symbolical terms, one of the many instances of imperial brutality. A final irony emerges as the Major finds a couple of weeks later that the shoot-out of cats has led to the proliferation of rats which is even more dangerous. Farrell adds: "a cat, however savage and wild, can be passed off as a pet. Not so with rats" (307). The massacre of cats necessitates the massacre of rats and thus one brutality leads to another and then to another and so on *ad infinitum* in any system of imperial domination.

As the novel nears its end, everything that happens in and to the Majestic acquires political overtones. For instance, Farrell skilfully juxtaposes his description of the powerful impact of spring storms on the structure of the Majestic with that of the escalating violence of Irish rebels on the Empire—a rhetorical feat whereby Farrell reinforces the Majestic's symbolic terrain. Shortly after the graphic description of IRA violence in which 'eminent British soldiers and statesmen were blown off their feet,' Farrell describes the great storms that "blew in from the north-east and once more all the windows in the Majestic were rattling *in torment,* while the chimneys *groaned and whined like unmilked cows,* half threatening and half-pleading, and draughts *sighed gently* under doors *like love-lorn girls"* (356; Italics mine). As troubles go on to assume alarming proportions in Ireland and various colonies of the Empire, the rotting Majestic's equally rotting occupants begin to cling absurdly to some illusion of power and permanence. As the only way to improve their sagging morale, the Majestic's population turns to the game of whist and gradually the whist tables which dispense a 'faint odour of cats' become the centre of social life in the hotel, with each player finding a 'retinue of advisers and confidantes' at her or his elbow. Within a day or two, this *'epidemic* of whist' (221) takes such a grip that the game continues almost without interruption throughout the day and on into the night and Farell's intentions become quite evident as he describes the players afflicted with the 'epidemic' moving to their bedrooms:

> And everyone would climb the stairs, chuckling, to their rooms and dream of aces and knaves and *a supply of trumps that would last for ever and ever, one trump after another, an invincible superiority subject to neither change nor decay nor old age, for a trump will always be a trump, come what may (*222 Italics mine).

To sum up, *Troubles* throws light on Farrell's unique use of illness as a metaphor for his critique of imperialism. While most novelists of Empire, even those who were clearly critical of the Empire, resorted to a more direct method, Farrell, aware of the fact that the so-called realism conjures away the represented reality rather than replicates it accurately, makes effective use of the symbolism of physical illness and other disorders to convey the gravity of imperial evil and to represent the eventual eclipse of Empire.

References

Binns, Ronald. *J.G.Farrell.* London: Mithuen, 1986.Print

Farrell, J.G. *Troubles.* England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970.Print

. *The Siege of Krishnapur.* England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973.Print

_____. *The Singapore Grip.* London: Fontana, 1979.Print

_____. *The Hill Station: an unfinished novel.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd., 1981.Print

Sontag, Susan. *Illness As Metaphor.* London: Hardmondworth, 1975. Print

Sahdev Luhar

Departments of English and Literary Syllabi: Notes on Cultural Reproduction

Abstract:

Literary studies has never been a neutral process of imparting aesthetic knowledge but has proved itself an institutional mechanism of cultural (re)production. Since its inception, English literary studies has been engaged in forming the hegemonic cultural practices in India. Earlier it was a tool of cultural domination in the hands colonial rulers, today it is an institutional stratagem to construct a kind of cultural elitism. Literary syllabus is never impartial accumulation of literary texts but it is an ideological apparatus of someone's vision. It been observed that departments of English in India are passing through a crisis – many of their postulates which were once considered self-evident and universal are questioned and challenged. In the wake of the western critical theories with their anti-foundational and anti-essentialist notions, what has been commonly accepted as essential 'knowledge' is now subject of hermeneutic reassessment. There is a cry for the paradigmatic shift in the pedagogical practices. It is essential to realise that hubbubs over the literary canon that usually centre around what is included and excluded in literary curricula really signify more profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories. With these preposition in mind, the present paper seeks to address the following queries: What role do the department of English perform in reproducing culture? What are the cultural and ideological implications of university syllabi for literary studies? What is the cultural relevance of what has been sold as "required knowledge"? And who has the responsibilities of designing the best syllabus for the students and how it has been regulated?

Key words: Literary studies, syllabi, cultural reproduction, hegemony

Departments of literature in higher education, then, are part of the ideological apparatus of the modern capitalist state. They are not wholly reliable apparatuses ... (Eagleton 2003: 174-5).

Literary studies has never been a neutral process of imparting aesthetic knowledge but has proved an institutional mechanism of cultural (re)production. Since its inception in the colonial time, English literary studies has been engaged in forming the hegemonic cultural practices in India. Earlier it was a tool of cultural domination in the hands colonial rulers, today it is an institutional stratagem to construct a kind of cultural elitism (Luhar 2014: 76).

These two epigrammatic standpoints may seem personal discernments but they hint at the pragmatic veracities of the English literary studies in India or in foreign. The earlier pronouncement of Terry Eagleton suggests that the departments of literature are the ideological apparatus of modern capitalist state. Whatever text they teach as curriculum has certain *values, meanings,* and *tradition*. They function to materialise the vision of the modern capitalist society and their priorities. The later proclamation alludes to the "fact" that the aesthetic knowledge has disappeared from the literary studies instead it has assumed the

Sahdev Luhar is Assistant Professor in English, N. S. Patel Arts College, Anand (Gujarat)

form of institutional mechanism for cultural reproduction. Literary studies has been functioning as a cultural apparatus for disseminating hegemony to different social groups – earlier for the colonisers and now for the dominant social-political groups. The present paper highlights how the Indian departments of English reproduce cultural hegemony through their literary syllabi. What are the cultural and ideological implications of university syllabi for literary studies? What is the cultural relevance of what has been sold as "required knowledge"? Who has the responsibilities of designing the best syllabus for the students and how it has been regulated? – these are some of important queries that the university departments are facing today.

The term 'syllabus' first made its entry in *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1656 to refer to 'a table of content'. Its meaning changed in 1889 to denote 'an outline of lectures or a course' which proved ambiguous: in some fields the term has been used to mean 'a course of study rather than a document outlining information about the course' (Parkes 2002: 55).The terms 'canon' and 'syllabus' have some interconnections with each other – both pre-eminently mean *a list of texts*. A question that arises here is that if both 'canon' and 'syllabus' hint at the same thing, where should a boundary line be drawn? Guillory opines that the distinction between these operates in the realm of 'imaginary projection' (Guillory: 52). Syllabus seems, however it is not, a disinterested term, whereas the idea of canon constructs 'an imaginary' realm of its authorship, and thus, a list of texts is transformed into a list of representative authors or social identities. Remarking on the dissimilarity between the terms, Guillory notes that the difference lies between the phrases: adding a "*text* by a woman" to the syllabus and "adding a *woman*" to the syllabus. This difference suggests the *imaginary representation*. Syllabus is more inclusive term; it blurs all distinctions. Canon is more exclusive, it vitalises all kinds of distinctions.

In the departments of English of Indian universities, the syllabus of English for postgraduate studies is designed by a committee called "Board of Studies," each university has its own committee in each subject. This committee consists of the subject experts-teachers of different class, caste, religion, and region from the same university or in some cases from other university. Ostensibly the members of *Board of Studies* represent all the sections-groups of the society. Hence whatever text that is selected in name of syllabus is considered a result of collective endeavour and thus *secular*. The growing 'canon concerns' in the foreign universities encouraged the Indian universities for the canonical revision of the syllabus. This led to the inclusion of many national canons like American, Canadian, Australian, Indian, etc., along with gender-caste-region-based canons into the syllabi of English at postgraduate level. Notable changes have been introduced, at postgraduate stage, in the syllabi of English in last three decades. A study of the selected departments of English of Indian universities suggests that the departments of English have engaged themselves with formation of different canons. In the last three decades, the MA (English) curriculum has undergone a drastic change. It has offered variety of papers. The papers which were offered earlier have been replaced by more thematic, innovative and skill-oriented papers. Here, an attempt is made to study the relationship between university syllabi and canon formation using instance of the Indian English fictions. The following Table A shows list of Indian universities considered for the exploration of literary syllabi of MA (English):

Table A: List of Indian Universities Selected for the Study

Sr. No.	Universities Considered for the Present Study	Year of Implementation of MA (English) course*	Under CBCS Yes/No	Given University Code
1.	Andhra University, Visakhapatnam	w 2012	No	AUV
2.	Kakatiya University, Warangal	w 2009-10	No	KUW
3.	Bharathiar University, Coimbatore	w 2012-13	Yes	BUC
4.	Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad	***	No	MANUU
5.	Osmania University, Hyderabad	w 2010-11	Yes	OUH
6.	Gurunanak Dev University, Punjab	w 2012-13	No	GDUP
7.	Karnataka University, Dharwad	d 2011-14	Yes	KUD
8.	Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra	w 2012-13	No	KUK
9.	North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong	***	Yes	NEHUS
10.	Punjab University, Chandigarh	w 2012-13	No	PUC
11.	Punjabi University, Patiala	d 2009-11	No	PUP
12.	Calcutta University, Kolkata	***	No	CUK
13.	University of Jammu, Jammu	d 2010-12	Yes	UJJ
14.	University of Kashmir, Srinagar	***	Yes	UKS

*Note: w = w.e.f. & d = during

*** = no specific detail regarding time-period is mentioned in the syllabus

The first observation of the MA English syllabi of these universities suggests that out of these fourteen universities' syllabi only five universities, to name Kakatiya University, Bharathiar University, North-Eastern Hill University, Punjab University, and, University of Jammu have well-defined learning objectives. Kakatiya University has only overall learning

objectives; NEHUS and UJJ have paper-wise objectives, while PUC and BUC have both general and paper-wise objectives. This makes it clear that many of the Indian universities which teach MA (English) still do not have well-defined objectives.

Another important fact that captures our eyes is that apart from the genre-wise, period-wise, nation-wise literature, the university departments of English have also introduced numbers of theme-based papers. It is quite perceptible that in university departments of English, the concerns for the 'region', where they are located, have increased. Many university departments have introduced the regional works in English translation to make the students aware of regional literary output. For instance, Kakatiya University (KUW) which is located in Warangal (Andhra Pradesh) has introduced Annamayya and Vemana as well as *Bhakti* tradition of Nayanars and Alwars, Virasaivism and its contribution to social reform, Vaishnava Bhakti, Haridasa movement etc. in paper named as "Indian Classics in Translation". Similarly the University of Kashmir (UKS), Kashmir has introduced Kashmiri writers such as Shaikh-ul-Alam, Lal Ded, Mahmood Garni, Rasul Mir, Qurat-ul-Ain Haider, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, HK Bharati, and HK Koul in the paper called "Translation and Translation Theories". The same is the case with other universities as well.

There were often some complaints that the university departments of English have failed to ensure the quality education. Those who became teachers or lecturers after the university education practically failed in their classrooms; the objective of producing qualitative teachers seemed weakening. The university departments, realising this threat, decided to prepare the students for the actual classroom condition. Hence, the papers that can help the students started appearing in the MA (English) syllabi. The papers like "Language Management and Communication Skills", "Classroom Applications", "Fundamental of Information Technology", "Writing for Academic and Professional Purposes", "English Grammar and Writing", "Communicative English", and "Modern English Grammar and Usage" are the consequences of such efforts of the university departments of English.

Another shift that can strike to even a common reader is that the eradicating distinction between English Language Teaching (ELT) and English Literature Teaching. Of course, there are some institutions which offer the separate postgraduate course in ELT; in many of the universities the postgraduate course in English includes one or two basic paper/s. Initially, for both the courses, there were different syllabi and altogether different institutional set up; now the university departments of English have realised that a student of English ought to be good at ELT in the same manner he/she is good at papers of literature. However the study of ELT is made optional for the students. Similar is the case with Linguistics. Earlier there was a separate course on linguistics but now it is an optional part of literary syllabus. Thus, the contemporary syllabus of MA (English) has brought the study of literature, language teaching and linguistics together.

Now the study of MA (English) is not limited to English-British literature; numbers of the literatures either in English or in English translation are the parts of English studies. The MA (English) course is stretched to incorporate Indian, American, Australian, Canadian, African and other Commonwealth literatures. Apart from these, Greek, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabian and other literatures are also taught in English translation. The papers entitled as the "World Classics in Translation" and "Modern European Classics" have made the study of classics of the different parts of world possible. The papers named as the "Comparative Literature" and "Regional Literatures in English Translation" has the potential to enrich the

students with the knowledge of regional literatures of India. The regional literatures of India is translated English and taken as a good substitute of English literature. There is a strong need of introducing the paper namely "Comparative Literature" in all the universities of India as this paper has the ability of providing a compendium view of regional literary offspring of India. It would bring all the Indian literatures together and would enhance the knowledge of the students. Though the Comparative Literature is in itself a large field, its study at postgraduate level, in form of a paper or two, is really beneficial. The university departments of English have also engaged themselves in formation of new literary canons. The papers named as "Gender Studies", "Women's Writing", "Indian Diasporic Writing" and "Indian Writing in English" are in fact attempts of forming feminist, diasporic, Indian English canon and others.

The university departments of English have also decanonised some of the subjects. Earlier in many universities, the paper called "Literary Criticism and Theory" consisted of a portion dealing with the study of Indian Aesthetics wherein different Indian theories of literary appreciation were taught but this portion seems vanished in the syllabi of many Indian universities. The students of MA (English) are exposed to the western tradition of literary criticism only. The students must be taught how the Indian theories of literary appreciation can be practised over Indian (English) texts. The decline of the Indian aesthetics in MA (English) classroom would prove fatal for the Indian universities. Similarly in the 1980s the Dalit studies has emerged out as a budding area of study. However the analysis of these thirteen university syllabi suggests that the dalit studies is ignored intentionally or unintentionally. Many universities have showed their concerns for the Black literature or Afro-American literature but the dalit literature which is home-grown literature is ignored with no reason.

One must appreciate the inclusion of the papers such as "Children's Literature", "Literature and Film", "Cultural Studies", "Literature and Philosophy", "Environment and Indian Writing in English" in the syllabi of MA (English). But these papers are not offered by all the universities. Literature, being a product of different societal influences, must be analysed in relation with culture, film, philosophy, environment, etc. "Cultural Studies" has emerged as an important field in the western universities but in many of the Indian universities it is still alien. The same is the case with the "Children's Literature". Considering it frivolous, one should not divert his/her attention to the study of mainstream literature only.

Table B: Pre-1980s and Post-1980s Indian English Fiction in MA (English) Syllabi

Pre – 1980s Indian English Fictions	***Post – 1980s Indian English Fictions***
Ahmed Ali, *Twilight in Delhi* (1940)	Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (1988)
Anita Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963)	Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tides* (2005)
Anita Desai, *Voices in the City* (1965)	Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (2008)
Bankimchandra, *Raj Mohan's Wife* (1864)	Anita Desai, *Clear Light of the Day* (1985)
Bharati Mukherjee, *Wife* (1973)	Anita Desai, *Fasting Feasting* (1999)
Chaman Nahal, *Aazadi* (1975)	Anita Desai, *In Custody* (1986)

Kamala Markendeya, *Nectar in Sieve* (1954)	Anita Nair, *Ladies Coup* (2001)
Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (1956)	Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997)
Krupabai Satthianandhan, *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* (1895)	Bapsi Sidhwa, *Ice-Candy Man* (1991)
Manohar Malgokar, *A Bend in Ganges* (1964)	Chitra Banerji Divakaruni, *Sister of My Heart* (1999)
Mulk Raj Anand, *Coolie* (1936)	Githa Hariharan, *Thousand Faces of Night* (1992)
Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (1935)	Namita Gokhale, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* (1994)
Nirad C. Choudhary. *An Autobiography of Unknown Indian* (1951)	RK Narayan, *Tiger for Malgudi* (1983)
Raja Rao, *Kanthapura* (1938)	Rohinton Mistry, *A Fine Balance* (1995)
Raja Rao, *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960)	Rohinton Mistry, *Such a Long Journey* (1991)
RK Narayana, *The Guide* (1958)	Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981)
RK Narayan, *Swami and Friends* (1935)	Salman Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1996)
RK Narayana, *Man Eater of Malgudi* (1968)	Shashi Deshpande, *A Matter of Time* (1996)
RK Narayana, *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955)	Shashi Deshpande, *The Binding Vine* (1992)
Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901)	Shashi Deshpande, *That Long Silence* (1988)
VS Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961)	Shashi Tharoor, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989)
VS Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (1967)	

Both the periods, pre and post 1980s, differ from each other on thematic line. The pre-1980s fictions generally deal with the themes of freedom struggle, independence, partition, and immediate post-independence condition. The trio of Rao, Anand, and Narayan dominate the field of pre-1980s fiction. Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936), and Narayana's *Swami and Friends* (1935) are the social critique of the colonial Indian. They are marked by the quality of nationalism, zeal for social change, and, Gandhian ideology. Most of these fictions propagate the Gandhian idea of annihilation of caste and social distinctions and highlight the grandeur of simple, rustic life. Likewise, Nirad Choudhary's *An Autobiography of Unknown Indian (1951),* Raja Rao, *The Serpent and the*

Rope (1960), R.K. Narayana, *The Guide (1958), Man Eater of Malgudi (1968) and Waiting for Mahatma (1955) are distinguished the Gandhian influence.* Emergence of female writers and representation of feminine sensibility is marked quality of pre-1980s Indian English fiction. Bankimchandra's *Raj Mohan's Wife (1864),* Krupabai Satthianandhan's *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life (1895),* Kamala Markendeya's *Nectar in a Sieve (1954),* Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock (1963) and Voices in the City (1965), and* Bharati Mukherjee's *Wife (1973) tell the story of female heart.* Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan (1956), Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges (1964),* and Chaman Nahal's *Aazadi (1975) narrates the trauma caused by the partition of India and Pakistan.* V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas (1961) and The Mimic Men (1967) deal with identity crisis.*

One can easily notice that since the beginning of the Indian English fiction, *in 1864 to the seventh decade of the twentieth century, hundreds of the fictions have came out but the university departments of English just focus on the writers who have succeeded in winning prizes and praises in India and abroad. It seems that it has been the tendency of the university departments of English to select those fictions which deals with the colonial struggle, postcolonial predicaments, problems of social life, caste system, and identity crisis.* In many of the universities, the departments of English are offering more post-1980s texts to replace the traditional themes with the emerging. The decade of 1980s is considered as the new beginning for Indian English literature. In the fields of poetry, drama, and fiction, it marked 'newness'. Both the pre and post-1980s Indian English fiction generously uses the trimetric of history, myth, and culture. The post-1980s fiction is a complex fusion of art and aesthetics; the myth, memory, and culture; as well as native social reality and global aspirations. What make post-1980s Indian English fiction different from the pre-1980s would be discussed in the next chapter.

Table C: Short Profile of Selected Post-1980s Indian English Fictions

Name of the Text	***Name of the Author***	***Publisher (Country)***	***Award***	***Author's Religion***	***Present Place of Domicile***
Midnight's Children (1981)	Salman Rushdie	Jonathan Cape (United Kingdom)	Booker Prize (1981) Booker of Bookers (1993) Best of Booker (2008)	Muslim	Britain
The Moor's Last Sigh (1996)			TIME Magazine's Best Book of the Year		
Such a Long Journey (1991)	Rohinton Mistry	McClelland and Stewart (Canada)	Governor General's Award Commonwealth Writers Prize Books in Canada First Novel Award Short listed for Booker Prize (1991)	Parsi	Canada

A Fine Balance (1995)			Giller Prize Short listed for Booker Prize (1996)		
Ice-Candy Man (1988)	Bapsi Sidhwa	Milkweed Edition (United States)	---	Parsi	United States
Tiger for Malgudi (1983)	R. K. Narayan	Viking Press (US) Heinemann (UK)	---	Hindu	India
Clear Light of the Day (1980)	Anita Desai	Heinemann (United Kingdom)	Short listed for Booker Prize (1980)	Hindu	United States
In Custody (1984)			Short listed for Booker Prize (1984)		
Fasting Feasting (1999)		Chatto and Windus (United Kingdom)	Short listed for Booker Prize (1999)		
That Long Silence (1988)	Shashi Deshpande	Virago (United Kingdom)	Sahitya Akadamy Award (1990)	Hindu	India
A Matter of Time (1996)		Penguin India	---		
The Binding Vine (1992)			---		
The Shadow Lines (1988)	Amitav Ghosh	Ravi Dayal Publishers (India)	Sahitya Akadamy Award (1989)	Hindu	New York
The Hungry Tides (2005)			Hutch Crossword Book Award		
Sea of Poppies (2008)		John Murray (United Kingdom)	Short listed for Booker Prize (2008)		

The Great Indian Novel (1989)	Shashi Tharoor	Viking Press (United States)	---	Hindu	India
Thousand Faces of Night (1992)	Githa Hariharan	Penguin India	Commonwealth Writers Prize (1993)	Hindu	India
Gods, Graves and Grandmother (1994)	Namita Gokhale	Rupa & Co. (India)	---	Hindu	India
The God of Small Things (1997)	Arundhati Roy	IndiaInk (India)	Booker Prize (1997)	Hindu	India
Sister of My Heart (1999)	Chitra Divakaruni	Anchor Books (United States)	---	Hindu	United States
Ladies Coup (2001)	Anita Nair	Penguin India	---	Hindu	India

This short profile suggests how the departments of English reproduce specific culture. If one divides the above mentioned writers in Hindu and Non-Hindu categories, he/she would certainly observe that the majority of the Hindu writers (around 50%) who are taught in MA (English) classroom are Brahmins. Remaining 50 per cent are occupied by those non-Brahmin writers who are upper-caste westernised Indians. Salman Rushdie, the hero of 1980s, is the only Muslim writer introduced in MA (English). Bapsi Sidhwa and Rohinton Mistry are the Parsi writers, the first lives in the USA and the other in Canada. Apart from these three writers, all are Hindus, Hindu upper caste.

The cultural critics like Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, Ronald Barthes, John Guillory, Pierre Bourdieu and others assume that literary productions entail the idea of "culture capital" and anything that functions as *culture capital* indulges in hegemonic practices. But as discussed earlier, Stuart Hall holds it, the hegemony can be maintained by "wining and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural" and it can be sustained so long as the dominant classes "succeeds in framing all competing definitions within their range" (Durham 2001: 150). If this hidden agenda fails, it anyway ensures that the presence of the subordinate groups in an 'ideological' arena which does not appear *ideological* at all. Such hegemonic control, perhaps, is reminiscent of what Barthes calls 'mythology' which performs the functions of naturalisation and normalisation. These assertions lead to an essential facet of hegemony that "it has to be won, reproduced, sustained" (Ibid: 151). Precisely the same apparatus was employed by the Brahmins to maintain their superiority over the 'other' castes. An 'intellectual' space that the Brahmin

writers have formed for themselves is in fact the consequence of their shrewdness which came to them through the colonial transaction. They realised that teaching of Sanskrit to the Indian masses would distort its vitality and would pose challenges to them. They did not want to lose the *culture capital* that they have attained through long-standing pedantic-hegemonic practices. They thought that the socio-religious capital which they had earned through selling the Sanskrit; similarly they could also acquire newer emergent culture capital through learning English. During the colonial epoch only, they could envisage the formation of English as a global language and took up the opportunity to rule over the masses. They were the masters of Sanskrit, the language of Gods, and wanted to be the master of English, the language of the rulers. Both the languages kept the close to the power – religious and colonial. Since the formation of the caste-system they knew it well that educating the masses imparts the power to control them, hence the Brahmin as a community, first of all, learnt English only to teach the 'other' masses and to maintain their hegemony. But the colonial era was the time of cultural insurgency when it was not possible to entice the majority Indians masses only through teaching. They realised that they must integrate the national flavour in their teaching; it had to be made more social and easily acceptable. The increasing caste-consciousness in the colonial era indicated to them that the shifting wind wanted them to cast off their Brahminical self and this was the only way out to win the consent of the ruling the masses. This led to the process of de-Brahminisation which was again a stratagem of reproducing and sustaining their Brahminical hold. Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao opines that "the de-Brahminised Brahmin may no longer be a caste, but his new ways, being in tune with the forces of change, are likely not only to ensure his survival but felicitate his retaining a position of high status and authority" (Paranjape 2000: 57). The de-Brahminisation was a policy to embrace a newer-secular identity without giving up hereditary caste-based privileges. One can easily find this ideological apparatus still present in the contemporary Indian society and these selected fictions points towards this fact.

This is the reason why the post-1980s Indian English fiction seems more Brahminised, elite or upper caste. Prof. Rao who believed that –

Whether in the national movement, or in the fight for democracy and socialism, or migration to urban areas, or in education, or in pursuing science and technology, or in upholding the rights of underprivileged and backward classes, or in adopting western values and knowledge for attacking or qualifying Indian values, or going in for a Western way of life and daily habits, the Brahmin has placed himself in the forefront of the social change, even though it means his shedding the very traditions, values, symbols and way of life that has given him hitherto superior position in Indian society (Ibid: 57).

Though many of the Brahmins have placed themselves in forefront for the social change and easily responded to the progressive social forces and even do not hesitate to adopt the position which goes counter to their caste interests, all these have ideological implications. It is obvious that the Brahminism makes qualitative repercussions on the art and ideas of fiction, however one must ask the question: *is the selection of the post-1980s Indian English fiction for the purpose of syllabus in university departments of English democratic-secular?* As the above arguments indicate, the answer is certainly 'No'. Though the universities have formed "Board of Studies", which ensures democratic and secular process for the selection of texts, there must be some *unseen power* that regulates this process and makes it hegemonic. Probably the selection process of the members of Board of Studies is polemic

and more inclined towards the Brahmins or elite groups. Or the members of the Board of Studies are uninterested and passive subject experts who do not wish to introduce any reform. Whatever may be the case, such circumstances points out the inefficiency of the "Board of Studies".

Out of these twenty one fictions, sixteen fictions have won some literary prizes or at least they have been shortlisted for the prizes. These sixteen fictions are introduced in the syllabi of more than two universities. Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* (1981), which is introduced in seven universities, occupies the first rank if one looks at the number of repetition of post-1980s Indian English fiction. If one considers the list of both pre and post 1980s Indian English fiction, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) surpasses the popularity of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and is introduced in twelve out of thirteen universities. Those fictions which are not awarded any award or prize are introduced once only. This tendency suggests that the university departments of English are fascinated by the award-winning fictions or writers. Awarding prizes do not reflect over the quality of the text or by no means have they hinted at standardised practice, they only show the influence of the west. Whatever the west stamps as good by awarding prizes are warmly welcomed by the university departments of English. The valuation of literary texts through awarding prizes does not guarantee aesthetic value. Terry Eagleton believes that "value is always 'transitive' – that is to say, value for somebody in a particular situation-and … always culturally and historically specific" (Huggan 2001: 28). Similar to other cultural forms, a literary text does not have intrinsic value – its value is contingent. Hence the award which is announced on its contingent value does not emerge as a locus of immanent value. Such prepositions lead to the following observations of Graham Huggan:

One such regime of value pertains to the Western (Euro-American) education system, which is increasingly invested in the promotion and certification of "marginal" products. Another is the metropolitan publishing industry, which has placed its stake in the postcolonial as a convenient device for merchandising of exotic-culturally "othered" – goods. Both these agency arguably participate in what we might call an "alterity industry": one which involves the trafficking not only of culturally "othered" artefacts but of the institutional values that are brought to bear in their support. As I have argued elsewhere, postcoloniality implies a common condition of contradiction between anti-colonial ideologies and neo-colonial market schemes. ... It is rather to see that work as being bound up in a late-capitalist mode of production, where such value-laden terms as "marginality," "authenticity," and "resistance" circulates as commodities available for commercial exploitation, and as signs within a larger semiotic system – the "postcolonial exotic" (Huggan 1997: 412).

Literary prizes entail a *symbolic* value which is generated by the western academy and the metropolitan publishing industry. Through promotion and certification of the literary texts in the form of awarding the literary prizes, they hegemonised the literary studies. It seems a neo-colonial strategy of the ruling the literary products of the 'marginalised' countries. Pierre Bourdieu opines that the literary prizes exist in the wider regime of the symbolic consecration and are announcers of the cultural capital. They do not simply represent a significant achievement of the writer but claim a monopoly of judging-legitimising the writer's work:

The fundamental stake in literary struggle is the monopoly of literary legitimacy… the

monopoly of the power to say with authority who are authorized to call themselves writers; or, to put it in another way, … the monopoly of the power to consecrate the producers or products (we are dealing with a world of belief and consecrated writer is the one who has the power to consecrate and to win assent when he or she consecrates n author or work–with a preface, a favourable review, a prize, etc.) (Huggan 2001: 5)

Bourdieu finds at least four "agents of legitimation" engaged in the formation of cultural capital. They are: writers, literary industry, media, and the audience or the "valuing communities". The writers and the audience play passive role, whereas the literary industry, which includes publishers, booksellers, reviewers, etc., and media, both print and electronic, are actively engaged agents of this process. These active players have the power of endowing the consecrated authority to those texts which have potential as well as to those which do not have. In present times, the financial sponsorship of the literary awards has raised many questions at its authenticity. Numerous literary awards are sponsored by the transnational corporate houses. The sponsorship of the literary awards guarantees a huge publicity to such companies which function as an authority of deciding the worth of the texts. Bourdieu observes that the contemporary corporate houses have overtaken the earlier hierarchical systems of public and private patronage through which ideas of literature and literary value were upheld. The Sahitya Akadamy Award, the highest recognition for literature in India, is sponsored by the State or the government. Those who function as the mediatory between the State and the writers, in fact, are not always the men of literary taste. Besides, the selection process is always influenced by the functioning government. It has been often observed that the writers whose texts support the ideology of the ruling government are awarded with the prizes. Even the criteria for the selection of literary texts go on changing with the shifting State authority. Even those who work as a Jury in the selection committee are often the teachers of the university whose literary taste is formed through the English education system and are influenced by the western tradition. In nutshell, one may argue that awarding prizes do not guarantee aesthetic values. However, the university departments of English in India are fascinated by the award-wining fictions.

A fleeting look over the publication profile suggests that out of *twenty one* fictions only *seven* fictions are published in India (around 33% only). Penguin India, Ravi Dayal Publishers, and Rupa & Co., and India Ink are the only four India-based publishing houses. Rest of all (around 67%) are located outside of India. It means that India creativity still largely depends on the western publishing houses for its emergence. The west still has the monopoly over the publication industry and thus hegemony over literary creativity. The publication industry is not simply an economic sight but is field of culture production. The publishing literary text is in fact production of cultural goods. The publishing industry creates, what Bourdieu says, symbolic goods. One which has the power to authorise symbolic good has the power to dominate. Because of this, the western publishing houses decide what Indian readers ought to read and how their literary taste should be shaped. What Indian read considering good is first stamped as good by these publishing mega-players; they stamp it good in favour of the west. And what the west can favour as good is generally that thing which supports its hegemonic ideology. Hence, one may conclude that the most of the Indian English fiction which have came to India through foreign publication agencies are supportive of the western hegemonic practices. Another important fact is that the most of publishing house are multinational corporate houses. The texts which are produced in these houses are guaranteed a wide publicity and huge readership. The wide publicity and

readership do not penetrate upon artistic and aesthetic quality but are economic strategies of these corporate houses. Thus, the consideration of the Indian English fiction as an artistic construct certainly requires some serious pondering.

Another important aspect for the consideration is the authenticity of representing India. Out of the twelve living writers (except R.K. Narayana who passed away in 2001), six writers are non-resident Indians. They have lived in foreign land for considerable years of their life; they hardly visit India regularly. India lives in their imagination. When such writer writes a novel on Indian theme, it certainly arouses a question about the authenticity of his/her experience and of the disinterestedness of cultural representation. Salman Rushdie, in this connection, observes that the writers who write outside of India will "create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (Rushdie 1991:10). For these writers, there is no single India but manifold Indias. Hundreds of the versions of India take shape in their mind. Rushdie adds:

Writing my book in North London, looking out through my window on to a city scene totally unlike the ones I was imagining on to paper, I was constantly plagued by this problem, until I felt obliged to face it in the text, to make clear that… what I was actually doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: 'my' India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of the possible versions. I tried to make it as imaginatively true as I could, but imaginative truth is simultaneously honourable and suspect, and I knew that my India may only have been one to which I (who am no longer what I was, and who by quitting Bombay never became what perhaps I was mean to be) was, let us say, willing to admit I belonged (Ibid: 10).

So the Indian writers who write from the abroad in fact deal with, in Rushdie's terms, "broken mirrors, some of who fragments have been irretrievably lost" (Ibid: 11). Rushdie's observations make it clear that numerous shreds of memory function as inspirational source for the non-resident Indian writer. So whatever they write, it cannot be claimed true, it is memory's truth. Similarly the attempts of discovering Indian culture from the texts of such writers lead to disappointment. However, despite of physical disconnectedness with one's country, one remains emotionally attached with one's nation when he/she is out of India. This attachment with nation's past is a kind of endearment to the memory. This memory helps him to preserve the same cultural tradition from which he/she has departed at a certain point in the past.

Thus, It is for sure that the curriculum of the university departments of English is not an accumulation of artistic and aesthetic values. The artistic and aesthetic strength of literary texts is determined not by indigenous practices but by the imitation of the western criterions. It is also observed that the 'common' man is missing in the syllabi of the MA (English) in the Indian universities. Most of the texts which are selected by the curriculum-makers are written by the Brahmin or the privileged caste. Very few texts deal with the common masses of India; in their narration as well they centre on the privileged castes of India. Most of the writers by their profession are engaged with the 'white colour' jobs and have received good education in India or abroad. Hence, the voice which Indian English fiction reflects is in fact a voice of the elite and not common. It also becomes visible that the most of the texts which are selected for MA (English), in the selected university departments of English, have won or at least are shortlisted for some literary prize. So again this leads to a question: is it the case that these texts are stamped as good by awarding prizes that is why the student are made to

study them? Another point of observation is that around 67% Indian fiction are published in abroad; thus what is claimed as an Indian product has originally get birth in foreign publishing press. It also hints at an important fact that Indian creativity is still dominated by the west; what the west decides good and publish, the Indian reads that much as Indian writing. The most of the famed Indian writers do not reside in India, they write from abroad. Hence what they write has an imprint of imaginary homeland.

References

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Print.

Luhar, Sahdev. *Literary Canon Studies: An Introduction*. Anand: N S Patel Arts College, 2014. Print.

Guillory, John. "Canon, Syllabus, List: A Note on the Pedagogic Imaginary". *Transition.* Issue 52. Print.

Parkes, Jay and Harris, Mary B. "The Purposes of a Syllabus". *College Teaching.* Vol. 50, No. 2 (Spring, 2002). Print.

Durham Meenakshi Gigi, and Kellner Diuglas, ed. *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. Print.

Paranjape, Makarand. *Towards a Poetics of the Indian English Novel.* Shimla: IIAS, 2000. Print.

Huggan, Graham. *Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margin.* London: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Huggan, Graham. "Prizing "Otherness": A Short History of the Booker". *Studies in the Novel.* Vol. 29, No.3, *Postcolonialism, History, and the Novel* (Fall 1997). Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991.* London: Granata Books, 1991. Print.

Vishaka Venkat

A Feminist Inception in Disney Movies: A Move Away from Hegemonic Masculinity?

Abstract

Disney movies have always been in limelight with their controversies and sexual innuendos. The initial movies of Disney productions presented princesses who were graceful and helpless. In recent movies like Tangled, Brave, Frozen and Maleficent there has been some diversions from the traditional framework. This paper looks at the change brought in the movies by Disney renaissance. The concept of true love's kiss as a panacea for any curse has also undergone changes. The paper also evaluates the varied dimensions of resurrected Disney Princesses by analyzing the bond of sisterhood, songs and their attire. Has it been really a path breaking move from masculinity or are the characters still under the male gaze?

Key Words: Feminism, Masculinity, True love, Sisterhood

Disney movies have always been in limelight with their controversies and sexual innuendos. The panoramic view of the initial movies picturing the Disney princesses, always presented a story where a docile, helpless princess wait for years patiently for her prince to arrive and rescue her, only to discover her true and unwavering love. Disney Princesses like Snow White, Aurora the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella and Jasmine have followed the same thread line as mentioned above. But recently there has dawned a new perception in Disney movies. They have produced female centric movies like *Brave* (2012), *Frozen* (2013) and *Maleficent* (2014). Can this be taken as a move away from hegemonic masculinity? With Frozen as perhaps the 53rd movie of Disney, the Walt Disney productions have undergone through various ages and have eventually evolved. What difference can one find in the Disney Renaissance?

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept propounded and popularized by R.W. Connell through her articles. It mainly looks at the dominant social position of man and inferior status of woman in the society. It has been a pivotal concept in gender studies. The hegemony of the masculinity is derived from Gramsci's concept of Cultural Hegemony and evaluates the power structure to place men high in the social hierarchy. Feminism in its early stage has presented men as violent, rude and as the one who can never comprehend the feminine cult. But masculinity picturised men with a positive aura who are always capable of the impossible and could find solution to all the problems. They are daring and ever ready to take risks. Masculinity shows up the strength of man and it is often superficially embedded through the male body and his attractive biceps, abs and unique physique. Masculinity is socialized through institutions like family, education and the work space. But are all men masculine? According to Connell "masculinities are configurations of practice within gender relations, a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations as well as face to face relationships and sexuality. Masculinity in institutionalized in this structure, as well as being an aspect of individual character and personality" (Connell 29). The notion of male power and supremacy has been carried out through ideology and social structures. Hegemony is different from dominance. There is no persuasion but a gentle

Vishaka Venkat is IInd year P.G. Student, Govt.Victoria College, Palakkad

negotiation and compromise flowing underground. This results in unconscious acquiescence which accepts the dominant discourses without questioning it. This process is hegemonic where there is unwelcomed intervention and changes. What forms of masculinity the Disney movies have conveyed? Instead of rude and uncouth men they presented the chivalric gentlemen who undertake the journey to save the princesses. In the early movie as in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and *The Little Mermaid* (1989) there are no villains. The evil queens and witches dominate the terrain. Thus men had been reflected in the good mirror who were never flawed. It was with Aladdin (1992) and The *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), they bring in the villains. With their characterization one can look at the binaries in gender roles where masculinity is associated with activity and feminity is linked to passivity. Jafar in *Aladdin* and Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* are typical masculine characters who look for women who shall serve their fantasy and take up the household chores. Women are never given a choice to choose their partner. Men like Jafar and Gaston dash in to get the best from the lot. They consider their right to choose the bride as the supreme and divine right. While Bob Parr in *The Incredibles* (2004) and Hercules in the eponymous movie present the institutionalized masculinity of being strong and muscular, characters like Marlin in *Finding Nemo* (2003) and Kenai in *Brother Bear* (2003) represent the subordinate males who can be marginalized under the framework of masculinity. The initial forms of manhood conveyed through the Disney movies are the one who is rich, probably a Prince, courageous, adventurous and have enough leisure time wanting to save someone from dilemma. But Disney movies have altered along with time.

Evolution of Female Characters

In an article titled "How Fourth-Wave Feminism is Changing Disney's Princesses" *by Kaitlin Ebersol, she looks at the changes brought in Disney movies in accordance with the three waves of feminism.* The first wave of feminism was initiated in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It worked for a political motive aiming at the voting rights of women and abolition of slavery. But women were still denied sexual autonomy and social equality. The same has also been reflected in the Disney movies. In the early movies Like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella, the female leads lacked independence. They were just mere onlookers and could not help themselves from falling in to a trap. Both Snow White and Aurora were princesses but the situations were out of control. They were feeble and could never exercise any of their powers like a Prince. Snow white was ousted from her own kingdom by the evil queen. Cinderella too was ill-treated by her step mother and never received the respect she owed to get from them. The early Disney movies presented a situation where females were not equally recognized. The second wave of feminism begins between 1960's and 1990's. Their demands were radical. Sexuality and reproductive rights were the central issues. Women never wanted them to be recognized biologically inferior. The same situation has been reflected in the Disney movies too. Movies like *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Little Mermaid* (1989), *Mulan* (1998) and *Pocahontas* (1995) slightly resisted the misogyny. Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* is an intellectual and studious who loves to read. She often gets irritated by the manners of the beast. The beast was also cursed by an enchantress for his ill manners. It is Belle's kiss which saves the beast from the curse. Belle, a girl from the lower class comes as a savior for the

prince. Ariel is a daring and an independent woman in *Little Mermaid*. She is a head strong girl who fights with her father and runs away to explore the world on her own. She also saves the prince who drowns as the ship wrecks. There has been a transition from men saving the damsels to a climax where women rescue their love. Initially female characters were shown to be proficient in house work. As one sees Snow white who promises the dwarfs to do all kind of domestic jobs if they allow her to stay. The same happens in *Cinderella* where the mice hand over the stitching work to the female mouse and the males do the manly job of pulling and dragging. After the Huns attack the Han China, the emperor gives order to recruit one man from every family. To save her father Fa Mulan disguises herself as a boy and joins the army. Mulan is a brave woman, as soon as her truth is discovered though never executed she is expelled from the army. Pocahontas is a free spirited wise woman who chooses her own path and tries to solve the hostilities between the tribe and the intruders. Very few Disney movies have villains. In most of the movies they have presented vamps. Early Disney movies presented two stereotypical extreme forms of femininity. Either they are graceful and innocent like all the Disney princesses or are villainous and ruthless to the core like Ursula and Witches who give sleeping curse to Aurora and Snow White. Society becomes the major villain in *Beauty and the Beast* as the crowd charges at the beast as they are mooted by Gaston. The third wave of feminism upheld the modern and deconstructed the concept of mother, body, gender and women as a whole. It began in the mid 1990's. The same has been reflected in the Disney movies like *Brave* and *Frozen*. Throughout the early Disney movies mothers have always been absent in the film. It was with *Brave*, mother as a central character truly came to the forefront. Queen Elinor is disappointed with her daughter, Princess Merida, who ventures out in the woods practicing bow and arrow. Merida too is dismayed to know about the marriage proposal to the son of one of her father's allies. She rejects the proposal. Merida is a free spirited and head strong woman who though lands up in troubles finally convinces her mother about being and accepting oneself. The mother daughter relationship strengthens up through the course of the film which has been a digression from the early Disney plots where mother's presence was negligible. Disney has evolved from presenting docile, graceful princesses to female leads that are unsophisticated, carefree, independent and adventurous. Non white princesses have also made an entry through Jasmine in *Aladdin*, Tiara in *Princess and the Frog* and Pocahontas in the eponymous movie. The trajectory of feminine characters has diversified in due course of time.

Female Sexuality

Disney often has faced controversies for its white washed characters. Right from Snow White to Elsa in *Frozen* most of the princesses are white and thin. Being thin and white are the yardsticks of a princesses for a prince to fall in love. Prince Eric in *The Little Mermaid*, Prince Phillip in *The Sleeping Beauty* and the Prince in *Cinderella* fall in love with the beauty of the princesses. Princesses like Cindereella and Snow white instantly fall in love as soon as they awake from their curse. Drizella and Anastasia two step sisters of Cinderella are stereotyped to the extreme, as girls who wait for the man of fortune to take them. Erotic appearances of the women in *Aladdin* follow the misconception that women of east are exotic. Even the attire of Princess Jasmine says it aloud. Long hair is a symbol of beauty but this thought of having long well maintained hair gets diverted with the climax in *Tangled* (2010) where Rapunzel cuts her hair to save Eugene. Rapunzel, the princess with the long

strong hair gets a boy cut in the end. All the princesses till the movie *Brave* were presented as dancing dolls with well combed hair. It was with Merida there has been a change in perceiving female characters. Merida's appearance looks uncouth and unsophisticated with loose tangled hair that never suits a princess but at the end is accepted by her mother for what she is.

True love

As seen in the early movies one gets to see an impotent, languorous princess in a curse waiting innocently for a prince to arrive and rescue her. This becomes her true love. This concept conveys a total submission of woman to man, where she never has a chance to choose her partner. Whoever saves her, ought to be her true love. It is a patient waiting in a long silence for someone to arrive, daring to take risks and lift them up from their jeopardy. Recently this concept of true love has been rehashed. As seen in the movie *Frozen*, Anna is frozen to death. She turns into a cold statue. Only true love can transform her back to her former self. It is Elsa's affection for her sister that turns Anna into her real self. It is the sister's love that becomes the cure for the curse. Similar is the situation in *Maleficent* (2014). It is not a sister's love but motherly affection that withdraws the curse. Aurora is given a sleeping curse by Maleficent. The Prince comes a long way to give Aurora the all curing kiss. But she never wakes up. It is Maleficent's love that brings Aurora back from the sleeping curse. The vanity of love at first sight is also shown in *Frozen* where Anna is betrayed by her true love at first sight Price Hans. The movie *Brave* present's another situation. Merida embarks on a journey to save her family and her mother from a curse because of which they had turned into bears. Merida is as audacious and bold as any Prince who dares to take the risk to reverse the curse. True love gets another dimension in the movie *Tangled*. The story of Rapunzel has always been the one where a girl with long hair is kept safe in a tower. She has never seen the outside world. And finally a prince comes to save the princess from the distress. This story gets twisted in the movie. First of all no prince comes to save Rapunzel. In fact it is a thief who comes for the rescue. In the end the thief gets injured and is lying with a fatal wound. The princess heels him with her magical hair. So from prince saving the damsel in distress there has been a transformation to a climax where the girls come for the rescue.

Disney Songs

Snow white and the Seven Dwarfs one of the earliest movies of Disney productions plays the song “someday my prince will come”. In this song she waits for the true love to arrive and wishes to be married off happily ever after. Snow White is the most stereotypical woman in early Disney movies. This song embosses her into the stereotypical framework. “Once upon a dream” in Sleeping Beauty also portrays her patient waiting for prince charming. These two songs represent women as the one who are to be protected and saved by men. They are weak and graceful. The song in *Beauty and the Beast* where Belle is the talk of the town there is often a line repeated, where it is said that “Belle is funny, she doesn't fit in”. As Gaston proposes to her, She calls him “borish and brainless” in the song “Madame Gaston can't you just see it?” Throughout the song she keeps on saying “I want more than a provincial life, I want great adventure in the great wide somewhere”. This also shows her desire to venture out of her village. The same adventurous spirit is seen in Ariel in the song “part of your world”

where she craves to go out in the human world leaving behind her sea kingdom. Unlike the former songs these two songs portray the adventurous spirit in women who dare to dream and wander out in the wild alone. In the song "When will my reflection show who I am inside?" in *Mulan*, she says that "she will never pass for a perfect bride or perfect daughter, now I see if I were truly to be myself I would break my family's heart". The "colours of the wind" in Pocahonatas is a song which shows her free spirited personality where she dares to question the Whiteman who calls the native the savages and finally declares her love for the whiteman John. Both the songs show the predicament of woman to open up her heart as she knows if she remains true to herself no one shall accept her. But in both the movies they make their own choices against the tradition. "Let It Go" in *Frozen* is a powerful song that went viral in the year 2014. It is the song of self assertion, confidence and the guts to do what one wants. The song can be taken as the cradle of the fourth wave feminism, where women no longer have to be afraid of criticisms and should go ahead to accept who they are as Elsa does in the movie because running away from oneself is not a solution rather facing oneself is a remedy.

In tune with Nature

Ecofeminism relates women to nature and delineates the similarities between them. They can be dragged, fenced and are subjugated to men. Nature and women are the symbols of fertility and prosperity. So a woman can relate herself more to the nature than a man can do. This same concept is seen in the early Disney movies. Pocahontas is one of the protagonists who is in tune with nature. Her life style and life cycle is intrinsically related with forest which gets disrupted with the arrival of the colonialists and she attempts to protests against it. Grandmother willow in the movie is a representation of nature who gives prophetic vision. Mulan had Mushu, a dragon as her pet and guardian. In *Mulan* II it is the attempt of the dragon to stop her getting married so that he can remain in the pedestal. In *Tangled* the Princess has a chameleon as her pet which remains as her companion. Snow white is as pure as the nature an innocent princess who is often shown communicating with the birds. Cinderella is picturised with the little mice who help her out whenever she is in trouble. Merida turns her own mother into a bear. Soon after her mother becomes a bear she builds a special bond with her. Belle is a princess who gets involved in taming a beast. The beast can also been seen as the other side of Belle, her wild self. Jasmine is a princess with Tiger as her pet. But she is not as ferocious as her pet. Most of the princesses are seen to be having a pet and in one way or the other they try to be closer to the nature. Ecofeminism has been the major theme in *Tinkerbell and the Legend of Neverbeast* where Fawn takes care of the ferocious creature. *Tinkerbell* series is revolved around nature and the pixie hollow which keeps nature in balance.

The Concept of Sisterhood

This concept is truly perpetuated in the movies like *Frozen* and *Tinkerbell* Series. The strong bond of womanhood is reflected in both the movies. Both are female centric movies. Elsa is struggling with her special powers and fate. So is the case with Tinkerbelle who never wanted tinkering as her profession. When one looks at other fairies, their professions are feminine, Silvermist is a water fairy, Rosetta is a garden fairy, Iridessa is a light fairy and Fawn is an animal fairy. Tinkering is a manly profession for which Tinkerbell is chosen,

which she accepts at the end of the first movie with the help of her friends. Elsa in Frozen also becomes an assertive Princess of Arendelle with the help of her sister. Elsa learns to control her powers only by realizing her love for Anna. Tinkerbelle too acclimatizes with her profession after her friends make her realize that she is best in tinkering. Brave is another movie which perpetuates the relationship between mother and daughter. Mother and daughter share a special relationship which cannot be understood by a father or a son. Merinda's mother at the end of the movie becomes her friend rather than her guardian. Thus the concept of sister hood is slowly gaining an upper hand in Disney movies.

Feminine fatherhood

Fathers are seen as rough and tough. They are hot tempered and soft. They really do not know how to care for their children. As one sees in *Incredibles*, Bob Parr is a family man but it is Helen who cares for her children. Some Disney movies have portrayed fatherhood as amazing and adventurous as motherhood. Films like *Finding Nemo, Brother Bear* portray this exception. *Finding Nemo* is a movie where Marlin, a single father desperately tries to find out his son Nemo, who has somehow reached in an aquarium in a city. The climax of the movie shows the special bond between the father and son. Marlin is as good as any mother who gets panicked soon as he comes to know the disappearance of Nemo. *Brother Bear* is a heart touching story. The tribal boy Kenai, takes revenge for the death of his brother who was killed by the bear. The boy kills the bear which comes to kill them and the baby bear is left all alone. Soon the boy turns into bear and develops a bond with the baby bear. He becomes the brother of the baby bear. The ending of the story is emotional where the boy chooses to be a bear for the sake of the baby bear. In part II also, the story is different. The bear has a girlfriend, though he falls in love with her, he is reluctant to change into a man for the sake of baby bear. Soon the girl changes into a bear and chooses to live with him as a bear. Both the stories are filled with self sacrifice and affection. The qualities that are often associated with the motherly love like warmth, sacrifice and patience, can be found in these male characters too. They are filled with feminine traits.

Male Protagonists

There has been a deviation in the portrayal of the male protagonists. In the initial movies all the heroes were of high class and were mostly princes like Prince Eric, Phillip, Aladdin, a pseudo prince with the help of genie, etc. But in *Frozen* and *Tangled* there has been a transgression as the heroes are from lower class. In *Tangled* the hero, Eugene, is a thief hailing from a lower class. He takes Rapunzel for an adventure out of the tower, falls in love with her and in the end he is acquitted of all the crimes he has committed as they eventually get married. In *Frozen* Anna falls in love with a shepherd, Kristoff. Kristoff accompanies her in the journey to bring Elsa back to the kingdom. In *Brave* there are no heroes at all. It is a heroine centric movie. In fact there is a scene where Merida overpowers all the suitors who compete for her in a bow and arrow competition. The presentation of the male physique also has been different. Prince Eric and Prince Phillip are show as gentlemen. Men like Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* and Bob Parr in *The Incredibles*, Genie in *Aladdin* and Hercules are masculine. They have remarkable muscular physique. Villains like Jafar, Hades and Shan yu too have admirable posture. Eugene and Kristoff, the heroes of the recent movies have

medium postures. Their physicality and attire are different as well as moderate because they are not rich and kingly like the previous heroes.

Worth a Change?

So as one analyses the movies, one can feel the change with Disney renaissance. It has progressed and has made subtle changes. They have made an attempt to deviate from the prescribed gender roles. Perhaps Elsa must be the first princess to rule her own kingdom, Arendelle. But these changes still remain superficial. The impact of Disney princesses on girl children has been alarming. The early Disney princesses like Snow White, Aurora, Belle still remain as their favourite. From a traditional patriarchal framework Walt Disney productions have come up with varieties and real changes as far as they are concerned. *Frozen* and *Brave* are the only movies that do not end with marriage. The gender ideology has expanded in the recent movies. They have brought heroine centric movies like *Frozen*, *Brave* and *Tinkerbell* series where men play as the sidekicks. The productions also have included non white princesses like Pocahontas, Jasmine and Tiana. Still the changes are not immensely visible or felt. These movies have never been away from dominant masculinities. In *The Little Mermaid* Ariel's father is adamant and always wanted her to be obedient to him. As seen in *Frozen*, Elsa and Anna are the protagonists. But the villain, Prince Hans thinks females are incapable of ruling the kingdom and thus he tries to take over Arendelle. In *Brave* both her parents wanted Merida to get married so that she can be used as a commodity to be traded in to strengthen their allies. Merida eventually overrules them. Thus the movies have expanded their female characters but still they are under the inscrutable male gaze!

References

Connell, R. W. and James.W. Messerschmidt. “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept”. Gender and Society, 2005: 829-859. Web. 4 May. 2015.

Ebersol, Kaitlin. “How Fourth-Wave Feminism is Changing Disney's Princesses”. High Brow Magazine 23.10. (2014): Web. 6 May. 2015.

Rampton, Martha. “The Three Waves of Feminism”. Pacific. 23.10. (2014): Web. 10 May. 2015

Srividya. S.

(Un)faithful Adaptations: the Road from *Udakapola* to *Thoovanathumbikal*

Abstract

Adaptations ensure the minimum guarantee of success at the box office. The reworking of a popular story can rake in money without much effort. Interestingly, looking at certain movie adaptations closely one can see that the film appropriates, without any suspicion, the world view addressed to in the original, creating a new narrative. This paper looks at the film "Thoovanathumbikal" and the novel Udakapola written by P. Padmarajan against the unequivocal differences in the two perspectives of the novel and the film.Way back in 1987 when the film was released it spurred a lot of unprecedented debates on the explicitness of an unconventional life. Whereas Padmarajan breaks off from the conventional social values considerably and appreciably in his novel, he seemingly succumbs to the demands of the society and makes the characters conform to the existing social mores in an effort to appease the middle class audience of his film. The medium of cinema is inextricably linked to the context of its production, hence seeking political correctness is one way towards better prospects for the film.The paper attempts to explore through a Nietschean perspective of how the Dionysian vision in the novel is conveniently tilted into the Apollonian frame by the author himself. This forced deliberation on the part of this exceptional auteur reflects a survival strategy in a society still hampered by the strictly moralistic axis on which it revolves.

Keywords : Adaptations, Apollonian, Dionysian, Social Mores, Political correctness

Strangely enough Kerala psyche exhibits ambivalence. On one hand, it has always been credited as a state with an illustrious tradition of awakening and out of the box thinking and on the other, with a dangerous preoccupation with rapes, moral policing, voyeurism and other forms of violence. This contradiction baffles on account of the way in which these incidents have risen in the course of say, ten years. More recently the society seems to be moving towards the extreme act of murder in terms of containment of male and female sexuality. Crimes related to sexuality apart from adding some sensational touch to the news are, incredulously, never discussed in media rooms. This appears so incongruous for a society which debates on everything under the sun, a rumination on the perverted libido of the state is a strict no-no. The discourses surrounding such events are interesting. Apart from the sporadic discussions on the 'Kiss of Love' event the core issue is addressed peripherally or with an irredeemable silence. Take for instance people who claim to be progressive and who talk for the basic rights of an individual or minority rights. They never forget to take an anticipatory bail that although they support such movements they should not be branded as 'rebels' themselves. Nevertheless, these acts of social cowardice are the symptoms of a malignancy that lies deep rooted and gravely unattended in the consciousness of Kerala. This is the socio cultural context against which this paper is set.

To begin with, this paper is not an attempt to trace the superiority of one form of text over the other. It, on the other hand, seeks to address the texts as two different entities promoting

Srividya. S. is Asst.Professor, Dept.of English, Govt.Victoria College, Palakkad.

two contrasting world views and question, in turn, the politics behind how two texts, one a novel and the other a film based on the same, interact to produce a consciousness that tells a lot about the cultural context in which they were produced and received .The question is about how the same generation of people responded to two texts in two different media in quite different ways. The first part of my paper is an enquiry into the vision behind the novel *Udakapola* (1979) written by P.Padmarajan and the adaptation *Thoovanathumbikal*(1987) directed by the author himself. The second part of the paper aims to interpret these two texts and acknowledge their explicit difference against the canvas of semiotic signs of which they are part and which consecutively they reproduce, of how a privileging of one system of signs over the other reveal "a desire to be identified with values of tradition, culture and taste to which certain elites especially political elites and generations aspire"(Hayward 20)

Way back in the 1980's directors like Bharathan and Padmarajan initiated a new wave in Malayalam Cinema striking a balance between parallel and commercial cinema. This was an entirely path breaking effort for it unlocked before the audience a land hitherto unknown to the Malayali sensibility. Certain taboos were celebrated on screen and it demanded realistic and imperative attention. Padmarajan's craft as a film maker revealed itself in his impeccable scripts and bold visuals. A new cult of Malayalam cinema was introduced by films like *Peruvazhiyambalam, Thakara, Kallan Pavithran, Arapatta kettya graamathil* etc. These works brought in a new perception of the world around, of the dialectic of right and wrong, of beauty and ugliness, of love and hate ,of life and death and his art moulded the aesthetic tastes of the era to a large extent.

Frederich Nietzsche in his work *The Birth of Tragedy* recalls a myth where King Midas asks Silenus, the companion of Dionysius "What is man's greatest happiness?" Silenus remains silent for a long while yet forced by the stubborn King breaks out,"Ephemeral Wretch, begotten by accident and toil why do you force me to tell you what it would be your greatest boon not to hear? What would be best for you is quite beyond your reach: not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best option is to die soon!" (8).The Dionysian life tries to overcome this painful intuitive realization of man by its obsessive indulgence in the pleasure aspect of life.

The novel 'Udakapola' takes the reader exactly to this intoxicating territory of Dionysius, the Greek god of wine and fertility. The narrator unravels page after page in the novel the wild, dirty, chaotic, promiscuous, squandering life of a group of friends uninhibited by the moral regulations of the society. The new entrant into this world is the enchanting Clara who gets into prostitution on her own, exults in her new found freedom and the dignity of her profession. There develops a deep association of intimacy between Clara and the narrator. Among others is the magnanimous, unconventional, lavish Jayakrishnan who squanders his inherited wealth without any qualms on intoxicants, women and a flamboyant life style. The narrative reveals with poignancy the other side of pleasure too, the pain and misery of the prostitutes, pimps, dealers, of feudal lords being helpless witnesses to their own downfall.

The impinging reality of death informs much of Padmarajan's work. The men and women in his world are common, down to earth, at the same time, visionaries. They inhabit villages and towns with the same restlessness at heart. They indulge in their wrongs with a strong awareness of the destiny and the impulses that govern them. The intensity of his man-woman relationships is enigmatic in its form and content. Their ultimate passion consumes both body and mind and in most cases is possible only outside the realm of the social 'moral'

order. The Dionysian impulse involves a frenzied participation in life itself and in this participation most of the time the agents are oblivious of the destruction of their lives. The end befitting such a being is what is portrayed by the writer in the novel as the end of the protagonist, the king of celebration himself, Jayakrishnan. The narrator confirms, 'amidst the celebration, his face slowly got blurred and ceased to be' (97). Human lives burst away like transient bubbles, living for a moment or two.

Contrary to this tragic vision of life is the vision offered by Apollo, the Sun God. He symbolizes the rational aspect of man, of how through reasoning and discipline human beings try to order their existence more aesthetically and artfully. As opposed to the Dionysian world, the mantra here is moderation in everything. Apollo embodies self-control, optimism, in effect a totally civilized existence. So it is the duty of art to take men away from the terror and frenzy of the inevitability of the ephemeral human life. In the film version, we see Jayakrishnan emerging as the hero, unlike the self destructive indulgence of the protagonist of the novel, he is in full command of his life. He slides into his dual role with much finesse , of a respectable, feudal land lord in his village controlling his family comprising his mother and his widowed sister, and that of the extravagant, fun loving ,adventurous man who is ready to go to any extent for his friends in the town. When the situation demands he is able to bury his frivolous past, including his love for Clara, for a better socially acceptable life with Radha.

In the film *Thoovanathumbikal* the protagonist Jayakrishnan's character is merged with the narrator of the novel. And the narrator's intimacy with Clara is portrayed through the bond between these two. The most beautiful scenes in the film, generations of viewers agree, are the scenes of rendezvous between Clara and Jayakrishnan. Rain,which is symbolically associated with fertility, is a sublime presence in each of their meetings. “Under the magic of the Dionysian, not only does the bond between man and man lock itself in place once more, but also nature itself, no matter how alienated, hostile, or subjugated, rejoices again in her festival of reconciliation with her prodigal son, man” (Nietzsche 4).Viewers fall for Clara at the first instance, her beauty, her wildness, the exotic sensuality and most importantly her will. In the history of Malayalam Cinema, a prostitute has never been celebrated like this before.

In 1979, when the novel was published, it spurred a lot of unprecedented debates on the explicitness of an unconventional life with all its blemishes. It was a bold attempt in delineating certain aspects of human life which remained latent till then. Later in 1987 when *Thoovanthumbikal* hit the screen the difference in its world view was quite evident. Many characters which had shocked the sensibility of the readers and then commanded their due understanding had been either deleted or sized down to fit into the framework of the commercial medium called cinema. To pick out a few instances, the element of incest described in the novel as the story of IFS officer Karunakara Menon and his sister-wife was completely dodged. The narrator, an anonymous man who is a link in the underworld chain gets blended with the character of Jayakrishnan. In the novel, Jayakrishnan suffers a climactic and irretrievable downfall after his marriage. The city which bred him forgets him completely and he sinks into oblivion.The film, however, redeems him by gracefully accepting his past and coaxing him into the institution of marriage. The legitimacy of Clara's profession in the novel is substituted invariably by the legitimacy of the family. This was not just for the sake of convenience. Of course, the parameters of the cinematic medium are

important considerations but not the only one. On the whole, the Dionysian multiple visions in the novel had been given up for a convenient central Apollonian vision in the film.

Why does this film have an enduring appeal among the youth? To answer this question we might need to go back to the psychoanalytical theories regarding spectatorship. The cinema viewer is a social as well as a psychic entity. Therefore he occupies multiple positions within the cinematic institution. The viewer has a narcissistic identification of the images on the screen and the visual pleasure which viewers derive from the film is something that holds attraction to the subject to go back to cinema again and again. "The sexuality lies in the content of what is seen than in the subjectivity of the viewer, in the relationship between what is looked at and the developing sexual knowledge of the .child. The relationship between viewer and scene is always one of fracture, partial identification, pleasure and distrust" (Rose, 229). Nevertheless, the experience of the viewer is never uninhibited because he views from a social position too. Here the visual pleasure is also associated with its opposite: the shame of looking. Hence the cinema has to revert back to its ideologically and politically correct position to save its face before the society and sustain its cultural values.

Interpreting the adaptation against the background of the moral values and the traditional chemistry of the man- woman on screen which eschewed all sorts of physical intimacy and aimed at sublimation, we arrive at a different picture altogether. This can be read by reverting back to the mob psychology mentioned earlier. Viewers individually and safe within the darkness of the theatre will indulge in voyeuristic fantasies as they please but collectively, they remain moral puritans who take part excitedly in lynching as and when the society demands. This act in the name of 'piety' camouflages the viciousness behind it easily. Psychologically, the enactment of violence may be the overt manifestation of repressed libidinal drives. The confrontation with the patriarchal authority and subsequent alienation is the primal fear of the mob. Hence, one who joins the mob is safe within the system. These sinister aspects of the social life are pointers to the larger abuse taking place in the society.

Whereas Padmarajan breaks from the convention considerably and appreciably in his novel,he seemingly succumbs to the demands of the society and makes the characters conform to the existing social mores in an effort to appease the middle class audience of his film. Thus, inevitably Padmarajan, the creative writer has to be different from the film maker. When he writes screenplays for directors like Bharathan and I. V. Sasi, the intricacy of many of his novels gets lost. This forced deliberation on the part of the auteur reflects a survival strategy in a society which revels in a double stand. If a cinema needs to be taken seriously and be considered as "good" cinema, there are certain strict criteria to be met with, certain acceptable sign systems it has to endorse. And the film does just that. While the erotic pleasure principle is retained for some time, the hero has to come back to the family system and be safe in the hands of his fiancée Radha.

Having a well studied idea of the medium called cinema and the appropriation asked for by the means of production and distribution, as well as the minds of the filmgoers, some viewers feel, the subtle, personal and intense experience of sexuality in some of his novels takes on the mission of titillating the senses of the viewers bordering on obscenity sans refinement. Nevertheless, it must be remembered too that the director through his, inborn, spontaneous rendering cannot fail to bring in the nuances of his characters. The façade of discipline and order created at the end of the film reveals the tactic of sustenance in a society

hampered by the strictly moralistic axis on which it revolves. In those times and even now, despite all odds, the rehabilitation of the family is the ultimate commitment of the film maker as a social being, it being the norm one who fails to do it, will regress like Jayakrishnan in the novel to oblivion. What Padmarajan,the director, does unconsciously then is to adhere to the norms of rational thinking as Jayakrishnan in the film does. Decades have gone by since the film was released and yet the answer for the question as to whether the director would have remade the film and ended the film differently would undoubtedly be negative. Years have passed but the values of society remain the same, perhaps, even more rigid.

All social systems are vulnerable at their margins, and all margins are accordingly considered dangerous. For the society, the bodily margin of Clara is both pleasure and danger. "The message is that female sexuality is a seething subterranean force which must be brought under stringent discipline if it is not to overwhelm the social order. This message is to be found not only in feminist theory. It lies at the heart of many cultural forms, both "high" and "popular" as Kate Millet points out in Sexual Politics." (Macsween 179) Hence Clara must be brought within the hegemonic order and this explains why the rain which falls metaphorically throughout the film comes to an abrupt end in the last scene where Clara is forced by the director to renounce the body of the whore for the sacred ,less dangerous body of the mother. She dons the role of the wife of another widower and a mother so that their lives, of hers and Jayakrishnan's , are not "spoilt". From the downfall in Udakapola , Jayakrishnan seems to have learnt the ultimate lesson in survival and regains his patriarchal splendour in *Thoovanathumbikal*. Thus Apollo, the god of order and reason, reigns in the end.

References

Padmarajan P ,*Udakapola*, Kottayam:DC Books, 1997.Print.

Anithakumari,T. *Padmarajan : Cinema ,Sahithyam ,Jeevitham*. Kochi: Pranatha books, 2007. Print.

Hayward,Susan. *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*, London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

MacSween, Morag. *Anorexic bodies: a Feminist and Sociological perspective on Anorexia Nervosa,* London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*, New york: Dover, 1995.Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Mayne, Judith. *Cinema and Spectatorship*, London: Routledge, 1993.Print.

Rose Jacqueline, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, London:Verso, 2005. Print.

Laurence Gane , Piero. *Introducing Nietzsche*, London: Icon Books, 2008. Print.

Vridhi, Jyothika. *The Cinematic Imagination*,USA: Rutgers university P, 2003. Print

Teresa. J. Heloise

Myriad Man's Vision of the New Woman

Abstract:

Gurudev Tagore, a visionary whose ideas where far ahead of time, had envisaged a liberated womanhood in free India. His profoundly sensitive description of situations and character show his deep knowledge of female psyche. He was deeply aware of the socio cultural frame work of Bengal. While his poems present the mystic in him, his short stories and novels display daily life. These works feature an array of women in vulnerable social positions. Tagore uses his novels and short stories as rostrums that invite women to find their own identity. Tagore believed systematically defined gender roles. While he admires fineness in a woman he also appreciates courage in her to face the society. His work highlights the social issues and to a small extent the consequences and solutions to it. The paper investigates Tagore's views on new woman as he has projected in his first novel Choker Bali.

Ingrained in our patriarchal system, the subjugation of woman is responsible for the internalization of female inferiority through a process of socialization, religious laws customs and rituals. The acceptance of a woman of being a woman in a way indicates her awareness of certain limitations, weakness or in capabilities. 'Woman has ovaries, a uterus these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature' (Beauvoir 13). Right from childhood a girl is programmed to perform certain duties, take up certain roles. She is socialized and conditioned to accept mental and physical abuses as part of a husband's marital right. In this patriarchal system of ours a woman is largely considered as a fragile possession: by birth belongs to the father or brother, in marriage let to be controlled by her husband, and in old age to be in the custody of her son. She is not seen as an entity in herself as instructed by the codes of Manu in the *Manu Smrithi*:

Pitaa Rakshati Kaumarce,
Bharataa Rakshati Yauvanee;.
Putroo Rakshati Vardhakyee,
Na stri Swaatantryam Arhati.

(The father protects the women during childhood, the husband during her youth, and the son during her oldage;a woman does not deserve freedom.)(Sastri, IX, 3)

The primary site of female subjugation is the family wherein subjugation is achieved largely through sexuality. 'Women are indoctrinated in their supposed 'natural state' by male control of their sexuality in the family' (French 53). A patriarchal society is not open-minded in granting its women segment any right and so women's dignity is a glorious omission in a conformist patriarchal set-up. Any attempt at women's advancement and giving equal rights to women shakes the society to its groundwork. The present paper is an attempt to focus on Rabindranath Tagore's feminist outlook and his outlook on women's progress in the social set-up of his own times in the context of the centuries old patriarchal concept and practice in the country in the light of his Choker *Bali*.

Teresa. J. Heloise is Assistant Professor, Little Flower College, Guruvayoor

The history of India shows that she had been conquered many times and had been ruled by people belonging to different racial origins. Almost always the conquerors adapted to the trends of the conquered.But the British were different. They bought their alien customs to India and superimposed it on us. In the words of R.C.Mazumdar, "Fifty years of English education brought greater changes in the minds of the educated Hindus of Bengal than the previous thousands of years." (Mazumdar 89).The newly western educated young initially ran behind westernization misunderstanding it to be modernization. This began in the wake of the eighteenth century and culminated in the formation of the "young Bengal" by the twenties of the nineteenth century.They tried to question and condemns everything Indian. But it was Raja Rammohon Roy who accepted the west without rejecting the East and turned the attention of the young to the prevalent social problems in order to wage a war against inhuman social and religious practices such as Sati, Child marriage, polygamy etc., (Raj 6) which saw women as less than human. On the one hand an attitude of self analysis and willingness to integrate western values with ancient traditions of India was fostered and *Brahmo Samaj(1828)* was formed ,on the other hand Orthodox Hindus who were against such reforms formed the *Dharma Sabha(1830).* Tagore's Novel holds up a mirror to this society in conflict and reflect the crisis of spirit resulting from the dialectal relationship between the reformist and revivalist impulses.

Tagore's first major novel *Choker Bali*,first published in Bengali in1903 ,after serialization in *Bangadarshan* from 1901,is known to be" the first all round psychological novel devoted to the study of social problems,"(Ray 165).The novel not only probes into the recess of the mind of Binodini the main character but it also delineates the plight of the young Hindu widow. In the exploration of the so called redemptive choices which the Hindu ethos seem to offer to widows ,Tagore" emerges as a non conformist ,ready to expose social conservatism".(Narvane 117).The novel carries Tagore's suggestion that the amelioration of the widows does not lie merely in remarriage but also in creating conditions for the harmonious realization of their personality. Commenting on Tagore's outlook on woman in Indian society, Edward Thompson writes: "He would have her remain woman –a center of love and inspiration without which the world is poverty stricken. But he has never ceased to attack the injustice and cruelty which regard woman as inferior or unfitted for education or the arts."(Thompson 74)

Choker Bali is the helpless tale of the psycho-emotional yearning and frustration of Binodini who is the only child of her parents. Though poor her father sees that she is given English education. Unfortunately the sudden death of her father leaves Binodini penniless at a marriageable age she is given in marriage to an old sick man and she quickly becomes a widow at the very prime of her life. She is doomed to a life of misery in a tradition bound Hindu society which looks down upon widows. Within a short while after this, she is brought into Rajalakshmi's house.Rajalakshmi is Binodini's mother's childhood friend.She lives with her young son Mahendra and his newlywed bride Ashalatha. A frequent visitor to this household is Bihari, Mahendra's bosom friend. Asha and Binodini take to each other and chose the name 'Choker Bali', meaning a grain of sand, to call each other.A quite unlikely nickname to chose ,but it holds the irony and essence of the novel, since both are grain of sand that brings tears in each others eyes and at the same time makes each a unique pearl from the oyster of situation. In course of time relations get entangled. Mahendra falls for BInodini. Binodini is jealous of Asha for getting a young loving husband and also for being the center of admiration of Bihari.Binodini is infatuated by mahendra, but she has true emotional longing

and spiritual cravings for Bihari.Bihari is viewed with envy by mahendra for he is valued by Binodini.He cooks up an issue between Asha and Bihari to keep the latter away.The climax of the novel is when Binodini has to leave the house and go to Barasat, her village ,following the instruction of Bihari.The villagers of Barasat make Binodini's life difficult due to the frequent visits of Mahendra which Binodini herself does not entertain.Finally she has to elope from Barasat with Mahendra for self defense and to search for Bihari without Mahindra's Knowledge. All the time Binodini is with Mahendra she never lets her to his desires. Yet Binodini's purity is not understood or accepted by anyone .In the denouement of the novel she is able to let Behari know of her innocence. Bihari proposes to marry her even though this would mar his reputation. But binodini refuses such a step.

Choker Bali highlights the triple question affecting a woman in India –child marriage, dowry and widowhood. Other issues like women's enclosure and purdha system also get expression in the novel. Strict *purdah* system was followed in Tagore's childhood days. Women moved in closed palanquins in the darkness. The description, when Binodini, Asha, Mahendra and Bihari go for a picnic the arrangement is thus "at the appointed time carriages pulled up in front of the house, an ordinary one for luggage and a deluxe carriage for the gentlemen and ladies."(Tagore 67) .The palanquins in which women went out were shut as closely as their apartments in the house. There are many instances in the novel where in when a man, other than husband, comes in presence of a woman she draws her veil to the tip of her nose.

The novel begins shedding light on the social conditions pertaining marriage and family relationships. Tagore is plain enough in narrating the misfortune of Binodini in a single passage:

> Binodini's father was not a wealthy man .But he had taken great pains to get his only daughter educated and trained in domestic work by a British missionary lady. It had not occurred to him that the girl was growing past the marriageable age. After his death, his widow began to look for a match desperately. They had no money and the girl was now in danger of remaining a spinster.
>
> Finally Rajalakshmi came to their aid and fixed Binodini's marriage to the son of someone she knew from her native village near Barasat. Soon after her marriage, Binodini was widowed. (Tagore 3)

Money determines the fate of the girl. She is penniless and so she is married off to 'the son of someone 'that is a person without a particular identity. In spite of the father's free view in giving his daughter education the girl cannot or is not allowed to stand on her own feet due to the constrains of the society. Moreover, even though she is still a girl, she is told to have crossed the marriageable age which indicates the hangover of the child marriage system which was still prevalent in the society. A girl is programmed to be a house maker and nothing more than that. This can be understood by the fact that though Binodini's father gave her English Education he wanted her to be only a house keeper this is why he teaches her domestic work. She is soon widowed as a result of her marriage to an elderly man who probably might have been sick. She is doomed in full-blooded youth to a life of privation and denial .

The novel centers around the problematic figure if the upper –caste Hindu widow, whose

remarriage was traditionally forbidden and who was enjoined to mortify the flesh and lead a Spartan existence. Tagore's novels was not the first to project the problem of young Hindu widows which came to the fore front in the middle of the eighteenth century by the abolition of Sati. The sad plight of the young widow – young because Child marriage still prevailed- had been used by Bankim Chandra Chatterji in his *Bisbriksha*(Poison Tree 1873)and *Krishnakanter Vil*(1878).But both these novels projected the society's as well as the author's aversion to the widow. The society considered the widow as an ill omen. This had two reasons .One because the widow is ill fated as she lost her husband two because young and beautiful widows, who lived a life suppressing their natural sexual urge, became a trap for the younger men of the husband's family. Widows were considered as bewitching seductresses. Although ,Tagore shows his widowed protagonist in a more favourable light ,he too points out the society's mind about widows in the instance where Binodini refuses Bihari's proposal for marriage, saying:"Oh, for shame, even the thought is shameful, I am a widow, I am tarnished-I shall bring dishonor to your name in the eyes of society"…(269)

Although widow remarriage had been legalized by 1856 social taboos were strong enough to ensure there were few takers of the legal privilege among the Hindu elite. It is the troubling question of the sexuality of the young widow, officially purged through a regime of ascetic denial but nonetheless still thought to be present that lurks the center of these novels. Bihari who belonged to a higher caste but suffered from no religious bigotry or any superstition of his time ,approached Binodini for remarriage, but she refuses it rather than consenting to a socially unacceptable marriage, she seeks, through dynamics of self-affirmation, a more meaningful role for her rich personality, acquiring thus "a grandeur even in her defeat"(Naravne 118).

Binodini is the symbol of a new class of emancipated woman .She is not prepared to be crushed and burnt by the society. Her refusal to the marriage is a fight to assert her rights in the patriarchal, materialistic society. Her rebellion is a Hindu widow's protest against the unjust privations of a grimly mortifying existence the society has imposed on her. Throughout the novel we find Biniodini as a vibrant character pulsating with life and vigor .As a widow she is condemned for life yet she emerges out triumphantly from the quicksand of a lacerated life by asserting her freedom to love ,serve and be happy. She is a relief to Rajlakshmi. She joins Mahendra and Asha in their revelry only after doing her duty. She plays the role of a caretaker in the house, not with any mercenary motive but with a spirit of sacrifice and devotion, with love and dedication.

Binodini's refusal to Bihari's marriage proposal is an unexpected twist in the story. This ending has up till now received different criticism. Certainly Tagore is not hesitant to give a revolutionary solution .He has done it before in his short story *Tyga,* wherein the heroine Kusum a Kayastha widow is remarried to Hemanta ,a Brahmin young man. If Choker Bali were to end with Binodini marrying Bihari it would be a melodramatic end. It would appear as though Binodini had given consent to the marriage as a means to escape the shame she is in and that Behari was marrying her as a sacrifice to protect Binodini at this juncture of her life. Instead Tagore project's a 'new woman' in Binodini who is bold enough to say an affirmative 'NO'.A no for which she will have to pay with her life that has to be continued as a widow .A no with which she boldly bars her way of escape-escape to a blissful conjugal life offered to her out of kindness.

Conclusion:

This decision which is a key point of the novel equalizes Binodini, a woman with Bihari, a man in using the right to decide. Both chose to remain unmarried and spend life in serving others. Binodini's decision here is in no way due to the pressure of the society but by her own free will .Tagore presents her as being able to exercise her freedom just as a man a century ago itself. Through Binodini, Tagore registers his awareness of the encumbrances to feminine development engendered by an economic system and a family structure which breed in woman dependency, insecurity, lack of autonomy, and an incomplete sense of their identity. He seems to suggest the need of a social change which would gear up the growth of "a subjectivity based on a relational identity where sameness and difference are not mutually exclusive or split into categories of gender but are recognized as equally important aspects of an effective sense of self"(Waugh 85)

References

Primary work:

Tagore,Rabindranath. *A Grain of Sand:Chikher Bali*.Delhi:Penguin Books,2003.

Secondary works:

Beauvoir,Simon de. *The Second Sex*. Penguin Books, 1948.

French, Marylin. *The War against Women*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.

Mazumdar,R.C,ed.,*The History and Culture of the Indian People*. Vol. X , Bombay: Bharathiya Vidhya Bhavan , 1996.

Narvane,V.S., *An Introduction to Rabindranath Tagore*.Madras:Macmillan,1977.

Raj.G.V,*Tagore the Novelist*.Delhi:Sterling Publishers Private Limited,1983.

Ray,Mohit.K.(ed.)Studies on Rabindranath Tagore (vol 2),Delhi:Atlantic Publishers,2004.

Sastri,A.J. (ed.) *Manu Smrithi*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1983.

Waugh,Patricia.Feminine fictions.London:Routledge,1989

Shivshankar Rajmohan. A. K.

Redefining the Homosexual Discourse: A Reading of Yukio Mishima's *Confessions of a Mask*

"Why does it always have to be the 'female' body that's presented as exotic… fascinating to scrutinize and imagine? Why is it never the 'male' body?" (Goldstein 1)

The paper stems from the fundamental belief that the spectral implications of the cultural dynamics of body aesthetics conspire in achieving a profound Deleuzian "affect" on the way men and women perceive themselves. Irrespective of the diverse spatial and temporal dimensions of the material human world, there seems to be a perception prevailing that upholds an ideal of beauty which invariably and inevitably is linked to sexual appeal and social status. These perceptions generated by power agencies play a major role in the construction, maintenance, and representation of both male and female bodies.

The general public has a tendency to believe that women are the only victims of body image. Men are also pushed into a social stereotype where they are told how to act, when to cry, and when to be tough from a very young age. When a man fails to fit in to the frame of "macho" image, he will merely be labeled as gay. R.W. Connell notes that our "patriarchal culture has a simple interpretation of gay men: they lack masculinity" (143). What it implies is that there are multiple conflicts and contradictions between the "desire" which is constructed by the discursive system and the "desire" that the body contains. As Deleuze maintains, whether it is madness or schizophrenia, there is always a grid in place and the body has no alternative but to conform to it (27). A "line of flight" for body remains elusive and even an attempt to challenge the grid eventually results only in attaining another label, which in turn, pulls the body squarely back to the same grid. The human body has been depicted in a wide variety of different ways across a range of cultural and historical locations for which literature has been the medium. It has been described, variously, as a biological entity, clothing for the soul, a site of cultural production, a psychosexual construct and a material encumbrance. Each of these different approaches brings with it a range of discourses that explore and construct identities and subject positions. The body is at once a locus of invention and self-expression, and also an object of domination and control. In most of the fields, especially in literature, the body is located at the heart of debates about gender and sexuality. There were only few "heroes" who lacked masculinity and still remained "heroes." When a man fails to shoulder the "burden of masculinity" thrust upon him by the culture industry, he becomes the "other to man" (Straus 130) like Franz Kafka's fictional character in *The Metamorphosis*.

But there appears to be a lacuna of proper theorization and study on masculinity which, in effect, makes the male body a "text less text" (Culbertson 115). It is in this context that this paper which attempts to read the novel *Confessions of a Mask by Yukio Mishima,* where the "body" itself becomes the text, assumes relevance, for it not only would provide a deeper understanding of the text but also the notions of sexuality, gender and body. The novel *Confessions of a Mask* attempts to answer the pivotal question what would happen when "He" makes his own reading of his body.

Shivshankar Rajmohan AK is Independent Scholar, "Prabhatham," Neliath Road, Chovva, Kannur.

There appears to have a consensus among critics to classify Mishima as a sensualist author and *Confessions of a Mask* as a text aims at eliciting sensual experience. However, Mishima goes far beyond this materialistic and reductionist interpretation by creating a complex narration about a troubled young boy searching for beauty and trying to conceptualize his experiences toward human body and masculine virtue.

The narrator of the novel gradually realizes that he must hide his supposedly deviant sexual urges behind a mask of normality. The work details, according to many critics, the life of a young man caught between the demands of Japanese society and his homosexual drives. Kochan, the narrator, confesses the realization of his "oddness" through his obsession with princes and never the princesses in storybook, his obsession with the painting of the naked St. Sebastian, his obsession with Omi, the bad guy of their school, and a whole lot more. Basically, they were obsessions with men, obsessions with these men dying, including him and an obsession to create a "mask," a false persona and to hide his homosexuality from the rest of the world.

A person assumes a mask to appear as something he or she is not in order to be accepted within the community. This is a common practice of homosexuals who live in a less-accepting area and wish to get along without being discriminated against. A mask acts as a guard or a shield that protects a secret. Kochan uses a mask in order to be accepted within his family and among his peers, but it leads him to a life of solitude and loneliness. "Straight" men never have to question their identity, but growing up gay and realizing that one is different, mean a constant questioning of one's own self, a question that Kochan desperately tries to tackle in the novel. Mishima uses the conventional discourse of gender in presenting the psychological complexity of an alienated man.

The argument advanced here is that the apparent homosexual tendencies in Kochan are not biologically driven, but they are the direct "affects" of the prevailing discourse on masculinity and his own deep rooted realization that he posses a weak body.

It is essential at this juncture to analyze three significant instances in the novel. In chapter two of the book there is a particular graphic section where Kochan daydreams about cannibalism. The daydream begins with him sitting waiting for dinner to be served. The dinner is being held in a secret basement. Kochan goes into the kitchen to see when the meal will be ready when he sees one of his fellow classmates being led into the kitchen from an upstairs staircase. When the unsuspecting student arrives at the bottom of the stairs, the cooks grab him by the throat and strangle him. The student is stripped naked and laid on a silver platter. The section culminates with the murdered student being brought before Kochan and set in front of him in the middle of the table where he then carves the murdered student's body into small slices with sharp knives.

It is just before the above scene in the novel that Kochan first discusses his idea about a "murder theater" (161). In the "murder theater" young men would battle like roman gladiators for Kochan's amusement. In this "theater," the participants could only use knives or spears, exploding weapons such as guns were not allowed and these weapons had to be aimed at the stomach to prolong the agony and suffering of those involved. Torture devices were not allowed either since they would not produce a sufficient out pouring of blood.

The third instance appears in the last chapter of the text where Kochan tells the reader his sudden encounter with Sonoko, his sister's friend. During one of their fairly regular meetings

they walk down the street and enter a dance hall. Kochan sees a group of tough looking men talking to some young women. One of the men is a gangster who is stripped naked to the waist. He is wrapping a waist band tightly around his body. Kochan can't take his eyes off the young man. He starts having fantasies that the young man will go out into the street and get into a knife fight with another gang member where he will then be brought back inside the dance hall with his belly cut open and his half naked body covered in sweat and blood.

The generally accepted interpretation of these instances could be something similar to the one provided below. While instances one and two prove Kochan's desire to be violent, aggressive and be everything that is generally associated with masculinity, the third instance proves, beyond doubt, Kochan's homosexual drives. But the question that lurks around and remains unanswered is whether Kochan can be called "homosexual," though he rejects the female completely and fetishizes the male body. Mishima explains that:

> The steel faithfully taught me the correspondence between the spirit and the body: thus feeble emotions, it seemed to me, corresponded to flaccid muscles, sentimentality to a sagging stomach, and over impression ability to an oversensitive, white skin. Bulging muscles, a taut stomach, and a tough skin, I reasoned, would correspond respectively to an intrepid fighting spirit, the power of dispassionate intellectual judgment and a robust disposition. (*Sun* 26-27)

In Mishima's observation physical beauty is not only an objective in itself but is even more desirable because it becomes equated with spiritual perfection. A beautifully sculpted physique symbolizes an equally strong spirit while a weak physique, on the other hand, is an external metaphor for a weak spirit. This seems to be a revolutionary conception of material human body. Instead of separating the spirit from the body like Descartes and so many others, Mishima forms an equation that can bind body and mind. Thus, Kochan's desire for perfectly crafted male body appears to be the reflection of his insatiable desire for a perfect spirit. It becomes quite interesting to note that the desire for the body in Mishima's world becomes the desire for the soul. Hence, Kochan should be stripped down of the pestering halo of homosexuality thrust upon him quite insensitively by the general reading public and the so called scholars. Kochan does not desire, in fact, a male body, but rather a body that is strong and powerful. The desire for a strong body can end up, unfortunately, only in a male body in our society, for we believe and propagate the idea that men are powerful than women. Kochan when approached from this angle would provide us a fairly complex and unheard of definition of sexuality and body. He does not get erection in the presence of a woman simply because he does not see strength in her. He sees his own powerless self in women. Hence, his relation with women would be called as homosexual. In the sense of its concern with the "otherness" of the love object, this orientation cannot be called "homosexuality," for "homo" means "the same." Rather, it is close to "heterosexual" eroticism, which is also derived from the fascination of "the other." In other words, it is his relation with men of power that can be termed "heterosexual," for it is a love for the "other." But, Kochan has no escape from the rigid social structures of our society and is forced to "perform" both his gender and sexuality within the available social scripts, rather than following the biologically determined "essence."

Interestingly, most of the critics of Mishima by quoting the passage provided below affirm Kochan's homosexual desires.

> His white and matchless nudity gleams against a background of dusk. His muscular arms . . . are raised at a graceful angle, and his bound wrists are crossed directly over his head. . . . It is not pain that hovers about his straining chest . . . but some flicker of melancholy pleasure like music. Were it not for the arrows with their shafts deeply sunk into his left armpit and right side, he would seem more a Roman athlete. . . . The arrows have eaten into the tense, fragrant, youthful flesh and are about to consume his body from within with flames of supreme agony and ecstasy. . . .That day, the instant I looked upon the picture, my entire being trembled with some pagan joy. My blood soared up; my loins swelled as though in wrath. The monstrous part of me that was on the point of bursting awaited my use of it with unprecedented ardor, upbraiding me for my ignorance, panting indignantly. My hands, completely unconsciously, began a motion they had never been taught. I felt a secret, radiant something rise swift footed to the attack from inside me. Suddenly it burst forth, bringing with it a blinding intoxication. . . This was my first ejaculation. It was also the beginning, clumsy and completely unpremeditated, of my 'bad habit'. (*Confessions* 72-75)

There is yet another way to interpret his behavior. Although, Kochan confesses his sexual desire to the same sex, it is not appropriate to apply the term "homosexual" to him, because his sexual inclination is not exactly equal to the "homosexuality" in the modern Western sense. The fact that he is attracted to men of a different age group from his own is related to the traditional make-up of the same sex couple in *nanshoku*, which typically consists of an older man and a younger boy. The reference to body and sexuality in the Japanese tradition goes back to the Tokugawa period, also known as the Edo period, which lasted from 1603 until 1868, around the time Japan was "opened" to the Western world. This was the era of samurai, urbanization, and most importantly *nanshoku*. The term *nanshoku* is most commonly translated as "sodomy" or "pederasty," and although both of these are perhaps correct translations, neither captures the full scope of the term. The term strictly refers to male-homosexual behavior, never lesbianism, and always to relationships between men and boys, especially those in the samurai and monastic communities of pre-modern Japan.

The sociologist Makoto Furukawa points out in *The Changing Nature of Sexuality: The Three Codes Framing Homosexuality in Modern Japan, that nanshoku* is, as the title might suggest, one of the "codes" that frames homosexuality in modern Japan. Before going into the contemporary significance of *nanshoku*, it is important to first examine it as a stand-alone "code."A code functions in two ways, the first is to create "a framework for the understanding and discussion of homosexuality," (Furukawa 99) that is to say an understanding of what homosexuality is and how we talk about it, and the second, which is derived from the first, "is to regulate the behavior of the individual" (Furukawa 99). As a code, *nanshoku* is still very significant for two reasons. One reason is that the *nanshoku* code offers an example of a not-too-long-ago society that understood homosexual behavior as a speculum of the social order rather than as a threat to it. *Nanshoku* was constructed as an extension of certain Tokugawa social conventions that were fundamental to maintaining social order. *Nanshoku* was primarily associated with social institutions that function based on loyalty, solidarity, and obedience, for example military and monastic communities. The influence of heterosexual roles is evident from the highly gendered division of active or

passive partners in *nanshoku* relationships. The senior partner assumed the "active" role of penetrator, while the younger would act as the "passive" or penetrated partner, with virtually no room for role-switching. Furthermore, it was conventional for the younger partner to assume a feminine appearance. There were two different *nanshoku* traditions; monastic and military, and Kochan possesses the features of both: the idolization of the love object of the former, and the educational function of the latter. To examine the characteristics of the narrator's feeling towards Omi, the first person with whom Kochan ever falls in love. Having failed to be promoted two or three times, Omi is several years older than Kochan and his classmates. Omi has a more matured body than the other classmates, and it is this matured, masculine body that attracts Kochan to Omi.

Kochan usually watches the strong muscles of his shoulders and chest with great admiration, especially when he performs on the horizontal bar in gymnastics class:

> As he began the pull-up, the muscles of his arms bulged out hard, and his shoulders swelled like summer clouds. . . Life-force — it was the sheer extravagant abundance of life-force that overpowered the boys. They were overwhelmed by the feeling he gave of having too much life, by the feeling of purposeless violence that can be explained only as life existing for its own sake... (137)

Not only Kochan but all other boys in the class are greatly moved at the sight of Omi's beautiful muscles, because they show them what they still do not possess. For the teenage boys on the brink of puberty, who still have skinny "feminine" bodies, Omi's body is what they hope their bodies to be in the future. His muscles are the model of the ideal male body for the younger boys. Furthermore, the adoration of Omi's body by the other boys not only comes from the beauty of the muscles of the male body, but also from what Kochan calls "life-force" (137), which is the very thing that Kochan desperately wants to gain. Due to his weak constitution, the narrator is told by one of his classmates "You'll surely die before you're twenty" (143). Kochan himself is continuously expressing his dissatisfaction about his poor health and frail constitution.

> I turned pale. In the pallid goose-flesh that suddenly covered me I was experiencing a form of regret like some piercing cold. I stared vacantly into the air, scratching the ugly vaccination scars on my thin arms. My name was called. The scales looked exactly like a scaffold proclaiming the hour of my execution. 'Eighty-eight,' the assistant barked to the school doctor… As the doctor entered the figure on my card, he was mumbling to himself: 'Wish he'd get to ninety pounds at least.' I had become used to undergoing this treatment at every physical examination. (129-130)

Having had a strong inferiority complex about his physical condition, Kochan finds that Omi has what Kochan really needs.

> In a phrase, what I did derive from him was a precise definition of the perfection of life and manhood, personified in his eyebrows, his forehead, his eyes, his nose, his ears, his cheeks, his cheekbones, his lips, his jaws, the nape of his neck, his throat, his complexion, the color of his skin, his strength, his chest, his hands, and countless other of his attributes. (113)

It is Omi, or more precisely, Omi's body that demonstrates the meaning of "life-force" to the narrator, who is always plagued by his lack of masculine strength. Physical weakness was disgusting, not only to Kochan, but also to the other boys, for it was considered "feminine" (88) by them who were expected to grow up to be "masculine." Especially in the case of Kochan, who continuously suffered from his frail constitution, the longing for a perfect "masculinity" becomes so great that it leads Kochan to a strong love for Omi.

Although the narrator's love for Omi does not advance to a physical one, the relationship between them reminds us of military *nanshoku* among samurai in early modern Japan. In the *nanshoku* relationship, the *nenja* (the adult male) was usually expected to provide a model of manliness for the *wakashu* (the younger boy), and in exchange, the *wakashu* had to apply himself to learning what the samurai ideal of manhood was. This educational function of *nanshoku* was considered effective in raising strong military males. Although, the military skill of the samurai class which justified the *nanshoku* relationship among them had almost disappeared in reality by the Kanei Era (1789-1800), the ideal of masculinity as physical and mental strength survived and was revived in Mishima's writings.

Kochan tries to practice masculine behavior in his school days by beginning to speak "crudely like the other boys," although he was still using "the polite, feminine forms of speech at home" (88). His single motto "Be Strong" clearly tells us of his efforts to grow up to be a strong adult male, and his erotic interests towards soldiers in general as well as Omi, suggest that his yearning for masculine strength is of the pre-modern warrior aesthetic.

The military male-love described above was often accompanied by a strong misogyny, for "femininity" or more precisely, the characteristics that men identified with femininity, such as physical weakness and fear of death, for these traits were considered as threats to masculine strength. *Hagakure* (1716), the Bible of male-love and the samurai ethic and one of Mishima's favorite books, rarely refers to women except for a few discriminatory comments against them. For fear of weakening the male-to-male bond, indispensable to warriors, the samurai ethics try to exclude women from the sphere of their official duties. To attain masculine strength and to reinforce the male-to-male bond within the military, the samurai boy was required to escape from his ties from the women surrounding him, such as his mother or his sisters, and expected to enter into an exclusively male group in the official sphere. Inspired by the samurai ethics in *Hagakure*, Mishima's Kochan tries to escape from his grandmother and wishes to be connected to male comrades to grow up to be a strong adult male. The reference to samurai culture, to which Mishima himself was greatly attached to, provides another insight which can deconstruct the "homosexual" label attached to Kochan and provide a deeper understanding of the character of Kochan and the actual reasons for his "deviant" love for men.

In spite of all his efforts to attain the masculine strength evinced by Omi, Kochan is forced to admit that a strong masculine body is perhaps the most difficult thing to attain for a person like him, plagued by physical weakness. Looking closely into the mirror, Kochan dreams of having "a chest like Omi's, shoulders like Omi's" (145), but at the same time, Kochan has to convince himself that "never in this world can you resemble Omi" (145). As a result, Omi becomes a sacred idol beyond his reach that must be awed or worshiped. He confesses that:

> I fashioned a perfect, flawless illusion of him. Hence it is that I cannot discover a single flaw in the image that remains imprinted on my memory. In a piece of writing such as this, a character should be brought to life by describing some essential idiosyncrasy, some lovable fault, but

> from my memory of Omi I can extract not a single such imperfection. (112-113)

By recreating Omi as an illusory figure without any human imperfection, and by worshiping him like a god, Kochan finds a way of escaping from his own miserable reality. Hence, the motivation for his love of Omi is the eternal longing for the perfect masculine beauty which transcends reality. Thus, Omi becomes the embodiment of the ideal world for Kochan. In other words, Omi is "the other" for him, and it is this "otherness" that makes him love Omi.

It would be naïve to approach Kochan's struggle to survive in a world where any deviance from the prescribed frame is intolerable as a struggle of a homosexual against the hetero-normative discourse. To adapt to the social standard of "normal" love he makes painful efforts to love women.

> I covered her lips with mine. A second passed. There is not the slightest sensation of pleasure. Two seconds. It is just the same. Three seconds. ..I understood everything. I drew away from her and stood for an instant regarding her with sad eyes. ...I must flee, I kept telling myself. Without a moment's delay I must flee. (337-338)

It is not his "abnormal" and "excessive" homosexual desire that makes the presence of women intolerable to him, for his desire for the male body goes way beyond the boundaries of homosexuality and resides in the realm of identity and perfection of both body and spirit. Kochan's "deviance," is the result of his fear of "feminine weakness" and belief in "masculine strength." Kochan longs for a strong and muscular male body, for a strong body implies a strong spirit. Hence, the actual desire is not for a male body but any body with strength. It is at this juncture the novel and the character assume complexity. This paper which attempted to read the character of Kochan using some of the ideas derived from the samurai culture of Japan is one among the infinite ways of solving this complexity.

Reference

Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. London: MPG Books, 2005. Print.

Culbertson, Philip. L. "Designing Men: Reading the Male Body as Text." *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader.* Ed. Bjorn Krondorfer. London: SCM, 2009.Print.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986. Print.

Dworkin, Andrea. *Intercourse.* New York: Basic Books, 2007. Print.

---. *Right Wing Women.* California: Perigee Books, 1983. *Google Book Search*. Web. 3 Feb 2014.

Furukawa, Makoto. *The Changing Nature of Sexuality: The Three Codes Framing Homosexuality in Modern Japan.* London: U of California P, 1999. *Google Book Search*. Web**.** 11 Feb 2014.

Goldstein, Laurence. *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997. Print.

Leupp, Gary P. *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan*. New York: U of California P, 1995. Print.

Mishima, Yukio. *Confessions of a Mask.* Trans. Meredith Weatherby. New York: New Directions Books, 1958. Print.

Pittman, Frank S. *Man Enough: Fathers, Sons, and the Search for Masculinity.* New York: Columbia UP, 1993. *Google Book Search*. Web. 17 March 2014.

Reeser. W.Todd. *Masculinities in Theor: An Introduction.* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Print.

Slaymaker, Douglas*. The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction.* London: Routledge, 2004. *Google Book Search*. Web. 6 Feb 2014.

Straus, Nina Pelikan. "Transforming Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis." *The Metamorphosis.* Trans. Stanley Corngold. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996. Print.

Tsunetomo, Yamamoto. *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai.* Trans. William Scott. London: Faber, 1983. *Google Book Search*. Web. 3 Feb 2014.

Shahina Mol. A. K.

(In)Appropriate Femininity and Popular Media: Reading the Performative Identities in Recent Malayalam Film Songs

Abstract

'Effect of popular culture on women' has been a discourse for critical inquiry with national and international importance for a long period. In this post modern post global era of media explosion/post media –where we reach into an era of 'netizen journalism'-citizens are treated and accepted in various ways. Though the call for freedom and personal liberation through media happens at one end, in other extreme we have the same age old concept of gender stereotyping and sexual assault happening through the media and other popular cultural forms. While focusing on contemporary Malayalam films one can observe that Malayalam films have received wide critical and popular attention. But not much study has been undertaken on how the women have been treated and projected in Malayalam films. As Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert observe in their essay, on 'Literary Paternity' the same angel/ghost concept is over ruling even in most of the mainstream Malayalam films and other pop cultural agencies.

In the celluloid world of Kerala women have been projected either as subservient to men or as monster like ridiculous women. The effect of this pop feast is dangerous even to literate women of Kerala and to other common folk. Writing and critiquing against this hegemonic relation is essential in the academic and popular circles. Men are often the box office gods. Breaking such stereotypes is essential and time demands a re -search into this women –cinema interface. Question of perfect women is a much debated one and is still getting debated. As Simon de Beauvoir argues "the very concept of women is male concept. Woman is always the 'other' because the male is the 'seer'. He is the subject and she is the object" (*The Second Sex*). Women are often evaluated on their looks not on their talents. They themselves are contending with being and becoming an object of male gaze. This should be reconstructed /deconstructed. Here I would like to focus on some recent mainstream Malayalam film songs to find out and debate the sexual assault and gender stereotyping in them. I hope it will add to the critical re- search into Malayalam films and pop culture and their effect on women and their lives. [Key words: gender stereotyping, male gaze, 'other', mainstream Malayalam films/songs].

The social position of women in the Malayalam movies has been a clichéd debate from the beginnings of 1950s to the present .The masculine dominance and the feminine passivity have been the raw materials for public opera with commercial impacts. Cinema has a distinct role in shaping ideologies since it is a powerful social medium by which identities are constructed to some extent. Social identities are often ?uid and a popular medium like cinema makes it strengthened through various apparatus like dialogue, story, music, songs, climax, dramatic elements etc. Ideologies —often powered by male /patriarchy emanating from it subsume us consciously or unconsciously.

Shahina Mol. A. K. is Assistant Professor in English, KAHM Unity Women's College Manjeri.

Popular media like cinema, magazines, news paper, television etc are always preserving the public interest/male interest, through diverse forms. Cinema being a popular medium of mass consumption presents social (re)alities or social sensitivity. The consumable way of portrayal of women is to be viewed critically along with other serious issues. The attitude of public Keralites towards womanhood is very clearly re?ected in the cinema through transparent and opaque mode. The interplay between society and cinema just helps to reinstate the hegemonic relation of man to woman. The occurrence of certain underlying structures –'*Iangue'* is visible though the manifestations are different from period to period or movie to movie.

As prominent post structural feminists Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar obsereve in their critically acclaimed essay, "The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary paternity", "…As we shall show, the image of 'angel' and 'monster' have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women's writing to such an extent that few women have definitively 'killed' either figure. Rather, the female imagination has perceived itself, as it were, through a glass darkly" (*The Mad Woman in the Attic* 17). Thus in films too women are being presented either as angel like perfect beings or as ?awless individuals whose duty is to be prettier always or else as devil like monstrous beings who are dangerously ridiculous. The real woman self is lost somewhere in the midst of this abstraction or desensitization by the inaccurate portrayal of male presenters.

A close reading of post 2000 mainstream Malayalam ?lm songs will open the dominant ideologies which work here. Women are degraded into mere performers and men are always the worthy characters and also the taste makers. This paper will foreground the role of Mainstream Malayalam ?lm songs of post 2000 era in the (mis)construction of feminine identity and gender stereotyping. A reading of selected songs from movies like *Nammal (*2002), *Speed* (2007), *Inspector Garud* (2007). *Pandippada* (2008), *Dr Love* (20l l), *Diamond Necklace* (2012) and *22 Female Kottayam (*20l3) are made here as specimens to study and to decode the images working in them various planes.

Kamal's movie *Nammal,* the campus film which was the spirit of teenagers in the beginning of this millennium celebrated the thriller song which reads as follows:

"*En Karalil Thamasichal Mappu Tharam Rakshasi*

Sammathamay Chernnu Ninnal Umma Tharam Rakshasi"

As it is observed in the paper, the woman herself celebrates the image of *lady giant* or *Rakshasi* and dances to the tunes creating an impression that she is ?tting herself into such an image and is ?nding a self de?nition. As Simon de Beauvoir, the post structural feminist critic rightly comments in her *The Second Sex*: "Woman is always the *other* because-the male is the *seer*: He is the subject and she the object. The meaning of what it is to be a woman is given by men" (The Second Sex 215).

The age old stereotyping of females is still working in Malayalam ?lm songs even in this post millennial era. The movie Speed by Jayasurya starring Dileep and Kavya Madhavan as couple, carries a song accompanied with dance which has its lyrics as follows:

"*Ko kko kko kkozhi chumma kokkipparathe*

Chikkan chilli fry ayi vetti vizhungum njan

Kuttithevanke Melle Kolam Ketti thullathe

Ittavattappojyam Muttaviriyikkum Njan"

The authority of male community to tame the (dis)ordered woman is brought here out .All the continuing lines carry the same overtones .The aggressive sexual power of male is clear when it sings "*lttavatta ppojyam mutta virikkum njan".* The power of the heroine is visible here only in vigorously dancing according to the tunes. Though the following lines in female voice carry some very mild criticisms against the 'Hero', they are not eloquent criticism or an attack against the male figure of society which is constructed through ages.

Another 2007 movie titled as *Inspector Garud*, also is a blind follower of the so called dominant images and is popular for its male ? gure as purifier. The song begins as:

"*Kantharippenne..Kantharippenne*

Kanthante nenjil kathikkerathe(2)

Oru rasithumbil Ninne Othukkum Maran

Ini Ittavattakkottiladakkum Veeran"

The gender bias on celluloid is just celebrated for its concept of female freedom as something given or controlled by male folk. The song invites danger when it follows as: "*njan Kalam varachaal nee athilothungum...".*The film *Pandippada* is also not much different when the heroine is simply acknowledged as "*panchayathile hunku peruthavalarivaloo.../konjam vivarakkedu kattum.. "*in one of its songs.

As Judith Butler, the post structuralist feminist critic argues in her *Gender Trouble*, "One's gender is structured though one's own repetitive performances of gender", the repetitive utterances in these film songs create some appropriations about female identities and performances which are tough to overcome, because identity is performatively constituted. In appropriate gender concepts are formed here through these filmic culture of construction. The linguistic structures in these ? lms construct the women selves or stabilize the woman self and teaches how it should be and the dangers followed by the violation of the same. Man's duties to criticize woman and to assess her seeming to be the common themes which work in most of the movies.

A song from K Biju's Dr .Love also has the same elements of teachings for women. The well planned thread of certifying women on the basis of male social scale finely works here:

"*Nannavoola Nannavooalaa ,theettivarum/Soorppanakhe nee Nannavoola*

Woman are viewed as the same devil like, monstrous being who will never be right automatically as herself but instead need a correcting mission which duty undertaken by the male heroes of our Malayalam movies.

The 'knot' is another patriarchal image which is so common in most of the pop feasts of Malayalam movies. The literary expressions of knot will be changing as *Kalam* (circle) or *ittavattam* in Malayalam , which are used sometimes, just to bring rhythmic beauty but with frightening connotations. Keralites both men and women have enjoyed the *knot* with which women are *tied down* by men. The song from Laljose' movie *Diamond Necklace* (2012), carries such an image in one 'of its songs:

"Thottu thottu thottu nokkamo onnu thottavadi ninne...

Vittu vittu vittu pokathe ennum kettiyidamo ninne .."

She can be either a *kanthari* or a *thottavadi* who is always under the control of some corrective institutions.

The much debated movie *22 Female Kottayam ,* for its attack of male chauvinistic attitude also simply foreshadows the helplessness of female body in its title song which follows as : *"Chilaaneeee Ninnudal minnuna chillu.... "*.The same old consideration to woman's body as easily *breaking glass* is evidently given here. As Simon problematized in her *The second Sex*, woman has no chances be proud of her body. The *performances* in films are simply creating social structures and make them stable and popular in such a way that no woman would be able to go beyond.

These songs are not singled out examples. Women are being projected either as violent, sexy, evil manifested, fatal being on one hand or as dangerously quiet, gentle vulnerable, submissive and too emotional at another level. The most worthy roles which are donated to her by male company are always of an obedient daughter or idealistic wife. We can observe that in Kerala in a popular medium like cinema patriarchal discourses stripes women off to the danger zones.

These political inscriptions through the agency of film or film songs are creating some (in) appropriate gender notions and feminine identities. There are endless images and literary expressions which are obviously anti feminine /womanistic and derogatory too. Sexual overtones are plainly visible in the songs often. These underrated or undervalued /mis representations are to be problematised and discoursed. The academic discussions can do a positive impact here by critiquing the roles and the politics behind.

Reference

Primary texts:

Nammal Dir.Kamal.2002.Film

Speed, Dir Jayasrya.2007.Film

Inspector Garud ,Dir Johny Antony,2007.Film

Pandippada, Dir Rafi Mecartin .2005.Film

Dr Love, Dir.K Biju.2011.Film

Diamond Necklace, Dir Laljose.2012.Film

22Female Kottayam, Dir Ashiq Abu.2012 .Film

Secondary Texts:

Bouveir, de Simon.The Second Sex.Trans .Constance Borde and Sheela malovany.London:Vintage Books ,2011.print.

Butler,Judith. Gender trouble:Feminism and the subversion of Identity.Newyork:Routledge,1990.print.

Gilbert,Sandra and Susan,Gubar.The Mad Woman in the Attic.London:Yale University Press,1979.print.

T Pillai,Meena.Ed. Women in Malayalam Cinema. Chennai: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sajna. P.

Exploring the Biafran Experience in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* illuminates the reality and disintegration of Nigerian life in wartime during the 1960s. The Biafran war waged between 1967-70 was Nigeria's politically and ethnically charged battle between North and the South, specifically the south-eastern region, where the unsuccessful fight for secession left one million civilians dead. England started all the trouble by colonizing and oppressing Nigeria, stirring up ethnic tensions, and supplying arms to Nigeria during the war. Nigeria used starvation and genocide as weapons of war, and the Biafran soldiers committed their own atrocities against the Nigerians and even their own people. The novel shows human faces of different aspects of this conflict, and portrays individual tragedies and victories that bring to life events most Westerners are not even aware of. Half of a yellow sun describes the Biafran flag. It symbolized the struggle of its people for independence and a brighter tomorrow.The novel features the daily lives of Igbo people of different social levels from the well-educated and bourgeois to illiterate country peasants. Adichie's characters are strongly defined individuals whose personal lives and interrelationships go through fragmentation and change, their rise and fall in violent tandem with the country's horrific civil war.

> "...my point is that the only authentic identity for the African is the tribe...I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed *black* to be as different as possible from his*white*. But I was Igbo before the white man came." (20)

ChimamandaNgoziAdichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a powerful novel that addresses the emotional and personal consequences of the Nigerian Civil War, along with the historical atrocities that accompanied it.*Half of a Yellow Sun*, takes its title from the emblem for Biafra, the breakaway state in eastern Nigeria that survived for only three years, and whose name became a global byword for war by starvation. The novel is prefaced by an epigraph from a rare Achebe poem "Mango Seedling" (1973). Adichie's powerful focus on war's impact on civilian life, and the trauma beyond the trenches, gives this novel a place alongside such works as Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* and Flora Nwapa's*Wives at War.*

In the epilogue of the novel, Adiche's response to the purpose of writing about Nigeria-Biafran war is thus:

> I wanted to write about love and war, because I grew up in the shadow of Biafra, because I lost both grandfathers in the Nigeria-Biafra war, because I wanted to engage with my history in order to make sense of my present, many of the issues that led to the war remain unresolved in Nigeria today, because my father has tears in his eyes when he speaks of losing his father, because my mother still cannot speak at length about losing her father in a refugee camp, because the brutal bequests of colonialism make me angry, because the thought of the egos and

Sajna. P. is Research Scholar in English, Kannur University, Thalassery Campus, Palayad

> indifference of men leading to the unnecessary deaths of men and women and children enrages me, because I don't ever want to forget. I have always known that I would write a novel about Biafra. (2)

Half of a Yellow Sun concerns the events of the Nigerian Civil War, called the Biafran War, and the years preceding it. Nigeria gained independence from the British Empire in 1960, but its existence as a country was an arbitrary structure set up by Britain, and contained many different cultural groups. Ethnic tensions led to the massacre of Igbo people in 1966, which then led to the secession of south-eastern Nigeria and the creation of Biafra. Aided by Britain and Russia, the Nigerian government then declared war to annex Biafra. The war lasted for three years, from 1967 to 1970, with the Nigerians using starvation and genocide to ultimately defeat the Biafrans. More than a million civilians died from famine and fighting during the war.

Half of a Yellow Sun is told through the intertwining perspectives of three characters Ugwu, Olanna and Richard.Ugwu is a fifteen-year-old poor village boy who gets a job as a houseboy for Odenigbo, a university professor. He sends Ugwu to school and his living room is a stage for voices full of revolutionary zeal. Olanna is a privileged woman from Lagos who is educated inLondon. She leaves her lush life behind and runs away from her parents' world of wealth and excess, to live with Odenigbo. The next notable character is Richard, an English journalist who receives a Grant to write a novel about Nigeria. He is in a relationship with Olanna's twin sister, Kaneine.

The three main characters move into Nsukka, in the south, which turns out to be the heart of the Nigerian Civil War. Adichieexcavates into this political conflict caused by the attempted breakaway of the south-eastern provinces of Nigeria, as the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra. In the novel, the realities of war become a major factor. This is not strictly a north/south revolt but rather the conflict is based mostly on tribal disputes. Living mostly in the south, the Igbo people do not trust the more northern tribe people called the Hausa. The main characters of this story are Igbo. Although their hearts are in favour of the revolution and ultimate independence, the Igbo people are not as well prepared, equipped, or financed as the Hausa. In the end, the Igbo people suffer tremendous losses.The novel uses the economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various people of Nigeria. Moreover, it draws out the emotional and psychological consequences of the conflict and succeeds in constructing a multidimensional version of this war.

Half of a Yellow Sun, Adichie's second novel, was published in 2006. It is set in Nigeria, and deals with the events which are of pivotal importance in the postcolonial history of Nigeria. In the earlier stage, the intellectual community of Nsukka express their ideas throughout a string of dinner parties at Odenigbo's. Odenigbo is a pseudo-revolutionary, always railing against colonial oppression, but he still calls Ugwu “my good man” like an English gentleman.In one instance, he passionately exclaims: 'This defence pact is worse than apartheid and segregation, but we don't realize it. They are controlling us from behind drawn curtains. It is very dangerous!' The ideas of the educated elite of a newly independent country reaffirm through the pages alongside friendly arguments between colleagues, discussions among artists, the rhythm of local music, flowing alcohol and Ugwu's delicious cuisine. The incidents create a vivid and serene backdrop to the upcoming events.

The pendular movement of the narrativetechniques imply the physical, mental and emotional changes endured by the characters. Famished children in refugee camps find

themselves unable to outpace and catch lizards. A child soldier, nicknamed Target Destroyer, uses “words like enemy fire and Attack HQ with a casual coldness, as if to make up for his crying.” A girl's belly starts to swell, and her mother wonders if she is pregnant or suffering from malnutrition. When an acquaintance of Olanna turns up at a refugee camp, she notices that “he was thinner and lankier than she remembered and looked as though he would break in two if he sat down abruptly.”When the war starts, Kainene throws herself into relief work. Kainene, bitterly describes the post-independence rulers:

> "The new Nigerian upper class is a collection of illiterates who read nothing and eat food they dislike at overpriced Lebanese restaurants and have social conversations about one subject: 'How's the new car behaving?'

The scene of Olanna nervously eating wedding cake in the midst of the air raid's wreckage marks the official beginning of the Biafran War. There is no character, with the exception of Kainene and Olanna's parents, who have fled to London, whose life is not in danger. The description of starvation is so vivid that it makes our heart ache. For example, when Olanna queues for powdered egg for her sick baby daughter, the sight appears to be very realistic and breaks our heart. The living situation has declined in Biafra – even the once-wealthy Olanna cannot even afford dried egg yolk for her sick child. However, Olanna and Kainene, who have been set apart by adultery, are reconciled because of their shared suffering during the war. Kainene says, "There are some things that are so unforgivable that they make other things easily forgivable"(347).

There are cruel moments that transport the reader directly to the fighting grounds. A refugee flees the north by train, carrying in a bowl her daughter's head, still bearing its delicate braids. Olanna is caught in the north visiting a friend when the first Igbo killings begin and barely makes it back alive to the south:

> A liquid – urine – was spreading on the floor of the train. Olanna felt it coldly soaking into her dress. The woman with the calabash nudged her, then motioned to some other people close by. 'Bianu, come,' she said. 'Come and take a look.' She opened the calabash… Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy-grey skin and the plaited hair and rolled- back eyes and open mouth. She stared at it for a while before she looked away. Somebody screamed.'As Olanna and others become caught up in the violence, the novel captures horror in the details of "vaguely familiar clothes on headless bodies", or corpses' "odd skin tone - a flat, sallow grey, like a poorly wiped blackboard". (149)
>
> One of the most common tragedies of this war is that schools are always seized to become relief centers or refugee camps. The government fails to protect its citizens. The bombing of the school shows that the Nigerians are not just interested in defeating the Biafran army, but also in killing as many Biafran citizens as possible.Olanna's new confidence continues to show itself as she sets up a makeshift “school.” The school she was teaching at was one of the last to be bombed or turned into a refugee camp, so she was even luckier than most.

Tending her adopted daughter, Olanna endures the descent into one-room squalor, food-

aid queues and air raids without self-pity. But there is anger at the "bleakness of bombing hungry people", and the deadly kwashiorkor, malnutrition that afflicts children, dubbed "Harold Wilson syndrome" for the former colonial power's complicity.

> 'A hawker walked into the compound with an enamel tray covered in newspapers, holding up a browned lizard on a stick… 'I want some, Mummy Ola, please,' Baby said. Olanna ignored her and continued to brush her hair. 'Those things are not good for you,' Olanna said… Baby began to cry. Olanna turned and looked at Ugwu in exasperation and suddenly they were both smiling at the situation: Baby was crying to be allowed to eat a lizard.'(352)

Adichieunknots the realities of war beginning with the physical and literal before going into the psychological and emotional facets. She frames the explosion of the North-South conflict as a fundamental moment that offers historical context. They function as a stepping stone into the psychological and emotional effects of war on individuals, relationships, ethnic groups and the nation as a whole.This narrative strategy is intertwined with simple moments where an action or thought show the distinct emotional and material differences that begin to be reflected in all of the characters- When they realize how much meat they used to have at their disposition or they miss the scent of soap their family members used to carry.

Richard'switnessing of the mindless 'butchery' of Nnaemeka and other Igbo people at Kano airport furtheramplifies the bestiality of man in situations of wars:

> Where are theIgbo people? Who is Igbo here? Where are the infidels? .... 'You are Igbo,' the secondsoldier said to Nnaemeka.... The soldier walked over to him, 'Say Allahu Akbar!'.... He would not say Allahu Akbar because his accent would give him away. Richardwilled him to say the words, anyway, to try; he willed something, anything, to happenin the stifling silence and as if in answer to his thoughts, the rifle went off andNnaemeka's chest blew open, a splattering red mass, and Richard dropped the note inhis hand.... The soldiers ran out to the tarmac and into the aeroplane and pulled outIgbo people who had already boarded and lined them up and shot them and left themlying there, their bright clothes splashes of colour on the dusty black stretch." (152-153)

The Biafransbecome so desperate in the war that they forcefully recruit civilians, by even kidnapping children and the elderly to fight and die on the front lines.Ugwudevelops from theclumsy little village boy, unsure of himself and who sleeps with pieces of chicken in his pocket, to aresourceful "teacher" and "child soldier" able to distinguish himself in battle situations.Ugwu now has his own new identity, "Target Destroyer," which gives him a kind of freedom to commit terrible acts that "Ugwu" would not. We see just how corrupt the soldiers can be, abusing their power and bullying the civilians who are starving on their beha

The naive optimism of most of the Biafrans focuses on the figure of Ojukwu, who claims that "even the grass will fight for Biafra". This seems to be boastful as we find that famine and starvation will play a major role in the novel.Kainene is confident in Biafran victory, but she is also willing to see the truth about Ojukwu. He is an inspirational speaker, but also boastful and growing more corrupt. Richard feels a close personal connection with Biafra's success, as it has become key to his identity and happiness.

The brutality and bestiality shown by Abdulmalik in massacring the Mbaezi family despite thisrelationship that exists between him and the family could only be rationalized within the context of"war":

> Uncle Mbaezi lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamywhiteoozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on theveranda. The cuts on her body were smaller, dotting her arms like parted red lips.... Wefinished the whole family. It was Allah's will! .... The man was familiar. It wasAbdulmalik. (147-148)

The novel has an open ending leaving the readers to decide the fate of Kainene. She disappears amidst her attempt to get food for the refugees for whom she is responsible. It is however in the exposition of the embedded narrative "The World Was Silent When We Died" within the book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* that Adichie's real voice emerges.

> He writes about the world that remained silent while Biafrans died. He argues thatBritain inspired this silence. The arms and advice that Britain gave Nigeria shaped other countries. In the United States, Biafra was 'under Britain's sphere of interest'. InCanada, the prime minister quipped. 'Where is Biafra?' The Soviet Union senttechnicians and planes to Nigeria, thrilled at the chance to influence Africa withoutoffending America and Britain.... Communist China denounced the Anglo-AmericanSovietimperialism but did little else to support Biafra. (258)

The title of the novel comes from the image of the Biafran flag, which is composed of half of a yellow sun over stripes of red, black and green. In the novel Olanna teaches her students about the flag – the red symbolizes the blood of the Igbo slain in the 1966 pogrom, the black is to mourn their deaths, the green is for Biafra's future prosperity, and the yellow sun is for the country's "glorious future"(281).Adichie often points out the yellow sun on the uniforms of Biafran soldiers, and sometimes contrasts this image of hope with scenes of violence or tragedy. The flag ultimately comes to represent the optimism of the Biafrans when they first seceded from Nigeria, and then the horrors of starvation and war that came to crush that hopefulness.

Adichie trespasses the boundary of the historical recount of events by interweaving human aspects, turning on multiple microphones for each of these voices to be heard. The thematic of war opens up into the bigger theme of humanity where we see characters struggling with issues of love, class, race, profession and family, among others. *Half a Yellow Sun* is an example of one of the many forms where fiction can coexist with history. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, unrestrained by the margins of truth and untruth which historians are bound to, produces a sincere version of the Nigerian Civil War. The novel is indeed an expression of knowledge about human kind.The novel is anmanifestation of polyphony on the Nigerian Civil War. The novel goes beyond historical research and travels deep into Nigeria's memory, going into the roots of the conflict, into the injustice, violence and pain of war; the irrelevance of humanity amidst these conditions.

Reference

Adichie, ChimamandaNgozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Harper, 2007. Print.

Ben Florman and Justin Kestler, LitCharts Editors. "LitChart on Half of a Yellow Sun."

LitCharts.com. 15 June 2015.

Hawley, John C. "Biafra as Heritage and Symbol: Adichie, Mbachu, and Iweala." *Research in African Literature* 39:2 (2008). 15-26. Print.

Hodges, Hugh, 'Writing Biafra: Adichie, Emecheta and the Dilemmas of Biafran War

Fiction'.*Postcolonial Text* 5.1 (2009). Print.

Ojinmah, Uwelo, 'No Humanity in War: ChimamandaAdichie's Half of a Yellow Sun',

Journal of Nigeria Studies 1.2 (Fall 2012), pp. 1-11. Print.

Okpi, Kalu. *Biafra Testament*. Oxford: Macmillan, 1982. Print.

Uwasomba, Chijioke, 'Story as History; History as Story in ChimamandaAdichie's Half of a Yellow Sun', *AfrrewIjah: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 1.4 (November 2012), pp. 28-45. Print.

Rukhaya. M. K.

Reduplication of Diaspora in Gauri Shinde's *English Vinglish*

Abstract:

Gauri Shinde's English Vinglish portrays the reduplication of a foreign culture within one's own country, as the title suggests. The protagonist Shashi thrives in a hyper real diaspora situated in her own homeland. She is delimited by immediate relatives who are judgmental towards her as she fails to meet the norm of speaking and breathing English. Her alienation as a woman also functions parallel to phenomenon of diaspora as it has been interpreted by critics as the feminine counterpart of the masculine concept of colonialism. The reduplication is apparent in her attempts to clone as she mimics English words or a Michael Jackson step. Whether she adapts replacing the vowel æ in the word 'jazz' or the velar ŋin the word 'English' as echoed in the title, or enjoys her catering business, there are efforts to carve her identity. Shashi seems like an odd jigsaw piece that does not fit into this family puzzle. She figures in the Third Space, as for her, family is of the utmost significance. Therefore, she neither belongs to this world nor that. Her attempts at learning English is an endeavour to fit herself into this picture, and thereby complete herself. "If one is culturally defined by language, then entry into or appropriation of another language also implies cultural appropriation or transformation," says Dingwaney in "Translating Third World Cultures (Dingwaney, Anuradha and Maier 3).

Keywords: Diaspora, hyperreal diaspora, English Vinglish

Gauri Shinde's *English Vinglish* portrays the reduplication of a foreign culture within one's own country, as the title suggests,. The protagonist Shashi thrives in a hyper real diaspora situated in her own homeland. She is delimited by immediate relatives who are judgmental towards her as she fails to meet the norm of speaking and breathing English. Shashi is treated as the 'other' within her own domain that is a simulated version of another culture. The reduplication is apparent in her attempts to clone as she mimics English words or a Michael Jackson step. Whether she adapts replacing the vowel æ in the word 'jazz' or the velar ŋin the word 'English' as echoed in the title, or enjoys her catering business, there are efforts to carve her identity. Shashi seems like an odd jigsaw piece that does not fit into this family puzzle. She figures in the Third Space, as for her, family is of the utmost significance. Therefore, she neither belongs to this world nor that. Her attempts at learning English is an endeavour to fit herself into this picture, and thereby complete herself. Her flight to America and her return, reflect her tryst to complete herself with a foreign supplement; only to later realize that perfection lies in self-satisfaction, and returns to her former self.

The movie begins by revealing the protagonist in parts after which the whole is exposed. Her fragmented identity is made apparent here as opposed to the whole. The movie begins with an attempt to read a newspaper: an intellectual exercise. However, just as she sits down, she is immediately summoned to her mechanical routine. She does not define her work; the domestic chores define her. Her husband Satish confines her persona to the domestic realm.

Rukhaya. M. K. is Assistant Professor in English, Nehru Arts and Science College, Kasaragod

He derides her saying that she was born to make laddus causing her immense disrespect. “Women are born,” states Vijayshree, into an "expatriate" status (the term expatriation is itself conjoined to patriarchy) and they are expatriated in patri, hence a geographic movement away from home to an alien country is only an accentuation of gendered exile that they have all along borne. It is this sense of perpetual elsewhereness that steadily reinforces the woman's need for survival and self-preservation” . Therefore, etymologically, 'Patria' stands for 'country' or 'fatherland.' Though she is the homemaker, the home is named after the husband Godbole. The word 'Godbole' is also significant as it underlines the Male God who commands. Laddu is a delicacy that is representative of celebration in India and emblematic of Indian festivity. The protagonist endeavours to locate her distinctiveness in her small-time catering business in her own niche. Shashi goes to deliver the ladoos personally to garner appreciation; her husband's approval being the ultimate remark to her. However, Satish is too engrossed in his big world to care for her small joys. He callously asks her to stop the same not sensing how much it meant to his wife. People equipped with Western education are normally perceived as broad-minded. Conversely, we perceive that Shashi finds non-acceptance in her Motherland though she is resourceful and open-minded. Vijay Mishra asserts that diasporic identities are formed by the grand narratives of being “untimely ripp'd” from a “mother's womb” . It proves to be more traumatic in Shashi's instance in her being treated like a step-daughter within her own motherland. Her trauma stems from alienation and denunciation. The artificial hyperreal English World within her native land comes across as insular as her own child refuses Shashi's accompanying her to the PTA meeting. She cringes at her mother's inability to speak English, and the school atmosphere also comes across as an extension of this hyperrreal diaspora. In the meeting, a parent introduces herself in the following way: ”I am Neelam, commonly known as Rupal's mother these days.” This idea indicates how we have arrived at a stage where the motherland no longer defines her children, the children stand for the motherland; and in this particular context, India, in terms of her children, will be defined as a country aping the United States. Shashi hankers after English, not because it is a way of life to her. It becomes for her, a criterion of acceptance into her own society and family that sees her as an alien. Shashi becomes elated when she knows that her daughter tops the exams in English, as it was a decisive factor for recognition, and presumes that her daughter had arrived.

Shashi's daughter Sapna does not deem it necessary to obtain her mother's permission for participating in a competition as long as she has her father's consent. Normally, after a PTA meeting, it is the child that shames the parent, but here ironically Shashi's daughter claims that Shashi had shamed her. Both the mother and the motherland are relegated here. Shashi stands for not only the mother here, but also the motherland and the feminine framework of diaspora. Makarand Paranjpe in “Displaced Relations: Diasporas, Empires, Homelands” theorizes the diaspora as a sort of dialectical Other of colonialism. The latter was the dominant, assertive, masculine thesis of which the former is a submerged, apparently passive, feminine antithesis .

We find this pre-occupation with a foreign culture also in the flight from India to America where the flight features just one Hindi movie channel, but 100 American movie channels. Dasgupta writes that for Indian immigrants, Indian cinema plays an important role in maintaining a "continuity in their dislocation “. Amitabh Bachchan who gives a guest appearance in the movie is far from being a guest in a foreign culture. Indians are known to be

emotive, expressive and sometimes even melodramatic. To substantiate, before Shashi's departure for New York, Shashi's daughter mocks at Shashi's crying stating that in India people could not pronounce 'Good bye' without crying. Edward Said in his *Orientalism* describes how the East is seen as effeminate by the West owing to their fixation with emotions. Amitabh Bachchan exhibits this phenomenon of eloquence without any sense of inhibition in a plane peopled by sophistication. He does not follow the etiquette .He subverts the diasporic experience that generally goes abroad to mint money by telling the Airport Personnel in America that he is going to the US to spend some dollars and help recover 'their' economy. He delivers the crux of the theory the movie tries to put forward when he tells Sridevi: "There is no need to be afraid of the English. It is now time that they should be afraid of us."

And it proves to be right when Shashi enters the US to attend her sister's daughter's wedding. Her sister's family settled in the US for many years is more compassionate towards her and accepts her for what she is. They admire the Indian costumes and insist on an Indian wedding though the boy is English. The food served for the wedding is Indian, and so is the style of serving. Further, we find that the English fiancé attempts to decipher the Hindi spoken by the Indian family just as earlier Shashi used to try to make sense of the English spoken by her family. We also find an inversion of the scene where Sridevi tries to mimic a Michael Jackson step, in the English fiancé striving to imitate a Punjabi *balle balle* step.

Shashi is elated when she comes to know of an English crash course that promises to teach English in four weeks. She utilizes her own earnings to learn the language, and enrolls in the conversational English course and proves to be the best student in the class and her teacher's favorite. Shashi's question to her American tutor: Why 'India', but '*The* United States of America,' connotes more than it denotes. She is loved for the person she is; her saree that is also part of her nationality is called 'gorgeous' and she is called an entrepreneur by her teacher David Fischer as opposed to her husband who belittles her laddu –making business. We find her coming out of the class with renewed confidence.

There are also lighter moments where we have Indianisms that attempt at subverting the West. The vowels a, e, i, o, u are read out as Ayyo by Ramamurthy, the Tamil software engineer. There is mother interference in the question: 'What is your good name?' that renders the Black American really angry as nobody has a bad name. There is also the ambiguity with the Great Indian Nod that stands for neither a 'yes' nor a 'no.' Salman Rushdie states: "Those people who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it –assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within their frontiers". There is a whole song dedicated the Indian way of reduplication, with the reduplicated word beginning with the Hindi letter 'v' that is non-existent in English, as it comes half way within the articulation of 'v' and 'w' in English. The movie title also echoes this phenomenon as the English 'v' is changed into the Hindi 'v' and the English 'sh 'is transformed into the Hindi 'sh,' where again, the Hindi 'sh' is non-existent in English.

"Can the Sublatern Speak?" ask Gayatri Spivak in a rhetorical question; and her answer is 'no' and as a woman is rendered more without agency. Shashi maintains that when a man cooks it is called an art, but when a woman cooks it is 'duty.' Laurent reassures her that anybody who makes people happy is an artist. Subsequently, we find that Shashi's family

comes ahead of their schedule to America, and as a result she is unable to complete her course. The exam would be the final test of whether she was qualified or not. Nevertheless, even before the final exam that ascertains Shashi's recognition, we find in Shashi a sense of liberation and self-assurance in a scene where she declares with firm conviction during the course of a row to her husband:"Enough!" Her niece Radha who loves her aunt Shashi dearly invites Shashi's friends and teacher to the wedding. Shashi gives a toast at the wedding in English and thereby impresses the others with her effective speech. The marriage takes place between English masculinity and Eastern effeminacy. Shashi tells the newlyweds that a juncture may arrive in their lives when one may feel lesser than the other. It is at times like these that we must help ourselves. She ultimately comes to realization that perfection lies in self-satisfaction: the source of confidence lies within and does not require a certificate of acceptance, and returns to her own self with a renewed confidence. Jasbir Jain affirms;"The relationship of the hyphen to the homeland is not always one of linkages, it may be one of withdrawal and a withholding of the self". David Fischer declares that her speech was outstanding and she had passed with a distinction. The only correction that he makes is "One does not return back, but return." Apart from the grammaticality of the sentence, the line is also highly suggestive. Returning cannot be always seen as a regressive act. Sometimes, returning or returning to one's roots, or recognition of self-worth is a highly progressive act. Shashi says;" If you learn to love yourself, your old world seems new." The act of returning in the plane in the end echoes this phenomenon.

K.S. Maniam says in "Writing from the Fringe of a Multi-Cultural Society": The sense of homelessness in a land you have always treated as your home gives you, in unexpected ways the courage of the chameleon, rather than the reassuring and circumscribing strength of the tiger, to continually and creatively discover the marvelous and even metaphysical nature of your origins." At the beginning of the movie Shashi craves for acceptance from her husband, but at the end we find subversion as he seeks acceptance from her. The movie begins with Shashi reading a Hindi Newspaper, and ends with her asking the stewardess for a Hindi newspaper in English. For her, English becomes a tool, as it should be, and not a way of life.

Furthermore, the protagonist's name is Shashi where in the Hindi language 'Shashi' stands for 'Moon' or 'Moonlight.' Raja Rao spoke of India as "not a country (*desa*), but a perspective (darshana)" , and Rushdie of "Indias of the mind", however if India endeavours to emulate a foreign country then indeed like the moonlight is only a mere reflection. Helene Cixous in her "Sorties" talks of the sun/moon binary pair that corresponds to the dialectical pair man/woman, and sun/moon also stands for the East/West dichotomy. It is also significant as the Sun is a man and functions as the centre of his own universe. The moon only possesses reflected light from the sun. Towards the end of the movie, we perceive that Shashi discovers self-assurance and finds herself equal to her husband. The moon never comes between the sun and the Earth but when it does, and is on an equal plane, it can cause a total solar eclipse.

Reference

Dasgupta, S. Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian Diaspora. San Fransisco: Aunt Lute Press, 1993. Print.

Dingwaney, Anuradha and Carol Maier. Between Languages. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999. Print.

Edward.W.Said. Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Print.

Jain, Jasbir. "The New Parochialism." Paranjpe, Makarand. In-Diaspora. New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2001. 82. Print.

Mishra, Vijay. "Diasporas and the Art of Impossible Mourning." Paranjpe, Makarand. In-Diaspora. New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2001.

Paranjpe, Makarand. "Displaced Relations: Diasporas, Empires, Homelands." Paranjpe, Makarand. In-Diaspora. New Delhi: Indialog publications, 2001. Print.

Rao, Raja. The Meaning of India. New Delhi: Vision Books, 1996. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. Imaginary Homelands: Essay and Criticism. London: Granta, 1991. Print.

Vijayashree, C. "Survival as an Ethnic: South Asian Immigrant Women's Writing." Paranjape, Makarand. In-Diaspora. New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2001. Print.

Poornima. S. Unni

A Discourse on Egalitarian "New" Indian Woman of *Salam Namaste* and *Ta Ra Rum Pum*

Abstract

The term "Bollywood" will refer specifically to the Hindi-language film industry. Bollywood films are a way for Indians all over the globe to keep "in touch" with their homeland. It is fascinating to note that there has been a continuous change in the construction of women characters in popular Hindi-language cinema. Interestingly there is a whole new type of audience that is demanding the portrayal of a "modern" woman as opposed to the traditional subservient type of woman whose only goal was to marry and have children. The stereotypic women characters in the 70's and 80's give way to the new liberalized women especially in the Bollywood movies released after the millennium. The exploration of women's status and social roles became favourite themes of new directors as Bollywood, like other industries, is also equally influenced by the processes of globalization. Bollywood cinema took a different stance from the 90's onwards, and seems to becoming more liberal and "Westernized" in the portrayal of egalitarian new heroines. More contemporary films began to expose women characters as being more independent and making choices about family and work that are not based on traditional expectations of Indian womanhood. So changes are very much evident with regard to the individuality of the woman and the level of self actualization in the recent Bollywood movies. In films of the new millennium, women are constructed to treat sexual passion as a normal part of the relationship between man and woman. Women portrayed in the new millennium movies like Salam Namaste and Ta Ra Rum Pum allot time and energy to the realization of their ideals. This paper examines the portrayal of modern woman who is strongly adhered to egalitarianism in the two Bollywood movies, Salaam Namaste (2005) and Ta Ra Rum Pum (2007).The selected movies here showcases on the women characters who are bold enough to articulate their needs thereby rising above what is traditionally expected of Indian women.

The women characters in recent bollywood films are portrayed as being livelier, independent, bold and strong willed to overcome all challenges they have to countenance in their lives .They never falter their steps at times of crisis but combat it with great will power and endurance. They are neither the devoiced women we come across in the movies of 70's and 80's nor the transitional women of movies released in the 90's.In the two movies, "Salam Namaste" and "Ta Ra Rum Pum" we can perceive the new Indian woman who is more liberalized in their outlook towards life. They have their own choices about family and work that are totally against the traditional expectations of Indian womanhood. In these movies, there is a paradigm shift from usual submissive woman to a new emancipated woman that exhibits more social freedom with equal rights similar to her male counterparts. The women characters of these movies depict a strong characteristic of self esteem as they open their hearts to their love only after realizing that they truly love them.

Bollywood cinema took a different stand point in the portrayal of heroines from the 90's onwards as there is a craving in them to rebel and achieve transition in their status though they

Poornima. S.Unni is Research Scholar, Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrishur

often met with failure. In the two movies released after the millennium, the heroines are seen portrayed as more liberal and westernized as a result of the influence of globalization. It is true that bollywood movies are not just produced for Asians within India but Asians all over the globe. People are becoming more integrated into a single society and function together, sharing norms and values and ideologies as a result of globalization. Globalisation and the diaspora phenomenon have always appealed the audience as well as Bollywood film industry. The processes of globalisation serve as a catalyst for the remaking or reworking of existing gender divisions (Cullity and Younge, 2004). Interestingly, this transformation process raises questions relating to the capacity, potentials and changing role of the Indian woman, both as audience, member and as film character.

Salaam Namaste challenges the exploration of female sexuality and women's empowerment. The movie throws light to the issue of pre marital sex between two diasporic Indians. This two diasporic Indians depicted in the movie are Nikhil Arora, known as "Nick", and Ambar Malhotra, known as "Amby", who left India in order to live their own lives in Melbourne, Australia. Amby is a medical student, who works a part-time job as a radio-jockey to fend for her. Nick is an architect turned chef. Their acquaintance begins after Nick fails to arrive for an interview with Amby at the radio station, where she hosts the show, “Salaam Namaste”. Infuriated by his lack of punctuality and courtesy, Amby sets out to defame him over the radio, and a war of public words ensues between them. When Nick and Amby physically meet after this incident, there is a strong attraction between them which is not faded even after discovering each other's true identities..

Nick and Amby fall in love and decide to diverge from traditional romantic courting. Instead, they opt to live together first, so that they can get to know each other better as their busy lives do not offer much room for romantic pursuits. After Nick and Amby move in together, they adapt to their carefree and fun filled life until Amby learns that she is pregnant. Nick wants Amby to have an abortion, but she firmly decides to keep the baby. She cannot move out because of financial reasons and the conflict begins. Amby has no support system since her parents cut all ties with her when she told them she was following her dream of becoming a surgeon in Australia. She finds an ally in her colleague Jignesh and has an ethnically diverse group of friends. Nick realizes over time that he cannot get over his love for Amby and revives the thought of becoming a father and decides to marry Amby just before she gives birth to twins.

The influences of economic liberalization and the impact of the NRI (Non-resident Indian) communities are all factors that play a part in the shaping of current Bollywood ideologies. . Over the decades, there have been occasional films that focus on breaking down the stereotypic roles assigned to women formed as a part of the ideologies of a nation. There are film-makers who attempt to address difficult, women-oriented issues such as rape, unwed motherhood and surrogate pregnancy etc in some recent movies. *Salaam Namaste* is one such film with a conspicuous departure from the ideologies and patriarchal system that is prevalent in most films. Hence, it is important to closely examine the agenda of the film-maker in his depiction of the woman character. Firstly, her identity is modifed by her nickname. It is common to find the Indian diaspora adopting foreign names in order to fit into the societies into which they migrate. In this case, both the hero and heroine assume different names. Interestingly, both characters are also depicted to have consciously decided to detach all ties with their families. Amby is depicted as leading an autonomous lifestyle as opposed to

the dependence those women characters in most Bollywood films of earlier times display towards their families.

Amby is pictured as a woman who is striving to achieve her dreams. Her decision to live with the man that she falls in love with and engage in pre-marital sex is a taboo that the film-maker explores candidly. Amby is visualized as a carefree spirit as is evident when she participates in the impromptu song and dance beach party during which the entire marriage party throws off their clothing and gets into their swimsuits. Her body language and manner in the way that she participates in this fiesta delineates her as a character that is comfortable with the setting. Even though song and dance routines in Bollywood films permit sexual freedom, Amby's character does not appear to need the assistance of this convention. This is exhibited in her use of gestures and movements during the dance sequence in which she appears to be comfortable and unpretentious and the dance sequence adds to the spontaneity of the character that she portrays. Yet, when Nick puts before her the idea to move in with him, she hesitates initially. Hence, while appearing to be completely "Westernised" peripherally, she is still bound by the ideologies of the Indian nation to a certain extent. It is plausible for us to argue that many Western women would also hesitate to move in with a man. This character trait is important for a woman character like Amby as it distinguishes her from other Bollywood heroines who are tied to Indian ideologies.

It is also important to bear in mind that pre-marital sex is a taboo in Hindu culture. It is fascinating, however, that when Nick and Amby do move in together, they have separate bedrooms, and it is Amby who initiates the first move that leads to them sleeping together for the first time. She overtly seduces him without even a hint of demureness. Amby is depicted as well aware of her sexuality as a woman and is not at all afraid of exploring her needs and desires with the man that she has consciously chosen to live with, even though he is not her husband. Completely out of the norm is the "bubble bath" scene in which Nick and Amby take a romantic bath together as if they were an old married couple. Amby looks more like a supermodel than an Indian woman, and unabashedly takes keen delight in the intimacy that she shares with Nick.

The movie takes a candid look at an unorthodox subject for bollywood cinema in a very unsentimental manner. While unwed motherhood is heard of as a half-hidden side plot of Bollywood cinema, it is very queer to find it as the main narrative focus in Salam Namaste. *Salaam Namaste* depicts the live-in relationship as a deliberate choice of two adults instead of the heroines give in to passion for one moment and blames it as their irresponsible acts in some movies released in the 90's.Amby falls pregnant because she chooses to engage in pre marital sex as a part of her daily life without any inhibitions associated to the traditional concept of Indian woman. She is dreaming of widening her space by moving to Australia instead of allowing herself to shrink her space dominated by patriarchy in a country like India.

In films of the new millennium, women are constructed to treat sexual passion as a normal part of the relationship between man and woman. They are depicted to actively enjoy lovemaking as sexual beings without any hint of shame and regret .By doing so the woman consciously decides to become an equal partner in relationships. *Salaam Namaste* promotes the concept of an Indian woman living her life according to her own ideals. Amby chose to leave her parents and then took the bold step of becoming involved in a pre-marital relationship. These actions are not in keeping with typical Indian culture or religion where

marriage denotes the start of a lawful and socially-sanctioned relationship between two people. By engaging in pre-marital sex willingly, the relationship between the hero and heroine clearly drift from the norms of Indian tradition as depicted in Bollywood films.

Amby is not characterized as a "traditional Indian woman" who is expected to be domesticated and pamper her man. She is a working woman, pursuing her dream career, loves pizza and hates to clean up. It is Nick who finds it difficult to sleep if the dishes are not washed. Gender issues are challenged by the portrayal of the characters in an almost role-reversal type of setting in the narrative. Seeing a man in the kitchen may have been a social taboo decades ago, but it is becoming more and more agreeable in today's modern Indian marriage as increasingly depicted in Bollywood films. Another scene that departs from the traditional depiction of gender representation is the one where Nick wakes up early to make sure that he can prepare breakfast for his live-in lover before she leaves for work. Thus the movie deals explicitly with relationships and gender differences.

In older films, a lone lady loitering in the kitchen while rolling out perfect rotis and attending to her children was a common sight, but in *Salaam Namaste*, Nick and Amby both clean up together, with Nick even preparing a lavish breakfast for her while she sleeps. Amby does not have the time or the inclination to be the conventional "dutiful Indian wife" who will stay at home and wait for her man to come home. Films like *Salaam Namaste* do not portray women as homemakers whose only goals in life revolve around maintaining immaculate homes, tending to the children and serving their in-laws without any assistance from their spouses. Indian society is also experiencing a departure from traditional ideologies in the relationships between husband and wife. In today's urban society, both within the narratives of films and in the real world, many men are treading into a new world of domesticity and housekeeping.

For a long time, Indian women have faced subjugation and been relegated to the confines of their homes as homemakers. The younger generation of women considers this in itself motivation to orchestrate change to this pre cooked mechanism, and as a result, women are now seeking a balance through what has been their traditional area of dominance that is their kitchens. It is merely a metaphor for the change that has been sweeping through the urban, middle class of society. While viewing the nursery, Amby immediately fantasizes about the possibility of Nick supporting her during her pregnancy as they are estranged at the time. While the Indian woman in recent films is depicted to live her life according to her own rules, she considers the love and support of a man as requisitioning too.

The film is very much evident of a genre where tradition and customs with regard to relationships are challenged. Amby and Nick engage in a pre-marital sexual relationship. This act is against Indian tradition, where marriage is regarded as the social norm before engaging in a sexual relationship. Amby is portrayed as both educated and independent, and her construction is not confined to the traditional characteristics of Indian women who are subordinate and lower in social rank. Her manners and ideals are less Indian and tend to be more Westernised. She amalgamates well with her new adopted country, Australia. She pursues her own goals and ideals and portrays a woman who seeks to be fully independent. The film is thus a clear break from "traditional" ideologies and portrays the woman character as independent and free from male oppression.

The central woman character of movie **Ta Ra Rum Pum** is depicted as a fun-loving and

free spirited young woman who lives without any inhibitions and fear. There is no "Indianness" about her dress or manner. She is a beautiful young woman who lives in New York City with her room-mate Sasha. She meets and falls in love with Rajveer Singh (RV), a young man with a passion for being a race car driver. RV joins Speeding Saddles, a failing race team, and is successful, hence becoming a well-known and wealthy celebrity race car driver. Radhika is an aspiring pianist, majoring in Music at Columbia University, while RV has no degree or educational background since he had to drop out of school to support his family when his father died. RV's lack of education earns him the disapproval of Radhika's father, Mr. Banerjee. Despite her father's contempt for RV, Radhika marries him and becomes a wealthy housewife and mother of two children, Priya and Champ. RV soon becomes the number one race car driver in the USA.

Tragedy strikes when RV is involved in an accident whilst racing and he is hospitalized for a few months. He tries to make a comeback but the trauma of the accident mentally depress him. The family is forced to auction their home after RV endures a string of failures and they move into a neighborhood of much lower social standing. RV and Radhika decide to hide the truth from their children. The family struggles with their new lifestyle but stick together by using a mixture of fantasy and cheerfulness to pull through. While battling to forget his love for the racecourse, RV is tormented by a newly developed fear for racing. However, when Champ is admitted into hospital and needs to undergo immediate surgery, he takes to the racetrack again, and wins the ultimate race. He reclaims everything he had lost and the family lives happily ever after.

Radhika is delineated as a modern minded bold woman. She socializes freely with her friend Sasha and the pair even double-date non-Indian men. On one such date, Radhika finds herself unable to communicate with her date and playfully orders wine, gets drunk and leaves to crash another party where she dances with reckless abandon until her friend Sasha finds her and drags her away. Radhika clearly has no curfew and is not answerable to her father or anyone else as was the case with women characters of earlier times. The discussion that she has with her father is significant. Mr. Banerjee is against the idea of his daughter marrying RV based on RV's social and intellectual standing. He advises Radhika to have an affair with him, amuse herself, and then to find a man who is worthy of her. He admits to having done the same before he married her mother. Radhika is indignant about his suggestion and indefatigably informs him that she will be getting married the following morning, whether or not he elects to attend the wedding. This scene contradicts two renowned conventions familiar to Bollywood films. Firstly, the manner in which Radhika declares her wedding plans and secondly, the shift towards the "no-frills" wedding. Unlike fathers in older films, Mr. Banerjee appears to have no authority over his daughter's life and silently fades into the background.

Radhika is married to RV in a moving car, dressed in a white wedding gown that is a Western bridal dress with only the priest and their friend Harry in the back seat. There is no formal ceremony, or traditional Indian prayers. After the wedding, RV takes Radhika directly to their new home which he has purchased for them. Radhika's father's advice must be noted because it is extraordinarily unusual for a father to advise his daughter so candidly to have an affair particularly in a Bollywood film. It is Radhika's reaction that is commendable, because this young woman although having the freedom to live her own life without the usual restrictions and frills of Indian culture, rejects her father's suggestion and opts to live her life

with integrity, having chosen the man with whom she wants to spend the rest of her life.

It is also remarkable to note that Radhika is cognizant of the flaws of the hero. He is a spendthrift, has no concept of how to manage money, is uneducated and lives for the moment. Despite having identified his weaknesses, she is prepared to love him and live with him. An accident and two children later, the couple face financial problems and are forced to move into a poor neighbourhood. There opens the real struggle. Since neither of them have a degree, they both struggle to find jobs. They decide that their children should not have to change schools and while RV battles with the fear of not being able to race again, Radhika actively goes out and finds odd jobs playing the piano for low remuneration. When Harry reappears in their life with a taxi license as a means of earning some extra money for survival, Radhika is grateful, but RV takes it as a personal insult and refuses to accept any "hand-outs". Radhika is depicted as a practical, hands-on mother and supporting wife even in the face of trials and tribulations.

A change in women's clothing is often used to mark a shift in status, for example from being single to a married state. With this change in clothing there is a perceived shift in the responsibilities of the woman too. For instance, the good married woman will take over responsibilities of the household, which include cleaning, cooking, caring for children. At no point in the narrative of *Ta Ra Rum Pum* is Radhika depicted as making this transition. Yet, when faced with adversity, her character adopts the traditional role of motherhood, even though her dress is still contemporary and she continues to play the piano to assist in the financial responsibility of maintaining the household. This film reflects the creation of a new identity for the woman character. Radhika is portrayed as a woman who has the ability to be both a maternal figure and a sexual being on her own terms. Once again the Western or Indian binary is interrogated and the construction of Radhika's character depicts a shift in which being good wife and mother forms a part of her as an individual and does not reduce her status to one of subservience or as mere appendage to man.

Radhika is presented as being stronger and more resilient than her husband. This depiction challenges gender stereotypes that claim the man to be the stronger individual in a relationship. When her father hands her a cheque for $50 000, she boldly tears it up and claims that they do not need his fortunes to survive since he did not consider RV worthy of her. She defends her man as being the best husband, father and race car driver and walks away from him. This is a memorable moment in the film as it not only establishes Radhika's character as a woman of integrity, but proves that she believes in herself and her decisions in life to the extent that she is willing to risk losing everything for her convictions. Ironically, it is RV who is upset with Radhika's obstinacy and demands to know how she could just turn away from the money that they so desperately need. However, Radhika is depicted as an optimistic woman who does not falter in her belief that she has made the right decision in life. She is depicted as a pillar of strength for her husband, a friend and mother to her children and at the same time, nurtures her love for music by playing whenever she has an opportunity, albeit be it un-glorified.

While there is a play on voyeurism in the beginning of the film when Radhika is still single, after marriage and two children the focus is taken away from Radhika as a sex symbol and focused on her as an equal partner and most of the time, as a more rational and practical person than her husband. In the second half of the film, her dress is more practical instead of revealing and she does not let her children see her vulnerable side, instead she entertains them

so that they are unaware of the family's true state of affairs. The women characters in recent films are portrayed as being actively involved in all aspects of their children's lives, so when Radhika realizes that Champ has swallowed a piece of glass, she rushes to the hospital with him and is fully aware of the problems as well as the solutions. When there are financial problems, she goes out and makes an effort to earn money for their sustenance.

The women characters in films of the new millennium are being increasingly portrayed to be fully self-actualised in every aspect of their lives. They make their own decisions and then live with the consequences thereof, whether they are positive or negative. There are fewer restrictions of societies upon them, especially as they live abroad, away from the close societies that exist in India. As a result, these non-resident Indians do not have to answer to family or society as their existence is not defined by traditional ideologies nor are they restrained by cultural practices. Therefore, these women become a part of a huge melting pot where they are forced to mould out their own identities and ideals. Radhika's father is concerned about his daughter finding a man who is of the same social standing as the circles that he moves around in, however, it is not often that a father of an Indian woman advises her to have an affair. Of course, with the double standards that apply to different genders, the males in the family are allowed to have as many affairs as they choose, not only before marriage, but if they do so after marriage, it is considered a norm.

If we analyze Amby and Radhika of these movies it is palpable that a great transformation occurred to their appearance as well as mental makeup. Radhika is constructed to have a mind of her own as she rejects her father's suggestion and his money, even when she is living in dire straits. Being career-orientated does not detract her from her motherly instincts and she is able to be the primary care-giver to her children. More important is the truth that she enjoys being a mother and attends to all her children's needs while still being an equal partner in her relationship with her husband. Having tended to her own needs for fulfillment and self-actualization when she was a carefree single woman, in other words she dated, attended college, socialized, etc when she decides to marry, she takes on all the responsibilities of this commitment, and then her priorities change to being a supportive wife, a loving mother and a woman who wants to fulfill her ambition of becoming a musician. Unlike films of before, at no point is Radhika seen cooking or making the traditional roti and waiting anxiously for her husband to come home from work. The climate of Indian couples living abroad has changed, and women are constructed to be living their own lives, tending to their own needs and making decisions about their lives based on their own expectations of relationships and goals.

It is of relevance at this stage to take a closer look at the relationship of Radhika with her father as opposed to the relationship of Amby from *Salaam Namaste.* Both are women from the films of the new millennium. Yet, while Radhika is able to confront her father and bluntly declare her marriage plans, Amby runs away and is cut-off from the family. The issues of parental control that are raised in both films are still being negotiated with audiences. While *Salaam Namaste* blends in to the older tradition and norm of being ostracized if stepping away from the norms, *Ta Ra Rum Pum* takes a different stance. Despite being against his daughter Radhika's marriage, Mr. Bannerjee offers his daughter financial aid when he becomes aware that she is in need of assistance. Her reaction is notable in relation to the way in which her character is depicted to be able to stand up to her father.

There is a huge shift in the depiction of women characters in relation to patriarchal

societies and ideologies. In films of earlier times, daughters were depicted to live according to the rules set down by their fathers and thereafter by their husbands. Amby expresses her feelings of loss at being detached from her family and her tone and body language affirm the feelings of dejection that she feels. Yet, despite the loss of family, she does not conform to her family's ideals, but leaves in order to carve her own destiny. When Radhika's father advises her to have an affair, she breaks away from him and at no point in the film is she portrayed as regretting her decision. She is able to fulfil her life without feelings of remorse unlike Amby.

Both women, when presented with life crisis do not turn to their parents for support. Radhika places her faith in her husband even when he loses everything and leaves the family in dire straits. Amby, when deserted by Nick when he discovers that she is pregnant, continues battling through her daily life without ever even considering asking her parents for assistance. This raises questions about the bonds of kinship and familial alienation. It seems as if films that deal with diasporic women depict them as independent not only in their thought processes, but portray them as being too proud to turn to their kin even when they are in dire straits. This is in contrast with the patriarchal societies and the strong familial bonds that were depicted in films of earlier times.

The theme of motherhood is also raised in the narratives of both films. Both women display the motherly instinct. Radhika does everything in her power to maintain her children's standard of life, often going hungry herself. In one particular scene, she stuffs her handbag with food so that her children are not deprived of the luxuries that they were used to. Amby begs Nick to have a blood test because she cannot bear the thought of hurting her unborn baby. These traits of motherly instincts have been constant in the representation of women over the centuries. Radhika does not ever consider asking her father money even when Champ is critically ill. Surely, if he could hand her a cheque for fifty thousand dollars, he could very well have funded the operation of his grandson, but there is possibly the issue of pride involved. She elects to place all her faith in her husband winning the race, even though there is the possibility that her son might lose his life in the process. In this particular case, it seems as if the woman character that stands up to parental authority, and thereby breaks away from the social constraints of traditional societies, places her own ego above the survival of her offspring.

Film-makers are increasingly depicting women characters in roles that promote gender equality. While Rhadhika is depicted as a character that stands up to parental authority, she is also depicted as a woman with the power to make a decision. It seems as if film-makers, in striving to promote gender equality through the depiction of women characters are simultaneously exposing the negative aspects of power. Control is associated with power and as a result, the ego plays an important role in decision-making, as is apparent when Radhika's chooses to place her faith in her husband instead of her father. While it can be argued that Radhika places her own ego above the survival of her offspring, it can also be argued that she fervently believes in her husband. In contrast to the depiction of women characters of earlier times, Radhika is not a victim of a patriarchal society. Instead, she elects to place her faith in her husband willingly. This in itself is a withdrawal from the depiction of women characters in earlier films in relation to the gender ideologies that were imposed upon them.

Films of the new millennium stress equality for women and when Amby of *Salaam Namaste* suspects Nick of having slept with another woman even though he is not her lawful husband, she is outraged and walks out on him. This is clearly a huge step for the woman

character of today who is portrayed to expect the same dignity and respect that she is willing to bestow upon her man. There is no room for self-pity or blame and the women characters in the films of the new millennium are upfront about their standards and expectations in relationships. The heroines of these two movies belong to the tradition of powerful liberal minded new women who tries to establish a voice and space of their own. Amby and Radhika, claiming equal power with their husbands can be grouped as the egalitarian new women. They lead a liberalized life free from inhibitions and repressions. As modern women they have the courage to violate even the taboo of pre marital sex and to surmount all the setbacks even better than their male counterparts.

References

Chaudhury,M. *Feminism in India.* London: Zed Books, 2005.

Ganti, T. *Bollywood: A Guide to Popular Hindi Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 2004

Ghadially, R. *Women in Indian Society: A Reader*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998

Somaaya, B. *Cinema: Images and Issues*. New Delhi: Rupa and Co, 2004

Jouhar. K.

The Poetics of Pain: Reading *Achanurangatha Veedu* in the Light of Trauma Theory

Abstract

The relationship between rape and trauma was first theorized by Freud. Studies in this regard were later taken up by sociologists, psychologists and intellectuals from many other important disciplines. "Trauma" may be defined as physical or psychological wound to the body and mind caused by an external source. Psychic trauma occurs when a sudden, unexpected, overwhelming, intense emotional blow or series of emotional blows assault the person from outside. (Terr 8).

The psychological trauma experienced by a rape victim is termed as "Rape Trauma Syndrome" by psychiatrist Ann Wolbert Burgess and sociologist Lynda Lytle Holmstrom in 1974. RTS is a cluster of physical and emotional responses commonly seen in most of the rape victims. According to Wolber, rape may create disruptions to normal physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal behavior of the rape victim. The physical trauma might be often exacerbated by the emotional trauma caused by ostracisation and marginalisation by the society. Such an emotional assault might be equally painful and the wound it inflicts will be deeper.

This paper is an attempt to study the representation of the pain suffered by the rape victim as a result of physical assault by the rapists and emotional assault by the society in the film Achanurangatha Veedu.. The film is inspired by many gang rape cases in Kerala which garnered much public attention. The film won critical acclaim for its political position. The film takes the media and public to task for its intruding to the private space of the victim so as to satisfy voyeuristic impulses.

Objectives of the Study

1. *To read the movie against the backdrop of trauma theory so as to shed light on the link between violence and trauma.*
2. *To analyze the psychological and physical trauma of the rape victim in the light of theories and studies on "Rape Trauma Syndrome".*
3. *To explore the possibilities of using film as a tool to fight social evil.*

Methodology

The theoretical framework of the study is a site of intersecting discourses. The researcher intends to use trauma theory, psychoanalytical theory and other relevant theories so as to explore the modalities of the representation of the quintessence of violence in the film. The present study is analytical in nature.

Jouhar. K. is Assistant professor in English, Sullamussalam science College, Areacode.

Scope of the Study

Debates on rape have garnered much public attention recently. Many films dealing with rape stories have been released. Many of them fail to do justice to the victims' point of view since they make compromises in the name of commercial interest. A critical study of mass media's portrayal with special focus on the representation of the victim's point of view is the need of the hour.

Key Words : Trauma, RTS, Cathy Caruth, Achanurangatha Veedu

Debates on rape have garnered much public attention recently. Many films dealing with rape stories have been released. Many of them fail to do justice to the victims' point of view since they make compromises in the name of commercial interest. In this paper, I make an attempt to read the Malayalam film *Achanurangatha Veedu* in the light of trauma theory. I also make an attempt to analyze the filmic portrayal of the psychological and physical trauma of the rape victim in the light of theories and studies on "Rape Trauma Syndrome".

Trauma theory is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of trauma. Trauma theory resulted in a major attitudinal shift in attitude towards the victims of trauma. Rather than viewing them as sick or fallen, they are now considered to be injured in need of love and care. The canonical texts in trauma theory *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* by Cathy Caruth, and *The Juridical Unconscious : Trial and Trauma in the Twentieth Century* by Shoshana Felman serve as the theoretical backdrop of my analysis.

The relationship between rape and trauma was first theorized by Freud. Studies in this regard were later taken up by sociologists, psychologists and intellectuals from many other important disciplines. "Trauma" may be defined as physical or psychological wound to the body and mind caused by an external source. Psychic trauma "occurs when a sudden, unexpected, overwhelming, intense emotional blow or series of emotional blows assault the person from outside" (Terr 8).

The psychological trauma experienced by a rape victim is termed as "Rape Trauma Syndrome" by psychiatrist Ann Wolbert Burgess and sociologist Lynda Lytle Holmstrom in 1974. RTS is a term used in psychology to refer to the psychic imbalances in the victim. According to Wolber, rape may create disruptions to normal physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal behaveor of the rape victim (1). The physical trauma might be often exacerbated by the emotional trauma caused by ostracisation and marginalisation by the society. Such an emotional assault might be equally painful and the wound it inflicts will be deeper.

The film *Achanurangatha Veedu* is inspired by many gang rape cases in Kerala which garnered much public attention. The film won critical acclaim for its political position. The film takes the media and public to task for intruding to the private space of the victim so as to satisfy voyeuristic impulses of the public.

The film centres round the life of Samuel after the abduction of his youngest daughter Lisamma, by a prostitute ring. Lisamma eloped with the son of the owner of a bus because her headmistress asked her to come with her parent. Her lover used her and handed over her to a sex racket. She was sexually exploited by 40 men. Samuel attempts to bring the culprits to book. But, the police- politician-media nexus used this incident to further their own vested interests. The poor, helpless girl was often portrayed in the public sphere as a prostitute. The so called civilized men saw in Lisamma not a victim but a sexual object to be made use of.

The investigation and interrogation by the police, and the court proceedings were harrowing experiences for the victim. The supposed sites of justice became the venue for the reenactment of her trauma over and over again. After the legal procedures, the court did not consider Lisamma's testimony as a credible evidence to inculpate the accused. All the 40 accused were exonerated by the court. Samuel loses his hope in the system and the emotional turbulence takes its toll on his psyche. In a moment of utter desolation verging on neurosis, he poisons himself and his daughters. He fails in this attempt. The film has an ironic climax. The victims are sent to the prison and the victimizers roam free. The film, according to a review in *Sify*, leaves the audience with a lump in their throat.

According to Cathy Caruth, traumatic events simply do not occur in time. They fracture the very experience of time. The event is fully assimilated only belatedly. To be traumatized is to be possessed by an image. In the film, Lisamma ca not even comprehend her pain at the moment of shock. But the traumatic event comes back to haunt her after a brief period of latency. She communicates her trauma through silence and tears. Her screams are indeed a reflection of her inability to verbalize her experience. Since rape victims cannot use words their memory is visceral in nature. So, to thinking about the event leads to a reenactment of traumatic event. Lisamma continues to experience the same pain even after her resettlement in her family because the wound on the psyche cannot be healed easily. Freud in his Story of Tasso talks about traumatic repetition. The final scene in which a pimp approaches to ensnare Lisamma again indeed has many charecteristics of a traumatic repetition.

The symptoms of rape trauma syndrome are clearly visible in her. RTS disturbs physiological, psychological and cognitive domains of an individual. According to Scarse (7) there is no "typical" response amongst rape victims. However, the U.S. Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) asserts that, in most cases, a rape victim's acute stage can be classified as one of three responses: expressed ,controlled or shock/disbelief .In the case of Lisamma, she cannot even think about resuming her studies because trauma has impaired her cognitive domain. Even her sensory impressions are shaped by her inner turmoil. At the psychological level, she experiences a void which is unsettling. Lisamma immediately after her reunion with her family is silent. This silence is disturbing since it is brought about by her inability to verbalise her thoughts. Later, she expresses her shock through cries and shrieks. It might be interpreted as her return to the most primordial form of communication. Neither her silence nor her screams could encapsulate the quintessence of her pain. Other symptoms of RTS like numbness, diminished alertness, disorganised thought, and bewilderment are also clearly visible in Lisamma.

The rape victims often develop many pobias. Lisamma develops agrophobia or fear of going into the society. This fear can be rationalized. The society treated her with callous indifference. She was treated like a commodity. In one scene in the film in which she was brought to the rescue home by the police, people thronged to steal a glimpse of her. The comment by one of the onlookers “So many men have already seen you. Let me also have a look” encapsulate the callousness on the part of the society. Along with traumatic events , the inhuman treatment of the victim also lead to the formation of phobias in the victims. As Felman observed trauma continues to act through present events in ways which elude our understanding.

Western theories on trauma often focus on the individual victim. But, in the Kerala scenario, relatives of the victim are equally traumatized. The film portrays the slow

disintegration of Samuel, Lisamma's father. He tries to be brave, but he is not strong enough to defeat the powerful police and politician nexus. His failure to seek retribution through the court of law takes away the last straw of his hope. He slowly slips into madness. This development of neurotic behavior might be seen as part of his defense mechanism. This splitting of the actual event adds to his pain. He slowly develops the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. He often talks and complains to his diseased wife. The recurrence of such flashbacks is one of the main symptoms of PSTD. Hyper vigilance and occasional outburst of anger are also some of the symptoms.

Probably, the most shocking event in the film is the exoneration of all culprits by the court of law. The inability of the legal system to do justice to trauma victims is first theorized by Felman in her book *The Juridical Unconscious*. She makes a bold attempt to challenge some of our basic assumptions regarding law and justice. During court procedures, rape victims like Lisamma are forced to re-live the moments of trauma over and over again. According to Felman, law is constitutively unable to accommodate trauma in legal terms. The victim is asked to present the irrationality of violence in rational prose. The victim's failure to talk about an event which she herself has nor properly understood is often construed as an excuse to give the culprits the benefit of doubt. Unlike legal systems, films and literature can communicate trauma. The film is remarkable in this sense. The film expresses solidarity with the victims by successfully capturing the essence of her incommunicable trauma. This film assumes the task of bearing witness.

Towards the end of her book, Caruth argues that trauma might provide the link between cultures. Literature and films connect us with the victims and make us much more receptive and empathetic. It could communicate a truth which elude the grasp of the legal systems . To conclude, the film successfully conveys the quintessence of trauma. It is relevant because it opens our eyes and ears.

References

Achanurangatha Veed. Dir. Lal Jose. Perf. Saleem Kumar. Shirdhisayi Films, 2006. DVD.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. Print.

Felman, Shoshana. *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002. Print.

Rainn. "Who Are the Victims?" *Rainn*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Mar. 2015.

"Rape Trauma Syndrome." *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia, n.d. Web. Apr.-May 2015.

Terr, Lenore. *Too Scared to Cry: Psychic Trauma in Childhood*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990. Print.

Duna Liss Tom

Rhetoric, Metaphor and Performance: An Analysis of Sarah Joseph's *Aathi*

Since the end of the twentieth century, environmental criticism and ecology acquired leading space among the literary and cultural studies arena. When the rapport between plants and living beings to their environment began to change tremendously with the advent of modernisation, this new literary branch, and the 'ecocriticism' got a prominent role. Since the 1960s, the practice of environmental movements has created awareness of the various environmental issues. It is in this context, Lawrence Buell elaborate three models for thinking about the reciprocity between text and environment: as rhetoric, as metaphor and as performance. Rhetoric has been of strong interest for the environmental critics from the start of the ecocritical movement. By rhetoric in the particular context is meant how language being the instrument through which we acquire knowledge about the environment and through which we acquire or change attitudes toward it. In other words it is the "fitting together in a dynamic equilibrium of the human race with all the other things, organic and inorganic that grace the outer layers of the planet earth" (Buell 45). The recently published novel *Aathi/Gift in Green* by one of the eminent Malayali writers and social activist, Sarah Joseph explores the various dimensions of environmental criticism and ecology in its deepest sense.

Gift in Green, originally written in Malayalam is a magical novel about the relationship between the people and the land they inhabit. People flourished in Aathi depending upon the backwaters and the rich source of fish they got from there. The cool, serene island of water bodies and mangroves and then the people themselves disseminated with the advent of modernity that Kumaran, one of the central characters introduced in *Aathi*. Later, *Aathi* becomes a sewage dump. Sarah Joseph has modelled the land of Aathi on an island named Valanthakkadu in Ernakulam district of Kerala, which is inhabited by about fifty families. According to her, it is a place free of burglary and it is an area teaches you many of the life principles. She recollects her experience about the island stating that it is a story about fifty families that subsists on fishing, picking mussels and farming pokkali rice. They earn as much as three hundred rupees a day from picking mussels. When she asked whether they could earn more they replied "why should we?"- they had no need to gather more. The villagers live in perfect harmony with nature so that they would not even disturb any single living being.

The people of Aathi lived the water-life, drawing sustenance from the water and the fields. The water life meant that their daily immediate needs were met from the earth and water. They could collect enough food to feed the whole family just by working till noon every day. The mangroves that surrounded the land of Aathi hold plenty of fish which the people used to catch with their bare hands. During high tide, these fish and prawns were carried across to the rice fields, from where the people caught them. They also knew the secret of growing rice in salty waters. In Aathi, people from the ancient times lived the water life, harvesting only what they need from nature. The key feature of water life in Aathi is that people think only

Duna Liss Tom is Research Scholar in English, Kannur University, Thalassery Campus, Palayad

about meeting their daily needs without exploiting the nature.

The people of Aathi tilled the land and harvested paddy; "...the rice they ate was of excellent quality. Everyone cultivated pumpkin, white gourd, spinach and beans for their own use" (Joseph 21). Besides they reared cattle and poultry as well. They perceive their land and the water as bequeathed by their ancestors to assuage their hunger. Aathi bestowed all the seamless circumstances for its people, where they lived the water life. The story telling evenings and the purity of the water around them combined richness to their life until the coming of Kumaran. He begets modernisation, corruption, avarice and pollution leading to the destruction of Aathi. The water life becomes supplanted by earthwork such as land filling and bridge building which led to the devastation of nature itself. The land of Aathi that believed in drawing only sustenance from nature is corrupted by Kumaran and his group of men.

Aathi is about water and by extension about nature. "Innumerable canals, water drains, ponds, water springs, wells, paddy fields brimming with water, and slushy marshes crisscrossed the place — the network of Aathi's nerves" (33-34). The conceptual, philosophical, organic, historical significance of water is mentioned in this particular book. The Bible, too, says in the beginning there was darkness over depth. The first of the seven nights of storey telling starts with the biblical story of Hagar who was abandoned by her husband in the desert. The story gives an account of Hagar's struggle for water. "Wracked with thirst, her son began to scream and howl" (11). Against the creeping hopelessness and blazing son, she prays to God for water. Later when a mysterious bird flails the ground with its wings regardless of its blood speckle wings, Hagar stood transfixed to see water squirting from the earth like the eyes of a pierced coconut. It is Noor Muhammad, the story teller who commences the recitation of the water story in Aathi. When the story of Hagar provides a detailed description of the serenity and purity of water in the religious context, the next chapter is an explanation about Kumaran who has discarded the water-life. Kumaran despised water. He argues "...the thing had no form or shape....what is this water you're talking about? Does it have any identity? Will it ever be something in itself? The thought of it makes me sick" (21). For Kumaran's story about water, Kunjimathu states "water knows everything and forgets nothing" (21). For Markose, "It is water that composes all poems: the most enchanting as well as the most perilous" (27). Divya, Siddhu's and Dinakaran's sister provides a different version of the water-life. She narrates the story of the supply of the pipe water in Mumbai where she lives — "Apparently, people had had their hands broken in fracas over water. For every pot of water available, twenty anxious aspirants waited in the queue" (30). The little Kayal also found water as her healer. To "know the water" is important, Gitanjali says. Noor Muhammad finds water as the source for all stories. He declares "... all stories irrespective of their location, exist in the womb of water. There is water inside and outside stories of every kind. Stories enfold the hope for water where there is no water."(148) Shailaja was searching for a mirror in the heart of the water to settle her suspicions and misgivings. But she finds "only a dark stretch of water" (74). The metaphors used by Sarah Joseph stretch like a chain. Though the reiterating metaphor is water, it is escorted by darkness as its binary pair.

When the purity and serenity of the water life was destroyed by Kumaran, darkness started brooding over Aathi, the metaphorical darkness to which the author resort is the destruction of Aathi itself. Chandramohan's comment explains this. He says "Water is our

only source of livelihood. If we have survived, it is because of Chakkam Kandam Kayal....Today everyone hesitates even to touch what slimes in place of that water. It is doubtful if there are any fish. Even if there are, who will eat them?" (95). Darkness is carried to the serene land by Kumaran who represents the man alienated from nature and driven by selfishness and greed to destroy the sustenance base of Aathi. He buys the property of Ganesha Subramaniyam that consisted of three hundred acres of land, forests and backwaters. Later he buys the whole of Aathi in the name of binamidars by forging documents and bribing the officials. He filled the backwaters with earth and with waste from the city. This dumping of waste from the city breeds diseases and death in Aathi but Kumaran is praised by the media for his self-sacrifice. He advocates the youth to renounce traditional modes of farming and to take up jobs in the city and to sell their lands to him. He burns down the green bangle, the forest that surrounded the island of Aathi. He is a global businessman and farmer meant on placing Aathi on the world map but his plans of modernisation and development lead to environmental degradation and the destruction of life bases in Aathi. With his coming, the modes of living such as the water life and farming are replaced by construction of buildings resulting in pollution, creation of toxic waste and destruction of natural habitat.

All the environmental problems discussed by the author adjoined to the shadowy side of Aathi. Sarah Joseph portrays the horrors of environmental pollution and its effects on children in the novel. The children of Aathi are stricken by typhoid resulting in the death of nineteen children. When it is understood that it is the toxic waste from the city that is killing the children, the people protest against the waste dumping. However when confronted, Kumaran pays compensation to the families of the dead children and he concerned nothing about the loss of lives in Aathi or about the environmental annihilation in the land.

The mothers suffer when their youngsters are lured into selling their land and moving into flats in the city. Their lives of sharing and affection, such as that of Ayyakutti and Kunjikali who shared their sugar, salt, earrings etc lost their communal life. The elder sons even argued with their mothers that they "are going to a virtual paradise" (279). However Kunjikali and their son feel isolated in their new home on the twentieth floor of a huge building. She comes back to Aathi to live her life of water.

Many of the characters in the novel *Gift in Green* show a natural awareness and protectiveness towards nature. This feeling of oneness with nature is not just shallow environmentalism that insists on protecting nature for the sake of human beings but a deep understanding of oneness towards all the living and non living entities in their immediate environment. Women such as Kunjimathu and Shailaja protest vehemently against the destruction of the traditional ways of life, when Kumaran brings his army of people. They were ready to sacrifice their life for the sake of Aathi.

The novel resonate environmentalism because of the portrayal of present day social issues in Kerala such as water contamination, lack of proper waste disposal systems, dumping of biomedical waste in rivers an water bodies, the use of endosulfan to ensure profit in farming, the problems of land filling, destruction of marshes, disposal of plastic and biomedical waste and so on. In the novel, Chakkam Kandam is declared as a place unfit to live by Shailaja who is married to Chandramohan of Chakkam Kandam but returns to Aathi after the wedding night because of the stench that emanates from the place. Before returning home, her mother –in-law recounts that Chakkam Kandam was as lovely as Aathi when she

was a young bride coming to her husband's home but later became a sinking waste yard for the lodges nearby. She weaves into the novel a report of the pollution control board that describes how the toilets in many of the lodges in the area have no septic tank and how the excrement falls into a large canal called Valiathodu and reaches the Chakkam Kandam Kayal. The pilgrims who come to Guruvayoor stay in these lodges with adequate facilities and human excrement is dumped on the roadside or in the stagnant waters of the canals.

Later Shailaja witness the destruction of Aathi as well. In the novel, another kind of waste that raises serious health concerns is biomedical waste that is dumped into the immediate environment from hospitals across Kerala. The hospitals in the state have no system for the proper disposal of the biomedical waste. Shailaja who works as a sweeper in a hospital is curious to know about the waste that she dumps daily into a large toilet bowl inside the hospital. One day she climbed the steps of the compound wall that separated the hospital from the lake where the biomedical wastes are dumped. She witnessed the lake carrying "...placentas and murdered foetuses...severed limbs, swabs oozing with pus, blood clots, decomposed phlegm, chemical agents, plastic bottles and bags, garbage." (74)

The consequences of using endosulfan in prawn farming are also illustrated in the novel. The greed of the prawn farmers makes them poison the farm after the harvest so that all the prawns left in the field die and float to the surface. This makes the fish unsafe for consumption and the fields unfit for farming. Along with the use of metaphors used in the particular novel its plot structure also adds to beauty.

The novel is more sensitive to nature and lyrical in its structure. Author gives a detailed account of the consequences of man's cruelty to nature. She develops her arguments for nature and became 'ecospeak' who balances the polemical with the poetic. In this multifaceted book author exist as an advocate for nature and who like Hagar, insists on a water covenant.

The structure of Gift in Green is unconventional in the canon of Malayalam fiction. Those who are familiar with the linear narrative style in the Malayalam tradition may get amazed with the pattern of narration in this novel. The translator explains the plot structure by saying that the movement of the plot is not like a train along the straight tracks, stopping only at designated stations, instead it is more often like a bus that changes its direction so often and complete its journey with an unwavering eye on the destination. Like a crossword puzzle, the plot take different stories and narrative strategy and ultimately combines and weave the threads together. The author criss-crosses time zones, leaves the narrative threads in suspended animation, toggles between stories gleaned from diverse sources. By employing the resources of a language, relying especially on images, metaphors and symbols, author has beautifully balanced the narrative rope between art and activism. Gift in Green is above all a book of stories and story-tellers. These stories have come down to us from an assortment of sources such as the Bible, the holy Quran, Zen and Sufi traditions, the Puranas, folk narratives, historical events and those attributed to the life of St. Francis of Assissi. These stories have been recreated and reinterpreted within the alchemy of Aathi

The story is structured in a double fold manner. Along with the story of the life and struggles of Aathi, the plot is interrupted by the periodic ceremony of storytelling. The stories narrate are diverse. But all of them reflect profoundly on the plight and destiny of the people of Aathi. Thus Sarah Joseph has succeeded in weaving the threads of environmental protection and literary work together. The practice of protecting the natural environment on

individual, organizational and governmental levels for the benefit of both the natural environment and humans has started by the second half of the twentieth century. It helped in improving the biophysical environment which has been degraded with the pressures of population and technology. Thus the novel's deployment of rhetoric and metaphor effects a commendable performance of launching a fictional resistance to the myriad possibilities of planetary endangerment.

References

Buell, Lawrence. The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. Print.

Dreese, Donelle, N. Ecocriticism: Creating Self and Place in Environmental and American Indian Literatures. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. Print.

Garrard, Greg. Ecocriticism. London: Routledge, 2004. Print

Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals,

Environment. London: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Joseph, Sarah. Gift in Green. Trans. ValsanThampu, New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2011. Print.

Ajayi, Olawale Taju

Contemporary Nigerian Poetry in English: Context and Form

Abstract

The importance of contemporary Nigerian poetry in English does not lie merely in its consideration as a point of historical construct within the conceptual framework of modern Nigerian poetry, rather, it must be construed more significantly vital as a social credo of poetic engagement, set apart, for instance, from the self-reflexive indulgent attitude of the earliest Nigerian poetry of modern era. Consequently, this paper aims at examining and determining through systematic outlay, firstly, if the expressive character of poetry purely must be a verbal act with strictly aesthetic function or, a functional statement of a social act. From that foothold, this paper proceeds to specifically examine by theoretical application, the Nigerian poetic instance in order to establish a possible conceptual framework for the poetry written by contemporary Nigerian poets.

Key words: Poetry, Nigerian, Contemporary, Verbal Act, Social Act

1. Introduction

Language, religion and poetry are children of the same mother – man's expressive needs. The first arises from the need to make human experience meaningful through communication; the second, a result of man's helplessness in the face of overpowering forces of nature which he neither could explain nor profitably predict, and the necessity of subjecting himself to the protection of such superior forces. Thus, Haralambos (1980) asserts that:

> … awed by the power and wonder of nature, early man transformed abstract force into personal agents. Man personified nature. The force of the wind became the spirit of the wind, the power of the sun became the spirit of the sun. (454)

And according to Skelton (1965:37) "he regarded them (language, religion and poetry) as divine and worshiped them." The third among these three children, poetry, is man's attempt and indeed a need , after the initial helpless resignation to the whims of his assumed superior forces, to limit the limitlessness of his world, to enclose the vastness of the universe within comprehensible limits and, ironically, to reach beyond himself and capture the hidden meanings of experience. The earliest of this attempt, it is assumed, manifests in magic. One must point out, however, that there is no suggestion in whatever way that these three phenomena have evolved in the order in which they are discussed here. For instance, if indeed man came into an awesome world, a stranger both to himself and his environment and if indeed language, as we recognize it today is a later communal development, then there must have been a religion before there was language, since the need to come to terms with the awesomeness of the world must have preceded the need to communicate. Therefore,

Ajayi, Olawale Taju, Department of English Faculty of Arts Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria.

according to Dasylva and Jegede (2005):

Language . . . is a cultural production. In order words, poetry subsists in expressed words (spoken or written).

By implication, certain developments become perceivable, such as increased capacity for mental retention of poetry; refreshing poetry as a specialized (verbal) act, as well as sophisticating its many aspects.

It would be seen from the foregoing that although, at the root, poetry is primarily an expressive gesture, yet, in its realization as a verbal category, it became a functional imperative of a social act, deriving from man's attempts at transcending the limitations imposed upon him by his environment and also his desire to overcome his own excesses. This is why Akporobaro (2004) argues that:

> . . . although poetry is universal, the forms and convention within and through which it manifests itself vary from society to society . . . period to period and from culture to culture (359)

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework within which this study is situated is found in the expressive character of poetry both as purely a verbal act with strictly aesthetic function and also as functional statement of a social act.

3. Poetry: A Verbal Act or A Social Act?

The question of function certainly cannot be said to be peculiar to the poetic genre within the literary corpus. Rather, while the problem of determining the essence of literature itself as a functional imperative may appear most manifest in the category, the question is one that is significant to drama as well as to fiction, as it is to poetry. Yet, the question becomes much more fundamentally significant to poetry when it is considered that poetry is not a process of perceptible reality, but a response to it. Because of this, it is not as large a canvas, in terms of space, as the two other genres, in exploring such perceptible realities as will make a possible social existence, expansively spread to capture in minutiae the terms of social experience in a single poetic stroke, for instance.

The second reason might appear less compelling, yet its importance definitely must not be underestimated. For example, it will appear that it is in compensating for its own limitations that poetry seemed to have devised its peculiar process of evocation of sensations and visual effects such that the world presented by a considerably sustained narrative, for instance, can be spread before a reader within a short breath of condensed, yet highly suggestive and evocative poetry – that is of course assuming high degree of imagination and a remarkable level of sensitivity on the part of the reader. The process of evocation is part of the terms of reference in poetic aesthetics. The question – "Poetry: A verbal act or a social act?" appears definitely demanding. Between the alternatives provided in it, there seems to be something finite; the kind of choice which when made excludes the other, yet one is inclined to think that such choice alternative is hardly ever obtainable in poetic engagement.

At this point, it becomes apparent that for any meaningful and gainful achievement of purpose, it is important that certain concepts be directly addressed within a specific

theoretical focus. For instance, for a precise projection of the scope of analysis, it should be deemed necessary that the terms – "social act" and "verbal act" be located within the theoretical context of this paper. The term "verbal act" assumes a dimension far beyond its literal domain. Intrinsically, the word "verbal" portrays and indeed intones a certain cult of expressive attitudes which in fact forms the basis of its use in the given context. More in the main, however, by a verbal act, the poetic impulse becomes interpreted as a structure of codes.

As a "social act", on the other hand, poetry becomes an interpretation of life. Within the matrix of social understanding of poetry, therefore, such external factors as cultural, economic and political considerations which define man as a social being are taken as part of the total scheme of social existence. As a social act, poetry becomes not merely an imitation of life, but also a redeeming act, an instance of man's own recognition of his shortcomings. While the question of poetic function in literary theory is generally traced to Plato, poetry, certainly, cannot be assumed to have possibly existed in a functional vacuum. Percy B. Shelley in his essay, "A Defence of Poetry" affirms that ". . .poetry is connate with the origin of man . . ." (Kermode et al [Eds] 1973:746); and at its birth, poetry was evidently an expressive imperative, a verbal representation of experience.

However, with the development of what should be regarded as the totality of human culture, poetry assumed immense social significance, manifesting in its relationship with dance, songs etc. As a urge toward expression, therefore, poetry can be regarded, in its most simplistic sense, as a verbal act. Though it may be argued that poetry, is itself part of that complex human awareness that is experience, but this may not be so. This is because the poetic – that which is expressed – is a product of experience and as such, cannot be part of that process. More rigorously, from Plato to the extremely experimentalist modernist sensibility, the argument has been as varied as the base-ideologies that could be said to have informed them. There seems, however, to be two apparently discernible extreme attitudes which correspond to the two aspects earlier established as the character of poetry: that poetry is a mode of expression and that it is also that which is expressed. The one attitude sees poetry as a formal entity, a verbal gesture defined as a structure of codes, and the other, as a social category which, like other social elements, must address society and in fact function for definite social ends.. The second attitude is indeed mostly manifest in the Marxist literary orientation.

The utilitarian perspective to poetic function in contemporary literary ideology perhaps finds its loudest expression in Marxism. Critically, therefore, any choice between poetry as verbal act or social act appears a mere reductive, separatist engagement, sheer artistic pretence and indeed illusory. This is because there is something inclusive in the two attitudes, which defines the true term of poetic function.

The literary terms of "form" and "content" must necessarily be correlatives respectively to our concept of "verbal act" and "social act". This is explained by the fact that as a verbal act, poetry being an act of interpretation which structures the poetic impulse as codified expressions of an inner activity, the "how?" question in the critical process becomes the point of emphasis; and a s a social act, poetry being indeed a reflection upon society, the critical question "what?" becomes the basis for evaluation.

Now, if "form" is how "content" is said, their relationship cannot be said to be exclusive,

because in the idea of content is included the idea of form and vice versa. Indeed, Cairns Craig (1982:10) confirms that "it is one of the canons of modern criticism that there can be no divorce between form and content" although he is quick to add that "this is rarely adhered to with any rigour". The implication is simply that the "what?" question which cannot be regarded as the basis of a social act necessarily includes the "how" in a verbal act. Even the Russian Formalists in all their extreme pronouncements still conceded generally to art and indeed poetry its "great social function" (Wellek, 1982:129). The major thrust of these, according to Rene Wellek was posed against the didactic nature of Russian ideological tradition of criticism.

4. The Nigerian Experience

Historical consciousness lends itself up too easily as an instrument in delimiting the rather tenuous borders of the Nigerian poetic space. Very easily, it can be argued that there is hardly possible such delimitation in a complete sense of historical consideration. Much as it lends itself easily to hand however, the historical consciousness is, in this specific context, merely a way of looking into the whole gamut of the Nigerian poetic instance to make statements of times and ends, or in the alternative, the shades and temper of the poetic engagement at given periods on the historical draw-line. And the purpose of the attempt here is simple: to determine the historical scope of the term "contemporary".

Emevwo Biakolo's attempt to situate modern Nigerian poetry based upon what appear mainly the different shades of temperamental disposition which indeed inform its categorization into four periods invariably becomes significant to this aspect of this paper. In his "Explorations in New Nigerian Poetry", Biakolo disregards the usual convenient historical classification of Nigerian literature generally into the old and the new generations for the sole reason that it is "rather nebulous" (The Guardian, January 20, 1990:12). He there from proceeds to argue that indeed, with equal justification, it is possible to categorize modern Nigerian poetry into what he calls "four putative periods".

The first of the periods embraces the pioneer poets whose significance is not only historical but also significant in terms of mobilizing for mass participation in the then socio-political scenario. It is with the poets of the independence period – the second period, that the question of sensibility as it moulds the poetic impulse actually began assuming a definite shape in the history of Nigerian poetry. The third period is characterized by the effects of the pain and ravages of the civil war upon the creative consciousness of the poets. It is in the last of the periods that we find what is generally referred to – as indeed Biakolo himself does in his article – as recent Nigerian poetry.

In the same vein, Dasylva and Jegede (2005:133) see the poetry in this category as "present or current" with a hybrid quality of combining "both the indigenous and foreign techniques" with one complementing the other. They argue further that within the contemporary category could be found two generations of poets – the first representing the pioneers which include Clark, Okara, Soyinka and Okigbo, the most successful I suppose, who started the "phase of imitativeness"; the second representing the younger poets whose poetic fervour tends towards what Fashina (1997:124) calls an "attempt at reasserting African identity . . ." We must, however, be cautioned by the assertion of Biakolo that in this category:

. . .only a couple of works possess sufficient sensitivity and/or the discipline of thought and emotion, to belong to the true engage tradition. (160)

In this group of younger poets are Harry Garuba, Emman Usman Shehu, Esiaba Irobi, Odia Ofeimum, Sesan Ajayi, Tanure Ojaide and Niyi Osundare, with Osundare regarded as the link between these two generations. It is, therefore, with the second generation of contemporary Nigerian poets that this article shall concern itself, focusing on Harry Garuba, Niyi Osundare, Emman Usman Shehu, Esiaba Irobi and Tanure Ojaide.

However, relying absolutely on this overt categorization of the poetic enterprise into what Garuba (2005) calls "over-categorical demarcations" along generations could be misleading for our purpose. According to Harry Garuba:

> the term 'generation' is still an ambiguous, unstable one because in some instances it appears to refer to age and in others to the time of first appearance of the poet in the public domain. The ambiguity heightens when writers said to belong to one generation are still active and producing work two or three generations after the one to which they are said to belong. (52)

This classification is significant in order to properly situate the trans-textual and cross-generational temperament of the poets considering that there has been no significant change in the social space within which they operate. The challenges they had to contend with from the outset are still the same challenges contemporary Nigerian poets are contending with presently. That is why Tsaaior (2011) contends that:

> [A]gainst this important backdrop, it is safe to state that by the very nature of their vocation, writers inscribe their distinct individualities and existential experiences within the fabrics of their writings as veritable members of their societies by intervening in the tapestry of societal events in the ceaseless flow of its currents, interpreting its moods and temperaments, defining its present, and divining its future of (im)possibilities.(99)

5. Contemporary Nigerian Poetry in English: The Content

The lyric is the most visible form by which contemporary Nigerian poetry expresses itself, because the poetic impulse essentially responds to and expresses a social rupture of which is a pretentiously objective a further extension of this sense in which it is also a challenge of the society. What this means is that there is an attempt in contemporary Nigerian poetry at objectifying the primarily subjective in the lyric in the sense that the lyric poem is not just a quarrel with the self but is indeed a statement of the crises in the society. This pattern is a constant feature of all the contemporary Nigerian poets. Indeed, Harry Garuba, a most sensitive poet of this period, strongly illustrates the point just identified about the lyric in the context of contemporary Nigerian poetry in his collection *Shadow and Dream* (1982) where the intensity of the persona's expression bears the wounded social memory of a larger communal consciousness represented in the "scars". In fact, this attitude to the lyric form is confirmed in "Estrangement: Kano 78" when the persona says that:

. . .surely the poet is estranged who cannot share his people's fount of being (9)

> This image of its wounded memory constantly reminds one, in the words of Biakolo, of the psychological and spiritual wounds which our history of social and political malaise and injustice inflicts on the sensitive individual.
>
> (*The Guardian*, January 20, 1990:12)

It is clear thus, that the contemporary Nigerian poet in his task of recreating and reformulating decadent social values and ethos merely played a role as an instrument of social engineering. Perhaps, this is why Nesther Alu (2000) argues that:

> Although equally experimental, these poets tend to avoid experimentation with Western forms, preferring oral African forms with a renewed sense of commitment (201)

Again, as an instance of the social act, contemporary Nigerian poetry exhibits another pattern of characterization, which is closely linked with the Marxist influence upon an ideology which speaks for the masses, the wretched of the society of whom Emman Usman Shehu (1988) must have said:

> You have given so much of your soil in return for so little (17)

Against the backdrop of this preference for the utilitarian which has resulted in an emphasis upon the social act by contemporary Nigerian poetry, it is interesting to note that there is still a sense in which one can situate the theoretical position earlier made within the society. Specifically, one identifies the poetry of Harry Garuba, Esiaba Irobi, Niyi Osundare, Usman Shehu and Tanure Ojaide. These five poets have been singled out because of their definite social vision, though they cannot be said to be the only illustrations of this position. For these poets, it would seem that their stylistic choices and deliberate craftsmanship are in fact the defining factor of their social visions. In a manner which suggests a conscious attempt at maintaining poetic balance, Osundare, in *Moonsongs* (1988) focuses his sociological binoculars on the astrological element "the moon" which he imbues with the qualities of evil and good. The moon, here, thus highlights the class contrast between Ikoyi and Ajegunle. In Ajegunle:

> The moon is a jungle,
> said like a forgotten beard
> with tensioned climbers
> . . . and nights are one long prowl
> of swindled leopards

whereas in Ikoyi:

> the moon here is a laundered lawn
> its grass the softness of infant fluff;
> silence grazes like joyous lamb . . .

Little wonder then that Dasylva and Jegede (2005) see Osundare's poetic art as "an extensive polemic art"(159)

Esiaba Irobi's poetry is crafted with the same socio-polemic fervour. In *Cotyledons* (1988), Irobi, the youngest of these five poets, indeed shows a keen aesthetic awareness in spite of the depth and largeness of his social vision as it is obvious that he moves consciously

through landscapes of poetic techniques which range from the narrative perspective of lyrical patterning to outright dramatic evocation. In "Rains", which is meant to be "the planting season . . . of swinging mattocks" , Irobi speaks of some other kind of bizarre farming in which:

> we are planting back
> into the entrails of the earth
> all the brilliant brains
> God sculpted from this earth . . .
> the planting season of spades
> and coffins, when the earth is red
> like something soiled by blood (47)

The choice of images and other evocative elements of aesthetic consideration by Irobi and those earlier mentioned is directly connected with the realization of their social experience and actually serve to punctuate the psychic involvement of the poets, as victims of social rupture.

6. The Context of Text

The context of the Nigerian poetic text has essentially effected a new sensibility and indeed conditioned a new awareness that determines composition. This point, again, really is not new especially when it is considered that literature generally derives its material from society and specifically, from human experience, because it is itself the vision of man, and as such, cannot divorce itself from the divergent forms of life. In considering poetry as a verbal alternative to experience, the Nigerian situation is peculiarly illustrative as it is indeed, the whole of Africa. This is because even in the twenty-first century, literacy is still largely a new experience, thus, the prevalence of reliance on oral forms. Therefore, one of the bases for a justifiable exploration as verbal act of modern Nigerian poetry in English taken as a whole even, is in the influence of the oral poetic forms, and that is in spite of the admission by Osundare (1981) that:

> Writing is a vital means of
> domesticating man's barbarity
> into civilized creativity . . .

In a very rigorous sense, among the contemporary Nigerian poets, Niyi Osundare appears to be the one who has developed a peculiar medium of poetic expression from the materials of the oral forms available to him in traditional poetry. In fact, we can say of him that his collection, *The Eye of the Earth* 1986, arguably, remains to date the most enduring illustration of this observation, among his works. Osundare clearly, it will seem, has come to recognize the significance of the verbal structures in oral form, and indeed has brought this to bear immensely on his poetry. As in the oral tradition to which an important character is the presence of an audience which not merely listens but is in fact part of the poetic moment and also part of the construction of the poetic experience, Osundare's poems often anticipate an audience for which it adequately make provisions through the deployment of rich dramatic effects. In *The Eye of the Earth*, it is the formal properties of the praise poetry which have provided the pattern of structure. He, therefore, "uses rara,oriki and //a/a rhythmic patterns" (Jegede, 2003:157). This is found in almost all the poems in this collection. A graphic picture

of the earth is presented in "Earth", through "metaphors and extended praise names":

Temporary basement
and lasting roof
first clayey coyness
and last alluvial joy breakfast . . .

In his deployment of sound and musical resources as seen in *Moonsongs* where a poem takes even rhythmical pattern from "a persistent sound of pestle in mortar" (Osundare, 1988:29) as well as in *The Eye of the Earth* where the use of drums and flute all combine to accentuate the dramatic effects of the poems in the truly oral sense, one continually feels a sense of presence. Harry Garuba also manifests this trait in his collection *Shadow and Dream* in his use of the four folk figures – "Cock", "Lion", "Snake" and "Tortoise" as poetic symbols.

Tanure Ojaide is yet another poet whose aesthetic impulse commands great intellectual attention. Olafioye (2000) describes him as:

. . . a product of pastoral and endemic rurailty. . .
where he imbibes the content and depth
of cultural philosophies, traditions and other ways of life (46).

This is true of Ojaide because cultural properties such as festivals, Urhobo folklore, Udje songs and dance, gods and ancestors as well as legendary characters such as *Ogiso*, hold a peculiar fascination for his craftsmanship. *Ogiso* was a maximum ruler on whom his people's existence depended. The height of his tyranny was the execution of a pregnant woman for some misdemeanor. In "Elegy for Nine Warriors", a poem in *Delta Blues and Homesongs* (1998), *Ogiso* represents the grandparent of the "Butcher of Abuja" or, if you like, the tyrannical Nigerian president:

The butcher of Abuja
dances with skulls
Ogiso's grandchild by incest
digs his macabre steps
in the womb of Aso Rock (26)

The nine warriors hanged are described as "upright ones", "fellow singers" among whom was the "muse favourite son", "the eagle" and "totem bird". One imagines that the nine warriors here are the famous "Ogoni Nine" while the "muse favourite son" is Ken Saro-Wiwa. Though the poet regrests these killings, he celebrates an envisaged reunion at "Urhobo gate, which to Ojaide is:

. . .the welcoming station of
spiritualities and completeness . . .
a cosmic point of destination (26)
thus reminding us of Christopher Okigbo's "*Heaven's Gate".*

As mentioned earlier, gods and ancestors are an integral part of Ojaide's poetry. In *Delta Blues*, *Aridon* is the god of memory who is invoked in "Waits" to help in the poet's resolve to internationalize the mourning of his subject of lamentation, Ken Saro-Wiwa:

Aridon, give me the voice
To raise this wail
Beyond high walls.
In one year, I have seen
my forest of friends cut down
now dust taunts my memory. (1)

Uhaghwa, the muse, is also invoked to:

. . .give me the insuppressible voice
to raise this wail to the world's end. (19)

Even "At Oxford", *Uhaghwa*'s salutary essence could be felt as the persona brings to Oxford:

. . .greetings from Uhaghwa
with whose feather I write. (17)

However, the terms of the verbal act in contemporary Nigerian poetry cannot be easily restricted to the influence of the oral poetic form. Consequently, the question of an informing vision becomes significant, and this is the urge to speak for the society. The form which this vision has taken for its expression is the lyric which relies upon the nature of the vision which it expresses such that the different modes that could be said to exist have evolved. Basically, two categories which determine these modes are *temperament* and *purpose*.

Temperamentally, contemporary Nigerian poetry will seem to have evolved two classifications of form, namely: (i) the militant and almost violent and (ii) the reflective and sometimes meditative. A distinctive characteristic of the first category is always the loud sense of urgency which the poetry exudes, often explained away as revolutionary. We are not likely to find readily, illustrations of this instance in one compact whole, rather, they are more likely to be found scattered as we are to find in a collection like *Poets in their Youth (*1988) edited by Uche Nduka, and even sometimes, in some of the earliest poems of Osundare.

A second mode discernible which has evolved from the lyric type in contemporary Nigerian poetry is the pastoral which is a major feature of Osundare's poetry as he seems to derive his images from the very texture of experience that is the lot of the rustic life. However, there is another discernible interpretation of the pastoral in many of the contemporary Nigerian poets in the sense of expanding the meaning of pastoral to include poetry about the lowly even in urban setting. Emman Shehu's poem, "*Maradun*", especially exemplifies this tradition. In this category of the pastoral, the vacant essence of the poor becomes the concern in poetic response.

In this category also are the eco-poets whose poetic activism is triggered by the environmental degeneration occasioned by the activities of crude oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. To make matters worse, the wealth derived from crude oil is unequally distributed, resulting in the underdevelopment of the oil producing communities, who are mainly fishermen, with less than 30 per cent of the people having access to basic amenities such as electricity and safe drinking water. With the waters and air polluted as a result of oil spillage and gas flaring, life becomes miserable for these vulnerable folks. It is on this account that the likes of Nnimmo Bassey (2002) and Ogaga Ifowodo (2005) become the mouthpiece of the region. In *We Thought It Was Oil but It was Blood*, the poet catalogues the

woes of the coastal communities and instigates them to rise up in arms, if possible, against the authorities.

Writing on the significance of Bassey's *We Thought It Was Oil but It was Blood*, Sule E. Egya (2013) states that:

> [I]n a mode characteristic of Bassey's poetry, the (title) poem shifts between past and present, first recalling a time when people "danced in the street" (2) because of the discovery of crude oil which had seemed to assure their future prosperity. This early optimism, however, is abruptly curtailed, as the reader is informed of the "Three young folks" (5) and the "Countless more" (6) who collapse under the fires of the "Red-hot guns"(11). In a single stanza, the poem transportsus from an idyllic past to a violent present . .. (63)

It is with the same combative determination that Ifowodo (2005) engages the collective memory of the Niger Deltans. In *The Oil Lamp*, Ifowodo chronicles the common disasters that befall the communities where crude oil is explored. One of such disasters is the incessant fire outbreaks resulting from pipeline vandalism by the locals who feel compelled to steal refined petroleum products in order to survive, not minding the dire consequences. This is vividly captured in the section of the volume titled "Jese" made up of 15 sequences. Here, all we see and feel include the "venomous scent of charring bones, / the dripping and drying fat of breasts and buttocks" (169-170). The effect of the destruction is so vast that, according to Egya(2013):

> [W]hen the fire eventually dies out, both humans
> and non-humans have perished. The earth has been
> deeply wounded, and all because it contains crude oil. (67)

Another (verbal) characteristic identifiable in contemporary Nigerian poetry is the satiric gesture. This mode distinguishes Femi Fatoba from the other contemporary Nigerian poets in his sometimes detached but largely sympathetic and sometimes out rightly bitter and uncompromising ironic posture. In fact, Fatoba seems to represent the two attitudes to the satiric mode present in contemporary Nigerian poetry: the *Horatian* "gentle and broadly sympathetic" and, the *Juvenalian* which is basically "biting, bitter and angry" (Holman [ed.], 1972:474) found also aside from Fatoba in Odia Ofeimun, Esiaba Irobi and Tanure Ojaide.

Of importance, however, is Ojaide's brilliant use of the traditional Udje songs and dance of his Urhobo culture as a literary tool for satire. This is like the Yewa/Awori/Ketu Efe performance. According to Ibitokun (1993):

> . . .there is room for social comments
> and satire or jokes . . .in non-dirgeful occasions . ..
> and it is this comic-satire (moralizing) aspect
> that young participants like most. (123)

In the same vein, the Udje songs and dance, especially during festivals, become an instrument for corrective discipline. And as it is with the Efe, even when the songs are disguised, the object/subject of the composed song is often known by the community. That is why, for Olafioye, (2000):

> The objective of the Udje's satirical lyric,
> therefore, is to insult and hopefully, goad the
> ridiculed towards conscience of retrieval (76).

This is what Ojaide does in "Odebala" in *Delta Blues* where he pokes scathing fun at bloated ego:

> Odebala boasts he's rich
> I only hope he knows what wealth provides.
> Odebala swaggers, puffs out his shoulders,
> because he day-dreams his wish
> boasts he's the town's millionaire . . .
> who knows what he eats. (78)

In "My Townsman in the Army", Ojaide takes a swipe at an army General whose rise in the army is facilitated by his ever "generous" wife:

> I will prefer to remain a Captain
> than the Major-General
> whose stars Udje flaunts before the world
> He thinks he deserved his position
> but we know who clears the way
> with her body for his rapid advance . . .
> And I hear he loans rifles to armed robbers
> who brings him returns from their loot. (74)

In Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, we find another poet whose caustic eyes capture the very essence of the Nigerian inanity. In *Dancing Masks* (2014), the opening poem sends shivers down the spine and raises concerns over global warming and the "disaster" that "looms" in this weird world, akin to human beings sitting on a time bomb, waiting to explode even as "time crosses the abyss of hope" and "poor nations await the guillotine".

In "Casualty", both young and old share their sentiments towards one another. For young casualty, her worry: "Why do you have to travel and leave me at home?" For Old Casualty, the desire to succeed in this profession of "publish or perish" roused her ambition for good prospects across the borders. The "mad competition to excel" in "this land that kills initiative" could better be the divine excuse for a year sojourn elsewhere? Nonetheless, the niggling trepidation for Old Casualty hangs in the balance; the fear of young casualty metamorphosing into "drug addict, rapist, thief or terrorist?" Could it then be argued that the insurgence of terrorism in recent times stems from the absence of proper parental care of young casualties?

In this collection, Ezeigbo legitimately recommends herself as a poet that cannot be ignored in the criticism and evaluation of modern Nigerian poetry. In *Dancing Masks*, Ezeigbo reveals her maturity from her first three collections of poetry by presenting a superior socio-political vision for which established poets like Tanure Ojaide, Odia Ofeimun, Niyi Osundare and Tayo Olafioye have variously received critical reception. A semiotic analysis of the *Dancing Masks* renders a spectacle of people, grappling with floods of socio-political aberrations that are masked in hope and humour, signified by two dancing masks on the front cover page of the collection. By this token, the masks become a motif through which greater insight is provided into themes of social relevance in contemporary Nigeria. Ezeigbo presents us with a mask behind which most people live, and "behind which certain human tendencies are disguised".

7. Conclusion

The content of contemporary Nigerian poetry which is largely identified as the social situation indeed has conditioned its text and even, the verbal patterns that could be said to have evolved. Considered as a verbal alternative to experience, the influence of the oral traditional type upon contemporary Nigerian poetry has opened up in a greater way, the scope of choice of pattern in the poetry. The informing vision of this poetry is established essentially as the urge to speak for and to society and by adopting the lyric, this vision has evolved modes which can be said to define its expression as a patterned phenomenon: temperament and purpose. In terms of its purpose, however, the use of the lyric in contemporary Nigerian poetry is classified into the confessional, the pastoral and the satirical, each with its own contextually identifiable tone and verbal character. Therefore, any attempt to formulate for the poetry a conceptual framework will show that contemporary Nigerian poetry certainly cannot be described as a generic formal entity.

It is imperative to mention, as a final note, that the issues treated in contemporary Nigerian poetry have been, in the main, political. This may not surprise us since the crisis of the Nigerian society since independence in fact, has been that of political corruption. Thus, while this concern cannot be made exclusively to the contemporary Nigerian poet, the relevance of our engagement with the issue here will rest in the observation that as a result of what appears the political urgency in contemporary Nigerian poetry, statements for political ends and the intrinsic aesthetic value seem to become even a hindrance to its process of articulation.

References

Adimora-Ezeigbo, Akachi. *Dancing Masks.* Ibadan: Kraft Books. (2014).

Alu, Nesther. "Echoes of Commitment in Modern African Poetry" in Azuike, Macpherson (ed.) *Studies in Language & Literature* in honour of Professor Michael Adeleke Adekunle. Jos: Mazlink Nig. Ltd. (2001).

Akporobaro, F. B. O. *Introduction to African Oral Literature.* Lagos: Princeton Publishing Co. (2004).

Biakolo, Emevwo. "Ogundipe-Leslie and the New Nigerian Poets". *Review of English and Literary Studies*. Ibadan: 2, (1).

Biakolo, Emevwo. "Explorations in New Nigerian Poetry", *The Guardian.* Lagos: January 20. (1990).

Craig, Cairns. *Yeats, Eliot, Pound and the Politics of Poetry.* London and Canberra: Croom Helm. (1982)

Dasylva and Jegede [Eds.] *Studies in Poetry*. Ibadan: Stirling Horden. (2005).

Egya, Sule E. "Eco-human engagement in Recent Nigerian poetry in English" *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 49 No. 1.(February, 2013 (60-70).

Garuba, Harry. *Shadow and Dream*. Ibadan: New Horn Press. (1982).

Garuba, Harry. "The Unbearablr Lightness of Being: Re-Figuring Trends in Recent Nigerian Poetry." *English in Africa* 32 No. 1(May 2005): 51-72.

Haralambos, M. *Sociology: Theme and Perspective*. Slough: University Tutorial Press. (1980).

Holman, C. Hugh. *A Handbook to Literature*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merril. (1972).

Ibitokun, Benedict. *Dance as Ritual Drama and Entertainment in the Gelede of the Ketu-Yoruba Sub-group in West Africa (A Study in Traditional African Feminism)*. Ile-Ife: OAU Press Ltd. (1993).

Ifowodo, Ogaga. *The Oil Lamp.* Trenton, Asmara, NJ: Africa World P., (2005).

Irobi, Esiaba. *Cotelydon*. Lagos: Update Communications. (1988).

Jegede, Toyin. "Towards a Conceptual Definition of the Poetics of New Nigerian Poetry in English" in *IBA: Essays on African Literature in Honour of Oyin Ogunba*, Wole Ogundele and Gbemisola Adeoti [Eds.]. Ile-Ife: OAU Press. (2003).

Ojaide, Tanure. *Delta Blues and Homesongs*. Ibadan: Kraftbooks Ltd. (1988).

Olafioye, Tayo. *The Poetry of Tanure Ojaide; A Critical Appraisal*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd. (2002)

Osundare, Niyi. "From Oral to Written: Aspects of the Socio-Stylistic Repercussion of Tradition". *Journal of African and Comparative Literature.* 1, March. (1981).

Osundare, Niyi. *The Eye of the Earth.* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books. (1986)

Osundare, Niyi. *Moonsongs*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books. (1988).

Shehu, Emman Usman. *Questions for Big Brother*. Lagos: Update Communications. (1988).

Shelly, Percy Bsysshe. "A Defence of Poetry" in Frank Kermode et al (Eds.) *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature.* 1. (1). New York: OUP. (1973).

Skelton, Robin. *The Poetic Pattern*. London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul. (1956).

Tsaaior, James Tar. "Exile, exilic consciousness and the poetic imagination in Tanure Ojaide's poetry". *TYDSKRIF VIR LETTERKUNDE,* 48 (1) (2011) 98-109.

Wellek, Rene. *The Attack on Literature*. Sussex: Harvester Press. (1982).

Ramesh. V. K.

Moyin Kutty Vaidyar: The Poetic Genius in Arabi-Malayalam

The hybrid language Arabi-Malayalam has played a vital role in the development of Malayalam literature. The system of writing Malayalam in Arabic script has the history of more than four centuries. Though Arabic was the religious language of Kerala Muslims, Arabi- Malayalm was their written language. In different times, many prose and verse texts have been produced in Arabi-Malayalam. Among them verse form was the most popular. Maalappattu (devotional songs), padappattu (war poems), kissappattu (stories in songs) and urudippattu (advices) are some of the poetic movements in Arabi- Malayalam. Besides, there are different forms of lyrical and narrative verse like Kappal pattu,Pakshippattu and Kessuppattu.

Moyinkutty vaidyar is one the most famous poets in Arabi-Malayalam. He was born at Kondotty in Malappuram district. Apart from Arabi- Malayalam he was also well versed in Persian, Urdu, Tulu, Telugu and Tamil. Though Moyin kutty, the genius lived only for forty years (1852-1892), he had contributed about 26 texts to Maappila literature. An overview of his works shows that he had made effective use of the style of telling stories through songs. Both regional and classical events were fit raw material for his writings. Vaidyar employed a technique of telling stories like a historian.

Vaidyar started his poetic life in his 16th age. In adolescence, he wrote many extempore poems about ordinary events that happened in his surroundings. Vaidyar presented Maappila life style, bull racing and love in a rustic language .The short poem entitled *Vandum Poovum* (pipit and the flower) was the famous work among his early writings. It was set in the mode of Kunjayin Musliyar's Kappappattu. *Salasil Kissappattu* was the first work written by Vaidyar based on concocted stories. Salasil was the son of a woodcutter. Once Salasil's mother gave him 100 rupees to run a business and told him to buy what he first sets his eyes on. He bought a cat and then a dog, and a parrot. Finally, he bought a snake, which was actually a djinn that had changed shape. Salasil Kissappattu is about this young fellow who ultimately married the princess with the help of the djinn.

It was Moyin kutty Vaidyar who inaugurated children's literature in Arabi-Malayalam. *Elippada* is another popular poem written by Vaidyar after *Salasil*. It is also considered as the first published work by the poet. The work appeals primarily to children with the story of a fight between cats and rats. In the first battle, rats defeated the enemies in the battle field. The humiliated king cat took revenge and the rats were completely ruined in the second battle.

Through *The story of camel and deer* Vaidyar reveals the compassion of Prophet towards animals. A camel, which is tired because of long, heavy work, complains to the Prophet about the exploitation of its owner. The prophet talked the matter to the owner that he wanted to free the camel from him. But the owner mocked the prophet asking “can a camel speak?”. When the camel spoke in front of the people, the owner was convinced and he completely changed his mind.

Ramesh.V. K. Department of Malayalam, Sullamussalam science College, Areacode.

In the second part of the poem, Vaidyar narrates the story of a deer, which is trapped in the hands of a hunter, entrusted the prophet to give guarantee during her visit to feed her children. But knowing the fact that the guarantee has given by the Prophet, the fawns were not ready to drink milk from their mother. Realizing its guilt the penitent deer cried in front of the Prophet. The story ends with transformation of a hunter who was an adversary of prophet. Vaidyar wrote these early works under the pseudonym *Fayyal Qaseethin* (the son of a physician)

In another work entitled *Kilaathi Maala* , Vaidyar presented an imaginary story in which the prophet and his followers were sitting in a mosque at Yasrib. At that time the Archangel Gabriel appeared, disguised an old woman with a sack. She drank some water from Ali, nephew of the prophet. Then she demanded the prophet to send someone to accompany her and lift her load. The renowned disciples of the Prophet like Aboobacker, Umar, Usman and Ali tried to lift it; but failed. When they became tired the prophet sent his own grandson Hussein to do it and he lifted the load easily. The poem ends with prophet's description about Hussen's skills. In a similar tale *Kurathi Padham* Gabriel appears in the kitchen of Fathima Beevi's house and gave her the happy news of the birth of Hassan and Hussein. In these two tales one can see Vaidyar's attempt to strengthen Shiya beliefs.

Writing poems about Islamic history was prevalent even before Moyinkutty Vaidyar. It was in this time that the battle songs (padappattu) in Arabi-Malayalam came to be a movement. Though many Mappila poets had written padappattu already it was Moyinkutty Vaidyar who made them popular. *Saleekath Padappattu* is the longest song among his early writings. Vaidyar claims that the song is based on the events described in *Seera Kudsiyyath* written by Ibnu Hisham. This story is also mentioned in the book named *Thareerul Ahban.* The heroic activities of the fourth Caliph Hasrath Ali have been depicted in this book. But some Muslim scholars opined that this text doesn't have any connection with the biography of Hasrath Ali. When the poet was in his deathbed he prevented its republication. This was to prevent misinterpretation of history and escape from the enmity of anti-shiya group. Badr and Uhd were unmatched among the great battles for justice and virtue in the history of Islam. *Badr Padappattu* was popular for its praise of heroism and devotion. This work, which is also known as *Gasvatu Badarul Kubra,* is rich with diverse rhythms and stylistics. The theme of Badr Padappattu is the battle between Muslims and Qureshis in Hijra 2nd year at Badr. This epic in 112 *ishal*s by Vaidyar is an inspiring one to Kerala Muslims.

Uhd padappattu is another battle song following the battle of Badr. It discusses the story of the struggle between Muslims and Qureshis beneath Uhd Mountain in Hijra 3rd year in which Muslims were defeated. The description of Uhd battle in *Uhd padppattu* is more imaginative than that of the Badr battle. Malappuram padappattu or Madha Nidhi Mala is the only work by Moyinkutty Vaidyar's with a Kerala setting. It was in Malappuram Padappattu that the history of Kerala and Cheraman Perumals was first narrated. It is also considered to be a national work which promotes Hindu-Muslim harmony. The song tells us about a divan (duke) named "Paranambi" who turns against the Muslim community believing some unreliable words. 44 muslims were killed at Malappuam Mosque by Paranambi's soldiers. Since then regretting over the tragic incident Paranambi gave many privileges to the Muslim community. Malappuram Padappattu is an excellent example of Vaidyar's broad mindedness and his nationalism. It is also a proof of the poet's knowledge in Sanskrit and a model for good fusion of Sanskrit with Arabi-Malayalam.

Husnul Jamal and Badrul Muneer was Vaidyar's masterpiece which made him

eternal in Arabi-Malayalam literature. It was in his 20th year that Vaidyar wrote this saga of love. It is a verse rendering of a Persian novel by Khaja Mueenudheen Shahsheer. It was Nisamudheen Sheik, the scholar who belonged to the Miyan tribe, who introduced this novel to Vaidyar. So Vaidyar praises Shahsheer throughout the poem. The poem tells the story of the courtly love affair between Husnul Jamal and Badarul Muneer. Husnul Jamal was the daughter of Mahasin, the king of Ashmir town in Hind and Muneer was the son of Mahasin's minister Massamir. The king Mahasin opposed their affair and as a result the lovers decided to elope soon. A fisherman named Abu Sayyad informed the news to minister. And consequently Muneer was placed under house arrest. Meanwhile, Husnul Jamal left the country with Abu Sayyad on a horse mistaking him for Muneer. She rejected the proposal of Abu Sayyad. With sword and word she faced everyone who came to see and seduce her. At last she reached the palace of Mushtaq, the king of djinn.

When Muneer was released he wandered all around searching for Jamal till he found her in Mushtaq's palace after 10 years. The king Mahasin consented to his marriage to her and handed over the reigns of his kingdom to Muneer. The poem ends with the beginning of prosperous life of Badrul Muneer in which he married three more ladies named Kamarban, Sufaira and Jameela. This beautiful comic ending clearly shows Vaidyar's excellent narrative skill. The descriptions of the hero and the heroine are exquisite. Vaidyar's erotic representations were revolutionary as it was a taboo in the traditional Islamic writing. This poem is different from other love poems because unlike other works *Husnul Jamal and Badrul Muneer* presents a woman as the symbol of love and freedom. Vaidyar's courage to present such a heroine who renounces her home and kith and kin is notable. Through this narration Vaidyar was creating a revolutionary spirit which provokes the orthodox Muslims.

The weddings song of Malabar Muslims is known as Oppana. Vaidyar's *Vettilappattu* (Bethila) is a song which belongs to this genre. It is a short poem having a reference to the common habit of betel-chewing. It is told in the beginning of the poem that the song was written as a part of the presentation of betel leaf as a divine gift to Balkees, the wife of the prophet Sulaiman by her own djinn. The theme of the song which is written in 5 ishals is the model married life of eminent personalities. The text discusses a healthy dispute between the Caliph Ali and his wife Fathima. In the very outset of the poem Vaidyar presents a prophetic vision which is musical but incomprehensible. Moyinkutty Vaidyar is a great poet who unfolded the hidden stories which were popular only among Arabic scholars. The incomplete poem *Hijrathunnabi* was the last work come from his pen. Its central theme was the prophet's migration (hijra) from Mecca to Madina and his life there. As opposed to the usual practice Vaidyar enters into the history of prophet in Hijra. He depicts the stories about prophet's birth beautifully. It tells about Halima's adoption and her wonderful experiences. Kadeeja's wish to marry the prophet was also mentioned in *Hijrathunnabi*. It is said that the 26th ishal of *Hijra* was Vaidyar's last creation. It describes the 2nd caliph Umarul Frooq's paths of glory.

When Vaidyar was bedridden with severe delirium, he composed a few more poems. fever expecting his death Vaidyar composed some more poems. Vaidyar who was a physician by profession passed away very soon. It is clear from the preface of *Hijra* that it was completed posthumously by Vaidyar's father Unni Mammad and Ambalathingal Kunjamutty. This epic which was popular among Malabar muslims for a long time helped the growth and development of Islam among the common people in Malabar.

Moyinkutty Vaidyar is a poet who has dedicated so many eternal artistic works to Arabi-Malayalam literature within a short span of his creative life. Vaidyar was unique among other mappila poets because of his poetic imagination and scholarship. He was a poet vested with an integrity and authority to Malayalam versification. His poetry was influenced by both day-to-day happenings and great historical events. Vaidyar also liked the classical themes like love and fight. Vaidyar's works could form a sense of identity among Kerala Muslims. His attempt to mark the identity of the marginalized people in the Malayalam literature has made him an unmatched and immortal genius.

References

K.K Mohammed Abdul Kareem and C.N Ahammed Moulavi:*Mahathya mappila sahithya parambharyam.*Calicut:Azad Books,1978 print.

Balakrishnan Vallikkunnu:*Mappila Sahithya Padanangal.*Thiruvanathapuram. Kerala Basha institute,2011 print.

O.Abu:*Arabi-Malayala Sahithya Charithram:*Kottayam.National Books,1970 print.

Dr. Arunlal. K.
Dr. Sunitha Srinivas. C.

Memetic Carnival: Indian Commercial Cinema and Cultural Genetic Phenomena

Abstract

Indian commercial cinema with its textual richness and fragmented narrative structure, calls for a radical redefinition of cinematic reception itself. The internationally 'recognized' narrative devices of the Hollywood feature films do not apply to the diegetic nuances of Indian mass films. Masala or formula movies, as they are called, do not follow an unbroken narrative plan: there are songs in between that often have little to do with the film's plot either before or after them, there could be comic subplots that move arbitrarily parallel to the main plot, there could be wholly epic-dramatic fight sequences and so on. For an Indian audience cinematic meaning is inclusive of these diegetic breaks. The paper argues that in the syntax of Indian mass films, dramatic coherence is subordinated to memetic communication, through blending of several sets of memes that may of themselves stand apart from the body of the film.

Key words: Commercial Cinema, Memes, Cultural Evolution, Deleuze, Dawkins.

Modern cinema, according to Henry Bergson has made it possible to comment on human condition by cancelling subjective claims on "the aggregate of images"(Qtd. *Bergsonism*, 21) . In his two volumes on cinema (*Cinema I: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema II: The Time-Image)* Gilles Deleuze deconstructs this hypothesis in such a manner as to argue that the appearance of the "time-image" in cinema has revealed the true nature of time as a "continuous forking into incompossible presents and not necessarily true pasts". In Deleuze's view cinema is experienced by the viewer as he experiences past: however, they belong to an impersonal rather than an individual past. In this sense, the cinematic meaning is a variant of atavistic transfers, genetic extensions in time that start from the very origins, going towards the forever. Like in a family tree, in cinema, everything we *see* in any given movie is a genetic variant of something we have *seen* in films before it. It is beyond conscious copying, it is an ingrained 'trait' of cinematic meaning. Every cinema contains its legacy in terms of 'formulas' and technics. It is on this capacity of the film, especially the Indian commercial film, to behave as a cultural genetic phenomenon, a special transference of memes, abridged and suited to need according to the context, that the current paper is focused.

Indian commercial cinema with its textual richness and fragmented narrative structure, calls for a radical redefinition of cinematic reception itself. The internationally 'recognized' narrative devices of the Hollywood feature films – rigorous plots, unobtrusive music, composed noise levels, cause-consequence patterns – do not apply to the diegetic nuances of Indian mass films. Masala or formula movies, as they are called, do not follow an unbroken narrative plan: there are songs in between for example, that often have little to do with the film's plot either before or after them. It is often such that when Indian commercial films are exported abroad, these songs are edited out. For an Indian audience however, the cinematic meaning is *inclusive* of the diegetic break affected by the songs. In the syntax of Indian mass films, coherence of the drama is subordinated to possibilities of memetic communication, through blending of several sets of memes that may of themselves stand apart from the body of the film.

Filmemes (neologized from film-memes) are living structures in a culture transferred

Dr. Arunlal K is Assistant Professor in English, Govt. College Mokeri
Dr. Sunitha Srinivas C Assistant Professor in English, Govt. College Mokeri

through cinemas in evolutionary formats. A continuous mutation and blending occurs in filmemes – both the film and the meme mutually assisting the survival. Indian mass cinema, in its beginning, had borrowed profusely from native theater models, and traditional regional popular arts. During its growth and development the genre domesticated the technology of the western film upon these borrowings and emerged with a markedly different national cinema. This new mode of entertainment contained traces from everything that entertained dominant Indian demographic groups in pre-cinema periods. These traces soon became regular memes in the popular sense of cinematic entertainment. And it became possible for them to move in and out of the cinematic body with a certain sense of autonomy. We already saw the case of songs which can choose to dissociate from the narrative structure and still make good sense to the film-goer. Apart from the film histories, we now have exclusive popular historiographies of film songs. It is possible to post a cache of RD Burman or AR Rahman songs on a website and make sense, with scant reference to films that contained them, or plots that embedded them. Commercial cinema supplies to a large part, to the average Indian film-aficionado, the verve of his songs, humor, heroes and language: all emanating from the memeplex of cinema but not necessarily referring to cinema always in the popular cultural afterlife. Like in the case of song memes, the genre of dance namely 'cinematic dance' is a meme that does and does not specifically belong to films, but is a 'field of cultural meaning' because of being 'generally' present in commercial films. In fact, the obsolescence of India's traditional high art dance forms was capitalized by the cinematic dance meme. Fitting the earlier dances in cut-to-size formats to the time-slot permissible in cinema's metamemetic corpus the cinematic dance generated new gambits for old cultural artifacts. Song-dance sequences as memes may be seen as signposts to a history of cultural reception as well. The requirements of the audience in different periods of cultural progression will be different. In the beginning, the song-dance sequence as a meme evoked to the viewer, the evolution of film from such popular forms of mass entertainment as Ramkatha or puppetry or local theaters. As mass films came of age, this function was superseded by others. Consequent to the rooting of tourism as an industry in India, the people found themselves in the abundant presence of a new range of images. In the films of the 1990s the song-dances that were hitherto simple prose set to tune and sung by the characters, gave way to visual narratives of tourist locales, both inside and outside India. Their memetic function was to primarily exist as a song shot, say, in Switzerland or Singapore: the lead pair that sang through the locale became a diminutive element, signifying barely anything, as the song ran repeat slots in the television previews or Music channels by virtue of its scenic beauty. In other words, people consumed the scene *as* 'scenic' (as different from cinematic) out of this new meme. The meme linked itself consistently with the constructs that the flourishing tourism industry supplied to the current visual culture, and derived its autonomy from evoking a desire in the audience to be 'there where the song is set'.

The memes and the memtic mode of representation in Indian commercial film perhaps become extreme manifestations of the Deleuzean hyperrepresentational possibility in modern cinema. A meme is itself beyond singular representation, always reaffirming its autonomy. The subordination of Aristotelian plot-building to memetic carnival achieves a unique perceptive dimension for Indian mass films: rather than plot-events, when memes orient what is happening, the movie as such gains its independence from the 'world'. Hence, the ubiquitous derision about Indian mass movie as being mere escapist and wishful gimmickry. While the representation of the world still presupposes an essential difference between memes and their manifestations, the body of the film – a memeplex – eliminates this difference, replacing actuality with elements from cultural common senses.

The idea of a meme always presupposes the idea of a society. Cinematic representation is not only the presentation of the world as a reflection of the filmmaker but also, and to an equal

degree, the objectification of cinema itself. Therefore the backgrounds per se by which memes are produced and circulated by commercial films in the society cannot be bracketed out. Indian society and its underlying notions about itself contribute generously to the making and mutating of notional memes in mass movies. There are categories of cultural materials that Indian cinema circulates among the audience masses by default, and through which are transmitted a set of core attitudinal leanings of the form. The easy commonsense about Indian cinema as a 'carnivalesque mix of crime, money, comedy, sacrifice, betrayal, destiny, and triumph of morality' (xi, Nandy) will need to be critiqued closely: some of these 'ingredients' – some aspects of the formula – do not just mean a 'carnival', but a 'survival' in the cultural consciousness of the population, creating and consuming at the same time. Indeed even a perfunctory tryst with Indian film studies shows that commercial cinema is widely accepted as a site for gauging the ideological/political leanings of the people.

An analysis of the notional memetic dimension of Indian mass cinema is akin to what psychologists call a projective test of personality: it reveals more about the structural and notional logics of film production, its audience and its critics than about the film itself. The individual film and its consumption falls apart to reveal the inner stimuli and its potential energy as it will be served piecemeal across the nation in extra-cinematic channels. The politico-ideological objectives of a film do not stay within it, nor is it a product sprung out of the characters of the film. The whole apparatus of suspense, violence and sensuality in commercial movies imbibe from and refill the portions of existing gender/class/caste notions before they meet the requirements of the formula (song, fight, fashion, special effects etc).

An Indian commercial film's mode of communicating, as traditional film studies has it, is through evoking private/emotional responses towards conflicts that are products of social forces, thus begetting a tension in the narrative body: the police, the state or the hospital or any institution of modern power may appear as the non-human/negative/universal of the semiotics in this case. The movie resolves the tensions with such semiotic balances (say, the crime and a sense of moral sanction in committing it, though the police will have to take the hero in) in its climaxes as where the non sequiturs of intervening institutions tame/resolve the hero's anger, violence, transgressions or social excesses. This resolution attained from institutions of modern living however, is only a part of the message that the audience carry home. An Indian film cannot be 'explained away' using syllogistic semiotic squares, such as proposed by AJ Greimas because its existence is in fragments – in units that defy a cumulative linearity towards the resolutions of the climaxes (unlike the western popular feature movie). Its signification pattern is replete with subordinate units of meaning, memes, engendering minor sites of suspense and tension that does/need not relate to the climactic resolutions of the narrative, and may not even correspond to what is particularly and explicitly stated in the movie. Emerging from the subconscious attitudes of the society, infiltrating into the movie's subtext, such memetic components communicate seamlessly to the audience despite the lack of 'actual' signification attempts towards such meanings. In fact, it is not the apparent structure of the film body that hosts them, but the very possibility of the cinematic medium of creating a visual semiotic force field in its body.

Unlike in art house movies, commercial movies are not bound by 'realistic demands'. Consequently, they can afford to manufacture their content by processing 'dreams' (songs and dances are usually 'dreams' of the characters, and the fight sequences likewise remind one of fantasy-possibilities), superstitious fears, cults, obsessions regarding caste or religion and other so-called irrationalities. Apart from these notions (notional memes) we can also see concrete structural memes such as 'the interval', or a hero-introduction sequence in mass movies.

Let us take the meme of 'interval,' for example. Since the narratives do not follow a strictly

causal chain and willingly break the tension of Aristotelian plots, it was possible for Indian films to break for ten minutes in the middle of the show. In the case of a western film, this break, called 'interval' in the Indian film lexicon, is a huge practical risk. Begun in the earliest films on, right since 1930s as per Theodore Bhaskaran, when the constraints of a single projector forced the projectionist to stop the film for ten minutes, these breaks today have come to segment the analysis of Indian movies into first and second halves. The meme weighs in as a crucial punctuation in the structure of an Indian film adding on to anticipations and pleasures. It moves out of the movie halls, though only minimally, as interval-points in any narration that needs to have anticipation and promise of pleasure. Across India, the word has come to form an aspect of popular slang (*idavela* in Malayalam, *etaivelai* in Tamil etc.) and has somewhat stood in for the western notion of 'taking a break'. Also the oral retelling of an Indian film's plot hinges on this otherwise ignored unit of signification. An interval meme is for many obvious reasons, not an autonomous meme incorporated from outside into the metamemetic body of the film, but a meme that is inherently cinema-based, disseminating its significatory dimensions into the language and culture in general.

Structural memes affect the body of narration only insofar as they punctuate the audience's reception of the memeplex and the notional memes. They also help the Indian audience to bypass the impossibility of eliminating point of view to the cinema. (As for the international film with a well-made plot, the question of cinematic point of view is still a dilemma.) The system of memetic meaning making in Indian Commercial films, therefore, is pre-Western cinema, sensory, and pre-linguistic, inasmuch as messages or values is ontologically older than their significations or signs. There is an interesting reversal here: although cinematic systems are empirically “younger” than dramatic signification or literature, they appear to have carried over most effectively what other systems of representation have failed to in the wake of postcolonial redresses. The stigma of caste, or the patriarchal validations are communicated through mass films, despite their stated objectives being 'moralising' against such practices: the memes that carry out the representational function in a commercial movie act quite beside the interests of the film itself, at large. A film that denounces caste system may end up reinforcing the same because of the memes in the body of the narrative, or similarly a film against atrocities on women may end up as a heavy patriarchal statement. Deleuze's argument that cinema originates in a pre-human state of the world could be read alongside this. He asserts that unlike natural perception, which is grounded in a fixed and privileged point of view and which is thus limited by our practical interests, cinematographic perception is essentially acentered. Deleuze treats the camera as a kind of consciousness, more inclusive and disinterested than mere perceptual consciousness as it presents us with pure images rather than with selections from the flow of images. Whereas Bergson thought it necessary to deduce” natural as well as cinematographic perception from pure perception, Deleuze believes cinematographic perception to have a great advantage over natural perception insofar as the former “lacks a centre of anchorage and of horizon”(*Cinema I,* 58). Memesis happens in the meaning of mass films because the acentered nature of cinematic perception is endorsed from outside. The sets of memes are, cinematic codes, connotations or associated meanings which get repeated in the line of evolution of film-cultures and gets socio-culturally transmitted, even independently, as a unit of meaning. As was said earlier, there could be abstract memes such as caste notions or gender attitudes that a film carries in its subtext, and very concrete and visible memes such as songs, dances or digital effects in its text.

The memetic mode seeks to use a block of cultural meaning-making unit, such as 'patriarchal notions' on the one end, and 'dressing and fashion' on the other, as a very flexible 'signifying element within a system' that also has a recognizable history of cultural mutation behind it. The special effects that are used in films make a case in point. As a memetic

component that is neither as autonomous as song-dance sequences, nor as integrally aligned to the structure of cinematic meaning as moral notions, 'fashion in Indian films' create their meaning through a special strand of evolution.

The meme of fashion in films highlights the contradictory impulses present within our popular culture. While great focus is placed in cinema-fashion upon 'glamorizing' by sexualizing, fashion also renders the sexualized body 'acceptable' to the viewing public. Because of the strong presence of this meme in the cinematic body the dress codes and fashion statements of our films have frequently been singled out for analysis in Indian film studies. The double bind of sexualized v/s traditionalized body extended to such an extent that fashion was seen in studies as a signifier of the wearer's gender, sexuality, class, and social standing, and any ambiguities here could lead to misunderstandings and confusions in the cinematic frame. The market was very conscious of the way the cinematic codes were configuring fashion equations. Every box office success dished out its range of real world counterparts in mass markets. As in the case of songs and dances, these real versions had no inherent link to the film that introduced it, except as useful taxonomic categories. The recent explorations of Indian commercial films into the shifting relations of gender, and in particular, to the representation of lesbians and gays have grafted a range of new fashion formulas into the cinema slowly altering the meme's traditional content.

Indian cinema's use of special effects makes another interesting aspect of the mass's process of cinematic meaning making. An average Indian 'formula' movie uses digitalized effects generally to aggrandize action sequences. In the publicity of the films too, emphasis falls on the money and effort spent on filming the action scenes. As in the case of songs these scenes may also be taken out of the movie for TV previews or internet bytes. However, the configuration of the meme of digital effects has many subtler manifestations than that. For one, almost all the 'punch' scenes in a formula popular movie tempts the director to reach for his usual palette of special effects, starting from slow motions to bullet-time shots to seamless replication or various montage cuts. At times, it works in a reverse manner: in order to introduce a special effect he has come across, a scene or a song may be conceived–a narrative component serving the purpose of effect-introducing. A feature of cinematic special effects is that it is in and of itself contagious: once a compelling new effect is introduced in a popular movie, of necessity, it repeats itself in all ensuing movies whether they really require it or not. In other words, special effects do not remain special for durations longer than a few weeks of a movie's release–they are bound to be reproduced for lesser effort and lesser money and therefore more frequently in the future. The way special effects become memes is therefore a cultural maneuver of fleeting and changing codes. One might say it is their popularization and access that makes them so: for instance, the ingress of a bunch of cinematic special effects to the content of wedding videos and soap operas. Also home videos shot in handicams and mobile phones bear out the excrescence of the digital effects meme.

Apart from major memetic sets we have come across above, there are also sub-memetic sets, sets of minor memes that the masala/mass genre customized from the various western and indigenous sources. These serve the larger memes as structural/notional appendages. Most of these leave behind a trail of evolution that has erased or re-attached or morphed several culture specific connotations to conditions of sensibility and social environments. The greater part of the memetic elements of the 70s and 80s masala movies have their ancestral roots in the results of the very modernization viz. cinematization of visual imagination at the beginning of the last century. As John Berger pointed out in *Ways of Seeing,* his study of twentieth century visual culture the conventions of new visual art are essentially grand-scale customization of the discourse of Victorian oil paintings with the help of new technologies. A quick survey of the field of 19th century paintings gives us such themes

as: still life (Dutch), landscape (English), pagan mythologicals, Passion of Christ paintings, nudes (with subcategories of bathers and rapes), interiors of the bourgeoisie, and family and personal portraits. These representational themes were repeated over and over in paintings ever since the European renaissance. By the 19th century, they had become stock subjects taught at art academies and drawn by almost all aspirant artists–they had come to embody the value-notions of the aristocratic European society ranging from racial bigotry to patriarchy. Berger does not contend that these stereotypical memes made direct jumps to the discourse of cinema. They first found their paths to advertisement photography; in the contemporary print media they re-created the illusion of painting, and initiated the memesis. As these memes constituted themselves into the cinematic medium in the Hollywood popular movies, though the advertisement angles persisted, their potentials and scopes had changed. Within these films, qualifiedly, all these memes scatter, and attach themselves to plots and characters, conferring upon them the illusion of a fantastical, glamorized existence–a fantasy and glamour subconsciously associated with colonial edifices. That is, the film creates the illusion that it is reproducing an existing reality, whereas in fact it is constructing a fictional reality based on the fantasies in the postcolonial imaginary. For example, consider the sub-meme of bourgeois interior used in the narratives of our films: the illogically vast drawing rooms and practically unreal staircases that abound in the commercial films of 70s and 80s are memetic mutations of the Victorian paintings' aristocratic interiors.

The representation of the female nude presents another instance of minor memeses. The conventions of classic Victorian nudes required the female to feign that she is unaware of the gaze of the artist/viewer. In order to divert the guilt of the viewer, the nudes were generally identified with mythological characters or were made incarnations of humanist ideas such as liberty and justice. Slick finish and polish of the figures drawn from actual models characterized the genre. Down its evolutionary path to Indian commercial films, we find the same representation mutated to some very complicated effects. Indian censorship ideas are closely intertwined with the notions that censured the post-Victorian depictions of nudity in the West: at issue was not nudity *per se*, but the degree of realism in the representation. Films here safely sidestepped the censor-bar on physical-sexual depiction through the medium of songs and dances, which in themselves are memetic in nature. Nudity of the heroine is a sub-memetic component of the dance sequence. The dance is typically picturized using customization of conventions that have come down from the depiction of nudes. The camera adopts angles which are voyeuristic – available only to the camera (the eye of the artist), not to the woman, not even to the man who dances with her. Apart from the dance sequence, there were also other slots in the narrative corpus where nudity could appear as a minor meme: rape sequences or bathers for instance. These scenes existed in the structure of the movie as minor components that may be removed to be shelved with a large number of other similar scenes. Unlike the song-dances however, the identification of such memes with the category of commercial film is extremely arbitrary, their circulation being generally relegated to pornographic subcultures.

As he concludes his second volume of *Cinema*, Deleuze argues that cinema can and should be seen as the condition of possibility for signification in general, that cinema provides us with access to being, that it reconstitutes the dawn of the world before the birth of human perception or consciousness. Cinema is not a language. Deleuze insists that the best analogue for the frame in cinema "is to be found in an information system rather than a linguistic one. The elements [within the frame] are the data…which are sometimes very numerous, sometimes of limited number. The frame is therefore inseparable from two tendencies: towards saturation or towards rarefaction"(*Cinema I* 12). A memetic understanding of Indian cinema follows this insight: it resists reading films like novels and asks the medium to make sense as a history of transference, a pre-language richness.

Deleuze has noted that "to restore its original nature as a being rather than an object of knowledge, the subject must become even more subjective: it must constitute itself "above" its own representations; it must create hyperrepresentations." Hyperrepresentation is an autotelic phenomena. In the case of commercial cinema connections to outside are mediated by memes. And in finding and locating memetic bodies in its structure this brand of cinema is not just representational but hyperrepresentational – it is not an object of knowledge per se, it is a being.

Functional comparisons may be made with the early twentieth century structuralist efforts of Levi-Strauss school that sought to map identifiable meaning-categories in myths. Levi-Strauss himself, most famously, established a set of successive equations with multiple variables (A:B = C:D), using the Oedipal myth, in order to show how a family of mythic narratives transforms 'initially contradictory statements into apparently unproblematic equivalences'. (Levi-Strauss 72) In the case of cinematic examples, sets like 'the hero teaching the heroine how to respect him' = 'love and respect for his mother infantilizing the hero'– binary oppositional thematic blocks – could be derived using such logistics. These blocks get repeatedly used in the cinematic narratives as formula themes. A J Greimas recognized in such representations something like the rules of deductive reasoning (Corbett and Connors, 39). He fitted such sets into a 'square of oppositions', later called 'semiotic squares,' where propositions could be tested as to their validity by diagrammatically placing the terms involved into the different corners of the square, according to whether they are positive or negative terms (e.g. human/not human), and whether they make universal or particular claims(all humans/some humans).The semiotic square was intended to identify the 'elementary structure of signification' by specifying the 'semiotic constraints' underlying culturally meaningful narratives, and was an improvement upon systems like Propp's morphology. Fredric Jameson observes that the semiotic square as a unit of meaning in the narrative may function as "a valuesystem,in which raw materials coming in from the outside are at once given their place in the rectangular structure and transformed into symbolically signifying elements within the system."(Jameson 164) Memes as used here corresponds in a tangential manner to this analytic insight, but moves further. Instead of singling out semiotic squares with propositions of deductive logic, the memetic mode seeks to use a block of cultural meaning-making unit, such as 'casteist notions in cinema' on one end, and 'special effects in cinema' on the other, as a very flexible 'signifying element within a system' that also has a recognizable history of cultural mutation behind it.

In Novel and Film: Essays in Two Genres, Bruce Morrissette has noted about this impossibility and the routes that tackle it. Taking the case of novelist/filmmaker Allain Robbe-Grillet as an example of the attempt to get rid of the specific, situated point of view and substitute it with a purely "geometric and visual perspective"(45), Morrissette demonstrates how this project eventually restores, though in a slightly modified form, the omniscient narrator:

Is it possible to separate point of view in itself, as localization of a camera objective or of an authorial eye, from the reason or internal justification of this same point of view? Does this "observer," who for Robbe-Grillet…need not be a "character" in the narrative, have the privilege of randomly positioning himself almost anywhere? …Can he displace himself at will? What will then prevent such an eye of the camera or of the novelist from becoming, once again, an eye "everywhere at once," if not an eye that is perpetually omniscient and

omnipresent like the eye of God? …Yet if we grant the camera an absolute liberty of movement…an omni-optique system is obviously created, the justification for which seems as difficult or arbitrary as in the case of the omniscient author. (46)

A distinction needs to be made between the objectification of point of view and the alleged "dehumanization" resulting from it. The suppression or the disguise of the subjective point of view in cinema or in the novel never attains the total elimination of subjectivity. Robbe-Grillet's apparent objectification of the point of view does not necessarily deprive his novels of humanism. His descriptions of objects and events create only the appearance of an impersonal work for they "do not in any way have a 'photographic' or naively realistic purpose; they are…rather supports or objective correlatives of a tacit psychology"(93). The most "objective" descriptions and manipulations of the point of view are bound to remain "pseudo-objective"(106).

References

Bhaskaran, S. Theodore. Eye of the Serpent: An Introduction to Tamil Cinema. Madras: East West Books, 1996.

Blackmore, Susan, The Meme Machine, Oxford :Oxford University Press, 1999.

Brodie, Richard . Virus Of The Mind: The New Science Of The Meme. England: Integral Press, 1996.

Dawkins, Richard. The Selfish Gene. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

---. "Replicators and Vehicles" King's College Sociobiology Group, eds., Current Problems

in Sociobiology, Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, pp. 45–64, 1982.

Deleuze, Giles. Bergsonism. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Zone Books, 1991.

---. Cinema I: The Movement-Image. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam.

London: The Athlone Press, 1986.

---. Cinema II: The Time-Image. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: The Athlone Press, 1989.

Distin, Kate. The Selfish Meme: A Critical Reassessment, Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, p. 238, 2005.

Greimas, A.J. Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Jacob, Preminda. Celluloid Deities: the Visual Culture of Cinema and Politics in South India. Plymouth: Lexington, 2009.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. Structural Anthropology. London: Penguin, 1972.

Morrissette, Bruce. Novel and Film: Essays in Two Genres. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1985

Nandy, Ashish. "Tradition, Trangressions, and Norms." The Tao of Cricket. New Delhi:OUP, 2000.

Prasad, Madhava. Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction. New Delhi:Oxford University Press, 1998.

Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, and Paul Willemen. Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema. New Delhi:

Oxford University Press, 1994.

Ravi S. Vasudevan,ed. Making Meaning in Indian Cinema. New Delhi: Oxford UniversityPress, 2000.

Russell, Bertrand. The Analysis of Mind, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921.

Call for Papers

Singularities International Conference on Power
12-14 January 2016 (SICON POWER 16)

www.singularitiesinternationalconferenceonpower.in

Power is a constructed myth of authority which controls and channelizes the operations across the universe. Though power is often equated with autocracy, its panoptic exercise is legitimized at the expense of its capacity to rule out anarchy. A strategic situation and a desire with terror or concealed intentions, power pierces the layers of social and individual anatomy horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and along circular paths. With multiple dimensions and relations it holds, power imposes restriction, later deflates it, and eventually invites counter action. This paradox, with the coercion of signifiers, is, sociologically, nothing but a comparative stance in the hierarchical thread of human existence. **Singularities,** the transdisciplinary biannual research journal, undertakes an academic endeavor to travel around these singularities beneath the skin of power, by organizing Singularities International Conference on Power 2016.

The Postgraduate Department of English at KAHM Unity Women's College has successfully driven the academic community of the region to novel perceptions and genuine realities. Through organizing this international conference on power we aim to bring together leading academic figures, scholars and researchers belonging to various disciplines across the world by providing a trans-disciplinary forum of discussion, to exchange unique theories, perceptions, intuitions and analytics. In a broader perspective, we encourage and solicit high quality papers which are original, unpublished and dynamic results of research, with conceptual, constructive, empirical, experimental or theoretical dimensions that address the below mentioned themes and topics for the conference:

- Power-Scope of a Definition • Power and humanity
- Categories of Power • Power and scrutiny
- Disciplines and Power: sociology, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, law, medicine, engineering, architecture, archaology
- Power and Discipline • Power and civics
- Machines / Technology and Power • Media and Power
- Power and History • Power and Ethnicity
- Power and Nations • Power and international relations
- Power and Politics • Gender and Power
- Power and Spirituality • Power and Animals
- Human relationships and power • Religion and Power

- Ideology and Power • Power in Theory
- Power and modus operandi • Power and Sustenance
- Power and body • Dangers of Power
- Limits of Power • Science of/and Power
- Signs and Power
- Representation of Power in film, drama and other performing arts/dance forms
- Manifestations of Power in Literature
- Power and art
- Power and senses-visual, auditory etc.
- Power and silence • Power and Games
- Power and business • Power and boundaries
- War and Power • Power, imperialism and colonialism
- Globalization and Power • Power, belief and non-belief
- Power and social evils • Power-Myths
- Power and cyber culture • Power and money
- Power and morality • Power and Nature
- Case studies

Submission Guidelines

- The first page of the abstract should contain only
    - Title of the paper
    - Name of the author
    - Affiliation
    - Address with Email & Phone No.
- Abstract should be typed in Times New Roman font in MS Word format
- Font size is 12 for normal text and 14 for Title
- Line space should be 1.5
- The typing should be on one side of A4 paper
- Abstract/Paper must be original and in English.
- Abstract word limit is 400 words including introduction, objective, research methodology and result or conclusion.

We acknowledge receipt and answer all paper proposals submitted. If you do not receive a reply from us in two weeks you should assume we did not receive your proposal; it might be lost in cyberspace! We suggest, then, to look for an alternative electronic route or resend.

Singularities International Conference on Power
January 2016 (SICON POWER 16)

Registration Fee:

Students:

Participation only	:	Rs. 500/-
Participation and Presentation	:	Rs. 750/-
Participation, presentation and Publication	:	Rs. 750/-

Research Scholars:

Participation	:	Rs. 750/-
Participation & Presentation	:	Rs. 1000/-
Participation, Presentation & publication	:	Rs. 1500/-

Others:

Participation only	:	Rs. 1500/-
Participation and Presentation	:	Rs. 2000/-
Participation, presentation and Publication	:	Rs. 2500/-

Important dates

Last date for submission of Abstracts: October 2, 2015

Approval of Abstracts: October 15, 2015

The abstracts received will be reviewed by a panel of experts and the authors of the selected abstracts will be informed accordingly only by Email.

The abstracts may be sent via email to: mail@singularities.in

E-mails should be entitled: SICON POWER 16 Abstract Submission

For more information about the conference, visit the website: www.singularities.in or palimpzest.blogspot.in

All papers accepted for and presented at the conference must be in English and will be eligible for publication in an ISBN eBook. Selected papers may be developed for publication in Singularities Volume 3 Issue 1.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Singularities

a transdisciplinary biannual research journal

ISSN No: 2348 – 3369.

Name : _____

Address : _____

_____

_____

Tel : _____

Mob : _____

E-mail : _____

Choose the type of subscription required :

1 - Year - Rs. 1000 ☐
[2015 Volume 1 Issue 1 (January) & 2 (July)]

2 - Years - Rs. 1750 ☐
[2015 Volume 1 Issue 1 (January) & 2 (July)]

Mode of payment towards subscription is as follows :

Online transfer on State Bank of Travancore,
Citi Point Shopping Mall Manjeri.

Name of the Account	: Department of English Fund
Branch Code	: 71023
Account number	: 67267390497
IFS Code	: SBTR 0001023
MICRCode	: 676009054

Signature :

Date :

Postgraduate Department of English

Korambayil Ahamed Haji Memorial
UNITY WOMEN'S COLLEGE
Manjeri, Malappuram, Kerala.

www.singularities.in
www.kahmunityenglish.in/journals/singularities/


Singularities
a transdisciplinary biannual research journal