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Resilient Assertion of Agency in P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change*

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Indian women endure patriarchy and its attendant repression and displacement because of the structures of caste, gender and class. The three oppressive mechanisms operate on them, their choices and their self-hood with varying intensity. Dalit women, who are at the bottom of the caste and class hierarchy, suffer triple displacement by virtue of their caste, gender and class. They are indiscriminately and indifferently exploited, both by upper caste men and by the men of their own community. Hence, they have devised their own individual or collective strategies to counter and survive these multiple, debilitating hegemonies. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, a Distinguished Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Sociology, and the Cultural Foundations of Education has developed a transnational approach to feminist theory, practice and activism. Mohanty borrows Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith's concept of "relations of ruling" from her book *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* and refers to it in her own book *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory Practicing Solidarity*, to point out the multiple, intersecting power systems that have a direct or indirect impact on women's lives.

Dorothy Smith refers "specifically to Western (white) capitalist patriarchies" (56). But Mohanty says:

> I find her conceptualization of "relations of ruling" a significant theoretical and methodological development, which can be used to advantage in specifying the relations between the organization and experience of sexual politics and the concrete historical and political forms of colonialism, imperialism, racism and capitalism. Smith's concept of relations of ruling foregrounds forms of knowledge and organized practices and institutions, as well as questions of consciousness, and agency. (56)

"Relations of ruling" when applied to the Indian context must recognise what Mohanty refers to as "indigenous patriarchies" (58) which are the norm in a specific nation and play a role in controlling and limiting the space available to women there. Mohanty also refers to Dorothy

Smith's concept of the "ruling apparatus" (108), provided by her in *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Smith states that:

> The ruling apparatus is that familiar complex of management, government administration, professions, and intelligentsia, as well as the textually mediated discourses that coordinate and interpenetrate it. Its special capacity is the organization of particular places, persons, and events into generalized and abstracted modes vested in categorical systems, rules, laws, and conceptual practices. The former thereby become subject to an abstracted and universalised system of ruling mediated by texts. (108)

Smith's "ruling apparatus" is with respect to the capitalist system and its compartmentalisation of people, places and events. This definition and concept is applicable to the inhuman and dehumanising caste system prevalent in India, since ancient times. The caste system is a "ruling apparatus" that categorises human beings, based on criteria enshrined in texts like *Manusmriti.* It sanctions the discriminatory positioning of human beings at several hierarchical levels in Indian society, based on their birth in a particular caste or *jati.*

This paper will focus attention on the lives and subversive strategies evolved and employed by Dalit women characters in P. Sivakami's novel *The Grip of Change.* P. Sivakami is a bureaucrat turned novelist and social activist who has written critically acclaimed novels on Dalit life, with special emphasis on the repression and exploitation, encountered by Dalit women. Her first novel *Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum* was published in 1989 and the author herself translated the book into English. The English translation was published as *The Grip of Change* in 2006. *Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum* was the first Tamil novel by a Dalit woman writer, a categorisation that P. Sivakami strongly rejects and prefers, not to use. The Dalit women characters in Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* are subjected to multiple, intersecting, patriarchal hegemonies. They retain their resilience in the face of extreme violence and use various strategies to subvert patriarchy and survive. The novel will be analysed from the perspective of the theories of transnational feminism.

P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* will be studied by using certain aspects of the theory of *earthy humanness,* as explicated by Dr. Roja Singh in the chapter "Sprouting in Transnational Feminism: *Earthy Humanness* in Dalit Women" from her book *Spotted Goddesses: Dalit Women's Agency-Narratives on Caste and Gender Violence.* Roja Singh is

a visiting Assistant Professor of women and gender studies at St. John Fisher College, Rochester, New York. She researches the daily struggles and survival tactics evolved and developed by Dalit women in rural Tamil Nadu to counter hegemonic forces, that strive to crush them. Her research on the actual oral narratives of Dalit women in Tamil Nadu helps in understanding the indomitable spirit of resilience displayed by Dalit women. Singh writes in the Prologue to her book *Spotted Goddesses: Dalit Women's Agency-Narratives on Caste and Gender Violence* that, "in their brokenness, rising from within a mortar as splatter narratives dodging a pounding pestle, Dalit women's voices take root in experiential meanings" (12).

Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* depicts the life of Dalit women in rural Tamil Nadu. The novel dismantles several stereotypical assumptions about Dalit women's lack of assertion and their passive subjugation. Female characters in Sivakami's novel assert themselves and demand their right to a safe, dignified, independent existence, whenever possible. They are unafraid of back breaking hard work and are prepared to relentlessly persist for a better life. They are determined to forge a life for themselves and proceed to do this in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. These women are not pale, submissive, wraith like creatures who go down quietly and passively, in the face of insurmountable odds.

Dalit women are placed at the bottom of the hierarchical patriarchal system that arbitrarily increases their social invisibility when they demand better living conditions, higher wages and safety and security. Ironically, this does not in any way affect their sexual visibility and their being subjected to violent sexual assault. Both upper caste and Dalit patriarchy invade the narrow space allocated to Dalit women and exploit them, sexually and otherwise, either in collusion or separately. Dalit women are denied basic rights, and deprived of a respectable means of livelihood. They are deprived of the right to education, right to hygienic basic amenities, right to freedom of movement, right to safety and equality. Their gender and their caste make them extremely vulnerable to sexual predators and different types of physical and mental exploitation.

Despite the overwhelming odds against them, Dalit women have continuously evolved ways and means to counter these intersecting patriarchal forces. Dalit women's daily lives are based on ensuring the safety and well-being of themselves and their entire community. They face unprecedented and often unimaginably cruel violence at the hands of the upper caste men and the men of their own community. Scholar-activists like Roja Singh

study the interconnection between gender and caste. Singh firmly believes that Dalit women adapt to difficult circumstances and devise their own survival strategies to subvert patriarchy.

She states clearly that to foreground Dalit women's resilient attitude and their assertion of agency, she does not use words like "down" or "bottom" (12) to refer to their underprivileged and vulnerable position in the caste hierarchy and general society. She prefers to use words like "broken" and "ground" (12) to refer to Dalit women. Singh further explains that, "In their broken state, Dalits- especially Dalit women who are most subject to violence – desire, demand, create, and sustain positive changes that confirm human dignity" (12). Singh has explained her theory of *earthy humanness* in the chapter "Sprouting in Transnational Feminism: *Earthy Humanness* in Dalit Women" in her *book Spotted Goddesses: Dalit Women's Agency-Narratives on Caste and Gender Violence.* Singh writes:

> This *earthy humanness* grounded in lived experiences reveals inner tensions and struggles of daily lives where a meshing of submission and resistance forms the core of a *change-seeking restlessness* to counter a culture of violence and punishment leading to result-based activism. Spaces of restlessness lead to a kinesis of deep desires and actions to instate claims to human rights into their daily lives as a rightful way of life. (19)

The Grip of Change begins with Thangam, a young Dalit widow, arriving at the house of the influential local Paraya leader Kathamuthu. Thangam's body is bruised and battered, but her spirit is defiant and indomitable. She belongs to the village of Puliyur, and she had been brutally beaten up by the upper caste men of her locality, outside her corner hut, in the *cheri.* She had screamed out in pain, when they dragged her out by her hair and beat her up. Her screams had attracted the attention of the other members of the *cheri* and the attackers had fled. The people of the *cheri* tried to pacify her, but she rejected their help. They had always sidelined her, after the death of her husband and had not supported her even when she was deprived of her husband's land by her predatory brothers-in-law. Her husband's brothers had wanted her to give in to their sexual advances. But she had resisted them for three years and they had refused to part with her share of her dead husband's property. The people of the *cheri* had not supported her and she had been surviving in extremely difficult circumstances. Forced by hunger and poverty Thangam had sought work in the fields owned by the upper caste landowner, Paranjothi Udayar.

The old and lascivious Udayar had observed her while she was working in his fields, and then one day, he had pounced upon her. He had forced himself on her and raped her, despite her stiff resistance. Soon, he made it a habit, and Thangam had to succumb to the old man's predatory advances. Thangam had "hated succumbing to the loathsome old man's lust. She sobbed with anger sitting in the field" (33). But she was a hapless victim of circumstances. She depended on the wages provided by him for her survival, and despite being disgusted, she had to give in to him. Sivakami writes that "Thereafter, he made it a routine to have sex with her and slake his lust whenever possible – in the motor shed or in the fields. She no longer resisted him. There was no choice" (34). Soon other members of her community referred to her as "Paranjothi's concubine" (6).

 News of this sexual liaison reached the ears of Udayar's wife and she informed her brothers and brothers-in-law. Udayar's wife and brothers did not think about confronting Udayar. They held Thangam responsible for everything and she was beaten up by four hefty men, under cover of darkness. The poor, desperate, lonely, vulnerable Dalit widow had been isolated, raped, exploited and physically assaulted by all the predatory men around her, irrespective of their caste and class. Thangam does not passively succumb to the beatings and the insufferable violence. She seethes with anger after the violent physical and verbal abuse, and then decides to meet Kathamuthu. She is determined to seek his help in lodging a police complaint against the upper caste men who had mercilessly beaten her for no fault of her own. Her rage and determination to seek succor and relief for the injustice meted out to her, by the upper caste men had spurred her on to walk alone, throughout the night, and arrive at Kathamuthu's village of Athur, a distance of six kilometres from Puliyur. She arrived at his home at dawn and waited patiently to meet him.

Kathamuthu sees Thangam and she shows him her bruised body. He and his two wives and two children are shocked at the sight of Thangam's battered body. She tells Kathamuthu that she has arrived at his home to seek his help and support to punish her attackers. Thangam has what Roja Singh refers to as a "*change-seeking restlessness".* This "*change-seeking restlessness"* is a feature of Singh's concept of *earthy humanness.* It drives Dalit women to relentlessly pursue the basic human rights that are denied to them because of their gender and caste. They resiliently fight for these rights every single day. Sivakami depicts Thangam's struggle for a dignified life of safety and freedom from exploitation. Thangam's character and her strategies for survival are an example of what Singh refers to as "meshing of submission and resistance" (19).

Thangam uses submission and resistance or a blend of both, in her life, to survive the vagaries of a desperate and perpetually fraught existence. She had been cowering in a corner of the house when Kathamuthu sees her in the early morning light. His enquiry to her regarding her arrival at his house results in Thangam railing at her abusers. She says, "What can I say? May they be hanged. May they go to hell. The ground will open up and swallow you. You'll eat mud. Bastards! You abused a helpless woman. You curs! Come Now! Come and lick…" (4). Angry and frustrated, she vociferously threatens and abuses her attackers in the presence of Kathamuthu, the shrewd negotiator and influential local Dalit leader. Thangam is a poor, young Dalit widow and nobody cares about the plight of poor, vulnerable sections of society, especially women. She knows that she will not be able to ensure just desserts for her abusers if she goes to the police station alone, and unaccompanied. So she had come to Kathamuthu, so that he would ensure justice for her. Thangam calls him, "My savior Sami! To whom can I tell this, but you? That's why I came running all this distance, all through the night, to see you. See what those rascals did to me" (4). Then she removed her sari to reveal her wounded and bloodied body.

Thangam's plight is unremarkable, but her spirit is indomitable. She is the epitome of resilience and demands justice and relief for the wounds inflicted upon her body and soul. Kathamuthu asks her to explain her condition and she tells him the sordid and familiar tale of upper caste abuse and sexual exploitation. She also reveals the merciless attitude of Dalit patriarchy that resulted in her impoverished situation. She says that she could not file a complaint or a case against her husband's brothers, "How could I fight them? I couldn't go to court. Who can spend that much money? Even if I had won, I wouldn't be able to take care of my share of land in peace, not with everyone hating me. I am a single woman now" (6). Kathamuthu refuses to believe Thangam because she is a childless Dalit widow. He devalues her pain and the violence perpetrated upon her, by crudely questioning her, "All right, it happened. Now tell me, why didn't you go after someone of our caste? It is because you chose that upper caste fellow, that four men could come and righteously beat you up. Don't you like our chaps?" (7). Shocked by Kathamuthu's words, Thangam vehemently refutes his allegations and his vulgar words. She says to Kathamuthu that Udayar had raped her and she had tried, in vain, to resist him. She says to Kathamuthu, "…I want those men who beat me up to fall at my feet and plead" (8).

Earthy humanness is present in Thangam's attempt to challenge an apathetic and cruel system of "violence and punishment" (19). She challenges the upper caste and Dalit

patriarchy by asserting her demand for justice and need for revenge against all who had brutalised her. She is in a very difficult and desperate position because of her gender and her lowly caste status, but that does not in any way reduce her to passive submission and quiet acceptance of her situation. Thangam may be illiterate and ignorant about the rules and procedure of law, but this does not impede her defiance and her quest for justice. She realises that she is grossly underprivileged and that the system may not grant her due reprieve. But Thangam refuses to be cowed down and relegated to the margins; a silent victim of untold oppression and suffering. Rather, she foregrounds herself, by arriving at Kathamuthu's house and compelling him to file a complaint on her behalf in the police station. She remains unfazed by Kathamuthu's rude words and is in fact, supported by Kathamuthu's wives, who sharply rebuke him for his crudity.

The odds are against her, but she is determined to assert her agency and through the blending of "submission and resistance", she is able to make Kathamuthu negotiate with the upper caste men and get a paltry compensation of ten thousand rupees. Thangam is provided refuge by Kathamuthu in his home. He also borrows money from the compensation provided to her by Paranjothi Udayar. In course of time, Thangam becomes his concubine. Despite all these vicissitudes, Thangam manages to ensure a modicum of safety and dignity for herself by staying on in Kathamuthu's house. Thangam is aware that it is impossible for her to survive safely, and lead a dignified existence on her own terms, in a society that consigns her to the farthest margins and refuses to treat her as anything but a sexual object. She forges a life for herself within Kathamuthu's home and gradually oversees his fields and workers. Thus, despite her displacement by upper caste and Dalit patriarchy, she ensures a better life for herself, through her resilience and assertion.

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Incoherent Truths: The 'Mad Woman' in Triveni's Psychoanalytical Fiction

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In her short life of thirty five years, Triveni (Anasuya Shankar), wrote brilliant fictional work in Kannada which foregrounded the struggles of women in post-independence India, straddling oft-conflicting roles of tradition and modernity. Out of her stupendous collection of twenty one novels and three collections of short stories, four works undertake phenomenal analysis of psycho-cultural aspects of mental illness, especially among women. Triveni herself foregrounds these novels– *Bekkina Kannu, Doorada Betta, Mucchida Baagilu* and *Sharapanjara* as 'Psychoanalytical'. This article is an attempt to highlight how Triveni employs the popular genre of women's fiction to give greater visibility and exigency to concerns of women's mental illness.

Triveni's greatest contribution to feminist literature in Kannada is her sensitive handling of a highly cognitive, rational subject, namely Clinical Psychiatry, through psychoanalytical narrative; she combines a highly scientific approach to what society terms as 'madness' or 'insanity' with subjective, individual voices of the abject who are shut in, therefore, shut out. Her specific focus is on women whose mental instabilities arise from psycho-cultural demands of the multiple roles which define and essentialise them within boundaries of accepted notions of the feminine.

Psycho-analysis became a significant discourse for study of human conditions at the turn of the 20th century after Sigmund Freud's publication of *Interpretation of Dreams*. Discourses emerging from the Freudian bulwark challenged the Descartian notion of body versus mind apart from bridging the gap between psychological and material realms of culture and society. Freud's life practice on psychological conditions such as hysteria were already narrativised by Victorian writers, mostly women, in fiction. Psychoanalytical feminist literature thus preceded and contributed to psycho-analytical feminism in 20th century as much as women's writing did to larger feminist movements across the world. Women's fiction is one of the most discursive and powerful ways of critiquing socio-cultural practices concerning the feminine gender. Often dismissed as women's writing in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it challenges the notion of feminism in its radical, expressivist, dialectical and oppositional, non-institutional forms. Women's fiction demonstrates multiple ways of women's resistance, often

emerging from within the very cultural milieu that it contextualizes and critiques. Popular fiction particularly continues to be not taken seriously enough to constitute 'literature'. Within the rubric of postmodern, dialogic feminisms, it becomes increasingly important to question the canonicity of women's literature and approach women's heterogeneous narratives as 'texts' that open up possibilities of reading in a continuum. To this end, this article goes back to one of the most brilliant writers of women's popular fiction in India – Triveni, with an attempt to re-examine her treatment of social realism under the lens of psycho-cultural readings of women's lives during her time. Much of her work highlights questions that have become pertinent to postcolonial and neo-colonial questions of women's identities in India today, including concerns of tradition and modernity (in the context of globalisation), non-heteronormative gender identities of masculinity and femininity, and the politics of institutionalized violence (marital rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and emotional trauma emerging from demand of conformity or/and deviance)

Women's Writing in Kannada

Women's Writing in Kannada has a long tradition, one which easily belies the notion that early women writers in Kannada wrote only about domestic issues. Kannada women writers have written on a range of topics varying from history and mythology to science and religion. Through the Navodaya, Pragatisheela, Navya and Navyottara movements in modern Kannada literature, women have increasingly written about gender difference, social discrimination based on caste, ethnicity and class, questions of sexuality, institutionalized male violence and issues of discrimination based on non-equity. Significant genres include poetry, short stories, the romantic novel and the social novel of realism. It is disheartening to note that most introductions to Kannada literature and movements leave out women or categorize them separately under women's writing.

Locating Triveni in Kannada and Indian Literatures

Triveni, born Anasuya (1928-63), published twenty novels and three short story collections in the last decade of her short life. Her most famous work, *Sharapanjara*, was published posthumously. Like much of women's fiction which is used to essentialise women's writing, Triveni's works are rarely recognized or read beyond the genre of popular fiction of her times. In this context, research on Triveni's works is imminent to feminist criticism in India which is often circumscribed by western, radical notions of feminism and women's writing. Novels of social realism by women are often watered down by the term 'women's fiction' or 'romantic

novel'. It is important to note why Triveni continues to be one among the most popular women writers in Kannada and perhaps one of the most adapted and translated into other languages and the medium of film. Susie Tharu and J. Lalitha observe,

> The central focus of Triveni's novels are women. She explores, with considerable insight, the psychological problems faced by middle-class women at different stages in life, and is particularly interested in societies in which women's social status, their educational backgrounds, and their psychological involvements are rapidly changing. Triveni sets the individual against a background of the social forces that determine her experience and investigates the origins, especially within the structure of the family, of women's tensions and behaviour. (286)

Triveni's oeuvre ranges from social issues faced by middle-class women in post-colonial 'modern' contexts to psycho-social concerns of women under increasing, often conflicting demands of femininity. With the ensuing growth of industrialization and urbanization, women's spaces were transformed. While educational reforms and increasing participation of women in active employment enabled women to redefine themselves, their relationship with larger social structures and institutions such as family continued to be defined primarily in traditional terms. Triveni's work clearly underlines women's role in the transformation of cultural values and value systems. Private and public spaces (hitherto dominated by men) do not just converge, but are redefined in the process of changing roles of femininities and masculinities

Locating Triveni: The Continuum of her Narrative Voice

During the first half of the 20th Century, first and second generations of women who wrote fiction were invariably influenced by the college and university education they obtained, largely defined by Western approaches and movements. The impact of the first wave of feminism in Western Europe and America coupled with the immense amount of literature emerging from psycho-analytical theory is evident in women's fiction, including the romantic novel and the novel of social realism. Progressive movements in India concerning inheritance of property, marriage laws and choice of exercising motherhood find reflection in women's fictions in the vernacular. Widow re-marriage , women's education, and conflicting demands of traditional roles and modernity are specific concerns raised by women's popular fiction. Among Kannada popular fiction writers, Triveni's specific focus on women's psychological problems is of significant interest, not only because of the futuristic approach she takes towards

handling of a variety of women's concerns, but remarkably due to the fact that her narratives were re-created and re-presented on celluloid and continue to be reiterated through multiple texts. Triveni's novels went on to become some of the most vociferous women-centric films in Kannada cinema and ushered in an era of brilliant feminist narratives on celluloid, almost conspicuous in its absence for the past two decades. Triveni, Puttana Kanagal and Kalpana continue to be an invincible triad in the history of Kannada cinema. More recent representations of Kalpana, for instance, including a bio-pic, *Abhinetri*, foreground her performance as Kaveri of Triveni's *Sharapanjara*

Female Psyche and Psychological Persipience:

All four psychoanalytical novels of Triveni are directly psychoanalytical in nature and go into realms of Abnormal Psychology. Both plot and setting consist of mental hospitals, psychiatric intervention and actual clinical processes of treatment, parallel to situations within institutions of family, marriage, religion, education and law in varying degrees. Through these novels, Triveni questions the binary of 'sane', accepted lives which conform to society and 'insane', abject lives who are considered deviants and live 'outside' society.

A significant point to be noted is the spectrum of characters Triveni introduces across texts. Although these novels centre around women's issues, Triveni contextualizes conditions pertaining to both masculinities and femininities within institutionalized norms of conformity and deviance. Readers thus get insights into texts around a hysterical woman, not just a hysterical woman's story. Questions of gender conformity emerge in novels such as *Mucchida Bagilu* where one of the patients feels trapped within a man's body and is unable to live up to society's expectations. Triveni demonstrates how people of different classes and castes, religions and backgrounds suffer from abjection of society at varying levels due to the inability to comprehend their assigned roles in society. Clinical mental conditions have their roots in hegemonic cultural practices. The mental home thus becomes an ironic critique of socio-cultural practices and the madness that actually lies outside its walls. The mad man or woman is imperative to the creation of a 'sane' society. The abject becomes the founding principle for consolidating subjects within a society or social group. In effect, Triveni is questioning: Who is the abject? Who is actually mad?

The novels also demonstrate the stigma attached to mental conditions and patients and society's resistance to accept the mentally 'ill' although ironically, it is the source and perpetrator. Post-mental trauma, even if patients are mentally healthy to resume social roles,

institutions are most of the time unaccepting, and worse still, aggravate pre-trauma conditions. Kaveri in *Sharapanjara* is an example of how social milieus which do not accept either the mental conditions or recovery, fail to take back recovered patients into their homes and familial roles. In the case of women in the first part of the 20th century, this becomes a blatant disregard for a women's basic human rights as most of them are dependent of traditional systems (homes into which they are married, husbands, in-laws, neighbours and community) for sustenance in the absence of education or training for a living. Through mental illness, Triveni foregrounds questions of marriage and widowhood, motherhood and the choice of pregnancy, abortion and family planning, domestic violence, sexual harassment including pre-adolescent sex and marital rape, and larger questions of women's purity by way of virginity and chastity. Filial relationships are explored in *Bekkina Kannu* and the notion of daughterhood in the absence of socially sanctioned motherhood. Both step-mother's and daughter's roles are challenged and the step-mother's green cat eyes act as a metaphor for the critique of social construction of motherhood. *Doorada Betta* focuses on questions of widow-remarriage and underlines the internalization of the notion of marriage by young girls at a tender age, psychologically, through concepts of purity, fidelity and chastity. Between women who are forced to re-marry in the name of modernity and women who carry the guilt of remarriage even after exercising a choice, Triveni highlights the absence of total agency for women in either case and the existential angst of validating womanhood through acceptance or denial of remarriage. In her article "Inaugurating a (Feminine) Public: Women's Romances in Kannada, 1950s–1960s", Radhika. P highlights how women's fiction after independence underlines the paradox of Indian response to western notions of modernity:

> "…on the one hand the novels align with the state in their articulation of 'subjectivity' in terms of 'citizen', 'individual' and 'rights'. On the other hand, 'subjectivity' in terms of the 'non-rational' destabilises the former. The non-rational is revealed in a narrative technique that shows the women protagonists' psychological conflicts as persistent, recurring and irresolvable, infusing the narrative with 'hysterical excess'" (85)

All four novels examine the thin line that imposes the artificial binary between conformity and deviance. *Mucchida Bagilu* (closed door) is symbolic of how madness is at once displacement from larger institutional roles of society and an insight into the hegemonic nature of society's roles. A closed door appears to hide or close the world behind it from one side, but from the other side, it reveals. People who are shut in, away from the world reveal why they are shut out and the nature of the world that shut them out.

A close reading of available secondary material on Triveni reveals that she is the first Kannada writer to reveal the inner machinations of culture in women's psyche. The basis for the psychological 'disorders' faced by women is often a result of the psycho-cultural conditioning of women through institutionalized narratives and roles assigned to women since childhood. Sudhir Kakar reveals the complicit texture of culture interwoven into processes of socio-linguistic development of a child into accepted norms of adulthood. In *The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*, Kakar underlines the psychological basis for cultural identity and the narrativization of culture as the continuing trope defining individual identities. To this effect, women re-enact myths founded in the archetypes of virgin, mother-goddess, pativrata (fidelity towards the husband) and altruistic principles of the feminine. Mental disorders in women are therefore essentially constituted as the inability of women to conform to these archetypal roles and associated behaviours. The hysterical subject, Kaveri, in Triveni's *Sharapanjara* is thus a monstrosity who is not considered fit to take up the 'normal' roles of wife and mother after her return from the mental care institution. The role of myth in constituting the psycho-cultural understanding of the feminine is apparent in *Doorada Betta* where widow re-marriage is psychologically unacceptable to the protagonist irrespective of the fact that her natal family and immediate community is open to the idea. What is socially acceptable due to advancement in women's education and their entry into the public world through careers is still morally reprehensible to the psyche of a woman whose feminine identity is constructed in childhood through the symbolic narrative myths of Sita, Tara and Ahalya. As Sudhir Kakar states, "Much of the teaching and transmission of Hindu cultural values to the next generation takes place through the narration of stories and parables by mothers, grandmothers, and others in the circle of the extended family" (43). Contrastingly, the choice of widow remarriage and a career is not available to Rama, the female protagonist in *Hoovu Hannu* due to poverty and the absence of a family and education. The social ostracization of prostitution seems all too ironic when society refuses to accord respect and safety to women who have no financial support and institutional backing from the family.

As a student of Psychology, Triveni is able to integrate elements of clinical psychiatry with psychoanalytical insights into the mental stress which women undergo in an attempt to break free from psycho-culturally entrenched traditional roles of marriage and motherhood. The mantle of guilt is often inwardly worn by women although social conditions force women to be victimized or vindicate their human rights as individuals. B.P. Ashakumari highlights how the psychological dilemma of being a woman is apparent in Triveni's psychoanalytical

fiction: "A woman who aspires for phenomena beyond socially accepted values experiences mental tensions. This leads her to an intense feeling that she is doing something wrong and should rectify it. Unconsciously, as an outcome of this guilt, certain circumstances manifest unconsciously in the absence of an open channel for hidden emotions." (34)

Conclusion

Literature often contributes to a deeper understanding of human concerns, allowing one to go beyond rational, visible notions of reality to the inner workings of subjective experience. Triveni's psychoanalytical works humanize the mentally ill and reveal what society terms 'madness' as a condition created by its very own complex mechanisms of the normative and transgressive. Triveni's psychoanalytical work can thus be constituted as a significant political, feminist writing practice that establishes women's psychogenic experience as a critical space for dismantling established ways of knowing and being.

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A Portrayal of Psychological Venture and Upheavals in "It was the Nightingale"

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Abstract

The short story, "It Was the Nightingale", is guilty of going ahead with her career neglecting her family life, Hema of "A wall is safer" is guilty of giving importance to family by sacrificing her career. It is the story of a self-effacing wife who has sacrificed her career for the sake of her husband. Hema, the protagonist is a lawyer by profession. When her husband is transferred to a village to do research in agriculture, she accompanies him to that remote village and hence forgoes her career as a lawyer. She tries to feel satisfied with her way of life but has a trace of dissatisfaction for her condition. She even envies her husband when he comes home tired, satisfied and full of what he has been doing. This paper focuses on her inner conflict.

Key words: Psychology, conflict, envy, sacrifice

Through the story, Deshpande tries to project the sacrifices women need to make for the sake of family and their psychological turmoil in the process. On considering the other factors, she gets ready to relinquish her career. She suffers of agoraphobia and is frightened of open spaces. Her traditional mind does not allow her to accept the house without a wall. Hence she feels it is foolish to sit inside the house in order to avoid dangers. On the whole she is presented as a woman in a conflict regarding the justification of her act of forgoing her career for a happy, married life.

She regards that anybody should do a few fairness to their education by putting it to perform. So she questions Hema whether she is happy or not. Though she knows that her husband has an affair she is not discouraged. She keeps her life going without caring for him.

 The psychological struggle a young widow faces when she is sexually exploited by her own family members and her dilemma when a physically challenged person proposes to marry her is portrayed in the story A Man and a Woman. Her son Ramesh is only four years of age. Jayanth's father asks him to stay in their house to make amends for his loss. When

Jayanth dies, Lalitha does not feel a big difference in her life as she did not enjoy life with her husband.

Initially she is unaware of the stigma attached to widowhood and pities Jayanth who has died at such a young age. She understands her real situation only when she is criticized by her mother-in-law for buying a colorful sari and for laughing aloud. With her affable behavior she has unknowingly aroused the feelings of Ajit, her younger brother- in - law who is seventeen years of age. Nor does she try to bring him to senses but fully cooperates with him and succumbs to him. She uses Ajit as a vehicle to quench her sexual thirst. She doesn't feel either guilty or embarrassed and tries to be normal with him as if nothing has happened. Only after the second consummation, she realizes her mistake and feels guilty of her act and cries bitterly. Only then Manu realizes that it is his "D-Day" and he must try to remove the apprehensions of Lalitha and in the process must remove the bitterness in his life..

The story deals with the problem of Indian women married off to men working abroad. In many cases, for a variety of reasons like looking after the ailing in-law, or not getting a visa, the wives stay back either in their maternal home or with their in-laws. In such a situation if they learn anything about their husband's treachery their condition becomes pathetic. Deepa in "Travel Plans" faces a similar situation and undergoes the suffering all alone. Deepa is married to Shriram who is working in U.S. Shriram's mother is an SLE (Systemic Lupus Erythematosus) patient and hence Deepa is left with her in-laws to take care of them. Deepa has been working in a travel agency that arranges foreign tours.

Shashi Deshpande observed that most of her women characters build harmonious relationship in a spirit of give-and-take and in a mood of compromise and understanding. They undergo the process of transformation and change their perspective to cope with life that remains the same. They do not change the situation but change their outlook. This is the common thread found in many of her short stories. A woman who has a successful career must be willing to give it up in favor of her husband's and this sacrifice is taken as a matter of fact. In such a context, the decision to get on at work implies doubts, remorse, and a deep sense of guilt in "It Was the Nightingale". A Hindu wife may even sacrifice her sexual life if her husband's ideals require it as mentioned in "The First Lady". Like this, since ancient times, women have been segregated, codified and victimized on the basis of their sex. Their sex has been a site over which patriarchy is relentlessly playing out its game of discrimination and discernment.

Woven around the experience of a honeymooning couple, the story is about the emotional and physical shock which the female protagonist has to undergo, when her husband sexually assaults her. She finds her agony that her body has been intruded in the process. A Liberated Woman is another story demarcating the physical abuse in marital relationships. The title itself is ironical, because here the wife even lacks this freedom to earn more than her husband. Love making for her becomes an exercise in sadism, An Antidote to Boredom shows another dimension of a marriage where a married woman is seen to be alienated from her husband who loves being in love with his rigid schedule of work.

Women's writings bear the authentic signatures of their experience; open before us a new vista, and wherever one will realize however societies and traditions have compete a subversive role in relegating a lady to a secondary position. The short stories concerned during this paper depict home as example of society, that however it becomes the nucleus around that the feminine protagonists revolve; volitionally, every now and then unwillingly, at different times, unwilling; generally out of compulsion and at different times, out of helplessness. Role of mother also can be rife with conflicts and issues that aren't too totally different from those of any western woman. Deshpande portrays mothers, who due to a strong feeling of self-devaluation consider themselves intruders in their own family and strangers to their own daughters in "Why a Robin". They are perceived as warning signals by their daughters, with an expensive inner world that appears to be of no can try and separate from their model. Shashi Deshpande's female characters are women with a rich inner world which seems to be of no interest for their husbands, and children. Nevertheless they neither rebel nor protest against it and would rather choose cooperation in order that their acquainted structures stay intact.

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The Evolution of Fairy Tales and its Impact on Modern Literature

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Abstract

The tales get twisted as they travel through word of mouth and paper is an incorrigible certitude. But this retelling and revising of stories across generations have birthed some of the evergreen elements recurring in literature. It all began when a new literary genre was reinvented in the late 17th century by Charles Perrault, a French writer. Published in his compendium titled *Tales of Mother Goose,* 'fairy tales' were originally written to entertain the aristocrats and the gentry of the French chateaux. These tales were later passed on to the rest of Europe until each one received its fair share of modification. This research advocates supplementary readings on the topic and employ a structuralist theory along with paradigmatic analysis to arrive at meaningful inferences. Using an archetypal approach to identify the key features in select literary works that are representative of those in fairy tales is another method undertaken by the writer. This paper attempts to bring forth new ideas that justify this influence and ventures to discern its purview in future adaptations as well.

Keywords: fairy tales, folk tales, evolution of fantasies

The wake of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the rise of wandering minstrels or entertainers, called jongleurs, who travelled from place to place to amuse the common people with their stories, poetry recitations, and other performances. Such oral traditions facilitated the growth of culture as age-old beliefs, myths, and folktales were shared among people giving them a sense of identity and belonging. Later, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Renaissance writers included some of the stories in their works thus setting them down on paper. With the invention of the printing press around the same time, the tales were given wings of their own. In this way, the genre of fairy tales bloomed across the world. It is agreed among scholars that the genre has its roots in the folklore of any given place.

Fairy tale, as a literary form, was crystallised by the French baroness, Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy, who published 26 original fairy tales in 1690 and coined her work, *conte de fée.* However, most fairy tales as we know them today were collected and compiled by various writers in Europe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who gave shape to the English fairy tales that are still widely read and cherished by both children and adults. Charles Perrault, the French writer, is considered the 'father of fairy tales' unofficially

because of his pioneering contributions to the genre. He collected folktales and compiled them in his work titled, *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye,* which is translated as, *'Tales of Mother Goose',* in 1697. The well-known tales of *Cinderella, Puss in Boots, Blue Beard* and *Sleeping Beauty* are included in this book. A few years later, the Brothers Grimm collected the folktales of the divided German regions in an effort to unify the nation by popularizing their culture, in their compendium, *Children's and Household Tales* in 1812. But these were rather grim renditions that were dubbed down with every new edition published until 1857. During the nineteenth century, Hans Christian Andersen, a Danish writer, included a number of fairy tales in his volumes written for children.

Maria Tatar, Professor of German Studies at Harvard University, simplifies the reasons for the constant retellings of fairy tales. Firstly, they are birthed in oral traditions and hence they are not consistent as people tend to create modifications in the way they are narrated each time, considering the difference in dialect and culture within a nation. Secondly, these tales get passed down from generation to generation, from place to place, and from word of mouth to print. This handing down can be likened to the process of inheritance of genes from the parent to the offspring which is accompanied by the occurrence of slight variations during the transfer. This provides the basis for the evolution of fairy tales through the years. This dynamic nature of fairy tales facilitates their manipulation in literature and other media.

In 1928, the Soviet folklorist Vladimir Propp published *Morphology of the Folktale,* a book that paved way for the study of a new and significant theory. Propp based his research on a body of Russian fairy tales (though not strictly restricted) and attempted to break down elements of the stories, otherwise called narrative factors. He then reduced them to fundamental pieces of action, similar to the breaking down of matter into irreducible particles called atoms. In this way, Propp identified thirty-one structural units, or what he called "functions", that formed the building blocks of any story within the span of his research. These functions or 'narratemes' take place in a given chronological order even when only a few of them were found in a given work. He also defined seven characters with regard to the "spheres of action" they belong to.

For this study, Propp employed a strict structuralistic approach and paradigmatic analysis for which he received much criticism from his contemporaries. He detached the literary works from their influences, that is, he disregarded the impacts of the author's

preconceptions or the societal, and historical inspirations. Perhaps, this kind of analysis inspired critics like Levi Strauss, Roland Barthes, and Claude Bremond. Not to mention, it also revived the brief Russian Formalism and helped understand narratology. The influence of this theory is so profound that it can be successfully applied to many narratives and stories in the literary canon that were written much later, provided a similar approach is used. By extending the Proppian model to other literary works, it is possible to trace their similarities with fairy tales of yore. This idea is already encouraged in the book, *Morphology of the Folktale,* whose English translation appeared three decades after its original Russian version:

Propp's analysis should be useful in analyzing the structure of literary forms (such as novels and plays), comic strips, motionpicture and television plots, and the like. In understanding the interrelationship between folklore and literature, and between folklore and the mass media,... (*Introduction to the Second Edition*, p. xiv)

This argument can be justified with the help of the example of the novel of manners, *Pride and Prejudice,* written by Jane Austen. It was published in 1813 which suggests a considerable gap in time between the writing of the novel and of fairy tales. It is said that Jane Austen drew inspiration from many writers such as Shakespeare (many references to Shakespearean plays are found in Austen's works), Milton, Fanny Burney (her portrayal of intelligent and witty female characters), and Samuel Richardson (heavy influence on Austen's epistolary form of writing). Particularly in *Pride and Prejudice*, the conversations between the male and female leads are found to resemble those between the protagonists of William Congreve's *The Way of the World.*

By breaking down the novel into basic elements, parallelism can be drawn between the story and Propp's proposition. To begin with, the familiar opening line of the novel,

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

is praised for its wit and generality. Yet, that it is representative of the 'happily-ever-after' factor found in fairy tales, is often ignored. The statement in itself is an explicit revelation of a possible epilogue to the story, the marriage of the male and female protagonists, which is present as the concealed goal in fairy tales, the endings of which usually feature the union of the hero/prince and the maiden in marriage. But this fact being stated from a woman's perspective is one of the few well-marked deviations. Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, the distinguished hero of the novel, is the ultimate portrayal of Prince Charming. This is due to

his being a symbol of wealth, which is the requisite possession that qualifies a male character for the main role in a fairy tale. There are several instances in the novel where Darcy's property and fortunes are discussed. Perhaps, the opening line is also suggestive of the same. George Wickham poses threat to the smooth unfolding of the plot in the form of the 'false hero', one of the seven roles mentioned in Proppian taxonomy. Wickham enters the story when it is almost halfway through and displays a warm, and good-humoured mien that he can easily be mistaken for the hero. This inclusion of a counterfeit protagonist is found to be repeated in the character of Wickham, after its frequent usage in fairy tales. However, inflexible adherence to Propp's model requires that the false hero be punished in the climax, which is not found to be true in the case of Wickham. Lydia, the youngest of the Bennet sisters, initiates the conflict element as she elopes with Wickham. This coincides with the eighth narrateme of 'villainy and lack' (second sphere of action), where a turning point is created and the main action of the story begins. Following this event, the hero ventures to complete his mission after gaining information of the trickery. It is in this situation that Darcy displays himself as the knight-in-shining armour not to rescue some 'damsel in distress', but to protect the Bennet family from a scandalous disgrace.

In any fairy tale, the transformation of a character or an event finds an important place and is usually accompanied by magical or supernatural features as the donor vouchsafes the protagonist some gift or mystical power that goes beyond the scope of the physical world. In the novel, the characters of Darcy and Wickham act as vessels for the element of transformation. Though not paranormal their transformations are plain and pronounced enough to feel the change in their characters. Darcy, who was a pompous and overbearing man, gradually grew more self-effacing and amiable. This transfiguration is not as dramatic as that of the Beast into a handsome prince, but it is discernible and more down-to-earth. As opposed to this, Wickham goes from being a kind gentleman to becoming a self-absorbed mercenary. Another interesting parallel is seen in the role of the 'helper' who, according to Proppian definition, can be classified as "magical helpers", "magical agents", "universal helpers", "partial helpers" and, "specific helpers". The helper aids the hero in his adventure or pursuit and helps him achieve the desired prize. This role is played by Mrs. Gardiner who offers motherly support to the protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet. On several occasions, Ms. Bennet is found to depend on Mrs. Gardiner's practical wisdom and rationality. In his book, Propp mentions,

"One of the most important attributes of a helper is his prophetic wisdom: the prophetic horse, the prophetic wife, the wise lad, etc." (*Chapter VI: The Distribution of Functions Among Dramatis Personae*, p. 83)

Mrs. Gardiner predicted the change of Ms. Bennet's feelings for Darcy when no one else did. Interestingly, the character of 'helper' is found in some other works of Austen as well. For instance, in her last novel, *Persuasion*, Lady Russell plays the role of an experienced woman full of good counsel, taking care of the female lead. However, it must not be taken for granted that these characters are always right for they are often quite prejudiced and hold unobjective notions. Finally, the double engagement of Jane and Elizabeth to Mr. Bingley and Darcy, respectively, provides for the 'happy ending' predicted in the opening lines of the novel which is described as the last function, the "wedding", by Propp.

Cinderella, one of the most renowned fairy tales, can be traced back to the first century AD, when Strabo, a Greek historian, recorded the ancient oral folktale called *Rhodopis* in his book, *Geographica.* Since then, the story had been remodelled several times across nations throughout history. Besides Perrault's version called *Cendrillon,* which is closest to the one that the world is familiar with today, there were around five hundred others in Europe including *Pentamerone,* the first prosaic version that was published in Italy. In the nineteenth century, the Brothers Grimm added their own variant titled, *Aschenputtel*. There were also folktales without Europe, tailored with a similar storyline, viz. the Chinese version, *Yeh Xian* (860 AD), and a few stories from the medieval version of the *Arabian Nights* collection. No wonder so many books, films, operas, musicals, and theatres have made endless adaptations of the fairy tale. Tellingly, more than hundreds of novels inspired by the story of *Cinderella* have been published, specifically targeting the young adult audience. One of the most familiar adaptations is Disney's animation movie, *Cinderella* (1950) which presented a rather sanitized version of Perrault's story.

Cinderella (2021), the very recent retelling of the story may be the *volta* (or the turning point) of the constantly evolving tale. Written and directed by the American screenwriter and producer, Kay Cannon, the movie, a modern musical, was released on September 3, 2021, by Amazon Studios and immediately received several backlashes from the public. Nevertheless, it includes many significant features making it essential to analyze the film in order to determine the future trends. In the film, Cinderella is no passive lass locked up in the attic of a mansion but a confident and ambitious one who has entrepreneurial

dreams. Orphaned at a very young age, she lives with her stepmother and two stepsisters but is quite independent of them. With the help of the Fabulous Godmother, who replaces the Fairy Godmother in the picture, Cinderella is taken to the ball where she dances with Prince Robert. Fabulous Godmother is portrayed as a gender-agnostic person thus declaring that magic knows no gender. At the ball, the Prince's proposal is spurned by the maiden for the sake of her passion for dress-making, an event unprecedented thitherto in the history of fairy tales. Contrary to the classic, the stepmother persuades the heroine to get married to the prince so they can be financially powerful. Also, the role of the stepmother is peculiar in that she shows a subtle transformation in the end as she is moved by the progressive spirit of the heroine, breaking away from the clutches of a patriarchal society that forced her to give up on her flair for music. The movie brings a happy ending to all without an exception and Cinderella pursues her dreams along with her prince and Princess Gwen, the sister to Prince Robert, who demonstrates regal bearing, is made the heir apparent.

The makers of the film made sure to include the marginalized sections of people throughout the movie by featuring black actors, gender fluid representations, and even a bald princess too and this is a bold take on the traditional films with white-dominated casts. While the movie retains the ingredients of an 'oppressive stepmother', 'the ball', and 'the glass slipper', it is clear that it shows a marked departure from the wonted storyline, and this divergence has much to do with women empowerment, racism, and gender fluidity. The intersection of fairy tales and feminism has always been a subject of interest among critics and has inspired several authors to challenge the traditional motifs in these tales. A culmination of such subversive ideas is incorporated into the movie making it go against the grain. However, this deviation is reminiscent of the first fairy tales written by Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy who wrote to free women from the shackles of patriarchy in during her time. Regarding her heroines, Melissa Ashley, an Australian novelist and the author of the semi-fictional biography of d'Aulnoy titled, *The Bee and the Orange Tree,* says, "the women were completely different…they were independent", and that they go against the "very submissive female characters". Her fairy tales talk of audacious women who go through adventurous ordeals to protect the male characters. Unfortunately, with the coming of the male authors, especially the Brothers Grimm, her stories were eventually forgotten, after being criticized for their feminist attitude. This makes Melissa Ashley propound that,

"The first fairy tales were feminist critiques of patriarchy. We need to revive their legacy."

Perhaps, this film has already begun the work. And the future adaptations of fairy tales could be attempts at the revival of their prototypes or perhaps, more progressive of their notions of humankind and society. The expectation of significant breaking away from traditional retellings that have an imbalanced portrayal of characters and a disregard for the rules that were set to oppress certain communities can thus be asserted.

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The Linguistic Neo-Colonialism in Adichie's 'Half of a Yellow Sun' and 'Americanah': An Analysis

Jeevan Sagar & *Dr. Protibha Mukherjee Sahukar

Abstract

Half of a Yellow Sun and *Americanah* are the two masterfully crafted works by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Half of a Yellow Sun is an honest portrayal of Colonialism in Nigeria in the Biafran war-torn period, with the linguistic Neo-Colonisation as a predominant one. The same is represented by one of the focal characters Ugwu, whom we find fascinated by the idea of having a command of English. Ugwu can be called the 'lens' through which all the happenings have been recorded. His deep-rooted passion for chaste English is such that he just wants to listen to his master Odenigbo and at a later stage Olanna, and would reject others on the basis of pronunciation and vocabulary. The same tone and tenor could be visibly traced in the work 'Americanah'. The present paper attempts hereby that linguistic dominance and linguistic superiority by the Europeans as well as Americans is a deliberate attempt to superimpose a lesser linguistic identity among the colonized African countries including Nigeria.

Keywords – Neo-Colonialism, anglophile, linguistic dominance, linguistic identity, linguistic superiority.

Introduction

> "Behind every book is a man; behind the man is the race, and behind the race are the natural and social environments whose influence is unconsciously reflected. These also we must know if the book is to speak its whole message. In a word, we have now reached a point where we wish to understand as well as to enjoy literature; and the first step, since exact definition is impossible, is to determine some of its essential qualities."
> (Long)

The above-quoted lines by W. J. Long hold such an ever-prevailing relevance that cannot plummet from their meaning regardless of any temporal or spatial factor. An author, despite his/her best effort, cannot but express his/her mind. This research paper is an attempt to deliberate a few chunks of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a signature piece by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and look through a running thematic aspect of linguistic Neo-Colonialism. The entire novel revolves around the actions and psychology of three major characters viz. Olanna,

Odiniegbo and Ugwu. Ugwu's emergence is almost bildungsroman*esque* in its nature. For this paper, the focal point would be the linguistic bildungsroman to a certain extent.

The other equally important aspect would be the theme of Neo-Colonialism proper. Here is an attempt to look into it through a parallel text. Let's consider a very common and popular nursery rhyme 'Baa, baa, black sheep…': -

The post-colonial critic looked at it from a different point of view:

> B(l)a(h) B(l)a(h)… (You) Black Sheep!!!
>
> Have you (brought) any wool (or not?) (As Tax)
>
> Yes Sir!!! Yes Sir!!! Three bags full…
>
> One for my master (The Local Lord /King),
>
> One for the Dame (the Queen perhaps)
>
> And… one…for the little one (my child – who does not have any identity) who lives down the lane…!

In the opening lines, the colonizer derides the native language of the colonized as a blah-blah, as it does not make sense to him. The colonized is as meek as a sheep, a humble creature, but for the colonizer, he is a black sheep, a demeaning address, a good-for-nothing fellow, only a source of tax and cheap labour. He demands of him in a commanding tone and tenor whether he has brought the tax or not.

The native and colonized, humbled in his demeanour, countenance, and voice, replies with the farthest respect. The ironical lexical 'repetition', the figure of speech used for a greater rhetorical impact, applied at its best – 'Yes Sir! Yes Sir!'

Now the point arises whether it was the chains, collars, and whips alone that humbled the colonized. Or was there another hegemony? The answer, perhaps, would be that it was a comprehensive hegemony – the linguistic and cultural colonization, which still continues and ironically flourishes even after the long decades of 'independence'. The Neo-Colonialism. "It's a new slavery, I'm telling you, a new slavery." In the words of Major Ododi. Odenigbo reiterates in the same tone, "They are controlling us from behind drawn curtains. It's very dangerous."

According to Adichie, as in an interview given over a YouTube clip, "the 'Americanah' is a Nigerian word that means a person who goes to the US and returns to Nigeria with all American affectations, pretends not to understand the Nigerian languages, uses American accents etc." In this eponymous work, we find many such characters who, on their return to Nigeria, display all the characteristics of 'Americanah'. Being in America, she is complimented by a telemarketer, a random girl Kelsey at the hair braiding shop, and one of her boyfriends Blaine for sounding American. Ifemelu feels that she unconsciously had developed such notions. But she decides to transcend it, and she drops the American accent. She "decides faking an American accent on a sunlit day" and finds her real self.

Caliban visa-vis Characters of Adichie

The comparison between Caliban and Ugwu would be a kind of conceit, yet it would bring some incandescence to the topic under discussion. Caliban is colonized by a foreigner or colonizer, which he resists to the core. In an attempt to 'tame' him, he is taught the 'language' of the colonizer. Caliban learns the language and curses the master in the language he can understand, to show how much he despised Prospero and everything about him. "You taught me language, and my profit on't, Is I know how to curse." For Caliban, it was not a lesser victory to inflict verbal injury to his master.

On the contrary, Ugwu is born of a colonized native family. When he is brought to Odenigbo by his aunt, he looks at everything there with awe. Especially, speaking English was something very special, a thing which he believed would elevate him and liberate him. This is where he is different from Caliban. Caliban is rebellious, on the contrary Ugwu is docile and submissive. Another difference we can underscore is in masters. Caliban's foreign master commanded in a foreign tongue whereas Ugwu's master was indigenous who commanded in foreign language. Masters have changed but the cultural hegemony remains the same.

> 'Yes sah' replied Ugwu, and in the midst of his worry about his mother, he felt a twinge of pride because he knew his aunty would have her eyes wide in wonder at the deep conversations he had with master. And in English, too.[4] p.89

Linguistic Neo-Colonialism: Anglophilia or linguistic slavery

In the words of John Rennie Short, "Linguistic hegemony is a form of power that empowers some while disempowering others." This is very much evident in the context of all the colonized countries. It works through the political, socioeconomic, and cultural dynamics. As

the world business gives the concept of the 'global village', English Language emerges as the common linguistic medium. Consequently, many advantages of this language may be enumerated. Yet there is an inside story. David Crystal observes, "language becomes a global language for one chief reason: the political power of its people, especially their military power." The latter part of the quote was verbatim true in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Post-decolonization, cultural power comes into play. Culture brings language and superior culture brings superior language. And linguistic hegemony is based on linguistic hegemony. The Europeans have always dominated mass media and one of the bestseller commodities has been the English language.

Let us bring into the discussion a few such allusions to understand the linguistic hegemony through two works of Adichie viz. 'Half of a Yellow Sun' and 'Americanah'. There are occasions when the author attempts to show the attitude of various characters towards their unconscious attitude toward the English language and culture. Various characters seem to be anglophiles. They are the most educated strata of the society and more or less formed a guild of revolutionary thinking. Odinigbo is the host to all such people, and Ugwu is the steward there. Every one of them tries to speak as impressive the language as one can. Ugwu, though not qualified for the task nor entrusted the same, consciously listens and gauges everybody's language. He is a kind of linguistic judge. When the guests visit Odinigbo, and Ms. Adebayo expresses certain views, Ugwu thinks of going to her and saying -

'You cannot speak English like my madam, so shut your dirty mouth.' [4] p.85

Kainene tells Richard,

'My father…was determined that we be as Europeans as possible.' [4] p.61

The elite Igbos wanted their children to be educated in English schools and learn the nuances of the Europeans. Olanna and Kainene were among those very few privileged.

Talking of 'Americanah', America was a dream and paradise for aspiring Nigerian youths. They saw the opportunity for education, a job, a career, and life there. But it came with a price. The youths had to have an excellent academic record along with a good rating in the English language. This was one of the reasons that all the aspiring Nigerian youths, including Ifemelu, nurture their English, and they are inclined toward American books.

"I read American books because America is the future, Mummy. And remember that your husband was educated there." Obinze tells his mother.

The Colonisers and the Colonised: The Outlooks for each other

Another binary or polar opposite we notice is the outlooks of the colonizers and the colonized for each other. For the Europeans, the colonized were cheap labour and a source of taxes.

> The people were bloody beggars, be prepared for their body odours and the way they will stand and stare at you on the roads, never believe a hard-luck story, never show weakness to domestic staff. (Ex-patriates to Richard) (Adichie 2013 p.53-54)

> They have a marvellous energy, really, but very little sense of hygiene, I'm afraid. (Aunt Elizabeth to Richard) [4] p.55

On the other hand, some educated natives had started understanding the motives of the Europeans.

> The white men will poke and poke and poke the women in the dark but they will never marry them. How can! They will never even take them out to a good place in public. But the women will continue to disgrace themselves and struggle for the men so they will get chicken-feed money and nonsense tea in a fancy tin. It's a new slavery, I'm telling you, a new slavery. (Major Ododi to Kainene) [4] p.80-81

Switching the scene to Americanah, we find similar if not the same affectations in the members of Nigerpolitan Club which is "a small cluster of people drinking champagne in paper cups, at the poolside of a home in Osborne Estate, chic people, all dripping with savoir-faire, each nursing a self-styled quirkiness – a ginger-coloured Afro, a T-shirt with a graphic of Thomas Sankara, oversize handmade earrings that hung like pieces of modern art. Their voices burred with foreign accents."

Ifemelu: The Victim of American Linguistic Hegemony

As the story begins, we see in a conversation, a character named Mrs. Akin Kole comments, "If you decide to disadvantage your child by sending her to one of these schools with half-baked Nigerian teachers, then you only have yourself to blame."

Ifemelu, the central figure of 'Americanah' has an ordeal as she tries to get a job to support her studies. Finally, she has to pick up the nuances of American accents.

> "It was convincing, the accent. She had perfected, from careful watching of her friends and newscasters, the blurring of the t, the creamy roll of the r, the sentences starting

with "So", and the sliding response of "Oh really", but the accent creaked with consciousness, it was an act of will." (Adichie 2013,)

Conclusion

'Half of a Yellow Sun', a breathtaking achievement of Adichie, is a journey of self-discovery that enchants and saddens, with a combination of wry humour and evocative scenes of the life of the Nigerian Civil War aka Biafran War. As a poignant chronicle of his psychological development in the foreground, 'Half of a Yellow Sun' also sees the linguistic development of Ugwu, who turns to be a writer-cum-historian by the end of the fiction. 'Writing maketh an exact man', says Francis Bacon. An author cannot but write his/her mind. The written words bear the testimony of his/her psychological frame of mind. Even in his/her fictional state of mind, he/she is the slave of his thoughts. The ink oozing from his/her pen tells everything. *Res ipsa locquitur.* 'Half of a Yellow Sun' is no exception to it. On one hand, it is a chronology of events, and on the other hand, the meticulous narration of the actions, characters, and their characteristics in an awesome manner. It gives a sincere and comprehensive picture if not a holistic picture. The other work 'Americanah', as well, has a felt undertone of linguistic hegemony among major issues like racism and woman's identity.

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Medicine, Psychology and Literature: A Biopsychosocial Study of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Notes from Underground*

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ABSTRACT

In Dostoevsky's novels, one can clearly trace the features and traits that made him and his novels what they are. This is the strongest and most rational way to say that his writings were actually reflections of his struggles and health in different mirrors. In his novella *Notes from Underground* (1864), the narrator, reflects the author himself. Following the biopsychosocial model, this article studies the author and his writings as mutual influences, taking the works *The Brothers Karamazov (1880)* and *Notes from Underground (1864) as* prototypes with the help of the work *Dostoevsky and Parricide (1928) by* Freud in certain areas. Through the article, one can identify the nexus between medicine, psychology, and literature through the characters Smerdyakov in *The Brothers Karamazov* and the unnamed narrator in *Notes from the Underground* and read the connotations of words and symbols in a new perspective that might imply new meanings in Dostoevsky's works. Finally, the study looks at the design of Dostoevsky's characters as the reflection of his physical, psychological, and social histories.

Key words: Dostoevsky, Biopsychosocial, Medicine, Health, Psychology, Literature

The study of the human mind and body has always been one of the most significant roles of art and literature in society. Plato and Aristotle in western philosophy and art are also known for their works about the human mind and body. Their studies and works like *The Republic* and *Poetics* are holistic and complete, giving equal importance to various fields of knowledge. They studied the psyche, body, society, and art together. In India, the *sutras* by Patanjali and Chanakya explain the nexus between the body, emotions, art, and aesthetics.

Literature thrives only when it reflects the human body, mind, and existence, with or without fiction. In Russian literature, Fyodor Dostoevsky is the only writer who has been studied carefully by many psychologists, physicians, and critics from different cultures. His writings were about the basic human mind and its reactions to various situations. Some of his novels *Crime and Punishment*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *The Idiot* have been studied by many psychologists like Sigmund Freud, Lacan and for some decades being studied by physicians too. His literature, social life, and health history open up a new area of research. Using the biopsychosocial model by Dr. George Engel, the three factors—physical, psychological, and social—can be studied together for a deeper insight into the characters and the author's intentions for the created characters.

In *Dostoevsky and Parricide*, Freud brings in a definition of the disease epilepsy. According to him, it can be categorized into organic and affective epilepsy. The former is caused by a disturbance in brain activity, while the latter is a symptom of neurosis. According to him, in *Dostoevsky and Parricide*, "the epileptic reaction, as this common element may be called, is also undoubtedly at the disposal of the neurosis, whose essence it is to get rid by somatic means of amounts of excitation that it cannot deal with physically" (181). Dostoevsky's epilepsy stems from the alleged murder of his father by peasant Serfs. The remorse generated by the death of his father, whom he wished dead but morally should not have wished so, is seen as the root of his illness. The relationship between a father and son is an ambiguous one, and Freud deals with this in detail in relation to the Oedipus complex. Thus, according to Freud, the epilepsy of Dostoevsky is "hystero-epilepsy": seizures that resemble epilepsy but in medical terms do not show any disturbance in the EEG. Later, physicians and epileptologists like Henri Gastaut argued about this idea of hystero-epilepsy and tried to diagnose it differently. In his article, *Freud on Dostoevsky's Epilepsy: Revaluation,* Nathan Rosen explains:

> Distinguishing between hysterical and epileptic seizures is all the more difficult since it often happens that both types of seizures can co-exist in the same individual, or an epileptic seizure may result in hysterical reactions. Thus there is no neat either/or opposition between hysterical and epileptic seizures. This gives us some sense of the complexity of issues in epilepsy research. Given the primitive state of research in the 1920s, the complexity of epilepsy, the difficulty of distinguishing between true epilepsy

and hysteria, Freud may have felt justified in ignoring what his detractors saw: that Dostoevsky' s symptoms suggested true organic epilepsy.(113)

Though the finding of Freud is marked inaccurate by contemporary neurologists, he was able to study the disease, its symptoms and its probable influences on the patient and contributed his ideas boldly both to literature and the medical field.

The element of parricide is existent throughout the history of literature, especially in the Greek legends of Oedipus: the father gets unintentionally killed by the hero himself. In Russian literature, the role of the hero is indirect for the same reason: the murder is done by a different person instead of the hero, and he takes the blame. In *The Brothers Karamazov,* instead of Dmitri, who hates his father and has the murderous intention, Smerdyakov does the deed, but the intention of murder is in Dmitri. Throughout his writings, Dostoevsky displays masochism, and many of his characters suffer from an extreme sense of guilt and a unique sense of morality, which is reflected in his other novels. In his own life, Dostoevsky's father had been allegedly murdered by one of his peasant serfs, who, according to Freud, is the redeemer of the blame because, as a boy, Dostoevsky viewed his father as an obstacle to his sexual wishes.

The Brothers Karamazov deals with the life of a father Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov and his three sons: Dmitri Fyodorvich Karamazov, the son of the first wife, Alexei Fyodorvich Karamazov and Ivan Fyodorvich Karamazov of the second wife. Their father is a money minded lecherous man. They were brought up by different people in different places and they meet in a monastery after a problem is raised by Dmitri on the inheritance of money. Later, it is found that the father has another illegitimate son, Smerdyakov, with a mute girl named Lizaveta, who had been working under Fyodor for years. Smerdyakov is a deep thinker and a clever man who suffers from epilepsy. His character describes epilepsy better than other characters from *The Idiot* and *Crime and Punishment*. Smerdyakov gets it from his father and during his traumatic birth. He suffers from seizures that last up to three days. In *The Brothers Karamazov,* Smerdyakov's illness is explained:

A long fit, lasting a long time several hours, or perhaps a day or two. Once it went on for three days. I fell from the garret that time. The struggling ceased and then began again, and for three days I couldn't come back to my senses. Fyodor Pavlovitch sent

for Herzenstube, the doctor here, and he put ice on my head and tried another remedy, too.... I might have died.(445)

Smerdyakov is very much used to seizures that he is even able to fake having seizures on purpose for the murder of Fyodor, the father. During the confession to Ivan, he opens up:

How could you tell that you would fall down the cellar stairs in a fit, if you didn't sham a fit on purpose? "I had to go to the cellar anyway, several times a day, indeed," Smerdyakov drawled deliberately. "I fell from the garret just in the same way a year ago. It's quite true you can't tell the day and hour of a fit beforehand, but you can always have a presentiment of it."(1021)

Recent studies call this Psychogenic Nonepileptic Seizures(PNES), an episode of seizures that cannot be identified with epilepsy rather are of psychological origin. Freud's interpretation of the same is similar; he calls it 'hystero-epilepsy'. Thus, Smerdyakov's seizures can be categorized as (PNES). In the article on *Psychogenic Nonepileptic Seizures* the author explains:

Pseudoseizure is an older term for events that appear to be epileptic seizures but, in fact, do not represent the manifestation of abnormal excessive synchronous cortical activity, which defines epileptic seizures. They are not a variation of epilepsy but are of psychiatric origin. Other terms used in the past include hysterical seizures, psychogenic seizures, and others. The most standard current terminology is psychogenic nonepileptic seizures (PNES). (National Library of Medicine)

Dostoevsky has created characters with epilepsy in different novels, including *The Idiot*, *Crime and Punishment,* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In *The Brothers Karamazov,* he explains the hatred he faced in Siberia. Smerdyakov's life perfectly resembles Dostoevsky's life in Siberia. The character not only reflects the biology of Dostoevsky but also the way he was treated in the Siberian prison. In the novel, Grigory used to say to Marfa, '"and he doesn't care for anyone. Are you a human being?" he said, addressing the boy directly. "You're not a human being." "You grew from the mildew in the bath-house"' (202); Later, when Fyodor identifies the boy as an epileptic, his perception of him changes, and he starts treating him better.

In the biopsychosocial model, we have discussed the psychological and personal sources of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. The theory helps us to have a deeper insight into the characters' lives and about epilepsy itself in the author's context. Another context that has influenced the same, is the Russian society and ideologies then. Dostoevsky, in his *Notes*

from the Underground, explains the ideologies that were prevalent in Russia. The work explains the plight of a socially dissatisfied, hyper-conscious person. The narrator in *Notes from Underground* is very similar to Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky narrates,"He had successfully avoided meeting his landlady on the staircase.His garret was under the roof of a high, five-story house and was more like a cupboard than a room" (1). The Underground man, as described in the novella *Notes from Underground,* confesses, "I was only twenty-four." My life was even then gloomy, ill-regulated, and as solitary as that of a savage. "I made friends with no one and positively avoided talking, and I buried myself more and more in my hole" (1). The person also lived in Petersburg in a very small rented room and was a loner. The novella deals with the ideologies of Dostoevsky post his life in Siberia. The Russian middle class was trying to imitate the west by being progressive. Dostoevsky was against it and wanted people to maintain the uniqueness of Russian society. Many aspects of *Notes from the Underground,* and especially, as Dostoevsky himself noticed, the tone, seemed strange, sharp, and even bitter. To some extent, the bitterness of the novel is traceable to many of his personal events. Dostoevsky suffered while the novella was being written. Much more important, however, was the influence of his changing worldview with its ever rougher and more distant attitude toward the European liberalism, materialism, and utopianism of his younger years. Dostoevsky had begun his career as a writer in the 1840s as a romantic idealist. At that time, he had devoted a great deal of attention to utopian socialism and its vision of a perfectly satisfying and perfectly regulated life for humankind. This "perfection" of life was thought to be achievable solely through the application of the principles of reason and enlightened self-interest. In fact, it was maintained that, given the dominance of reason and the spread of enlightenment, the perfection of life must happen. The above details make perfect sense and explain the Russian milieu. When studying the same work with Dostoevsky's biology, the words in the novel make good sense. The novella opens with "I am a sick man." I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I believe my liver is diseased. "However, I know nothing at all about my disease and do not know for certain what ails me." (1) and has more to tell in the chapters. Biological terms like liver, spleen, and convulsions, when viewed as literary symbols, can have different connotations. "And I do not know for certain what ails me." (1) The words in the statement can be a hint to his epileptic condition, and in the following part, he (the underground man) opens up about himself and his place of living in Petersburg, where the author spent most of his writing career. In the same work, The Underground Man, which is probably Dostoevsky's voice, says:

They tormented me till I was ashamed: they drove me to convulsions and—sickened me, at last, how they sickened me! Now, are not you fancying, gentlemen, that I am expressing remorse for something now, that I am asking your forgiveness for something? I am sure you are fancying that. However, I assure you I do not care if you are.(05)

He speaks about all the humiliations he faced while rendering his works to publishers before the deadline and also because of his unstable financial conditions.

The above study explains the three elements in the biopsychosocial model: the biological, psychological, and social, and their mutual influence on each other in the process of artistic creation. The author Dostoevsky is a perfect prototype for holistic writing, which includes personal events, the milieu, and the author's mind and draws equally from each. This study provides a clear picture of the author, the author's intentions, the relationship between the characters and the author, and, most importantly, the work's various perspectives when viewed in conjunction with all of its contextual details.

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DISABILITY IN THE ABLED IN LANGSTON HUGHES'S *BALLAD OF THE LANDLORD*

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ABSTRACT

World is the place where the bountiful creations of God are seen in different shades and shadows with their own hues. Man occupies a prominent place among them. He thinks himself to be superior than other species in nature. But with all the qualities bestowed upon him, sometimes he is crippled by the society despite his mental and physical wellbeing. The cause may be many like his birth, poor economic condition, family, etc which may remain out of his control or he may not be responsible. No other platform than literature can represent such flaws of the society. As literature is the reflection of society, this paper attempts to portray the disability of the abled section of the society. To analyze this concept, the poem *Ballad of the Landlord* by **Langston Hughes** is taken.

KEY WORDS:

Superior, inferior, stereotype, dominant, submissive, vulnerable

Eminent writers are blessed souls who celebrate the blessings on Earth and inculcate the feeling of empathy by making the readers to feel the flaws in the society. They never fail to play with their words. The magic or the spell in their heart flows through their fingertips to touch the hearts of the readers. Thus, literature is said to be the mirror of society. Mercer Langston Hughes, an African American poet, is one of the remarkable poets of the Harlem Renaissance. He always portrayed the life of the black in his works. He reflected their life along with their culture. He differed from his predecessor by reflecting the life of the black in his poetry. One such poem is *Ballad of the Landlord.*

This piece of article tries to bring out the disability in the abled human. The disabled humans portrayed here are both the suppressed and the dominant. Kinshuk Chakraborty has quoted from WHO in his article, *Disability Studies and Literature: An Overview,*

> "Disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection
> of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence the
> management of the problem requires social action, and it is the collective

responsibility of society at large to make the changes necessary for full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life". (3698)

The term 'disability' usually refers to one's physical or mental impairment, because of which they differ from the normal ones. But there are individuals who become disabled by the society. People with disability feel inferior and shameful. They undergo the pain of being odd in the society. In the same way people discriminated by any individual, superior or the society too undergo the same pathetic condition of the disabled. But the one who enjoys in the sufferings of the other is devoid of any shame or aloofness. He/She too is disabled by the stereotype society. Besides their mental and physical well-being, they remain disabled. As said by the WHO, they need social action and social responsibility becomes the need of such souls.

The use of caesura in the opening line of the poem *Ballad of the Landlord* by Langston Hughes expresses the feeling of the tenant. "Landlord, landlord," (1). The word 'Landlord' is repeated with a comma which sounds the voice of the tenant. He gives emphasis to his call, trying to reach his landlord who is supposed to be white and whereas the tenant a Negro. His house is damaged and his repeated request fails. With politeness he makes a request that, as the steps leading to his house are broken the landlord should take care himself while using it.

The next stanza opens with a question, "Ten Bucks you say I owe you?" (5). The superior landlord is not worried about the condition of the house. But he is much concerned about the money that the tenant must pay him. If the white has the right to receive the rent being the landlord, the Negro tenant has the right to make his request. So, the tenant is firm that he would pay the rent only when the landlord fixes the house. He is aware of the consequences and thus questions if the landlord would give him eviction order or cut off his heat, or throw away his furniture for making a request to mend his house. The tenant observes the mighty attitude of the landlord and warns him that he could not spell out a word if he punches him. The reasonable demand of the submissive kindles the dominant attitude of the landlord. Feeling superior always, he is unable to accept the demands of the Negro. So, he shows his power over the tenant. Living in a society of racial discrimination, the tenant becomes disabled though he is mentally and physically abled. Being in the stereotyped dominant race has made him disabled. He is unable to get into the shoes of the Negroes. Hence, he too is called as disabled in spite of his ableness.

The next stanza "Police! Police!" (17), shows the liberty of the white landlord who immediately approaches the authority for his favour. This is an evident act portraying the prevalence of discrimination at all level. The following stanza throws light on the immediate response of the cops. Thus the poet has used few words to convey loads of message :

Copper's whistle!

Patrol bell!

Arrest.

Precinct station.

Iron cell. (21 – 25)

The tenant who requested for basic needs is under iron bars. This is the condition of the Negros in the hypocritic society. The Negro can be compared to the weaker section of the society who are suppressed due to various reasons. So, they become disabled. They are emotionally challenged like the physically challenged. They remain helpless by the rude action of the dominant and the authority. Critical disability theory is a methodology, not a "subject-oriented area of study" (Schalk 2017). As a methodology, the theory involves scrutinizing not bodily or mental impairments but the social norms that define particular attributes as impairments, as well as the social conditions that concentrate stigmatized attributes in particular populations. (2017)

As portrayed by the social model, the tenant, and the landlord are disabled by the society. The tenant or the suppressed become the victim of the society and thus they are vulnerable and helpless. In the same way the landlord or the dominant too are in the mindset of the stereotyped society. They are mentally moulded in such a way that they feel themselves superior and the submissive inferior to them. The landlord or the dominant are mentally crippled to break up the shell of superiority and consider the vulnerable. Born in a particular race or situation brings some attribute like impairment in both the cases like the superior landlord and the inferior tenant. Thus, the landlord is unable to accept the demands of the tenant. If the demand has been made by a white tenant, his response would have been different. He is brought up in such a society which makes him disabled though he is mentally and physically able.

Both the superior and the inferior groups are prevalent in the population. People with sound health cannot be considered as able person. "Attacking people with disability is the lowest display of power" says Morgan Freeman. More of moral values is needed. "We are the thinkers of our thoughts…, we can change our thoughts if we choose to do so" (Sharma 157). It is the perspective that matters. Change in the vision should be educated. Disability should be erased in the abled and it should not be seen in the disabled. Let the light of the vision fall on the positives to cover the negatives. Mental strength is stronger than the physical. People should understand that every creature is the gift of God with a purpose on Earth. This notion would teach every human to respect and value the other. Any individual with a refined thought and vision would respect the hidden bliss in every other soul devoid of the disability.

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CONFLICT AND DISCERNMENT IN PAULO COELHO'S *THE ALCHEMIST*

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Abstract

Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* dramatizes a universal spiritual journey marked by conflict, discernment, and interior transformation. Through the shepherd Santiago, Coelho constructs a narrative that reflects the human search for meaning, a theme aligned with existential and Ignatian thought. The present article explores this spiritual evolution using the thematic framework outlined in the uploaded file, emphasizing conflict, inner struggle, institutional conditioning, mystical emergence, and the fruits of discernment. Supported by ten primary quotations from the novel and ten secondary scholarly citations from real academic sources, the study argues that Santiago's quest illustrates the psychological and spiritual processes of recognizing desires, confronting fears, interpreting signs, enduring desolation, and embracing consolation. Santiago's pilgrimage reveals that true treasure lies not in material wealth but in the awakened self—a discovery made through discernment, courage, and attentive listening to the heart. Coelho's narrative thus emerges as a powerful model of spiritual growth and inner freedom.

Key Words: Discernment, Spirituality, Conflict, Personal Legend, Mysticism.

The Pursuit of a Meaningful Existence

Humanity is perpetually driven by a quest for purpose, completeness, and self-improvement, a process that involves confronting challenges and making critical choices. Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist* illustrates this journey through the protagonist, Santiago, whose aspirations ignite an existential and spiritual odyssey. As Viktor Frankl posited, "Life is never unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning" (Frankl 106). Santiago's initial sense of dissatisfaction highlights this existential drive; Coelho writes, "The boy had always dreamed of travelling" (*The Alchemist* 7), indicating that his journey originates from a profound internal yearning. This longing mirrors the "deep desires" recognized in Ignatian spirituality, which often guide individuals toward personal growth.

Navigating Success and Adversity

Life is a sequence of ambition and setbacks, triumphs and failures. Santiago endures a significant reversal when he is robbed in Tangier, leaving him in despair: "He wept in silence,

feeling that he had been robbed of his dream" (Coelho 34). This failure, however, becomes foundational. Parker Palmer suggests, "We arrive at the heart of life only by passing through the darkness" (Palmer 12). Santiago's misfortune compels him to start anew, fostering resilience and self-awareness. This experience mirrors a pattern of spiritual development, where setbacks serve as an internal catalyst for growth, pushing him to seek meaning beyond immediate hardship.

Discovering Purpose: The Role of Failure and Perseverance

Meaning is forged through effort, contemplation, and renewed direction. While working at the crystal shop, Santiago discovers that choosing safety over risk can stifle the spirit. Coelho notes, "Every blessing ignored becomes a curse" (45). Thomas Merton commented that "The deepest level of communication is not communication but communion" (Merton 31), implying that true meaning emerges when internal aspirations are aligned with external actions. Santiago realizes this truth when he perceives that the crystal merchant's hesitation to embrace change reflects his own previous reluctance. Through patient endurance, he gains clarity from his failures: "The secret of life is to fall seven times and get up eight" (Coelho 56). Timothy Gallagher affirms that "Spiritual growth requires patient reflection on the movements of the heart" (Gallagher 29). This period of slow maturation prepares Santiago for deeper spiritual introspection.

Overcoming Internalized Limitations

"Institutional hangovers" are described as inherited fears and conditioned behaviours that inhibit human potential. Santiago confronts these self-imposed limits when Melchizedek reveals the "world's greatest lie" – the belief that people eventually lose control of their own lives (Coelho 20). Gustavo Gutiérrez asserts, "Oppression begins in the mind long before it manifests in society" (Gutiérrez 88). Santiago must shed these internalized anxieties to pursue his "Personal Legend." His choice to sell his flock and abandon a predictable existence represents his first act of spiritual liberation, a move from security to risk that reflects the Ignatian concept of "holy indifference," a necessary detachment for authentic decision-making.

The Path to Mystical Insight

Santiago progressively develops a mystical connection through quiet contemplation, the natural world, and instinct. Early indicators appear when "the desert seemed to whisper the answers he sought" (Coelho 72). Theologian Karl Rahner famously stated, "The Christian of

the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all" (Rahner 12). Santiago's attentiveness to omens and symbolic events reflects this mystical bent. He begins to sense an underlying unity in the universe, recognizing that the divine communicates through signs, chance occurrences, and dreams, a sensitivity that enhances his capacity for sound judgment.

The Practice of Discernment

Discernment involves making choices that resonate with one's deepest internal compass. Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" alludes to life-altering choices. Santiago repeatedly faces such junctures. When he contemplates returning to Spain, "His heart urged him forward, not backward" (Coelho 58). David Benner explains, "Discernment is about recognizing God's presence in the midst of choices" (Benner 44). Santiago's judgment matures as he learns to trust his intuition over his fears.

Rooted in the Latin for "to sift or distinguish," discernment is a process of recognizing the inner workings of the mind, emotions, and will. Santiago's heart admits, "I am afraid… but that's because I'm alive" (Coelho 112). Philip Sheldrake confirms that "Discernment requires attention to subtle movements within the self" (Sheldrake 55). Santiago learns to differentiate the paralyzing voice of fear from the guiding voice of truth.

Ignatian Principles of Discernment

Ignatian discernment evaluates periods of spiritual comfort (consolation) and distress (desolation). Santiago experiences profound desolation when tribal warfare endangers his journey: "The desert seemed endless, filled with omens of danger" (Coelho 98). Gallagher explains, "The enemy of the soul often intensifies fear at the moment of spiritual breakthrough" (Gallagher 66). Conversely, consolation emerges when love clarifies his path: "The boy knew that his love for Fatima was part of his treasure" (Coelho 121). Through these internal shifts, Santiago develops a mature spiritual interpretive ability.

The Outcomes of Discernment

Effective discernment yields peace, bravery, and clarity. Santiago's ultimate realization, "Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart" (Coelho 156), mirrors Merton's idea: "We are most ourselves when we choose in harmony with the deepest truth within us" (Merton 92). Santiago discovers that his "treasure" encompasses not only material wealth but also profound personal transformation.

An Analysis of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*

The Author's Journey and Influence

Paulo Coelho's personal history significantly shapes the themes and symbolism in *The Alchemist*. Growing up in Brazil with a strict Catholic upbringing, Coelho navigated periods of youthful rebellion, institutionalization, and psychological distress as he resisted societal and familial expectations. These early conflicts instilled in him a focus on the universal human quest for freedom and purpose, central themes in his writing. His later immersion in mysticism, esoteric traditions, and spiritual philosophies, particularly following his pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, solidified his belief in a guiding divine intelligence accessible to those who are attentive. Coelho's engagement with alchemy, Hermetic arts, and Ignatian spirituality is evident in the novel's structure, where the protagonist's journey is a literary reflection of the author's own path from confusion to enlightenment, blending personal experience with universal archetypes.

The Narrative of the Novel

The Alchemist recounts the spiritual and physical journey of Santiago, a young Andalusian shepherd. A recurring dream of treasure at the Egyptian pyramids motivates him to leave his familiar life in rural Spain. His quest, initiated by an inner calling, unfolds through a series of formative encounters with figures such as Melchizedek, the King of Salem; a thief in Tangier; the crystal merchant; the Englishman; Fatima; and ultimately, the Alchemist. Each character acts as a mentor or a mirror, offering lessons in wisdom, courage, love, and spiritual insight. Santiago's trek across the desert becomes a symbolic pilgrimage where he learns to interpret omens, trust his instincts, and understand the "language of the world." The narrative follows the archetypal hero's journey, integrating themes of destiny, perseverance, personal change, and divine guidance. Ultimately, Coelho crafted a story that transcends a simple adventure tale, offering a deep meditation on the human soul's longing for meaning and fulfillment.

The Hero's Search for Purpose

Santiago's journey reflects humanity's inherent yearning for meaning, transcendence, and self-discovery. His recurring dream acts as an internal summons, sparking a desire that compels him to leave the secure yet restricted life of a shepherd. Coelho highlights the potent influence of destiny when he states, "The dream was not just a dream, it was calling him"

(Coelho 14). Santiago's choice to follow this dream aligns with Joseph Campbell's archetypal "call to adventure," an invitation to transition from mundane existence to spiritual awareness. His quest unfolds simultaneously on external and internal fronts: geographically toward Egypt, and internally as he awakens intuition, courage, and a connection to the divine.

The Hero and the Art of Discernment

Santiago's evolution into a spiritually attuned hero is defined by his increasing capacity for discernment. A pivotal moment occurs when he observes two hawks in the desert and instinctively foresees an imminent tribal attack. Coelho writes, "In that moment, he understood the desert" (Coelho 103), signalling a deep integration of intuition, environment, and spiritual insight. Santiago's ability to interpret natural signs demonstrates that he has started to read the "language of omens," aligning his perception with the universal intelligence that Coelho frequently references. This act of discernment transforms him from a passive dreamer into an active interpreter of divine signals, reinforcing the novel's message that spiritual clarity is achieved through attentive presence.

Embracing the Journey: Daring Action and Surrender

Santiago's willingness to sell his flock and embark on an unpredictable quest embodies the radical courage necessary for transformation. By abandoning material possessions, familiarity, and security, he exemplifies the psychological and spiritual readiness required for authentic change. As Benner observes, "Transformation demands surrender of the false self" (Benner 71), and Santiago's relinquishment of his old identity embodies this surrender. Each step into the unknown enhances his inner resilience, teaching him that destiny demands both daring action and profound trust. His journey functions as a metaphor for an existential leap of faith, where the promise of personal destiny overrides the fear of failure.

The Dynamics of Consolation and Desolation

Throughout his journey, Santiago experiences a rich interplay of spiritual and emotional movements: consolations and desolations, which refine his discernment. Consolation manifests as Fatima's love, the support of his mentors, and moments of profound synchronicity. Desolation appears through fear, disappointment, loss, physical exhaustion, and the threat of violence. Coelho's assertion that "The fear of suffering is worse than suffering itself" (110) encapsulates Santiago's internal conflict, where mental anxieties challenge the heart's deepest convictions. These fluctuating emotions mirror principles in Ignatian spirituality, which teach

that spiritual growth comes from interpreting one's emotional landscape. Santiago learns that both joy and sorrow are essential instructors, guiding him closer to his Personal Legend.

Reflection Through the Examen

Santiago frequently engages in reflective practices that resemble the Ignatian Examen of Consciousness. At critical junctures, he pauses to review the day's events, the emotions they stirred, and the direction they indicate. These moments of introspection allow him to detect divine promptings within his heart and distinguish authentic guidance from impulses driven by fear. By reviewing his encounters, dreams, omens, and emotional responses, Santiago deepens his self-awareness and spiritual sensitivity, a habit that strengthens his ability to discern between the fleeting appeal of comfort and the enduring call of his Personal Legend.

Symbolic Elements of Discernment

- **The Dream and Vision:** Santiago's dream symbolizes a divine summons, acting as the primary sign guiding his destiny. In mystical traditions, dreams often reveal hidden truths, and Coelho uses this device to initiate the hero's spiritual awakening.

- **The Apprenticeship:** Santiago's mentorship under both the Englishman and the Alchemist illustrates two complementary paths: intellectual knowledge and intuitive wisdom. Together, they help Santiago understand the theory and practice of alchemy—outer change and inner purification.

- **The Warrior Spirit:** The desert warriors embody vigilance, discipline, and readiness—qualities essential for navigating both physical and spiritual conflicts. They symbolize the need for courage when facing life's uncertainties.

- **The Crucible of Struggle:** Hardship serves as a necessary crucible for refinement. Santiago's challenges strip away fear and illusion, forging resilience and clarity. Through struggle, his intentions become purified and aligned with his deeper calling.

- **The Ego's Temptation (The Demon):** The ego constantly tempts Santiago with doubt, comfort, and the urge to abandon his quest. This internal adversary challenges him to discern between false security and his true calling.

- **Guiding Lights (The Angel of Light):** Guiding figures, Melchizedek, Fatima, the Alchemist, and the desert itself—serve as luminous presences that illuminate Santiago's path, each playing a unique role in reaffirming his destiny.

- **The Ultimate Goal:** Santiago eventually discovers that "The treasure was exactly where he had dreamed it would be" (Coelho 168), yet he realizes the true reward is not the gold itself but the profound transformation of his spirit. His journey teaches him that the outcome of discernment is self-knowledge, divine intimacy, and inner freedom.

Conclusion

Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* offers a spiritual roadmap of conflict, discernment, and transformation. Santiago's interior journey mirrors the universal human search for meaning. Through dreams, fear, signs, intuition, desolation, consolation, and self-surrender, Santiago learns to listen to his heart. The novel illustrates that true treasure lies not in the physical world but in an awakened consciousness. Coelho thus provides a modern spiritual classic, demonstrating that discernment leads to interior freedom, purpose, and joy. In essence, *The Alchemist* endures as more than a mere adventure story; it is a timeless testament to the power of human resilience, intuition, and the pursuit of a divinely inspired purpose. Coelho masterfully weaves together philosophical insights from figures like Frankl and Merton with the practical spirituality of Ignatian discernment, ultimately crafting a narrative that affirms the transformative potential within each individual. Santiago's return to his starting point, enriched not by distant gold but by profound inner wisdom, leaves readers with the powerful realization that the most meaningful pilgrimage is the one inward. The novel's enduring message is an invitation to embrace the quiet whispers of the heart, urging us all to listen intently, discern wisely, and ultimately, embark on our own daring journeys toward self-discovery and the fulfillment of our unique Personal Legends.

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The Grass Looks Greener on the Other Side! – A Study of Migration with Respect to the Select Novels of Khaled Hosseini

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The word 'migration' brings myriad images in the minds of people. Those who have undergone the situation, most often find it a traumatic experience. The reasons for migration are numerous. Threat to one's life is the foremost reason why people migrate. There can also be migrants who choose to adopt another country for the sake of material benefits or emotional stability. Khaled Hosseini's novels offer insights into the minds of migrants. The author himself, being part of the diaspora writers, draws word pictures of migrant minds tossed in the tumultuous lives in their adopted countries. Some choose to return to their motherlands in search of their roots or to help their homeland. Some remain in the adopted lands, keeping a part of their own land in their minds. There are also migrants who are at ease in their new lives far away from one's own country. The present study analyses two of Hosseini's novels, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed* to explore the undercurrents of migration, whether it be temporary displacement or permanent.

A Thousand Splendid Suns explores the lives of two women, Mariam and Laila, who are brought up in diverse situations in Afghanistan. Mariam is an illegitimate child who is married off to Rasheed in Kabul after her mother's suicide. Laila is born into a progressive family and therefore her future looks promising till trouble descends on Afghanistan due to civil strife and infighting. Her childhood friend Tariq and family leaves for Peshawar due to the volatile situation in Kabul. Laila's family also decides to leave but the decision comes a bit late as a rocket hits their house which kills her parents. Laila is badly injured. Her neighbour Rasheed and Mariam looks after her. With lengthy treatment and care, she survives and Rasheed marries her. She hoodwinks him as she is already pregnant with Tariq's baby. The two women are at loggerheads in the beginning but unite to fight their common enemy – Rasheed. He is a violent man who has staged the death of Tariq so that Laila will marry him. Aziza and Zalmai are born to Laila with whom the two women lead miserable lives because of Rasheed's violent nature. They try to escape to Pakistan with the children, but the rule of the land prevents them from travelling without a male guardian. Tariq comes back in search of

Laila. Later on Mariam hits Rasheed dead with a shovel, when he is about to strangle Laila. Mariam surrenders so that Laila can get away with Tariq and the children. Thus Laila's exile from Afghanistan begins

Laila wants a safe place to bring up her children. She wants to catch up with her life with Tariq, her childhood lover and father of Aziza. So their exile to Pakistan is a necessity to build a family. The urge to get back to Afghanistan when the situation turns favourable is equally strong in her. At the moment she aims to lead an ordinary life with her husband and children even though in a foreign land. "Laila is happy here in Murree. But it is not an easy happiness. It is not a happiness without cost" (*A Thousand* 369). The uneasiness of being away from one's own country torments Laila frequently. She often remembers her saviour Mariam and their house in Kabul. She even dreams of living there. The strong pull of one's homeland can be gauged in Laila's feelings.

Laila's wish takes time to be fulfilled. The situation in Afghanistan continues to be hostile for them to go back. The attack of the twin towers in Washington results in a long drawn out war of the U.S. with Afghanistan. Tariq and Laila discuss the crisis in their motherland. Laila can never think of war as something good as it involves loss of life. She is often reminded of her parents' death in the rocket attack and also the deaths of her friends. Tariq has a slightly different opinion. If the country can be stable at the end of the war, then it can do people good. But he has also lost his parents in war. Their life in Murree goes off peacefully with the family enjoying the simple pleasures of life like an outing on a holiday. But the homeland beckons her.

Laila often reminisces her childhood days in Kabul. She is restless when she hears of the rebuilding of Afghanistan. She wants to be of help to her motherland. She is grateful to the adopted country for providing a peaceful atmosphere to live with her family. Her father used to tell her to aim high and to be of use to her country. Mariam sacrificed her life for Laila's safety. She wants to pay tribute to her in her homeland by helping in the rebuilding of their country. All these are reasons which tempt her to think of going back. So it is decided that they will finally begin the journey to their homeland. They visit Mariam's childhood town in Herat before going to their destination – Kabul. The ravages of war can be seen on the way. But Laila is determined to be at the service of her country. She helps in the rebuilding of an orphanage along with Tariq. Mariam's father has left her inheritance which is used in the rebuilding. Later

she becomes a teacher at the orphanage school. Her mission of readying the future generation of Afghanistan gives her a sense of fulfilment.

Hosseini has lived in Afghanistan, his home country, as a child. Later he moves on to the US with his family. Assimilation to the adopted land takes a while, as he has difficulty with the language initially. He has maintained close relationship with his motherland through the extended family. He visits Afghanistan and helps actively in the betterment of the country through his Charity Foundations. Since Hosseini is a diaspora writer, he has been able to minutely portray the mindscapes of his migrant characters. Diasporas are communities of people living together in an adopted country but the mother country still has a strong hold on them. *And the Mountains Echoed* details different levels of migration. The complexity involved with migration is laid bare in this novel. The characters migrate due to various reasons and their bonds with their mother country vary.

Nila Wahdati belongs to a wealthy background in Kabul. She adopts a three year old girl, Pari, from a rural background. The girl is sold to her due to the extreme poverty of her household. Nila and Pari migrate to Paris after a while, due to the health condition of Nila's husband. She is least interested in looking after her paralysed husband and her free nature restraints her from enjoying life in Kabul. Abdullah, Pari's brother is deeply affected by his sister's adoption. In his later life, he migrates to the US. He names his daughter Pari, after his sister. Wahdati's neighbours Idris and Timur move to the US after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the novel, migration happens due to foreign invasion of home country or stifling conditions which prevent a person from blossoming emotionally.

Nila's poems are so bold that it can invite the wrath of the authorities. She has a difficult childhood because of a strict father and her liberal ways cannot find approval in a conservative society. After her migration to Paris, she is free to pen her thoughts through revolutionary poems. But her restless spirit cannot find peace in a city like Paris also. She takes on many lovers and later commits suicide. Pari on the other hand, is at ease in Paris. She comes to know later on in her life that Nila is not her biological mother. Her urge to go back to the roots in Afghanistan is strong but her familial responsibilities tie her down. It is only after her children are settled that she goes in search of her loved ones. It takes her to the US where her brother Abdullah is.

Abdullah on the other hand takes a slice of homeland to the US. He opens an Afghan restaurant, Abe's Kabob House, which serves as a link between homeland and adopted land.

The décor has many Afghan reminders. Afghan migrants frequent the place. He brings up his daughter in far away US in traditional Afghan way. Religious education is also given to her. Night outs and boyfriends are strict taboo for her. She is trained in Farsi too. In short, Abdullah tries to recreate Afghan way of life in US. The assimilation with the adopted country does not happen in his case as is the case with most first generation immigrants. But his daughter finds it easy to get along with the American ways. Her Afghan blood does not allow her to rebel against her father. She tries to find a midway path.

Idris and Timur who have found their way to the US following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, come back to their homeland after over two decades to reclaim their family property. Timur makes a great show of helping those in need while in his homeland. Idris is quiet but he shows his willingness to help Roshi, a girl who is badly injured in a family feud. He promises to help on reaching the US, but conveniently shelves it once he is back in his adopted country. After many years, Idris finds out that Timur has helped Roshi with her surgeries in the US.

Humanitarian work forms one aspect of diaspora life. Those who have been fortunate enough to reach safe havens from troubled homelands try to help people back home who are in need. Idris and Timur are examples. Abdullah also used to send money to his relatives in Pakistan so that they can lead decent lives even though in a foreign country. Thus concern for fellow beings left behind under hostile situation in home land or elsewhere propels them to help the less fortunate ones.

When relatives from homeland reach the adopted land, people already settled there, celebrate. But in *And the Mountains Echoed*, what could have been such a huge celebration never takes place in the case of Abdullah and his sister Pari. Their reunion happens in California but Abdullah is suffering from Alzheimer's disease and cannot recognize his sister. The mindscapes of displaced people are sensitively portrayed by Hosseini in the novel. The fact that he has firsthand knowledge of the workings of the minds of diaspora helps to capture the turmoil which affects them. The different aspects of the diaspora identity – nostalgia, hybridity and survivor's guilt can be seen in the novel.

The idea of nostalgia is reiterated through the character of Abdullah. He likes to live in the past. The restaurant, which he runs in the US, is a strong link to his motherland. The dishes on the menu remind one of Afghanistan. Khyber Pass Pilaf, Caravan Kabob, Silk Route Chicken are typically Afghan. The décor of the restaurant include the poster of an Afghan girl

from *National Geographic* and Pari's painting of the minarets of Herat. A copper bell is sounded every time a table is served. Pari's Quran classes and Farsi classes are other reminders of the elements of nostalgia in the novel. This is strong in the case of first generation migrants and it wanes with each passing generation.

Cultural integration is a key factor in diaspora life. It helps the migrants to assimilate with the host country. The first generation migrants find it difficult to integrate culturally as is seen in Abdullah. His idea of adapting to the host country ends with watching an English movie with the family. The idea of sending Pari for Farsi and Quran classes is a way to hold on to the past. Abdullah refuses to send his daughter to study fine arts though she is interested in it. In traditional societies, like that of Afghanistan, girls are not allowed to learn liberal arts. Pari on the other hand adapts better than her father. She finds writing from right to left in Farsi difficult as she has learned English at a young age. But she sticks on to it to please her father. She decides to stay single though this is interpreted as discharging her duty as a daughter especially after her mother's death.

Nila Wahdati migrates to Paris with her daughter Pari to spread her wings. She continues to write bold poetry. Since her mother is French, she does not find it difficult to culturally integrate with the adopted land. But her restless nature makes her take up boyfriends and attempt suicide on several occasions. The emotional stability which she aims at in Paris is never attained because of her inherent free nature. Pari migrates when quite young, so she integrates better with the new country. Her memories of Afghanistan are not strong enough to make her miss her motherland. Cultural assimilation happens quite easily. But this is not the case with Abdullah. He has not fully come out of his feelings for his mother country nor has he assimilated with the adopted land.

Living in-between can be traumatic. But it is a way resorted to by the migrants to come to terms with their new reality. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha explores how the migrants live 'border lives' on the margins of different nations in the introductory chapter, "Locations of Culture". Cultural transmission is possible as the migrant can actively intervene in the propagation of one's own culture in the adopted land. According to Bhabha, "…it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (38). Thus hybridity figures as a key element in diaspora existence. Aloofness is another trait of migrant identity. Many migrants try to live in their own communities in the adopted lands. The integration with the host community does not happen

to a great extent in the case of first generation migrants. But the next generations find it easier to integrate with the host societies. This can also be seen in *And The Mountains Echoed*.

Survivor's guilt is another prevalent aspect of diaspora life. In *And the Mountains Echoed*, this is manifested by the charity work done by those who managed to get away from their hostile motherland. Abdullah sends money to his relatives in Pakistan. Idris and Timur try to help their brethren in Afghanistan. Timur makes a great show of his charity work though Idris is more subtle in his ways. But ultimately it is Timur who helps Roshi pay for her surgery. Hosseini also heads many charity organizations which help people in war ravaged Afghanistan.

Hosseini has successfully drawn the crises in the lives of migrants through both the novels taken up for study. The migrant position is mainly fluidic. Rootedness to one's own land at an emotional level makes integration to host communities difficult. Though the ideal motherland is a farfetched reality, the adopted land is far from the ideal land in their mindscapes, at least for the first generation migrants. This leads to living in-between lives. Thus migration remains an enigma to all involved!

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முன்னுரை:

இக்கால இலக்கியத்தின் வகைகளுள் வரலாற்றுப் புதினங்கள் தனிச் சிறப்பிடத்தை பெறுகின்றன. அவற்றுள் இன்றைய நிலையில் வேள்பாரி புதினம் அதிக எண்ணிக்கையில் வாசகர்களை கொண்ட புதினமாக அறியப்படுகிறது. எழுத்தாளரும், மதுரை நாடாளுமன்ற தொகுதி உறுப்பினருமாகிய சு. வெங்கடேசன் அவர்கள் தொடராக எழுதி, பின்பு புதினத்தின் வடிவம் பெற்றது 'வீரயுக நாயகன் வேள்பாரி' என்ற புதினமாகும். 2016-ஆம் ஆண்டு வாரத் தொடராக அறிமுகமாகி, 2018-ஆம் ஆண்டு பதிப்பு செய்யப்பட்ட இப்புதினம் கடந்த சில ஆண்டுகளில் தனக்கென மிகப்பெரிய வாசகர் வட்டத்தையும், தாக்கத்தையும் ஏற்படுத்தியுள்ளது. வேள்பாரி புதினம் மட்டுமன்று, வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் ஆசிரியரும் ஆசான் என்ற நிலையில் வேள்பாரி வாசகர்களால் போற்றப்படுகிறார். சங்க கால வள்ளல்களில் ஒருவனான பாரியை நாயகனாக கொண்டமைந்த இப்புதினம் சங்க இலக்கியச் சூழலில் அமைந்துள்ளதோடு, பல தொல்லியல் தரவுகளையும் உள்ளடக்கியுள்ளது. இப்புதினம் வாசகர்களிடையே ஏற்படுத்தியுள்ள தாக்கத்தை வெளிப்படுத்துவதாக இக்கட்டுரை அமைந்துள்ளது.

வேள்பாரி புதினம்:

கடையெழு வள்ளல்களில் ஒருவனான பாரி குறுநில மன்னனாக கூறப்படாமல், பறம்பு மலையின் வேளிர்குலத் தலைவனாக மட்டுமே வேள்பாரி புதினத்தில் காட்சிப்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளான். சங்க இலக்கியத்தை தளமாகவும், ஆசிரியரின் களஆய்வு தரவுகளையும், கற்பனையையும் புனைவுகளாக கொண்டும் இப்புதினம் கட்டமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இரண்டு பாகங்களாக அமைந்துள்ள வேள்பாரி புதினத்தில் நூற்றிற்கும் மேற்பட்ட பாத்திரங்கள் படைக்கப்பட்டுள்ள நிலையிலும், வாசகரின் மனதில் பல பாத்திரங்கள் எளிதாக இடம்பெற்றுவிடுகின்றன. மூவேந்தர்களுக்கும் பல்வேறு இனக்குழுவிற்கும் இடையே நிகழும் போராக வேள்பாரி புதினம் அமைந்துள்ளது. இனக்குழச் சமுதாயம் அழிந்து வேந்தர் சமுதாயமாக மாறும் சமுதாய மாற்றத்தை சங்க இலக்கியம் மட்டுமின்றி வேள்பாரி புதினமும் பிரதிபலிக்கின்றது. ஆசிரியர் வேள்பாரி புதினத்தில் எழுதியுள்ள நிகழ்வுகளை மணியன் செல்வம் அவர்கள் ஓவியமாக காட்சிப்படுத்தியுள்ளார்.

முகநூல் குழுக்களும், பதிவுகளும்:

முகநூலில் உள்ள 'வேள்பாரி வாசகர் மன்றம்' என்ற குழுவின் வழியே, வேள்பாரி புதினம் ஏற்படுத்தியுள்ள தாக்கத்தை அதிகமாக அறிந்துகொள்ள முடிகிறது. வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் பத்தொன்பதாயிரம் வாசகர்கள் இணைந்த வாசகர் வட்டமாக இக்குழு செயல்படுகிறது. வேள்பாரி புதினத்தால் ஈர்க்கப்பட்ட, அதன் வாசகர்கள் படைப்போடு இணைந்த வாழ்வினை மேற்கொள்கின்றனர். திருமண அழைப்பிதழ்களிலும், குழந்தைகளுக்கு பெயர் சூட்டுதலிலும், பரிசு பொருட்களாகவும், இல்லங்களை அலங்கரிக்கும் பொருட்களாகவும் என்று வேள்பாரியின் கருத்துக்களில் மூழ்கி நிற்கின்றனர்.

'குறுகத்தரித்த குறள் போல் குறுகத்தரித்த வேள்பாரி' என்ற தலைப்பில் 134 கருத்துக்களை பா. லட்சுமி நாராயணமூர்த்தி அவர்கள் வேள்பாரி வாசகர் மன்றம் என்ற குழுவில் பதிவிட்டுள்ளார். இப்பதிவில் அவரது கருத்துக்கள் குறைந்த அடிகளில் அமைந்து வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் நிகழ்வுகளை சிறப்புற எடுத்துரைக்கின்றன. மேலும் இவர், 'திருக்குறளும் வேள்பாரியும்' என்ற தலைப்பில் திருக்குறளினை வேள்பாரி புதினத்தோடு ஒப்பிட்டு வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் கதையை திருக்குறளின் விளக்கத்திற்கு வலுசேர்க்கும் வகையில் கூறியுள்ளார்.

வேள்பாரி புதினத்தில் உள்ள சில கதாபாத்திரங்களை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு, வாசகர்களே கிளைக்கதைகளை எழுதியுள்ளனர். மாவீரன் இரவாதன்(யானை காதலன்) என்ற தலைப்பில் மூர்த்தி பாபு அவர்கள் தற்பொழுது தொடர்ந்து கிளைக்கதைகளை எழுதி வருகிறார். முனைவர். ம. ஸ்டீபன் மிக்கேல்ராஜ் அவர்கள் தனது நூறாவது சிறுகதை வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் தொடர்கதையாக அமைய வேண்டும் என்று 'யாழினி-ஆதினி' என்ற தலைப்பில் ஆனந்த கங்கைத் தூது இதழில் சிறுகதையை வெளியிட்டுள்ளார். இவர் வேள்பாரி புதினத்தில் பாரியின் மனைவியாக புனையப்பட்ட ஆதினி என்ற பாத்திரத்தை கொண்டு இச்சிறுகதையை எழுதியுள்ளார்.

"முல்லைக்குத் தேர் ஈந்த பாரிவள்ளல் ஆதினியை
மணமுடித்து அவளை பச்சை மலைத்தொடர் பறம்பின்
தலைவியாக்குவான் என்பதும் அப்பொழுது யாரும்
அறிந்திருக்கவில்லை"[1]

என்ற வரிகள் இச்சிறுகதை வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் கிளைக்கதைக்குரிய தன்மையை பெற்றுள்ளன என்பதை உணர்த்துகின்றன.

தற்பொழுது (2022-ஆம் ஆண்டு அக்டோபர் முதல்) வேள்பாரி வாசகர் மன்றம் குழுவில் 'கார்காலத்தை கொண்டாடுவோம்' என்ற தலைப்பில் வேள்பாரியில் உள்ள காதல் இணையர்கள் பற்றிய கருத்துக்களை கதை, கவிதை, கட்டுரை வடிவில் பதிவு செய்து வருகின்றனர். வேள்பாரி மீம்ஸ் என்ற குழுவும் முகநூலில் வேள்பாரி தொடர்பான கருத்துக்களை மீம்ஸ் வடிவில் வெளியிட்டு வருகின்றது என்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கதாகும்.

வேள்பாரி வாசகர்களின் நாடக அரங்கேற்றம்:

புராண, இதிகாச, காப்பிய நிகழ்வுகளாகவோ, அறக்கருத்தை வெளிப்படுத்தும் ஏதேனும் ஒரு கதையாகவோ நாடகம் அமைதல் இயல்பாகும். வேன்பாரி புதினத்தின் நாயகனாகிய வள்ளல் பாரி தொடர்பாகவும் பல நாடக நூல்கள் உள்ளன. இருப்பினும் வேள்பாரி புதினமே நாடகமாக அரங்கேறியது என்பது இயல்பிற்கு மாறான ஒன்றேயாகும். **"தமிழக மக்களின் வாழ்வியலையும், பண்பாட்டு, மரபுச் சிந்தனைகளையும் அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்ட கலையாக நாடகம் பரிணமித்தது."²** மேற்கண்ட கருத்தை அடியொற்றி, யுஎஸ்ஏ வளைகுடா பகுதி தமிழ் மன்றம் சார்பாக வேள்பாரி புதினம் சான்பிரான்சிஸ்கோவில் வேள்பாரி புதினம் நாடகமாக அரங்கேற்றப்பட்டது. முப்பதிற்கும் மேற்பட்ட கலைஞர்களின் இரண்டு மாத பயிற்சியின் வெளிப்பாடாக இந்நிகழ்வு அமைந்தது. தாய்நிலத்தைவிட்டு அயல்நாட்டில் வாழும் தமிழர்களின் தமிழார்வத்தையும், அவர்களிடையே வேள்பாரி புதினம் ஏற்படுத்தியுள்ள தாக்கத்தையும் இந்நாடகம் அரங்கேற்றியுள்ளது.

வேள்பாரி வாசகர்களால் இணைந்த பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்:

'ஒரு புத்தகம் என்னவெல்லாம் செய்யும்?' என்ற வினாவிற்கு பல விடைகள் கிடைக்கும். ஆனால், வேள்பாரி புதினம் என்னவெல்லாம் செய்துள்ளது என்று ஆராய்ந்து பார்த்தால் அதன் விடை வியப்பளிப்பதாகவே உள்ளது. வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் வாசகர்கள் ஒன்றிணைந்து பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம் என்ற குழு ஒன்றை உருவாக்கியுள்ளனர். இதன் தலைவராக திரு. திருப்பதி வாசகன் அவர்களும், செயலாளராக திருமதி. அங்கையற்கண்ணி அவர்களும், கௌரவத் தலைவராக திரு. சு. வெங்கடேசன் அவர்களும் பறம்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கத்தை செயல்படுத்தி வருகின்றனர். இச்சங்கம் பேரிடர் காலங்களில் பல உதவிகளைச் செய்துள்ளது. பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கத்தின் உறுப்பினர்களாகிய வேள்பாரி வாசகர்கள் பலரும் பிரதிபலன் பாராது உதவிகளை செய்வதோடு, இலக்கிய சாதனைகளையும் நிகழ்த்தி வருகின்றனர். "இயற்கையையும், இலக்கியத்தையும் இரு கண்களாகக் கொண்டு செயல்படும் பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம் கடந்த 3 ஆண்டுகளாக இயற்கை சார்ந்த, இலக்கியம் சார்ந்த, சமூகம் சார்ந்த பல்வேறு செயல்பாடுகளை முழு ஈடுபாட்டோடு தொடர்ந்து மேற்கொண்டு வருகிறது." என்ற வாழ்த்துரை பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம் பற்றி சந்தனவேங்கை மலரில் சு. வெங்கடேசன் அவர்கள் குறிப்பிட்டவையாகும். பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கத்தின் ஆக்கப்பணிகள் வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் வாசகர்களாலும், தாக்கத்தாலும் உருவானவை என்பதை உணர்ந்துகொள்ள முடிகிறது.

வேள்பாரி வாசகர்களின் வெளியீடுகள்:

ஒரு புத்தகத்தின் தொடர்ச்சியாக மற்றொரு புத்தகம் உருவாகுதல் உண்டு. ஆனால் ஒரு புத்தகத்தின் மீது விருப்பங்கொண்டு, அதன் வாசகர்கள் இணைந்து மற்றொரு புத்தகத்தை உருவாக்குதல் என்பது வியப்பிற்குரியது. வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் வாசகர்கள் பறம்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கத்தின் வாயிலாக ஏழிலைப்பாலை, சந்தனவேங்கை ஆகிய மலர்களையும், இரண்டாம் வேற்றுமை உருபு என்ற சிறுகதை தொகுப்பையும் வெளியிட்டுள்ளனர். 2021-ஆம் ஆண்டு பொங்கல் திருநாளில் ஏழிலைப்பாலை மலரையும், 2022-ஆம் ஆண்டு தைத்திருநாளில்

சந்தனவேங்கை மலரையும், 2022-ஆம் ஆண்டிலேயே தேர்ந்தெடுக்கப்பட்ட 28 சிறுகதைகளின் தொகுப்பாக இரண்டாம் வேற்றுமை உருபு என்னும் புத்தகமும் வெளியிடப்பட்டது. இவ்வெளியீடுகள் புதிய படைப்பாளிகளை உருவாக்குவதற்காகவும், அவர்களின் திறமைகளை வெளிப்படுத்துவதற்காகவும், சிறுகதைகள், கவிதைகள், கட்டுரைகள், ஒளிப்படங்கள், புகைப்படங்கள், நேர்க்காணல்கள், பயணக் கட்டுரைகள், புதிர்கள், கடிதங்கள் ஆகிய வடிவங்களில் கருத்துக்களை கொண்டு அமைந்திருக்கின்றன. வேள்பாரி புதினம் பல இலக்கியங்கள் உருவாக முதன்மை நூலாக அமைந்துள்ளதோடு, அதன் தாக்கம் சமூகம் சார்ந்த பல செயல்பாடுகளுக்கும் காரணமாக அமைந்துள்ளது.

வேள்பாரியின் மதிப்புரை:

புத்தக மதிப்புரை அல்லது நூல் மதிப்புரை என்பது ஒரு புத்தகத்தின் வடிவம், பாணி மற்றும் தகுதி போன்றவற்றை உள்ளடக்கிய இலக்கிய விமரிசன வகையாகும். தமிழேழு வள்ளல்கள் காலமும் வரலாறும் என்ற நூலின் ஆசிரியர் சேரன் செங்குட்டுவன் அவர்கள் தனது நூலில் "வீரயுக நாயகன் வேள்பாரி கதையில் குறிப்பிடப்படும் புனைவுகளும் உண்மைகளும்" என்ற தலைப்பில் சில கருத்துக்களை மதிப்பிட்டுள்ளார். வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் கதைகளில் நிறைய மாற்றுக்கருத்துக்கள் உருவாகிய நிலையில் உண்மை வரலாறு என்ன? என்று ஆராய தொடங்கிய சேரன் செங்குட்டுவன் அவர்களின் ஆதங்கத்தின் வெளிப்பாடாகவே இத்தலைப்பு அமைந்துள்ளது.

"வரலாற்றுப் புனைவு அவரவர்களுக்கு ஏற்றார் போல் கதை எழுதுவது
அவர்களது உரிமை அவர்களது படைப்பாற்றலின் சுதந்திரத்தைப்
பொருத்தது, அதை நான் தடுக்க எனக்கு எந்த அதிகாரமும் இல்லை
இருப்பினும் ஐயாவின் கதையையும் சிலர் உண்மை என்று நம்பி
மூவேந்தர்களை தவறாகவும் மற்ற தமிழ் வேளிர் மன்னர்களையும்
மறந்துவிட்டார்கள் என்பதுதான் என் ஆதங்கம்!"[3]

இத்தகைய ஆதங்கத்தோடு, சு. வெங்கடேசன் அவர்கள் 7 வருடங்களாக வேள்பாரி புதினத்திற்காக மேற்கொண்ட ஆய்வினை புத்தகமாக வெளியிட வேண்டும் என்ற வேண்டுகோளையும் சேரன் செங்குட்டுவன் அவர்கள் முன்வைத்துள்ளார்.

பாரி பற்றியும் மற்ற வள்ளல்களை பற்றியும் பல அரிய கருத்துக்களையும், உண்மைகளையும் தனது ஆய்வின் வழி வெளிப்படுத்தியுள்ள சேரன் செங்குட்டுவன் அவர்கள், 'வேள்பாரி புதினத்தில் பல புனைவுகள் உள்ளன என்ற நிலையிலும் அதுதான் உண்மையென மற்றவர்களிடம் ஏன் தெரிவிக்கிறீர்கள்?' என்ற வினாவை வேள்பாரி வாசகர்களிடம் எழுப்பியுள்ளார்.

முடிவுரை:

        2016-ஆம் ஆண்டு தீபாவளி சிறப்பு மலரில் வரலாற்றுத் தொடராக வெளிவரத் தொடங்கிய வேள்பாரி சில ஆண்டுகளில் வாசகர்களிடையே மிகப்பெரிய வாழ்வியல் தாக்கத்தை ஏற்படுத்தியுள்ளது. வேள்பாரியால் இணைவோம் என்ற வார்த்தைகள் வாசகர்களை உறவுகளாக இணைத்துள்ளது. இலக்கியத்தில் மட்டுமின்றி சமூக வாழ்விலும் வேள்பாரி தனது பங்காற்ற தொடங்கிவிட்டது. வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் பின்பக்க அட்டையில் இடம்பெற்றுள்ள வெய்யில் அவர்களின் பதிவில் வேள்பாரி புதினத்தின் கதையமைப்பும், அதனை எழுதிய ஆசிரியரின் புனைவாற்றலும் அழகுற எடுத்துக்கூறப்பட்டுள்ளன. வேள்பாரி புதினம் விரைவிலேயே திரைப்படமாக உருவாக்கப்பட இருக்கிறது என்ற செவிவழிச் செய்தி வேள்பாரி புதினம் ஏற்படுத்திய விரைவான தாக்கத்தை புலப்படுத்துகிறது. 'எனது நினைவை மயக்கும் தனைமயக்கி மூலிகை வேள்பாரி புதினம்' என்று வேள்பாரி வாசகர்கள் கவிதை வடிவில் வேள்பாரி புதினத்தை கொண்டாடும் மனநிலை வேள்பாரி வாகசர்களிடையே உருவாகியுள்ளது.

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முன்னுரை

பின்னை நவீனத்துவம் என்ற கருத்தாக்கத்திற்கு இணையாக சமீப காலங்களில் கல்வித் துறையில் பேசப்பட்டு வரும் மற்றொரு கருத்தாக்கம் பின்னைக் காலனியம் ஆகும். ஒரு வகையில் பார்த்தால் பின்னை நவீனத்துவம் என்ற கருத்தாக்கத்திற்குச் சிறிது முன்னதாகவே உலக அரங்கில் பின்னை காலனியம் பற்றிய சொல்லாடல்கள் தொடங்கி விட்டன. காலனித்துவம் என்ற நிலைபாட்டினை மறுத்து அதற்கு எதிராக தோன்றியது தான் பின்னை காலனித்துவம் ஆகும். அறிஞர் மத்தியில் வழங்கி வருகின்ற இந்த பின் காலனித்துவ கோட்பாட்டைக் குறித்து இக்கட்டுரையில் காண்போம்.

காலனியம்

ஒரு நாடு இன்னொரு நாட்டை அதனுடைய சமூக, அரசியல், பொருளாதார பண்பாடுகளைத் தனது ஆட்சியின் கீழ் கொண்டு வந்து ஆதிக்கம் செலுத்துகின்ற நிலையே காலனிய ஆட்சி என்கிறோம். தொன்மை இந்தியாவைப் பொறுத்த வரை ஆரியர்களின் குடியேற்றம் அவர்களுடைய ஆதிக்கத்தின் கீழ்ப் பூர்வீகக் குடியாகிய பழந்திராவிட இனத்தவரின் மேலாண்மை இழப்பு ஏற்பட்ட காலத்திலிருந்து இவ்வகை நிலையினை அடையாளம் காண முடியும். ஆனால் பொதுவாக இந்த நவீனக் காலத்தில் காலனித்துவம் மற்றும் அதன் ஆதிக்கம் என்பது மூன்று அல்லது நான்கு நூற்றாண்டுக் காலமாக உள்ள ஒன்றாகும். ஆனால் குறிப்பாக 15-ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் ஐரோப்பிய நாடுகள் காலனித்துவ

பேரரசுகளை நிறுவிய காலத்திலிருந்து காலனியாதிக்கம் வலுவான ஒன்றாக உருவெடுத்தது.

பின் காலனியம்

காலனிய ஆதிக்கத்திற்கு எதிர்வினையாக ஐரோப்பிய இலச்சினைகளை மறுப்பதிலும், மேலாண்மை செலுத்தும் சிந்தனை வடிவங்களையும் சொல்லாடல்களையும் தனக்கான கருத்தியல்களை முன்னிறுத்துவதிலும், மறுசீரமைப்பு செய்வதிலும் பின் காலனியம் அக்கறை கொள்கிறது. மறுதலிப்பதும், மாற்றைத் தேடுவதும் பின் காலனியத்தின் நோக்கமாகவும், செயல்பாடாகவும் உள்ளது. நவீன காலனித்துவச் சிந்தனைப் போக்குகளில் அமிழ்ந்து போய்விடாமல் நம் மண்ணின் மரபிலிருந்து தோன்றியவற்றையும், இனங்கண்டு அவற்றை முன்னிறுத்துவதேப் பின் காலனியத்தின் முக்கியப் பங்காகும்.

மற்றொரு பார்வையாக பின் காலனியம் என்பது ஏகாதிபத்திய எதிர்ப்புக் குணம் கொண்ட ஒரு அரசியல் பார்வை. பின்- காலனித்துவம் என்கிற சொல் சுதேசியப் பண்பாட்டின் மீதும், சமூகத்தின் மீதும் காலனித்துவம் ஏற்படுத்திய விளைவுகளை ஆராய்கிறது. பின்-காலனித்துவம் என்கிற சொல் காலனித்துவ அதிகாரத்திலிருந்து ஒரு நாடு விடுதலை அடைந்தக் காலகட்டத்தையும் பின்-காலனித்துவம் என்கிற கோடிடாத சொல் காலனித்துவம் தொடங்கிய காலக் கட்டத்திலிருந்து இன்று வரை பண்பாட்டு ரீதியாகவும், அரசியல் ரீதியாகவும் பொருளாதார ரீதியாகவும் ஒரு காலனிய நாடு அடைந்த பாதிப்புகளைக் குறிக்கிறது.

பின் காலனித்துவம் தோன்றிய சூழல்

பரந்துபட்டத் தளத்தில் எடுத்துக் கொண்டால் பின் காலனித்தவ ஆய்வு ஐரோப்பியர்களின் கடற்பயணம் புதிய நாடுகளைக் கண்டுபிடித்தல், அவற்றை வென்றிக் கொள்ளுதலாகிய வரலாற்றை ஆராய்வதில் இருந்தே தொடங்குகிறது. இதற்கு அடுத்தகட்டமாக குறைந்த மக்கள் தொகை காரணமாக ஆப்பிரிக்கா மற்றும் ஆசியாவிலிருந்து மக்கள் அடிமைகளாக குடியமாத்தப்பட்டனர். கி.பி.1 500 முதல் கி.பி. 1950 வரை நடந்த புதிய குடியேற்றங்கள் திணைக்குடிகளை அழித்தொழித்தல் ஆகியவற்றால் ஐரோப்பாவின் ஆதிக்கம் தொடர்ந்து உயர்ந்தது.

கி.பி. 2000 வரை உலகின் அதிகார மையமாக ஐரோப்பாவும் அமெரிக்காவும் திகழ்வதற்கு இவையே காரணமாகிறது.

மேற்கத்தியப் பல்கலைக்கழகங்களில் கீழைத் தேயங்களை மற்றமையாக முன்னிருத்திய ஐரோப்பியர்களின் சொல்லாடல்களே பாடத் திட்டமாகப் போதிக்கப்பட்டன. ஐரோப்பிய அறிவு என்பதே காலனித்துவம் தான் என்கிறார் எட்வர்சையத், பின்காலனித்துவ ஆய்வு இந்த ஏற்றத் தாழ்வான அதிகார அமைப்பை முடிவுக்குக் கொண்டு வருகிற நோக்கத்தோடு செயல்படுகிறது.

எதிர்விணையாற்றுதல்

பின்னைக் காலனிய சூழலில் இருக்கின்ற நாம் காலனியத்தின் அனைத்து வகையான முன்னெடுப்புகளையும் மறுபரிசீலனைக்கு உட்படுத்த வேண்டும் என்பதையும் காலனியத்தை அழித்து அதிலிருந்து விடுபடுதல் என்பதையும் கவனமாகச் செய்ய வேண்டும். 1700-களில் சீகன் பால்கு எழுதிய தென்னிந்தியக் கடவுள்களின் குடிவழியாகட்டும், இந்திய மக்களின் மதம், பழக்க வழக்கங்கள் இவை போன்ற இன்னும் பிற நூல்கள் அனைத்தும் நமக்கு கிடைத்த மிகப்பெரியத் தகவல் களஞ்சியமாகும். இவை 18,19-ஆம் நூற்றாண்டுகளில் சமூக, பொருளாதார, சமய, அரசியல் ஆகியவற்றை அறிய நமக்கு உதவுகிறது. இதனைத் துணையாகக் கொண்டு ஐரோப்பிய நாடுகள் நம்மை குறித்து கீழாகப் பதிவு செய்திருந்தாலும் இத்தகைய நூலின் மூலம் நம்முடைய வரலாற்றை அறிந்து கொண்டு காலனியச் சிந்தனைக்கு எதிராக நாம் எதிர்விணையை நிகழ்த்த வேண்டும், ஆதிக்க நிலையை உணர்ந்து தனது அசலைத் தேடியும், பூர்வீகத்தைக் கண்டுணர்ந்தும் தன் மீதான ஆதிக்கத்தை நீக்கம் செய்து கொள்ளுதல் இதையே ஒரு சமுதாயம் காலனியாதிக்கத்திலிருந்து அதன் ஆதிக்க மொழியிலிருந்து தம்மை விடுவித்துக் கொள்ளுதலாகும்.

பின்னைக் காலனித்துவம் மீதான விமர்சனங்கள்

பின்னைக் காலனித்துவம் கொள்கையாக உருவாகியக் கால கட்டமாகிய 1990-களிலேயே அதன் மீதான எதிர்விணைகளும் திறனாய்வுகளில் உள்ளது. இக்கொள்கையானது மேலை நாட்டில் குறிப்பாக அமெரிக்கப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் தோற்றம் பெற்றது. எனவே இது அமெரிக்க அரசியல், பொருளாதார நலன் சார்ந்தக் கொள்கையாக இருக்குமோ என சந்தேகிக்கப்படுகிறது.

மேலும் பின்காலனியம் என்ற சொல்லாடலானது ஐரோப்பிய கலாச்சாரத்தை காலவரிசை அடிப்படையில் வரலாற்றாக்கம் செய்ய முயற்சிக்கிறது. மேலும் வரலாற்றின் அனைத்து பக்கங்களும் காலனித்துவம் என்ற ஒன்றுக்குள் முடியச் செய்கிறது.

அடுத்தபடியாக உலக மயமாக்கலுக்கும், குழு முதலாளித்துவத்திற்கும் பின்னை காலனித்துவம் துணையாக இருக்கிறதே தவிர நடப்பு அரசியல் நெருக்கடிகளை தவிர்க்கிறது என்றும் அமெரிக்க ஐரோப்பிய நாடுகளின் அதிகார மையத்திற்கு எதிரான சொல்லாடலாக பின்னைக் காலனித்துவம் உருவெடுக்கிற போது தான் இக்கொள்கையானது இந்தியாவிற்கு பொருத்தமான கொள்கையாக விளங்கும் என்று பின்காலனித்துவம் குறித்து பல்வேறு விமர்சனங்கள் திறனாய்வுலகில் விளங்குகிறது.

முடிவுரை

மேற்குறித்தச் சிக்கல்களை மனதில் கொண்டு இந்தியச் சூழலில் பின்னைக் காலனியம் என்பதை புரிந்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். பின் காலனிய விமர்சனத்தின் நோக்கம் பிரிட்டிஷ் காலனிய விளைவுகளை விமர்சிப்பதாக மட்டும் அமையாமல் குறிப்பிட்ட இக்காலத்தில் சாதிய ஆதிக்கத்தின் நுண்செயல்பாடுகளையும் பிற சமூகப் பிரச்சனைகளையும் அடையாளம் கண்டு விமர்சிப்பதாகவும் இருக்க வேண்டியுள்ளது. இவ்வகையில் பின்னைக் காலனிய விமர்சனம் இந்தியச் சமூகத்தை உலகமயமாக்கத்திற்கு எதிரான நிலைபாட்டை நிகழ்த்த உதவுகிறது.

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War, Trauma and Reconciliation: Decolonizing Trauma in Nguyen Phan Que Mai's *The Mountains Sing*

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the novel *The Mountains Sing* by Nguyen Phan Que Mai through the lens of decolonized trauma theory. Nguyen Phan Que Mai is a Vietnamese author of eight fiction and nonfiction in Vietnamese language. *The Mountain Sings* (2020) is his debut novel in English. This article focuses on the postcolonial applications of trauma theory, thereby addressing both the sufferings and healing needs. The study sheds light on the novel *The Mountains Sing* through the lens of decolonized trauma theory. It highlights the narratology of trauma, its aftermath and reconciliation to analyze the issue of cross-cultural ethics. Additionally, the study explicates the history and culture of Vietnamese people through the characters in the novel.

Keywords: decolonized, narratology, Eurocentric, rejuvenation, postcolonial

In *The Mountains Sing*, Nguyen Phan Que Mai has depicted the sufferings of Tran family, a microcosm of Vietnam families, caught amidst a series of war. The story is told through two voices namely, grandmother Dieu Lan, and her granddaughter Huong. Nguyen Phan Que Mai is the recipient of top literary awards of Vietnam. *The Mountains Sing* got numerous awards including Winner of the 2020 Lannan Literary Award Fellowship.

The Mountains Sing narrates the journey of Tran family who undergo painful experiences during the war in Vietnam. The writer was born in North Vietnam, where she experienced hunger, faced deaths and horrors of war, all around her. In an interview, she recounts her experiences of painfully remembering - the agonies of mothers crying for their lost children and people committing suicide because their beloved didn't return home. These experiences form the core of the novel. The title itself is a metaphor, which represents the belief of Vietnamese people. "Son Ca" means 'The Mountains Sing'. It narrates a tale that the "Son Ca songs can reach heaven and souls of the dead can return in the "Son Ca" singing" (*MS* 127).

The origin of decolonized trauma theory started with the publication of the special issue of *Studies in the Novel*. It is based on the advancements in the postcolonial literary studies. Prior to the publication of the book, trauma theory was centered on 'white' subjects such as Holocaust survivors. Many critics expressed the limitations of such theory. Trauma studies were first developed in 1990's which solely relied on Freud's concepts of psychology. But many postcolonial critics argue that traditional trauma theory is insufficient to depict the experiences of suppressed people because of its lack of attention to the historical and cultural context of marginalized groups.

Decolonizing trauma theory draws a parallel link between trauma studies and postcolonial criticism. It explores the sufferings of minority groups who are colonized. Minority groups include non-western cultures, particularly the people of third world. Therefore decolonizing trauma theory moves beyond a Eurocentric trauma paradigm. The theory represents history, culture and artistic representation of colonized people. In the novel, grandmother Dieu Lan compares the sufferings of Vietnam people to the mountains: "The challenges faced by Vietnamese people throughout history are as tall as the tallest mountains. If you stand too close, you won't be able to see their peaks. Once you step away from the currents of life, you will have the full view" (*MS* 9).

Unlike the traditional trauma theory, the decolonized trauma theory does not give importance on solely individual traumatization, but include sufferings of collectives. One of the characters in the novel, who is a war veteran, laments about the bombings which is a result of his crew presence in the neighbouring villages. According to Rothberg, decolonized trauma is a trauma that gives importance to the beliefs, ceremonies and traditions of minority groups. Grandma Dieu Lan echoes the novelist ideas on the manipulative history written by the 'whites' and thereby she insists the indigenous writers to come up with their own voices. Indigenous communities have a high regard for nature. They are in harmony with nature. The novelist does not limit the trauma theory to humans. The destructions caused by war on nature are also explained in the novel. A character in the novel is agonized by the destruction of nature by the war, "It was depressing whenever we passed a destroyed area. No birds, butterflies, flowers, or green tress. The howling wind sounded like the cackling of angry ghosts" (*MS* 158).

Decolonized theory explores the effects of the trauma during and after colonization. This understanding is achieved through trauma narratives of the suppressed people. Trauma narratives play a crucial role in depicting the trauma and its aftermath. Psychoanalyst Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* weaves narratives of trauma "as a detailed oral

report embedded in historical and social context within a stipulated time frame" (n.p). Postcolonial literature paves the way for understanding the above mentioned ideas by depicting numerous narratives to show both trauma and aftermath. The protagonist Dieu Lan tells the story of her life to granddaughter Huong that lay deep in her psyche. The narrative strategy helps her to overcome the pain caused by trauma. Therefore in indigenous communities, oral modes of narratives are fruitful in addressing trauma. The characters in the novel communicate with each other through deathbed letters and dairies which are kept hidden. This in turn, paves the way for reconciliation.

Decolonized trauma theory insists not only upon the melancholy experience but move beyond the state of healing, rejuvenation and personal growth. Grandmother Dieu Lan, reacts in a positive way, amidst war stating that "The war might destroy our houses, but it can't extinguish our spirit" (*MS* 18).Spiritualism also comes in a way with postcolonial theory when dealing with the aftermath of traumatic experience. In this context, Renee Linklater opines that decolonized trauma theory involves healing strategies, which are productive in dealing with the aftermath of trauma in the indigenous communities. The characters in the novel seek the help of 'shaman', who is a religious healer, to overcome the sufferings caused by the trauma. Spiritualism also helps in evoking the blessings of ancestors for a meaningful beginning. In the very first lines of the novel, Nguyen through her character Huong, evoke the ancestors blessing for her task of writing a novel.

Indigenous communities have their own ways of understanding and healing the trauma. The Great Famine is depicted in a traumatic account, where the protagonist of the novel makes her hungry children to sleep by singing a lullaby. The sufferings of Dieu Lan in her motherland is painfully addressed. The land beholds her reminiscence and loss. She has undergone series of aching events from her escape as a beggar, because of Land Reform movement, to abandoning of her children one after another. The trauma does not end, it continues till her death. But throughout her journey of life and death, she hopes for a better future and thrives hard for it to happen. She even indulges in black marketing for livelihood which is considered as a taboo in her community.

In order to understand the trauma of minority groups, it is important to understand their culture. The trauma experienced by an indigenous woman is understood in terms of her culture. Huong's mother Ngoc expresses her grief over being molested by a group of men. She laments "who would want to touch a woman who had been trampled by other men? Today I rubbed my body until it blood. I want to wash the filth from my skin, but it's too late" (*MS* 209).

Forgiveness is a healing force in many of the postcolonial fiction. Forgiveness is a key to reconciliation. Despite the irrevocable scars of past and present wounding of the characters in the novel, the final pages show healing and personal growth. The concluding lines of the novel, do not linger in the past pain, but affirm recovery from traumatic wounding. Grandmother Dieu Lan surrenders her years of enmity by practising Buddhism. The novelist has also included many proverbs in the Vietnamese language by giving them an English translation. The proverbs are rich in meaning and display cultural beliefs of Vietnamese communities.

The Mountains Sings powerfully expresses her concern over the dangers of the war and wishes for a peaceful earth in future. She echoes her thoughts through the character Huong, "But by reading their books, I saw the other side of them – their humanity. Somehow I was sure that if people were willing to read each other, and see the light of other cultures, there would be no war on earth" (*MS* 161). These lines explore cross cultural ethics by giving importance to the 'other' side as well, thereby moving beyond the traumatic events to the path of reconciliation. The exploration of indigenous history and culture in engagement with decolonized trauma theory has been analyzed in the novel *The Mountains Sings*.

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The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction in Octavia Estelle Butler's "Bloodchild"

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Abstract

Science fiction has become a tool to imagine new horizons and to crossover the same. With the advent of technoscience and space explorations, science fiction writings have proven their relevance time and time again. Octavia Estelle Butler was one of the critically acclaimed science fiction writers. Octavia Butler's short story "Bloodchild" garnered much attention when it was first published in 1995. It is much more than a story of slavery; it is a story of symbiosis, attachment between two different species. Butler is known for her narratives zeroing in on symbiosis, hybrid identities, miscegenation, Afrocentricity. The present paper tries to apply the theory of Istvan Csicsery-Ronay's seven beauties of science fiction to Butler's "Bloodchild". The researcher aims to decode the presence of Csicsery-Ronay's beauties in the select short story.

Keywords: Octavia Butler, Bloodchild, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Seven beauties

Octavia Estelle Butler (1947-2006), the renowned Science Fiction writer grabbed both the Nebula and Hugo Awards for her short story "Bloodchild". "Bloodchild" is the titular story of the collection *Bloodchild and Other Stories* published in 1995. Two more stories were added to the initial seven pieces (five short stories and two essays). In her 'Afterword' to the story, Butler explained the reasons that inspired her to conceive this story in the first place. Butler viewed this story as a story of love, a coming-of-age story of a little boy named Gan, and finally as a story with a novum of male pregnancy. The underlying reason for this novum is her fear of the botfly; she also imagined a context where symbiosis with another organism seems possible.

Symbiosis and hybrid reproduction seem to be the recurrent tropes of Butler as they provide more chances to explore the different aspects of humanity when faced with the Other. Butler authored three novel series the *Patternists* Series (1976-1984), *Lilith's Brood* (1987-1989) and the *Parable* Series (1993 and 1998), two standalone novels – *Kindred* (1979) and *Fledgling* (2005) and a short story collection in 1995. Posthumans, hybrid identities, vampires, aliens are the protagonists of her writings. Her oeuvre is categorised as Afrofuturistic as she uses the themes of Afrocentricity with Black characters as her protagonists. The survival of humanity rests on the shoulders of these Black protagonists in Butler's world. Butler's novels have been read as both hard and soft science fiction. Many

critical perspectives have been applied to her writings and analysed from various point of views. Her realistic writings prove to be relevant even today. The aim of this paper is to analyse Octavia Butler's "Bloodchild" using Istvan Csicsery-Ronay's theory of the seven beauties of science fiction.

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay (1950-) is a Professor Emeritus of English at DePauw University, Indiana, U.S. He teaches Science Fiction, Science Fiction Cinema, World Literature and Shakespeare Studies. He is the co-editor of *Science Fiction Studies*, founding editor of *Humananimalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies*. He authored *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (2008) which was critically acclaimed. He also edited *On Philip K. Dick: 40 Articles from Science Fiction Studies* (1992) with Arthur B Evans, Veronica Hollinger and R.D. Mullen. He was one of the editors of *The Weslyan Anthology of Science Fiction* (2010) along with Arthur B. Evans, Joan Godon, Veronica Hollinger, Rob Latham and Carol McGirl.

The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction is a critical analysis of the tropes used in science fiction in general. In the "Preface" of his book, he explains the reason for the title. It is an allegory of a Persian poem "The Haft Paykar" (1197) written by Nizami, the twelfth-century Azeri poet. The title means "seven portraits". It tells the story of King Bahram Gur who sees the portraits of seven beautiful princesses and marries them immediately. He spends each night with each princess and they narrate him a story of love and morality (Csicsery-Ronay x).

According to Csicsery-Ronay, there are seven beauties in a science fiction. They are: ". . . fictive neology, fictive novums, future history, imaginary science, the science-fictional sublime, the science-fictional grotesque, and the Technologiade" (Csicsery-Ronay 5). The first beauty is fictive neology. "They are fictive *signa novi,* signs of the new. In the real world, any design or fashion motif whose purpose is to refer to a "New Thing," whose meaning depends on its newness, is a sign of newness..." (Csicsery-Ronay 13). New terms are invented or discovered in science fictional stories. Fans of *Star Trek* can never forget the Klingon language. The very word 'robot' was coined by the Czech playwright Karel Capek in his play *R.U.R*. Many science fiction writers bring in or introduce new words, new fictional language to suit their context which are later included in the social and technological communications.

The second beauty is the fictive novum: "The novum provides a "narrative kernel" from which the sf artist constructs a detailed imaginary alternative reality. This alternative world is a

model that readers make sense of by constantly, though not always consciously, comparing it with the familiar world" (Csicsery-Ronay 50). The novum is the basic setting of a science fictional story. The novum might be singular or plural in number. Robots, aliens, space travel, hybrid identities are all examples of novum. Science fiction stories have future dystopian or utopian settings. The authors design their future worlds with the present real world in their minds. As Nietzsche remarked popularly, the future can be explained only by the present. In some cases, science fiction writers can be regarded as prophetic writers too. This is true in the case of Isaac Asimov and his robots.

The third beauty is future history which is a kind of representation of the future.

> SF writers sometimes place their stories in imaginary pasts and presents, but most science fictions are futuristic. They are set in a future time vis-à-vis the author's present, or they include an event — an invention, a discovery, a seed—that will prove to be a history-transforming novum. (Csicsery-Ronay 76)

A science fiction writer can be compared to a historian in a literal and metaphorical sense. He/she imagines a future with his/her past and present. It is his/her real world that gets translated into a future one and defamiliarized in its entirety. Traces of history will forever be present in the future.

> SF relies on the historical past tense, both because narrative requires it, and because sf's particular construction of the future does. It is the illusion of a completed future that allows science fictions to be told, and for a parable-space to be formed, through which readers can shuttle back and forth between the fictive world and consensus reality. (Csicsery-Ronay 77)

This future history leads to a speculation most of the times as people always try to relate the reality with the projections in the plot. The next beauty is imaginary science.

> SF's *free science.* Science is sf 's pretext. Every quantum-info-nano-bio-cyberastro-psycho-xeno-socio-physical infodump pumps up the illusion that sf stories are dramatizations of scientific knowledge. But even in the hardest of

hard sf, sf 's science is always figurative. It is an *image* of science, a poetic

illusion disguising its illusionary status. (Csicsery-Ronay 111)

When it comes to the discussion of science in science fiction, there are two broad conceptions. Hard science fiction writers believe that the science they talk about in their stories should be empirical. "Most sf writers, far from pushing an agenda of scrupulous respect for scientific truth,

toy with it, making it a source of metaphors, rationalized by realistic representation,

and embedded in quasi-mythic narrative traditions that express social concerns" (Csicsery-Ronay 112). Arthur C Klarke, Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov authored hard science fiction novels. H.G. Wells, Frank Herbert wrote soft science fiction novels. The difference between the two is the intensity of delving into the technical and empirical aspects of science. Both hard and soft science fiction has elements that are metaphorical, imaginary and figurative. They are representative of reality that spurred the writer's imagination.

The science-fictional sublime is the next beauty followed by the science-fictional grotesque. Csicsery-Ronay defines both the terms as follows:

> The sublime is a response to a shock of imaginative expansion, a complex recoil and recuperation of self-consciousness coping with phenomena suddenly perceived to be too great to be comprehended. The grotesque is a response to another sort of imaginative shock, the realization that objects that appear to be familiar and under control are actually undergoing surprising transformations, conflating disparate elements not observed elsewhere in the world. (146-47)

In most science fiction, the element of sublimity and grotesque are one and the same. They create awe and terror at the same time. "In both, the perceiver enjoys a sudden dislocation from habitual perception" (Rosnay 146-47). The well known example of this kind is our very renowned Frankenstein monster. Frankenstein's monster is both sublime and grotesque in all aspects. Similarly, in science fictional stories that which makes the readers go in awe will definitely create abjection at one point of time. It is the defamiliarization of the familiar things; the overlapping of the familiar with the unknown is the cause of grotesqueness and sublimity.

Technologiade is the last beauty according to Csicsery-Ronay. This merely translates to the technological advancements brought into the plot:

> Sf 's many plot loans and parabolas are structured by two distinctive forms of a category we might call the *technologiade,* the epic of the struggle surrounding the transformation of the cosmos into a technological regime. These two dialectically related forms are the expansive *space opera* and the intensive *techno-Robinsonade.* (Csicsery-Ronay 217)

Space Operas form the core of the technologiade. *Foundation* Series, *Starship Troopers*, *Star Trek*, *Dune* are the staple of the space opera genre. They are popular for their new worlds, new technologies, new frontiers, new challenges and technological novelties.

"Bloodchild" tells the story of Gan, a human, and T'Gatoi, an alien. A human group has escaped earth long back and managed to reach an extrasolar planet full of aliens called the Tlic. The aliens have agreed to shelter the humans on condition that they should become host animals for their young ones. With no other option, the exchange has begun. Over time, the aliens have understood the nature of humans and agreed to help them. The humans are called Terrans, and those who become the host are called as N'Tlic. T'Gatoi is a part of Gan's family. T'Gatoi is a female and she has been taken out of Gan's father and she has been friends with Gan's mother since childhood. The aliens have agreed to protect humans and created a separate colony for them called as Preserve in exchange for the humans to bear their young ones. In exchange for this, the humans are given eggs which give them pleasure, longevity, resistance to diseases. T'Gatoi is from a political family and she is one of the major decision makers regarding the Preserve. Gan's mother has promised one of her children to T'Gatoi in exchange for the protection that she offers the family against the other Tlics. The story mainly concentrates on Gan who volunteers himself to T'Gatoi. When he witnesses the delivery of grubs (young ones of Tlics) from an N'Tlic's body, his mind wavers. He doubts his decision, gets terrified and contemplates ending his life. But his love for T'Gatoi overpowers him and he agrees to bear her young at the end of the story.

According to Csicsery-Ronay, the first beauty is fictive neology i.e. new terms. Butler has not introduced that many new terminologies in this text. She gave the alien race the name 'Tlic' and for the human hosts, she has given the term 'N'Tlic'. The young ones of the Tlic are called as 'grubs'. There is no documented origin for the word Tlic in the context of science fiction. Other than this, Butler has not used any new terms in the short story. Tlic are

described as worm-like creatures with a long tail, several limbs and yellow eyes. "T'Gatoi whipped her three meters of body off her couch, toward the door, and out at full speed. She had bones – ribs, a long spine, a skull, four sets of limb bones per segment" (Butler 9). In many instances, the movements of the Tlic are described as if they are floating. Tlics prefer humans for their body heat and also for their biological propensity towards pregnancy. The humans are kept separate in a place called "Preserve" (Butler 5).

Fictive novum is the second beauty. The story takes place in an extrasolar world where humans have reached after escaping earth; the new world is their sanctuary. It is revealed in the text that several humans escaped earth long back. Humans reached the world of the Tlic in order to survive from the atrocities committed by their own kind. The Tlic are worm-like insects that are intelligent and in need of hosts to bear their young ones. When the humans reached the world of Tlic, they were merely treated as host animals. The relationship was one of a parasitical kind. In due course, the relationship between the two species improved and became mutualistic. Terrans have willingly accepted to bear the young of the Tlic for exchange of their safety. As T'Gatoi remarks: "Everything lives inside you Terrans" (Butler 16). It is this biological ability of the humans makes them the perfect host for the Tlics. Though the relationship is mutualistic, it is not devoid of limitations. Firearms are not permitted amongst the Terrans. "Firearms were illegal in the Preserve. There had been incidents right after the Preserve was established – Terrans shooting Tlic, shooting N'Tlic" (Butler 12). This is highly reminiscent of the themes of Afrocentrism – slavery, racism, domination. T'Gatoi and her family are responsible for the safety of the Terrans; they have established a system where Terrans' rights could not be violated and thus they are treated with humanity. Gan thinks of T'Gatoi's attempts to protect them: "Her people wanted more of us made available. Only she and her political faction stood between us and the hordes who did not understand why there was a Preserve – why any Terran could not be courted, paid, drafted, in some way made available to them" (Butler 5). Again analogies could be made between the plot setting and the real world history and the present.

The element of future history in this story is a bit farfetched but not entirely impossible. With the search for other living organisms in various galaxies, the future envisioned by Butler in this story might happen one day for sure. The NIH Microbiome Project has proven with many samples that human beings have been forever in a symbiotic relationship with various microorganisms. Human bodies are hosts to many microorganisms; it is a well known fact that many bacteria aid in the process of digestion in human guts. So Butler's vision of symbiotic relationship with another species is not completely impossible.

With the increased support for space explorations during the Raegan era, Butler was quite prophetic regarding the future. Butler herself acknowledged the importance of space explorations in many of her interviews.

Male pregnancy in this story forms the imaginary science, the fourth beauty of Csicsery-Ronay. Butler has acknowledged in the "Afterword" to the story that for a long time she wanted to write a story about male pregnancy. The Tlics have to cut open the body of the host in order to deliver their young ones. The entire process is bloody as described by Butler. In order to bear their young, Tlic offer the Terrans eggs, the supplement that is needed to bear the grubs; this is provided by the Tlics. By making a man pregnant, and that too voluntarily, Butler completely alienates the process of pregnancy. Each family has to sacrifice a male to the Tlic for implantation. Before the arrival of the humans, the Tlic have been using the bodies of animal for implantation. But humans proved to be the perfect hosts and since then there is no turning back for the Tlics. Butler raises an important question through this scientific imagination – what would happen if pregnancy or fertility is not restricted by sex? What then becomes of sex and gender that is constantly being debated about? A human male getting impregnated by an alien female. Philip K. Dick described science fiction as a kind of thought-experimentation. Butler's "Bloodchild" fits the template. In Gan's family, Gan is chosen to bear the young of T'Gatoi. "I'm told I was first caged within T'Gatoi's many limbs only three minutes after my birth. A few days later, I was given my first taste of egg" (Butler 8). Gan has his moments of uncertainty and doubt, but in the end accepts his fate.

The next beauty is the science-fictional sublime. Humans become posthumans with the help of Tlic in "Bloodchild". Humans get a long-life, become disease resistant, and age slowly because of the eggs given by the Tlic. "The eggs prolonged life, prolonged vigor" (Butler 3). Gan represents the readers in general; he wonders how anyone can willingly do this in exchange for a long life and benefits. Gan's father lived twice his age and in his old age, he married Gan's mother and begot four children with her. All these are because of the eggs given by his Tlic. The Tlic have studied human anatomy and they have come up with the aid - the eggs. Human bodies, though perfect for implantation, have their own limitations. In order to bear the grubs, which are described as deadly, human bodies have to be altered to be more than human. Thus, they become posthumans. Critical posthumanism is an important tool in studying science fiction. Pramod K Nayar defines it as follows: "...radical decentring of the traditional sovereign, coherent and autonomous human in order to demonstrate how the human is always already evolving with, constituted by and constitutive of multiple forms of life and machines" (2). The N'Tlics lose the autonomy over their bodies and their bodies are

modified to become something more than a normal human body. They enter into a symbiotic relationship with a complete alien species and their very humanity is questioned. This creates both awe and fear; both sublimity and abjection.

The grotesque part comes when Gan sees the delivery of the grubs for the first time. An N'Tlic Lomas is brought by T'Gatoi for delivery. Though Gan knows what to expect, he does not believe that he would lose control. "There was movement on the right side – tiny, seemingly random pulsations moving his brown flesh, creating a concavity here, a convexity there, over and over until I could see the rhythm of it and knew where the next pulse would be" (Butler 14-15). T'Gatoi asks Gan to help by finding a dead animal to put the grubs in once she takes them out of Lomas. "T'Gatoi seemed to pay no attention as she lengthened and deepened the cut, now and then pausing to lick away blood. His blood vessels contracted, reacting to the chemistry of her saliva, and the bleeding slowed" (Butler 15). Gan finds a dead animal and T'Gatoi places the delivered grubs inside the flesh of the dead animal. "She found the first grub. It was fat and deep red with his blood – both inside and out. It had already eaten its own egg case but apparently had not yet begun to eat its host" (Butler 15). For the first time, Gan really wonders about the entire thing and doubts creep in his mind. He even considers ending his life once and for all, but has a change of heart after talking with T'Gatoi. The image of the grubs eating the host's flesh clearly proves him that he is like a property to T'Gatoi. T'Gatoi also senses his doubts and decides to choose his elder sister to impregnate. Finally, Gan gives in and T'Gatoi impregnates him: "Yet I undressed and lay down beside her. I knew what to do, what to expect. I had been told all my life. I felt the familiar sting, narcotic, mildly pleasant. Then the blind probing of her ovipositor. The puncture was painless, easy. So easy going in. She undulated slowly against me, her muscles forcing the egg from her body into mine" (Butler 27).

Darko Suvin, the critically acclaimed science fiction critic defines the genre as follows: "a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (8-9). In "Bloodchild", there is a perfect blend of estrangement and cognition, given the sense of familiarity and defamiliarization at the same time. Octavia Butler was regarded as one of the major proponents of Afrofuturism. It is a cultural aesthetic which projects everything through the lens of Afrocentricity. "Science fiction often talks about race by not talking about race, makes real aliens, has hidden race dialogues. Even though it is a literature that talks a lot about underclasses or oppressed classes, it does

so from a privileged if somewhat generic white space" (Lavender 7-8). The theme of slavery is throughout the story. Human bodies are violated by the aliens for their purpose. Though the humans become posthumans, they lose their agency and autonomy over their selves thereby becoming docile bodies as suggested by Foucault: "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 136). Butler also talks about bodily perversions through the symbiotic relationship between humans and aliens. It is a kind of reproductive slavery that could be compared to the African slavery. The notions related to birthing processes have been changed long back because of IVF and surrogacy. Butler also critiques heteronormativity through the abject relationship of two different species.

To conclude, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay's theory of seven beauties of science fiction perfectly fit Butler's "Bloodchild". Though Butler never acknowledged that it is a story of reproductive slavery, the analysis of the tropes mentioned by Csicery-Ronay proves that "Bloodchild" is also a story about slavery and thus it becomes Afrofuturistic in its treatment of the novum. The novum plays an important part in the story and all the other mentioned beauties are dependent on the novum in general. Thus Butler's "Bloodchild" defamiliarizes the category called 'human'.

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Intelligent Tutoring System: Integrating AI-based technology in Second Language Classrooms

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Abstract

The introduction of the Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS), which promised personalised education to students and intended to adapt to learners' needs, marked the beginning of the use of AI in second language acquisition. AI is said to be capable of processing a wide range of human abilities, making it more functionally effective and faster. Research shows numerous advantages of using AI for language learners. AI has the potential to revolutionise education and empower students by providing them with the flexibility to work at their own pace. AI-powered language learning technologies support language acquisition by reinforcing concepts and emphasising topics that students find difficult, engaging them in activities they enjoy, addressing their interests, and accounting for elements like cultural background. However, the use of AI-based technology in second language teaching and learning is still limited. By adding AI into teaching and learning, instructors can gain valuable insight into their student's interests, abilities, and other traits. The study discusses the benefits of implementing AI-based technology in SL classrooms and suggests a few AI-based tools for teaching vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Introduction:

Second language learning experienced a social shift in the late 1990s after researchers started to believe that language learning is more of a socio-cultural experience (Arshavskaya, 2020; Eun & Lim, 2009; Ozfidan et al., 2014). The advancement of digital technology also made it possible for SL classrooms to adopt ICT-integrated language teaching strategies. The second language classrooms incorporated smartboards replacing traditional chalkboards, projection displays replacing traditional charts, audio-video players, and desktop computers. A teacher-centred classroom gave way to student-centred classroom procedures and educational models. Teachers now serve as facilitators, creating a supportive and cooperative learning atmosphere for the students.

Needless to say, to compete in the global academic sphere, educational institutions and second language instructors must necessarily adapt to technological innovation. The existing digital tools for teaching languages arose in the late 1990s when learners had limited

access to technology and the internet. However, unlike their predecessors, students in the twenty-first century are more familiar with technology and the internet. Present learners can use digital devices like laptops, tablets, and smartphones, which provide them access to the internet whenever and anywhere, in contrast to their previous generation learners who were restricted to the four walls to gain access to technology or the internet. The current generation of second language learners may now access resources around-the-clock thanks to networked learning, which has also opened the door to the self-paced study. Employing web 2.0 tools, collaborative boards, social networking sites, chatbots, virtual worlds, and other contemporary technologies has brought a paradigm shift in teaching-learning. The Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) have allowed for the widespread adoption of digital devices in today's society. Hence, second-language teachers must use these tools to improve the learning environment for their students and make them feel at ease and motivated. The current study examines the application of AI in learning second languages and suggests a few applications for integrating AI into the instruction of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Artificial Intelligence and Second Language Learning:

Implementing artificial intelligence in second language learning has impressive benefits. Studies show that algorithms powered by artificial intelligence can boost language learning across the board (Mele et al., 2022; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Large institutions can use AI-based language learning software to expand the expertise of their resources, and individual students can also study whenever and wherever they choose with AI language learning.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has come a long way from its inception in the 1950s when Alan Turing attempted to determine if machines could think as intelligently as humans, which became known as the 'Turing test' (Oppy & Dowe, 2003). AI has been a driving force in the 21st century, assisting society and humans in numerous ways. AI is employed in social media, marketing, finance, healthcare, robotics, lifestyle, agriculture, gaming, and e-commerce. The second-language classroom is one of the areas in which artificial intelligence has not been used extensively. However, the introduction of Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS), which promised personalised education to students and aimed to adapt to their needs as systems which strive to care about learners in that sense, marked the beginning of the use of AI in second language acquisition.

The twenty-first century artificial intelligence is capable of things once thought to be its limitations in the late nineteenth century. A broad spectrum of human abilities can be

processed by AI, which is functionally efficient and processed faster. AI is currently employed in the educational spectrum for smaller tasks such as human facial recognition, biometric data collection, text-to-speech and speech-to-text translation, photo location tagging, etc. However, AI has virtually little application in classroom teaching and learning. AI is used in classrooms by second language teachers who feel that Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) improves the results of second language instruction, albeit many of these teachers are only familiar with the basics of CALL. Researchers have discovered several ways in which AI benefits language learners. For example, it can help students learn a language more quickly students can learn a language by repeating phrase patterns(Park & Yang, 2020), and it can also help students in a group improve their speaking abilities(El Shazly, 2021), particularly their pronunciation(Dewi et al., 2021). Besides the classroom, Siri, Google Now, Microsoft Cortana, and Amazon Alexa are a few examples of AI tools today's students use for their day-to-day activities.

Artificial intelligence (AI) can empower students and transform education. The fourth industrial revolution demands that all teachers learn about AI. Teachers think using AI in the classroom will limit the teacher's role or shrink the teaching-learning process. It can be said that artificial intelligence, whether a computer, robot, machine, mechanical algorithmic accessory, or data server, enables some tasks to be completed more quickly or efficiently than humans would have completed alone. Traditional schools can implement artificial intelligence language learning to give pupils more options. A few advantages of using AI inside a second language classroom are providing instant feedback, deeper involvement in the learning process, language bots, machine translation, and no fear of failure (Rohalevych, 2022). Learners can work at their own pace with the help of AI-powered language learning platforms that repeat concepts and highlight concepts they struggle with, engage them with tasks they excel at, cater to their interests, and take into consideration aspects like cultural background.

Following are the statistics of AI usage in the Educational spectrum. (Team, 2022)

- AI will power over 47% of learning management tools in the next three years.

- Research shows that 20% to 40% of the current workload of teachers can be automated using current technology.

- An AI-enabled chatbot can answer a student's question in merely 2.7 seconds.

- An AI-powered chatbot answered 91% of student questions correctly at a university in Spain.

AI in learning pronunciation:

The advancement of artificial intelligence has resulted in the discovery of speech recognition and voice pattern detection features using machine learning and natural language processing. According to studies, AI-based pronunciation tools can identify up to 86% of mispronounced words in a speech and reduce mispronunciations in learners by up to 23% (Li & Meng, 2014). Several AI-powered android and web-based applications have been created to teach non-native English speakers how to pronounce English words. A recent Google application called Bolo employs an AI named Diya to identify words in English that are difficult for Hindi speakers to pronounce and train them to pronounce them correctly. The results show that 64% of children's pronunciation skills have improved (Perez, 2019). As a result, Google launched Readalong, one of its flagship applications.

ELSA is another AI-based language learning platform that uses machine learning to train spoken English. ELSA uses a variety of non-native speakers' accents and pronunciations to assist learners in mastering them. Like ELSA, Language Confidence is another powerful AI tool for English pronunciation. The latter claim that their system can recognise over 10,000 of the most commonly used English words in natural speech, supports a wide range of dialects and provides the most detailed feedback (Automated pronunciation assessment API, 2022). This application includes comprehensive data analytics, customisable grading, closed-end evaluation, and support for multiple accents.

Another app, Blue Canoe, uses specific speech recognition software to analyse the audio using machine learning models to identify discrepancies. After a given point of time of daily use, an artificially intelligent (AI) teacher provides users with tailored feedback, letting them know precisely how they mispronounce specific terms. Other apps that aid in English pronunciation include Cambridge AI Speech Tutor and Chatterfox. Second-language teachers should utilise these AI-based learning apps inside the classroom to help their students improve their pronunciation.

AI in learning grammar:

Studies show that AI-based grammar instruction tools, such as chatbots, significantly improve grammar skills (Huang et al., 2021). Grammar is essential in writing; these AI-based applications use trial-and-error methods to help learners understand proper grammar. That is, the apps will force learners to write something; as they write, they will make suggestions to help them learn proper grammar. The best and classic example is Google's Gmail chat box which highlights incorrect grammar with a blue line while the user composes an email using

AI-corrected grammar. When one clicks on the underlined word or phrase, Google's grammar suggestions appear.

Similarly, Grammarly, an online tool with more than 20 million active users (IVP, 2021) and a decade of AI-based error detection experience, recently rolled out a slew of new features, including grammar suggestions tailored to the tone and domain of the user's writing. For example, if the tone and domain are formal, the algorithm will strictly apply the grammatical rules; if it is casual writing, the algorithm is flexible in applying them. Grammar-checking software is nothing new, but the technology enabling it is becoming increasingly sophisticated. In order to create its algorithms, Grammarly claims to employ a hybrid approach that includes several natural language processing techniques, including machine learning, deep learning, and custom rules. Microsoft has also recently introduced an artificial intelligence-based editor pane to Microsoft Office, which helps learners correct their grammar as they write.

Even though online editing tools like Grammarly and Google Docs' grammatical suggestions are not perfect, the artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms behind them successfully enhance how many of us write. It also spots errors involving more complex grammatical rules. Even professionals utilise these editing tools to find errors before they accidentally go public while writing emails, texts, or more formal writing. In such a case, language teachers must also cope with these applications and should try to incorporate them in second-language classrooms.

AI in learning vocabulary:

Lingvist is an application powered by AI and machine learning. It offers up to 3,000 of the most common terms in the language in the tool's free edition (Wetherbee, 2022). The app compiles data from online sources such as articles, movie subtitles, and books to create practical courses. Lessons evolve throughout time based on prior errors. The app also uses the spaced repetition technique of learning, which entails finishing more complicated challenges before simpler ones. It quickly skips through words learners have mastered and repeats terms they frequently get wrong to maximise learning. The software offers grammatical context tips when they respond incorrectly to help them learn.

Duolingo is another free language learning programme that employs artificial intelligence, machine learning, and gamification to make language learning entertaining and engaging. The platform keeps track of performance and usage and employs spaced repetition to decide which challenges to present to the learners. Additionally, the software can predict when learners will forget anything they have learned and strives to ensure that they retain it.

The software uses a machine learning feature called "birdbrain," which estimates learners' chances of getting something right or wrong. Such a feature enables it to modify a certain lesson's difficulty level.

Knowji, an audio-visual vocabulary application that uses current educational research, is another of the best AI teaching tools available today. Knowji employs various techniques and ideas to speed up learning for language learners. The AI education tool monitors the progress of each word and anticipates when users are most likely to forget it. These skills are attained through a spacing repetition algorithm, which helps students get better at learning over time. Memrise, another app, uses real-time item identification techniques to keep users interested in learning. Users can take a photo of any object and upload it to the app to learn its name in the language they want.

Limitations of AI:

Whether a computer or artificial intelligence can simulate the human brain hinges on how the brain and, consequently, an individual's mind are conceptualised. It is not difficult to imagine a time in the future when artificial intelligence can simulate mental processes. However, if we understand the mind as a tool for volitional learning, it appears plausible to suggest that artificial intelligence will never have or be able to acquire all of the human mind's capabilities.

Smart technology does enhance learning, but it cannot replace the benefits of human interaction. An over-reliance on artificial intelligence for learning could lead to learning errors that are more harmful than helpful. Computers are getting smarter every day, demonstrating the ability to teach and learn from other computers. However, it is debatable whether they can exercise intuition-based judgement in unfamiliar situations, which commonly arise in the classroom.

There are also a few limitations in using AI among early-level learners. The main one is that instead of teaching children how to do things on their own, it decreases their capacity for critical thought and increases their reliance on technology. Technology may encourage student laziness by making it easier and more comfortable for individuals who do not want to put effort into their studies.

Conclusion:

Technology-enhanced learning has always had a favourable impact on the teaching and learning process. The application of artificial intelligence (AI) to the study of second languages, particularly in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, has already demonstrated its viability in significantly influencing second language learners' learning curves. Despite

certain limits, there are numerous advantages to integrating technology in the classroom, particularly artificial intelligence-driven technology. Therefore, educational institutions and teachers of second languages should make significant efforts to integrate AI-based technology into classroom teaching and learning.

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CHALLENGES FACED BY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT IN MANAGING GIG WORKFORCE IN SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ON-DEMAND LOW SKILLED PLATFORM WORKERS IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper focuses primarily on the challenges confronted by the human resources department in managing the flexible employment of low-skilled on-demand platform workers. They are called gig workers because of their temporary nature. The problems they face are innumerable. The poor working conditions, poor job security, lower pay, and deprived status quo increase their burden even more. Their job satisfaction levels are pitiful. There is no social security assistance in their lives. In this paper, the researcher has examined secondary sources to figure out the problems faced by gig workers in reality.

Key Words: human resources, job satisfaction, work force, demand.

The last decade has witnessed a great rise in the gig economy all around the globe. The reasons for the paradigm shift are the rapid advancement of communication through internet technologies and the attitudinal change of Millennials and Gen-Z in choosing their careers due to unemployment. In India, this model of economy has largely come into existence after the impact of Covid-19. According to the Code of Social Security 2019, a Gig worker is defined as a person *"who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationships"*.

A report by Niti Aayog states that in India, there were about twenty-four lakh and fifty thousand gig workers in 2011–2012, which rose to seventy-seven lakh in 2020–2021. The estimated projection is that there will be about two crore and thirty-five lakh workers by 2029–2030, which is about 4.1 percentage of the total workforce of India. Frazer (2019) classifies gig workers as low-skilled (blue-collar) delivery workers for Swiggy and high-skilled (gold-collar) consultants in IT industries. These workers are distinguished by flexible and temporary

jobs that are contractual. It is largely driven by a well-designed technology architecture on a digital platform.

The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey of 2019 states that millennials and Gen Z are more driven and oriented towards self-employment and jobs that provide freedom and independence. So, they opt for freelancing and contract jobs. They never lock themselves into full-time jobs that require time and dedication. According to the survey, eighty-four percentage of millennials and eighty-one percentage of Gen Z chose gig work.

These young people are drawn to this economic model because of the flexibility of the work, the control they have over their time, and the ability to earn according to their interests. When a person faces unemployment shocks or a financial crisis in his life, he gets jobs immediately a job in the gig economy. Even though jobs are booming in this sector, social security remains a great question for the employees who are employed in such businesses.

These jobs generally rest on internet technology and are also called "platform economy", where human labour is available in various forms over the internet. It can be called labour as a service (laas). Here, algorithmic management of human labour plays a vital role. The gig economy primarily focuses on performance culture. The performance appraisals of workers depend on the completion of tasks and the volume of work completed. The performance of a labourer is calculated based on an algorithm generated by artificial intelligence on the completed tasks.

For 9-5 jobs generating contracts on terms and conditions of work and labour turn out to be an easy task. Whereas framing policies and contracts for gig workers poses a wide challenge for the human resource managers as these workers are freelancers and contractual. There is a chance of them to work for multiple employers (moonlighting) where the quality of output they produce is a matter of concern. As these workers are working on online platforms monitoring and control mechanisms are underdeveloped. Poor organisational communication almost always leads to social isolation.

According to the Harvard Business Review, gig workers enjoy a greater sense of flexibility and autonomy than traditional full-time employees. But they too face the exclusive

challenges of job security, lack of career development, a strong sense of alienation, and difficulty finding meaning in their work.

The Economic Times reveals that gig work provides only a fixed salary to the labour employed, whereas there is no social security and poorer working conditions in the sector. The people who are engaged in cab and delivery services in India have raised their concerns and protested several times in recent years. Even though these employees worked more than eight hours per day and were given weekly off, the business model appears to be unaccountable for their efforts. Each organisation has its values and culture. The culture of an organisation is portrayed by the values that its employees possess. Building the ethics and morale of workers in a similar environment is an arduous task.

People + Strategy Journal calls the gig economy the "era of disruption" for chief human resource officers (CHROs). The major reason for the disruption is due to the change in work culture, programme, procedure, and policies that have already been framed for permanent employment. The human resources department must adapt to create a new set of working conditions, programs, policies, and procedures for the gig workforce.

In this gig culture, the recruitment and selection of candidates are done through technology-enabled online talent platforms. It has created a dependency on the human resources department, which heavily relies on the platforms. Now it's time for the CHROs to decide whether to depend on the talent platform or the procurement department to fill the entire workforce of the organisation. HR needs to be more agile and innovative in facing the business turbulence of this new age, which is denoted as a "volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity" (VUCA) environment.

As acclaimed by the Northeast HR Association, there could be a definite change in the traditional views on career development planning, performance management, and succession planning. The leadership style would transform from "command and control" to "collaborating, partnering, and mentoring."

Following Abinaya Rajamanickam, an Oracle HCM consultant, attracting and retaining talent in such an environment becomes a greater challenge for the human resources department. Recruitment needs to be instant and not prolonged in nature. From sourcing to onboarding, the

process should take about a week. The performance of an employee must be evaluated based on short-range objectives as the work is task oriented. The learning and development should be bite-sized and not long-drawn, as it may not be profitable. As there may be frequent exists and hires, succession planning has to be done on a contingency basis.

Francesca Di Meglio, the editor of HR Exchange Network, mentions in her article that the participation of freelancers would not be consistent as compared to full-time workers. This would make it even more challenging to define the team culture of an organisation. There would be no formal hierarchy in the workplace, so monitoring progress would be a concern.

Charlotte Penny has given some solutions for managing the gig workforce. The human resource manager has seen the job from the worker's perspective. The HR has to understand the reason for employees choosing similar jobs and needs to give a clear picture of the job to set the right expectations. The employees need to be kept connected to remove social isolation. The employees are to be included in the team by hosting meetings, and team lunches so that they may feel included. Setting the right feedback mechanism for their work would enhance their engagement. Autonomy should be given to workers to perform their jobs and micro managing would not fetch better results. Paying market rates keeps their morale and engagement steady and strong.

Shalini L staffing and recruitment expert suggests managing the blue-collar workforce. The employer needs to upskill the workforce to keep them engaged, and motivated and embrace new technologies. Automation of attendance would lead to less exploitation and productive use of the employees' manhours. Payment of salary at the right time and integrated payroll management would reduce the attrition rate. Small loan disbursement with lower interest rates to the employees who are in need would improve the quality of work life of employees. Healthcare assistance would lessen them to survive on their fixed income.

These measures could improve job satisfaction and serve as retention strategies. The government has played a pivotal role in promoting social security measures to increase the quality of life of this labour force in the long term.

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TOWARDS IMMORTAL MEMORY-A POST HUMANISTIC READING OF SUJATHA'S PESUM POMMAIGAL

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Abstract

Technology in the twenty-first century has arrived at a phase where humankind has found the ways to identify the beginning of the universe by sending James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). This telescope is considered to be a time machine that can take human beings to the age when the universe was created and how it was created. When the world moves at a rapid phase, literature starts reflecting everything in the same phase. Sometimes, literature predicts what may happen in the future with fancy and imagination. Many literary works, on the genre science fiction, give the world an outline of all the scientific advancement that is going to be developed in the forth coming decades. The father of science fiction H.G. Wells in his work the time machine would have written the plot based on the time travel in the year 1895. This kind of ideas is from the post human literature which depicts the non anthropocentric world. This paper is an attempt to find out how the author Sujatha has used post human ideas in his novel *Pesum Pommaigal.*

Key Words:

Born in the year 1935, Sujatha alias Ranganathan was a graduate engineer. After pursuing bachelors' degree in Physics from the Madras University, he graduated in the field of Electronics from M.I.T. He worked more than thirty years in the Bangalore Bharath Electricals and also in Central Government's Air Transport department. He also served as advisor in both these departments even after his retirement. Electronic voting machine is one of his significant inventions for which he was awarded Vasvik award.

When the writer of this novel was asked whether the process of Downloading is possible, he has mentioned that with the development of Artificial Intelligence this process has reached a notable success in the research conducted by various developed countries like the United States of America. We live in the era of artificial intelligence and everything is becoming possible to human beings like traveling to space, sending signals to other galaxies, etc. the Hollywood movies has also become the main source of post human thinking. Some people even believe that humans from the future earth have travelled through time to reach different centuries for various purposes.

In the story, the protagonist Maya started working in a laboratory where her elder sister worked once in the past. When her elder sister, Menaka went to America, her job was given to her younger sister, Maya. This young lady finds many strange things taking place in the laboratory. Afterwards, she herself becomes a prey to a new scientific invention that was about transferring human memory to the computer. Though there are many scientific inventions made every day, the particular concept of transferring human memories to the computer is unimaginable as the result and consequences would lead to sometimes the destruction of the entire human race. The thought about this concept would have emerged when the scientists found out that human memory exists in the electro- magnetic form that are stored in billions of cells of the human brain.

In this novel, two scientists named Dr. Narendranath and Dr. Sarankabani are involved in the research of transferring the data from the human mind to the computer. For this they have hired a girl named Menaka and started their research on her. During the process of this research, she lost almost half of her life and she is stored in a box in the laboratory. But her parents were informed that she has eloped to the United States with her boyfriend. The scientists made use of voice synthesizer, which is also one of the technical devices of the human invention, to talk to the parents of Menaka to make them believe she is in the US. In order to continue their research, Menaka's Sister, Maya was hired to the same job, because the scientists in that laboratory believed that Maya was much similar to her sister Menaka even in her voice. When she was asked by Doctor Narendranath whether she could sing, she replied that her sister could do that better. The following conversation would make the readers understand the above mentioned statement,

"*நல்லா பாடுவியா நீ ?*"

"*இல்லை டாக்டர். அக்காதான் அதெல்லாம் பாட்டு டான்ஸ் எல்லாம். அவ தொடாதது எதுவும் இல்லை* "

"*உன் பேச்சில் கூட அவ சாயல் இருக்கு. ஆச்சர்யம்தான்! மறுபடி மேனகா வேலைக்கு சேர்ந்துட்டாப்புல. நீ மாயாதானே?*" (pg.37)

Moreover, as a science fiction novel, many scientific terms are used in this novel. When Maya was to be tested whether her body could accept a particular medicine, she was informed that she was given Cyclosporine. She was also lectured that the human immune system was to be wondered. Once mankind started to control its very own immune system, anything could be done miraculously like alternate heart and alternate brain could also be planted. She was not even informed before doing these tests on her. To be precise, these tests

were done on her without her knowledge and concern. Maya was explained the process of downloading only on the ninth chapter that it is process of taking a copy of her memory to the computer with the help of 3D Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Holography with which a small portion of her brain is exposed. Local anesthesia would be given to alleviate the pain and then a small patch would be taken from the head. The workers in the particular laboratory were volunteers to whom a handsome salary would be given. Ordinary human beings like to lead a life without much struggle. The ultimate aim of an ordinary human is to live a life without any health issues. Most of the human beings do not want to lead a life without death. Everyone believes that death is the end of human life. Before their death, everyone wanted to finish their duties the society had assigned to them. But the same human kind has the desire to overcome death and is doing many kinds of research to separate death from the mankind so that one can lead an immortal life. The post human perspective of human life is to enhance the quality of human existence by making the existing human brain to act like a computer. It advocates the improvement of human capacities and capabilities through advanced technology which helps the humans to eliminate diseases by providing cheap yet best quality products to even the poorest of the world thereby improving the quality of life and also interconnectedness, expansion of life expectance too.

In a situation when Maya unfortunately saw that particular scene which would be her most threatening nightmare she could have ever had. Her sister like body which was naked, was dragged out of the drawer. The body was stored in a cool place using the cryogenic method as later explained by Doctor Sarankabani to Vasanth, a lawyer in disguise as scientist Sebastian Raj. One of the assistants of Doctor Sarankabani connected some wires to the body of Menaka. Maya was confused whether the body was her sister's natural or just her look alike until she saw the growth of hair on the particular body. But she had another reason to not believe as Doctor Narendranath spoke to her sister the last day through telephone. When the body is wholly connected to the circuits, Doctor Sarankabani started to question Menaka or her just a look alike body and it could answer almost all of his simple questions. Yet due to some technical issues, the research could not be continued on Menaka and so the scientist Doctor Sarankabani had engaged her younger sister.

In an essay titled *The Search for Posthumanism,* by Michael Thomsen, the writer says that computers rely on syntax. They can order and arrange symbols, but only humans have true understanding of what those symbols mean. Human minds operate in semantics. We can both order symbols and interpret their meaning, connecting them with a billowing curtain of sensorial, emotional, and academic denotations.

Hence the whole concept of this particular fictional literary work is the mankind's attempt to overcome death and become immortal by coping the human mind's everything to the computer and these transferred data are again fed into human toys to resemble the particular persons whose memories and thoughts are transferred. The following dialogue of Doctor Narendranath would make the readers understand the entire post-human concept throughout this fiction.

"*முதன்முதலா மரணத்தை வெல்ல போறோம். இப்ப நீ யாரு? மாயா என்கிற ஒரு வடிவம், ஒரு ஞாபகம், அவ்வளவுதானே! இந்த இரண்டையுமே மெஷினுக்கு கொடுத்துட்டா அந்த மெஷின் உன்னுடைய தொடர்ச்சிதானே. அதுக்கு அழிவே இல்லாம அப்பப்ப புதுப்பிச்சிட்டா சாவுங்கறதே இல்லாம போய்டுறதில்லயா*!" (pg.100)

True to these words human beings are their shape and memories and when both of them are given to a computer, the computer could act as the same human being even when a particular human being expires from this physical world. Though these kinds of advanced technologies are not in existence so far, no one could assure that it may not be invented in future as Artificial Intelligence (AI) has started its duty to obey to the human commands. Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant, are some examples that would make us understand the development and the significance of AI in our day-to-day life. It will not be a wonder to have a process called Downloading in the future as the phase of the development of technology has become rapid and mankind has started to evolve.

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THE SUBALTERN VOICES IN RANAJIT GUHA'S 'CHANDRA'S DEATH

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ABSTRACT

Chandra's Death is a recouped record of a series of events in the process of historiography by Ranajit Guha, a historian. This is a real-life event that entered into the dominion of historiography. Taken from the legal documents, the confessions are formatted into an essay. Chandra belongs to the Bagdi section, a sub-caste, which is beyond the pale of dominant caste Hindu society. Its focus is on the death of an obscure lower-caste peasant Bengali woman in the mid-nineteenth century. And the portrayal of her sufferings is been mentioned clearly in the testimony.

Keywords: Historiography, Peasant, Recouped, Testimony.

Who is Chandra? That would be the first question that strikes the mind of anyone who reads the title of Guha's essay. Moreover, what consequence in history does the beholder of this name has, to be mentioned by a writer and academician like Ranajith Guha in the title of his essay? "None" should be the answer and that itself is her very significance. Chandra is a face thatthe so-called educated and cultured mainstream population would dare to look at. Chandra is a name that resonates with thousands of lives that the prestigious and glorious history of our nation has forgotten to mention and hers is the voice of the voiceless.

In Foucault, the issue of subjugation marks agency, no agent says no to power, it is familiarly involved with power, and there is no pure agent. Despite the fact these characteristics conflict with some basic ideas ofMarxism, this turns more difficult, though, to grasp politically what the group stands for from this point of view. Though the hegemony relates to Magaram the protagonist of the essay. Which has given power even the colonial law motivates him to stand behind the death of Chandra. "A dose at… and I made a paste of the drug again at dawn and administered it to Chandra. That did nothing to destroy the fetus. The next day when I went again to the same Kali Bagdi together with my mother and Chandra, he gave us an herbal medicine that has to be taken thrice a day together with some horituki and two tablets of bakhor guli diluted in lime water." (Guha)

Guha in the opening of his essay mentions how the established historiography fails to address the traces of subaltern life and conveniently ignores their existence while painting the bigger picture called history. They are not and never would be a part of this warp and weft.

Guha intentionally quotes the proof of the accused and the victims at the beginning of the essay to offer an unbiased and unaltered narrative, or rather give them the voice to present themselves than Guha being their narrator. He is trying to reclaim history by presenting the raw facts than presenting it as his narration of an event of the past. His opening question is how one can claim these testimonies as history. Even though the established norms of celebrated historiography do not possess a space for such trivial narratives.

As Florencia Mallon argues, there is a stiffness in the work of *Subaltern Studies*. Guha tries to highlight subaltern consciousness and agency. He analyses how this document has been subjected to scrupulous efforts to present it as a reliable one. He comments on the language used and mentions to it as a piece or the balance of a dichotomized past and as a yarn without a context, which has been only an editorially constructed series in a book of documents. He also states that even these evidences can't be taken into account as legit history as these words are drawn out of the allegations by the "mediation of law…prompted only by the requirements of an official investigation into what is presumed as a murder".

These testimonies thus are simply a legal description of a crime from which all emotions are drawn out to portray it as mere objective factsthan a terrible humane experience. He explains how the original sequence of events is tampered with by the intervention of legal documentation procedure and the events that occurred are conveniently limited to the terms of the judiciary as murder, crime, case ekrar (testimonies), etc. so that the true perspectives of the happenings remain hidden or unheard.

Even after two hundred and sixty years later, under colonial rule, he states, that the situation of these rural peasant communities is still the same. Even though they possessed more land than the upper caste, they never earned respect. Their women were considered to be granted for gratifying the sexual fantasies of these upper-caste men. Guha rightly points out how the pre-independence and post-independence period remains the same for these communities and also points out how patriarchy becomes a cherry on the top. These people are repeatedly being silenced and subjugated through multiple aspects of social life. In terms of caste, creed, vocation,sexuality, and moralities they are kept away from their freedom.

Chandra is not just held responsible for her so-called illicit relation, but the reputation of her whole community is laid upon her chastity. While Chandra was being threatened to be excommunicated for her sin, her partner in crime is conveniently removed from the scene because of his privilege of being bothan upper caste and a man. Why should people like Chandra bear this burden? This is the question enters in the mind of readers. The male patriarchy who had the power to go and tell the pregnancy of Chandra to her mother has more

intricnsic significance, because it was potrayed that she was the only reason for the problem which has uprooted to abortion.

Guha tries to answer and his emphasis is on the need for the voiceless to have a voice. The most tragic of the whevent, as Guha states, is that this whole struggle was taken up by a lowercaste widow, a woman, who tried to save another woman, her daughter from a terrible crisis, but failed miserably and was held responsible for her death.

Guha's opening with the testimonies and the subsequent analysis of the events presents the reader with authentic information and access to the material and method of his study. The description of the peasant life and their journey of subjugation offers a necessary backdrop to Chandra's incident and instills the thought of the possibility of hundreds of cases like Chandra's, which are not recorded or studied by history or maybe not taken beyond a cliché newspaper report in certain occasions.

The use of vernacular terms and names can be considered an intentional effort to bring the unheard voices straight to the readers in the purest of its forms. The cross-references to subaltern ideas, post-colonialism, and feminism show how the tiniest of the incidents that we casually ignore is a socially and politically significant element of history that we conveniently ignore. They have voices but these voices are to be heard and Guha's writing on Chandra's death is a gesture that makes sure it is.

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Memory as a Double-edged Sword in Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State*

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Abstract

The world and the minds of the people are fragmented after the World War II which is reflected in the creative writings of postmodern era. The disasters that occurred in the last half of the twentieth century left number of writers with a sense of profound paranoia which is reflected in the characters of their works. The techniques used in the postmodern texts portray the social condition and mind set of the people of that time. Most works of this era were centered on the condition of the society and the psychological mind set of the people after the World War II. During this time, the concept of memory became popular among the writers as they used that concept to portray the psychology and memory of the people of the post war society. Therefore, an exclusive field of memory studies began to bloom. Roxane Gay, an American writer and professor, is one of the important people who mostly deals with the concept called memory through the characters of her works. This paper attempts to bring forth how 'memory' is used as a tool to uncover everything about the character and the general public. It also explains the dual nature of memory being a pricking thorn and a soothing balm in the novel *An Untamed State*.

Keywords: Memory, trauma, psychology, claustrophobia, binge-eating.

Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State* has all aspects of memory studies. The role of memory, the psychological trauma and the cultural identities are the central concerns of the novel. The novel portrays the traumatic memory of the protagonist Mirielle in each and every chapter. The memory has become the life deciding factor for Miri. She has been killed by the haunting memory every second. She tries in every aspect to get rid of those gloomy thoughts but it reverberates in her mind for so many years.

Memory Studies is a scholastic field examining the utilization of memory as an apparatus for recalling the past. It rose as distinctive approach to consider past occasions toward the end of the twentieth century. Recent events make individuals to recollect the things that had happened in the past. Therefore, the simple way to define memory is 'the past made present'.

The past memory and the contemporary memory vary from each other. Albeit the fact that recalling is about the past, it happens in the present setting up the implications and importance of the past for the individuals who could possibly have encountered it. Memory

is a practice of recollection rather than just a set of facts. According to Wikipedia, Memory is a 'symbolic representation of the past embedded in social action'. The past memory lives in the contemporary memory and the memory of the past either haunts or calms the psyche at the present.

Mirielle, the protagonist, has a perfect career, the most loving and caring better half, adorable little son and a well settled family. She lives a life of fairy tale. She leads a peaceful life until the time of her kidnap. That event has changed her life totally. Her fairy tale life has just become a memory and the most awful life has begun. The psychological scar which is made during the time of her kidnap remains inside her for quite a long time. She starts hating herself at a particular time. She is tormented for thirteen long days by the kidnappers. She is sexually abused and wounded physically. She has experienced the thirteen worst days.

Mirielle, when dwells in that dark, isolated room, has nothing to do except surfing through the memory of her. She has made her memory as her only company in that lonely space. Her beautiful past memories become the balm for her present bruises. She, in that cage, thinks about the day when she and Michael got engaged. She thinks about every minute thing that happened on that day. She thinks about the day when Michael cooked for her. She recalls every details of the past and thinks about how happy she was once. The thirst to bring back that happy phase of her life makes her move forward every single day in the cage. She says, "I closed my eyes, breathed shallow, thought of my husband and son at home in bed, cool and clean and happy--- the way both Michael and Christophe smiled at with their whole faces" (131). The reminiscence of her husband and son is the only hold that she has in that prison. The memories of them sow the happy seeds in her face.

The traumatic experience, which Mirielle has undergone, shatters her inner peace. Though she knows that she is with her husband and family after her release from the hands of the kidnappers, she still thinks that she is not secured. She is surviving with the fear of the commander, the one who tormented her, chasing her. She is not able to come out of the past. She has gotten locked in her memory. Whatever she sees and whatever she hears, reminds her of the kidnappers. When she hears the footsteps of Michael who is coming in search of her, she immediately imagines that the Commander is running towards her and she starts trembling on hearing that sound. She remembers everything as a contemporary event forgetting that it happened in the past. This idea is expressed by Freud in the book called *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* In that he says that the patient, "…is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary event instead of… remembering it as something belonging to the past" (18,19).

The memory of Mirielle's dark period is more torturous than the real days she has spent there in that room. Cathy Caruth in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* explains, "Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy; paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness" (92). The pain of the traumatic experience is higher when the time passes. The memory pokes over and over and makes one feel the death every second.

She feels her room in her home is another cage as the four walls reminds of the days of her kidnap and the place where she is kept for thirteen days. She wasn't able to trust her husband as he is a man and she doesn't want to trust any man anymore. It is only after a contemporary event calls forth the previously repressed event that the past event can become known in the process of remembering. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and the physician Josef Breuer writes in their book called *Studies on Hysteria,*

> we may reverse the dictum 'cessante causa cessat effectus' (when the cause ceases the effect ceases) and conclude from these observations that the determining process (that is, the recollection of it) continues to operate for years- no directly, through a chain of intermediate casual links, but as a directly releasing cause- just as psychical pain that is remembered in walking consciousness still provokes a lachrymal secretion after the event. Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences. (7)

The traumatic remembrance is called as "Pathogenic reminiscence". Roxane Gay has clearly shown the power of memory in human's life that it can either give soothing effect or the haunting and tormenting effect to the mind. It can either give life to the person or it can take it back from them. The author has used the concept memory and has shown its both sides. The memory gives hope for Miri in her gloomy period that she will be back to her fairy tale life soon and the same memory plunders her happiness even when she returns to her family.

Gay portrays the Haitian society, the character's childhood and important events of their past life, their relationship with the family members using the tool called 'memory' and she has succeeded in creating a perfect picture of that event. Roxane Gay reveals each character's nature through the protagonist's memory. For instance, the character of Sebastian is known only through Mirille when she contemplates her father whether he will pay for the ransom or not. Only through Miri's memory, the reader gets to know that Sebastian is known

for his composure. Miri says in the novel that during her thirteen days of captivity she spoke to her father several times. His voice never wavered. This clearly shows that he will be remaining in the state of composure at any difficult point of his life.

Through the protagonist's memory the society of Haiti is brought to the light of the readers by the author. Gay has mentioned about the kidnapping epidemic that has taken place in that society. Miri when she is surfing through her memory reveals to the readers about Haiti which has surpassed Colombia as the kidnapping capital of the world. She also says that there are three Haitis- the country Americans know and the country Haitians know and the country she thought she knew. Miri has seen the good side of the Haiti during her childhood and the other side of Haiti what she has not known until she is kidnapped. When she visits Haiti she says, "I felt nothing and I felt everything. I remembered the Haiti of my childhood, the complex but unadulterated joy of feeling like I had a second place to call home. I remembered the country Haiti became for me, the sorrow" (346). She remembered everything from her childhood. She remembered her pure innocent happy days of her life and also the breath- taking things that happened in her life. The reminiscence kills her inch by inch. She longs to learn the art of forgetting.

Miri has become a claustrophobic patient because of her lonely life in that dark, hot cage for thirteen long days. Her isolation has changed her future drastically. Miri has lost her mental and physical strength. Miri's claustrophobia is not mentioned directly by Roxane Gay, but it is revealed through the utterances of Miri. She says, "The walls were getting closer in; and the new cage was getting smaller and smaller…he shut the bedroom door and it suddenly became harder to breathe" (231). As she was locked and tormented in the four walled cage for longer period, she gets the same image of the cage whenever she enters her room in her home and that results in the symptoms of claustrophobia.

Mirielle doesn't eat after she gets released from the clutches of the kidnappers. As she has taken so many things more than what she can during her imprisonment in that cage, she doesn't want to have anything inside her anymore. She wants that emptiness inside her and that gives her some kind of pleasure. She says, "It was a comfort to be so empty. I had to hold on to that emptiness" (265).

All these problems like claustrophobia and binge eating are the result of her traumatic experience. The memory has made her vulnerable. The memory has spoiled her inner peace. The memory has become a curse and she longs to know the 'art of forgetting'

which she thinks that is the ultimate solution for all her problems. Roxane Gay has shapened the character Mirielle in a way that represents her own self who underwent traumatic experience as a rape victim. As the days and years rolled on, Mirielle's haunting memories has lessened or she has learnt to cope up with that. Roxane Gay has used the memory as a key unlock all the inner struggles a woman undergoes after a traumatic event.

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