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Editor-in-chief

Dr. Vijay Kumar Roy

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Editorial

Ars Artium has entered its fifth year of publication. During four years of its publication, it has achieved a considerable height by getting indexed to a number of important international directories/databases for the purpose of being visible to a wider readership.

The present volume contains sixteen research papers, two book reviews, and sixteen poems. **Prof. Nigamananda Das**' paper, "Achyutananda Das: A Spiritual Eco-Chronicler" is an in-depth and detailed analysis of the spiritual revolution, ecological virtues, social, political and cultural directions revealed through the life and literary works of a 16th century Odia saint poet Achyutananda Das (1482-1601 AD) for the upliftment of the downtrodden communities.

Ms. Sonia Soni's paper, "Tagore's Handling of Marital Matrix: A Study of *The Wreck*", is a thematic study of Rabindranath Tagore's one of the famous novels, *The Wreck* (1921) which is an English rendering of his Bengali novel, *Naukadubi* (1906). The author compares patriarchal phenomenon with colonization where the act of domestic tyranny is common and imposition of illiteracy on women is one of the fundamental obstacles that confines them from liberty after their marriage and they are treated as tools for pleasure and household work. The role of fate and chance in shaping the conjugal lives of the characters has been highlighted including different layers of man and woman who are kind and caring for each other. Hindrance of orthodoxy in love and need of protest to succeed in establishing the individuality and dignity of woman have been dealt with beautifully proving Tagore's understanding of women's psyche for the sake of equality in social order and all kinds of liberty including sexual-independence.

There are two papers on partition literature. **Dr. V. Pala Prasada Rao**'s paper, "The Roots of Religious Intolerance: A Select Study of the Indian Novels", is a critical analysis of the religious intolerance that had caused heinous crimes and took numerous lives particularly of women after independence of India and formation of Pakistan. The paper has detailed references of Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*, Beni Prasad's *The Hindu Muslim Questions,* Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas,* Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India,* Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan,* and Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja*. The second paper, "Partition and Women: A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*" by **Ms. Aastha Bhatia** is a study of the same theme of religious fanaticism and its dreadful consequences in the forms of inhuman offenses against women. *Ice Candy Man* was first published in England and subsequently it was published as *Cracking India* in the USA and India.

There is a paper on feminism by **Dr. Madhur Kumar** in which he has illustrated women's subjugation and resistance, and courage to confront traditions in order to

pursue their passions and set upan example of new woman who can live with or without the support of man as vindicated in Sashi Deshpande's *Small Remedies*.

The paper on peace literature by **Dr. Bhavesh Chandra Pandey** deals with the present situation of the world in which fear and hatred have distanced people that has resulted in loss of necessary human values. The author has discussed Stephen Gill's concepts of 'multiculturalism' and 'world parliament' as propounded in Gill's visionary novel, *The Coexistence* (2011)*,* that can help eradicate national prejudices, avoid wars, develop love and tolerance, and establish world peace.

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma's paper on Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Music for Mohini* (1952) is an analysis of how a woman sacrifices her comforts and embraces unfamiliar customs and conventions for social and cultural development of her nation.

There is a paper on Indian English play by **Dr. Tribhuwan Kumar** in which he has explored patriarchal concerns and gender issues in Mahesh Dattani's debut play *Where There's a Will* (1988).

There are four papers on poetry. **Prof. Chiramel Paul Jose**'s paper is a study of William Blake's poem "The Little Black Boy" in the context of the Bible. **Dr. Jamal Ahmad** has analysed the mythological and philosophical themes in the poetry of Lord Alfred Tennyson in the light of ethics and aesthetics. **Dr. Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay** has presented W.B. Yeats' vision of truth, retrospection, realization, artistic creation, and after all their unity, all these after ceasing Yeats' anger and old age frailties vindicated in his later poems. **Dr. Suman Yadav**'s paper is an exploration of Dalvir Singh Gahlawat's poem, "Wall of Trust" that focuses on the importance of trust in professional life. It is the strength of trust that heralds virtues, brings all happiness, and if it weakens, it leads to drastic situation including illegitimate activities.

There is a joint paper on marine literature by **Dr. Mariam Seedat Khan**, **Dr. Gunasekharan Dharmaraja**, **Ms. Belinda Johnson** and **Ms. Roxana Vahed**. They have explored various challenges of women seafarers on board cargo vessels, cruise, passenger ships and ferries that are dominated by men and how women seafarers succeed in maintaining family relationship and responsibilities together.

A paper on phonetics by **Dr. C.V. Thomas** is a good research in which the author discovers some of the pronunciation innovations in Malayalee-English through intrusion and elision of certain phonemes.

There are two papers on English Language Teaching; one is on the materials of teaching/learning English and another is on the methods and strategies of teaching of English. **Dr. Abdalrahman Mansour Yousef Abu Jaleel** has investigated learner-centred activities in the English language textbooks of the intermediate stage at Saudi Arabian public schools and found that these activities are inadequate when we focus on a shift from teacher and teaching to learner and learning. So there is a need to increase learner-centred activities in the text books in order to achieve the aims and objectives of teaching English in intermediate stage. Another paper by **Dr. Priyanka Sharma** is a detailed analysis of innovative teaching methods and modern language

learning strategies for weak learners of English in order to achieve the aims and objectives of teaching English as a second language.

Among two book reviews, **Pejman Masrouri** (Michigan, USA**)** has reviewed the book, *Anti-Terror and Peace: IFLAC Anthology* (2016) edited by Prof. Ada Aharoni (ISRAEL) and Dr. Vijay Kumar Roy (INDIA) and published by Amazon Kindle. This new book on peace literature contains articles, short-stories and poems contributed by the authors of twenty three countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malta, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Serbia, South Africa, Ukraine, United States of America, and Zimbabwe. Another review is done by **Patricia Prime** (NEW ZEALAND) of *Realm of Beauty and Truth: A Collection of Poems* (2016) authored by Dr. Vijay Kumar Roy and published by Authorspress, New Delhi.

Among sixteen poems, there are two poems by **Alexander Nderitu** (Nairobi, KENYA), three poems by **Patricia Prime** (Auckland, NEW ZEALAND), two poems by **Rob Harle** (Nimbin, AUSTRALIA), one poem by **Lilian Cohen** (Melbourne, AUSTRALIA), four poems by **K. Pankajam** (Chennai, INDIA), two poems by **Supratik Sen** (Kolkata, INDIA), and two poems by **Prof. Ada Aharoni** (Haifa, ISRAEL).

–Dr. Vijay Kumar Roy

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Contents

Achyutananda Das: A Spiritual Eco-Chronicler

–Nigamananda Das*

Abstract

The paper presents an exploration of the literary and cultural contributions of a 16th century Odia saint poet who represented the oppressed communities of his time like cowherdmen, fishermen and other castes and worked for the socio-cultural upliftment of these communities through religious and socio-economic activities. It is said that this saint wrote one lakh books, all devoted to glorify the great incarnation of God, Lord Krishna. A propagator of neo- Vaishnavism, he contributed profusely to the medieval Odia religious literature, where he has narrated his personal experience from *yoga*, *sadhana* and ponderance over religious thoughts/experiences and his practices as a *karmayogi* (crusader of action) and *jnanayogi* (crusader of knowledge). Describing himself through his own spiritual experience and vision as a companion of the Lord through the various ages, he had created several personal myths and had adopted a large number of disciples from various communities leaving behind a tradition of *guru-shishya* (preceptor-disciple) in the communities which have been following him so far and a religious sect of his own creating a community of worshippers who are called *brahma-gopala* who are adept in religio-cultural activities, etc. This poet-saint was the contemporary of Sri Chaitanya and had other four companions in Odisha who together were the five Vaishnava saints and poets, popularly called *Panchasakha*, i.e., five friends.

Keywords: Saint, Oppressed communities, Cowherdmen, Spiritual revolution, Panchasakha, Neo-Vaishnavism.

Achyutananda Das (1482-1601 AD) was a prominent poet and saint of medieval Odisha, an eastern Indian province, who crusaded the greatest social change during the 16th century AD and fought for the socio-cultural and political uplift of subalterns by liberalizing the religious and social norms in favour of the downtrodden lay communities who were struggling to survive amidst quagmire of multiple social maladies. He was born on the eleventh day of moonlit fort-night of January in 1482 AD at a small village called Tilakana in the Cuttack district of Odisha to the poor

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parents who afterwards shifted to Puri to work under the then king Prataprudra Dev. This child born to the poor parents Dinabandhu Khuntia and Padmabati was a very unmindful boy at the beginning of his career who afterwards under the grace of the Almighty had achieved miraculous power and merit with spontaneous poetic grace and spiritual knowledge and emerged as a socio-cultural and spiritual crusader and advocate of the divine grace and activities of the supreme Lord to spearhead a revolution to empower the poor populace of the province of Utkal as a whole and of the Eastern coast of Odisha to uplift the down-trodden and empower them culturally and spiritually. The spiritual revolution initiated by this poet was invigorated when he came in association with his other friends and Sri Chaitanya at Puri. Odisha has been artistically and culturally rich since time immemorial. The major saints of India like Sankaracharya, Ballabhacharya, Nimbarka, Ramanuja, Vishnu Swami and Madhvacharya came to Puri and established their faiths and monasteries and set traditions of worship and bhakti (devotion) making the field fertile for further cultivation. The five poet-saints popularly called *Panchasakha*, namely, Achyutananda Das, Balarama Das, Jagannath Das, Yashobanta Das and Shishu Ananta Das liberalized the tradition of bhakti making it reachable to the depressed and oppressed of the society, snatching it away from the sole dominant possession of the oppressive Brahmins. This bhakti movement was anti-brahministic in the sense that it aimed at suppressing the wrong and superstitious dominance of the Brahmins and democratizing religion, and cultural and spiritual sadhana which were the sole property of the Brahmins when the other castes and women were treated as dalit/subaltern who could not participate in any spiritual debate/activities. In the other way, the real role of the Brahmins was appreciated and alternately realized by these saints who created alternative Brahmins in other castes who were Vaishnava priests to provide cultural and spiritual leadership and transparency and propagated and initiated spiritual ethos among the non-brahmins and oppressed classes. This spiritual revolution was also a socio-economic, political and cultural revolution to empower the oppressed in their fundamental rights and to make them self-empowered, self-reliant and sufficient.

Most prolific among his *Panchasakha* colleagues, Achyutananda Das has not been much recognized in the Vaishnavite circle of devotees/saint biographers of Bengal. His other two colleagues Jagannath Das and Balarama Das have enjoyed enough popularity and their names are available in the biographical works on Sri Chaitanya Dev and the Chaitanyaite tradition of Bhakti. But among the *Panchasakha* poets he is the most adept sadhak, yogi and guru and has been famous for his prophetic writings about the contemporary and future forecasting with the analysis of the vedantic saga. He upheld a stern sense of ecology in the era of spiritual and phenomenal turmoil when the overall security of Utkal was at stake and being a humble preacher of divinity and source of sustainability, he came forward for rigorous propagational programme for the upliftment of deprived populace by sacrificing his own comfort. His time was a time of religious unrest because of the instability of ruling dynasties and political upheaval. Besides his activities, he was basically a poet who crusaded reforms through his writing, preaching and religious missionary activities. His writing as devotional glorification of the Almighty Lord was meant for chanting because chanting the holy

name is a kind of yoga for it brings mental integrity/tranquility and discipline along with humility which banishes the sin and sense of sin from the human mind and propels him towards being united with the work/activity that brings sustenance to uphold honourable living. Among his colleagues he was most autobiographical who wrote about himself and his colleagues in many of his works that give clue to his activities and details of life and such details also have enough spiritual significance as that was an attempt at creating personal myths. Myths and mysteries have role in everybody's life in asserting some identity or other. The history of Odisha is littered with ruins, invasion, devastations and natural calamities and here history is not even safe. As such had Achyutananda not left behind such autobiographical traces, his identity would completely have been lost. In his book entitled *Udaya Kahani,* he has mentioned the dates of birth of him and his four colleagues. According to this book, he being the senior-most, was born in 1482 AD, Balarama Das was born in 1484, Shishu Ananta Das in 1486 AD, and both Jagannath Das and Yashobanta Das in 1487 AD (Dash 1963: 640). An eighteenth century biographer Ishwar Das in his *Shri Chaitanya Bhagabata,* in chapters 46-48th and 54th narrates Sri Chaitanya's relationship with the Panchasakha and gives a brief account about each of the five saints who have been described to be the parts of Lord Vishnu incarnated to be the associates of Sri Chaitanya. In the 46th chapter it is mentioned that Sri Chaitanya met Achyutananda at the Kundabalada village (in *Guru Bhakti Geeta* Vol. III, Chapter 10, and other books, it is Tilakana Village) and he was the son of Ananda Mohanty (Ishwar Das 1953:262) who was titled by the King as Khuntia. It may be mentioned here that the data provided by Ishwar Das being a devotional account may vary and as such Achyuta's father's name and other details do not match here with other books. His early life, married life, poverty, wide pilgrimage with his disciples to the major pilgrimage centres of India, writing the theoretical and devotional texts, texts on religious praxis and works meant for upliftment of the subalterns have been narrated repeatedly at various places in his writings. In his book entitled *Anakar Samhita,* he has given a list of his works and as per this list, he composed 36 *samhitas*, 78 *geetas*, 27 genealogies (*vamsanucharit*), 12 sub-genealogies (*upavamsanucharit)*, 100 futurological writings (*bhabisya*), and many songs and *padavalis* which number altogether one lakh, all glorifying Lord Krishna. Many of these works are not extant now not being properly preserved by the families of his disciples with whom he left these works. Thus preservation has been a difficult task though devotional accounts say otherwise about cosmic preservation. Historians and critics also opine that though Achyutananda mentions the total number of his writings as one lakh in *Anakar Samhita,* it means a large number of writings, not exactly one lakh in number.

It is said that Achyutananda Das was very unmindful in studies at his childhood and was taken by his father to Puri for a *darshan* of Lord Jagannath during which Sri Chaitanya was present at Puri and in the Grand Trunk road in front of the Jagannath Temple he was leading a procession of kirtan by the Gaudiya Vaishnavites when Achyuta's father made him touch the holy feet of Sri Chaitanya and it is also said that with touching His holy feet a change came in Achyuta and he started pronouncing scriptures and a great attraction for learning came in him immediately. At the behest of

Sri Chaitanya, Achyutananda was initiated to the *gurumantra* by Sanatan Gosain. He was advised to wear the *Koupina* (holy underwear used by the saints), smear his body with *tilak* (sandalwood paste/a particular yellow soil called *tilak* available for the purpose). He was given instruction to paste *Harimandir tilak* on his forehead and *panchtilak* on arms and chest. Sanatan Goswami initiated him into the *Shyama Panchakshara Mahamantra* under the banyan tree at South side in the precincts of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. Thus it is probably in 1505 AD during the first visit of Sri Chaitanya to Puri when Achyutananda Das was about 24 years old that he was initiated into the Vaishnavite cult and was advised by Sri Chaitanya to propagate the Krishnalila among the down-trodden cowherdmen and all other *sudras* and compose and enact the Raslila at different places at different times of the year. He evolved a type of Raslila in Odisha known as *Rahasa Kirtan* which is chiefly musical recitation of the theoretical song interpretation of the Radha-Krishna *lila* and which is firmly devotional, sometimes interpretation of the occult mystic realities of bhakti with phenomenal reality, sometimes it is physiognomic interpretation of *sadhana* based on meditational performances, that is, how to master the senses to overcome the difficulties or physical sufferings to arouse spiritual awakening in us and aggravate our mental power. Experience gathered from yoga, spiritual *sadhana* mixed with the vedantic knowledge which he calls *brahmajnana/ brahmavidya* was narrated in many of his works. His writing career spans over several decades and towards the close of his career, he wrote many books which bear discrepancy with the former narrations and there have been several interpolations by the later scribes and minor writers who were his followers. That is why many critics opine that there were many writers from fifteen to nineteenth century having the name of Achyutananda and there are several confusions over the authorship of texts.

At the behest of Sri Chaitanya he decided to be a spiritual leader of the subalterns and specially a mentor of the clan of the cowherdmen for flourishing a socio-cultural revolution enacting the holy *lila* of Lord Krishna through the performances of the *Rahasa Kirtan* to bring peace, prosperity and spiritual uplift and diversity among the devotees providing them the eternal holy and mystic sense of the Lord's companionship that emboldens the depressed in the spirituality and strengthens them in soul to take up strides in *karma* and *jnana*. Karma is at the root of everything and that is why in the *Bhagavata Purana,* Lord Krishna advises Uddhava that *Karma* is his guru. Achyutananda provided the same knowledge to his followers that by chanting the holy name of the Lord one cannot get salvation unless he devotes himself all out to perform the activities that sustain our life. A *karmayogi* in the first place is only fit for becoming a *jnanayogi*. He was a sternly secular minded-fellow. The spiritual practices of the *Panchasakha* had closeness with Buddhism because of their knowledge-oriented devotion called *Jnanamishra bhakti* (Devotion mixed with Knowledge/Knowledge-based devotion). That is why the Bengali/Odia critics of Vaishnavism have called these five poet-saints as *Prachhanna Bauddha* (Clandestine Buddhists). Like Sri Chaitanya he had a large number of followers and through his spiritual intuition he came to know about his previous births in various mythological ages and he says at various places in his books that all the time he has been an associate of the Lord along with his four other friends

who together are called *Panchasakha* and they say that they were born in the Kaliyuga for bringing salvation to the suffering devotees and promoting the subalterns and destroying the demonic forces as the associates of the incarnation of the *Kalki*. He was Sudama, a friend of Lord Krishna in Dvapar Yuga, Nala in Tretaya Yuga in the monkey army of Lord Rama and saint Kripajal in the Satya Yuga, who was the father of goddess Sarala. As Achyutananda in Kali Yuga he became an associate of Lord Chaitanya who was supposed to be an incarnation of Lord Krishna and as advised by him he preached the divine mode of living among the downtrodden and became the guru of the whole clan of the cowherdmen in Odisha by teaching them, promoting them and evolving various spiritual-cultural activities to perform throughout the year and to strictly become vegetarian.

His preaching can be interpreted to be a strictly spiritual ecological principle. Matthew T. Fox (1940-), a Roman Catholic priest and Professor of Religious Education at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas, who runs now his own University of Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California, seeks to define ecological spirituality within the Christian Tradition drawing on many earlier Christian scholars, including Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi and Julian of Norwich. He introduces a religious experience that builds on a sense of the sacred and this religion begins with a sense of awe and wonder and includes a sense of unconditional love and delight. Fox proposes four paths to a spiritual ecology. The first is to experience the Divine in terms of delight, awe and wonder at being present in the world which involves the intuition that the creation is a blessing and response of gratitude (Via Positiva). The second journey into spiritual ecology comes through experiencing darkness, deprivation, suffering, and pain (Via Negativa). These two paths lead to a rebirth of creativity, a third path, which involves in identifying new ecological virtues for living such as vegetarianism, recycling, relearning the sacredness of nature, defending creation through political action, and making new rituals to celebrate sacred places, times, and being in nature (Via Creativa). The fourth step is a transformation to a more compassionate society in which all beings love one another (Via Transformativa) which includes the making of justice (Fox 1998: 228). The four paths of spiritual ecology were strictly adhered to by Achyutananda and his followers. He had his disciples at various corners of Odisha and beyond and they hailed from different depressed and deprived communities. With his disciples he experienced and practised suffering, pain, deprivation and made benign prayers to the Lord, practised humility, maintained strict vegetarianism, recycling of things to safeguard loss to nature, celebrated the sacredness of nature and revolutionized the religious activities in democratic ways and evolved new rituals (like *Rahasa kirtan*, etc.) to celebrate sacred places and times. He was the creator of new pilgrimage centres like the places where he established his monastery and the places where the monasteries of his disciples were established. His first monastery was at Puri sea-beach called Banki Muhani and then he permanently established his monastery at Nemala, (which has other versions like Nembala/ Lemala/ o,/ Lembala- all originated from the root Odia word Neem/Nim/Nimba/Lima/Limba- the bitter Neem wood from which the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra of the Puri temple are carved out) at present in the Cuttack district of Odisha which is a

famous pilgrim centre. The place was full of the neem trees and as such it was called as Nemala and was named as such by the saint. He has mythicized these places by giving them eternal dimension. His graveyard shrine at Nemala is named and described by him to be Padmaban (the lotus forest) which is the most sacred place in the world where the soul and supreme soul unite with each other. The place is such situated that at the four directions of it there are shrines of four very ancient goddesses [Jagulai (Ambika) in East (with south-faced Ganesh), Mangala (Durga) in West, Sunama (Anukampa) in South and Bhagabati (Bhabani) in North]* who are supposed to be the guardian deities of the place along with four Siva temples. It is said that Lord Siva is the greatest Vaishava. So the place is a confluence of Saiva, Shakta, Ganapatya, Soura and followers of other divine faiths.

He propagated and practised the vegetarianism and celebrated places by assigning greatness to many places in describing their glory by attaching some mythical and mystical attributes to them. He called the place of his monastery at Nemala as Padmaban (Lotus Forest) by assigning many glories to it. Similarly the river Chitropala, on the bank of which his monastery situated has been as one of the holiest rivers in the world and is narrated to be holier and greater than river Ganga. In *Mangalastakam*, the name Chitropala is mentioned as the great godly river: "Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Kaveri, Saraju, Mahendratanaya, Charmanvati, Renuka, Sipra, Vedamati, Mahasuranadi Chitrotpala, Ganduki, punyapunya jalei samudra sahitam kurvantu te mangalam" (qtd in Mohanty 2014:48). In *Brahmapuran*, *Kapil Samhita*, *Agni Puran*, and *Niladri Mahodaya* also the greatness of the river is amply mentioned. The great saints and sages like Maitreya, Bidur, Chyavan, Markanda, Soubhari, Narayan, Kratubhvaja, Gargacharya, Shukadev, Pareswar, Vyasadev, Bamdev, Gyadhisut, Chamasa, Karbharjan, Mrukund, Manduk, Dadhichi, Sangisut, and Lomaharsan established their monasteries on the bank of this river Chitrotpala. Many ancient banyans existed on the bank of this river making it sanctuaries of many precious lives, plants and places. Hence Achyutananda in his *Chitrotpala Mahatmya* has celebrated the greatness of the river which confirms to the Via Creativa path/principle of Spiritual Ecology theory of Matthew T. Fox.

In his *Guru Bhakti Geeta*, he has talked about his various disciples and advised them to do various activities for the dissemination of knowledge among all the devotees. For the cowherdmen community he composed songs of riddles and difficult questions called *Gopal Ogal* which are sung with dance and with accompaniment of musical instruments like *singa* (a pipe made of buffalo's horn), *kahali* (a pipe made of brass metal), *mridanga*, cymbals and they also beat sticks like *garba* dance. Elderly cowherdmen hold a bamboo cudgel parallelly being in groups in both sides of the cudgel and sing *ogal* songs pushing each other parallelly and dancing. The *ogal* songs and dance are the new rituals invented by Achyutananda for the cowherdmen community amongst whom he was recognized as the saviour and prime preceptor and as such he pronounces himself "Me Achyuta Das, the King of cowherdmen" in his *ogal* songs. In these songs he has narrated in the question- answer mode several difficult riddles about the secrets of the cosmology like he has theorized the creation of cow and has

defined the various parts of its body that how the thirty three crores of gods live in the body of the cow and how the Gayatri mantra is inscaped in its body. He describes a cowherdman as the incarnation of *Gopala*, the Lord as a cowherdman and the twelve robes of the Gopal. The theory of the colours of the cow and its heavenly types are some of the interesting subjects narrated in the *ogal* songs. He created a community of gurus for this cowherdmen community who are like Brahmins, adept in all ceremonial and sacred religious performances and they initiate the cowherdmen community with the guru nama (sixteen names and thirty two letters) mahamantra and the gopal mantra and this community of gurus are called *Brahma- Gopala/ Gopala Vaishnava*.

Though Achyutananda was initiated to the holy cult of Neo-Vaishnavism at the behest of Sri Chaitanya and propagated the holy lila of the Lord through his *Rahasa-Kirtan* at the behest of Sri Chaitanya, he established his originality and independent views through his activities. It may be mentioned here that the Bengali associates of Sri Chaitanya disliked his appreciation of the Panchasakha and his award of *Atibadi* (the very great) title to Jagannath Das and that is why they left Sri Chaitanya alone at Puri and left for Brindaban. Achyutananda, through his sadhana and spiritual/ devotional exercises superseded the activities of Sri Chaitanya and chose his own centre of activities among the deprived populace leaving Puri, his place of initiation and inspiration and travelled to the different corners of Odisha. He lived for nearly seven decades after the demise of Sri Chaitanya in 1533 AD. During this long span of time he wrote a large number of books. He is basically famous for his monumental work *Harivamsa* (in seven volumes) as Jagannath Das is famous for his *Odia Bhagabata* and Balarama Das for his *Ramayana*. Besides that his other monumental works are *Sunya Samhita* and *Guru Bhakti Geeta.* For propagating the Raslila he composed more than twelve Raslila texts which he calls *Rahasa*s and a theoretical text on the rules of performing the *Rahasa Kirtan* known as *Rahasa Vandana*. The Rahasa texts written by him are *Nitya Rahasa*, *Mahanitya Rahasa*, *Sunya Rahasa*, *Thulasunya Rahasa*, *Radha Rahasa*, *Brunda Rahasa*, *Duti Rahasa*, *Parama Rahasa, Ganga Rahasa, Rahasa Prema Panchamruta, Ananta Rahasa, Padmaban Rahasa,* etc.

Sri Chaitanya was preaching the devotional love theory of Gopi-Krishna whereas Achyutananda with his disciples was propagating the theory of Gopala-Krishna which was socio-economically and spiritually sound as that was making the devotees activity-bound. Like twelve forests of the Brajamandala namely Madhuban, Talban, Kumudban, Kamyaban, Bakulban, Bhadraban, Khadirban, Mahaban, Louhajangban, Belban, Bhandirban, and Brindaban, he created/named places under these names and named the sacred places after the banyan trees as *Bata*. He primarily adopted twelve disciples whom he called *Dvadasha Gopala* (Twelve cowherdmen) of whom he was the initiator of the Gopala mantra/ Mahamantra and divided them into two groups as *Panchashakha* (five branches) and *Saptashakha* (seven branches). His chief disciple Rama Das had twelve disciples whom he initiated to the Mahamantra. These two groups of Devadasha gopalas make another group called *Chabisha Gopala* (24 cowherdmen) which were the divine sects of spiritual disciples (apostles) in his system of propagating the holy lila of the Lord. The core group *Dvadasha Gopala* (twelve disciples) of Achyutananda

who belonged the community of the cowherdmen were Rama, Utthana, Bhratha, Mukunda, Dharma, Ananda, Bakra, Batsa, Vishnu, Jadava, Paban and Nanda. Five of them who were the closest disciples of Achyutananda are Rama, Bhratha, Bakra, Dharma and Bishnu and they are called *Panchashakha* (five branches of the Achyuta tree) and their monasteries existed at five different places like Kameswariban, Khadiraban, Chandrabhaga-Sangarasa Village, Ekamra Kanan, and Hemban respectively. Achyutananda had a total of sixteen thousand disciples, out of which the *dvadasha gopala* headed by Rama Das were the chief disciples and seven disciples named Utthana, Mukunda, Ananda, Batsa, Jadava, Paban and Nanda were engaged in the organizational activities of the propagation of the lila of the Lord at the behest of Achyutananda. At the behest of Achyutananda also his chief disciple Rama Das initiated twelve gopalas to the Mahamantra and advised them to organize and propagate the Rahasa kirtan widely among the devotees to uplift them socio-economically and spiritually. These twelve disciples who are again called *Dvadasha Gopala* are Mukunda, Ananta, Batsa, Paban, Sudam, Jadava, Balak, Madhu, Mathuri, Utthana, Gobinda and Brundaban. Like Matthew T. Fox's University of Creation Spirituality, Achyutananda had planned a University of Subalterns to equip them with better knowledge and ability in those days of colonialism when the security of their land of birth was at stake. Calamities struck the land and made the lay populace suffer the worst. His twenty four apostles and sixteen thousand disciples headed by him formed a great institution of religious and cultural education to uplift the subalterns of the time and since then the same trend of learning has been continuing and the vast populace of Odisha are still inspired by the morals of this great man even after four centuries of his demise.

This great saint was open to all different religious faiths of the time. He was never prejudiced against any religious faiths. It can be well exemplified in his admonition to his disciples *in Barancharit Gita* to meet Haridasa Gosain, Jagannath Das and Sri Chaitanya under the great banyan called Kalpabata in the campus of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. Haridasa Gosain was a sufi saint of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) who was a companion of Sri Chaitanya. He also respected the followers of Kabir. He believed in the Almighty Lord who according to him is both *Saguna* (Attributed) and Nirguna (Attributeless). He theorized the Lord Jagannath as the Ultimate Reality in his symbolic language and the four deities of the Jagannath Temple, i.e. Balabhadra (Balaram), Subhadra, Jagannath and Sudarshan as the tetradic ultimate reality and compared the human mind with the tetradic holy phenomena and after experiencing all religious experiences he has given his ultimate realization as:

> This mind is the tetradic idols, O Disillusioned Mind/0/
> Mind advises Conscience to peep into the Soul carefully,
> Being encoded in the four Vedas this theory frightens the God of Death,
> Whereas the sages like Sanak meditate always, O Disillusioned Mind/1/
> Don't dig pond nor well, nor build temple nor arch
> Nor Consecrate Lord on throne nor go to Brindaban nor Gopa
> Don't go to Prayag and Gomati, O Disillusioned Mind/2/

Don't hold this knowledge in heart nor put on garland nor paste tilak on forehead

Don't hold matted hair on head nor put on holy underwear

Nor smear ashes on your body as there is no salvation on the bank of Ganges, O Disillusioned Mind/3/

Meditate on your soul to realize the truth in others and you will be happy,

If you can see into yourself the dazzling reality

Says thoughtfully idiotic Achyuti, O Disillusioned Mind/4/ (Tr. Author)

Besides the Raslila propagation/ *Rahasa Kirtan*, to uplift the spiritual and cultural learning of the deprived cowherdmen, Achyutananda wrote a number of *Ogal** songs (songs of challenge/ encounter) narrating various theoretical precepts. These songs were meant for singing and dancing performances during several festivals and they contained many instructions about cow husbandry, producing healthy food products and marketing them in healthy ways for economic and cultural uplift of the cowherdmen. Combining religion with sustainable development, this saint did contribute profusely to help the down-trodden to come up and face the challenge of time when the land of Odisha was under the threat of foreign invasion like Muslims invading Odisha to destroy the monuments and plunder the rich religious shrines and destroy them and loot the public as a whole. The following are the samples of a few *ogal* songs which testify the knowledge crusade of this *Mahapurush* (great man) who stood for economic, cultural and spiritual boost to promote healthy living in the line of epic ages:

OGAL – I

Questions:

Listen O cowherdmen brethren! What I am asking

Explain me all one by one

I have kept them in mind since days so many

Tell me how many kinds of robes has a cowherdman

How do they go out in what robe?

How do they show their visage in how many robes?

Tell O brothers! Answer these select queries

It is getting so late as Achtyuta says:

Answers:

Listen O What you asked, brothers Cowherdmen!

We shall answer all fast one by one.

In our first robe we wear wooden sandal in feet

In the second we blow the buffalo-horn-made pipe

In the third robe, we put on a red loin cloth

And garland of Tulsi leaves on our shoulders back and front

In the fourth robe we use kohl in our eyes

In the fifth we put on garland of flowers

In the sixth robe we put a vermillion mark on foreheads

In the seventh we hold a flute in our hands

In the eighth we hold a sacred thread on our shoulders
In the ninth we hold an umbrella in our hands
In the tenth we put *gochina** mark on our foreheads
In the eleventh we put on various flowers
In the twelfth we hold a stick in our hands
Says Achyutananda thus we come out dressed. (Tr. Author)

OGAL - II

Questions:

Listen O! listen O! jewels of Cowherdmen
Allow me to ask you many a question
Tell me how did the pitcher evolve?
How was the water created and put in it?
How is the filled pitcher put on the ceremonial site?
Uttering which mantra are put the pulses and molasses at offering
With which chant of mantra the milk is offered to the gods?
Uttering which mantra do you hold flute and *singa* in your hand?
With which mantra you milk your cows
Uttering which mantra you untether the calf
With which mantra you offer the first milk to the Lord
Uttering which mantra you take stick and umbrella to your hands
With what mantra you offer water to your cows to drink
With which mantra you enter your cows to their congress
While closing the gate which mantra you chant
Uttering which mantra you arrange your basket
Answer these queries after thorough rumination
Asks Achyuta you answer these soon.

Answers:

Hearing all these speaks the son of Parvati
For the greed of son offerings were done like this
Said Ganapati like this to Lord Brahma
The World Enchanter Lord Siva first made the earthen pitcher
For many days the pitcher was not consecrated
Thus I would say the rules for consecration
When fruit and flowers were put on the pitcher
We chanted in three twilights the names of Lords three
Uttering the Name of Lord Siva we pour water in the pitcher
Chanting the name of Vishnu we put coconut on it
Now listen O brothers! The secret of Gopal's birth
Now the *Dol* festival has been arranged by new brides
Dazzles like new clouds Radha-Krishna's tri-dimensioned twin shape
That adorns the platform of *Dol* festival
We bow before Him uttering the Gopal mantra

> We move round the throne uttering *Om* sound
> We milk the cow muttering the mantra of calf
> We put milk pot in thread-hanger uttering Tarak mantra
> We bring back the cows from grazing ground reminiscing Sudama
> Enter them into their shed with *shishuved* mantra
> We go for selling curd uttering the mantra of Radhika
> And arrange our baskets uttering the name of great goddess
> We close gate at cow shed reminiscing Ananta
> The mantra for opening the gate is the mantra panchakshar
> The mantra for setting fire is the mantra of *jivanyasa*
> And the mantra for burning fire is the twin lettered mantra
> The mantra for putting ghee into pot is the twin lettered mantra
> And that of thread hanger and bamboo-stick carrier is the seven lettered mantra
> Mantra for walking the path is the Betal's mantra
> The mantra of wearing the girdle bells is the Chandika's mantra
> We tether the cows with Niranjan mantra
> And mantra of carrying milk with bamboo carrier is the rice eating mantra
> Mantra of *Chua** and sandal wood paste is *gopiballabhaya**
> O brothers! All these mantras must you know
> Listen O! Listen O! jewels of cowherdmen
> Told you in summary, please don't me blame
> The ogal songs gist the saga of cowherdmen
> Says Achyutananda for the benefit of them. (Tr. Author)

He was the legendary hero for the cowherdmen community of Odisha during his time and has been supremely honoured so far and will continue to be so as he has been called the Mahapurush (the great man) and is worshipped as the God and as an incarnation of the Almighty's closest associate and was empowered with eight heavenly powers (*Asta Aishwaryas*) like the God and beyond. It is not only the cowherdmen community but all other communities also worship him as God and an omniscient seer. He propagated the principles of action and devotion for the uplift of all concerned and accepted disciples from all communities and worked hard for preaching the principles of salvation amongst all. For the fishermen community he wrote their seminal spiritual text called *Kaibartta Geeta* which theorizes their evolution, greatness, prescribed activities of self-sustenance, rituals and festivals. He has prescribed and narrated the virtues and practices of a true Vaishnava, Gopala, Saint, Abbot, Mahatma, Dasa, Guru, Sujana, and the like in the *Guru Bhakti Geeta* (Vol. III).

This great saint and prophet was also a great practitioner and propagator of yoga and was also a medicine maker out of herbs and wrote a number of treatises on alchemy and treatment of humans and domestic animals. In *Gopakeli Gita* and *Kuanr Gita* the poet has narrated the healthy ways of rearing the domestic animals like cows and buffalos. In *Brahma Shankuli,* he has discussed various methods of yogic exercises and use of herbal medicines through which one can live disease-free life without

hunger and thirst for many days with firm meditation on the Ultimate reality. In Seventh canto of *Brahma Shankuli*, he says that drying herbs like Harikeshar, bhumineem, banyan boughs and pounding them to powder, if one takes with cold water in the morning, one can forget thirst and hunger. Similarly powder made of dried bael leaves, ganja, shoots of brinjal leaves and basanga leaves, taken in morning with cold water for six months frees all from all diseases and physical ailments. (Sahoo 2015:91). There are several other prescriptions made by this saint for physical and spiritual well-being of all the humans.

Achyutananda Das was a saviour of the subalterns during his time and has been so since then till now as he has been a great spiritual force commanding the honour of a god since his time and his works have been the panacea of instruction for the lakhs of devotees, though many of his works have been lost and destroyed in natural calamities and the persons in charge them have not been able to protect and preserve them for various reasons. He composed a large number of future forecasting texts popularly known as *Malika* (i.e. rosary of predictions) which were the warnings and instructions to the devotees about the nature of time and people's behaviour. He inspired the public through these writings to perfect themselves to get rid of the calamities and lead peaceful lives. The people believe that his words are proved all true all the time. As such all devotees consider this great saint to be an incarnation who was born to show right direction to the erring world at a juncture of spiritual crisis.

Notes

* The mythical Padmaban (Lotus Forest) and its four goddess gatekeepers are described in the *Padmaban Rahasa* as follows:

> The jewelled platform with endless glory
> Where twelve sounds are heard endlessly
> Dazzles with five dimensions this cosmic phenomena
> It is called as such Manikarnika
> O Holy Maidens! There is heard the eternal sound
> One sheds all sins by *recognizing* this sound //14//
> Mother Ambika is the gatekeeper there
> Exists at East direction of Padmaban
> Exists Mother Bhabani at the Northgate
> Goddess of Autumn guards the Western gate
> O Holy Maidens! Guards the Southgate Goddess Champa
> She is the Champak coloured goddess named Anukampa//15//
> Constantly they visit, with utter devotion
> Serve the Almighty at Padmaban
> They come with Goddess Chacheka and Bhagabati
> Also with Chitreshwari Gopi
> O Holy Maidens! Among the holy milkmaidens she is the main
> All congregate at the Padmaban //16// (Tr. Author)

* *Ogal-* In Odia language Ogal means to encounter/challenge. The ogal songs are meant for challenging some one's knowledge in a particular field.

* *Dol-* This festival is observed in the month of March (Phagun) and the famous *Holi* festival is a part of it. It is chiefly a festival of Cowherdmen and Lord Krishna played it with the gopis. Now it is a universally popular festival in India. In Dol Lord Krishna and his consort Radha visit the households in a Rath (Chariot)-like mobile decorated platform called Biman which is carried by at least four cowherdmen.

* *Gochina-* A yellow-coloured camphor like product collected from head of some rare dead cows which has divine healing power. Butchers collect this while scaling skin of dead cows and uprooting horns etc. and sell this product which is precious like gold.

* *Chua-* An oily coarse perfumed product, which is mixed with the sandalwood paste (Chandan) and is used at worshipping the Lord.

* *Gopiballabhaya-* is a part of the Gopal mantra (The Gopal mantra is- om klim krishnaya gobinday gopijana ballabhay swaha).

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❑ ❑ ❑

Tagore's Handling of Marital Matrix:
A Study of *The Wreck*

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Abstract

In every society, without any exception of caste or culture, life has never been easy for women, but the way life used to take turn for little Bengali girls after marriage was a matter of great surprise and sadness for Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore was never comfortable with the inequality of man-woman relationship. He always advocated equality of rights and respect for both the sexes; therefore he made his writings a medium to preach equal liberty for men and women. His phenomenal work of art, *The Wreck* depicts the matrix in married life of Kamala, Nalin, Ramesh and Hem. All the characters of this novel are bound in the clutches of chance and fate but finally emerge as victorious. The novel presents the psychological development of Kamala from a child-bride to a responsible wife, and through her character the novelist has highlighted the importance of female education and questions the custom of arrange marriage in the contemporary Bengali society.

Keywords: Chance, Faith, Marital matrix, Dogma, Psychological development, Radical, Extra-marital pulls.

> The very psychology of men and women about their mutual relation is changing and becoming the psychology of the primitive fighting elements, rather than of the humanity seeking its completeness through the union based upon the self-surrender. (Tagore 61)

Rabindranath Tagore, one of the most radical and romantic souls of his times, has depicted the gamut of complexities, confusion and continuity in the married lives of Hindu wives in his novels, short-stories and non-fiction. Tagore's presentation of matrix of married life is not just husband-wife relationship, rather it encompasses a lot more angles which affect this co-relationship, such as the presence of in-laws, extra-marital pulls and omnipresent social-cultural influences in the lives of man and woman. Being a son of *Zamindar*, Tagore spent a pretty long time in the countryside and here,

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he came in direct contact with common folk of Bengal. His heart moved to see the dreadful condition of Bengali married women.

The never ending intention of Indian male to govern the whole range of politics was forced to be limited only to the household. This dominance was marked not by any love or respect, but helpless surrender of the woman to the physically and socially powerful man. Thus, "Household relations had to be shown as supra-political ones, relations of power represented as purely emotional states" (Sarkar 39). However, Tagore denounced the inequality of man-woman relationship. He was uncomfortable about the power that man assumes at home. He asserts in *Rabindra Rachnavali*, "…true power of our society can be unleashed only when we seek woman's blessings in all forms without any false assumption of power to rule her" (Tagore 209).

Marriage has always been considered an important phenomenon in Indian society. Marriage is defined by Eva Hunter as a "cultural phenomenon which sanctions a more or less permanent union between partners conferring legitimacy on their offspring" (Hunter 127). But, several times, marriage does not bring equality and companionship for women, rather traps her individuality, independence and self-realization. Kate Millett remarks that this 'power politics' in the institution of marriage makes woman merely a 'utility item' to be used by man. In the contemporary Bengali society, conjugality was treated as the most vital project in the entire matrix of household relations as that imbibed the absolutism of one and total sub-ordination of the other partner. In fact, the husband-wife relationship became the mirror image of the entire colonial arrangements, where men were the epitome of the colonizer and women of the colonized. The Bengali husbands implicated those torturers on their wives which they were receiving in the outside world. A satirical poem hints at this fact:

> The Bengali male goes out
> And gets thrashed everywhere he goes
> The Bengali male appears terrible
> only within his home (qtd. in Sarkar 40)

The act of domestic tyranny by husbands was a mean to ease the effect of colonial tyranny implicated on them by the colonizers. They used to treat their wives as their private property as Karl Marx says, "Marriage . . . is incontestably a form of exclusive private property" (qtd. in Mitchell 110). The position of Hindu wife was not better than a cattle or cow given as a dowry at marriage time. Men treated women almost as slaves and educated wives were not welcomed by husbands because it would hurt their superiority complex. Tagore was against any false imposition of power under the guise of wrong declarations in the religious documents. He trenchantly avers in *Rabindra Rachnavali*:

> I feel both shame and pain to quote those *slokas* from *Manu Samriti* written in utter abuse of women. I [will] refer only to [those] here where Manu explicitly states that women are solely responsible for the cardinal passion of man, viz, sex passion, anger, greed, infatuation, vanity and envy. They have no real identity of their own. (Tagore 320)

Tagore highlights that illiteracy was imposed on women to mould their desires according to the wish of men so that the married life would be dominated by males only and women had no say in it. The minds of women were conditioned in such a way that they took pleasure only in household works and dressing up. Rakhmabai summed up this view, "Reduced to this state of degradation by the dictum of the *Shastras*, looked down upon for ages by men, we have naturally come to look down upon ourselves" (qtd. in Sarkar 442). Failing to pay heavy dowry, parents used to marry their daughter to a much older man who would either be a widower or already husband of two to three wives at a time. Child bride did not enter in her in-law's house as a mistress of the house, but as the lowest slave in hierarchy of family members and the ultimate way to get rid of this humiliation and gain some power "was to bear sons and arrange their marriages as soon as possible in order to reach the exalted status of the mother-in-law" (Ramabai 72). Thus, the position of women in the sphere of domestic life was not good and healthy one. They were considered passive, sub-standard and good for nothing by their husbands. From centuries, women are perceived in reference to men. Gilbert and Gubar comments in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, "To be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead. But, the woman who refuses to be selfless and acts on her own initiative irritates the society and is unwelcomed" (Gilbert and Gubar 74). Though, some missionaries and men of great insight emerged as their advocates, still the situation was same. However, Tagore cherished a well balanced view about love as well as institution of marriage, as he puts in *Sadhana*:

> We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment, it is truth, it is the joy that is at the root of all creation . . . It is equality and love which should form the basis of married life and the relationships surrounding this institution. (Tagore 88)

In most of his novels, Tagore has described the problems of married women and their isolated condition in joint family. Whether it is Binodini of *A Grain of Sand*, Kamala of *The Wreck,* Charu of *The Broken Nest* or Kumudini of *Relationships,* all heroines of Tagore are struggling emotionally or socially, not to talk about economically as economic independence was the luxury which is impossible for these poor women. It is interesting to note that most of Tagore's heroines are childless even after so many years of marriage and it adds to their humiliation and mental tortures. Sometimes, mental incompatibility with the husbands and intrusion of 'third person' shatter their married life. Tagore explains:

> The tension between the cultures in which a woman is nurtured till marriage in her father's home and her sense of surprise and shock as she has to face very different value system in her marital home. The refinement of the young bride opposed to the crude culture of her husband's family and the resultant culture shock as well as her valiant effort to accommodate with the callous environment of marital home often in silence, in tears and rage is a common

theme that has been explored *ad infinitum* in the Bengali fiction. (Dasgupta, Chakravarti and Mathew 201)

Extra-marital affair is a prominent factor in Tagore's novels and short stories that brings turmoil in the married life of many of his characters. But, *The Wreck* is a bit different in this regard where the matrix in married life is not because of sexual attraction towards 'the Third one' but because of strange games of fate. Tagore's *The Wreck (Naukadubi)* is modeled on the theme of Hardy's fate and chance. Characters in this novel are more sinned against than the sinning. In his prelude to the novel, published a few years after the publication of *Chokher Bali*, Tagore himself throws light on the role of fate and chance in shaping the conjugal life of the characters especially of the heroine, Kamala. This novel not only presents the psychological development of Kamala from a child-bride to a responsible wife, but also shows the importance of female education and questions the custom of arrange marriage in the contemporary Bengali society where man and woman were forced to marry without any former introduction especially when they hardly knew anything apart from their names and sometimes not even that. For the first time in *The Wreck*, Tagore focuses on the turmoil of Bhramo and Hindu Samaj, where a Bhramo girl and a Hindu boy want to marry. Later, he has repeated this theme in *Gora* also. This novel presents a strange and adventurous love story of Kamala, Ramesh, Hemnalini and Nalinaksha. Ramesh is deeply in love with Hemnalini and wants to marry her, but his Hindu background doesn't permit him to do so. His orthodox father forces him to marry the daughter of his old friend. Afraid of his father's strictness, Ramesh can't protest and hopes that "some accident might still prevent the marriage" (Tagore 05). He averts his eyes at the time of the ritual of *shubhodrishti* and this childish protest gives an absurd turn to his life:

> The wedding duly took place, but Ramesh refused to recite the sacred formula correctly, closed his eyes when the time arrived for the "auspicious look" ... wore a hang-dog expression, and kept his mouth shut during the jesting in the bridal chamber, lay throughout the night with his back turned to the girl, and lift the room as early as possible in the morning. (Tagore 06)

The whole confusion starts when after the shipwreck Ramesh finds Kamala alive on the river side and mistakes her as his wife Susheela, who has already died in the boat-wreck. Kamala takes Ramesh as her husband and starts treating him as a devoted wife. Tagore describes her sincere feelings when he writes, "In the dense darkness she found comfort on the heaving chest of Ramesh" (10). Ramesh also sees her as "his future helpmate . . . as his girl-bride, his adored mistress, and chaste mother of his children . . . bringer of joy and prosperity to his home" (13). After three months of marriage, one day Ramesh discovers that Kamala is not his wife, but wife of someone else who may or may not have survived in the boat tragedy. He begins to sleep separately and keeps Kamala at a safe distance. However, Kamala in her ignorance lies down next to him, clinging to his chest. She wants to be in the company of her husband and as from childhood she is taught that husband is God. She doesn't protest his wish to send her to boarding school. Even when she is sad, she never shrinks from her duty

of a devoted wife. While traveling in streamer, she takes care of Ramesh's food, his likes and dislikes. Her relation with Ramesh shows that though she is very young, yet her heart is filled with womanly love.

The novelist presents a contrast elevating the sufferings of Kamala when she meets Sailaja, uncle Chakrabarti's married daughter, who is very fond of her husband and keeps on talking about him all the time. Kamala naturally feels the contrast of her married life with her friend as she knows nothing significant about Ramesh. Here, Tagore also criticizes the attitude of mothers-in-law through sharp sarcasm when he says, "Such phrases as 'Hold your tongue!' 'Do what I tell you!' 'Young girls shouldn't say 'No' so often,' had never been dinned in her ears. Consequently, she faced the world with body erect and head high, a graceful plant with a tough stem" (152). The queer comparison with Sailja's conjugal life makes Kamala perplexed; moreover devoid of her mother-in-law's company she does not know how to win the heart of husband. It is really very cruel of mothers-in-law not to understand the feelings of young or almost child daughters-in-law. In the beginning of the novel, Kamala receives very bad reception by her in-laws. Tagore points out that when Kamala enters in Ramesh's house as a bride, she has to bear a lot of criticism due to the shipwreck and "no one offers to entertain her; in fact people shunned the very sight of her" (12). Without committing any mistake, Kamala has to bear all the humiliations as she is considered responsible for the shipwreck.

Fate and chance are given a lot of importance in shaping the marital matrix of his characters by the novelist. With the passage of time, Ramesh starts feeling a soft corner for Kamala and decides to bid farewell to Hemnalini's love. Here again, fate plays with him and Kamala happens to find the letter of confession that Ramesh has written to Hemnalini. After reading the letter, Kamala realizes the real face of the problem and is filled with guilt as she has been living with a man who is not her husband. The guilt forces her to leave the house in search of her real husband, Nalinaksha. Kamala is quite sure that her husband must be alive. Like a typical Indian woman she thinks, "If I would be a true wife to him I must live to prostrate myself at his feet. Nothing will rob me of this guerdon. While life endures he is not lost to me. The Lord has preserved me from death that I may serve him!" (268). Through Kamala, Tagore highlights that woman with a pure heart can achieve anything she aspires for. So, in one way or the other, Tagore makes Kamala join the tradition of Sita and Savitri who got their husbands back after so many miseries. The search of her husband becomes Kamala's sole mission and it reflects her individuality and optimism. In the course of her search, Kamala has to work as a servant in Nabinkali house. Here, she gets the first sight or *shubhodrishti* of Nalinaksha, who visits the house to treat Nabinkali's husband. Kamala's love and devotion to her husband falls in the category of *bhakti* as she feels that her suffering has reached its climax and God has granted her relief. Kamala wonders how such a man can be the husband of a wretch like her. There is Godly calm in his face:

> She prostrated herself before Nalinaksha's chair, touched the ground with her forehead, and kissed the dust. Alas! That she was debarred from serving him! Her heart was sick with the consciousness of devotion thwarted. (282)

Quite strangely, Kamala shows no psychological conflict in leaving Ramesh. Though, the marriage is never consummated, but she lived with Ramesh for a long period. This shows her love for her real husband, who is Nalinaksha. This also paints the love of Indian women for their husbands that develops soon after completing the seven circles of the holy fire, sometimes without knowing even the name. Ghose makes a befitting comment, "As soon as she learns of the wreck she is eager to return to Nalinaksha. Ramesh is totally forgotten, as something foreign" (Ghose 72). Kamala represents real Indian woman whose husband is her God. She is simple, traditional and pure-hearted, yet confident and determined. She is the symbol of love and devotion. Kh. Kunjo Singh states:

> Kamala excels all the traditional heroines of Tagore like Asha, Sharmila and Niraja, by her qualities of humility, self-restraint and self-effacement. Tagore seems to believe that such women can bring the much needed stability to the restless domestic world dominated by men. (Singh 60)

Most of Tagore's novels and short-stories deal with the turmoil of arrange marriages. It is for the first time, Tagore talks about the problems in love marriage that too inter-caste. Marriage of a Bhramo girl and a Hindu boy was a next to impossible task at that time in the Bengali society, as Bhramo used to be considered as *Pirali* Brahmans. Hemnalini, daughter of a broad minded Brahmo, Ananda Babu*,* is the first heroine of Tagore who dares to love an inter-caste boy, Ramesh and wants to marry him. Open-minded Ananda Babu also gives his consent to this marriage without any objection to Ramesh's religion. Hemnalini truly loves Ramesh and trusts him blindly. Even after Ramesh's decision of postponing the marriage, she has deep faith in his character. As Tagore says, "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark" (Tagore 06 *Greetings of Sunrise Verse* 60). She never blames Ramesh for any tragedy in her life and believes that circumstances have forced him to do so. Kh. Kunjo Singh highlights:

> She exhibits a rare constancy of love and loyalty towards Ramesh, but the latter's indecisiveness, lack of grit and inability to release himself from the grip of circumstances overtakes him render their love unfruitful. . . She wore an air of supreme melancholy and resignation that was like a permanent twilight on her features. (Singh 59-60)

Despite everything, she still loves Ramesh. Her love for him is the extreme of devotion. Tagore doesn't show Ramesh's reconciliation with Hemnalini, but the readers are quite aware of that her love for Ramesh is pious and unshakeable. Her self-less love forces Sisir Kumar Ghose to say, "She is the first of a type that recurs in Rabindranath, the prototype of Sucharita, Kumudini and Lavanya, Tagore's dream daughters" (Ghose 72).

The matrix of marital lives of Kamala and Nalinaksha and Hem and Ramesh has a number of turmoils but Nalin's mother brings a sigh of relief. She tries to resolve the complications in the married life of not only her own son and daughter-in-law, but of Hem and Ramesh also. It was surely the result of the transformation in the Bengali society, which changed the attitude of Indian mothers-in-law and now they are more on the side of friendship with the daughters-in-law. Santosh Chakravarti observes:

> Rabindranath Tagore's socio-familial concept took a new turn as he began to probe the husband-wife relationship within the joint family set up. Gone is the tyrannical in-law and submissive son syndrome in which subservience to the patriarchal norm is the rigour, as Rabindranath Tagore sets out at the beginning of the 20th century, to apply his mind to the taboo subject of women's emancipation. (Chakravarti 94)

Terror-stricken Kamala fears about her mother-in-law's views about her; however, Nalinaksha consoles by saying, "In the course of her life mother has forgiven many sins. Surely she can forgive you for what was not a sin at all" (Tagore 358). Commenting over this, Das Gupta and Chakravarti say, "In one sentence, Tagore sets Kamala free from the ruthless Hindu stricture of subjecting women to go through the ritual of *agnipariksha,* a trial by fire to validate her purity, as in the classic case of the suffering Sita in the Hindu epic *Ramayana*." (Das Gupta and Charakvarti 200)

The two heroines of the novel are complete women. They face harsh realities of life, but remain optimistic. Both men of the novel are not stereotypes as they respect the women in their lives. The lives of Kamala, Nalin, Hem and Ramesh are full of complexities and confusions, but with their intellectual abilities and strength of character they solve all the problems. The matrix of Kamala and Nalin's married life entangles not because of some outsider, but because of fate and to the relief of the readers they solve it. While portraying the character of Nalin and Ramesh, Tagore shows how modern and far sighted he was from his own age. In this novel, he not only presents different layers of women's personality, but also of men who are kind and benevolent to women. Tagore says in *Sadhana*, "We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment, it is truth, it is the joy that is at the root of all creation…" (Tagore 88).

Krishna Kripalani observes, "Tagore has inexhaustible sympathy and admiration for Bengali woman but little for the male of his race" (Kripalani 156). Kamala manages to escape from the matrix and guides other characters. Tagore has written a lot about women not only in his novels, but also in his novellas and short-stories. He cannot be hailed as a "feminist" in an ardent sense of the word, still his writings reflect a considerable understanding of woman's psyche, her status in social structure and strong urge to gain freedom and power for decision making in the family as well as in the society. Tagore has established the individuality of woman more than man and it is this individuality which ensures her dignity, self-respect and sexual-independence in the society.

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The Roots of Religious Intolerance: A Select Study of the Indian Novels

–*V. Pala Prasada Rao**

Abstract

The paper seeks to explore how the lunatic fringe is hell-bent on whipping up communal frenzy. As evidenced in the novels, most of the communal leaders are rank practitioners of politics and therefore, foment trouble for one or other paltry reason. The Indian ethos, which has long been extolled, has been at stake in the last part of the second millennium. It has also witnessed, as evidenced in the novels, the animosity and rancour between the secular and communal forces each trying to outwit the other. The ideologues of communal leaders would always like to harp on the contradictions between Hindu - Muslim traditions. Some of the worth mentioning differences between them come handy for communalists to subvert popular discontent of economic oppression in the main. A few novels are pressed into service to substantiate the argument.

Keywords: Indian ethos, Communalism, Hindutva, Traditions, Economic discontent, Secularism, False consciousness

The chief engagement of the paper is to unravel the insidious relationship between the secular and the communal. The Indian ethos, which has long been extolled, has been at stake in the last part of the second millennium. It has also witnessed, as evidenced in the novels, the animosity and rancour between the secular and communal forces each trying to outwit the other.

The vicious votaries of communalism would always like to hark back to Hindu – Muslim riots, and the ubiquitous contradictions between the Islamic and Hindu traditions. Some of the important differences between them come handy for communalists to subvert popular discontent of economic oppression in the main. For instance, Islam is a religion with a founder, a revealed dogma and with a churchly establishment. It reposes faith in the prophet and the *Quran*. For the Hindu society, religion is a highly personal affair: "It is a religion", as Lakshman in Tharoor's *Riot*

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(2001) puts it, "without an established church or priestly papacy" (Tharoor 144). For Islam, the Creator stands apart from His creation, ordering and presiding over His work. To the Hindu, the Creator and creation are one and indivisible. As a result, the Hindu worships God in almost any form he chooses. To the Muslim, on the contrary, there is but one God. The *Quran* forbids the faithful to represent Him in any shape or form. Idols and idolatry to the Muslim are, therefore, abhorrent.

It goes without saying that the differences existing in different religions are peripheral in the sense they do not take on people's minds unless they are whipped up. Religious differences did explain a sense of separate religious and social identity but they failed to explain the genesis or persistence of a long-term socio-political phenomenon like communalism. Communalism was not inspired by religion nor was religion the object of communal politics. In other words, religion was not the underlying cause, whose removal was basic to tackling the communal problem. It is necessary in this respect to distinguish between religion as an ideology or a belief system and the ideology of religious identity. Consciousness of one's religion is also not communalism. In Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1979), Chaudhri Barkat Ali is intensely conscious of Islam: "He and his wife said namaaz, their prayer five times a day … visited the mosque nearby, gave alms to the poor and observed fasts through the entire month of ramadhan" (Nahal 102). He is not communal for he regards himself and his family as good Muslims because they believe in the unity of all religions.

Comprehending religious differences is often mind-boggling. In fact to understand communalism or the ideology of religious identity, one must go beyond the sphere of religion and explore the domains of economics and politics. In other words, religious difference was a basic element of communal ideology and politics and was used by the communalist as an organizing principle in mobilizing the masses. Using religious distinctions which were very real, and of which people were certainly conscious, the communalist created the false consciousness of religious identity and communal antagonism. Exploiting the religious identity for the purposes of communal antipathy against the Muslims, the leader from the city in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) has successfully instilled feelings of intense ill will in the minds of the Sikhs.

The dubious role of communal part is always flawed as they like to use religion as a decoy. In communalism, religion plays an entirely extraneous or vicarious role – the role of a mask is clearly brought out if one takes a look at the religious side of the communal leaders in Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1988), Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja* (1993) and Tharoor's *Riot* (2001). Murad Ali in *Tamas,* asks Nathu to slay a pig, and makes it a point to get the carcass of the pig thrown on the steps of a mosque. He is a Muslim Leaguer and seems to promote the interests of the Muslims. So is the case with Ram Charan Gupta and his "bigoted ilk". Being a Hindu he does not take pride in its diversity, in its openness and tolerance. The topics on which he waxes eloquent are Ram Sila Poojan programme, the sacred soil of civilization, minority appeasement, Hindutva, Hinduness of Taj Mahal and foreignness of Muslims. It is said about him as "an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate in the last elections; it's expected that he'll do better next time" (Tharoor 51). Ram Charan Gupta is hell-bent on fomenting communal

sentiments in order to derive maximum political mileage. He hones his speeches in such a way that they become rabidly inflammatory. To political leaders, who were communal, the religious appeal is simply an instrument in rabble rousing. This statement was truer of Jinnah.

It was Jinnah, among others, who popularized the idea of a narrower notion of Muslim nationhood that confined Indian Muslims to a truncated share of the heritage of their entire land. Unlike the Maulana, Jinnah: "… wore Savile Row suits, enjoyed his scotch and cigars, ate pork, barely spoke Urdu, and married a non-Muslim" (Tharoor 107). In fine, his miens and mind testify his irreligiosity.

One should be very compassionate and has to be cerebral to be secular as seen in the profiles of many secular leaders who are profoundly religious. The symbol of secularism among the Muslims is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was, in fact, a far more authentic representative of Indian Islam than Jinnah. Yet Jinnah claimed to speak for India's Muslims. He used Islam in a general sense as a banner and not in its religious functioning. On the other side, the very heterogeneous character of Hinduism made the Hindu communalist keep all religious aspects out of communal politics. Many staunch Arya Samajists, opposed to idolatry in any form, virtually became cow worshippers in their communal practice. V.D. Savarkar, the high priest and theoretician of communalism was a rationalist and a practicing atheist. It was part of the great tragedy of the country as Mohammed Sarwar in *Riot* observes: "… that it was Jinnah and V.D. Savarkar who triumphed over the secular persons leading to much communal disharmony" (108). Like their leaders, most of the middle class Hindus and Muslims, who formed the social base of communalism, were hardly religious. Murad Ali, Lakshmi Narain, Hayat Baksh, Master Devbrat, Ranvir etc in *Tamas*; Ice-candy-man in *Cracking India* (1988); Captain Rahmat-Ulla Khan in *Azadi*; Bhushan Sarma in *Riot* and Akhtarujjaman in *Lajja,* to name a few, belong to middle class stratum of society were not religious-minded. What W.C. Smith in *Modern Islam in India* (1963) has said of communal Muslims is equally true of communalists in other religions. "For many middle-class Muslims, communalism is the most important part of their religion. Without communalism many of these Muslims too would be Muslim in little more than name. It is exceedingly difficult to discover what, if anything, they mean "Islam" except the Muslim community and loyalty to it. Usually they do not govern their lives by their religion in any sense, their decisions are not influenced by it, and their ideals and objectives do not derive from it. Often they do not know very much about their religion in any other sense. There is little concern with God; with personal salvation; with morality; with worship" (Smith 203-204). The characters of Jinnah and Ram Charan amply evidenced in Tharoor's *Riot* can best illustrate the fact.

In *Riot,* Tharoor's mouthpiece seems to be an IAS officer, Lakshman who seeks to undermine the ubiquitous but fake religious differences creeping in the minds of people.   Lakshman, in the novel, feels that religion is one of the sources of division breeding communalism. He observes: "The sense of religious chauvinism that transforms itself into bigotry" (Tharoor 44).   He believes that intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit. He gives umpteen

examples of communal bigotry and communal clashes in her history – Hindu-Muslim, Muslim-Sikh, Sikh-Hindu, Hindu-Christian etc. Ethics, which should be the kernel of religious code, has been carefully removed especially during the extreme phase of communalism. In Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Iqbal, a better philosopher than social worker, finds religion shallow and wanting in all values. He believes that India "devoid of religious faith had been constipated a lot of humbug" (194). He denounces that the lunatic fringe fails to appreciate ethos and they confine themselves to the façade of religion. He surmises: "Take religion. For the Hindu, it means little besides caste and cow protection. For the Muslim, circumcision and kosher meat. For the Sikh, long hair and hatred of the Muslims" (Singh 195). Lakshman believes that there is no religion that was founded on intolerance – and there is no religion that does not value the sanctity of human life.

Religion with the soulless world could only be the cause of barriers creating disharmony and discord. Communalism was in this sense also a sleight of hand. Though relying on religion for communal demarcation, it had hardly any religion in it. The communalists used religion to appeal to an existing consciousness of religious demarcation to create quite another type of fresh consciousness of political demarcation. They used religion merely as a grouping and a separating principle for political purposes thereby creating a false consciousness. They hardly have any other use of religion.

Tharoor's secular views expressed with aplomb and reason, find their lucid expression in Mohammed Sarwar's interpretation of history. He sheds much light on hegemony and elevation as he constructs history. He is convinced that the arena of history is mired in controversies most of which were sparked off by the fanatics. He sees the need to hail composite religiosity and to applaud the syncretic culture of Hindus and Muslims. But the complicated way whereby Ram Charan marshals the oral tradition of India makes the historian's job more challenging.

The medieval period had witnessed a certain cultural rapprochement and the gradual development of common culture among the upper and middle class Hindus and Muslims in different parts of the country. At popular plane, popular religions with their mutual influences – corrupted or unorthodox – formed together in social and cultural spheres. There was adaptation by the high religions to a variety of tribal and local cultures and beliefs. As a result, they carried with them into the new religion old religious and social beliefs and practices. The popular religions were highly eclectic in their beliefs and practices. The common popular culture and ways of life tended to prevail. Marriage and other social practices tended to be uniform, or at least mutually influenced. Various syncretic cults had developed in different parts of the country. Hindus and Muslims shared common saints and Pirs, dargah and other holy places. In *Cracking India* the narrator-character Lenny goes along with Imam Din to Dera Tek Singh on Baisakhi, the day that celebrates the birth of the Sikh religion and of the wheat harvest. Lenny narrates: "From on top of Imam Din's head I see the other groups of villagers converging on Dera Tek Singh – Hindu, Muslim, Sikh … The men go to the Baisakhi Fair every year: before Ranna was born before his great grandfather was born" (Sidhwa 105).

The hallmark of tolerance can be traced in the local traditions of Indian across the nation. For instance, the Mano Majrans – Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim – venerate the local deity, the deo "whenever they are in special need of blessing" (Singh 11). In *Riot*, the History Professor, Mohammed Sarwar gives an account of a man called Syed Salar Masaud Ghazi who was "worshipped by both the communities" (Tharoor 64). However, the social and religious reform movements, especially their revivalist wings, tended to reverse this trend. They attacked popular religious beliefs and practices as irrational and corrupted and debased forms of the original faith. What Professor Mohammed Sarwar in *Riot* elucidates is worth-mentioning: "Extremists of both stripes have sought to discredit the secular appeal of Ghazi Miyan" (Tharoor 66). Similarly, Lala Kanshi Ram, the protagonist of *Azadi,* and devout Arya Samajist harps back to the past – "the glory of the Vedic civilization" (Nahal 17) – when Indian culture, as he thinks, was unsullied. Thus the emphasis of the movements was on the purity of faith and the purging of popular religions of the so-called 'alien accretions'. Purity meant making religion more fundamentalist and less universal. The ideologues returned to the distant and divergent traditions – traditions of periods when Hindus and Muslims have not known each other and which therefore separated and widened the religious, cultural and social gulf between them. Thus, returning to the pristine purity of Hinduism and Islam and the purification of religious rites meant condemnation of religious syncretism and checking the process of the evolution of a composite culture initiated during the medieval period. This led to the creation of a greater distance between religions and people, producing a sense of cultural and social exclusiveness. The effects of the movements were far-reaching. For instance, in *Lajja*, Sudhamoy remembered a time in 1946 when the hostilities between the Hindus and Muslim had been high. After eating sweetmeats at a shop he had asked the shopkeeper for water. "The word he had used was *paani*, not the word, *jal* he would have normally used". (Nasreen 180). In this context of revivalism a fairly long extract from Beni Prasad's *The Hindu Muslim Questions* (1941) on the communal issue is very apt:

> Revivalism weaned away the half-converts from the lingering Hindu beliefs and practices. On the other hand, the Hindu sub-castes, which had adopted Muslim ways of living, gravitated towards Hindu revivalism or modernism. Hindus and Muslims alike began to give up many practices which they had imbibed from one another and which had formed bridges between the two communities. Many areas of common life and thought have thus been restricted and many meeting places obliterated ... It imparts its tone in literature, favouring the elimination of Sanskrit terms from Urdu and that of Arabic terms from Hindi. (Prasad 25-26)

Reformist and revivalist movements also spread orthodoxy where heterodoxy had prevailed earlier. Even if they did not spread greater commitment to religion they spread religious consciousness of being Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. Though often not communal by themselves, they made the middle classes and the masses more susceptible to communal propaganda. The tensions and insecurities brought about by the widening inequalities cause people to take refuge in irrational ideologies – communalism, regionalist

demands, cultural movements etc. This explains why many people appear to have become susceptible to social tendencies that tend to blame some imagined other. The reason behind this is that the real perpetrators of the problem appear too large or too remote to be confronted. So antagonistic energies are diverted to those nearer home. They are easier to flight. Thus any group can be treated as the "other" and becomes the object of hatred and violence. In Indonesia too the response was taking the form of Islamic reaction against Christians. There is, in fact, a miasma of confusion about the real problems and real culprits. Politicians across the subcontinent have the proclivity to go any extent to come to power. They groom vote banks, addressing specific needs of religious communities. Shashi Tharoor in *Riot* drives this point home: "Politicians of all faiths across India seek to mobilize voters by appealing to narrow identities" (Tharoor 145). Thus the contrary pulls of the secular and the communal culminate in the loss of the ethos distinctive of the Indian subcontinent thereby bringing about alienation between the communities culminating blatant mutual intolerance.

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A Critical Study of Women Subjugation and Resistance in Sashi Deshpande's *Small Remedies*

–Madhur Kumar*

Abstract

Sashi Deshpande's novels are woman-centric. Her protagonists refuse to live on the margins of a male dominated society, but see themselves as women in their own rights who are ready to draw new boundaries for themselves. *Small Remedies* (2000) is also a woman-centric novel. It depicts the life of two women who lived almost fifty years ago in a male dominated society. In such a milieu, two young women, Savitribai Indorekar and Leela, find courage to defy all mores, break from their families and pursue their passions. Madhu, the narrator of the novel who is closely connected with both of these women, has her own life to live. The novel moves backward and forward in time to depict the life of these three women. Be it olden times or recent ones, all the three women have one feature in common - they are confident persons who know what they want and how to get it. They are dependent upon men for a harmonious and balanced life but at the same time they live life on their own terms. The present paper explores women subjugation and resistance in Deshpande's *Small Remedies*.

Keywords: Woman-centric, Milieu, Mores, Harmony, Balanced.

Sashi Deshpande emerged on the literary firmament in the 1980's first with her *Short Stories* (1979) and then her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980). "Her writing", observe M.K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan, "is…part of Indian literature and emerges from the rootedness in middle-class Indian society." (85) She chooses women protagonists for her novels who refuse to live on the margins of a male dominated society. They see themselves as women in their own rights who are ready to draw new boundaries for themselves. S.P. Swain comments thus on her fictional world:

> The novels of Shashi Deshpande are a realistic and an optimistic portrayal of the Indian middle-class educated women. Deshpande successfully presents these women as they are engaged in the complex and difficult social and psychological problems of defining an authentic self. She delineates them

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with their variegated swings of mood, the ebb and flow of joy and despair. We also get an insight into their feelings perceived and desires suppressed. (Dutta 453)

Small Remedies (2000) is a reaffirmation of Shashi Deshpande's commitment to the cause of women. It depicts the life of two women who lived almost fifty years ago in a male dominated society which was tradition bound and governed by rules which did not allow much freedom to women. In such a milieu, two young women, Savitribai Indorekar and Leela found courage to defy all mores, break from their families and pursue their passions. If Savitribai was obsessed with music, Leela was passionate about communism. If Savitribai turned her world upside down by running away with a musician to further her career in music, Leela lived and worked with factory workers of Bombay. Madhu, the narrator of the novel who is closely connected with both these women, has her own life to live. Her story is the story of a woman who in a moment seems to lose her grip on life and her family, when her only son Aditya is killed in senseless violence by a frenzied mob.

The novel moves backward and forward in time to depict the life of these three women. There are early years when Savitribai and Leela struggled to step out of their conventional lives and then the author shifts her gaze to the Modern Times, when many controls over women have fallen by the wayside. Be it olden times or recent ones, all the three women have one feature in common – they are confident persons who know what they want and how to get it. They are dependent upon men for a harmonious and balanced life but at the same time they live life on their own terms.

Savitribai Indorekar, grande dame of the Gwaliargharana, started her adult life as a dutiful daughter-in-law in an orthodox Hindu household. Madhu, the narrator of the novel, has seen her as a neighbour and the mother of her friend Munni, when she was a child. Now, Madhu travels to Bhavanipur, Savitribai's home, in her last years to write a biography of Bai. It is through her interviews to Madhu and Madhu's own remembrance of the early years that the mystery and unconventional life of Bai is unravelled. The interviews take the form of 'meetings' with Savitribai at her residence.

After five such "meetings", Bai talks of her childhood. She belonged to a wealthy family. She was close to her mother who showed her "the beauty of music" (27). The mother had spotted talent in her child and would encourage her to sing before the family. But in a conventional society this is where a woman has to stop. There was no question of making music a career or pursuing it as a passion. Moreover, as Bai grew older, her father who doted on her otherwise would not allow her to have a music teacher.

Ironically, it is in her married homethat she gets her first music teacher. Her father-in-law, himself a lover of music, engaged a middle-aged woman to teach her music. In doing so, he was going far ahead of his times for music was definitely not a realm for women. Those were orthodox times, when education was conceded to girls and nothing more. Learning music must not have been easy for the young Bai for she had to face contempt and derision from her own family members. May be to

escape this or because she fell in love with the young tabla player Ghulam Saab, Bai eloped with him. This was a radical step she had taken.

It is indeed quite comfortable to lead a conventional life according to the norms of the society but to go against established norms "speaks of great courage." (221) By choosing to live life out-of-the-ordinary, Bai was effectively cutting herself from the life of an ordinary woman. As an artist "the ordinary life of ordinary woman" (221) would be denied to her. Bai chose music above all else denying even her liaison with Ghulam Saab and Munni, their daughter, from this entanglement. Her life had no place for social restriction put by a traditional world order. Ghulam Saab was only a means to free her from her life in a respectable household.

From here, her journey started to seek Guruji, Pandit Kashinath Bawa. She wanted to be his student but again the times did not permit a man to have a married young woman as a disciple. She pursued him relentlessly for over a year till he succumbed to her singular devotion and accepted her as one of the pupils. Under his tutelage, she became a complete singer and "reached the pinnacle of her profession" (225) and over the years, she gained the reputation of a great singer when "her respectability, or her lack of it, no longer matter(ed)." (225) Bai lived her life on her own terms taking seriously the advice offered by her Guruji. Her fulfilment lies in the world of music, in her art, not in the world of children. Once she gains respectability as a singer she does not need either Ghulam Saab, her lover, or Munni, her daughter. This is not out of modern trend or fashion of the day. Savitribai is totally unaware of modern feminism or politically correct attitudes. All this comes out of "her own idea of her life." (166) She has the courage of her convictions; she defies her times and challenges her destiny, all for wanting to live "the life she wanted, steady in the pursuit of her goal, pure of purpose." (170)

The purity of purpose is evident also in the life of Leela, the other woman who leads an equally unconventional life and dares to break all ground rules framed and supported by the dogmatic structure of society. One of six sisters, Leela was named Sindhu, after one of India's rivers. Whereas all her sisters opted for marriage to fulfill their destinies, Leela became the rebel who was "disowned by the family." (45) She too married but became a widow thereafter. The steps she took subsequently made her the "black sheep of the family." (45) She decided to remarry, an unheard of thing in those days. If this were not enough, she settled for a man from another religion, a Christian named Joe. That they had a very happy married life did not placate the family. Neither were they appeased and pacified by her other activities, such as "teaching her role in the trade unions, her work among the factory workers." (46) They just ignored her achievements and tried to wipe her out from their lives. Leela did not care. She was passionate about communism and so she broke family ties to seek fulfilment in public life. Leela was too independent a spirit to be confined by norms of an orthodox society. She had decided to give her life to the Party and she fulfilled this wish right upto her death. She willingly sacrificed the cloak of respectability to gain love and unhappiness in equal measure.

Leela's life is a chronicle of "unusual woman" (94) who was far ahead of times. Some of the things that Leela did were undreamt of by other women of her age. Right from the beginning, Leela had decided to be financially independent. From the time she became a widow she took care toeducate herself. Thereafter, she took up a job to support herself. She not only took care of herself she even lent a helping hand to the family of her dead husband. She educated her young brothers-in-law and gave meaningful direction to their lives. On remarrying Joe, a doctor with a good income, she was too proud to become a liability on him. She continued with her job and her fervour for work amongst the disadvantaged sections of society. Joe fully supported her in her ambitions which only made their married life fulfilling and happy. When Joe died, she moved back to her Maruti Chawl's home to be with the poor to whose cause she was committed passionately.

Madhu who had observed these two women closely cannot remain untouched by them. "To know that I am linked to these two women is to drink the draught of strength, the magic potion the elixir of courage." (225) These two towering personalities leave an imprint on Madhu's own life when she is facing the greatest crisis of her life; the death of her only child Aditya. Her travel to Bhavanipur, Savitribai's home in her last years to write her biography, is also a journey undertaken for herself, in order to repair her mind and heal her body. An occasional unhappiness is an inevitable part of life but when unhappiness threatens to take away sanity it cannot be ignored. Madhu leaves her husband, Som and her city, Bombay to come to a little known Bhavanipur inorder to be alone to fight her inner demons and test her pain barriers. Confronting reality within needs a lot of courage. It often shatters carefully polished self-images. Madhu has to delve deep into her inner self, into her past so that she could accept accountability for one's condition in life. She had to rediscover the wisdom of the sages that extorts, "you are your own master" as "the cause of your happiness or misery is within you." This ancient wisdom accepts that everything in the world changes constantly including people and situations. Our full enjoyment of life is not dependent on any particular circumstance. Happiness means a balanced mind to face the reality of the moment. It is to achieve this balance that Madhu is inspired by the lives of these two extraordinary women, Savitribai and Leela. Their lives form the core of this book, *Small Remedies* as well as the core of Madhu's own tortured existence.

In Madhu, the author has presented today's woman who does not necessarily seek company of other women or is content to live a Zenana-like existence; in today's times a woman is ready for platonic relationships with men on conditions of equality and camaraderie. This confidence and self-assurance gives the young woman a right to choose and Madhu chooses Som to marry. Marriage like any other relationship, is based on faith and a desire and need for another person. Madhu who till now was totally effaced in the company of these young men, who filled their need of "an audience, the listener" (161), now noticed that for Som she was becoming "a woman, a desired woman, a desirable woman", the woman Som wanted. Madhu herself is prepared to be noticed in all her femaleness, for it serves nature's purpose. "A young

woman ready for mating, a young woman bearing a child – yes this too – cry out to be seen, to be taken note of." (161) Marriage, here, is seen as a fulfilment of nature's design for both men and women. From the moment her son, Aditya is born, Madhu discovers her world consists of only Aditya, even to the exclusion of her husband, Som. She is ensconced in this happy world. However, when fate snatched away her seventeen years old son, Madhu decides to move away from Som, for to see him "is to remember. In his face, in his eye I see my own grief, my guilt, my anger." (107)

The distance that Madhu puts between Som and herself by travelling to Bhavanipur, achieves two purposes. By moving away from Bombay, she tries to minimize the loss of her son by removing herself from the scene of crime. This distancing is also a means of measuring the gap in the relations between Som and herself. She has to find "an explanation" (55) for the chasm that divides the two of them. This could be achieved by travelling down the memory lane and remember what happened to her when she was a fifteen year old girl. The incident which lay buried under forgetfulness has to be resurrected to understand it. The process is painful but necessary and Madhu picks up courage in both hands to relive the agony of the day when her father's best friend assaulted her in her own house. The rape took place with almost innocence about it, without the bestiality associated with such acts. Young Madhu, while being initiated in her first sexual contact, remembers "Joy of feeling" and "pleasure." This violation had no violence or disgust inherent in it. On the contrary, Madhu was wonder-struck by the responses of her own body: "Nothing is known, nothing is strange." (268) And contrary to traditional behaviour, it is the man who feels ashamed of his act and soon thereafter commits suicide, Madhu puts away this experience as an "ancient memory" (268) and it only comes back many years later when she happens to see a painting by the same man. Yet Madhu was not ashamed of what happened to her as a young girl. The incident does not leave any scar on her life. She feels it has no relation, "no place" (269) in her life which she is living with Som. And when Som discovers this truth about Madhu, he is devastated. To an Indian male his wife should be chaste and a virgin at the time of marriage but that is not so with Madhu. He brings silence between them as punishment. But more than Madhu it is punishment to himself. He takes almost a year to come to terms with his own emotions and then makes the first conciliatory gesture for reconciliation between them. Madhu was more than willing to begin the healing process. She is eager to "wash away the darkness and ugliness" (323) of her unhappy past. The novel ends on a note of hope for a better future for Madhu and Som.

Shashi Deshpande has again projected her protagonist, Madhu, with a rare boldness and courage. She is the image of a new woman who lives life filled with joys and sorrows, but in her own defined manner. The author does believe in the female empowerment but in her world view both men and women are equally necessary. Her female characters be they Savitribai, Leela and Hasina can opt for life with men or without men. They are successful in ordering their life with or without male support.

Thus, *Small Remedies* is a complex and extraordinary novel in which Deshpande uses her power of words to expound the cause of women. Her female characters in

this book as in her earlier ones, present the bold face of today's women, but this new found courage that they have acquired is not a sudden phenomenon. Today's Madhu, Lataor Hasina are a possibility because they have been nurtured by women like Leela or have admired and idolized achievers like Savitribai who showed the way.

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World Peace through Multicultural Path in Stephen Gill's *The Coexistence*

–Bhavesh Chandra Pandey*

Abstract

India born Canadian author Stephen Gill discusses the possibility of adopting multiculturalism as the principle on which world peace can rest in his novel *The Coexistence*. Raghu Nath, the hero and the spokesperson of the author, freely expresses his dissatisfaction with wars, genocides, prejudices, xenophobia, racism and discrimination. He seems to be actively involved in the debate of world peace and suggests the idea of live and let live, symbiosis, and multiculturalism as possible ways for the attainment of world peace. Gill seems to reject the Darwinian principle of struggle for existence and suggests that nature offers examples of symbiotic relationship. He is hopeful that world peace will be achieved when there will be a world parliament and national prejudices will be won over. He sincerely believes in the idea of emergence of a World-state. In fact the novel *The Coexistence* appears to be the summary of the emerging socio-political discourse in the developed world.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Discrimination, Xenophobia, World peace, Coexistence.

Peace has been the preoccupation of the Canada based poet and novelist Stephen Gill. In an interview, Gill said that extremely sad situations during his adolescence had shaped his path to be a spokesperson of peace. He was born before partition in the area now in Pakistan; he grew up and got educated in India and finally settled down in Canada. He has been seriously concerned with finding solution for a peaceful existence. Therefore, almost all his writings harp on the question of peace. The novel *The Coexistence* is also a creative attempt to suggest a path for the attainment of world peace. He uses his studies of political science, philosophies and human rights to hint at attainment of peace through democratically elected one world government.

Raghu Nath, the hero of the novel and the spokesperson of the author, freely expresses his dissatisfaction with wars, genocides, prejudices, xenophobia, racism and discrimination. He seems to be actively involved in the debate of world peace and

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suggests the idea of live and let live, symbiosis, and multiculturalism as possible ways for the attainment of world peace. Gill seems to reject the Darwinian principle of struggle for existence and suggests that nature offers examples of symbiotic relationship. He is hopeful that world peace will be achieved when there will be a world parliament and national prejudices will be won over. He sincerely believes in the idea of emergence of a World-state. In fact the novel *The Coexistence* appears to be the summary of the emerging socio-political discourse in the developed world.

Stephen Gill has been a tireless crusader of peace. He grew up witnessing violence and discrimination and thus these elements became engrained in his psyche. He has expressed his genuine concern for peace in his poems "The Flame" and "Shrine" and most other writings. *The Coexistence* (2011) is his well meditated and unequivocal response to the question of world peace. It is an attempt to explore a reliable system of world peace in the world which is riddled with multiple levels of prejudices and discriminations.

Bearing an autobiographical strain, *The Coexistence* is an account of the personal experiences and reflections of the hero Raghu Nath. This is an argument in favour of a democratically elected parliament of nations. Raghu enunciates his model of peaceful world-state based on democratic and multicultural principles. He believes that the instinct for aggression must be replaced by the instinct of survival and the ideals of live and let live and symbiotic relationship must be promoted for a peaceful world. He is in favour of a world-state based on mutualism and symbiosis.

The novel touches a number of issues like war, communal violence, prejudices and discrimination, instinct of aggressions, identity crisis, isolation and globalization; and pushes forward multiculturalism as an ideology that can help address these issues and ensure a peaceful world. Gill suggests that diversity is the will of god and admiration of diversity through communication for understanding it is the way of peace. (19) Raghu says "As per my understanding god has created diversity and therefore humans have to honour the plan of the creator" (232). According to Gill, the key to survival in dignity is agree to disagree. (9) Diversity should not be the basis of discrimination. He believes that various types of discriminations are based on ignorance and disturb the world.

Raghu refers to different types of discriminations faced by himself and his fellow characters. Gill takes up Canada as his setting which, according to him is "a complete world in macrocosm, it is blessed with distinctive ethno-cultural, as well as political, racial, social and religious groups". As Raghu visits different places and encounters different people, he learns about various types of prejudices and discriminations. He is asked to leave Canada. "You fuuuu-up Indians, why don't you go back?" (85) He faces linguistic prejudices. He refers to the partition riots and religious discriminations in India. He meets a woman Queen of Sheba who faces colour discrimination. She says "Canadians will never give responsible positions to the black easily". (86) There are also references in the novel of the prejudices of the professors against students of other countries. Raghu believes that discrimination violates the basic principle of democracy within whose framework multiculturalism can flourish. But he also believes

that discrimination cannot be completely ruled out. He says that human beings are beset with feuds, mutual jealousy, bickering and ill-feeling for one another in every form. (187) As no one can eliminate prejudices, the best way is to recognize them.

In order to save the world from turning into a "republic of reptiles", the world needs to follow the path of symbiotic relationship. Raghu says that the battlefield of maniac messiahs is mind and this is the front where the fight has to start and finish. Our misleaders have to develop policies along the line of live and let live or based on mutualism also called symbiotic relationship. (266) He seems to be enamoured by the "gospel of coexistence" (57) and believes that "coexistence is the core of life". (64) He emphasizes that it is God's plan to coexist and coexistence is needed for peace and divinity. (136) For being peaceful and also retaining one's cultural identity, coexistence is needed. Coexistence is the recognition of everyone's right to survive. (19) The ideal of coexistence can be promoted only through tolerance. The Canadian leader B. Pearson believed that tolerance is the force for a peaceful coexistence that forms a vital organ for democracy which invites everyone to participate in the government through discussion. (19) For peace the world needs to follow the path of live and let live. This path has become the path of symbiotic relationship. (277)

As a remedy to prejudices and discriminations, Raghu pushes forward the ideal of multiculturalism. He believes that "multiculturalism is the way of the future and that it holds a passport to the land of coexistence". (135) He explains multiculturalism as "sharing and widening of knowledge to the boundaries of cultures and faiths". (219) It is the spirit of realizing that there are also other beauties and their recognition removes the fear of the unknown. (219) Multiculturalism refers to the acceptance of the language and life of other groups, prohibiting ethnic and religious discrimination and use of weapons to address conflicts. It refers to a situation beyond just tolerance to embrace equality in diversity and interdependence. (390) According to him, the motive behind multiculturalism was to create an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding. (75)

Gill favours multiculturalism as the suitable model for achieving world peace because Canada accepts this ideology. Multiculturalism is a political ideology that not only allows a peaceful coexistence of diverse cultural communities but also ensures them equal status in a democratic system. It is a different type of cultural pluralism. It is concerned with the issue of equality. It asks whether the different communities living peacefully together coexist as equal in the public arena. (Mahajan 2002:11) This emphasis on equality is the main difference between multiculturalism and pluralism. There is an acceptance of diversity and often tolerance is in practice but within the framework there is a "widely accepted hierarchy of cultures". (Mahajan 12) Pluralism is not often multiculturalism. Pluralism often exists when the authority of the dominant community and the symbols of its powers are readily accepted by others. (Mahajan 13) Multiculturalism is based on the belief that the co-presence of different religions, races, castes and other communities is not an indicator of their equal status in public domain. As such multiculturalism is not just an assertion of tolerance, nor is it, for that matter, a celebration of eclecticism of tastes. It speaks equality of cultures and argues

that in a democracy, all cultural communities must be entitled to equal status in the public domain. (Mahajan 15) Different but equal is the leitmotif of multiculturalism. It is against the idea of homogenization and assimilation. Theorists of multiculturalism believe that most states have majoritarian cultural bias. They propose that a multicultural society should not interpret differences in terms of central and peripheral. This society should be a cultural cauldron rather than a cultural melting pot.

The hero of the novel, Raghu thinks about the most suitable form of government for the global village. The model that he suggests is democratically elected parliament of nations. He is in favour of more and more democratization of the world because democracy is a government by discussion (102), and a democratic set up is most suitable for the growth of multiculturalism. According to him "a parliament of nations is a pragmatic solution for international problems". (276) He further defines parliament of nations as "democratically elected, secular world government with its head and powers of the executive, legislative and courts". (276) This world government will be in partnership with all nations, and ruled by law, not by the weapons of mass destruction. The people of the world today in her it a global village without being able to elect its mayor and council to govern it.

Gill suggests that the greatest threats to world peace are posed by prejudices and discriminations, ghettoism in the name of identity crisis and wars. Raghu mentions a separatist movement in Canada called Fronte de Liberation du Quebec. Such movements for the protection of identity lead to disturbances. However, such ghettoes are temporary walls which cannot stand against the onslaught of global current for coexistence based on the recognition of differences with dignity. (144) But the greatest threat to peace is caused by wars. Raghu tells in detail about the losses caused by wars in the past. Wars have led to the destruction of civilizations. They have solved no problems. In the future also the threat of wars looms larger. Future wars are going to be more deadly due to the invention of dangerous nuclear weapons. Raghu is afraid that the intellect of humans has developed robots of Lucifer in numerous ways that can destroy the blessings in the orchard of the global village. (188) He feels that the modern world has been attracted by Darwin's theory of the struggle for existence. The instinct of aggression has been disproportionately inflated whereas the instinct of survival has been ignored. He firmly asserts that nature offers ample examples of symbiosis and coexistence. Aggression is not the law of nature, nor is it instinctive. It is a social learning.

Thus Gill chalks out a design of a peaceful future world. He envisions a global village with a parliament of nations, based on multicultural, democratic principles, following the ideals of tolerance and live and let live. The guiding force of this settlement will be love because love is the language of God and God is peace. (279) Gill also hints at the value of communication, the absence of which leads to prejudices, discriminations, ghettoism and isolation. There are several references of the problem of isolation in the novel. Gill suggests inter-racial and biracial marriages for addressing the problem of racial prejudices. He also suggests that fear and distrust must be removed for solving the problem of war.

The style of treatment of the subject matter in the novel is that of a preacher or a political thinker. The writer seems to be so much obsessed with his ideology that he often fails in weaving the warp and weft of the plot. Raghu emerges as such a dominant figure in the novel that all other characters become insignificant. Gill himself admits in one of his prefaces that he is unable to get his characters involved in conversation. In this novel, the conversations are dominated by Raghu. In fact, Raghu is made to present Gill's point through speech. There are many characters in the novel, which just appear and disappear. They fail to make their presence felt. These are Akram, Krishna, Maple King, Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Wallace, Queen of Sheba, Mohan, Balwant, Bluebell, Prabha, Mrs. Clifford, Dr. Hafeez and Mr. Aggarwal. These are people from different countries and different racial backgrounds. They tell about their isolation and their experiences about prejudices and discriminations. Some of them are used in conversations deliberately to allow Raghu present his point view. The conversations of Raghu are often very casual dealing with issues like what do the people of the west find exotic about India and what sensationalism in literature is.

The Coexistence is essentially a novel of peace. It emphasizes that no organism is an island and if they have to survive they will have to learn the art of coexistence by accepting diversity as the will of God and by replacing the instinct of aggression by the instinct of survival. The future world will have to say goodbye to wars and discriminations and promote symbiotic relationship between persons and nations. A peaceful world will need to set up a parliament of nations and will have to adopt multiculturalism and democracy. The novel prescribes tolerance and love as the essentials for peace.

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Depiction of Woman as an Epitome of Sacrifice for Social Reconstruction of India in Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Music for Mohini*

–*Rajesh Kumar Sharma**

Abstract

In Indian English fiction Bhabani Bhattacharya, like Mulk Raj Anand, is a socially conscious artist. He believes that "an artist should delineate contemporary reality rather than recreate the historical or legendary theme" (Srivastava 5). In the novel *Music for Mohini* he feels that what was political liberty worth to the common man if it was not part of a renascence in social life? If freedom is to be made effective, India must reorient her national life on a new social basis where the woman has to sacrifice her comforts in the social rejuvenation of India. Mohini, the heroine of the novel, is symbolic of "the New India," of the newly emerged free India. The present study is a thorough depiction of woman's sacrifice of her comforts and adoption of alien customs and conventions for the sake of societal and cultural development of the nation. The study also depicts how a woman plays a role of a bridge between cultures, customs and conventions.

Keywords: Ambivalence, Culmination, Vivacious, Glimpse, Savage, Social-reconstruction.

Indian English fiction written between the advent of Mahatma Gandhi and winning of freedom tend to show preoccupation with the nationalistic movement. The writers begin to look at the problems of country with greater realism. There is also a growing concern about the shape of things to come out and steps to be taken in order to ensure the societal stability in which there should be mutual understanding of man and woman. Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Music for Mohini* (1952) is one of the important works of that time. It is his second major work that he had started writing soon after his marriage in June 1935. *Music for Mohini* is a forward-looking novel in which the woman is depicted as the epitome of sacrifice along with the vision of freedom from

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the alien customs and conventions. The author dwells on certain sociological aspects of Indian life. He wants his countrymen to awake and bring social freedom to the woman equal to the man.

When the story begins, Mohini is a motherless girl of seventeen, studying at a school and growing up at her home in Calcutta, where she is patted by her father, the professor with modern ideas and her grandmother referred as Old Mother. In a typical scene the brother and sister fight each other for fun in the absence of father, but when he suddenly and unexpectedly enters the room, the boy pretends to be working on a sum and Mohini pretends to be reading a textbook on Ancient India. The professor is taken aback when he casually looks at the volume she has kept open in front of her and discovers that it is a Bangla novel. This reminds the readers of Lydia Languish, the heroine of Sheridan's drama *The Rivals*. The Old Mother notices that Mohini is no longer a child but a woman, and she urges on her son the need to get her married without much delay.

As a result of Old Mother's prompting, several proposals for Mohini's marriage are considered and the conventional inspection of the bride is carried out by a few parties. One proposal comes through the agency of a bangle-seller that the bridegroom suggested is a handsome, well-educated affluent young man in the late twenties by name Jayadev and he is the head of the family called the Big House in the village Behula. She has been very favourably impressed by a learned article by Jayadev in the journal *Maya* and particularly by a photograph of the young man that shows him to be extremely handsome. Calcutta-bred Mohini also has been captivated by the photograph and has prepared herself mentally to leave the city and live in Behula. The match seems perfect to Old Mother and to Mohini herself. Only her father hesitates. How can his city-bred, freedom-loving daughter be happy in a village among the old-world folk? Wonder of wonders, however, even the horoscopes of the young couple auspiciously conjoin. Jayadev's mother has approved of the match because she has ascertained that all the eight signs of luck such as fingers of the wheel, the conch, the elephant and so on are present on the Mohini's palm.

So the marriage is agreed upon and the traditional observations precede the ceremony. After the final vows has been taken under the sheltering bridal shawl, husband and wife see each other, face to face for the first time:

> Jayadev gazed, while Mohini's head dropped, her face flushed…... His looks meant little. She prayed only for his approval, his contentment. A hundred thousand Hindu maids each bridal day of the year give their hearts to their unknown husbands, asking nothing but approval (*Music for Mohini* 85-86).

So Mohini leaves this home where love and security, wit and wisdom, laugher and music, old ways and new have surrounded her throughout her life. She will recall Old Mother's final words again and again during the years ahead. These words have a close similarity to the moral lessons given by the sage Kanva to his adopted daughter Shakuntala in the great poetic drama *Abhijnan Shakuntalam* by an ancient Indian poet Kalidasa:

> Honour your mother-in-law as though she were your mother, and abide by
> her will. Answer her hot words with absolute silence. Sweeten your speech
> when you talk to your neighbours. Words dipped in honey cost nothing. Bend
> yourself to the customs and traditions of the village….. (*Music for Mohini*
> 90)

Mohini is caught in the dilemma of being too westernized for some prospects and too
old-fashioned for others. She seems precisely at the crossroads between the ways of
Old Mother and those of independent India and emancipated womanhood. Mohini
bids farewell to her modern home of Calcutta for ancient Big House of Behula village.
There follows the overnight train-trip, where the couple travels in separate
compartments for men and women. The tortuous trip by bullock-cart and the final
slow progress in palanquins borne on sweating human shoulders. Mohini's journey
into her unknown life may be seen as symbolic; her future, a probing into India's
ancient village-centred past, which is at once past, present and future of Indian culture.
The firebreathing train symbol of modern technology is first link to the countryside.

Jayadev, the scholar, dreams of Mohini as a link between past and future of India.
Will she not become a modern-day Maitreyi, the paragon of Vedic womanhood, wise
and strong, equal participant in the struggle to make life the meaningful and free? Her
mother-in-law is a symbol of what the Big House has stood for all through its long
history of many centuries. After the loss of Jayadev's father in a flood the widowed
mother has lived entirely for the Big House and the value that it represents. She is
austere, dedicated and strong as steel. The family eats only vegetarian food. This
causes hardship to Mohini who is accustomed to eating fish. When the ladies of Big
House are to go out anywhere, they have to use either a palanquin or a bullock-cart.
We have a humorous exaggeration of the rigours of life in the Big house in the report
which the cook makes to the Old Mother and the father on her return to Calcutta:

> The little mother (Mohini) had nothing but herbs to eat. The tongue pined for
> fish with a riverful of fish almost within the sight….. The little mother was
> worn with toil. There was no sleep for her at night for the scream of jackals,
> *hua-hua-hua*, the hiss of pythons, the wolf prowl of bands of robbers yelling
> *reh-reh-reh*! The sun was a bare man-height in the skies when the little mother
> must be up and doing. The woman of Behula mocked her city clothes and the
> mother-in-law was a tigress (*Music for Mohini* 173).

Jayadev's study of ancient lore has given him the idea that he and Mohini should be
like the ancient sage Yajnavalkya and his intellectual wife Maitreyi. He expects her to
sympathize with and to share in his scholarly pursuits and to give him the necessary
moral support to carry out his programmes of social reform.

> I want to make Behula a model village socially. Our political freedom is worth
> little without social uplift. (I hate the world!) That means struggle. If we win,
> as we must, Behula will be an example for all Bengal. In this difficult undertaking
> you, too, Mohini, have your part (*Music for Mohini* 170).

Mohini stands for life and therefore, rebels against the coldness and artificiality of the pattern sought to be imposed upon her. A crisis in Mohini's life comes, as well as in the life of the Big House, when Jayadev approaches the age of twenty-eight. An astrologer predicts that Jayadev will die an untimely death unless a child is born to him by them. The anxious mother asks Mohini to offer blood to the Goddess in a lotus leaf bowl so that she may be blessed with grandson. Mohini's sophistication makes her rebel. Jayadev comes to know and gives his moral support to Mohini. Jayadev stops her mother from doing the ritual, and happily it is also known that Mohini is already pregnant. At the domestic level there is complete harmony between Mohini and Jayadev.

Bhattacharya is a thinker-artist who not only watches closely the actual social events and embodying them in his novel, but at the same time suggesting to the society as it ought to be. There is not only criticism but protest in his novels which moves us by its ringing sincerity. He cannot help speaking out the truth but the manner in which he does it, is very artistic. He tells about his depiction of reality in literature:

> The creative writer's final business is to reveal the truth. He reveals it, unlike the philosopher, in no cold statement of dogma but only in terms of life, rendered through the device of dramatization (Bhattacharya, *The Aryan Path* 395).

Mohini becomes the link between city and village, in another words new and old ways. Jayadev, who is too much the scholar, he and his philosophy need a conscious agent to force it into action. At one point Jayadev muses: "Thought had to be related to action….. The philosopher had to step out of his temple of silence and lead his people across the valley of conflict to end social slaveries. Social slaveries were cactus growths that would renew themselves over and again unless the roots were cut, roots that were deep in economic bondage….. A hungry man could not be free in spirit" (*Music for Mohini* 185).

It is in the life experience of Mohini that the philosophy is brought into dramatic action. Mohini becomes the culmination of so many symbols of social upliftment as Malta Grover writes:

> Mohini, the heroine, is the bridge between the values of city and the traditions of the village, between sophistication and simplicity, lastly, between the modern and old-fashioned East (Grover 46).

Though frustrated in her ambition to lead glamorous life, Mohini does not give vent to her dissatisfaction. She is resilient by nature and soon overcomes her dejection. Though aware of her limitations, she endeavours to rise to the expectation of her husband, and even starts taking lesson from him in Sanskrit. "She knows that her married life can be peaceful and meaningful only if she adjusts herself to the wishes of her husband, shares his ideas and renders him positive help in the programme of social reconstruction. Thus, Mohini not only comes closer to Jayadev, but also rescues the back-ward, ignorant and illiterate rural woman from the darkness of orthodox living and shows them a glimpse of modern times" (Sorot 68).

Mohini starts teaching the womenfolk of Behula. The village women identify the young mistress of the Big House with themselves. They are influenced by the humane temperament of Mohini. She brings the Big House closer to the ordinary house of Behula. The greater shadow of her mother-in-law is always there. She is the ruthless past reincarnated. She eats with her left hand as she had dedicated her right hand to Shiva to bring the blessing of long life on her son. It is unbecoming for a woman to sing loudly in the hearing of others. Plain cotton saris, made on handlooms, are preferred to fine mill-made muslin. Even the style of her hair dressing is regulated by custom. The house seems to be permeated by the presence of the ancestors.

Mohini, the heroine of the novel, is symbolic of the new India, of the newly emerged free India as the voice of her father reminds her when she prepares herself for the blood-giving ceremony. Mohini's Marriage and the festivities accompanying the ceremony are symbolic of India, gaining freedom and the festivities in its wake. Her responsibility as the new mistress of the house, of the village Behula is similar to that India's wooing the village which comprises the real country. How Mohini is able to generate life and light in the Big House, which is socially decaying and stubbornly bound by iron-tradition, will show how far free India will be able to uplift and transform her villages socially? The city-bred and village-wed enlightened girl Mohini has to play a significant role in changing the face of backward Big House and the village. Her sister-in-law Rooplekha who unlike her is village-bred and city-wed emphasizes the role, their situation demands them to play in the reconstruction of free India.

Rooplekha tells her story to Mohini from her experience. By that way they share the common lot. They have been pulled-up by the roots. For Rooplekha, city has as little mercy for an alien as the country for Mohini. No more, no less. And Rooplekha tries hard to fit in city ways. Being a maid of the Big House, she had to be married to a youth of equal status. No one suitable was found in Bengal villages, so the mother gave her against her will to a city youth, a surgeon in a Medical College in Calcutta. She was just sixteen. Her husband's relatives came to see her, smart women with enameled faces and they gave her a look and cried ironically about her beauty and the old fashioned sari and blouse. They also laughed at her village inflection. In a word she was a savage for them and misfit. She had been vegetarian and in city she was expected to eat eggs, fish and meat. It was very hard for her to move with her face bare and mix freely with his friends.

Then she made up her mind and began her struggle. It was a strain to give up her ideas, her customs and manners, and adopt theirs. She had plenty of patience. She gave up her old modesty. She ate fish and meat though at first the smell and taste sickened her. But it was all worthwhile for her husband's sake. She could not let her down. She had to make her happy. She advises Mohini that she will have to adjust herself the other way about. She has to rid her mind of its cozy city furniture, as it were or else, there will be much ugly talk and scornful behaviour. Mohini is not able to understand the purpose of Rooplekha and sharply reflects her city idea that there should not be such bothering because according to her "city and village are apart.

Perhaps they should stay apart; perhaps this marriage is wrong. We girls suffer, not the man" (*Music for Mohini* 126).

Rooplekha, the village-bred, wiser and experienced girl, gives the basic message of their marriage to Mohini:

> Shall I answer you? We who're so wed serve some real purpose. It's as though we made a bridge between two banks of a river. We connect culture with culture, Mohini, our old Eastern view of life with the new semi-Western outlook. The city absorbs a little of the 'barbaric' village, the village absorbs a little of the 'West-polluted' city. Both change, unaware. They are less angry with each other. This is more urgent today than even before. Our new India must rest on this foundation (*Music for Mohini* 126-27).

Convent-educated girl Mohini feels herself very small in comparison to the village-bred but wiser girl Rooplekha as she never read such things at the school. Owing to her mother-in-law's sternness and the old world spirit Mohini sometimes feels sore about her behaviour. But with the passage of time she begins to realize that the Mother is not completely devoid of basic qualities: compassion and sacrifice. She, therefore, overcomes initial hurdles and develops a great love and sympathy for the old lady. The mother also realizes that it is the age of the young men and women with their new ideas and aspirations. Mohini feels proud of Jayadev and her mother-in-law when her mother-in-law tells the unfortunate famine afflicted Bengal. The large numbers of uprooted people thronged into Behula. The master of house did everything in his power to alleviate their suffering. He gave away all the rice in the granary and even sold away priceless family heirlooms to help the starving Kisans.

The novel, *Music for Mohini*, as was said in the beginning is the depiction of woman's sacrifice of her comforts for the sake of societal and cultural development of the nation. Even then the clear-cut message of the novelist makes it a novel that represents the rebuilding of free India and the reorientation of values by the sacrifice of woman by adjusting herself in oddities accordingly. The study represents how a woman adopts alien customs and traditions to make a promising society free from old fetters into freedom of mind and faith in fraternity.

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Partition and Women: A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's
Ice Candy Man

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Abstract

Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Ice Candy Man* (1989) is a standing example of the relationship between partition and women. It portrays a broad cross-section of Lahore society both before and after the city became a part of Pakistan. The narrative is in the first person, the narrator being an eight year old handicapped Parsi girl. The beginning and the end of the novel are highlighted with two epigraphs, through which the novelist expresses her earnest desire to work urgently to heal the wounds of partition and to give words to the tragedy.

Keywords: Partition, Trauma, Exploitation, Post-colonial, Epigraph.

> Mass scale migration, death, destruction, loss – no matter how inevitable Partition seemed no one could have foreseen the scale and ferocity of bloodshed and enmity it unleashed . . . still less could anyone have foreseen that *women* would become so significant, so central and indeed so problematic. (Butalia 188)

This declaration by Urvashi Butalia clearly states the widespread effects of partition of India on women's life. Indeed, women played a very crucial role since it was intrinsically related to the symbolic meaning their bodies acquired in defining the nation, its identity as well as their own identity. The conflicting and complex relation between womanhood and nationhood perfectly mirrors the Indian case. Cynthia Cockburn rightly opines, "Woman is [. . .] highly valued in nationalist discourse and often symbolizes the spirit of the nation [. . .] national movements transfix women as living boundary makers of the collectively". (Cockburn 43) The struggle of colonialism and anti-colonialism is said to be scripted on the body of women, mostly middle-class women. The Indian nationalists at the time of partition cast a new and collective female identity in which community and gender intersected with each other and these two elements collectively intersected with government. Though, the nation was celebrating the concept of

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"new woman" and she was defined as mother land and *Bharat mata*, but it is also true that they were sufferers of abduction and mass rape, rather "political rape". (Leonard 142) The communal crimes against women during partition, were carried out collectively and by extreme brutality evolved from the cultural and social settings founded on all-male and patriarchal conception of gender relations within and between communities. Rape of 'Other's' women became the most immediate way to strike, to lower the moral and to challenge their men and manhood. To attack 'Other's' women purity is to attack the honour of her whole community and ultimately her nation. The body of a woman was considered as a project or territory over which the affirmation of one's identity was fought in a battle in which weapons were sexual violence and abduction. Menon and Bhasin clearly synthesize the picture:

> The material, symbolic, political significance of the abduction of women was not lost either on the women themselves and their families, on their communities, or on leaders and governments. As a retaliatory measure, it was simultaneously an assertion of identity and humiliations of the rival community through the appropriation of its women. When accompanied by forcible conversion and marriage it could be counted upon to outrage both family and community honour and religious sentiments. (Menon and Bhasin 5)

This "shame-fear-dishonour syndrome" (Menon and Bhasin 59) forced hundreds of women to take their lives in order to avoid the humiliations of sexual abuse; as many were killed by their own husbands, fathers and brothers for the same reason. The abducted women entered "the realm of silence" and those who were killed by their family or took their own life, entered "the realm of martyrdom". (Butalia 208) This inevitability of rape leaves woman with the choice of committing suicide so that she could be accommodated within the narrative of the nation as a legitimate and pure dead citizen and those who survive rape are refused entry into the domestic sphere of the new nation because a raped and impure woman cannot be perceived as the vehicle of the family and nation. It forces Jasbir Jain to remark that "partition was inscribed on the bodies of women". (Jain 117)

The memories of partition are too hurtful to be told but, it can be stated that art, better than any other language can express the unresolved and untold burdens of the partition. A historian writes about the wars and the historical events, but a creative writer writes all the perspectives of the events and makes it approachable and comprehensible to the common man. Bapsi Sidhwa is one such writer who wrote about this important and difficult period of the partition in her much celebrated novel *Ice-Candy-Man*. Sidhwa says in "Why do I write?" "I have loved to commemorate in my fiction, about my concerns. That is the nature of writing, if you have things to say, you need no other reason to write". (Sidhwa 31) She as a creative writer has painted the details left by the historians, wrapped them with the factual details of the historical events with a coating of fiction and made the events interesting and appealable to the readers worldwide. While writing the novel, she felt that the Indians and Pakistanis still share the concern for partition. In an interview she states:

> One had thought we were done with it; the spiral of hatred that defined the new borders, the savagery that accompanied the partition of India. The British had gone . . . but . . . what is happening in both countries in the name of ethnicity, race and religion only signifies that the partition did not solve our problems. (Sidhwa 3)

Sidhwa also says that she thought that with the passage of time the two communities would forget this case and heal themselves but she was wrong, "neither in Pakistan, nor in India, nor even in Bangladesh . . . This hostility has to be dealt with". (Sidhwa Int. by Preeti 292) She felt motivated to write *Ice-Candy-Man* because she wanted her novel "to function as a recording of a particular history, hoping that one might learn a lesson from that history". (Sidhwa Int. by Rajan 13) Her narrative of partition speaks about the silence, horror and loss of men and particularly, of women. She shows how the decision of partition played havoc on the life of ordinary people whether they were Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. The partition tormented their lives, identities, citizenship and nationalities into pieces and left them crippled with no alternate, but to see each other with suspicion and hatred. The novel opens with the lines of famous Urdu poet Mohammed Iqbal which is a metaphor of writer's consciousness:

> Shall I hear the lament of the nightingale, submissively lending my ear?
> Am I rose to suffer its cry in silence year after year?
> The fire of verse gives me courage and bids me no more to be faint.
> (Sidhwa 1)

Sidhwa ends her novel also with the lines of Iqbal. She quotes him at the beginning of the last chapter of the novel:

> Give me the wine that burns all veils, the wine by which life's secret is revealed,
> The wine whose essence is eternity,
> The wine which opens mysteries concealed.
> Lift up the curtain, give me power to talk.
> And make the sparrow struggle with the hawk. (275)

Through these two epigraphs, at the beginning and the end of the novel, Sidhwa expresses her desire to work urgently to heal the wounds of partition and to give words to the tragedy. But, the task is not easy as her feeble voice (the sparrow's) has to struggle against the numberless voices of official discourses (the hawk) which make people's suffering speechless to utter the secret and mysteries. On the last page of the novel she writes, "The guard . . . squats by Ice-Candy-Man, gleaning wisdom from his comment on life and its ways and the wayward ways of God and men and women". (277) She deliberately writes about 'women' to show that the structure of the society is not neutral; it needs man and woman to work smoothly. Allotting a visible space to woman is enough to declare that her novel of partition is gender-conscious.

Ice-Candy-Man can rightly be defined as a *bildungsroman* or a post-colonial *bildungsroman* as it deals with the growth and education of its female protagonist and

first-person narrator, Lenny, a handicapped Parsi girl - from her childhood to adulthood. In this novel, Sidhwa presents various nuances and complexities related with a decision of political pragmatism through Lenny, a child narrator and chronicler. Lenny looks at characters belonging to different communities through the prism of her own Parsi sensitivity. The child's narration lends a kind of authenticity to the novel. *Ice-Candy-Man* also presents the horrifying details of cruelty, human loss and dislocation, with a subtle irony, witty banter and parody and forces the readers to desist from maudlin sensitive reactions, and to concentrate more on the inscrutability of human behaviour. The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* deserves to be ranked as the most authentic and best on the partition of India. In the novel, Sidhwa has captured the turmoil of the times, with a brilliant combination of individual growing up pains and the collective anguish of a newly independent but divided country. Seen through the prism of a marginalised minority girl-child, it focuses on the deteriorating communal climate in pre-partition days. "Lenny's naiveté, her privileged position, and her religious background lend her version of partition a quality that other novels about this tempestuous period in Indo-Pakistani history lack". (Ross 183) Protected by her religious background and her parents' status, Lenny is not directly affected by the contumelious situation of partition days, but she keenly observes and comments on the events happening around her. The tone of a reporter which she adopts for recording the events or commenting on them enhances the poignancy of the emotions which are linguistically underplayed. Recalling the nightmarish experiences of her own time days, Sidhwa tells to Feroza Jussawalla:

> When I was a child living in Lahore at the time of Partition, my maiden name was Bhandara, which sounded like a Hindu name. After most of the riots were over, a gang of looters came in carts into our house thinking it's an abandoned house. They were quite shocked to see us and my mother and everybody there. At that time our Muslim cook came out and said, 'What do you damn people think you're doing? This is a Parsi household,' and they said, 'we thought it was a Hindu household,' and they went away. I decided to write a story about Partition because this scene was vivid in my mind. (Cited in Singh 37)

Sidhwa describes Lenny's learning about sexuality, community and nation and her view point over partition not as a political moment but as an accident which disturbs the personal life of people around her. On the narrative level, Lenny works as the 'fire of verse' in Iqubal's poem. She is not particularly an attractive child. She tells, "I am skinny, wizened, sallow, wiggly-haired, ugly". (Sidhwa 22) We are also told that she is dark-complexioned in comparison to her fair-skinned brother. "It's a pity, Adi's fair and Lenny so dark. He is a boy. Anyone will marry him". (81) But, the deformity of her foot helps her gain attention of the adult world and contributes to the singularity of her vision. Isabella Bruschi marks a very interesting similarity when she asserts:

> The deformity of her (Lenny's) foot, which will be cured in time, works as an allegory of the nation that will gain independence, thus being healed of the impairment of British Rule; Lenny herself remarks that polio makes her feel

involved in politics, when her doctor, Col. Barucha, blames the English for having brought it over to India . She is shocked . . . painful treatments, makes her more receptive and sympathetic to the torments of others. (Bruschi 179)

In an interview, Sidhwa declares, "Truth, nothing but truth can lead to a lot of harm, too". (qut. in Bahri 228) As a child always tells truth, Lenny's innocence leads to the tortures of her Ayah's life. She works as 'Ayah' for the polio-infected girl Lenny in the Parsi family of Lahore around the time of partition. From the pre-partition India to the post partition Pakistan; her subjection to the sexual abuse remains the same. The ice candy man is the reporter and the linking element of the plot. Queen Victoria's Garden is a type of confluence where all the suitors of Ayah meet (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian). Being a Parsi and loyal to her motherland, she praises Jinnah and criticizes the hero of Indian independence, Mahatma Gandhi. Men of all religious communities attempt to harass her sexually, which becomes evident when the eight years old narrator Lenny says:

> The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stub handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretences to look her with lust. Hawkers, cart drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes… (Sidhwa 3)

In the long line of Ayah's tormentors, Ice-candy remains at the forefront. Under the pretext of love and affection, he attempts to win her sexually even in the public parks. His fingers try to "massage Ayah under her sari". (19) Sidhwa tells that "things love to crawl beneath Ayah's sari. Ladybirds, glow-worms, Ice-candy man's toes". (19) Ayah's body itself becomes a synecdoche of the broken land, desired by all and ravished by those who courted and loved her. She stands for all those women who suffered the agonies of pre and post-partition, on whose bodies disputes were held and nations were built. Butalia throws light on the reason that why women and their sexuality were central to the preceding of partition:

> Throughout the nationalist movement one of the most powerful symbols for mobilizing both women and men had been the image of India as the mother ... if the severing of the body of the country recalled the violation of the body of the country recalled the violation of the body of the nation-as-mother, the abduction and rape of its women, their removal from the fold of their families, communities and country, represented a violation of their bodies as real – not metaphorical – mother. (Butalia 189)

There is no doubt on the fact the ice candy man loves Ayah, but that love or affection changes into the communal hatred after the partition of India. Trainload of corpses comes from across the border and people divide in terms of religious beliefs. This division gets performed in the bodies of the women. Ice-candy man who loves Ayah from the inner core of the heart and who even kills her lover to get her, suddenly forgets his feelings for her, when he knows, "A train from Gurdaspur has just come

in…Everyone in it is dead. They are all Muslim. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny bags full of women's breasts!" (Sidhwa 149) He loses his temper and decides to take revenge from Ayah by violating her body. She hides to save herself from being abducted. Imam Din tries to save her, saying, "she left Lahore". (179) But, Ice candy man emotionally blackmails Lenny saying,

"Don't be scared, Lenny baby …I am here…I'll protect Ayah with all my life! You know I will …I know she is here. Where is she?" (182) Believing his words Lenny says, "On the roof or in one of the godowns…." (182) Pleading to her emotion, the mob discovers Ayah and "They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet- that want to move backwards- are forced forward instead". (183) Continuing the narration, she further says, "the men drag her in grotesque strides to the cart and their harsh hands, supporting her with careless intimacy, lift her into it". (183) After the abduction, Ice-candy man takes her to "Hira Mandi…the red light district" where she works as the dancer and her kidnapper plays pimp for her. (240) She is taken to the place where "the men pay them [girls] to dance and sing …to do things with their bodies". (240) He first uses her body to acquire the financial benefits and later on converts her into Muslim and marries her. Against her will, she goes through the forced conversion, marriage and different forms of sexual abuse. Godmother, having found Ayah married to Ice–candy man, invites him home and asks, "why do you live in Hira Mandi? It's the red light district, isn't it? It's not a suitable place for a family man". (246) Sensing that ice candy man plays pimp for her even after the marriage, she outshouts, "You permit her to be raped by butchers, drunks and goondas and say she has come to no harm?"(248). She further says, "Is that why you had her lifted off-let hundreds of eyes probe her so that you could marry her?" (248). She knows that ice candy man forcefully marries her and lets her "be disgraced!" (249) She finds him "treacherous, dangerous and contemptible" (249). With this realization, she commits to recover Ayah from Hira Mandi and restore to her family. She even tells him, "Restore her to family in Amritsar". (250) The Godmother commits to imbue her "with a sense of worth" and restoring her "to the social acceptability". (Menon & Bhasin 192) So, she chooses what Ayah chooses for herself. Ayah often repeats, "I want to go to my folk". (263) She admits, "whether they want me or not, I will go". (262) Responding to the demand of Ayah, Godmother takes the help of police administration and recovers her from the brothel. She succeeds in bringing her to the camp, the first step for restoration to the family. They transform themselves into the social workers who in the "time of great social dislocation… found it possible to slip through the cracks and exercise their agency on behalf of the women whenever they could". (Menon & Bhasin 201) Due to the exercise of their agency, Ayah "has gone to her family in Amritsar". (Sidhwa 277)

Another woman, Hamida in *Ice-Candy Man*, also represents all those victims of partition, labelled as the fallen women. She, after the Ayah of the family gets abducted, comes to work as Ayah for Lenny. After being sexually abused, she searches work in Lahore rather than going back to her family. Lenny knows from her Godmother that "Hamida was kidnapped by the Sikhs…she was taken away to Amritsar. Once that

happens, sometimes, the husband – or his family won't take her back". (215) It's not her fault to be kidnapped and raped. But the family regards it as the honour killing and sends her back instead of restoring her to the family. The family refuses her at the moment she needs the family most. Godmother tells Lenny that "some folks feel that way – they can't stand their women being touched by other men". (215) By listening this, Lenny recalls when Himat Ali once forbids her to touch the sparrow that had tumbled from its nest on her veranda: "Let it be, he'd stopped me. 'The mother will take care of it. If our hands touch it, the other sparrows will peck it to death.' 'Even the mother? She asked. Even the mother' he'd said". (215-16)

When Hamida gets raped, she even does not try to go to her family, thinking that "They are better off as they are. My sister-in-law will look after them. If their father gets to know I have met them he will only get angry, and the children will suffer. Moreover, she never blames her husband for not coming to recover her. To our surprise, she says, "He is a good man,' …it's my *kismet* that's no good…We are *Khut-putli*, puppets, in the hands of the fate". (222) Hamida blames her fate for her suffering but makes no claim for space in the family. She takes her status of the fallen woman as given and commits the violence against herself. When Lenny grows old, she starts developing thoughts. For her growing up is also a sorrowful consciousness of reality. She asserts:

> I feel so sorry for myself – and for Cousin – and for all the senile, lame and hurt people and fallen women – and the condition of the world – in which countries can be broken, people slaughtered and cities burnt – that I burst into tears. I feel I will never stop crying. (217)

Bapsi Sidhwa restores voice to all women – no matter what religion or community they belong to, no matter whether they have lost their honour or struggling for their honour. She has given the example of Ayah whose real name is Shanta, that means 'peace' (mentioned only once in the novel). She is the representative of Hindu women while Hamida which means 'nice nature' symbolizes Muslim women. What Sidhwa wants to show is that women of both the communities suffered a lot at the hands of both Hindu and Muslim men at the time of partition. Ayah moves towards her people and home. Sidhwa doesn't write what happens to her in Amritsar, but she becomes the symbol of re-establishment of honour. Being a woman, Sidhwa is more capable and effective in highlighting the pain and plight of partition not only on woman's body but also on her psyche. While giving words to her thoughts, she says, "A woman's experience can only be translated by a woman" (Sidhwa Int. by Mmaka 03) and "some books can only be written by women" (Sidhwa Int. by Rajan 13). She, like Elaine Showalter, believes that women have played a prominent role in shaping the cultural and political identities, but instead of getting respect they have become an instrument for men to play with. Women were the worst sufferers of partition and Sidhwa has tried her best to give a bold voice to their sufferings and no doubt, she is quite successful in her efforts.

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A Critical Evaluation of the Politics of Patriarchy and Gender Role in Mahesh Dattani's Play, *Where There's a Will*

–Tribhuwan Kumar*

Abstract

The present paper is an exhaustive study of the treatment of patriarchy and gender issues in Mahesh Dattani's debut play *Where There's a Will*. Patriarchy and gender are the major themes in the plays of Mahesh Dattani, which he has used as a significant tool to give a new face to Indian English drama. Dattani has picked up the highly practical issues of Indian society which has been faced by majority of people. Almost all issues taken up by Dattani in his plays are radical, unconventional and contemporary. He has prepared the stage for the treatment of realism.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Gender identity, Theme, Realism, Gender role.

Mahesh Dattani, the Sahitya Academi Award winner playwright, is known to all not only for his modern dramatic style but also for his thought provoking dramatization of social consciousness. There are various reasons which set him different from other contemporary Indian playwrights in English. It is because he deals with burning social issues about gender identity, sexual identity including the *hizra* community and child sexual abuse, patriarchy, hypocrisy HIV- positive people, religious intolerance, and universal themes of contemporary Indian family.

Patriarchy is a major pre-occupation of Mahesh Dattani which automatically leads to another of his concern, gender. He has used the theme of patriarchy and gender in a number of his plays. Dattani's debut play *Where There's a Will* written in 1986 was first performed by Playpen at Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore on September 23, 1988, as a part of the Deccan Herald Theatre Festival. It is a fine entertaining comedy

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exposing the follies and prejudices of the middle-class Indian society – a topic repeatedly dealt with in his works. Commenting upon the quality of the play, Sita Raina says:

> Joy is the essence of life and I have always believed that theatre should exude delight. *Where There's a Will* is such a play. It is not only thought-provoking and introspective but also provides an evening of pure entertainment (Dattani 451).

Though the play is cast in comic muse, it is not devoid of seriousness. It is amusing as well as thought-provoking, entertaining as well as introspective. This is what makes Dattani a successful playwright.

Dattani has quite deftly handled the theme of patriarchal dominance in this play. The plot revolves around the life of a rich businessman, Hasmukh Mehta and his family. Hasmukh Mehta dies in the first scene itself and then stays on the stage as a ghost. He ruled his household when alive, and has attempted to do so after his death. This he does through the device of his will. The patriarch is disliked by his wife, daughter-in-law and his son. It is to be noted here that the victim of patriarchy is not only woman, but also man. Dattani raises a few questions about the traditional ways of defining ourselves. "One is not born a woman; one becomes one", (Hall 98) says Beauvoir. In the light of this, the sexual construct of Ajit is in question. He is not considered manly enough in the play. Asha Kuthari Chaudhuri says,

> Dattani raises a few unlikely questions about the sexual construct that a man is. The stereotypes of gender roles are pitted against the idea of the artist in search of creativity…. (Chaudhuri 67)

Owing to his patriarchal attitude, Hasmukh "forgoes an opportunity to improve his interpersonal relationships" (Chaudhuri 67)**.** This is the worst outcome of patriarchy. Our society is a witness to it.

By handing over the control of the family to Kiran Jhaveri, a mistress of Hasmukh till the son, Ajit is forty-five as per the words of the will, does Dattani mean something? Probably yes. He gives a hint to the end of patriarchy and the beginning of a new era in which there will be no patriarchal dominance and which will lead ultimately to the improvement of interpersonal relationships. Kiran Jhaveri, though unwanted and hated in the family of Hasmukh owing to her illicit relationship with Hasmukh, the head of the family and she, being nominated as the Trustee of Hasmukh's property after his death forges an opportunity to improve her interpersonal relationships with Hasmukh's wife, son and daughter-in-law whereas Hasmukh forgoes. Asha Kuthari Chaudhuri rightly calls her "the epitome of Dattani woman" (Chaudhuri 30). The patriarch is gradually dwarfed and diminished to the point of insignificance.

When the play begins, Ajit, the son of Hasmukh is found talking to his friend on the phone about his plan to invest in new business ventures, but it is rejected by his father calling him "bankrupt up here (points to his head) the day he was born. God just forgot to open an account for him." (Dattani 456) Ajit feels the pinch of patriarchal dominance and cries:

> I mean that you want to run the show, play Big Boss as long as you can. Or as long as God permits. And when all of a sudden, you are 'called to a better world', you will still want to play Big Boss ….(Dattani 460)

It is interesting to note that Hasmukh plays 'Big Boss' even after his death through Kiran Jhaveri. Ajit wants his own identity, but his father is sure that he would not be able to make spaces for himself without his protection and supervision. He calls Ajit a 'big zero'.

> If you are you, then you are nowhere. You are nothing just a big zero. No matter what you do, you'll remain a zero. Over the years you'll just keep adding zeroes to your zero. Zero, zero, zero. On their own, the zeroes don't mean a thing. But if there's a number one standing before all those zeroes, then they really add up to a   lot (Dattani 461).

Neither does Hasmukh have any love to spare for his wife, Sonal nor for his daughter-in-law, Preeti. He condemns his wife for her inability to provide him a good and healthy married life. His accusation is "twenty five years of marriage and I don't think she has ever enjoyed sex. Twenty-five years of marriage and I haven't enjoyed sex with her" (473). Hasmukh takes it as his right to display his dreams in which there is no space for the desires of others. Hasmukh's statement about his wife strikes a tone of sarcasm and sexual colonialism. For him a faithful wife is as good as a faithful dog: "Then I should be a happy man. I've got a loving wife who has been faithful to me like any dog would be" (Dattani 475).

Hasmukh describes his daughter-in-law, Preeti as "pretty, charming, graceful and sly as a snake" and sums up as a girl who "has an eye on my money" (Dattani 456).

Beena Agrawal rightly says, "Hasmukh's consciousness of his authority, his contempt for the simplicity of his son, his mockery of the submissiveness of his wife prepares a very ridiculous image of patriarchal authority" (Agrawal 109).

The relationship between Hasmukh and the members of his family is the relationship between 'the ruler' and 'the ruled' and thus focusses on the matrix of colonisation.

Towards the end of the first scene, Hasmukh dies in bed where his wife discovers his dead body a few minutes later. Death finds its meaning when tears are truly shed, at least one true drop of tear. But nobody really grieves over the death of Hasmukh owing to his domineering attitude.

In the second part of Act I, the ghost of Hasmukh appears on the stage to make an assessment of his doings. He lingers on in the house wandering through its walls, occasionally sitting cross-legged on the dining table and keeping on passing acerbic comments on the actions and the attitudes of the other living characters, though unheard by and invisible to them. Comically, even a member of the audience is not spared Hasmukh's ghost's not-so-veiled criticism: "Your shoes need polishing" (Dattani 496). As is evident here, the audience becomes an essential part of Dattani's dramatic scheme and gives his plays a realistic touch.

Hasmukh intends to govern the fate of his family members even after his death through his will. According to the will, after the death of Hasmukh, a Trust is to be formed and administered over by his mistress, Kiran Jhaveri as the Trustee; his son will not inherit his father's money and property until he is forty-five and he will have to compulsorily attend office everyday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. under the official tutelage of Mrs. Jhaveri. And finally and most insulting to all the members of the family, the will stipulates that his mistress will move in and live in his family till the Trust be dissolved twenty-two years hence.

The appearance of the ghost of Hasmukh is to see how the will works as a tool for patriarchal dominance even after his death, but ironically it works as an eye-opener to him. He encounters the inner conscience of all those characters whom he dominates in his life time. The idea of Hasmukh's invisible presence is an excellent device of introspection as Sita Raina says: "To be the watcher of one's self is to make intelligent changes in this life" (Dattani 451).

The ghost of Hasmukh comes to know about the mind of his family members and also of Kiran Jhaveri, his mistress. They speak ill of him and thus their true colours are brought to his notice. Ajit groans, "He has ruined us! The old man has taken us for a nice ride" (480). Preeti, an obedient daughter-in-law emerges as a cunning and calculative woman. She says to Ajit:

> He was a slave driver, your father! He almost drove me mad with his bossy nature. He succeeded with your mother. But I didn't let him do that to me. How did I manage? Simple, I gave in, I simply listened to him and didn't 'protest' like you! I knew he didn't have long to live. I thought; why not humour him for a few days? After he's gone, we can have all the freedom to do what we want, and also all the money. I almost succeeded. He would have left everything to us if you hadn't 'protested'. That was your mistake! (501-502)

Sonal, Hasmukh's wife calls him 'a village buffalo' who did not "understand about other people's feelings" (507). Even Kiran the man's mistress confesses to his wife at a candid moment: "He was so insensitive to other people's need" (507), "Yes, Mrs. Mehta. My father, your husband – they were weak men with false strength" (508) Kiran's worst reaction against Hasmukh and patriarchy is yet to come: "Hasmukh didn't want a mistress. He wanted a father. He saw in me a woman who would father him. . . Men never really grow up!" (510)

Kiran establishes a good understanding with the family members of Hasmukh. All the characters are liberated from the stranglehold of their past. The patriarch sees the palace of patriarchy demolished. It is followed by his self-realization:

> No. I don't think I can enter this house. It isn't mine … any more. I will rest permanently on the tamarind tree. They are not my family any more. I wish I had never interfered with their lives. They look quite happy together. With Kiran sitting in my place. Oh, I wish I had been more … I wish I had lived (515).

This critical study thus places Mahesh Dattani as a well-recognized post-colonial Indian English dramatist. He has dealt with a very serious theme of dominance of patriarchal system in an entertaining way. It cannot be denied thus that Dattani has applied a new thought in the realm of traditional thinking.

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Blake's "The Little Black Boy"

–Chiramel Paul Jose*

Abstract

As it should have always been with regard to approaching any of the works of William Blake's 'Composite Art', a three-fold approach of viewing the text of the poem side by side with its illuminated painting and in the context of the Bible is followed in this study of "The Little Black Boy", too. Dwelling on the critical heritage of this attractive song, an attempt is made in this study specially on the reversal of the roles of the white boy and the black boy in realizing the core principles of human love which breaks the barriers of caste, colour and creed. William Blake, using his skilful touches both with the lines and the images and with the strong allusions to the biblical themes of love, very effectively connives at the supreme importance of bearing with any human beings irrespective of caste, colour and creed which is the basis for peaceful and healthy human co-existence. In the sheepfold of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Shepherd, children of all colours, castes and creeds flock together and any sort of superiority on the basis of colour, caste or creed is purely a creation of the privileged class and not at all reasonable or compatible with Christ's world view.

Keywords: Blackness and Whiteness, Gift from God, Colour of the Soul, Realization, Eschatology.

Blake's "The Little Black Boy" was considered by Coleridge to be the best of his songs. As can be proven from 'Coleridge's Letter of 12 February 1818 to C.A. Tulk' (Griggs 1959), he gave this poem his symbol of highest value (O-) among the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, adding a 'Yea O- + O- !'. A great number of critical analyses have been carried out on this poem. No one today accepts the mother of this poem as a speaker of the radical Blakean wisdom. Her advice to her son resembling that of a catechism teacher, is essentially that his blackness is not a bereavement of light but a kind of special gift from God to enable him the better to bear the beams of love. When all the souls have "learned the heat to bear" they will come out from the 'shady grove' of their bodies and rejoice "round the tent of God like lambs." Black and

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white will no longer be there in such a heaven, she argued. Wicksteed (1928) asserted that this naivete and childlikeness of the story is "the pure wisdom which love and generation can teach us." But he also saw wisdom in the black boy's acceptance of his inferior position, and it is "a realization that his very blackness may be made to render service to the tenderer soul that seems so much nearer the light" (Wicksteed 1928: 113).

However, since Wicksteed's pioneering commentary in 1928 the commentarial tide has turned drastically. In an elaborate note Gleckner (December 1982) gives a list of various interpretations of this poem by various authors (205 n). Bloom (1963) pointed out that the black boy's word "bereav'd" in line 4 "has the force of 'dispossessed' or 'divested'; the myth of the Fall has entered the poem" (43). Further, "having been instructed in confusion the little black boy ends in the state. By his own logic, he ought to say that the English boy will be like himself at the last, but instead he gives us the opposite notion, the pathos of unfulfilled wish" (Bloom 46). We should not overlook the fact that the poem's final stanza is entirely in the future tense, as we notice from Geoffrey Keynes edition of Blake's complete writings:

> I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear,
> To lean in joy upon our father's knee,
> And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
> And be like him and he will then love me (*K* 125).

All the lines of William Blake in this article will be quoted from this edition and indicated by K followed by the concerning page number.

It is interesting to take note that a sort of apparent debate was going on among the Blake scholars about this poem. Comparing the two plates of this song (See Figures 1 & 2: The Little Black Boy (Plate 9 & Plate 10); retrieved on 12 June 2015 from: http://theworksofwb.blogspot.com/2011/01/little-black-boy.html), Leader (1981) argued that the Christ-figure in the second plate is that of the institutionalized religion. The Christ-figure here is seemingly oblivious of the black boy's presence as he is intent on focussing "all his attentions on the white child" (114-15). Leader also comments that this plate tends to be a plate of Experience, whereas "the first plate of the poem remains rooted in Innocence" (113). Analysing the last lines of the poem Manlowe (1977) too counts this poem as a poem of Experience:

> In these last stanzas, therefore, the black boy, encouraged by his mother's example goes one stage further than she does, in producing a wish-fulfilment picture with himself after death nearer to God than the white boy - . . . Now to be like him, the white boy, is not to have to pull himself up to the white boy's level ('white as an angel') but to enjoy pulling the white boy upto his. 'And be like him, and he will then love me': this is really what the black boy wants - not God or Heaven but being loved by his fellowman, and being like him, no longer isolated. . . .

In short, the poem is not about innocence, but about a deluded and self-deluding innocence which refuses to face its pain, and in so doing enacts hypocrisies attributable to Experience. It is a pathetic poem, one in which we feel for both mother and child, and yet know that what is concluded is corruption, lilies that pester (116).

Figure 1: The Little Black Boy (Plate 9)

Critics like Robert Gleckner and W.J.T. Mitchell, however, consider this poem as a poem of Innocence itself. Gleckner (December 1982) tries to answer the questions raised by Harold Bloom and Zachary Leader and brings out the poem's parasitism on the Bible (205-13). Before going to the poem's biblical allusions, we must have a glance at the two plates of the poem.

In plate no. 9 (See Figure 1 above) the first plate of this poem, an African mother and her child is sitting beneath a tree. The African mother is distinguished not only by her 'blackness' but also by the 'uncivilized dress pattern'. Unlike the English, she is

clad only to the waist. The mother asks the child to "look on the rising sun: there God does live" (L 9). The child, however, is pointing to the position of noon day sun. Below the picture is the text of the poem. In plate no.10 (See Figure 2 below) the second plate of this song, after the last

Figure 2: The Little Black Boy (Plate 10)

stanza of the poem, almost literally that stanza is reproduced in painting. Christ with the shepherd's crook is seated at the Eastern side, the place where the rising sun is. The black boy is seen to be bringing the white boy to Christ. Apparently, his education in love is complete or sufficient now and he is standing to "stroke his silver hair" during the encounter. Indistinct lambs are seen in the background. But from our foregoing analyses we can view the children as lambs and Christ as the Good Shepherd. Near them the living water that provides eternal life is flowing. In Revelation 21, St. John "saw a new heaven and a new earth," (21:1) and the Lord said to him, "To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life" (21:6). In the next chapter John says that the Lord "showed me the river of the water of life,

bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . and on either side of the river, the tree of life" (22:1-3). Probably in the poem's illustration (See Figure 2, above) Christ is sitting under the tree of life and the river of life is flowing from the throne of the Lamb, i.e. Christ Himself. Erdman (1970) has pointed out that the bending of the willows above Christ is emblematic of Christ's suffering as well as of his protective mercy (50). The same kind of bending willow trees can be seen also in Blake's painting "Our Lady with the Infant Jesus riding on a Lamb with St. John" which gets symbolic value as on the Cross, before His death, Jesus entrusted Mary and St. John as mother and son to each other (See Figure 3, below; retrieved on 12 June 2015 from: http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/object.xq? objectid=but409.1.pt.01&vg=biblicaltemperas&vcontext=biblicaltemperas&java=yes).
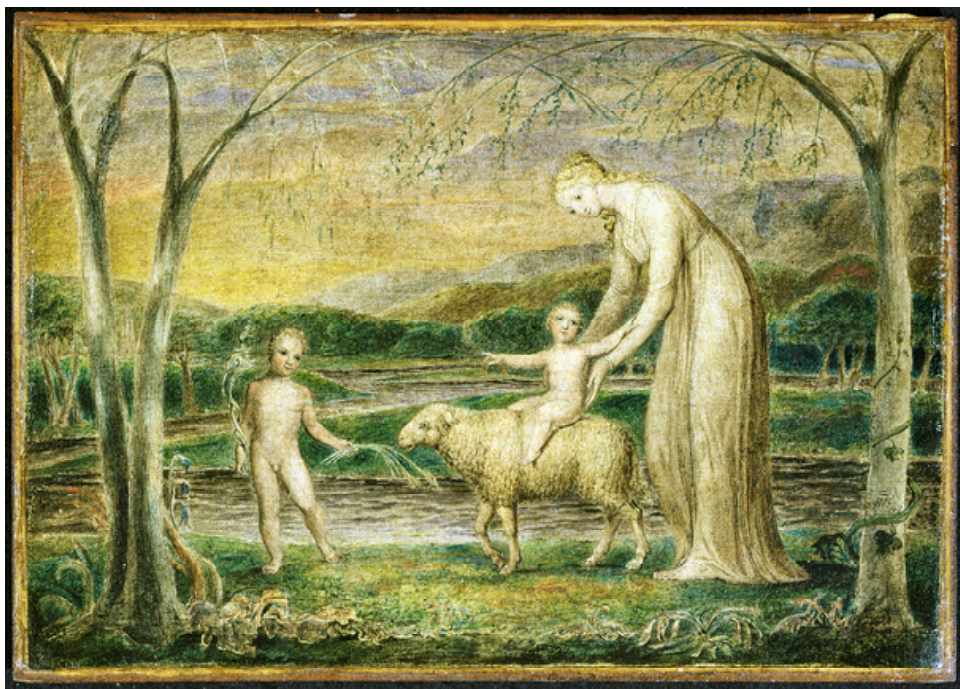
Figure 3: Our Lady with the Infant Jesus riding on the Lamb with St. John

Bearing the two plates of the song in mind, we will try to interpret the poem. Evidently, the first two lines of the poem: "My mother bore in the southern wild, / And I am black, but O! My soul is white" (lines 1-2) give us the black boy supplying the reader with information about him and narrating to us the facts about him. But as Glazer (1980) has observed, his apparent self-acceptance and his informational stance are interrupted and revealed as partial by the middle of the second line. "Instead of another "And," there is a disjunctive "But," functioning both to stop the flow of the line for the reader, who is made to pause at the "O!," and to interrupt the ease of the black boy's description of himself: "And I am black, but O! my soul is white."

Just as the boy's intuition of "I-ness," his ego identity, is presented as distinct from his sense of his own soul, so we, as readers and as viewers, are faced with a split between what we see and what we are told is real, and the unseen reality-the whiteness of the boy's soul-is implied to have greater value than that which is seen" (228).

Gleckner (December 1982) is inclined to think that the Black boy's wisdom is not that of the mother; it excels her wisdom. The boy perceives that "his soul is white". His apparent blackness is not causally attributable to a loss of light. Moreover he is only 'as if bereaved of light'. Gleckner observed that the little Black Boy is in light, because he loves the English boy. To support this, Gleckner is dwelling on two scriptural passages from I John 1:5,7 and I John 2:9-12. John's characterization of God is what Blake employs precisely in the imagery of "The Little Black Boy". "God is light and in him is no darkness at all"; and "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other" (I John 1:5,7). And more tellingly,

> He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now.
> He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.
> But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes
>
> (I John 2:9-11).

The verses quoted above are taken as they are in Gleckner's article and slightly variant from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Gleckner points out that there is a reversal of these roles in the poem by Blake: "the little black boy as the 'brother' who 'abideth in the light' because of his love, and the white boy as the brother who 'is in darkness' because he does not love" (Gleckner, December 1982: 209). It should be noted that W.J.T. Mitchell (1970) also had earlier pointed out this reversal of role because of the black boy's love and the white boy's lack of love in his "Blake's Composite Art" (12-13). But it is Gleckner who pointed out the biblical background to this.

In the view of the mother, speaking through the black boy's mouth, her son will be 'like' the white boy. But the black boy knows he is already 'like' God. It is not merely 'will be like'. He knows that he and his brother, the white boy, are the sons of God. This, he can understand because he loves. He has learnt to bear the beams of love whereas the white child apparently has not. The white boy, because he does not love, is "walking in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded him" (I John 1:11). That is why Blake paints the black boy as guiding the white boy to the Christ-figure. Moreover, in the vision of the Last Judgment described in *The Four Zoas*,

All the slaves from every Earth in the wide universe. / Sing a New
Song, . . . & the song that they sung was this. / Composed by an
African Black from the Earth of Sotha (Night the Nineth, ll. 682-86;
K 375).

The child considers himself, 'as if bereav'd of light' (L 4). In the Bible anywhere there
is no direct bereavement of light. But commenting on *Samson Agonistes* ll. 83-85,
Douglas Bush (1965) writes: "Samson's being cut off from light suggests his alienation
from God." (521) The black boy, however, is not experiencing such an alienation.
Milton's Samson is missing the inward light. The black boy's mother in Blake's poem
is missing the inner light. We are missing this innate light. "Only the black boy himself
knows (imaginatively, without ratiocination) that his soul is white, that 'inward light'
does put forth a visual beam - and that his 'appearance' of blackness. . ., 'the real
darkness of the body' is but appearance, an 'as if'" (Gleckner 211).

The mother consoles the black boy:

"For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,
"The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice,
"Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love & care,
"And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice (*K* 125).

The negro woman's words echo Revelation VII: 13-15 where Christians who have
been persecuted on earth will be dressed in white robes in heaven and will serve God
who will spread his tent of protective presence over them. At first sight this biblical
passage seems to confirm the mother's idea of other worldliness. But her 'tent' image
reflects other biblical passages as well. In Exodus 25: 8-9, the Israelites are enjoined
to make a tent or tabernacle so that God can dwell among men. Tents are the
Tabernacles of the Lord, which is often referred to in the Old Testament (e.g., Psalm
84). In John 1:1, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (or rather, he
pitched his tent among us). Both these passages, (Exodus 25: 8-9, and John 1:1)
suggest a sort of a realized eschatology, an eschatology which is realized here on
earth. The tent-pitching incarnate Word is here not to supply the Negro woman with
liberation from materiality. Rather, by his very act of incarnation, by the very fact of
his dwelling among men, the incarnate word implies God's inextricable involvement in
human history. Freedom must be sought in this world and time, not in the other world
and eternity.

The presence of the Tree of Life and river of life in the plate 10 of this poem
supports the above conclusion. For the little black boy, the full realization dawns that
Christ is not up there and out there. He is dwelling among us. The bending Tree of life
is acting like a tent or covering beneath which are Christ and the children. Guiding the
white boy and allowing him to stand nearer to Christ and feel Christ tangibly, the black
boy reveals the full transformation. He knows that God is in him and not out there.
'Touch' or 'no touch', his God is inside himself. He is not having a sense of separateness
which Leader sees "mirrored in the troubled expression on his face" (112).

The final stanza again alludes to Galatians 3:27-28. Consider the lines, "Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear, / To lean in joy upon our fathers knee."

Blake certainly derives the theme of universal brotherhood implied by 'our father's knee', which in the figure is Christ's himself from the description of both Christ and mankind as sons of God in the letter to the Hebrews:

> For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one
> origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren. . . .
> Here am I, and the children God has given me (Heb. 2: 11-13).

Similarly the lines, "And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair, / And be like him and he will then love me;" echo the removal of discrimination in any respect mentioned in Galatians, where we read:

> For, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
> There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there
> is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus (3: 27-28).

The black boy has assumed a far superior role to his white counterpart and in Christ's presence black and white no more matter. Black and white are contraries to be reconciled and in Christ we are all one. At least in one copy of Blake's painting, as noted by David V Erdman (1975: 51), Christ's face is a mixture of the black boy's blue black and the white boy's pinkish white reconciling both. Symbolically they become Christ's "one flock, one shepherd" (John 10: 16).

Having discussed the poem in detail, I rely on a quotation from Myra Glazer (1980: 226) in order to wind up this study: "When "The Little Black Boy" is viewed after "The Lamb," however, such an orientation is absent. "The Lamb" embodies a child's apprehension of God, nature, and the self, and to turn the page is to encounter another's. That is, it is the religious life of two boys which is being compared; the relationship of child to mother is subordinated in this context to that of child and God. "The Lamb" and "The Little Black Boy" playoff one against the other to reveal the profoundly holistic, yet ultimately partial, vision of the one, and the painful divisions of the other".

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Myths and Legends in the Literary Works of Lord Alfred Tennyson

–Jamal Ahmad*

Abstract

Lord Tennyson, the leading Victorian poet of English literature is hailed today not only a representative poet delineating the doubt and dilemma of his age, but also a great poetic figure who has discussed extensively the myths and legends of the past in most of his poems. He is very much successful in including Greek and Roman mythology as the basis of his poetry. His purpose is to give some universal philosophies through the speeches of his characters. Hence we find both mythology and philosophy in his poetry simultaneously.

Keywords: Myths, Legends, Philosophy, Classical poem, Concept of womanhood.

Tennyson's love for the past is visible in his poetry of adolescence. Between his eleventh and fourteenth year he translated the first ninety three lines of Claudian's "De Raptu Proserpine". He wrote a number of poems on the mythological themes and old English legends. Through these myths Tennyson found an objective basis for personal expression. His happiest use of myths or legends generally involved a reinterpretation of their original significance in terms of some private and highly personal insight. Once he said, "when I write an antique.I must put it into a frame something modern about it. It is no use giving a mere reshuffle of old legends" (Tennyson 13).

"The Sea-Fairies" published in 1832, is about Ulysses and his crew sailing past, the island of the Sirens on their way to Ithaca. The source of this poem is drawn from Odyssey and is also influenced by Croker's Fairy Legends. The poem begins with the song of the Sea-Fairies. Tennyson from the beginning, despite the tussle between the will power of the sailors to resist and the wiles of the Sea-Fairies to entice with their 'shrill music' which reaches the 'weary mariners' in the middle of the sea as they

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muse, 'Whispering to each other half in fear' (I.5). The poet provides through them beautiful images of a remote and romantic world.

The Sirens in "The Sea-Fairies" are quite different from that of Homer. Tennyson's 'Sea-Fairies' are "innocent creatures, almost angels in appearance who invite not to sin, but to a carefree holiday". But Homer's Sirens, with their tricky mesmerizing tunes, enchant the mariners on the high seas and once they have the unsuspecting sailors on their shore they kill them. Tennyson changes Homer's seductress Sirens into "Sea-Fairies" who, with their flirtatious song, offer a carefree life to the mariners.

The sharp clear twang of the golden chords somehow fails in stopping the sailors. The mariners who are resisting the temptation of the green isles in "The Sea-Fairies" willingly land on the Lotos-Isle in "The Lotos-Eaters" (1832). This poem is drawn from Homer's Odyssey. Tennyson takes a classical story and adapts it to represent a mood of the modern mind—the tendency to lose, in dreaming, all touches with the actualities of life. The weary mariners, sailing home to Ithaca, from the Trojan War, come to the island of the Lotos plant. Drugged into inaction by eating the plant, they sing together a choric song of sorrow and pain that come with toil and the joy they had in that magic languor. The dominant tone is elegiac (Daiches 998).

Tennyson has given a beautiful landscape to his classical poem which is put into harmony with the soft oblivion which the lotos brings, so the air is languid, the moon full faced, the sheets of foam of the streams slumberous. Even the snow on the peaks is old, the amber light dreams and the waves curve tenderly upon the land and the leaf and apple upon the trees ripen to fullness and fall. Thus nature too seems to have eaten the lotus. Even the end of the poem expressing the Epicurean conception of the gods—brings Olympus down into harmony with the indolent, indifferent lotus eaters.

The tired sailors step on the island and completely surrender to the pleasure of the fruit. "The Sea-Fairies" and "The Lotus-Eaters" appear to be not just modern reconstructions of certain situations from a wider canvas of Greek mythology; they are poems of escape from the demands of a world of reality into a world of art, of losing oneself in art.

The lotus land does not offer life but spiritual death and Tennyson has taken pains to depict it as a waste land where these men live in a trance 'with tired eyes', their voices thin like 'voices from the grave", (1,34) completely cut off from family and country. Their past has become a heap of broken images only dimly remembered. Thus in "The Lotos-Eaters" Tennyson has expressed the hollowness of the claims of 'Nirvana'. Retreat into dream world is unable to give the desired peace and contentment. The weary mariners resolve to remain in the lotus land to lead a life of inaction.

Thus the "desire for escape is there but the poet is aware of the dangers of such a state of mind" (Tennyson 160) by abandoning practical responsibilities the lotos eaters lose the sympathy of the poet. They can only muse, brood and live in memory.

"The Sea-Fairies", "The Lotos Eaters" and "The Hesperidins" may be regarded as poems of different versions of the Muses and their homes. The lotos eaters, comparing themselves to the mythical gods, become indifferent to the travails of making. They

enjoy the privileges—such as the music of the Muses that are the sole domain of the gods. To the lotos eaters the lotos Island appears a celestial adobe.

The sea in "The Lotos-Eaters" is violent. The sea symbolizes life. The mariners signify the poet sailing on the sea of life. Their reaction to the floating towards them from the shore is a symbolic depiction of the gradual change in the poet's attitude towards art. In "The Sea-Fairies" he resists the agnatic attraction of the world of art under the influence of the Apostles, while in "The Lotos-Eaters" he willingly submits to art.

If "The Sea-Fairies" and "The Lotos-Eaters" are about the strong attraction of art, "The Hesperides" is an attempt to understand and explicate it. "The Hesperides" strikes Tennyson's recurrent note of longing for a vanished or unattainable paradise and explores the persistent theme of the inhuman fascination of isolation and retreat. The poem was first published in the volume of 1832 and then, for reasons never given, was suppressed by Tennyson. It was first reprinted by Hallam Tennyson.

The 'East' and 'West' had a special significance for Tennyson. The golden apple has the virtue of being the treasure of the west. Tennyson connects the west with images of the sea, of growth and paradoxically of death. The antithesis to this condition he conceived as the land of dawn, bold and strong, full of activity and strife-the world of everyday life which is always plotting to steal the magic fruit. Tennyson's motto in associating the song of Hesperides with the sacred fruit connotes a connection among the artist, his art and his inspiration. Stange makes an important statement with regard to this poem. He writes:

> …in a sense Tennyson's will remained divided. In his more popular work there is an attempt either to suppress his conflicting desires for social engagement and for the life of art, or to resolve his conflict in favour of "the whole life" – to treat the withdrawal to a palace of art or to a lotos-land as an aberration…of what the people's poet came to feel was the devil's side in this continuing debate (732-743).

The song of the 'Sea Fairies' is an invitation to the mariners for a carefree life. While in "The Sea Fairies' the tempters resist the temptation, in "The Lotos-Eaters" the mariners themselves sing this song emphasizing forgetfulness. Thus the first two poems of this group stand for an escape. In the third choric song, which is sung by the three sisters, we have the theme of isolation and selfishness. The apple is to be protected so that Hercules should not steal it for the sake of humanity. Thus selfishness or escape from reality is the themes of the three choric songs, which form a part of Tennyson's early poetic career. In fact, all the poems of this period (1830 & 1832) are concerned with isolation and escape.

The poems comprising the second group reflect the poet's own concept of womanhood. The salient features of these poems are that they are not about maidens, consumed with passion of love, but are wives who are victims of infidelity, thoughtless overindulgence, or some intrigue of their husbands.

Tennyson was greatly influenced by his mother. The image of his mother as a 'remarkable saintly woman' projected in "Isabel", continues to be a model for his other women based poems. The impact of the woman who "devoted herself entirely to her children"[5] (Tennyson: *A Memoir*: I 17-18) was stronger on him. Tennyson himself feels: "the world hath not another (though all her fairest forms are types of thee. And thou of God in thy great charity)./Of such a finished chastened purity" ("Isabel", II.38-41). "Hero to Leander", "Oenone", "Semele", "The Death of Oenone" are poems the prevailing factor of poems. They depict the agonies of women.

Tennyson through Oenone's child tries to highlight the concept of womanhood and marriage. (*Tennyson*: *Christopher Ricks* 65) Oenone stays in the 'wooden Ida' to pine for her past life and desires to 'talk with the wild Cassandra, who had prophesied great discord and war. As an aggrieved wife she thinks of only one option, i.e. death. Oenone's taking just one option that of suicide is in a way an upholding of the institution of marriage. Tennyson has changed the story to the needs of the modern times. He points out that the foundation of character, of life, of Government, of true power, of the glory and strength of a country lies in 'self-reverence', 'self-knowledge', 'self-control'. Paris stands for a man wavering between the various values of life or ideals which he is going to follow. Hera stands for power, Athena for wisdom and Aphrodite for sensuous pleasures and physical beauty. There are three broad types of men—those who run after power, those who seek knowledge and wisdom in life; and those who indulge in pleasure of the physical senses. Tennyson favours moral law which asks a man to know and do the right with fear of consequences. Paris opts sensuous pleasure and this course brings disaster to Paris, to Oenone and to Troy, Tennyson takes up the subject of Oenone once again, after a lapse of about fifty years, in "The Death of Oenone".

Tennyson slightly deviates from the Greek myth in showing Oenone's immolation. Quintus Calabar's Oenone, without uttering a word, muffles up her face with her mantle and springs quickly into the fire. Tennyson's Oenone does the same, but it is significant that she utters the word 'husband' as she leaps on to the flaming pyre and 'mixes' herself with him and 'passes in fire' (I.106).

Tennyson's handling of the same theme was to uphold the institution of marriage. "The upholders of a mantel bond between Paris and Cenone were Ovid and Quintus Smymeus; Marriage it would appear was not a purely Victorian or Tennysonian invention" (Bush 222-23).

Tennyson's mythical poems on women reflect two personalities of a woman—motherhood and wifehood. Oenone, though the betrayed and aggrieved wife fights up till her death in upholding the institution of marriage. Semele, the simple woman and mother rejoices at her children's future attainments.

Like "Semele" and "Oneone", "Demeter and Persephone" too is a poem about a woman, a mother, who wanders anxiously for her stolen daughter. Demeter is an aggrieved mother whose husband himself is responsible for the abduction of their daughter. The poem was published by the poet when he was alone octogenarian. His

brother Charles who resembled him so much in spirit, his son Lionel and many of his best friends were dead. The poet was aware of his own approaching end.

Tennyson considered Demeter one of the most beautiful types of womanhood. Through this myth the poet has expressed the mysteries of love and life, earth and human destiny. The poem pictures a heart-rending scene of a mother, searching for her daughter over hills and dales. Demeter is in her daughter's loving embrace as she listens to her tale of woe after she (Persephone) had been kidnapped by Aidoneus. Finding that her mother is still afraid of the 'black blur' of earth left by the closing chasm through which she had been abducted, she touches the spot lightly with her foot, and it is covered with flowers like the rest of the field. Till line 125 the poem is a strongly emotional account of the grieving mother's search for her lost daughter. Here the poem could have ended. Demeter, having temporarily regained her daughter, once again blesses the fields; the rhythmic seasonal alternation of death and birth can begin. But probably, thinking of the very recent loss of his son Lionel, Tennyson is unsatisfied by the simple pagan narrative.

Thus Tennyson's Greek mythical heroines are solitary female figures. The lonely female for the poet is the symbol of his aesthetic self and the unconscious mind. Through all these solitary figures Tennyson is projecting his own unconscious mind.

The poems like 'Ulysses", "Tithonus" and "Tiresias" may be grouped as poems with Greek mythical heroes as protagonists. These poems stemmed from Tennyson's soulful cogitations on the loss of his friend Arthur Hallam. Hallam died on Sept. 15, 1833, at Vienna, and the news of his death reached Somersby on October 1833. "Ulysses" was composed soon after Tennyson got the news of Hallam's death and the other two were also, initially, composed round about the same period, i.e. 1833. But "Ulysses" was first published in 1842, "Tithonus" in 1860 and "Tiresias" in 1885.

Tennyson depicts the conflict between Tiresias and the general public of Thebes, as well as within the psyche of the sage himself, between his handicap of blindness, old age, and hence his helplessness on the one hand and his desire to serve his country on the other. It is in the theme of Menoceceus sacrifice that "Tiresias" can be regarded as a complement to "Ulysses" and "Tithonus".

The multifaceted, Greek mythical poems can be treated as the poet's objective correlative(s) for braving the struggle of life. The prolonged inner struggle of the poet, "to be or not to be" is recorded in them.

Apart from the classic myths Tennyson had been strongly attracted towards the Arthurian legends too. He, as a boy had read the Arthurian legend and worshipped Arthur as a hero. A proof of which is the two early versions— "The Epic" or "Morte Darthur" and "Sir Galahad". However, the appearance of the legend first came in verse in "The Lady of Shallot" (1832). He kept on working, expanding, re-shaping and re-arranging the legends for more than half a century. It was only in 1855, that he could give a final shape to his idylls.

Tennyson through his imagination weaves into the stories a certain aspect or spirit of modern thought. The world of castles, brave and chivalrous knights, fair

ladies, quests and enchantments offers an irresistible, contrast to the urban materialism, struggle for wealth and spiritual doubts that oppress the Victorian conscience. The poem proceeds seasonally from spring in "The Coming of Arthur" to winter in "The Passing of Arthur" which represents the rise and fall of a civilization, in which corruption prevails. This decline is caused by passion.

A survey of all the mythical and legendary poems of Tennyson shows that the poet often chose those themes, which were not fully developed. Only with such themes he could have full play of his imagination and could show the modem relevance of these old myths. Thus Tennyson turned to the Greeks not for the sake of beauty of Greece alone but also for the sake of ethical power of these stories. He did not just try to find a refuge in ancient times but brought the thought of the past to brighten the present. Nevertheless, the didactic note in these poems has not overshadowed their artistic beauty. In this way, Tennyson has brought a harmonious balance between the ethical and the aesthetic aspects of these poems. He expresses both their sensuous beauty as well as their universal lesson. Tennyson not only improved but increased the significance of the classical poems he wrote. In his hands these myths are the vehicle to express his personal convictions, his doubts and his beliefs.

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Rage Turns to Re-vision: A Pattern in Gerontological Concern in W.B. Yeats's Later Poetry

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Abstract

In the poetry of W.B. Yeats, one comes across the poet's pre-occupation almost with the totality of human concerns in life and it is notable that reality for an artist, as per the poet, lies in the tension between two ideal opposites of experience. A pattern of dialectics thus characterises the whole poetic world of Yeats and what he aspired for as an artist, was a 'Unity of Being' which would combine the ultimate forms of Realities such as life and art. In the complicated search of the poet, old age with its debilities also receives a due yet problematic treatment in Yeats' later poetry. The present paper seeks to establish how Yeats' initially angry and dismissive reaction to age as something deterrent to his search for an ideal vision of 'truth,' gradually develops first into a spirit of acceptance and then into a discovery of its sharpening effect on his passion and muse with which he feels to have realised his dream of achieving a unity in the sphere of realisation and artistic creation.

Keywords: Ideal, Dialectics, Unity, Being, Angry, Dismissive, Discovery.

> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have; [...].
>
> (Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* V, III, L-24-26)

To a sensible reader, a keen gerontological concern, an obsession with the smothering impact of crippling old age and a subsequent foretaste of finitude on the creative self of a prolific artist and poet like Yeats, forms a major tissue in the later poetry of W. B. Yeats. It is a fact that a similar kind of concern may almost naturally please/plague the aesthetic self of an artist or writer of any age who being blessed or cursed with longevity, negotiates the crisis in his or her own way. In some cases like that of, say,

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a romantic and visionary bard such as Rabindranath Tagore, old age with its limiting effect on the body is nevertheless welcome to the poetic self or soul as an inevitability but with its natural attributes such as, a keener insight into the mystiques of life and death or a perception of ensuing rehabilitation of the soul into its true abode as designed by the almighty. On some other occasions, the otherwise crisis may urge philosopher poets like Tagore and Aurobindo of the East or Tennyson of the West, to adopt the mantle of a prophet to address humanity in general.

But for a poet like W.B. Yeats, such a concern delves deeper into the tangled bines of his consciousness which encompasses a diverse range of interest and vision such as, mystery, the occult, myth and magic, history, culture, mysticism- the imbroglio of 'realities' and themes that had occupied the poet all along his career, before and after his troubled love experience with Maud Gonne. This paper seeks to focus within its limited compass how the abiding concerns of decrepit old age and death monitor the poetic response in the later poetry of W.B. Yeats — from an initial mood of contempt to an arduous mode of creative contemplation edging by implication, to the poet's spiritual proximity to his coveted ideal – 'a Unity of Being.'

Interestingly, the problem relating to the clash between the dying flesh and the heart (which is the seat of emotion) visits the poetic self without any ostensible sign of synthesis at first and this becomes conspicuous right from the beginning of the fourth and the most prolific phase of Yeats' poetry. The crisis now poses a serious dimension more than ever, in connection with his poetic realisation. What is important is that, this problem of age and encumbrance is also treated in the matrix of the same dialectical pattern of logic which characterises the entire poetic oeuvre of Yeats. In the later poetry of Yeats, old age instead of providing any immediate solution, serves as a necessary contestant, a part of the anti-self countering his creative self as poet.

In the title poem of the section *The Tower* (1928), readers note a vituperative penchant that pleads for an outright dismissal of old age as an 'absurdity' attending his active imagination; as a loathsome mismatch that by implication can be compared to a petty thing such as a kettle tied to a dog's tail. The imagery of the dog (animal spirit) and the pejorative term 'absurdity' drives home the repugnant attitude of the old poet to decrepit old age. The most popular and representative poem of Yeats in this phase "Sailing to Byzantium" too, offers a derivative discourse on old age and its hindering spell in relation to the artistic search of a poet who aspires initiation into the eternal world of art renouncing once for all the world of nature which harbours this life comprising flesh and blood. Old age with its attending ills is as cadaverous or 'paltry' as a scarecrow and to the comic intelligence of the poet acquired in the self-distancing mode peculiar to artists, this incongruous old age is simply not more than a laughing stock- 'a tattered coat upon a stick' (Line 10). The very urge for the soul's deliverance from the coils of an imposed curse of age and senility generates the poetic journey which finds Byzantium as the spiritual haven of the soul for offering a semblance of reality for an artist in the unity of the social, aesthetic and religious life of people belonging to Byzantine civilisation.

Significantly, the scathingly dismissive attitude to old age in *Sailing to Byzantium* gradually subsides to a sort of reluctant acceptance in later poems and the rage arising out of age distils a keener power of perception (Never had I more/Excited, passionate, fantastical/ imagination, nor an ear or eye'- *The Tower,* Lines 5-7) though the poet any how fails to alter the inevitable feeling of mortality — 'know that what disturbs our blood/ Is the longing for the tomb', [...] ("The Wheel", Lines 7-8). In poems such as "A Man Young and Old", "Oedipus at Colonus", "All Souls' Night" in *The Tower*, and "At Algeciras" in *Last Poems* (1936-39), an obsession with the end of life emerges as the prime emotion for poetic motivation. This thought continues and takes a strikingly symbolic dimension in another seminal piece "Byzantium" (in *The Winding Stair,* 1933), concurrently with Yeats' poetic search for a system that can combine even the arch contraries such as life and art in the form of an image that embodies for an artist, a 'Unity of Being' which ideally seeks to encompassboth the warmth of life as well as the eternity of art. For the soul of the old poet imaginatively transported to the holy city after death, the confusion regarding the identity of art as to whether it is autonomous or dependent ('star-lit or moon-lit dome', Line 5) is counterbalanced by the unwary resurgence of life's vitality with conflict and turmoil ('dolphin torn [...] gong-tormented sea', Line 40) as the substrate of all art. Critic Georgio Melchiori traces a strong element of death awareness in the meditative and stylistic nature of the poem:

> "Byzantium" is a contemplation of death— or rather the ideal state of death. While the *Sailing* was in the eight-line stanza form common to many meditative poems of Yeats, "Byzantium" adopts the metre that Yeats used only in his most deeply felt poems of death and birth, [...]. (Rai 1991: 139)

The obsession with the thought of death as a sequel to crippling old age receives a philosophic quietude of reflection in poems like "Vacillation" (in *The Winding Stair),* "A Prayer for Old Age" (in *A Full Moon in March,* 1935)*,* "An Acre of Grass" (in *Last Poems*) and obviously, "Meru" (in *A Full Moon in March*), a poem with a slight thematic variation. Though many of the poems coming under different anthologies published in later phase of Yeats' poetic career (as has been mentioned in brackets) reflect the old poet's zodiac range of interests including an unflinching celebration of the flesh and frank poetic exaltation of youthful passion familiar to the readers, yet the fleeting shadows of passion can hardly suppress the strong undercurrent of a compelling awareness of old age and finitude. For example, though the poet's vacillation between the polar antimonies such as a life of sense and that of the spirit concludes with his option for the former since the poet is committed in the way of Homer whose art rose out of the raw material of natural, mortal life, the poem "Vacillation" nevertheless opens with a reflective acceptance of physical death: "A brand of flaming breath,/ Comes to destroy/ All those antimonies/Of day and night;/ The body calls it death" (Lines 3-6).

This perceptive maturity of Yeats' complex relation with and attitude to the problem of ageing is strewn throughout the fabric of verses written in the far end of his career though interestingly again, this does not figure as the sole poetic concern except in such pieces as "All Souls' Night", "Meru" and "Black Tower" (*Last Poems*). In the

later section of the poem *The Tower*, the emerging vision of a poised existential stance accrued after a life-long devotion to philosophy can sneer at the decrepitude of body caused by old age. All warring antimonies fade like clouds in the dusky horizon or in the drowsy notes of birds fading into night. In another poem "Meditations in Time of Civil War" (from *The Tower*), the erstwhile troubled conscience welds itself into an abstract joy of realisation which spares room for neither 'self-delighting reverie /Nor hate of what's to come, nor pity for what's gone, [...]' (VII, Lines 29-30).

The theme of a 'deeper insight' wrought by old age can further be traced in another poem "The New Faces" (from *The Tower*) where the new born light of realisation makes 'the night overbalance the day' (Line 6) and the 'living seem more shadowy' (Line 8) than the shadow roving 'the garden gravel' (Line 7) of the poet's tower. This trend of mystic revelation even amidst the evanescent phases of perception acquires a wider dimension in the poem "All Souls' Night" which serving as an epilogue to Yeats 'A vision', celebrates a ritual party at the end of Yeats' strenuous labour in building his 'System.' The poem opens with a summoning of the souls of all friends, mentors and persons placed in occult lore to take part in a conference. The soul of Florence Emery reveals to the poet the euphoric dance of the soul when liberated from carnal fetters in order to merge with the Imperishable Being and thus attains deliverance from the cycle of birth and death what in Indian mysticism is known as *moksha*.

> ... in some figurative speech
> By some learned Indian
> On the soul's journey. How it whirled about,
> …………………………....................................
> …………………….......................................
> And there, free and yet fast
> Being both Chance and Choice,
> Forget its broken toys
> And sink into its own delight at last. (Lines 52-60)

The poem concludes with the confirmation of a transcendental knowledge of both the torment of doomed souls in hell and the ecstasy of the blessed in heaven, wound round the poet's mind like the 'mummy cloth' round Egyptian corpses. Similar kind of spiritual complacency of realisation in the old poet also permeates some poems in *The Winding Stair* such as "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" and "Death", though the question of the ironic stance central to Yeats, the poet, continues to be felt as before. In the former, the Platonic argument of soul for rejection of human life and contemplation of heavenly bliss is repudiated in Self's option for love and desires of the ageing body which paradoxically triumphs over the ultimate liberation of the soul from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth as assured by Soul. The poem "Death" posits a higher grade of realization in the old poet which reveals the attitudinal difference with regard to death in animals and men. While death may occur as an accident to the intelligence of animals; men on the other hand, have the capacity to look before and after and thereby weave a tapestry of myth and fantasy around death such as those of

after-life and the mystic maze of death and re-birth etc. in which the Soul dances with ecstasy in the wheel of time or eternity which is earlier envisaged in "Sailing to Byzantium" as comprising 'Of what is past, or passing, or to come' (Line 32). Being wiser than animals, man, in the mature realisation of the poet of *Death*, 'casts derision upon/ supersession of breath' (Lines 9-10) known as death.

In the poem "At Algeciras— A Meditation upon Death" too, the old poet with his keener insight into reality, perceives 'a greater glory in the sun' (Line 13). "Meru", a memorable poem, further marks an advance on the spiritual maturity in Yeats. The 'meru' in the poem stands for The *Himalayas,* a traditional retreat of Indian mystics who have renounced the world in search of truth and who through their austere measures or *sadhana* ('snow and winter's dreadful blast/Beat down upon their naked bodies', Lines 11-12) gain the insight necessary to view under the facade of civilisations, only the fleeting show of illusions or *maya* wrought at the divine command of *Bramhan* or the Imperishable Being. The idea of the Absolute here may correspond either to the *Advaityan* philosophy or Buddhism, and in either case, to facets of Oriental mysticism which is beyond the reach of Western philosophy. The dark sort of wisdom in this poem ('caverned in night', Line 10) gestures to the destiny of physical reality as void and this seemingly corresponds more to the Sanskrit concept of '-*neti'* (or nihilism, meaning- not here) as propounded by the philosophy of *Advaitya*. The poem bears out not only the old poet's interest in Indian mysticism but also his close contact with Indian saints and philosophers such as Purohit Swamy and Mohini Chatterjee among others.

Yeats' *Last Poems* display poetic reflection upon a diverse range of issues such as a cyclical theory of history ("The Gyres"), the artistic worth of tragic gaiety ("Lapis Lazuli"), Greek statuary ("The Statues"), etc. etc. Yet the fact that his obsession with the problem of age constitutes one of the major strains of his poetic sensibility in spite of the encyclopedic range of his reflections, becomes obvious in "An Acre of Grass", one of the richest lyrical harvests of Yeats' poetry of and about old age. This poem dramatises the speaker's intense urge at 'life's end', to use the quietude of old age (symbolised by 'picture', 'book' and 'healthy exercise') as a vantage point in order to explore emotions of the kind of ideal opposites and thereby discover the 'truth' of experience lying in between two extremes: - 'loose imagination' (Line 9) and 'mill of the mind' (Line 10). The following extract from one of Yeats's letters tells the readers more of an old poet's revelation of some paradoxical source of inspiration than of his desperate attempt to defy the impositions of age/time upon his poetic self:

> A poet, when he is growing old, will ask himself if he cannot keep his mask and his vision without new bitterness, new disappointment. Could he, if he would, knowing how frail his vigour from youth up, copy Landor who lived loving and hating, ridiculous and unconquered, into supreme old age, all lost but the favour of his Muses? Surely he may think now I have found vision and mask, I need not suffer any longer. He will buy perhaps some small old house, where, like Ariosto, he can dig his garden [...]. Then he will remember Wordsworth withering into eighty years, honoured and empty-witted and

climb to some waste room and find, forgotten there by youth, some bitter crust. (Rai 1991:176-77)

To counter the quiet and peaceful stalemate of old age, the poet as if finds his anti-self in adopting the mask of Lear or Blake or Michael Angelo like whom, he could also finally explore with a 'frenzy' peculiar to those old masters, the shroud of mystery to unveil the face of 'truth.'

Paradoxically, the 'old man's eagle mind' (Line 24) in "An Acre of Grass", the harvest of the poet's vision at old age, may serve as an apology (though in its own way) for the poet's frank and too bold a treatment of the body and sexual energy in his last poems, much to the aversion of a fair majority of critics. However, it is undeniable that poetry after all springs from the emotional recess of an artist and in this free literary world, there can never exist any fixed norm based on the so called propriety of choice according to one's age, as to decide the source of inspiration for a poet. Regarding his overt celebration of youthful vitality as a major constituent in his poetry of old age, Yeats clarifies his stand in his four-line poem "The Spur" (from *Last Poems*):

> You think it horrible that lust and rage
> Should dance attention upon my old age;
> They were not such a plague when I was young;
> What else have I to spur me into a song? (Lines 1-4)

Taking cue from the above quotation, it can be safely inferred that by now, it is for certain that the poet has come a long way from his earlier mood of outright rejection of and hatred for old age and as if in a bid to make the best of a bad bargain, he just slightly adjusts his angle of vision so as to discover an untapped resource or poetic potentiality in the sufferings of old age — in the bouts of illness, ebbing passions of the flesh and it is physical sufferings that paradoxically serve to sharpen Yeats' intellect and imagination to work as the subject for his 'song'.

The variegated spectrum of reflections on death, the ultimate destiny of self and soul, an astute awareness of the inevitable with its paraphernalia, flare into a beacon-light of farewell particularly in two of his *Last poems* — "The Black Tower" written just a week before the poet's death (Jan. 21, 1939) and "Under Ben Bulben", Yeats' self-chosen epitaph which being not chronologically the last poem though, brilliantly records Yeats' poetic testament. In "The Black Tower", the poetic vision is set in seeking to explore the mysteries shrouding death though with some 'haziness' as critic V. Rai has rightly observed in his book (1991:207). The expectant and anxious wait of the feudal guards of Black Tower (which is under the threat of capture by inimical forces) for their lord absent for some time ; the visionary account of Sidhe (the Irish God of Wind) blowing into the bones of the dead standing upright in graves; a strong implication of legendary associations of kings placed in similar predicaments (such as Cashel of Ireland or Arthur of Britain) as pointed out by critic Rai (1991:207); — all strongly suggest a theme of death and regeneration and the wind imagery evokes in the readers that of Shelley's West Wind which like spring, quickens the germ of life (in arid nature) in the form of bright blossoms with rosy hues.

The other poem "Under Ben Bulben", before it retrospectively slurs over Yeats' childhood extravaganza in Sligo and exhorts poets and sculptors to contribute to their respective culture and civilisation, opens with the poet's faith in the immortality of the soul and its power of resurrection after death. The sages of 'Mareotic Lake' in the opening lines refer to hermits of The baid (in "Demon and Beast" from *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, 1921) or Shelley's "Witch of Atlas" who like St. Anthony, were gifted with the insight into reality of things. The last line of the first stanza 'Spoke and set the cocks a-crow' (Line 4) usher in a new beginning after man's life-long journey between 'his two eternities/That of race and that of soul'(Lines 14-15). The poetic journey thus having been generated by a yawning sense of death, now skims over the gist of the poet's diverse reflections such as — the necessity of a dialectical nature of experience for a creative artist (a theory underlining Yeats' own poetic credo); his desire for the regeneration of European civilisation with exalted form and order of artistic creations; enrichment of Irish poetry by young poets in the trend set by Yeats etc.etc. Finally, the poem concludes with a grand epitaph addressed to visionary beings such as Sidhe (Rai 1991: 214) who in the image of 'Horse man,' will perhaps cast a 'cold' glance upon the extreme forms of reality - life and death (since he has taken both within his strides) — the thoughts of which were sought and explored life-long by the poet to be hammered into his chosen ideal— the 'Unity of Being.'

What has been spelt out in the epigraph taken from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has a sort of faint yet ironic relevance to Yeats' case. The qualities of experience as natural allies to old age which Macbeth has deliberately spurned for his unwarranted ambition as a matter of choice and now wistfully regrets for; as if fail as a matter of chance to offer content to the Muse in Yeats which grows younger with his ageing as the poet has categorically stated on different occasions.

Critic C.M. Bowra observes that in his last poems, Yeats "... is no longer torn by the conflict in himself between the man and the poet; he no longer wears what he calls himself 'Mask' to present himself to the world" (Chatterjee 1962: 135). Prof. Bhabatosh Chatterjee has rightly observed that Bowra's opinion is untenable since in poems of Yeats' later years, 'antimonies still exist' (1962: 135). The present paper has carefully sought to steer clear through the warring antimonies and trace how an initially violent reaction to age first lends a keener edge to poetic sensibility and leads it to a mood of retrospective exploration of the types of similar experiences of past artists and mentors like Blake, Timon or Michael Angelo where the poet can re-locate his stance within a wider spectrum of artistic experience so as to re-evaluate human experience. In a way, initial rage against age breeds a craze for creation in Yeats which in turn finds the crevice of 'truth' in the canvas of life where all the antimonies such as youth and age, beauty and the base, body and soul provide for the confused medley of emotions and passions of life that offers the matrix of all art. The theme is aptly summed up in the poet's artistic commitment made in the following excerpt from his "Circus Animas' Desertion" (in *Last Poems*): "I must lie down where all ladders start/In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart." (Lines 39-40)

One simply wonders to see how the 'eagle mind' of the old poet finally manages to detect in old age more a text for poetic paean than a pretext of personal pain.

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Incredible Dedication and Adaptability in Dalvir Singh Gahlawat's "Wall of Trust"

–Suman Yadav*

Abstract

Dalvir Singh Gahlawat is a burgeoning distinguished voice in Indian English poetry. He is the artist of feelings, experiences, and nature. He is very close to nature and man. In his poems he describes and understands human nature in different conditions. He portraits the pictures of the so called modern society where we see the peak of luxuries and lack of love, trust and loyalty. He is a writer of a number of books on literature as well as Indian Police System. His book, *Smile from the Veil: Collection of Poems* (2014) is fully pregnant with fecund and innovative ideas. The poems portray the real pictures of life. In today's competitive self-centered world where each and every person is trying to get physical comforts, it seems that the poet, beyond the above, observes the importance of inner feelings of trust. In his beautiful poem "Wall of Trust" he has presented problems of life with notable path of solutions i.e. incredible dedication and adaptability.

This paper tries to delineate the importance and weakness of 'Trust' through his poem "Wall of Trust" wherein the poet shows that 'Trust' is too weak to stand on the surface of loyalty, honesty and dedication in this "world of flatterers and money makers". Trust can be shaken by the outer forces if it is not protected from the flattery and "Yes-man-ship". However, in order to make it so strong, it requires to be nurtured with confidence, incredible dedication and adaptability. It requires victory over negativity and outer upheaval. It is the very truth of life that one has to go and go towards the path of adaptability by the way of incredible dedication without any hesitation in order to survive for long in this self-centered world as incredible dedication and adaptability are the true intelligence of human kind.

Keywords: Burgeoning, Fecund and innovative, Self-centered, Negativity, Confidence, Incredible dedication and adaptability, Nurtured.

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Introduction

When you want to tell the taste of sea water you do not have to explain every single drop of water of the sea but you explain only one drop to tell the taste of whole sea water. Similarly a writer picks up one incident from the society through which he generalizes the problem of whole society in which he lives. Dalvir Singh Gahlawat's poem "Wall of Trust" tells about the nature of society regarding trust on which the pillar of progress of any organization/establishment/department, creativity of any person, empowerment of leadership is based. The poem "Wall of Trust" has taken from the anthology *Smile From The Veil: Collection of Poems*. Like every poem of the collection, "Wall of Trust" has also a background. The hard cover of the anthology reveals that the poet is a Police Officer where flattery and trickery are common phenomenon among the police personnel from top to bottom and there is absence of trust and loyalty. Personnel have to be victimized by the off door policy of higher officers, therefore everybody remains under "Dog Loyalty". Through this poem, the poet wants to change the existing things not by fermentation but the power of his pen because you never change things by fighting the existing reality but by a new model that makes the existing model obsolete. When the poet joined his office there was a lack of trust, and rumours of dishonesty and disloyalty were observed here and there in the surroundings as the poet himself says in the very beginning of this poem:

> Entered into an edifice
> on 22nd November, 2002
> It was wrecked and dilapidated
>
> > ("Wall of Trust" 1-3)

After checking the trust level in police culture, the poet wanted to change the existing model through incredible dedication and trust. The poet started to build a 'wall of trust' as he considered the trust as a cardinal tool to promote creativity, conflict management, empowerment, teamwork and leadership during times of uncertainty and change. A culture of trust is a valuable asset for any organization that nurtures and develops it. Stephen M.R. Covey writes in his book *Speed of Trust:* "When the level of trust in an organization goes down, the speed of change goes down with it and the costs of the change go up". (Covey 2)

Such an insightful literary man has covered a long way to achieve this profoundness as his life was not so simple and conditions were not so favourable to him even in his department. Therefore, it is necessary to go through his life background to understand him. Gahlawat (b. 1961 in a small hamlet, Raipur, of District Jhajjar, Haryana) got graduation from M.D. University, Rohtak, Haryana and subsequently joined Delhi Police. In spite of disagreeable atmosphere in his department he got M.A. in Political Science, M.A. in English, M. Phil. in English and PhD in English. He hails from rural background. His Poem "Boat of Life" was selected as one of the best poems in the International Poetry Fest, Guntur, A.P. He has six books to his credit: *Turmoil and Turn: Women in Shashi Deshpande's Novels; Post Feminism in India: Myth or Reality;*

Psycho Socio Analysis of Indian Police System; Smile from the Veil (*Collection of Poems*)*, Feminine Consciousness: Glimpsing Indian Perspective, Indian Policing: Significance of Intelligence Leadership.*

Words can be like X-rays if they are used properly, they'll go through anything. You read and you're perforated. The poet emphasizes upon the words i.e. honesty, loyalty and uphill struggle that symbolize the balm to heal/obliterate the venom like flattery, contempt and corruption which take place in some form under the 'umbrella of discipline' in police culture. Through these words which are cultivated by 'water of love', the 'wall of trust' can be built. In other sense, the progress of any organization is possible only if these words take place instead of flattery, trickery, corruption and red-tapism.

The poet through his most sensitive poem "Wall of Trust" hints about the incredible dedication to his duty and tries to show that after every dark night there is a bright day but it requires wait with patience as lots of evil powers surround that are ready to divert our mind and soul towards the wrong path and on that wrong path there is a show off brightness but equally this path is full of darkness, loneliness, broken heart, pain and shrills. The 'way of uphill struggle' is greater than the way of 'show off brightness'. This makes the world happy and prosperous but on the other hand, the way of 'show off brightness' covers a small distance and then disappears and even the explorer forgets in which direction he should go. In this way the progress of a nation can be hampered but the 'way of uphill struggle' covers a long way and leads a nation toward the progress by leaps and bound. Such type of way cannot be blocked by the outer forces as this is not made by the cement and concrete but by inner forces of trust, honesty, loyalty and uphill struggle:

> Not "Wall of Cement and Concrete"
> But "Wall of Trust"
> Never shaken by the outer forces,
> as it was built by inner forces

("Wall of Trust" 13-16)

The poet makes the 'wall of trust' with a mixture of honesty, loyalty and uphill struggle which was so strong initially that it was impossible to demolish it by the foolish people ('wild animals') who enchant others by their oily tongue.

Materialistic and Futuristic Approach in "Wall of Trust"

The human mind is like a parachute. It works best when it opens. Employees of any organization provide the best result in a relaxed and hopeful environment as it is a natural phenomenon that a man becomes happy when he sees himself successful in his efforts, he pins many hopes with his efforts and waits for the result. Futuristic plan and teamwork strategy make an organization better. In lack of ultramodern stratagem, the progress of an organization in particular and a nation in general is impossible because what we decide today will have its effects tomorrow.

> We are all materialists, to one extent or another. We all use and enjoy material goods in our daily lives, and most of us simply couldn't get by without them. And there is nothing wrong with that, as long as the desire for material goods doesn't control us and our actions. Materialism becomes an obstacle when we start allowing things to control us, to keep us focused on things outside ourselves rather than on things that would be truly beneficial to us, such as our spiritual development, our relationships, our learning, and our peace of mind. (Berry1)

In "Wall of Trust" the poet, through the collection of small things, i.e. abstract material, wants to send a message to the society that in spite of amassing so many things one cannot get satisfaction. The poet accumulates the abstract materials i.e. honesty, loyalty and uphill struggle to build a wall of trust and pins many hopes in the same way as a child collects the small things from the courtyard to make a toy for playing there and when it becomes ready he gets happiness but if it shatters, he becomes disappointed. Similarly, the poet had pinned many hopes with the wall of trust. When the wall of trust is made he becomes happy but due to unforeseen circumstances it could not protect the poet from the scorching heat, as he writes:

> Exulted, it will protect
> from unwanted Breeze and Glows
> and will give immense pleasures
> in its shadows

<div align="right">("Wall of Trust" 7-10)</div>

In the second half of the poem, the poet seems to be depressed due to the dismissal of wall of trust by the selfishness and misconception. But despite it, the poet advises us to maintain the trust to heal the broken wall with virtues – honesty, loyalty and struggle. But with all problems and solutions the poet also shows that when your problems reach beyond capability of solutions then there is no need to cry for loss of the whole life. We should be adept to it and mould ourselves according to the situations rather than putting ourselves in worse situation. The wall of trust is not broken by outer sources or by outer persons but due to inner forces.

The paper is an attempt to analyze the poet's one part of personality "Incredibility, dedication and adaptability", and on the other hand readers can find the broken heart and adjustment somewhere in his professional life which is common phenomenon in this technical world where everyone suffers from this realistic problem of broken trust.

The Philosophy of "Wall of Trust"

The "Wall of Trust" means protection from unwanted or negative thoughts which proliferate and destroy the mind and body. A man dominated by negative thoughts becomes insane and tries to flee away from the responsibilities assigned to him. In this situation he is ready to do anything, even to smear his head.

> Wanted to strike head
> To smear it
> With the drops of my blood
> Wanted to call it 'Gory Wall'
> Not 'Wall of Trust'
>
> ("Wall of Trust" 28-32)

But 'Trust' is a virtue which gives us immense pleasure. The strength of trust makes one feel secure and get pleasure but in outer world there is negative charge also which gets protection under the shadow of trust, side by side it slowly cuts the tree of trust. Wall of trust should be maintained by positive feelings. This wall can be heralded by the others, they can shake out trust of our loyalty and honesty and in that condition we should not feel depressed but must use our strength.

> Once peak was for high to see
> unable to tell
> There is huge dust on it
> Never gave pleasure of 'Protection and shadows
> Never saved from glows
>
> ("Wall of Trust" 19-22)

When our trust becomes blind and it reaches the top then it becomes difficult to see breaking of trust slowly. So to save the wall of trust we must protect it from time to time so that we may feel safer under the cool and comfortable shadow of trust. In this respect the poet says:

> "I am Trust"
> If I go
> Would never come again
> And 'Wall of Trust'
> Would collapse for ever
>
> ("Wall of Trust" 37-41)

Incredible Dedication and Adaptability

The above personification suggests that the poet is an inseparable part of the 'Wall'. He did not want to separate from it since the trust is one of the cardinal tools to make the wall so strong that it could face the outer forces – negative thoughts, because the poet knows that if trust weaknes, the wall will collapse forever and that is why he remains firm on his place in spite of so many hurdles faced by him during the whole journey. From the "Preface" it is learnt that the poet had come to know about the dire consequences of excessive attachment therefore he found out the early solution. Although it is never too late to treat and repair difficulties in attachment such as reactive attachment disorder, early recognition of the symptoms of insecure attachment helps to repair it on time. With early detection, you can avoid a more serious problem. Caught in infancy, attachment problems are often easy to correct with the right help and support. The poet candidly indicates in the "Preface" of the anthology:

> I came to know that the attachment and trust had taken the place of professionalism. That night was a commemorative and instructive for me to adapt myself accordingly to avoid redundant mess and to keep myself alive. (Gahlawat 7)

"Wall of Trust" is a realistic problem of disappointment. In this barren world of relations and loyalty, man suffers from broken heart and trust, in personal as well professional life. The poet says in the preface of the anthology,

> … that night was a commemorative and instructive for me to adapt myself according to … redundant mess and to keep myself alive. There was a dialogue between me and my past when the day broke out I tried to pen my profound ideas in the shape of a Poem titled "Wall of Trust". (Gahlawat 7)

The poem shows that in spite of so many problems one must not lose courage and keep standing with utmost trust and credibility :

> Credibility boils down to two simple questions. First, do I trust myself? Second, am I someone who others can trust? Covey talks about Four "Cores" that are key to building credibility. The Four Cores are: 1. Integrity, 2. Intent, 3. Capabilities, and 4. Results. Integrity and Intent are character cores. Capabilities and Results are competency cores. All Four Cores are necessary for credibility. A person of integrity that does not produce results is not credible. If you are not credible, you are not trustworthy" (Covey 4)

Conclusion

The poem explains the practical problems being faced by the common man in any organization in his day to day life. It shows our outer and inner feelings as well as human values and virtues. It shows how modern man, in order to become a technical man, loses his own real virtues. He is very sound in safety equipment but weak on emotional level. The poet wants to send a message through the poem, "Wall of Trust" that one must be a person of incredible dedication and adaptability in order to avoid difficult situation. Indeed, it is always right to use our instincts as our guide. One must not set oneself up to be shot down emotionally by someone who doesn't deserve one's trust. But equally, one should not let negative past experiences allow oneself to believe that it's not safe to trust again. Trust to trust. Ernest Hemingway rightly says: "The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them." (Hemingway 1)

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Life of Female Seafarers: Stationed at the Port of Durban - A Study

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Abstract

Women have taken to sea, serving on board ships which were previously a male dominated industry. They can be found at all levels in the industry. They have historically constituted a small percentage of seafarers. They continue to establish themselves in the maritime sector at all levels, despite traditional perceptions that seafaring is reserved exclusively for men. Women seafarers from Russia, England and China have always been part of the maritime industry. The presence of women lends itself to new and complex areas of development on board cargo vessels, cruise, passenger ships and ferries. Women face many challenges to maintain a growing presence and growth as seafarers. While the demands and expectation of women may vary, common for all, are the challenges that faced in maintaining a healthy work life while also paying close attention to their family responsibilities. This paper seeks to explore the challenges that female seafarers experience on boards ships at sea; while at the same time maintaining and nurturing a relationship with their family.

Keywords: Women, Seafarer, Communication, Family, Balance, Work.

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Introduction

Maritime literature has shown that women have long been a source of service during the 1990s. Their presence has steadily increased during and after the Second World War. Unfortunately, accurate statistics are unavailable as the numbers fluctuate from country to country. The overall increase in the number of women retained in service is a situation which can be heralded as a victory for all women who are trying to break into male-dominated professions. The increase in the number of women in the profession has occurred as a result of the worldwide expansion of the maritime sector and the subsequent and accompanying shortage in the supply of existing seafarers in terms of meeting labour demands. There are roughly 27000 women currently working in the profession, the majority of who have been relegated to the traditionally perceived female occupations and roles in the service industries such as kitchens, hotels, catering and hospitality areas of seafaring. This trend is similar to that found in other male dominated professions, where women may have entered the workforce and have broken through the "glass ceiling," however, the majority of them "are locked into lower paying, lower echelon, and female-dominated jobs with little opportunity for advancement" (Anon 32). In the seafaring profession, it is apparent that the gendered perceptions of female skills have been transferred from land to sea. In the light of the limited number of women who occupy senior or high ranking positions on ships, the important question that will need to be continuously addressed is: how can women seafarers are empowered to overcome gender-related challenges in the maritime sector?

The number of women currently pursuing a seafaring vocation is approximately 1-2% of a population of 1.25 million seafarers however the registration of Union membersare rarely accurate. Women according to the Seafarers International Research Centre have "in 2000 accounted for over 18% of total Seafaring labour force in the cruise fleet" (Anon 11). The employment of women on Cargo ships create a difficult working environment whilst, women seafarers on pleasure cruises find that their working conditions are easily accepted as they are the stereotypical role of women.

Women holding positions of rank are few and far between in all categories of vessels. It is within this historically male dominated context that women seafarers experience many different and complex challenges in the work environment. Information on the number holding these positions are difficult to ascertain as "of the 27 trade unions that responded to the Seafarers International Research Centre, 13 reported that no data on women members" [were available] (Anon 12). The acquisition of data is an area that needs attention. Although these challenges vary from ship to ship, it is critical to advance the gendered question of 'How are women coping in a male dominated profession?'

Despite the increasing number of women employed in the maritime sector since 1980 (Chin 21), we see that life on board ships continues to cater almost exclusively to the needs of the male seafarer. Women have both historically and in the current environment continued to encounter gender-based challenges as a result of pursuing a career at sea. The prevailing perception of life at sea is that it is 'an unsuitable job for

a woman' because of the global construction that women are the 'fairer sex' who is not capable of handling manual labour that is required on board ships.

On board ships women begin their duties by negotiating acceptance at the outset amongst an all-male crew; facing scepticism; sexual harassment; lack of support from superiors and co-workers; unequal pay and treatment; lack of support for pregnant seafarers, to mention bit a few challenges. Personal ordealsinclude leaving family, friends, sometimes a partner and children behind. Risks include loneliness, suicide, fatigue and long trips. A Maritime-Executive who was interviewed in 2010 said that the maritime sector used to be one that was closed off to the historically disadvantaged, including women, but this is changing and we are geared for even greater success stories.

Research Methodology

With an extensive review of scholarship; the use of ten in-depth interviews conducted with female seafarers in the Port City of Durban, accessing internet blogs and conducting an online survey we attempt to provide a glimpse of the life of a female seafarer. This paper is based on interviews that were conducted with staff at the Durban Sailors Society. Staffs were interviewed at the offices at Bayhead as well as the offices at Umbilo road. A focus group meeting was held with eleven members of the sailors Society. This meeting was hosted by the Sailors Society in Bayhead on the 11 November 2012.

Due to the nature of the seafaring industry, data collection might be a challenge, due to the limited availability and access to willing participants. Also, because the industry is male dominated, accessing female seafarers might be a challenge. Lastly, language might be a barrier to data collection as seafarers come from different parts of the world. However, English is used as working language. For the purpose of this study, the researchers intend to use a non-probability sampling method namely the convenient sampling method. According to Davies "in convenience sampling you (the researchers) simply take what you can get where you can get it and interview the first eighty people you meet who agree to cooperate with you; you cold-call telephone numbers; you meet up with students at a union bar; or you email a thousand students and ask for volunteers" (55-56). This method is suitable for this study since access to seafarers is not easily available thus the researchers will gather participants at the Port of Durban Sailors Society using the convenient sampling method. However, more participants will be gathered using the snowball technique. According to Babbie (287), This research intends to explore and examine the occupational culture of seafaring from the perspective of female seafarers and examine how they make sense of and reinterpret their gendered identity both on-board and ashore. Here the focus is placed upon what kind of identity management strategies are utilized by women in order to cope with gender related issues. This will therefore explore how women seafarers' identities are affected by the nature and context of their work.

The Attitude of Male Sea

Mbambo, 29, is originally from Esikhawini on the North Coast of KZN but now lives in Glenwood, Durban (Maritime-Executive 2010). She laughs when she recalls the amazement of the captain of the first vessel she guided in after qualifying as an open license pilot recently. 'The captain actually took photographs and recorded a video while I was performing my job alongside him. It was very funny.' The needs and requirements specific to female seafarers are not always addressed within the maritime industry. One of the participants mentioned that "being at sea was difficult at first. I was the only cadet and the only female on a Russian cruise ship where only the captain spoke English well. But I eventually befriended another South African woman who joined the ship later and together we focused on achieving our career goals despite the challenges". Even though unions are continuously taking up the fight for female seafarer's basic human rights, there are still many shortcomings in the industry that needs to be addressed within this 'traditional' male dominated industry internationally.

The truth remains that life at sea is both emotionally and physically rigorous for seafarers of either gender. The predominance of perceptions, which encourage the belief that maritime vocations are essentially more suitable for men can introduce gendered constructs in seafaring roles and reinforce patriarchal practices. This is a socially constructed reality, which is persistent on board all ships where women are employed; it is the perception that male traits are needed in order to perform the job. A growing number of employers in the maritime sector are beginning to discover that females perform their duties well on board ships and this results in a more conducive environment on-board (Thomas 2004).

Why I Became a Seafarer?

The United Nations had actively been promoting the incorporation of women into the levels of employment in sectors of politics, economy and social arenas during the 1970s. This development was adopted by the Maritime sector that put into practice a programme which they referred to as "Women in Development" which resulted in employment at sea appearing to be appealing and financially rewarding (Anon 8). (Women Seafarer, Betty (Betty is her pseudonym) and in the interview was taken on September 2012, she says:

> All I really wanted was to earn enough money so that I can take care of my children; I never imagined that this life will be so difficult. I do not see my children for nine months every year. When I go home I don't know them. I am not sure how long I can do this for. If I do not work they do not eat. It is very simple. What would you do?

Women Seafarer, Alice which is her pseudonym in the interview taken on September, 2012 says:

I always wanted to live the glamorous life. I really believed what I saw in the movies. I was naïve. The life on the ship is hard. The only people that enjoy themselves are the passengers. The workers like me do not have time to enjoy anything. At times the men would approach me and try and pressure me to sleep with them. Also the distribution of work does not seem fair. I have had the same job for all the time I have been on the ship while the man that joined with me has moved up the ladder.

This is Not What I Expected

While women enter the seafaring profession with high expectations, assisted by global norms, standards and regulations that emphasize gender equity and fairness, they continue to face the age-old gender-based norms, such as 'men earn and women take care of the house'. These challenges include but are not limited to: sexual harassment, economic inequality, violence, gender-insensitive living quarters on board ships, unequal opportunities to pursue career development opportunities and, gendered work environments.

Women seafarer's experiences at work are different from what they expected before joining the profession. This is especially the case given the public image of 'a magical life aboard a ship'. Women's realities in this seafaring industry are characterised by constant struggles as they tend to be kept in the subordinate position under a manager who in most cases is a man. This situation is not only frustrating but adds to the reasons why women's careers are short at sea as reflected by the following statement from a lady who worked as a seafarer: "I was very disappointed... [...] I thought more about it. Should I waste my time with the company if it is not willing to promote women or assist me in my career?" (Belcher et.al. 13)

Embracing Women

A small number of shipping companies have embraced the introduction of women into the maritime sector fully and have subsequently employed them in management positions which have been traditionally dominated by men. The rationale underlying this is the perceived positive contribution that women are making to this industry. Women are said to be both more alert and enthusiastic. Ship owners who have employed women managers have reported that; the social atmosphere on the ship improves with the presence of women officers. They play an important role if they are required to mediate arguments. Women are perceived as nurturers and as a result of this they tend to create a warm atmosphere aboard, this is reflected by the way in which they speak to their colleagues as given below:

…the advantage is on board; all of a sudden the whole language changes to the positive, very positive. It's nothing like good old English, 'Oil!' It's not that. There is a 'please' all of a sudden and even between male communities everything changes. It has changed. No disadvantage, only advantage. (Thomas 11)

Socially Constructed Dual Identities

Women seafarers are forced to assume dual identities, if they are to fulfil their roles as mothers and workers. One identity is informed by their familial roles, while the other identity is influenced by the workplace. While negotiating both identities women are forced to strike a tenuous balance between the demands of both work and family. The sometimes-overwhelming nature of challenges encountered by women has led them to defy expected societal norms and therefore have pursued employment as seafarers, while at the same time ensuring the wellbeing of their family. The socially constructed nature of gendered norms reflects the overwhelming presence of men in the industry. This is a response from a male pilot meeting a female shipmaster aboard her ship from Hong Kong:

> ...No it's not possible. I'll call the traffic control. …There is a young lady here and she says she is the master. But, I have never seen a female master, so, what shall I do? Shall I disembark? (Belcher 13)

This is an indication of the socially constructed gendered perceptions that exist among seafarers. Finding a women captain on board ships is rare. Gregario argues that even the use of the term seamen to refer to seafarers demonstrate the construction of gendered job perception that sets in process the alienation that women in this sector experience.

Belcher et.al. maintains that in the global context there has been recognition that women and their labour have been under-utilised and under-developed in the maritime sector, despite an industry facing labour shortages. This acknowledgment has resulted in subsequent changes in labour recruitment strategies for women in the maritime sector. One of the areas where women appear to be attracted is the cruise sector where they work in the hotel and catering sectors, amongst others. It is estimated that in 2000, 92000 women were employed into seafaring, 70% of which were placed in the catering industry.

One of the possible reasons why so many women are absorbed into the cruise sector could be related to the nature of work these women occupy. The duties are very similar to the gendered roles or occupations that women are 'supposed to play' in traditional settings. This could also be the reason that up until now limited objections have arisen concerning the increased employment of women since in these sectors regarded as women's work, they cleaning, cooking, and waiting on tables and laundry.

Women are subject to harsh working condition where they work long hours with little or no time to rest. It might appear that because most women are doing "non-maritime" jobs that their working conditions are therefore better; this is not the case, as is reflected by the following statement from a female seafarer working on a cruise ship:

> …oh! Dear, oh! My God, what is this, a jail? So hard job, really hard. 12 hours stand up, without sit. We have half an hour to go for break. This half hour is for go to your cabin, five floors down. Take a shower, change your

uniform for the night, arrange make up, anything, go to eat your dinner, come back, clean your teeth. You know, I just go take a shower, put my clothes \, my make-up and I go. No more time for it. If you want to eat, I don't know what time. Most people eat one, two, three o' clock in the morning. They eat half hour. My God!, never, I never take this dinner. (Thomas 41)

Although there is no much objection to employing women in the service sector where they are engaged in activities perceived as being 'women's work (such as either cleaning, cooking, serving food, doing laundry); women in this sector are subject to difficult working conditions, the stress of which is exacerbated by the physical isolation from family and loved ones.

Gendered roles tend to be reconstructed in seafaring as reflected by Filipino men working as cleaners on board ships. According to Fajardo, Filipino men, are regarded as feminine because of their involvement in housekeeping jobs whilst Filipino women perform front line work in the bars, reception areas and in shops on board. Gendered chores on the ship are different; because they are socially constructed within the context of the ship and both men and women are trapped. This further perpetuates the subjugation of both women and men.

Attractive women on board the ship are forced into having sexual relationships with a male partner for protection from other male seafarers. "The ships' doctor told a female seafarer that you are stressed and you need a male partner". This remark demonstrates the prevalence of a rather regressive and patriarchal viewpoint that is common in the maritime sector concerning the role and independence of women in the maritime sector.

Are Women Assuming Masculine Adaptive Strategies?

While the presence of women in seafaring industry has been encouraged the number of women remains very small compared to their male counterparts and the ways the occupational culture is designed continues to reflect masculine perspectives and dominance. There is a reason to believe that the norms and values embedded in the industry reflect the dominant beliefs and practices associated with masculinity. Jobs that are male dominated often have masculine structures and masculine organisational and occupational cultures and historically been designed by men for men in a manner that allows them to draw upon masculine strengths and characteristics. (Kitada 34) Women seafarers are forced to change into different identities on board and on shore. They step into different shoes at behest of demands. The male dominated societies on board and on shore demand immediate changes in their role of works and when seafarers fail to cope switching over to different roles, their marital lives fail. Out of ten women seafarers nine are divorcees. There is evidence that suggests that women tend to switch identities or alter behaviour in relation to their working environment. They can adopt or take on a masculine identity with the intention to fit into a work environment where the perceived roles and accepted behaviour are those that conform to masculine stereotypes. However, one question remaining to ask is whether this

identity management strategy continues to only be used in public work environment or whether this increasingly influences women's behaviour and identity in their private lives and if so to what degree? Marshall in 1984 argues that the experience of female managers in the retail profession demonstrated that when they adopted masculine behaviour and strategies this resulted in a substantial degree of pressure outside of the work environment. In the retail sector, traditionally valued and gendered skills were not effective management approaches in comparison to being both being competitive and assertive. This has resulted in them displaying types of behaviour that are on the opposite side of the continuum when it comes to socially acceptable female behaviour. They found that if they inadvertently adopted either this masculine behaviour or style of managing in either their own households or in society in general, it was not accepted. Additionally, it also was not always acceptable in other forms of employment and also often and conflicted with their own images of womanhood and how they felt they were reflected in the society. Young and single female managers experienced difficulties arising from social uneasiness and an inability to identify or develop an identity that was acceptable to their family or significant others that conformed to societal expectations and was also compatible with their own views of their gender identity. This then impacted on their intimate relationships with potential sexual partners, with most of them reporting on feeling dissatisfied with this area of their private lives. Even within those professions where adopting masculine strategies is acceptable, women engaging in these strategies however often face what is referred to as a 'double bind' (Demainter & Adams in an interview). While women need to demonstrate 'male' characteristics like toughness and aggressiveness in order to perform their jobs well, unless they also simultaneously appear feminine, they are often criticized (Demainter & Adams in an interview). The problem that arises then is that they are expected to demonstrate feminine traits at work, but with masculine traits are perceived to be associated with competency and they then might be viewed as being incompetent (Demainter & Adams in an interview).

This research raises questions about the extent to which women seafarers' experiences at sea are affected because of the way in which they must manage their identity. Not only might they be forced to adopt masculine identities in certain contexts but the reverse might also arise. In this case, given the specific type of employment that many women seafarers occupy (such as the service sector professions), women might actually be conforming to adopting those traditionally gendered roles that are expected of them.

As a result, a duality of gendered identities might begin to emerge leading to women having to constantly switch between acceptable identities depending on the role being occupied or the task being performed. This could lead to a substantial degree of emotional and psychological pressure on individuals who are already under emotional duress because of the enforced isolation and continued separation from family, which could be further exacerbated by the physical duress of a demanding occupation. In any event, strategies of either adopting male identities or behaviour in order to adapt to historically male dominated occupations, or adopting traditionally

female roles and behaviour to conform with employer and male colleagues expectations are counterproductive. This is because either approach still fails to challenge the occupational context dominated by masculine outlooks and expectations. As long as the occupational context remains unaltered, any attempt to create an environment where true gender equity in terms of employment prevails will fail.

Individual Woman's Experience

Megan Steward, a maritime captain addresses this issue of masculinity and femininity in her blog Captain Meg's BlogSpot. She argues that all women longed to be loved and long to feel beautiful and as the sole woman working on cargo and tanker ships, she had to re-evaluate her perception of beauty as a seafarer. As a female officer on tanker and cargo ships she had to find a balance between being viewed as a serious professional seafarer and still be viewed as a woman. She was aware of the fact that if she dressed and beautified herself, men could be given the wrong impression of her, so she decided to be like the men and 'go natural'. However, she realized that by doing so she was neglecting to take a stand for women in the maritime industry, and as there are only a few women it is important to not lose your gendered identity for the sake of the 'job', as she feels you can be women and be a seafarer at the same time. But in the same breath she said that she abides with the prescribe dress code and will not wear revealing clothes in front of the male seafarers as it will create an uncomfortable situation, and she does not believe that people should work together if they cannot be comfortable in each other's presence. As a woman officer, Steward in 2010 claims, that one is in an authoritative position, and depending on how you deal with male seafarers who work under you, you can be successful manager or a failure. Stewart was of the opinion that:

> A woman [officer] needs to speak in a tone of voice that doesn't make her sound too feminine but at the same time shouldn't change who she is to fit in with the rest of the guys. Having a strong, confident voice and being certain in what she is saying is a big point in this. Speak in a way which doesn't come across as intimidating to the guys or that you are trying to show them up that you know better than them. There is always going to be that little bit of conflict within some of the guys having to take an order from a woman. Once that respect and trust is established by the woman being confident, strong and sure of herself and her ability then the atmosphere opens up to be a more comforting environment. (Stewart 64)

Stewarts' behaviour demonstrates that she has engaged in an alternative strategy to that of assimilating masculine strategies or a masculine identity. Research has demonstrated that some women refuse to accept the masculine definition of what constitutes an ideal worker, and find alternative mechanisms to perform their jobs well while retaining their feminine identities. (34) The problem with assimilating masculine coping strategies or assuming a male identity in the seafaring profession is that it still fails to address challenges such a discriminatory environment and inequitable treatment.

The Maritime Community is Made Up of Many Races

The current perception prevalent in the shipping industry is that black people are ill-suited when it comes to occupying seafaring professions. Out of the ten women seafarers interviewed, nine that includes one black, eight white and one Asian accepted that racial discrimination can be seen on board and also among the women seafarers. In the South African maritime context it may well is that the persistence of this stereotype and how it influences employers and prospective employees results in a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is characterized by the scarcity of African officers as well as the low numbers of African ratings within maritime professions. The following extract demonstrates the type of perception that personifies the South African maritime sector:

> Even though the Zulu and Xhosa lived on the [KZN] coast they've never been fisherman or seafarers. They've actually never been in the sea. But Cape Town, there's actually no place where you can't see the sea. Because everybody there, black, white, coloured has either got an uncle or a father that was on the tugs, trawlers or with Submarine. (Ruggunan 23)

> This perception is similar to that encountered by women entering male-dominated work contexts where the gendered structure of the environment simultaneously privileges the work of men whilst limiting the opportunities of women, making it less likely that they are able to live up to the expectations the 'ideal worker' (Demainter & Adams in an interview).

Within the industry it seems that it is predominantly white males who occupy the senior or higher level ranks. These are the officers' ranks, which are staffed by the senior tertiary educated crewmembers; the most senior level is the captain or the master of the ship. These are the positions that are accompanied by certain benefits such as job security, medical insurance, medical aid etc. which may in some instances also be extended to family members or dependents (Ruggunan 149). Individuals from other race groups are found predominantly at the bottom of the ratings. It would therefore appear that in order foster true racial diversity and social equity, not only must the gendered constructs in the maritime profession be challenged, but also the racial constructs.

The Global Context

The interconnectedness of the world is reflected in labour mobility and thereby allowing for the flow of capital, people, goods, images and ideologies. With improved transport and Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) people are able to work, travel and communicate with others from any place in the world with greater ease than ever before. This results in increased employment opportunities for people from developing countries, whose individual contexts might be characterised by the lack of job opportunities. It is these technological advancements that increase the pool of cheap labour available to employers. Workers can accept employment anywhere in the world, at any given time. It is not uncommon to find ships that employ workers

from specific regions in the world. Filipino seafarers are in demand, they work well, speak English and they cost far less than workers from the United States and the United Kingdom. Filipino seafarers of both genders are highly sought after.

Technology has allowed for the easy access to cheap labour from all corners of the globe. It has also played an important role in the restructuring of the maritime industry as reflected by the multinational makeup of diverse crews working on board ships. Rugunnan's study on global employment trends in the maritime industry identified that the need for cheap labour has led to a number of changes in employment strategies adopted by the maritime sector. There has been a decrease in the number of seafarers that were employed from traditional maritime nations (TMN's) such as the United Kingdom and Europe. On the other hand there has been a subsequent escalation in the number of seafarers employed from developing countries, particularly Indonesia, China, and Philippines. The reason for this is that seafarers from developing countries are substantially cheaper to employ maintain that the need for profit is the driving force behind the outsourcing of cheapest labour globally. The result is that an increasing number of women from developing countries are migrating temporarily to wealthier countries to work as seafarers as there is limited number of employment opportunities in their countries of origin.

Mobility and Technology

Seafarers are mobile workers; their profession involves movement of a somewhat peripatetic nature, not only dictated by their port of call or origin but also by the nature of the seafaring conditions. Their profession requires them to spend a significant period of time in a somewhat isolated environment sailing across the ocean in a variety of weather conditions. As they traverse the oceans either transporting goods, transporting passengers or providing services in other specific maritime industries they begin to construct a reality that identifies them as a seafarer.

Female seafarers travel between land and sea, and the two destinations may have different gendered constructs. Each gendered space has an effect on the female seafarer's identity construction. Captain Megan who is a female seafarer with experiences working on different category ships, which include cargo and cruise vessels, explains how she adapted her 'gendered identity' while working on a vessel for a long time to 'fit in with the boys'. It could be argued that several female seafarers shift from one gendered identity to another gendered identity when working on a vessel to protect themselves from male seafarers. The ability downplay their 'female' identity can help protecting them from bulling and sexual harassment whilst working at sea.

Inaccessibility, although the snowball method is used to certain extent, is the only reason for not taking up the research on the data of understanding what happened to their female identities while the women seafarers on board as men, one can have the understanding that the sexual harassment they face on board could also be one of the reasons for this No-women status. Women seafarers face sexual harassment on board ships as a number of senior officers use their position (power) in the work place as

means of getting away with their own sexual gratification (ILO, 2003). As a result, women adopt different kinds of coping mechanisms to deal with sexual harassment. Some refrain from attending social events on-board while others de-feminize themselves just to avoid harassment. Female seafarers de-feminize themselves by adopting what is generally perceived as masculine behaviour, meaning, they dress and talk like men, they adopt habits such as heavy smoking and drinking. On the other hand, female seafarers pursue romantic relationships as a form of protection from possible harassment.

This identity construction also can influence a woman seafarer if she is placed within other gendered roles, such as being a wife and/or a mother. Being a female seafarer can be difficulty most of the time, but this can be complicated when they have to rely on technology to stay in contact with her family. The improvement of technology also allows for quality contact with their loved ones.

It is during this long absence that seafarers begin to develop an increasing dependence on technology (such as Microsoft Messenger, Skype, Facebook, YouTube as well as chat rooms and blogs etc.) This is the only possible way to keep in touch and remain connect with their own friends, family, social and community networks who remain at home onshore. There has been an increased growth in the use of such ICT's, particularly on board ships, this has been driven by the increased number of women on board ships. The availability of various forms of technology that allow for instant long distance communication, women are able to continue with their gendered familial roles while complementing them with the financial contribution they make through their employment in the maritime sector.

What the Sailors Society had to Say

Marietjie Beukes in an interview said that "One of the main reasons that seafarers visit the centre is because of the internet. They come in and call their family. It is important for us to always have phone cards available in our store. Phone cards are our best sellers. We have several private telephone booths that seafarers can use to stay in touch with family. My experience of seafarers is that they spend most of their time speaking to their family". During the time of personal interview, Yvonne Pelser said that, 'we hardly have the opportunity to see women in the centre, however when women do arrive, we see them regularly. They spend hours on the phone, and on the computer talking to their family and friends".

The Emergence of the Cyber Family

The notion of family has been reconstructed as theorists now use concepts such as "global house holding" and "transnational families" in an attempt to capture the way in which families are currently maintained and family roles are restructured and played in the face of globalisation.

Global house-holding refers to the formation and sustenance of households that are increasingly reliant on the international movement of people and transactions amongst

household members residing in more than one national territory. Transnational families on the other hand can be defined as families that live some or most of their time separated from each other, yet they hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity exists even across national borders. This global house-holding affects among other seafarers to a large extent. The long separation of mothers and fathers from their children, husbands from wives and wives from husbands challenges conventional notions of the way in which families function under these unique conditions.

The development of new forms of technology, that allow more extended travel and those that allow for new forms of instant communication, have since their inception changed every aspect of human life. It has more especially changed the nature of relationships and the dynamics therein. This reality however varies depending on the type of ship, the level of access to technology, the cost factor and the frequency of the availability of technology on board while the ship is in motion.

While the use of ICTs for familial communication and parenting may in some ways alleviate the emotional distress experienced by women seafarers to a certain degree, it does not in any way make up for their long absences while at sea. Their regular communication could also lead to different forms of psychological pressure from information that they receive from their family on a regular basis. In an interview taken by the authors, a female respondent says:

> When I speak to my family at home and they give me sad or bad news it upsets me. I am so far away. There is nothing I can do. Sometimes I am nervous to make contact with them. Nobody likes to hear bad news when you are so far away. It is very difficult you miss important occasions. I have missed weddings, funerals, school plays, special holidays and important religious ceremonies. (One of the female respondents who is not ready to reveal her identity)

A South African Context in a Global Era

There has been a reduction in the employment of South African seafarers as a result of the countries strict labour policies which have been developed to protect vulnerable employees such as those designated as Historically Disadvantaged Individuals (HDI's). Like seafarers in the TMN's (Transit & Marine Networks), thousands of South African seafarers have lost their jobs in the maritime industry because their labour costs have escalated to the point where they exceed those of seafarers that can be employed from south-eastern countries. This was a point that was raised by of the interviewees. John, which is his pseudonym, explained that the seafaring company with whom he was associated would not employ South African ranked crew members because of the current labour laws and union 'interference'.

According to John, it is far too expensive for companies to employ South African ranked officers under the current labour laws and union actions. However, when it comes to rating seafarers such as those employed in the service industries like the

entertainment, hospitality or hotel sector of the ship, South African staff are welcome. He mentioned that his company is happy to continue employing South African staff to service the hospitality and entertainment sector. This is because of the different terms of service between the maritime and hospitality industry within the seafaring profession and the subsequent different degrees of protection afforded to ranked as opposed to rating crew members.

In South African historically disadvantaged groups also experience challenges and women in South Africa are subject to a double oppression on the basis of both race and gender. This profession has not only been socially constructed in a way that privileges males, and in South Africa, white males. While the diversity of individuals is increasing in the maritime sector, it would appear that the predominantly white male work place culture marginalizes women, limiting their opportunities. There are however, a few exceptions which are given below:

> Three Durban women have made history by becoming Africa's first black, female marine pilots to obtain an open license that enables them to navigate ships of any size and type into South African waters. (Maritime-Executive 12)

In South Africa, white males still monopolise employment as seafarers. While efforts have been made to transform maritime professions and seafaring occupations so that they reflect the diversity of South Africa, there are a series of challenges that have emerged. This was the view of recipients from historically disadvantaged backgrounds who received financial support from Transnet for a year of studies and completed their practical training. They trained as cadets while at sea with Submarine and Unicorn. While gaining work experience on board the ships they sailed to Europe and the Far East (Maritime-Executive, 2010). Once the training had been completed the students were required to undergo a rigorous oral exam. The exam was conducted by the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA).

> They obtained Class 3 tickets to be junior deck officers responsible for auto piloting vessels and managing safety equipment. They then trained and worked as tug masters at Transnet, maneuvering ships in and out of the port with the aid of small tugboats. After a one year pilot training programme they qualified as junior pilots before progressing through the various license grades, starting with smaller ships of around 16 000 gross tons, then 20 000, 25 000, 35 000 and eventually finishing with an open license. Rufus Lekala was also part of that first development group and now holds the position of Chief Harbour Master for South Africa. He is also the youngest in the world. (Maritime-Executive 20)

The Training of Seafarers

South Africa currently does not have any commercial ships which are registered with South Africa as their country of origin and which fly the South African flag. This is as a direct result of the cost implications that are involved in registering in South Africa.

Owners incur less taxes and find it cheaper to register South African owned ships with other countries and to sail under flags of convenience. (Raggunan 288) It is a lack of South African registered vessels that have had a substantial effect on the training of South Africans, specifically the marginalised, women and black people. Although efforts aimed at transforming race and gender representation in the South African seafaring profession have been remarkable, practical training provided is lacking fall short at is in terms of the practical training provided.

Current regulations stipulate that all seafarers are required to complete training on board vessels for a period of twelve months. Because South Africa does not have vessels to provide this specific and essential training, the training of seafarers therefore is determined by the ship owners. The Ship owners' primary motivation is on profit and labour cost is usually the first to be cut. Sourcing the cheapest possible labour is part of companies way to cut cost. Since the current cost of providing practical instruction is estimated to be Rs. 50 000, the expense of employing and training South African seafarers it would undermine any attempt to reduce labour costs while increasing profit. It is because of this that ship owners tend to prefer to source labour from countries that have more 'relaxed' labour laws. They also tend employ those seafarers from India, China and Asia who have already completed their training and whose practical instruction therefore costs less. Despite these challenges, South Africa continues to be an important role player in the maritime industry through the development of its harbours, ports and the activities of both ranked and rated maritime professionals. The fact that since it is the rating professionals who are preferred for employment globally does pose a number of problematic issues. Since research indicates that these are the occupations where individuals from historically disadvantaged race groups and women are likely to employed, and that individuals in these jobs are more likely to be exploited, this further perpetuates inequity and discrimination against these groups.

The continued employment of young women should however be heralded as a victory published in an Interview in SAMSA, 2013. In terms of the number of young men and women who go on to join seafaring professions in the international context and in absence of ships registered in this country, South Africa continues to contribute immensely to the process of globalisation. However, it is a pity that the seemingly insoluble tension between the expensive operating environment in South Africa and the ship owners' drive to reduce labour costs contribute to the continued lack of training facilities for young seafarers. As long as this is the prevailing dynamic that characterizes the existing context, true racial and gender transformation and representation in the SA seafaring profession will continue to be an elusive goal.

Conclusion

Women seafarers face a number of challenges, both in South Africa and internationally. Whilst expansion of the maritime industry and associated labour shortages have led to an increase in the number of women being employed in the seafaring profession, these numbers are limited and for the most part confined to historically perceived women's jobs: most of those can be found in the service industry. Professional mobility

and access to benefits that are the equivalent to those accrued by male colleagues for rated female officers can only take place in an environment where both employers and employees truly commit to supporting the entrance of women into seafaring professions. In dealing with gendered constructions of identity and accepted behaviour; not only must the changing roles and jobs of women in this sector be accepted and encouraged, but the prevailing occupational culture needs to be challenged at all levels. The adoption of masculine behaviour or adaptive masculine strategies might initially allow women to function in the seafaring profession, but the subsequent and continued renegotiation of their identity could expose them to increased emotional pressures. This also fails to help women address or remove associated challenges that they encounter. Until the organisational context that allows for the acceptance of outdated patriarchal practices and paradigm shifts, potentially harmful practices will continue to threaten the status of women seafarers. The continuous challenging of a male-dominated culture will also allow for the development of a more gender sensitive work environment that caters to a specific range of needs for seafarers of both genders. In South Africa the global demand for female seafarers might be a way in which youth unemployment might be addressed. However, current labour legislation and the practice of South African ships becoming "Flag of Convenience vessels" mean that there are limited training facilities available. A continuation of this situation in the near future seems likely, which will result in limited race and gender transformation in the rated professions with the majority of HDIs still being employed in the lowest paid rating professions. Again, as long as this situation prevails, the ability of South African women seafarers to overcome gender prejudice and discrimination and expand beyond the maritime professions they currently occupy will be limited and dependent on circumstances.

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Innovation of English Pronunciation in Malayalee-English through Intrusion and Elision of Phonemes

–C.V. Thomas*

Abstract

English spoken by educated people in Kerala is a regional variant of Indian English commonly called Malayalee-English (M.E). The M.E is influenced in its pronunciation and syntax by Malayalam- the mother tongue of the speakers. This L_1 influence/colouring on L_2 is denoted with the terms interference/negative transfer. It is generally held that interference is the main causative factor that produces the Indian English accents. However, the distinct Malayalee-English accent is not due to interference alone. Innovations in pronunciation by M.E bilinguals also factor in making the M.E a highly noticeable variety of Indian English. This study, based on a survey of the English pronunciation of a group of undergraduates highlights some of the pronunciation innovations in M.E through insertion and elision of certain sounds.

Keywords: Malayalee-English (ME), L_2, Interference/negative transfer, Intrusion, Elision.

Introduction

Indian English is described as the English language spoken by the Indian English bilinguals who learned it as a second language . As India is multilingual with more than thirty major languages, English learning in India occurs in language contexts where the national languages (official langages of the Indian states) dominate. It is from such a language contact situation that Indian English bilinguals learned the second language (English) from educational institutions (after acquiring the first language). This learning of English results in transfer of some of the features of the speakers' L_1 to their L_2. Consequently , one comes across a number of regional accents in Indian English such as Hindi-English (Hinglish), Tamil-English (Tamilish), Malayalam-English (Manglish) etc.

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These regional 'Englishes' differ in their pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary. As pointed out already when a bilingual learns a second language transfer of features of the first language into the second language occurs. So regional accent diffrences are usually attributed to the 'interference'. But Interference/negative transfer may not be the sole reason for differnces in accents in India. This study indicates that pronunciation innovations practiced by Malayalees also add on to the special accent of Malayalee-English .

Indian English is a prominent non-native variety of English in the global village. Malayalee-English is a major constituent of Indian English that is likely to play a significant role in the years to come. As Kerala is the most literate state in India with more than four million unemployed bilingual youths awaiting jobs in the national/international job markets, it is likely that a day may come when the M.E will be synonymous with Indian English. And so, a survey of the pronunciation innovations in M.E is significant and relevant as it would help in maximizing 'intelligibility' in communication contexts involving Malayalee -English speakers and even Indian English speakers, at large.

A number of studies have been carried out in India pertaining to the pronunciation of English in the country . Studies by Kachru (1965) Pattanayak (1969, 1981), Verma (1978), Prabhu (1987), Sasikumar (2009) and Tickoo (2009) have pointed out features of General Indian English.

Aspects of M.E pronunciation have been studied by Asari (1970), Nazareth (1990), Syamala (1983, 1996), Lalitha (1998) and Thomas (2002, 2011, 2011a and 2011b). But no one has so far examined the pronunciation innovations in M.E at the segmental level. Hence, the need for the present study.

Methodology

A study of the English pronunciation of 400 undergraduate students (17-20 age group; Arts, Science and Commerce students; both sexes) selected through stratified random sampling from the Central Travancore colleges has been undertaken. The members of the sample were required to pronounce selected words. The students' pronunciation was recorded by English teachers. Thus, through recorded pronunciation and participant observation (direct listening) the data was collected and subjected to further study.

Results

Analysis of the data indicates that pronunciation innovations in M.E. is made through 'Intrusion' of a few sounds in some words and 'Elision' of certain sounds from a number of words some of which are listed below:

I. **Sound Intrusions in Malayalee-English:** While pronouncing some words Malayalee-English bilinguals have been found to insert /j/ and /w/.

   (i) Intrusive /j/ :

      (a) The Rp diphthongs **/ ɪə /** and **/ eə /** are pronounced with /j/ intrusion. For examples: ear / ɪə^r /-[M.E jiʌr], fear / fɪə^r /-[fijʌr], near / nɪə^r /-[nijʌr], peer / pɪə^r / - [pijʌr], bear /beə^r/-[bijʌr], fair / feə^r /-[fejʌr], hair/ heə^r /-[hejʌr] and pair / peə^r / -[pejʌr].

(b) An intrusive /j/ has been heard in the pronunciation of words with 'dia' –beginning: diabetes /ˌdaɪəˈbiː.tiːz/- [dʌjʌbetis], diabetic /daɪəˈbet.ɪk /- [dʌjʌbetik], diagnosI /ˈdaɪəg.nəʊz/-[dʌjʌgnoːs], diagram /ˈdaɪə.græm/-[dʌjʌgram], dial /daɪəl/-[dʌjʌl], dialect /ˈdaɪə.lekt/- [dʌjʌlekt], dialogue /ˈdaɪə.lɒg/- [dʌjʌloːg], diameter /daɪˈæm.ɪ.təʳ/- [dʌjʌmiːter], diamond /ˈdaɪə.mənd/- [dʌjʌmend], diaper /ˈdaɪə .pəʳ/ -[dʌjʌper] and diary /ˈdaɪə.ri/- [dejʌri].

(c) Words with 'ca' - beginning have been found to be pronounced with an intrusive/j/ . egs:- camel /ˈkæm.ᵊl/-[ˈkjæm.ʌl], camera /ˈkæm.ᵊr. ə/ - [ˈkjæmʌrʌ], camp /kæmp/-[kjæmp], campus /ˈkæm.pəs/-[kjæm.pʌs], cancer /ˈkænt .səʳ/ [ˈkjæn .s ʌr], capital /ˈkæp.ɪ.tᵊl/-[ˈkjæp.ɪ.tl], capitalism/ˈkæp.ɪ.tᵊl.ɪ.zᵊm/ [ˈkjæp.ɪ.t ʌ l.ɪ.zm], capsicum/ˈkæp.sɪ.kəm/- [ˈkjæp.sɪ.km], capsule /ˈkæp.sjuːl/-[ˈkjæp.sjuːl], captain /ˈkæp.tɪn/-[ˈkjæp.tʌn], captivate /ˈkæp.tɪ.veɪt/ - [ˈkjæp.tɪ.veːt], captive /ˈkæp.tɪv/ [ˈkjæp.tɪw], capture /ˈkæp.tʃəʳ/-[ˈkjæp.tʃer], cat /kæt/-[kjæt],cattle /ˈkæt.ᵊl/-[ˈkjæt.l],crack /kræk/-[kræjk].etc.

(d) Miscellaneous words with /j/ intrusion include diet /daɪət/- [dʌjʌt], dietician/ˌdaɪəˈtɪʃ.ᵊn /-[dʌjʌt ɪʃn], doyen /ˈdɔɪ.en /-[doːjʌn], gamble /ˈgæm.bᵊl/-[ˈgjæm.bl], gas /gæs/-[gjæs],idiot /ˈɪd.i.ət/-[ˈɪd.ijet], iodine /ˈaɪ.ə.diːn/-[ˈaj.ʌ.din], loyal /lɔɪəl/-[loːjʌl], loyalty /ˈlɔɪəl.ti/-[loːjʌl.ti], mayor /meəʳ/-[meːjʌr], pack /pæk/-[pæjk], packed /pækt/-[pæjkd], rack /ræk/-[ræjk], racket /ˈræk.ɪt/-[ˈræjk.et], rag /ræg/-[ræjg], region /ˈriː.dʒᵊn/-[ˈriː.dʒjʌn], repayable /rɪˈpeɪ.ə.bᵊl/-[rɪˈpeːj. ʌ.bl], tag /tæg/-[tæjg], back /bæk/-[bæjk], bag /bæg/-[bæjg] and black /blæk/-[blæjk].

(ii) Intrusive /w/ :

In M.E. an intrusive /w/ is heard while pronouncing the following words: Awe /ɔː /-[oːw], Coward /kaʊəd/-[kʌward], cowardice /ˈkaʊə.dɪs/-[kʌwardis], cowardly /ˈkaʊəd.li/-[kʌward.li], dowry /ˈdaʊ.ri/-[ˈdaw.ri], Jewel /ˈdʒuː.əl/-[ˈdʒuw.el], Jewel-box /ˈdʒuː.əl bɒks/-[ˈdʒuw.el boːks], jewel(l)er /ˈdʒuː.ə.ləʳ/-[ˈdʒuw.e.llʌr], jewellery /ˈdʒuː.əl.ri/-[ˈdʒuw.e.llʌri], Jewish /ˈdʒuː.ɪʃ/-[ˈdʒuw.ɪʃ] and Jewry /ˈdʒʊə.ri/-[ˈdʒʊw.ri].

II. Elision of sounds in Malayalee-English:

Elision or dropping of sounds of some words is found to be one of the features of Malayalee English Pronunciation. The most commonly elided sounds are the following:

(1) /w/ is elided in words with 'qu'-cluster.

e.g. equal /ˈiː.kwəl/-[ˈiː.kuʌl], equality /ɪˈkwɒl.ə.ti/-[iˈkuali.ti], equator /ɪˈkweɪ.təʳ/-[ɪˈkueːter], equilibrium /ˌiː.kwɪˈlɪb.ri.əm/-[i.kɪˈlɪb.ri. ʌm], equinox /ˈiː.kwɪ.nɒks/-[ˈi.kɪ.noːks], equip /ɪˈkwɪp/-[eˈkɪp etc], similarly the /w/ in the following words are generally elied in M.E:

equitablle /ˈek.wɪ.tə.bᵊl/, equity /ˈek.wɪ.ti/, equivalence /ɪˈkwɪv.ᵊl.ənt s/, extinguish /ɪkˈstɪŋ.gwɪʃ/, frequence /ˈfriː.kwənts/, guava /ˈgwɑː.və/, inequable /ɪˈnek.wə.bl/, inequity /ɪˈnek.wə.ti/, liquid /ˈlɪk.wɪd/ liquidate /ˈlɪk.wɪ.deɪt/, liquidation ˌlɪk.wɪˈdeɪ.ʃᵊn/, liquidity /lɪˈkwɪd.ə.ti/, quarrel /ˈkwɒr.ᵊl/ quarter ˈkwɔː.təʳ/, queen /kwiːn/, queer /kwiːr/, quick /kwɪk/, quench/ kwent ʃ/, query /kwɪə.ri/, quell /kwel/, question /ˈkwes.tʃən/, quibble /ˈkwɪb.ᵊl/, quick /kwɪk/, quicken /ˈkwɪk.ᵊn/, quid /kwɪd/, quip /kwɪp/, quit /kwɪt/, quiz /kwɪz/, quota /ˈkwəʊ.tə/ quote /kwəʊt/, request /rɪˈkwest/, require /rɪˈkwaɪəʳ/, squad /skwɒd/, squeak /skwiːk/, squeeze /skwiːz/, squirrel /ˈskwɪr.ᵊl/, squirt /skwɜːt/, squad /skwɒd/, squadron /ˈskwɒd.rᵊn/, square /skweəʳ/

(2) The phoneme /k/ is dropped in the pronunciation of the following words: Antarctic /æn tɑk.tɪk/-[ʌn tar.tɪk], anxious /æŋk .ʃəs/-[æŋ .ʃʌs], anxiously /ˈæŋk .ʃəsli/-[ˈæŋ .ʃʌsli], electronic /ˌel.ekˈtrɒn.ɪk/-[el.eˈtroː.n.ɪk], facsimile /fækˈsɪm.ᵊl.i/-[fæˈsɪmail], punctual /ˈpʌŋk.tʃu.əl/-[ˈpʌŋ.tʃuʌl], punctuality /ˌpʌnk.tʃuˈæl.ə.ti/-[ˌpʌn.tʃuˈæl.i.ti], punctuate /ˈpʌŋk.tʃu.eɪt/-[ˈpʌŋ.tʃu.eːt], punctuation /ˌpʌŋk.tʃuˈeɪ.ʃᵊn/-[ˌpʌŋ.tʃuˈeː.ʃn], puncture /ˈpʌŋk.tʃəʳ/-[/ˈpʌŋ.tʃer], sanction /sæŋk.ʃᵊn/-[sæŋ.ʃn], sanctify /ˈsæŋk.tɪ.faɪ/ [ˈsæŋ.tɪ.faɪ], sanctuary /ˈsæŋk.tʃʊə.ri/-[ˈsæŋ.tʃʊe.ri], sanctum /ˈsæŋk.tləm/-[ˈsæŋ.tem].

(3) The /j/ sound is dropped in the pronunciation of a number of words: e.g. Annual /ˈæn.ju.əl/-[ˈæn.u.el], Assiduous /əˈsɪd.ju.əs/-[əˈsɪd.ju.əs], Calculate /ˈkæl.kjə.leɪt/-[ˈkæl.ku.leːt], Circulate /ˈsɜː.kjə.leɪt-[sʌrkule:t/], Circulatory /ˌsɜː.kjəˈleɪ.tᵊr.i/-[sʌrkule:t r.i], Credulous /ˈkred.jʊ.ləs/-[ˈkredu.lʌs], Cucumber /ˈkjuː.kʌm.bəʳ/-[ˈku.kum.ber], curious /ˈkjʊə.ri.əs/-[ˈku:ri.ʌs], Dual /ˈdjuː.əl/-[duː.el], Dubious /ˈdjuː.bi.əs/-[ˈduː.bi.jes]

Other examples include the following words:

Duo /ˈdjuː.əʊ /, Dupe /ˈdjuːp/, Duplicate /ˈdjuː.plɪ.kət/, emulation /ˌem.jəˈleɪ.ʃᵊn/, extenuate /ɪkˈsten.ju.eɪt/, fabulous /ˈfæb.jə.ləs/, inaugural /ɪˈnɔːg.jə.rᵊl/, inaugurate /ɪˈnɔːg.jə.reɪt/-, incestuous /ɪnˈses.tju.əs/, incredulous /ɪnˈkred.jə.ləs/, incubate /ˈɪŋ.kjʊ.beɪt/, insulate /ˈɪnt .sjə.leɪt/-, nutrition /njuːˈtrɪʃ.ᵊn/-, manure /məˈnjʊəʳ/-, obdurate /ˈɒb.djᵊr.ət/, particular /pəˈtɪk.jə.ləʳ/, peculiarity /pɪˌkjuːˈli.ær.ə.ti/, peculiar /pɪˈkjuː.li.əʳ/, pecuniary /pɪˈkjuː.njᵊr.i/, pendulum /ˈpen.djᵊl.əm/, popular /ˈpɒp.jə.ləʳ/, popularity /ˌpɒp.jəˈlær.ə.ti/-, popularise /ˈpɒp.jə.lᵊr.aɪz/, populate /ˈpɒp.jə.leɪt/, population /ˌpɒp.jəˈleɪ.ʃᵊn/, postulate /ˈpɒs.tjə.lət/, regular /ˈreg.jə.ləʳ/, regulate /ˈreg.jə.leɪt/, regulation /ˌreg.jəˈleɪ.ʃᵊn/, residual /rɪˈzɪd.ju.əl/, sedulous /ˈsed.jʊ.ləs/, simulate /sɪm.jə.leɪt/ , situate /sɪt.ju.eɪt/, soluble /ˈsɒl.jə.bᵊl/, stimulant /ˈstɪm.jə.lənt/, stimulate /ˈstɪm.jə.leɪt/, stipulate/ ˈstɪp.jə.leɪt/, strenuous /ˈstren.ju.əs/, student /ˈstjuː.dᵊnt/, stupid /ˈstjuː.pɪd/, stupor /ˈstjuː.pəʳ/, studio /ˈstjuː.di.əʊ/, tabular /ˈtæb.jə.ləʳ/, tabulate /ˈtæb.jə.leɪt/, tenure /ˈten.jəʳ/, utopia /juːˈtəʊ.pi.ə/

    (4) Miscellaneous deletions include the following phonemes

        (a) **/p/** in empty /emp .ti/-[em .ti] and pumpkin /pʌmp.kɪn/-[pʌm.kɪn]

        (b) **/ŋ/** in penguin /ˈpeŋ.gwɪn/-[pen.gwɪn]

        (c) **/i/** in intuition /ˌɪn.tjuˈɪʃ.ᵊn/-[ˌɪn.tju:ʃ.n], intuitive/ɪnˈtjuː.ɪ.tɪv/ [ɪnˈtju.tɪw], fruition /fruˈɪʃ.ᵊn/-[fruˈʃ.n] and tuition /tjuˈɪʃ.ᵊn/-[tjuˈʃ. n], and

        (d) **/g/** in language/ ˈlæŋ.gwɪʤ/-[ˈlæŋ.weːʤ], languid /ˈlæŋ.gwɪd/-[ˈlæŋ.wɪd], languish /ˈlæŋ.gwɪʃ/-[ˈlæŋ.wɪʃ].

The above account shows that pronunciation innovation in Malayalee English to an extent is the outcome of intrusion and elision of some sounds while pronouncing certain words.

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The Extent of Incorporating Learner-centered Activities in the Intermediate Stage English Textbooks in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

–Abdalrahman Mansour Yousef Abu Jaleel*

Abstract

There has been a prominent shift within the field of language learning and teaching over the last few decades with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching. Therefore, special focus has been given to the curriculum and the materials being taught. The present study aimed to find out the extentof learner-centered activities in the intermediate stage English textbooks at Saudi Arabian public schools. Based on the criteria of analysis, the work analyzed the activities of the textbooks for learner-centeredness. The findings of the study showed that the number of learner-centered activities was low compared to the non-learner-centered ones. In light of the findings, the work recommended that more incorporation of learner-centered activities should be adopted in the English language textbooks of the intermediate stage in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Authentic materials, Content analysis, Cooperative learning, Learner-centered activities, Real life related activities, Third intermediate grade textbooks.

Introduction

During the last few decades, greater emphasis was put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teachingdue to the shift within the field of language learning and teaching. According to Land and Hannafin (2000), throughout the 1990s, learner-centered learning environments have focused on learners' affordances that affected their way of learning and thinking, rather than transmitting information from teachers to learners. And Brown (2002) adds: when students learn they do that on their own speeds and using their own styles.

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Learner centered teaching and learning

In learner-centered education, the student is placed at the center of education. First, the educational contexts from which a student comes should be understood. Then, the instructor evaluates the student's progress towards learning objectives. This approach places the responsibility for learning on the students by helping them acquire the basic skills to learn which ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. The instructor here assumes responsibility for facilitating the student's education. This approach takes students' individual differences into consideration since it strives to be flexible, varies in methodology, and not always constrained by time or place.

The aim of language teaching and learning is to enable students to communicate with others within contexts. Therefore, it is the students' own responsibility to learn by using their learning styles, cognitive abilities, and use all the possible features of the language in real life exchanges.

This indicates that learner-centered teaching and learning has become prominent. Learner-centered learning is supported by various pedagogical concepts such as self-direct learning (Candy), active learning (Ramsden), learner-centered instruction or learning (Felder and Brent), vicarious learning (Lee and McKendree), and cooperative learning (Felder and Bren).

Omaggio (2001) mentioned several ways to create a student-centered atmosphere, such as students filling of information sheet that inquires into their backgrounds and interests in second-language learning. Short individual interviews may also be used. She added that the goal of this type of activity is to help students become aware of the types of materials that are readily available for them to read foreign language and to encourage them to use the language to learn about topics of interest.

Panagiotis et al. (2006) suggested that, to create a learner-centered classroom, teachers should incorporate lessons that are age-appropriate and relevant to students' needs and interests. Teachers should facilitate learning rather than just give information. Teachers should place the students at the center of education by giving them multiple opportunities to discover knowledge and practise skills in an environment designed to appeal to them. In addition, the educational environment should be designed to emphasize cognitive processes that prompt learners to construct new meaning from the acquired information. Moreover, learning should be connected to real-life experiences. Teachers should provide directions and feedback to encourage students to become skilled at thinking purposefully as they are provided with connections to real-world experiences.

Crick et al. (2007) stated that, with a person-centered approach to educational reform, the focus is on psychological, emotional, social needs of learners, interventions that maximize healthy functioning and promote motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners. Emotional safety within school structures and processes could be characterized by the question: Do I feel that I am a valuable member of my class and school; and is this communicated to me? This comes as students' emotional safety is strongly dependent upon the qualities of the relationships they have with their teachers and how these qualities are communicated.

According to Nunan, motivation, learning, and achievement are enhanced where learner-centered principles and practices are followed. The benefits of learner-centered practice extend to all participants in the educational systemsuch as students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Societies keep changing. As a result, the role and function of schools should change so that they better meet the needs of the learner as a whole person. This change requires an understanding of basic principles about learning and learners.

Language teaching and learner-centered curricula

It is evident that the new approaches to language teaching and learning set students in the position of language users, not the mere of knowers about the language. Therefore, special focus has been given to the curriculum and the materials being taught.

Nunan (1988) declared that the key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, the learner-centered one is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught. He added that the aim of a learner-centered curriculum is to assist learners use the target language for communicative purposes outside the classroom. One of the justifications for using authentic materials is to generate classroom activities which simulate genuine communication in the classroom in the hope that this will facilitate transfer of learning. He also encouraged learners'self-assessment as it helps them identify preferred materials and ways of learning. They can be involved in evaluating most aspects of the curriculum, including their own progress, the objectives of the course, the materials and learning activities used.

Brown (2001) stated that learner-centered instruction applies to curricula as well as techniques. It includes: (1) techniques that focus on learners' needs, styles, and goals, (2) techniques that give some control to the students, (3) curricula that include the consultation and input of students and that do not presuppose objectives in advance, (4) techniques that allow for students' creativity and innovation, and (5) techniques that enhance a student's sense of competence and self-worth.

Content analysis

Content analysis is a tool or a means to achieve the study objectives. Newman (1997) says that content analysis is a technique for examining information, or content, in written or symbolic materials. In content analysis, the researcher first identifies a body of material to analyze and then creates a system for recording specific aspects of it.

A lot of research has been conducted in the past few decades on content analysis. The reason that content analysis became a major research method in the area of the social sciences is that it is not only limited as a study and research method to quantitative research, but is also suitable for qualitative research. Holsti (1969) offered a broad

definition of content analysis as, "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (14).

Content analysis is "a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves as the basic of inference" (Holsti 2). It is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Marsh Web).

Krippendorff (1980) reinforced the importance of validity and reliability by stating that if research results are to be valid, the data on which they are based, the individuals involved in their analysis, and the processes that yield the results all must be reliable. A reliable procedure should yield the same results from the same set of phenomena regardless of the circumstances of application. To test validity, the results of a procedure must match with what is known to be true or assumed to be already valid.

Objectives of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia

The general objectives of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia are based on the principles of the communicative approach. Therefore, the curriculum is expected to set students in the position of language users. This can be achieved by providing techniques focusing on learners' needs, styles, and goals that give some control to the students. As for learner-centeredness, the curriculum emphasizes the new roles for students by giving them greater opportunities to define their own ways of achieving the objectives. It also emphasizes new roles for teachersto help students achieve the objectives by giving greater consideration to the individual learning needs of every student, varying the order in which they introduce topics, and selecting appropriate learning resources for the learning needs of their students. In addition, it directs teachers to select and use variety of instructional strategies to ensure that all students achieve learning goals that emphasize higher order and critical thinking and go beyond memorizing facts and information. Moreover, the curriculum does not neglect assessment by focusing on new methods of assessing learning through authentic methods, such as research assignments, teamwork, oral, and/or multi-media presentations that demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquire.

All the objectives are stated on behalf of the students. The following are the core subject objectives:

- to communicate information, ideas, opinions and feelings effectively for a variety of purposes in written, spoken and visual forms to interact and collaborate with others to accomplish goals;
- to read and understand both simplified and authentic texts of a general nature and\ or technical language and identify the main ideas from different contexts;
- toacquire a positive attitude towards English and realize its importance as a means for promoting mutual understanding amongst peoples and countries.
  (*Say It In English*, Second Intermediate, Pupil's Book, 2012-2013; *Say It In English*, Third Intermediate, Pupil's Book, 2012- 2013).

According to the learner-centered approach, learning is the responsibility of the learner, and the objectives of the curriculum are also learner-centered.

Statement of the problem

The objectives of English language teaching for the intermediate stage in Saudi Arabia are based on the principles of the communicative approach. According to this approach, the concept of learner-centeredness is emphasized. The objectives stated in *Say It In English*, Second and Third Intermediate Pupil's Book (2012-2013) are learner-oriented. As a result, *Say It In English* textbooks are supposed to include authentic tasks and activities that enable students to use the language communicatively outside the classroom. The activities which are presented in the textbooks should be learner-centered oriented. Therefore, the researcher was interested in analyzing the content of the third intermediategrade textbooks to find out the extent to which it is learner-centered oriented.

Question of the study

The present study aimed to answer the following question:

(1) To what extent dothe intermediate stageEnglish textbooks in Saudi Arabia's public schools include learner-centered activities?

Significance of the study

Content analysis might help teachers reflect on their methods of teaching so that they can help their students use the target language communicatively inside and outside the classrooms. Thus, it is necessary to analyze the content of the intermediate stage textbooks for learner-centered activities and tasks. Moreover, it might be helpful for them in encouraging them to give the students the responsibility for their own learning. Supervisors might also benefit from the findings of this study by shifting the focus from teacher-centeredness to students-centeredness. They may benefit also bytraining the teachers on using current strategies of teaching English as a second or a foreign language where the primary focus is given to the learners.

The Ministry of Education may reconsider the pre-service and the in-service training programmes with regard to the new roles of teachers and students. In addition, the Ministry of Education may benefit from the findings of this study to revise the textbooks so that the content might be changed to be more learner-centered.

Researchers also might make use of the findings of the present study to investigate the effectiveness of learner-centered instruction.

Definition of terms

Cooperative learning (also known as collaborative learning): It is defined as an approach to teaching and learning in which classrooms are organized so that students work together in small cooperative teams. According to J.C. Richards (1988), such

approach to learning is said to increase students' learning since; (a) it is less threatening for many students, (b) it increases the amount of student participation, (c) it reduces the need for competitiveness, and (d) it reduces the teacher's dominance in the classroom.

Learner-centered activities: Theyaretheactivities that focus on learners' needs, styles, and goals. They give some control to the students, include their consultation and input, they allow for students' creativity and innovation, they also enhance students' sense of competence and self-worth. Nunan(1988) declared that the focus will be on assisting learners to do in class what they will need to be able to do outside; the materials should reflect the outside world. In other words, they should have a degree of authenticity. This authenticity should relate to the text source as well as to student activities and tasks. The materials should also foster independent learning by raising the consciousness of the learners and making them more aware of the learning process.

Unit of analysis: The item which is identified as the basis for the analysis. A word, a picture, a paragraph, an activity, a task, etc.... The researcher counts the number of the identified units of analysis all through the content, then talk about the phenomenon under analysis to calculate the percentages of inclusion.

The thirdintermediate grade textbooks: The English textbooks which are being taught to thethird intermediate grade in Saudi public schools in the academic year 2012 / 2013.

Authentic materials: Language teaching materials that have the qualities of natural speech or writing. For example, texts which are taken from newspapers, magazines, etc., and tapes of natural speech taken from ordinary radio or television programs etc… (Richards 27).

Real life related activities: Activities which implement real life characteristics. They prepare the students to the real life, beyond book learning.

Criteria of analysis: A form of validity in which the analysis is compared to particular standards which have been agreed upon. For example, the criteria of the content analysis in this study which are mentioned under research instruments will be referred to in every activity being analyzed in the textbooks.

Limitations of the study

The following points can be considered limitations of the study:

(1) The interpretation of the findings of the present study is based on analytical schemes developed by the researcher. Therefore, their generalizability will be bound to similar analytical schemes.

(2) This study is limited to *Say It In English* textbooks for the third intermediate grade in Saudi public schools.

Review of Related Literature

Studies conducted on learner-centeredness

Warburton and Whitehouse (1998) explored students' perceptions of a learner-centered approach using problem-based learning on an undergraduate practice course at the University of Manchester. A self-completing structured questionnaire was used to evaluate 118 students' perceptions. Results showed that, in learner-centeredness, most student-generated objectives were met. At the same time, problem based learning seminars were enjoyable. As a result, it was recommended that educators take in considerations the differences in learning needs and wants. Moreover, there was a high demand to be clear on students' needs to ensure a learner-centered approach.

Chan (2001) explored the extent to which learner autonomy could work in Hong Kong tertiary classroom. Twenty students from second-year whose major was language were involved in a course on English at the workplace. A special questionnaire was designed in an attempt to promote learner autonomy. The results revealed that students gained awareness of the different roles of the teachers and themselves. They also revealed that students demonstrated positive attitudes towards the autonomous approach. Moreover, students should be given more learning opportunities.

Garrett and Shortall (2002) investigated what language learners said about their experiences of different types of classroom activities, specifically teacher-fronted activities and student-centered pair work activities, in both meaning transmission and grammar tasks. One hundred and three Brazilian EFL students at a language school in the state of Sao Paulo were administered to tasks appropriate to their level. After that, they were asked to fill in a questionnaire that was especially designed for the purpose of that study. The results indicated that students are interested in learner-centered activities as they move up through the language levels.

Alfassi (2004) examined the efficacy of a learner-centered environment in enhancing the academic achievements and motivation of high school students who are at risk of dropping out of school. It is shown that a learner-centered environment yields significantly higher achievement scores and a somewhat higher internal motivational orientation. These results suggest that a structured academic program in a learner-centered environment could provide hope for students at academic risk and other students who are likely to be lost to the academic educational system.

Van Aswegen and Dreyer (2004) investigated the extent to which BSL teacher educators are implementing a learner-centered approach to teaching and learning; identify the factors that impede the transition to a learner-centered approach to teaching and learning; and to provide recommendations to facilitate the implementation of a learner-centered approach to teaching and learning within the faculty of education and sciences. The findings indicated that the current view in higher education is that teacher educators need to focus on student-learning rather than on teaching. To move toward learner-centeredness, it is important to help teacher educators understand what learner-centeredness means and to help them overcome implementation barriers.

Stuart (2005) examined how adult learners at Toronto District School Board experience and perceive their ESL learning process. It was found that the learners call for changed in the organization itself. Therefore, it was highly recommended that the understanding of learner-centeredness should be broadened to include the methodology in the classroom.

Kasanda et.al. (2005) studied the types of everyday contexts and the strategies used in science classes. The study aimed at investigating the extent of learner-centered teaching taking place, and how teachers used this approach. Audio-taped teacher-learner interactions and non-participant field notes were used to collect the data of the study. The sample consisted of twenty nine junior and senior science classes taught by twelve teachers in six schools. The results showed that more everyday contexts were used in junior secondary classes than in senior secondary classes. The findings were related to some interpretations of learner-centered teaching. Therefore, the researchers recommended that teachers fuller implement learner-centered teaching.

Vazaka (2009) investigated the effect of the learner-centered approach on the teaching of reading skills and the importance of pre-reading activities. She suggested strategies for the pre-reading stage in which students' prior knowledge was elicited on which new information was built. The findings indicated that the learners were motivated to read and comprehend the texts. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers should use pre-reading activities using learner-centered approach strategies to facilitate students' understanding of a text and promote several reading skills that are important for the reading process.

Abu Jaleel (2010) designed a learner-centered instructional program to investigate its effect on Jordanian EFL first secondary students' achievement, problem solving, and critical thinking. The findings of the study indicated that the proposed instructional programme had a positive effect on the EFL first secondary students' achievement, problem solving and critical thinking skills. In light of the findings, the researcher recommendedthat learner-centered safe, challenging, authentic, and collaborative environments be established in the teaching/ learning process in a way that promotes active learning; andthere should be real shift from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness in the classrooms.

Summary

After reviewing some of the studies about learner-centeredness, it was found that it is extremely importantin the teaching learning process. There are individual differences between students, and that everyone learns on his/ her speed and he/ she uses his/ her own learning style(s). Therefore, the best solution to help the students learn is by giving them the chance to be responsible for their own learning. And, if possible, engage them in preparing and designing the learning materials. Security is major demand for learning. In learner-centered approach, the students may feel secure as they do not fear committing mistakes.

Methodology

Population and sample of the study

The population: The population of the present study consisted of all *Say It In English* textbooks which are being taught in Saudi public schools to the first, the second, and the third intermediate grades in the academic year 2012 / 2013. The total number of these textbooks is twelve. A student book and a work book are taught in every semester.

The sample: The sample of the study consisted of the third intermediate grade textbooks. That is, the four textbooks (two pupil's books and two workbooks) of the third intermediate grade in public schools in Saudi Arabia during the academic year 2012 /2013 were content-analyzed for learner-centeredness.

Data collection: The study was conducted using the analytical method in analyzing learner-centeredness at the level of activities presented in the textbooks. Activities were matched to the criteria of analysis. Then, they were categorized into two groups: learner-centered and non-learner-centered ones.

Unit of analysis: The activity was used as the unit of analysis.

Criteria of analysis

The following criteria of analysis were used to analyze the activities of the textbooks: (1) authentic materials; (2) activities which utilize group work; (3) real-life related activities. The criteria were derived from following learner centered principles:

(1)   Engage all the learners in the lesson by using a lot of pair work and group work.

(2)   Make the learners, and not the teacher, focus on the lesson by encouraging them to participate effectively.

(3)   Take the students' individual differences into consideration by varying the teaching techniques.

(4)   Promote humanistic relations.

(5)   Give the students enough time to think before they respond.

(6)   Use a maximum amount of student to student interaction in a relaxed atmosphere similar to real life situations.

(7)   Develop learners' confidence by telling the students verbally and nonverbally that you believe in them and by using extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

(8)   Link the new knowledge with the existing one in mind.

(9)   Provide opportunities for the students to apply what they learn.

(10) Respond to learners' difficulties and build on them.

(11) Provide the students with opportunities to practise both accuracy and fluency.

(12) Address learners' needs and interests and develop their responsibility for their own learning.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

To establish validity, the content analysis criteria were given to a group of experts, they were asked to give their judgment, and their modifications were adopted accordingly.

The following steps were used to guarantee the reliability of content analysis:

(1) The learner-centered activities using the unit and the criteria of analysis were analyzed.

(2) The analysis was repeated two weeks after the first analysis using the same unit and criteria of analysis. Then, the congruence between the two analyses was calculated. Its value was 92%.

(3) Another colleague was asked to analyze learner-centered activities using the same unit and criteria of analysis. Then the congruence between the two analyses was calculated. It was 90.

Procedures for data collection and data analysis

The following procedures were used to collect and analyze the data of this study:

(1) The related literature about content analysis to define the unit and criteria of analysis was reviewed. Theywere used in content analyzing *Say It In English* textbooks for learner-centered activities.

(2) The learner- centered activities were analyzed using the unit and the criteria of analysis mentioned under the first procedure.

(3) The analysis was repeated two weeks after the first analysis using the same unit and criteria of analysis. Then, the congruence between the two analyses was calculated.

(4) One colleague analyzed learner- centered activities using the same unit and criteria of analysis. Then the congruence between the two analyseswas calculated.

(5) Frequencies and percentages were used to interpret and discuss the findings of the study.

Findings of the study

Table 1 presents frequencies and percentages of the first criterion (authentic materials). This criterion develops learners'self-confidence and provides them with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In addition, it provides the students with opportunities to practise both accuracy and fluency.Moreover, it addresses learners' needs and interests and develops their responsibility for their own learning.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of the Authentic Material Activities and the Non Authentic Material Activities in both the Pupil's Book and the Workbook

Unit	Title of the unit	Frequencies of authentic material activities		Frequencies of non- authentic material activities		Total frequencies of activities in each unit
		Pupil's book	Work book	Pupil's book	Work book	
One	Learning Tools	12	3	18	4	37
Two	Making Plans	11	2	13	11	37
Three	Going to Places	4	8	21	4	37
Four	Revision	4	3	19	1	27
Five	Save Our Planet	12	3	13	6	34
Six	The Senses	2	2	23	9	36
Seven	Friendship	13	3	14	4	34
Eight	Revision	7	1	10	3	21
Nine	Inventions	7	3	10	5	25
Ten	Cultures	8	7	9	2	26
Eleven	Stories	2	4	17	4	27
Twelve	Revision	8	2	7	3	20
Thirteen	Healthy Eating	6	5	14	2	27
Fourteen	On the Phone	6	5	11	6	28
Fifteen	People Said	6	3	8	5	22
Sixteen	Revision	12	3	5	2	22
Total frequencies of activities		120	57	212	71	460
Percentages		26.1%	12.4%	46.1%	15.4%	100%

Table 1shows that the percentage of authentic material activities was 38.5% which is less than non-authentic material activities which constitute 61.5% of the total activities. Table 2 presents the inclusion of activities which utilize group work. Including such activities engage all the learners in the lesson. They also make the learners, and not the teacher, the focus of the lesson by encouraging them to participate effectively. In addition, they take the students' individual differences into consideration by varying the teaching techniques. Moreover, they promote humanistic relations among the learners. They give the students enough time to think before they respond. Finally, they use the maximum amount of student- to- student interaction in a relaxed atmosphere similar to real life situations.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of theGroup Work Activities and the Non Group Work Activities in both the Pupil's Book and the Workbook

Unit	Title of the unit	Frequencies of group work activities		Frequencies of non –group work activities		Total frequencies of activities in each unit
		Pupil's book	Work book	Pupil's book	Work book	
One	Learning Tools	0	0	30	7	37
Two	Making Plans	1	0	23	13	37
Three	Going to Places	1	0	24	12	37
Four	Revision	2	0	21	4	27
Five	Save Our Planet	1	0	24	9	34
Six	The Senses	0	0	25	11	36
Seven	Friendship	2	0	25	7	34
Eight	Revision	6	0	11	4	21
Nine	Inventions	0	0	17	8	25
Ten	Cultures	0	0	17	9	26
Eleven	Stories	1	0	18	8	27
Twelve	Revision	1	0	14	5	20
Thirteen	Healthy Eating	0	0	20	7	27
Fourteen	On the Phone	2	0	15	11	28
Fifteen	People Said	1	0	13	8	22
Sixteen	Revision	3	0	14	5	22
Total frequencies of activities		21	0	311	128	460
Percentages		4.6%	0%	67.6%	27.8%	100%

It is clear from table 2 that group work activities constitute only 4.6% of the total percentage of activities which is very low. Table 3 presents the incorporation of the third criterion (real-life related activities) to the total activities. Such activities provide opportunities for the students to apply what they learn. They also help the teachers respond to learners' difficulties and build on them. Moreover, they link the new knowledge with the existing one in mind.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of the real-life related Activities and the Non Real-Life Related Activities in both the Pupil's Book and Workbook

Unit	Title of the unit	Frequencies of real-life related activities		Frequencies of non –real-life related activities		Total frequencies of activities in each unit
		Pupil's book	Work book	Pupil's book	Work book	
One	Learning Tools	14	3	16	4	37
Two	Making Plans	8	5	16	8	37
Three	Going to Places	5	4	20	8	37
Four	Revision	9	3	14	1	27
Five	Save Our Planet	9	2	16	7	34
Six	The Senses	8	3	17	8	36
Seven	Friendship	15	2	12	5	34
Eight	Revision	6	1	11	3	21
Nine	Inventions	5	3	12	5	25
Ten	Cultures	4	5	13	4	26
Eleven	Stories	4	3	15	5	27
Twelve	Revision	8	2	7	3	20
Thirteen	Healthy Eating	6	5	14	2	27
Fourteen	On the Phone	7	2	10	9	28
Fifteen	People Said	4	7	10	1	22
Sixteen	Revision	13	0	4	5	22
Total frequencies of activities		125	50	207	78	460
Percentages		27%	11%	45%	17%	100%

Table 3 shows that the percentage of real life related activities is 38%, it is less than the activities that do not implement real life characteristics which constitute 62% of the total activities.

Discussion and recommendations

The researcher analyzed the activities of the third intermediate grade English textbooks to find out the extent to which they were learner-centered. He wanted to find out whether those activities focused on learners' needs, styles, and goals. He analyzed the activities to find out whether the language teaching materials had the qualities of natural speech or writing. He meant to discover if they utilized group work. Moreover, he wanted to know whether the activities implemented real life characteristics.

Based on the criteria of analysis, the researcher analyzed the activities of the textbooks for learner-centeredness. The findings of the study showed that the number of learner-centered activities waslow compared to the non-learner-centered ones. The findings also indicated that the percentage of learner-centered activities seemed

inadequate to a certain extent. That was due to the fact that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia adopted the communicative approach, in which the learner is the centre of the teaching learning process. Therefore, we should take into account that the textbooks consider the learner-centered approach as the main core of the textbooks.

In table 1, the findings showed that the percentage of the activities in which the language teaching materials have the qualities of natural speech or writing was 38.5%. Authentic material activities occurred 120 times in the pupils' book and 57 times in the work book out of 460, the total number of activities. For example, in the listen and practice exercises, the language teaching materials do not have the qualities of natural speech. The tapes are not taken from ordinary radio or television programs. In addition, most of the reading passages do not have the qualities of natural writing. They are not taken from newspapers or magazines. It is assumed that authentic materials are used in language teaching because they are considered interesting, engaging, culturally enlightening, relevant, and motivating. According to Herron (1994) empirical studies have confirmed the benefits of using authentic materials in classroom. Rivers (1987) maintains that students who work with authentic materials have an interest in the language that is based on what they know it can do for them. Cook (1996) suggests that one of the powerful reasons for learning a new language is to get closer to its speakers, to understand them better and take part in their lives, inother words the integrative motivation. Authentic materials utilize this motivation very strongly by their ordinariness and flavor of everyday life; they seem exotic and exciting. For students who have this motivation, authentic materials are a highly effective way of bringing the target culture closer; this is as near to participation as they will get without actually living in that country.

As for group work activities table 2 shows that they were used in very few activities, only 4.6% of the total percentage of activities. The instructions of the majority of the activities ask students to work individually on them. Group work activities promote interaction among teammates. By putting students in groups, teachers will give more language practice to the students. As students are more involved, they will feel secure and help each other to complete the tasks. Springer et.al. (1999) found that various types of small group learning were effective in producing higher academic achievement, more positive attitudes to learning, higher self-esteem and lower rates of drop out, than in conventional lecture-based courses.

Moreover, table 3 shows that the percentage of real life related activities was 38% which is less than the non-real- life related ones. For example, in grammar exercises, accuracy is emphasized rather than the intended messages. In addition, many of the speaking activities ask students to follow certain given patterns. Moreover, some activities ask students to complete dialogues with the correct forms of verbs. In real life we do not follow certain language function, but rather, we use the language communicatively. We do not care about sentence structure, we care about the message we intend to convey. There is an agreement among foreign/second language instructors that authentic language input can be utilized as an essential part of second language

learning. According to many scholars such as Brinton, Gebhard, Nunan, Martinez, Gilmore (just to name a few), there are many advantages associated to authentic language materials which make these materials pedagogically valuable to expose language learners to the target language. In this regard, Martinez (2002) provided a number of sound advantages for using authentic language materials for language teaching. An important advantage is that authentic language materials provide a wide range of language change of the target language. For example, by listening to songs and stories in the target language, language learner will be able to hear dialectal differences of various countries that speak the target language (Martinez, 2002). According to Brinton (1991) authentic materials and media can strengthen the direct relationship between the language classroom and the outside world for students. Gebhard (1996) considered authentic materials as a way to contextualize language learning. When lessons are focused on comprehending, language learners tend to concentrate more on content and meaning rather than the language itself. This offers the language learners a valuable source of authentic language input, so that they are not exposed only to the language presented by the text and the teacher.

Student-centered teaching methods shift the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners. Students will have a higher motivation to learn when they feel they have an effective role in their own learning. Instead of the teacher being the sole source of information, he shares the control of the classroom and students are allowed to explore, experiment, and discover on their own. The instructor acts as a coach and a facilitator. In many respects, the goal of this type of teaching is the development of the students' cognitive abilities. Therefore, the activities should be designed in a way which let the students initiate and discover meaningful information for their own lives.

Group work provides the students with opportunities to use the language without the fear of committing mistakes in front of the rest of the class which might make them feel embarrassed. The students feel responsible for their own learning in the learner-centered activities. This is done by making the students cooperate with their groups to find out solutions to given problems, and then competed with the other groups and tried to convince them with their points of view. Linking the new language that the students learn with real life situations helps the students to internalize what they learn. Therefore, the students should be provided with activities in which they related what they learn to real life situations.

Contrary to the many research findings conducted in this field, the findings of this study indicated that the percentage of learner-centered activities seemed inadequate to a certain extent. For example, Warburton and Whitehouse (1998) found that in learner- centeredness, most student- generated objectives were met. Chan (2001) found that students demonstrated positive attitudes towards autonomous approach. Garrett and Shortall (2002) discovered that students were interested in learner- centered activities as they move up through the language level. A lot of research that was conducted in this field found that it is necessary to care for learner's conceptions and beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning process in adopting learner- centered

models since the learner- centered approach models improve the students' learning and motivation (Pillay, 2002; Van Aswegen and Dreyer, 2004; Kasanda et al., 2005; Good and Robertson, 2006; Crick et al., 2007; Macaulay and Nagley, 2008; Vazaka, 2009). Moreover, collaborative learning and good learning environments should be stressed since the students assume full responsibility for their own learning in such environments (Alfassi, 2004; Nokelaien et.al., 2005). Such findings suggested the necessity to use learner- centered approach in the teaching/ learning process (Nunan, 1988; Brown, 2001; Omaggio, 2001; Chan, 2001; Zaharias and Poulymenakou, 2006).

Recommendations

In light of the findings of the present study, the researcher has the following recommendations:

(1) The learner-centered approach activities should be incorporated more in the English language textbooks.

(2) Learner-centered, safe, challenging, authentic, and collaborative environments should be established in the teaching/ learning process in a way that promotes active learning.

(3) The understanding of the learner-centered approach as well as its implementation in the classrooms should be used more.

(4) More voice inside the classrooms should be given to the students by engaging every student in the classroom activities.

(5) There should be real shift from teacher- centeredness to student- centeredness.

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Modern Pedagogical Language Learning Strategies for the Weak Learners

–Priyanka Sharma*

Abstract

The word 'teacher' represents knowledge - transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the taught. In fact, the foundation that builds a person is to great extent based on the knowledge he gets from his teacher. If there is somebody other than our parents who plays an important role in our mental development, it's our teachers. A good teacher doesn't mean he/she teaches well, but can make students know they can learn well. To make students interested in their learning, first a teacher should make them aware of what they are capable for. Teaching is a procedure that intimately involves both the students and teacher together. This profession needs sincerity, creativity, dedication and imagination that require to take teaching to heart and to care about each problem. The more a teacher thinks about a student, more he/she gets the solution. Being a teacher, one should try to understand problem area; problems among students can vary to friends, family or on personal condition. Psychological analysis gives a reason why a student is not learning and helps finding a solution. It is important to help teachers to make self-improvement. Teachers should think out various ways and try them out in teaching, as it will help to make the class more interesting and create more chances for us to improve the teaching. Teachers should also try to find if there are any physical or mental problems with weak students. For example, if a student is unable to write something from board or to comprehend with the speaker, he may have some physiological, psychological, environmental, linguistics, and content barriers. Some students may also suffer from interpretation problems which make them unable to cope with all students of the class. Here comes the main duty of teachers to find problems first and then treat students accordingly. The teacher of the present time should be open to the world, learn about what happens therein and follow up the new developments in the field of competence; otherwise, he falls prey to cognitive illiteracy.

The paper explains what I meant by comparatively weak students and outlines the problems that creates barrier in comprehension in teaching them. By helping the weak students I believe in creating a friendly, well-disciplined and united class atmosphere

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which would definitely help these specific students become more confident and take more initiative as well as responsibility for their study. A teacher must appreciate weak students even if they get little achievement and give them confidence that theycan do the best like other classmates. Helping them in their weak areas (concepts of grammar) and giving little more importance to their practice for grammar, paraphrasing, paragraph writing, not only help him realize the importance of sentence construction but also make sure they must not feel it like a burden or pressure. A variety of methods are employed and evaluated. They have been validated through meetings, personal interaction, questionnaires, interviews, and students' actions and self-evaluations.

Many students have memory problems. The students who have deficits in registering information in short-term memory often have difficulty in remembering instructions or directions they have just been given;what was just said during conversations and class lectures and discussions, and what they just read. Students who have difficulty with working memory often forget what they are doing while doing it. The students who are weak in English language they do not achievean expected level of English because they have very limited vocabulary; they cannot read even simple words correctly, they can understand very little of language, they cannot speak out a complete sentence without making mistakes, and they are at a loss in the basic grammar they have learned in junior middle school. In helping these students, I want to make them more confident, show more initiative and become more motivated in their learning. For the teacher, it is must that he should first try to be a friend to the weak student. When a friendship is built, student starts loving his teacher and after that he obeys whatever his teacher says. Here mystery of student's success lies in understanding and friendship between teacher and the student. To help to create a friendly, well-disciplined and a united class atmosphere, in which I believe it is good for students to study. This would not only help the students to be more confident with them but also helps the students have more initiative and self-responsibility for their study. Each student, whether of poor achievement or not, has his/her own sense of identity. They may be slow in their learning for a variety of reasons therefore the teaching methods used to help these students should also be varied. Teachers always find it difficult to deal with slow learners. Often teachers try to advise such students and get results by negative enforcement like punishment. But it is not the right solution. Teachers should give time to think over such students to get a better solution. Following guidelines will help teachers to improve slow learners:

1. Group Work

It is a universal phenomenon that the students are filled with anxiety and worry and feel insecure in learning the second language. Group work can be useful for them in various ways. The groups can be made of mixed levels or similar ones. The hope is that in a smaller group, the weaker student will feel more able to contribute. Also, if

the group works with a set of information, divide the information between the students, forcing them to work together. Division of class into groups can be done for the whole lesson that enables the teacher to give a different level or number of tasks to each group. Discussion of this strategy with the class can help prevent stigmatization.

According to my own observation, the poorer a student is in second/foreign language, the less sense of security he has. In my teaching I found that one of the main reasons that students do not want to act voluntarily in the class is because they are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by others. Some weak learners also have a problem that they forget what they learn. That's why such students lose confidence and they start differentiating themselves from good students. Teacher's duty here is to give them tips on how to recall and how to write correctly. In this method, students can compare their answers in pairs or in small groups. The teacher then collects the information and prepares a statistical representation of the key questions and answers. This will help to develop the sense of shared interest in the class.

Good and strong students in class do not like to sit with weak students. This is another cause for no improvement in weak students. Teachers should prepare seating arrangements properly to let weak students sit with strong ones. Teachers can also ask strong students to help their weak fellows. It can be done as follows:

(i) Work groupings: Varying the way students work in the class that helps meet the variety of levels in the class.

(ii) Pair works: Pair with strong students with strong, weak students with weak or strong with weak can be made. In a very controlled activity, the strong students with weak students work well. In a freer activity, strong with strong will be of benefit. Variety in the pairings is the key here - and the teacher should be sensitive to the general relationships between different students, and learn to note who works well with whom.

(iii) Whole class/ Mingles: A mingles activity involves students talking or interacting with many different members of the class in a short period of time in order to achieve a task. This means that any one student will work with students at different levels - experiencing stronger and weaker levels of communication. This supports the weaker students and provides opportunities for the stronger ones. Mingles can take many forms – students may have to find the person who has a matching word to theirs, or the second half of a split sentence. The students may all have the same or different questions, or a mixture. The key is the general principle of an information gap or communicative need.

2. Initiative Learning

Often weak students do not understand the lesson clearly.Such students should be taught individually according to their understanding level. Teaching of English requires encouragement from the teacher to help students discover by themselves the way of language learning. Strong learning skills and positive work habits are often indicators of future success in school, home, and in life in general. As a result of teacher-centered teaching, most of the students were very dependent in their learning. Students

got answers easily from the teacher or from other students, and then they easily left them behind. Everything seemed to be becoming clearer in the class, but everything seemed to be confusing after class. Teacher should consider how well the students act upon new ideas and opportunities. For better learning the students should:

   (i) demonstrate a willingness to take risks, demonstrate curiosity and interest in learning;

   (ii) approach new tasks with a positive attitude and recognize and advocate appropriately for the rights of self and others;

   (iii) help their fellow learners to take more initiativesand try to work out their own questions;

   (iv) try to solve the questions by themselves before the teacher discusses the 'best' answers in the class.

3. Discussion and Analysis

It is easy for students to get frustrated in a class of mixed ability groups. Stronger students may feel held back, weaker students may feel pressured. The teacher may feel stressed. The best solution to this situation is to have an open-class discussion about the classroom situation – to ensure the best for everyone. It is probably best to stage and structure the discussion. Use a needs analysis to prompt the students to reflect upon their learning style, learning strategies, language needs, learning enjoyment, motivation, language strengths and weaknesses. Questions that might be included are: What kinds of class activities do you enjoy / benefit from? Which language skill do you most wish to develop? Do you prefer working individually or with a partner? Would you rather sit and listen to the teacher all lesson or participate in group work?

4. Encouragement

Encouragement plays an important role in the success of a child. Teachers should find out strengths of weak students and applaud them with encouraging words. If a student is given confidence, he will feel his importance and worth. Making mistakes doesn't mean stupidity; it shows the learning process. Once confidence level of weak students increases, improvement takes place. A teacher should pay attention to every little progress of each student, especially towards those who are slow learners. Appreciation plays a very important role for hard work and progress. It can be oral or written. As the marks obtained in examinations are taken in high esteem, students become more active if marks are given in practice exercises. Classroom practice enables students to learn on regular basis. Weak students are identified easily and they are given opportunities to seek the ways of improvement. Jean McNiff truly remarks: As each tree of a different height has its own right to grow, students also should be treated according to their individual abilities and their own characteristics; they should be treated as individuals.

5. Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-based learning focuses on the use of authentic language through meaningful tasks such as visiting the doctor or a telephone call. This method is very encouraging

and helps the teaching to be student-centred. TBLT has many characteristics like – students are encouraged to use language creatively and spontaneously through tasks and problem solving; they focus on a relationship that is comparable to real world activities. The conveyance of some sort of meaning is central to this method. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome.

6. Innovative Teaching Approaches

Teachers should give concrete examples before proceeding to abstract concepts by way of simple and easy steps at a pace in line with the learning abilities of students. Teachers may teach new concepts from different perspectives by various approaches so that students can grasp the ideas through meaningful and repeated illustrations. Teachers should encourage students' active participation by more frequent use of teaching aids, games and activities. They can also make use of information technology and all the teaching resources available to help students understand the main points.

7. Emotional Teaching

A prominent foreign language teaching expert Wang Hongda in a workshop at Chicago remarks that emotion is of the same importance as that of the skills of learning in foreign language teaching. The cohesion of the teacher will be of great help for students' learning, especially for the poor students to improve their level. Teachers always give importance to strong students in classroom. But it is necessary that a teacher should go to weak students and ask them personally whether they have understood the lesson. Teacher's asking approach should be polite and not rude. This fact can't be avoided that students comparatively poor at English learning come from very poor and backward rural areas. In order to make students do what a teacher wants them to do, there must be trust and willingness for an active learning atmosphere. Persuade a weak student to make a time table for study. Sometimes students do not have a specific goal regarding their education. Teachers should observe such students and inspire them to fix a goal for study and life as well. Help such student to make a time table so that s/he can do everything on right time. Many teaching experts believe that a harmonious and friendly relationship is of great importance to motivate students especially those who are comparatively poor. It helps them to learn in a relaxed environment.

8. Teaching Activities/Aids and Supporting Materials

Teachers should design appropriate learning activities in line with the focus of teaching. On the basis of low starting point, small steps, diversified activities and instant feedback, teachers should encourage students to participate actively during the learning process to help master the skills and methods of collaborative learning. Diversified teaching activities such as situational teaching, competitions, collation of information, discussion, oral reporting, games, topical research, production of graphs/figures/models, role play, recording, visit and experiments may help students enhance their interest in learning. Teachers should exercise their discretion in the appropriate use of teaching aids. Appropriate teaching aids not only help to enhance students' interest in learning,

but also consolidate the knowledge they learned, thus achieving the objective of teaching. Common teaching aids are concrete objects, figures, models, word cards, number cards and audio-visual equipment such as tape recorder, headset, wire free induction loop system and multimedia teaching aids, etc. When designing and using teaching aids, teachers should first consider their practical use and assess whether the aim of remedial teaching can be attained.

9. Student Self-Awareness skill

Self-awareness helps an individual to tune into their feelings as well as to the behaviour and feelings of others. Students should be encouraged to develop an awareness of their own language abilities and learning needs. What are their strengths and weaknesses, and how can they focus on these or how can they measure their own progress? This may take the form of a learners' diary, regular self-assessment, keeping records of mistakes, keeping records of things learnt. Self-awareness is the capacity to recognize one's own feelings, behaviour, and characteristics to understand one's cognitive, physical and emotional self. Private and public self-awareness are two kinds of self-awareness that work together to help students understand that what they think and feel. How they see themselves might not always be the way others see them. When students have good self-awareness skills, they would recognize their strengths and weaknesses. They can identify what they need to do to complete a task. They can recognize errors in their writings and edit or change. They can understand and talk about their feelings. They can recognize others' needs and feelings.They can see how their behaviour affects others.

10. Grammar and Listening Comprehension

Students should follow a comprehensive development-programme in language learning, which consists not only of grammar, words and expressions but also their speaking and listening abilities. Grammar helps in sentence construction which provides students with the framework for the clear written expression of various ideas. Students will understand the benefits of writing with correct punctuation. Sentences always begin with a capital letter and end in a full stop, exclamation or question mark.

Listening skills are also important that should be taught in an interesting and effective way that should not only be limited to the classroom but also in a normal conversation. Students should be taught as how to give undivided attention to a person with whom a conversation takes place.

11. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Multiple Intelligence theory encompasses a wide variety of teaching strategies that can be implemented in the classroom. Gardner's theory suggests that no one set of teaching strategies will work best for all students at all times, and thus he suggests that instructors shift their intelligence emphasis from lesson to lesson. Below is a summary of eight ways of teaching, followed by a list of specific teaching strategies. Further ideas can also be accessed in the MI Activity Centres section.

Intelligence	Teaching Activities	Teaching Materials	Instructional Strategies
Verbal/ Linguistic	lectures, discussions, word games, storytelling, journal writing	books, tape recorders, computers, stamp sets, books on tape	read about it, write about it, talk about it, listen to it
Logical-Mathematical	brain teasers, problem solving, science experiments, mental calculation number games, critical thinking	calculators maths manipulative, science equipment, maths games	quantify it, think critically about it, put it in a logical framework, experiment with it
Visual/ Spatial	visual presentations, art activities, imagination games, mind-mapping, metaphors, visualisation	graphs, maps, video, LEGO sets, art materials, optical illusions, cameras, picture library	see it, draw it, visualise it, colour it, mind-map it
Bodily-Kinaesthetic	hands-on learning, drama, dance, sports, tactile activities, relaxation exercises	building tools, clay, sports equipment, manipulative, tactile learning resources	build it, act it out, touch it, get a "gut feeling" of it, dance it
Musical	rhythmic learning, rapping, using songs that teach	tape recorder, music collection, musical instruments	sing it, rap it, listen to it
Interpersonal	cooperative learning, peer tutoring, community involvement, social gatherings, simulations	board games, part supplies, props for role plays	teach it, collaborate on it, interact with respect to it
Intrapersonal	individualised instruction, independent study, options in course of study, self-esteem building	self-checking materials, journals, materials for projects	connect it to your personal life, make choices with regard to it, reflect on it
Naturalist	nature study, ecological awareness, care of animals	plants, animals, naturalists' tools (e.g. binoculars), gardening tools	connect it to living things and natural phenomena

12. Assessment and Record on Learning

Assessment plays a very important role in teaching and learning. By means of assessment, remedial teachers can know the learning progress as well as strengths and weaknesses of students; hence, they may design different teaching activities accordingly to help students learn in an effective manner. The two most common assessment methods are listed as follows for teachers' reference:

(i) **Formative Assessment –** Teachers can understand and assess the learning abilities of students from their daily class-work and homework as well as individual or group projects, such as model making, drawing, information collection, measuring activities and the way they relate daily events to the topics they learnt in class, so that they can revise the teaching content accordingly.

(ii) **Summative Assessment –** With reference to the progress of teaching, teachers may assess the performance of students by means of examinations/ tests. The examination/test papers must cover all the main points in teaching where the levels of difficulty meet the students' abilities. The weighting of questions and marks should be balanced.

The use of innovative methods in educational institutions has the potential not only to improve education, but also to empower people, strengthen governance and galvanize the effort to achieve the human development goal for the country. Undoubtedly, the teacher plays a fundamental and central role in the life of the student. He provides him with scientific approach, knowledge, morals, behaviour, belief and ambition as he spends together almost eight hours a day full of activities, vitality and vigour. These hours are longer than those the student spends with his parents and relatives. These mentioned modern methodologies are also more effective in encouraging students to communicate and in creating a positive attitude to the subject which is the most important aspects of student's education.

13. Word Games

The most important part of any language is the vocabulary. To understand the meaning of the words and to use them in day to day life is a very difficult task and games can help the students overcome this difficulty. Games like scrabble, housie etc. have been designed for this specific purpose. These games are just based on words and help the students develop their vocabulary. In addition to these, very simple games can be played to help improve the word database of the students such as simple dictation competitions, synonym competitions, words puzzles, anagrams and hangman. All these games are very addictive and help a lot in improving vocabulary as whenever the student hears a new word the first question that comes up is -what is its meaning?and in this way the vocabulary enriches.

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Book Reviews

Ada Aharoni and Vijay Kumar Roy, eds. *Anti-Terror and Peace: IFLAC Anthology*. Amazon Kindle Edition, 2016. Pp. 253. Price: US$ 4.99. ASIN: B01GK74UKC. Web.

Reviewed by
Pejman Masrouri*

Bringing together voices from around the globe, Ada Aharoni and Vijay Kumar Roy's newest publication, *Anti-Terror and Peace: IFLAC Anthology* is a crucial and timely contribution in today's troubled times.

Contributors hail from twenty-three different countries and offer a rich composite of multicultural experiences with one goal in mind – to eradicate violence and terrorism and replace it with hope and peace. A variety of expression is shared, including thoughtful and well-researched articles, art, poetry, short stories, and essays. I feel that each piece has been carefully chosen to stimulate interest, thought, discussion, and, most importantly, action.

As contributor Njero Kathangu Mtumishi, of Kenya, points out, "The war on terrorism can only succeed where justice is looked at from a human angle and not just in legal exchange." He eloquently summarizes that "Carrying arms disables the tongue." Fellow contributor, Free Pen, of France, shares a similar message, in that, "The war on terrorism solely by planes from the sky, is shortsighted, because it attacks the effect rather than the cause." He is right, because the terrorist ideology consists of words, and thus only words can bring out its elimination.

The battle against terrorism requires voices of peace and reconciliation but also deep thinkers and leaders, all of which we find in this innovative and excellent book. Lidia Chiarelli, of Italy, poetically communicates this in her included poem, "Paths to Peace" which end with this hopeful message, speaking about writers and poets of peace who condemn terrorism, she writes:

> they will be
> a new song
> in the deep blue sky
> that will not switch off
> in the dark of the night

Overall, this anthology serves to challenge leaders, thinkers, writers and media around the world, to show that the pen is mightier than the sword which is the logo of IFLAC.

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As contributor Muthoni Likimani from Kenya puts it, "My pen my bullet." Raising our collective voices in whatever means possible is key to achieving peace in our lifetime.

Ada Aharoni, who is Founder and World President of IFLAC: The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace, states in her contributed interview with Patrick Sammut of Malta, that she would like to see "more poets become 'conscious caretakers' of our beautiful world." She also mentions the importance of leaders, thinkers, and media to condemn world terror. In her own contribution to the anthology, she goes further, espousing the concept of not only diplomatic efforts to overcome terrorism but even of "Diplomatic Poetry," which is meant to bring warring sides together and pave the way to peaceful reconciliation and a world beyond terror, war and violence.

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* *Link: https://www.amazon.com/ANTI-TERROR-PEACE-IFLAC-ANTHOLOGY-ebook/ dp/B01GK74UKC*

Vijay Kumar Roy. *Realm of Beauty and Truth: A Collection of Poems*. **New Delhi: Authorspress, 2016. PB, pp. 86. Price: ₹ 250 / $12. ISBN: 978-93-5207-250-7.**

Reviewed by
Patricia Prime*

Vijay Kumar Roy teaches English at Northern Border University, Arar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is editor-in-chief of *Ars Artium* (www.arsartium.org), a research journal of humanities and social sciences published from New Delhi. The rationale of Roy's collection of poems, we're told on the back cover is that *Realm of Beauty and Truth* is a collection that covers the themes of beauty, truth, love, spirituality, patriotism, peace and universal brotherhood.

A characteristic of Roy's poem is the presence of inherence, concision and not a little weight: this excerpt is from "In the lap of My Mother":

> Wandering amid hills and forests
> I'm captured by Her beatific smiles
> Ever gaze creates an Elysium
> And rouses the powers of penance of Vishwamitra.

This poem, with its very sentimentality, exemplifies all Roy's strengths. The control of lines, the references to deities are exemplary. The line rarely falters, always carries with it a sort of ease; it understands the importance of elegance but never strives too obviously to achieve it. The lines are often perfectly attuned to the subject matter, as we see in "A Pius Pursuit":

> The blowing of winds, trembling of leaves,
> Waves of water, chirping of birds,
> Movements of innocent babes and beasts,
> Beauty of flowers and moonlit nights, and
> Existence of the living and non-living entities

Here, the longer opening lines give us the movement of wind, leaves, water, birds, babes and beasts.

The single stanza of "Loss or Gain" inducts us into its own deeply intriguing and atmospheric reality. Roy is ambitious in his acclamations:

> Honesty weeps bitterly
> Morality repents for its fate
> Spirituality hides in a corner
> Virtue has lost its power

However, he is unshowy; has a high intelligence but avoids ostentation.

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In "The Greatest Jewel", Roy gives us an insight into what he thinks is "a jewel of great price" – "Shyness". Roy's insights are as innovative as his use of language. Maybe the subjects he writes about demand a more flexible language because many of the poems consider identity and instead of finding something fixed and certain, they find shifting ground. In "Life and Death", for example, he writes, "Let me praise death – the dearest / To meet life after knowing all mystery."

The long poem "A Fortunate Father" ends with the following lines,

> … there is no vainness
> In worshipping Me
> …, being once Mine,
> Is Mine forever."

There is a degree of order in the poems, a separating of one thought from another, a visual and syntactical more that signals a change in thought. This allows us to see how Roy occupies a threshold between different ideas: order and chaos, sorrow and joy, sensuality and spirituality. Several of the poems are of a spiritual nature. In "Eternal Bliss", for example, in this beautiful poem of love, he writes,

> With spirit of Savitri
> Devotion of Sita
> Sacrifice of Urmila and
> Learning of Vidyottama
> She enlightens me
> With her innovative wisdom.

A rather affecting love poem, "Fruit of Love" with its reference to "the force of love", begins with these lines:

> The force of love is the mightiest
> And most ethereal
> Among all the prime forces
> Within one's ken.

There is a deep personal intensity behind the poem: the poet discovers "a pearl of great price" – a gift, which can only be found in the sea. "Morning Sighs" describes what it was like to the young and to hide one's passions, but now "Devotion to God and love-lorn passion" receives all his attention.

The first two stanzas of "Poor But of True Heart" describe a beautiful person, before whom the poet appears to be ashamed, but the last stanza offers the fact that not only God is not on his side, but nature too:

> Not only God is against me
> Nature too, seems the same
> But in spite of their ill-will
> My heart s love-worthy still.

There is a link between this poem and the rather unsettling "Dour Days". Here the poet describes a woman "Descending from the zigzag alleys of hills" with an

undernourished baby on her back. This episode, so frankly reported, reveals the poet's empathy with those less fortunate than himself.

One of the best of these poems is concerned with brutality, as in the poem of that name. The initial impulse from the author is to describe those people that history will not forget – Hitler, Mussolini, Alexander the Great, Baber and Aurangzeb – "for their over-ambitiousness / and the deeds of tyranny." In "Latent Agony of Major Indian Expatriates" the focus is on the intermingling of past and present, and eloquently it gives recognition to those who are forgotten by history – the natives. The poem explores the "Distinction in practices between them and the natives / Makes them realise immaturity in their changed faith". The impact of discrimination on life is poignantly reflected in ideas of history, nationhood, and the construction of identity.

"A Prayer for My Son" combines the recollection of the poet's son and the celebration of his growth with a wonderful sense of blessing on his life in the final verse:

> Let leading and managerial skills
> touch his feet and no judgement
> should hurt any heart
> instead be a solace to the destitute.

This awareness of the preciousness of life and of those who seek to destroy it is also suggested in the final poem, "Result of Gentleness", where the speaker observes that

> Our values should not be allowed
> To make us forget great lessons of history
> And again come in the clutches of
> Horrendous designs of the awaiting tyrants.

These poems are a moving celebration of what endures, in the individual life and in the human and natural world at large. Vijay Kumar Roy's poetry turns to the power and sustenance of God, or the hear-work that art does, and relishes the difficulties and pleasures to be found in the world. This is a poet who knows the pain as well as the passion of life and transforms them into an understanding of what it is to be human.

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Poetry

Arjun

One powerful way to reduce an enemy's power
Is to employ psychological warfare.
It has been proved many times over
That the greatest battles take place in the mind –
Lose there and you will lose everywhere.

The ancient warrior Arjun, from the *Mahabharata*,
Was a marksman par excellence
Because he focused his arrows so intently
That he saw nothing but the target.
Everything else was unimportant, a distraction, noise.

Like Arjun, you must focus on your personal goals;
Ignoring the haters, gossip mongers and lairs.
When they tell you that you are not 'all that',
Confidently reply, '*Au contraire, mon frair.*
I am all that - and a bag of chips.

'I am the Catcher in the Rye,
That's why I catch everyone's eye.
I am Ananta[1] among slithering serpents,
I am Ganesha[2] among enormous elephants,
I am Hanuman[3] among humanoid monkeys,
I am Arjun among the Pandavas[4],
I am the Joker in the pack; a light unto others.'

Notes:
1. Gigantic nine-headed serpent on which Lord Vishnu is often pictured reclining in Hindu religious lore.
2. Elephant-headed Hindu deity - the god of success (also 'Ganesh').
3. Monkey-headed Hindu deity.
4. A band of heroic warrior brothers in Hindu religious lore.

The Way Things Ought to Be

The more I look, the more I see,
The more I analyze, the more I realize
That this ain't the way things ought to be.

I want to bring Ethics to a Permissive Society,
I want to bring you closer to me.
My love,
Why did you have to blow?
This ain't the way things ought to go!

I'm sitting here, at a quarter past three,
Just chilling here, on the window sill.
I'm about to go From a View to a Kill
Suicidal thoughts are running through my head
Where will I be at a quarter past dead?
But I choose to remove that notion from my head:
Some things are better left unsaid.

When morning comes, I see a Stranger in the Mirror:
That guy looking back can't possibly be me.
What has happened to the African Dream?
What has happened to you and me?
We used to be so happy
Maybe the gods got green with jealousy
Like in that poem called 'Annabel Lee'.

I'm still sitting here, with half an hour to kill,
I'm reflecting on my life thus far
Even though we shouldn't cry over spilt milk.
I turn on the TV news and reel back in horror -
It's like everyone is trying to kill each other!
Armageddon must be just around the corner
'Cause this ain't the way things ought to be.

– Alexander Nderitu*

* *A Kenyan poet, playwright and novelist. Some of his writings have been translated into Swedish, Japanese and Arabic. In 2014, his poem "Someone in Africa Loves You" was represented Kenyan literature at the Commonwealth Games in Scotland. He is the Deputy Secretary-General of PEN Kenya Centre. Address: Alex N Nderitu, P.O. Box: 11789-00100, Nairobi, Kenya. Email: nderitualexander@gmail.com*

Tui's Cry

I sit in a low-slung lawn chair.
The sun is the glittering eye of god.

Astonished, I look on it as if for the first time,
pushing vague fingers through my hair,

straining to catch the tui's cry,
bored by the weather and finished reading,

it seems the next best thing to do
is to go inside and bake a cake.

A mother bakes but never speaks of anger.
Floured fingers from the chosen task.

I run the house from an open book
into its day of quiet work.

A Change of Scenery

It would be so easy to offer you a change of pace
where waters of all colours remain transparent.

A landscape of light failing, filling the air
and the restful evening with gentility.

At the corner of the town lies a monument.
It is not the beginning but a start beyond

the time I didn't know his name.
The chattered nonsense of a crowd of tourists

skips along the dusty road into
the gathering darkness, but

our way lies along the haiku pathway
where the big black dog noses deftly

at the carved stones, leaving her mark
for all to follow in the late sunshine.

Overhead the dark birds, below the breeze.
Hardly a sound now: a ghost of words. Whispers.

Not Myself Today

If you could come to where I wait
I would feel your absence become a presence.

Searching for a number I came across
your name written many years ago.

My pencilled letters feather-light
as though at any moment you might fly away.

I tiptoe to my desk where you will see me
writing at a desk: haiku, tanka or poems.

The scenes of our past life may have gone
but I am still here, sporting that same air

of inevitability. I've the same eyes
that spotted you so many years ago

across the room and thought then
that one day we might grow old together.

It is my turn to haunt you now,
to see where you have flown.

The petals of yesterday's rose
lie around the vase you gave me.

Take note. I am seconds away.
Not daring to glance at your coffin.

– Patricia Prime*

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Buddha and the Bird

the Buddha statue sits quietly
each day the rising sun kisses its face,
a butcher bird descends
perching lightly on the enlightened one,
Buddha unperturbed remains serene.

suddenly I recall Saint Kevin
Heaney's mystical masterpiece[1],
his poem *and* the blackbird
the universe *and* Saint Kevin
merged into oneness.
A mysterious mystical moment
enlightenment beyond words,
beyond books,
beyond repressive doctrines.

the butcher bird in rapture
sings her song sweetly,
I have merged into oneness
with the Sun *and* the Buddha
with Saint Kevin *and* the birds.

NB: 1. "*Saint Kevin and the Blackbird*" (p.25) by Seamus Heaney (in) *The Spirit Level* (1996) Noonday Press.

The last verse:

"'To labour and not to seek reward,' he prays.
A prayer his body makes entirely
For he has forgotten self, forgotten bird
And on the riverbank forgotten the river's name."

Pumpkin Creek

guarded by dense mangroves
a million miles from the fast lane
the humble house awaits

rocky outcrops and eucalypts
the Hawkesbury signature
symbols of an ancient land
dominate my vision

boat access only!
psychic adjustments required here
a reconnection with time and tide;
this is wild country
a place for creating,
a place to reassess values,
a place to laugh at our self-deceptions

the sturdy jetty
a safe landing point
beckons,
my little boat approaches
whoosh, whoosh
and the sun caresses this Nirvana.

NB: Pumpkin Creek is a boat only access creek, a tributary of the mighty Hawkesbury River near Sydney, Australia.

– Rob Harle*

* A reputed writer, artist and academic reviewer. He has published two volumes of his poetry - Scratches & Deeper Wounds (1996) and Mechanisms of Desire (2012), besides various poems in a number of magazines and journals. Address: Robert Francis Harle, Nimbin, Northern NSW - 2480, Australia. Email: harle@robharle.com

Loss

High above the plunging falls and deep ravines
among the boulders laced with whispers
I sense their Dream-time presence

theythat once read every stone and twig
andwove each tweak of nature
intosacred tribal lore

now driftdark inwhite man's towns
likeDreamtime birds lost in flight
trappedinside the white man's nets

I pass them huddled on the grass
bleeding for their severed past
clinging still to filaments of Dreaming

I see them
andcannot meet their shuttered eyes.

– Lilian Cohen*

* *She moved from Melbourne, Australia, to Israel in 1968, living first on Kibbutz Yizrael, then in Haifa, where she taught English at the Leo Baeck Education Institute. In 2013 she returned to Melbourne. A member of the Haifa chapter of the 'Voices' poetry association, her poetry and short stories have appeared in journals in Australia, England, Israel and the U.S.A. Address: Lilian Cohen, Unit 1, 5 Boston Rd, Victoria – 3103, Australia. Email: lilian.cohen6@gmailcom*

Holy Himalayas Beckon Me

An abode of snow, where god resides
in silence and sanctity
in spite of wild and wicked winds,
betwixt meditating mountains
whose forehead the sky is fervent to kiss
and snow-fed rivers flow like lonely souls
who know where to go, go nowhere else,
with tributaries straddling many borders.

Though the fluffy clouds disturb the icy solitude
and the snowy peaks vie with each other
to cuddle the floating clouds that swirl near them,
it lies in a long slumber, even time at pause,
as if to forget pains of the past.

A haughty thought crosses my mind
If I could fly like a bird
over its serene peaks, gracefully,
braving the thrash and lash of the vile wind
to touch their snow-white turbans
and land there gently as a ballerina,
perhaps I can make out
whether they ascend to the sky
or the sky descends to their peaks;
Who holds the flight of stairs?
or sans one at all, with a wish unbound
to make my while worth the voyage.

Life is a Gambling

Life is a gambling;
some gains, some loses.
At the end of the day
when we tally gains or losses
realize it is a play of luck
either bringing rapture
with a feeling of worth,
or driving us into madness
with a roaring sea inside
carrying in its depths
obstinacy, revenge, fear,
hate, deceit, pride and so on
and if we analyzes neutrally
causes and effects of gains or losses
it is obvious we are at the helm of things
and we alone can steer things.

The Surge Unseen

My words want to explore
the deep forests,
mystery of the caves,
peaks, cracks and cleavages,
isolation of the dark forts
hiding in human minds
and I wait for a poetic stir
manifested through diversities
like skepticism of God
insanity of the sane,
or the beauty in the evil
which grants me the muse to write
and so it happens, but I do not know
which atom of my consciousness
starts to feel the very first tickle of it,
like the sea which can't remember
from which drop of its water
the tides start to surge.

An Evening at Marina

I meander my way at the sea coast
to escape the sweltering heat that toasts
enjoying the sea's salty kiss upon my feet
as the sky sings the title song of the night
on the faded glory of the dying day
the chance of the day's last rays,
maybe their last wish too
to impress dusk with their sheer beauty
to bid adieu on a good note at sunset
a farewell multihued
with full of pigments billowing
as that of a painters pallet
and I see the sun watching
its own reflection in the mirror of the ocean
from behind the curtain of dark clouds
those take a trot in the sky to trim their waists

– K. Pankajam*

* *A bilingual writer, poet and novelist. She retired from BHEL as Dy. Manager (Finance). She has to her credit thirteen published works including seven books of poems. She has been featured along with other poets in the book of essays Femininity-Poetic Endeavours by Dr. V.V. B. Rama Rao. Her poems have been published in various online journals and included in many anthologies. Address: K. Pankajam, Block 2, 1A, Ceebros Orchid, 263/33, Velachery Main Road, Velachery, Chennai - 600 042, Tamil Nadu (India). Email: kp_bhargavrag@yahoo.co.in*

The Cry

There's this blankness in the air,
everything on the loose
crying raw, raw, rawraw!

Integrity has left in search of another moon
for now, dewdrops in the mornings
are written off as rains by historians
misguided people are busy separating
perfumes from sandal woods,
warmth from the moving cadavers.

Imbalance has become the plat du jour,
insomnia is the new intellectual identity,
art of killing, backstabbing is the new-found intelligence
anything else is seen as a recipe for non-sense.

Businesses somehow survive without users,
for only in advertisements we see creative work, kind words,
what is not innate has become resident for good
all neighborhoods have gone back into the woods,
but even here they are unruly, disobedient strangers,
fleshes and bloods have become hard, as solid red irons.

The pumping heart is useless in living bodies;
from those who are dead, it has fled
like a screeching bird, chirping a strange cry
looking for another sky.

I want to Live in a World

I want to live in a world where
We have the liberty to eat
Vegetables or meat,
Where hospitals are not unfair
To turn healthy persons into patients,
Where lands are not snatched
And government's main governance
Doesn't restrict towards collecting tax.

I want to live in a world where
Countries engage
In global parity of wealth and welfare
Not market weapons to flaunt self-defeating strength,
Where leaders fight for growth and peace
Than avenging themselves for trivial that and this,
Where concern and care for people go to any length.

I want to live in a world where
Winning remains in the spirit,
But competition doesn't become a thoroughfare
For crime, injustice and deceit,
Where weapons of every kind, soft and hard
Are bid farewell for good,
Where peace can be seen and heard
In every single neighbourhood.

– Supratik Sen*

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Not in Your War Anymore

"War is as anachronistic as cannibalism,
slavery and colonialism…"
— Rosalie Bertell

No Immediate Answer

I am not in your war anymore.
Surely we cannot paint war green
when even the long Cold War is dying,
so let's paint it in all its true
foliage colours, to help its fall

First, flowing flamboyant crimson blood
on throbbing temples and hands,
then russet bronze fiery metal cartridges
stuffing the crevices of young hearts
while golden laser Napalm dragon tongues
gluttonously lick the sizzling eyes and lips
of our children, under
giant mushrooms
freshened by mustard and acid rain
Surely, at the close of our
great atomic century
we will soon find the archaic
history tree, where we can dump
our fearful bottle legacy

And our grandchildren
will ask their fathers,
what were tanks for, Pa?
And with eyes full of wonder,
they will read the story of the
glorious imprisonment
of the Nuclear Giant
in his bottle, corked forever,
and will say –
Well done Pa, well done Ma!

Eve's Defence

You didn't have to accept
That shiny juicy apple
Did you Adam dear?

Please remove those
Musty fig leaves
From your memory and ears
And remember Adam dear,
You were created
From mere earth,
Whereas I was sculpted
From a much finer substance
Finer than ivory
Finer than gold.

In the rush of your
Heart's blood
In the throbbing of your temples
Remember Adam dear -
I was created
From pure human bone

Your strong rib-bone
Became me - Eve
Mother of Life.

Always remember
Dearest Adam
Free, indepedent Eve
Is - You.

– Prof. Ada Aharoni*

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