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# **THE INVESTIGATOR**

**An International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Multidisciplinary Explorations**  
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## **Editor's Note**

*The Investigator* is an international refereed multidisciplinary journal published quarterly (March, June, September and December), launched under the auspices of the academic community *Association for Cultural & Scientific Research (ACSR)*. Keeping the panoramic scopes of research as a vibrant path, *The Investigator* intends to reflect on the skilled minds attitudinally conjuring from humanities to other disciplines. The journal explores the currents of criticism and unleashes divergent thinking. It welcomes original, scholarly unpublished papers from the researchers, faculty members, students and the diverse aspirants writing in English. It is a peer reviewed journal that brings the scholarship of academicians and practitioners around the world. *The Investigator* hopes and wishes to provide a self assuring means to you for your further accomplishments.

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**Man, Nature and God as Projected in the  
Poetical Works of Robert Frost: A Brief Analysis**

*This paper explores the poetic skill of Robert Frost in making a blending of man, nature and God as the major theme projected in his poetic realm. It evidently projects Frost as a poet of world-wide renowned commanding appeal to the learned as well as to the common run of mankind and examines how his ordinary and simple poetic experiences got turned into weighty themes of emotion and pathos giving the American texture to the poetic content of his experiences on the pattern of William Wordsworth, bringing home the point that Frost is a grim philosopher with his persistent search for truth in his life and poetic mission.*

Robert Frost was a poet of world-wide renowned commanding universal appeal to the learned as well as to the common run of mankind. It is said that few poets in modern times have reaped as much fame as the American poet Robert Frost. As a measure of his success, it can be said that he was the recipient of the Pulitzer prize on four occasions (1924, 1931, 1937 & 1943). He is said to have made his readers live in the benign presence of Nature as Wordsworth did. He gave American texture to the poetic content of his experiences on the pattern of William Wordsworth. Like Wordsworth, Frost dealt with the themes pertaining to the widest commonality spread all the sundry. Frost's poems like those of Wordsworth are noted for their simplicity and grandeur; for he turned simple experiences into weighty themes of emotion and pathos. As a poet of the modern era, he took for him themes common place subjects and invested them with profound philosophical ideas.

Born on March 26, 1874 in San Francisco, the family of Frost moved to New England where he had his early education. He then left for Dartmouth College for his collegiate education. But he did not continue for long and tried his hand in various types of work such as in a mill and in a shoe factory. He did turn his attention to writing and he had a stint as a newspaper reporter. Soon he found that farming was best to his taste and temperament. It also proved to be highly paying. He was qualified not only to do farming but also teaching work by virtue of his experience at the Harvard University for two years. He taught in the Prince town Academy and also at the New Hampshire State Normal School. In 1912, he sold his farm and broke new grounds by becoming a writer. As a writer, he was found trying his hand in writing poems and had a blue moon to meet recognised poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The first recognition of Frost as a poet came not from his own country but from England which published his poems. In 1914, Frost returned to the United States and hence forward, it was a long road of success for him as a poet of repute and wide recognition.

Robert Frost is a poet of our time but he does not belong to the main current of modern poetry. At a time when American Poetry was ready to shake off the "threadbare conventionalism of outworn tradition", Frost strode on to the literary stage as a conservative poet. However, he was not only a conservative but also an



ardent experimentalist. He is the best loved of modern American poets and he is admired for his candour and lucidity, for his penetrating insight into the primal instincts of man. In his ‘gnarled, wise, deceptively simple verse’, one can hear the authentic voice of New England. In the words of Subodh Kumar Sinha, “Reading Robert Frost is like meeting an intimate friend” (p.194). In ‘two Tramps in Mud Time’, Frost makes an avowal of his mission in his life:

“My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes made one in sight,  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For Heaven and the future’s sakes”.

No doubt, Frost was a very conscious poet who took his poetry seriously and considered it a manifestation of the poet’s own joy communicated to the responsive reader. He had to his credit publication of such volumes as *A Boy’s Will*, *North of Boston*, *Mountain Interval*, *New Hampshire*, *A Further Range*, *The Witness Tree* besides the publication of some criticisms and a few plays. His poems have a simple, unforced lyric charm written as naturally and effortlessly as breathing. He is “a country man” with a deep love of natural things for field, and pasture, bird and flower, animal and tree. Though he has described the general life amidst nature, its joys and fears, its growth and decay and expressed all this in the idiom of daily speech, he does not go away from expressing his ideas in a highly philosophical perspective. His poetry has no doubt, an eternal fragrance bathing in moral and philosophical traits and perspectives.

Truly speaking, Robert Frost is said to have written a good number of poems which are essentially philosophical. Philosophical poetry normally raises fundamental questions about life and death and man’s destiny in the universe. Frost certainly raises philosophical questions but his answers are vague and often ambivalent. The reason for this vagueness and ambiguity is that Frost does not have any systematic or coherent philosophy to preach. It is also impossible to reduce his philosophical thinking to a diagrammatic accuracy. However, when certain views are expressed repeatedly in one poem after another, one may be excused for taking them as expressive of his considered view of life. From a study of Frost’s poetry, one may know about his views on men and God and his views are a measure of his sanity and profundity. Beneath his apparent simplicity and whimsicality, there runs the clear stream of ‘his rich and ripe philosophy.’

Frost seems to believe that the universe includes three orders of being Man, Nature and God. The three orders are almost, but not quite, discontinuous and their common element is a tendency to express themselves in orderly configurations. Man builds walls, Nature establishes zones and seasons. God constructs a cosmos. Thus, in the broadest sense, man has both divine and natural sanction for his effort to find or invent patterns and meanings; but only in the broadest sense. It is not at all clear that either Nature or God is concerned with man’s designs, and that there are any moral imperatives other than that man makes for himself. Frost pictures man as a solitary,

lonely figure, isolated and alienated from Nature, from God and from his fellow men. He conceives of Nature as soulless, mechanical, and impersonal. Man and Nature are two different principles separated from each other by insurmountable barriers. Nature may, on some special occasions, show some love or concern for man, but such occasions are in the nature of a 'favour' and not the general rule. In "two Look at Two", a deer and a buck stare at a man and woman from behind a man-made fence, and that is all. In "the Most of It", the magnificent buck that swims across the lake towards man is the most of it that nature has given. It is a terrifying poem, as terrifying as W.B. Yeats' "The Second Coming" and it brings out the completeness of man's isolation in his vast and impersonal environment. Such poems make critics like Trilling declare that Frost's view of the human predicament is a terrifying one.

Frost is almost skeptic with reference to any philosophical absolutes. In the sharp-edged satire of "The Bear", he symbolises the pathetic absurdity of man's efforts to extend the area of his understanding by either scientific invention or speculative thought. Frost prefers the wisdom that is nourished by understanding and tolerance and observation. His value as a philosopher lies in the home-spun intelligence which shines through his poetry. His poems provide ample wisdom of prudential kind which should serve as effective guidelines to our everyday conduct. He is a classicist in his belief in the Aristotelian golden mean, and in his faith in a balance between the extremes of hope and despair belief and doubt, self-love and society. Ethically, he advocates self-reliance and personal integrity. He looks upon integrity as operating through a variety of choice rather than between the two absolutes of evil and good. In "A Masque of Mercy", Frost teaches the lesson: "Nothing can make injustice just but mercy". The most moving part of this poem is the unshaken recognition that "our sacrifice, the best we have to offer, may not be found acceptable in heaven's sight". Frost is afraid of God as stated in these lines:

But I'm too much afraid of God to claim  
I have been fighting on the angels' side  
That is for Him and not for me to say,  
For me to say it would be irreligious". (Lines: 732-735)

To feel this fear of God and to go ahead in spite of it in man's principal virtue according to Frost. In "The Black Cottage", Frost says that a belief which seems to have ceased to be true may turn true again:

"Most of the changes we think  
We see in life  
Is due to truth being in  
and out of favour" (38).

However, his persistent search for truths does not mean that Frost is a grim philosopher. His touch is always light and always sure. His "After Apple-Picking" reveals that when the poet approaches the figure of heaven, he is careful to return to earth; he leaves his ladder in the apple tree, pointing toward heaven still, but he himself comes down. While Frost accepts life as tragic for himself, as in the sonnet, "Acquainted with the Night", for other people, his attitude is one of hopefulness.

Frost cannot be described as a great philosophic poet, at the same time his philosophy cannot be described as something cheap and insignificant. The one thing that is especially notable in Frost is that he gives expression to philosophic thought in a style that is naturally conversational. The rich and ripe philosophy, this sense of universal understanding, is in everything Frost has written, even the earliest. "The Tuft of Flowers", a poem in first volume, expresses the whole spirit of human participation. Even those who think they work alone, apart from others, have more they have known in common: "My work together," I told him from the heart, "Whether they work together or apart".

The poem "A Boundless Moment" displays Frost's intelligently humble attitude particularly well. The ethical views of Frost, are however, unambiguous and clear, and his poetry is, at times, a source of inspiration and moral instruction for his readers. One of the most ethical thought of Frost is that we should not be afraid of difficulties and failures and should keep up courage in the midst of dangers and adversities. His poem "Our Singing Strength" is a characteristic poem from this point of view. The poem is praise of those struggles and singers who are not daunted by storms or defeated by adversity:

"The country's singing strength thus brought together  
That thought repressed and moody with the weather  
Was none less there ready to be freed  
And sing the wild flowers up from root and seed".

In yet another poem also, he has expressed the thought that man should accept life as it is, with its failure and incomplete projects In *A Trial by Existence*, he writes that it is futile to seek for an explanation for the problems and difficulties which face man. The conclusion reached is, "a recognition that suffering is always in terms of what we are, not an alien something hitting us by chance from without, but somehow or other implicit in our very constitution". Human life on this earth is trial and therefore, suffering is inherent in the human lot" (23).

Truly speaking, many of Frost's poems carry a moral, but the moral is usually presented either as an argument running through a descriptive or sensuous lyric, or as part of a dramatic situation. It is very seldom that Frost makes his "lessons" as overt and obvious as Wordsworth sometimes did. He is a serious moralist as well as a serious artist. The rich and rich philosophy of Frost gets revealed in the simple nature of his philosophical speculation. Instead of dealing with the obstinate questionings of sense and outward thing, of the deep and impenetrable problems of human existence, he deals with the ethical questions of day-to-day life. He wants to make it a point that there will always be occasions for complaints against human life but wisdom consists in accepting the imperfections rather than complaining against them. "An old man's Winter Night" in which loneliness is bound up with the problem of old age is posing the eternal question of man's place in the universe. The poem is charged with a deep note of pathos, summed up in the lines:

"One aged man – one man can't keep a house  
A farm, a countryside, or if he can  
It's thus he does it of a winter night."

“Desert Places” points to a wasteland in the heart of man which is harder to bear, than the wasteland of the surrounding world. However, Frost suggests that an intimate acquaintance with the grim reality of human life strengthens man’s spirit to bear isolation and separateness as the poet puts it:

“They cannot scare me with their empty spaces.  
Between stars – on stars where no human race is  
I have it in me so much nearer home  
To scare myself with my own desert places”.

The sense of isolation gets implied in the richly ambivalent poem, “Directive”. It deals with a kind of journey which assumes different forms and directions but is, in reality, an inward movement, an exploration of the wounded psyche of the modern man who has fallen upon the thorns of life. In poem after poem, Frost has mirrored the somber aspects of human life and indicated that man must endure his human condition and live authentically in it, for there is no escape from his consigned doom. Man’s bound and disabled lot is brought out in “The Bear” which states:

“Man acts more like the poor bear in a cage,  
That all day fights a nervous inward rage.  
His mood rejecting all his mind suggests”.

Frost has powerfully demonstrated the perplexity that haunts the modern man who suffers because of a dichotomy between his mind and his mood. Frost often works with two themes, one is concerned with man’s ‘limitedness’ which lies in the fact that he lives in a world not made just for him and he cannot therefore be sure of absolute and final answers. The other theme is a corollary from this. If man cannot be sure of absolute powers, he must do what is necessary to be done in a spirit of love. Frost does not like to make any sweeping statements about God, just as he does not make such statements about Nature or Man. This has given rise to the belief among some critics that Frost is at best an agnostic. But perhaps he feels like this in “A Passing Glimpse”:

“Heaven gives its glimpses only to those  
Not in position to look too close” (Lines: 11-12)

“Trial by Existence” reminds one of the Wordsworth’s “Ode on Intimations of Immortality”. Frost’s poem shows the soul in heaven before it comes to the earth. The soul, which is heroic, comes to the earth in order to pit itself against the uttermost of earth”. But it is God’s will that no soul shall of its heavenly existence could be a source of such, comfort to the soul on earth that its trial on earth would be less heroic. Only by being deprived of memories of heavenly existence can a man be rid of pride. “Trial by Existence’ is allegorical, through it, Frost argues that man cannot lay aside his varying opinion of himself and come to rest in an official verdict straight from God, as Job in “A Mosque of Reason”, hopes to do. God’s most comforting words to Job are that together, He and Job have found out that what man need most to be taught was “submission to unreason”. Thus, according to Frost, that is the way things stand between man and God. Man continually repeats that the artist in him “cries out for design”. But God will not allow men to see completely into the life of things. The

barrier between God and man is maintained. To this barrier are added the limitations imposed on man by his reason or mind and his desire or heart. Yet reason and desire arouse the complementary faith which helps man to accept his situation and grow from that point of acceptance.

Robert Frost hesitates to speak dogmatically on the subject to the supernatural. He speaks more freely of God. This gets clearly reflected in his book "A Further Range" and he is said to have devoted "A Mosque of Reason" (1945) and "A Mosque of Mercy" (1947) to the questions to man's relation to God. Frost wishes to justify God's ways to God and he is of the view that man's relationship with God strengthens his individuality, his ability to overcome all evil thoughts and assert his dignity through courage and confident. No doubt, faith in the divine and then most certainly, God would assuage the cruelty and injustice of man's lot on this earth. He states in the "Mosque of Mercy":

"And I can see that the uncertainty  
in which we act is a severity  
A cruelty, amounting to injustice  
That nothing but God's mercy can assuage" (Lines: 737-740)

According to Frost, man can be saved only by God's mercy and to him, God is still one who cares for man, "and will save him, no matter how many times or how completely he has failed". In his essay on "The dimensions of Nature in Robert Frost's Poetry", Salamathullahkhan observes: "In the impersonal natural world, man's relationship with God also assumes moral and metaphysical complications" (p.36). Christian theology has found a place in the poems of Frost. For instance, in "In the clearing", he speaks about the Incarnation. Incarnation is regarded as proof that spirit enters flesh, changing into earth, in birth after birth, but the ending of the poem is scarcely sound theology. "The Fear of God" turns on no Christian conception. It speaks of "an arbitrary God". It seems that this poem speaks of the ancient fear of the gods that is one of the oldest components of religious history. It paints the loneliness of the soul rather than any dependence on deity. Even though Frost sometimes speaks of God and Heaven, it is the physical world, the world of sensible objects, in which Frost fully believes. He is a philosophically inclined poet but he is not a Platonist. On the other hand, he is never merely a materialist.

It might be said that "transcendental traits are found in Frost's poetry in a practical sense. That is whenever Frost treats of the subjects like God, love, social, political and spiritual freedom or the spirit of self-reliance in man or man's fear of a obsession with death etc., he scrutinizes them and throws open hitherto –unexplored avenues of thought hopefully leading to ultimate solutions to the problems; of course, he may not offer his solutions in terms of clear statements but he could invite readers to think aloud along with them and arrive at answers amenable to reason and logic within the framework of the readers' own mental set up" (Subramanian 81). Frost's poems "A Mosque of Reason" and "A Mosque of Mercy" illustrate his attitude to God. Reason and Mercy in relation to man and God are revealed in a world of human beings isolated from the world of nature. Frost's view of man, created by God, is that he should overcome evil and establish himself.

To conclude, Frost is not a person who rejected life out of hand; rather he advocates acceptance of life. He loves the world and life in it, even though he often finds faults with it, quarrels with it as a lover often does with the man he loves. His message in his poetry seems to be that one should love his work, help his fellowmen, understand their views, accept one's limitations, enjoy the moment, face life fearlessly, make the best use of one's energies and skills, and above all, have faith in God. Determined and fearless action in the present is considered by Frost as essential for human salvation. In a nutshell, it may be said that Frost pictures man as a solitary, lonely figure, isolated and alienated from nature, from God and from his fellowmen. Frost's acute awareness of problems, his dedicated but non-committed approach to solutions, thereof and his clear and logical thinking inter-relating men and nature are the hallmarks of his transcendentalistic writings.

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**Humanism as the Bedrock of Multiculturalism  
in the Religious Pluralistic Society of India**

*Multiculturalism stands for the politics of equality and it leads to universal equal rights irrespective of group membership. As we all know, India has a multicultural and religious pluralistic society. This multiculturalism and religious pluralism is maintained here inspite of all differences because of the humanistic tradition inherited to us through our renaissance thinkers. Contemporary Indian thought shows a deep appreciation for the problems of human life and destiny of man. It was their humanistic ideas which inspired them to fight against all social evils that existed in our country. Through this paper my attempt is to highlight the importance of humanism as the basis of our rich cultural heritage which helps our country to maintain its unity and peaceful co-existence inspite of its religious pluralism and multiculturalism.*

We live at a time when ideas and practices spread across boundaries of countries and regions with great rapidity. Cultural interactions can create space for creative innovations which combine constructions with vulnerability. In the opinion of Max Weber, the main cause of social change is the cultural factor because changes in the culture are accompanied by social changes. It is culture that gives speed and direction to social change. Culture includes all that man has acquired in the mental and intellectual sphere of his individual and social life. It possesses the characteristics of communication, adaptation and integration and it is an evidence of man's social heritage. Therefore we can say that culture stands for the outstanding thoughts and ideas of men transmitted to successive generations through the medium of arts, science, history and literature. The individuality of culture is a vast subject now days, and the tendency towards homogenisation of cultures, particularly in some in uniform western mode, or in the deceptive form of modernity has been strongly challenged. The presence of cultural divides raises many problems. There is the more basic issue of individuality of each culture and questions about whether and how this individuality can be respected and valued. The issues of inclusion and exclusion, domination and subjugation identify and segregate people along religious, ethnic and linguistic lines raises a real threat to the peaceful co-existence of divergent human civilisations. We see that there is no country in the world today which is not marked by cultural diversity and India is not an exception. In the Indian context, the vastness of our country with its rich diversities, including the complex entanglements of various groups with one another, particularly the structures of inequality, modes of oppressions and forms of conflict one needs to be perceptive careful and sensitive. The biggest challenge before countries like India is to preserve the pluralistic tradition and bring the various communities in the mainstream of the society by promoting the spirit of multiculturalism. This paper is an attempt to highlight the relevance of

humanism and its significance in the promotion of this spirit of multiculturalism in our society.

Multiculturalism has been defined as an ideology that suggest that society should consists of, or at least recognise and include with equal status, diverse cultural groups. Multiculturalism as an ideal has been regarded both as the entitlement of cultural groups and as a form of civil rights grounded in human dignity and equality of cultures. As stated by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "If there is any phenomenon which is characteristic of our times, it is mingling of people, races, culture and religions. Never before has such a meeting taken place in the history of our world."<sup>1</sup> It is seen as a move towards inter-culturalism, the beneficial exchange where cultures learn about each other. It is often considered as the opposite of mono-culturalism, which implies a normative cultural unity and pre-existing homogeneity. Whereas mono-culturalism assumes rejection of differences and a belief in the superiority of dominant culture, multiculturalism represents acceptance, appreciation, utilisation and celebration of similarity and difference. Bhikhu Parekh, a prominent political theorist and an extensive researcher on multiculturalism, defines it as follows: "multiculturalism is not about difference or identity per se but those that are embedded in and sustained by that culture; that is, a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organise their individual and collective life."<sup>2</sup> Multiculturalism is being looked upon as the only practical option before humanity for responding to the challenges of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious identities. It is an ideology that suggests that society should consists of or at least recognises and includes with equal status diverse cultural groups. Multiculturalism represents acceptance, appreciation, utilisation and celebration of similarity and differences. Cultural diversity is an essential component of multiculturalism, leading to a broader representation of perspectives, world-views, life styles, and language and communication skills. Acknowledging diversity suggests that subordinate groups are not necessarily required to give up their identity or assimilate to dominant norms. It is much more than mere toleration of groups' diversity. In essence, it stands for treating, accommodating and recognising all members as equal citizens whether they belong to minority or majority groups.

The term multiculturalism has been used in different contexts with varying connotations. Will Kymlicka in his work *Multicultural Citizenship* uses this term in a restricted sense focussing on ethnic groups and national minorities and not marginal or disadvantaged groups like gays, the poor, women et al. According to him, "a state is multicultural if its members either belong to different nations (a multination state) or have emigrated from different nations (a poly ethnic state), and if this fact is an important aspect of a personal identity and political life."<sup>3</sup> According to Amartyasen, "genuine multiculturalism is marked by the existence of a diversity of cultures, which tend to interact and even intermingle among themselves. On the other hand, existence of various cultural traditions co-existing side by side, without the twain meeting, could be nothing more than a plural mono-culturalism." Andrew Heywood underscores two forms of multi-culturalism – descriptive and normative. According to him, the former refers to cultural diversity whereas the latter implies a positive endorsement of such diversity. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* describes multiculturalism as an umbrella term to characterize the moral and political claims of wide range of disadvantaged groups, including African Americans, women, gays and



lesbians, and the disabled. Most of the theorists of multi-culturalism tend to focus their arguments on immigrants who constitute ethnic and religious minorities.

Indian society has been multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic from time immemorial. However, India has also faced with various kinds of divisiveness. Therefore the biggest challenge before countries like India is to preserve the pluralistic tradition and to bring the various communities into the mainstream society by promoting the spirit of multiculturalism. As in many other parts of the developing world, Indian society imbibes a composite culture in terms of religion, caste, language and similar other attributes. While these diversities contribute to the richness of a plural society by providing alternatives, it requires a great deal of fine-tuning on the part of the ruling state if it has to avoid conflict of interests within its own territory. Sunanda Sen rightly pointed out this issue and stated that, "One witnesses rising violence in India, large part of which concerns minority culture, religion, language, caste or tribal identities. As some of these dissents and conflicts overlap with regional identities, the federal character of the nation is simultaneously challenged."<sup>4</sup> Concerned citizens in India are worried over the alarming situation of current communal disharmony and there is fear that it might ultimately result in the disintegration of the nation. It is unfortunate that unscrupulous politicians with an eye on vote banks are indirectly supporting the force promoting narrow religious sentiments, and linguistic and regional identity. In the context of such a challenge, the initiative and concerted effort made by the Renaissance thinkers based on humanism provide a frame work for thought and action.

People from almost all major religions constitute India's population and this multi-religious and multi-cultural character of Indian society is deeply rooted in its philosophy and tradition. Multiculturalism is supposed to be egalitarian along with a democratic rather than authoritarian state. This differentiated India from other neighbour countries in the subcontinent were the government had a formal association with majority in terms of religion. The complex and heterogeneous character of Indian polity in terms of religion language, tribal pattern, and caste for regional identity have, however, always posed a dilemma for the secular state, especially in working out a route to true multiculturalism with an egalitarian and democratic order. So the contemporary Indian thinkers of India inculcated an attitude of humanism to accommodate and acknowledge the actively diverse components of Indian society. They tried to nurture such spirit deliberately as an alternate principle to promote harmony and peace in a pluralistic and divided set up to usher a new social order based on equality and universal brotherhood.

The popular concept of humanism is that it is an outlook which elevates man above everything else and demonstrates his supremacy over the rest of the creations. It may be defined as an attempt to explore the ways and means to bring about common welfare and progress of mankind through an all-round enrichment of individual lives. The supreme concern for man is at the centre for every humanistic philosophy. An adequate understanding of man in the context of his total environment is its basic prerequisite. Humanism recognises the infinite potentialities and possibilities of man. It means a system of thought concerned with human affairs in general. It is an attitude which attaches primary importance to man and his faculties, affairs and aspirations. As it is described by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan, "In recognising the central importance of

man in the scheme of things-and emphasising his freedom and individuality and creative power-his role in shaping and moulding his environment with view of making a better and happier world, humanism preached the gospel of activism, full of hope and promise for the future of mankind.”<sup>5</sup> Humanism seeks to clarify and enrich man’s goals, values and ideals and achieve his full humanness through bringing him in ever deeper and more intimate kinship and harmony with the surrounding life and society. Thus we see that humanism is an outlook that demonstrates the supremacy of man and recognises the value or dignity of man and asserts the centrality of human beings.

Indian nationhood and national culture is a delicately balanced system of unity in diversity and if this balance is disturbed by a wrong handling of the cultural problem, there may be terrible disintegration, putting an end not only to the democratic system but to all peace and order and our hard earned freedom may be lost to forces of tyranny, external or internal. So in order to secure the multicultural and religious pluralistic tradition of India, our renaissance thinkers synthesised the ancient Indian values with modern trends of Western science. Contemporary Indian thinkers analysed ancient Indian social-political thought, accepted its philosophical bases, and endorsed its world view and the concept of human nature, condemned social evils and economic exploitation and suggested remedies for these problems. They examined the problems of our country from a nationalistic and patriotic point of view. They cherished the ideal of spiritual nationalism and humanism and wanted to establish universal brotherhood. According to Dr K. Srinivas, “In their philosophies of humanism we come across the distinction made between the concern of philosophy and the ideal of philosophical thinking. The concern of philosophy is to tackle the existential problems of the individuals living in different life-situations. Thus the needs of man and society become the primary concern of philosophy. But the ideal of philosophical thinking makes us realise that at one point of life we have to transcend the limitations of this empirical world to attain absolute freedom. This is the ultimate goal of life. The concern of philosophy makes us motivated individuals to face the various life situations. By cultivating the human values one can, not only lead a pious life that is worth emulation, but can also contribute to build up a society where there is peace and social harmony. This message is reflected in the philosophical treatise of the contemporary Indian Philosophers.”<sup>6</sup> So they worked for the betterment of humanity and inspired man to seek self-realisation with a view to achieve self-perfection which will result in social perfection. Thus they tried to preserve the multiculturalism of India through the spirit of humanism and all of them were humanists in one sense or the other. While analysing the philosophy of most of the contemporary thinkers we find that they were all humanists in a particular sense of the term. For example when we go through the thoughts and ideas of Swami Vivekananda, we find that he tried to give to his philosophy a humanistic grab and strongly recommended humanitarian work and service. But he had an unflinching faith in the ultimate of spiritual pursuits and ideals and so his philosophy may be considered as Spiritual humanism. Thinkers like him have succeeded in obliterating the opposition between humanism and spiritualism by suggesting that the former envelops and comprehends the latter. So spiritualism no longer becomes incompatible with humanism, but becomes an aspect of it. Even in the realm of religion and philosophic implications, contemporary Indian philosophers adopt a humanistic attitude and they held that religion is for man and not man for the religion. The best

examples for this attitude can be seen in the concept of Universal Religion in the philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, and Sri Aurobindo etc. The main reason for highlighting such a concept in their philosophies may be attributed to the fact that India being a multi-religious society, there was great need for religious integration and harmony. Social service, compassion and feeling of oneness were the chief characteristics of this concept of universal religion. These ideals have a purpose, validity and relevance even today.

On the basis of humanism, our great leaders wanted to highlight one important aspect that cultures should blend with each other and benefit from the interaction with each other. They brought to light the fact that no culture can live, if it tries to become exclusive. They also held that cultural diversity and their growth enrich human existence. According to Abid Hussain, "India's cultural history of several thousand years shows that the subtle but strong thread of unity which runs through the infinite multiplicity of her life, was not woven by stress or pressure of power groups but the vision of seers, the vigil of saints, the speculation of philosophers and the imagination of poets and artists, and that these are the only means which can be used to make this national unity wider, stronger and more lasting."<sup>7</sup>Cultural diversity is an essential component of multiculturalism, leading to a broader representation of perspectives, world views, and life style, language and communication skills. In fine, we can say that multiculturalism which has its basis on humanism is being looked upon as the only practical option before humanity for responding to the challenge of diverse cultural ethnic and religious identities. It is much more than mere toleration of group diversity. In essence, it stands for treating, accommodating and recognising all members as equal citizens whether they belong to minority or majority groups. We would like to conclude this paper with a few lines from Tagore which articulate his vision of India.

'Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up  
Into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arm towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way;  
...In to that heaven of freedom,  
My Father, Let My Country Awake.'

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**Resurgence of Old Social Evils:  
An Analysis of Paul Beatty's *The Sellout***

*Paul Beatty in his Man Booker Prize Winning novel The Sellout examines the resurgence of vanishing hegemonic structures like slavery, sexism and racism. It is an attempt to analyse The Sellout which is considered as a biting satire on racism and its impact on the African-Americans. Beatty addresses the fundamental issue which is America's pervasive racism and the legacy of slavery. Race and racial inequality have powerfully shaped American history from its beginnings. Race is a social category and not a biological one and it constitutes a process of categorizing individuals on the basis of physical features like pigmentation of skin, texture of hair, stature and so on. Though race was actually a term used for categorizing people physically, it came to be used to discriminate against people. Racism is a matter not simply of individual's pathology but of patterns of cultural representations deeply ingrained within the practices, discourses and subjectivities of western societies. Racial classifications are almost always linked to forms of economic and social inequalities, domination and exclusion, and of belief and value systems that assign superior and inferior statuses and attributes to individuals and groups.*

Everyone knows that most people with African ancestry living in the United States today are the descendants of the people who were the slaves of white Americans. Human beings were considered as property and they were owned in the same sense as animals were. They could be whipped and branded and in other ways physically harmed with virtually no legal restrictions. The killing of a slave by a slave master was never punished. The rape of slaves was a common practice. Slave owners were free to split up families and to sell the children of slaves. The fact that slave owners had absolute power over their slaves does not mean that all slave masters ruthlessly abused their slaves. Many slave owners accepted a paternalistic ideology in which slaves were regarded as children for whom they had moral responsibility. More importantly, slave owners were businesspeople for whom slaves were an important investment, and the value of that investment needed protection. Just as farmers have an incentive to be sure that their horses are well fed and not overworked to the point that their health and productivity are threatened, so slave owners had incentives to take care of their investments in the bodies of their slaves.

Slavery ended with the Civil War almost a century and a half ago. But its impact did not disappear simply because this form of racialized class relations had been destroyed. Slavery contributed to a particularly malicious and durable form of racist beliefs that continues to influence American culture today. Slavery posed a deep cultural problem for the United States after the American Revolution: How could a country founded on the principles of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" accommodate slavery? How was it possible to reconcile the devotion to liberty and democracy with the treatment of some people as the property of others? The solution to this deeply contradictory reality was the elaboration of racial ideologies of degradation and dehumanization of blacks as intellectually and morally inferior and

thus not worthy of treatment as full persons. The attribution of intellectual inferiority meant that blacks were seen as lacking intellectual capacities for rational action. Therefore, as in the case of children, choices should be made on their behalf by responsible adults. The attribution of moral inferiority supported the view of blacks as inherently dangerous, ruled by passions, both aggressive and sexual, and thus incapable of exercising liberty. These beliefs constituted the core of the racist culture forged under slavery and although such beliefs were increasingly challenged in the last decades of the twentieth century and are no longer seen as respectable, they continue to influence race relations to the present.

Slavery was abolished after the Civil War, but this did not mean a complete dismantling of legally-enforced racial oppression. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, approved in 1868 guaranteed equal protection of the law and full rights to all citizens, and the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment passed two years later explicitly specified these rights applied to all people regardless of race or color. If these Amendments had been taken seriously and rigorously enforced, then racial oppression could not have taken the form of second-class citizenship for the blacks. Second class citizenship refers to a situation in which some categories of citizens have fewer rights than others. This can either take the form of an official, legally defined denial of some rights or a less formal practical denial of rights.

Many people assert that racism is outdated and not a contemporary problem. But racism is a current event. Only its expression is more subtle and disguised. The institutionalization of slavery within the Americans required an intellectual justification for the mistreatment of millions of African men, women and children. Racism becomes unique in the United States largely because of the efforts to abolish slavery. These efforts intensified the efforts of slavery's supporter's to justify their peculiar institution. The current affairs of racism have led to a widening of the economic gulf between white Americans and black Americans. Although the proportions of African-Americans in the middle and upper class have increased, so too have the proportion of African-American children reared in poverty. The presence of them in the higher echelons of corporate America, government and the military is about one-tenth of what one would expect given a system of true equal opportunity. The realities of racial relations in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century are the result of a decisive transformation that occurred in the middle of the 20th century the civil rights movement, the dismantling of the apparatus of legal segregation in the 1950s and 1960s and subsequent erosion of many of the cultural and economic supports of racial domination.

Racial discrimination continues to exist both in mundane social interactions and in the major institutional contexts in which lives and opportunities are formed. These discriminatory practices harm people, they violate values of fairness, and block the further advance of racial equality. They affect all African-Americans including the wealthy and middle classes though the consequences are most damaging for the poor. While racism may harm significant segments of the racially dominant group in American society, it is above all a form of domination that harms the racially oppressed groups. These harms have been a core part of American history and not merely of distant history. It is hard to overstate this point: it is only in the recent past that the classical liberal idea of equality before law has been extended to include

racial minorities, and even today in many critical respects such equality remains more a promise than a reality. The five primary forms of racial oppression that have occurred in United States history are: genocide and geographical displacement; slavery; second-class citizenship; non-citizen labor; diffuse racial discrimination. These constitute an overlapping historical sequence, with different racially defined groups being the subjects of different forms of racism in different historical periods.

Paul Beatty became the first American author to win the prestigious 2016 Man Booker prize for fiction. Beatty tackles the Post-racial America and themes such as slavery, police violence, gangs and racial discrimination in his fourth novel, *The Sellout*. Many writers are shy away from any discussions of race, especially when they are presented with humor. Beatty is not one of them. The very first sentence of the book sets the tone:

This may be hard to believe, coming from a black man, but I've never stolen anything. Never cheated on my taxes or at cards. Never snuck into the movies or failed to give back the extra change to a drugstore cashier indifferent to the ways of mercantilism and minimum wage expectations. I've never burgled a house. Held up a liquor store. Never boarded a crowded bus or subway car, sat in a seat reserved for the elderly, pulled out my gigantic penis and masturbated to satisfaction with a perverted yet somehow crestfallen, look on my face.”(3)

Beatty presents with irony and satire the excess pervasive in American society. Paul Beatty's novel *The Sellout* is the most perverse novel about race published in Obama's America. Racism appears in different ways and takes different forms throughout the course of the novel. The novel revolves around the unnamed, black narrator who is coming before the Supreme Court on charges of slave-holding and re-instituting segregation. The narrator recounts to the Supreme Court the events that brought him to the present time. The narrator in this novel is an unidentified Me. He is addressed by different names. He is called “Bonbon” by his girlfriend, “Massa” by his slave and “Sellout” by his archrival, a frustrated intellectual named Foy Cheshire. To save Dickens, a declining agricultural city on the outskirts of Los Angeles, Beatty's narrator, a local black farmer named Me, takes to an unusual remedy: slavery. The operation of slavery in the novel functions through two of the characters who become slaves unknowingly. The first one is the narrator himself who has been a victimized object for his father's experiments from his childhood. The other character is Hominy Jenkins. Me enslaves his neighbour Hominy Jenkins, the last surviving member of the Little Rascals, at Jenkin's request.

The novel's narrator is an African-American urban farmer and pot smoker who lives in a small town on the outskirts of Los Angeles. He is brought up by a single father, a sociologist and practitioner in the field of Liberation Psychology. The narrator grows up taking part in psychological studies about race because he was the little case study in his father's quest to unlock the eyes to mental freedom. Conditioning experiments were conducted by the narrator's father on the narrator. These demonstrate the outlook on fatherhood held by the narrator's father. The narrator's father considered his son more a research subject than an actual child. This treatment of son by father depicts the resurgence of narcissism and fascism. There are several instances in the novel in which the protagonist is treated merely as an object. In the first chapter titled

“The Shit You Shovel,” the narrator describes himself as his father’s Anna Freud, his little case study and his father explored with him social science experiments without teaching him how to ride as he was a small child. The narrator had a weird childhood:

When I was seven months,” he tells us, “Pops placed objects like toy police cars, cold cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon, Richard Nixon campaign buttons, and a copy of *The Economist* in my bassinet, but instead of conditioning me with a deafening clang, I learned to be afraid of the presented stimuli because they were accompanied by him taking out the family .38 Special and firing several window-rattling rounds into the ceiling, while shouting, ‘Nigger, go back to Africa!’ loud enough to make himself heard over the quadraphonic console stereo blasting ‘Sweet Home Alabama’ in the living room. (29)

The narrator’s father tied his right hand from back with an assumption that he would grow up to be left-handed, right brained and therefore well-centered. When he was eight years old, his father wanted to test the “bystander- effect” with him. His father reproduced the infamous Kitty Genovese case where she was robbed, raped and stabbed to death in 1964 in the streets of New York. The term “bystander- effect” means that the more people around to provide help, the less likely one is to receive help. His father wanted to place the narrator for Kitty Genovese and, unlike the white community, his father hoped that the black people, being a loving race, will help one another in times of need. In order to prove the black people as loving, the narrator was made to stand in the busiest road in the neighborhood:

He made me stand on the busiest intersection in the neighborhood, dollar bills bursting from my pockets, the latest and shiniest electronic gadgetry jammed into my ear canals, a hip-hop heavy gold chain hanging from my neck, and, explicably, a set of custom made carpeted Honda Civic floor mats draped over my forearm like a waiter’s towel, and as tears streamed from my eyes, my own father mugged me. He beat me down in front of a throng of bystanders who didn’t stand by for long. The mugging wasn’t two punches to the face old when the people came, not to my aid, but to my father’s. Assisting him in my ass kicking, they happily joined in with flying elbows and television wrestling throws. (30)

His father then realized that his notion was not true and he described his experiment as “bandwagon effect.” For him it was a failure experiment and his notion about black people as loving people got wrong. His experiment does not yield results as expected. Bonbon serves as the test subject for his father’s cold-hearted experiments with various racial stimuli. Some of these experiments are meant to condition the narrator to the harsh realities of racial prejudice whereas in other experiments the narrator is used as a guinea pig to test the current behavioural theories. For example, Daddy wears a Ronald Reagan Halloween mask and gives his son electric shocks to demonstrate white authority. He is told that no creature like Batman will come and rescue him and his clan. The narrator is not given any chance to read one comic book he has ever owned named *Batman, Spectacular Secrets of the Batcave Revealed* because such characters are considered mere illusions.

In another instance the narrator's father tries to reproduce Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark's study of color consciousness in black children using white and black dolls. Both the psychologists have designed and conducted a series of experiments known colloquially as the "doll tests" to study the psychological effects of segregation on African- American children. Clarks have used four dolls, identical except for colour, to test children's racial perceptions. Their subjects are children between the age of three to seven and they are asked to identify both the race of the dolls and which colour doll they prefer. A majority of the children have preferred the white doll and assigned positive characteristics to it. Clarks, therefore, conclude that prejudice, discrimination and segregation have created a feeling of inferiority among African-American children and damaged their self-esteem.

Unlike Drs Kenneth and Maime Clark's experiment, Me's father's version is much more revolutionary and modern. His father has placed two decorative dollscapes in front of him and asked him "With, whom, with what social- cultural subtext are you down with, son?" (34) Dollscape I features Ken and Malibu Barbie who are dressed in bathing suits and the dollscapeII features Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcom X, Harriet Tubman and a brown- skinned, egg shaped weeble toy. The narrator is asked to choose between the two dollscapes. He scoffs, "what are these, inaction figures?" after picking up dollscape II. The narrator tells that he likes Ken and Barbie because the white people get better accessories and have good look. This observation shows that even with social conditioning it is impossible to completely bury the ways we are taught to value ourselves. This is a fact worthy of careful consideration rather than a quick joke.

Me describes the place where he was born and raised thus: "You know when you've entered the Farms, because the city sidewalks, along with your rims, car stereo, nerve and progressive voting record, will have vanished into air thick with smell of cow manure and, if the wind is blowing the right direction- good weed"(28).After his father's death at the hands of the LAPD for a minor traffic infraction, Me uses the money that has been awarded to him in a wrongful-death settlement to pull his father's farmland property in Dickens out of foreclosure. Fast-forward five years, and widespread political corruption has led to the erasure of Dickens. Dickens is a falling place, a place once dominated by strict segregation policies, which America would soon be wipe off the map rather than rehabilitate. Not even the existence of a black president can steer Dickens' forsaken denizens onto a promising path; the remnants of racial inequality remain embedded in the community. Disappearance of Dickens from the map of America is considered as the evidence of the emergence and strengthening of neo-colonialism/ neo imperialism.

Since the narrator's father sees racism all around him, he decides to home school his son rather than having him attend white run public schools. Despite his father's arguments about racism, the narrator believes that there is no real widespread racism anymore. Not taking advantage of opportunity is the only thing holding back black people. The narrator himself has experienced direct racism once. At a white- run gas station, the narrator requests to use the restroom, but he is told that he has to purchase something first. The narrator decides to purchase a Coke. He is charged the "black" price of \$ 1.50 rather than the regular price of seven cents. Instead of giving in, the narrator runs down the block to use the bathroom.



The narrator's dad takes him to the regular meetings of the Dum Dum Donut Intellectuals, held in a local doughnut shop, meetings that are a gift to an author primed to send up the pretensions of some black intellectuals. It is a collection of "star-struck, middle-class black out- of- towners and academics" (93). The narrator's father recognizes that the donut shop is the one place in Dickens where niggers know how to act because every citizen could experience common togetherness. They discuss about racial disparity. His dad never gets around writing the best-selling memoir he hopes to write, which he considers calling "I'm Ai'ight. You're Ai'ight"(51). In Dickens, the residents are left to fend for themselves. Me's father was once the beacon of the community and was described as the "nigger whisperer." He was the negotiator called in to talk the neighbors off a ledge whenever any of them "done lost they ... mind." After his death, the neighborhood looks to Me to fill in his father's shoes.

Hominy Jenkins is another character through which Beatty analyses the concept of slavery in his novel. Beatty has also brought out a TV series named "The Little Rascals" which he used to watch during his childhood days. Most of the episodes were shot in his neighborhood. In the series there is always a black male figure who is the butt of 90 percent of the jokes, but he is the only smart person and the most intriguing kind of the leader. The series is racist and Beatty comes up with the idea of making things even more racist than they actually are. For that he introduces the character Hominy Jenkins in the novel. Through Hominy different race issues are examined. For one is the tradition minstrelsy, as well all know and recognize it as racist. However it is demonstrated through Hominy that he was very serious and proud of his acting. Actors who played racist roles should not be scorn for their roles they played but should be celebrated for working in a racist industry like entertainment. *The Sellout* is driven by a quest for the banned most racist episodes of the 'Our Gang' series, the ones that have never been shown on television. When these episodes are found, they prove to be no worse than the others: "The racism is rampant as usual, but no more virulent than a day trip to the Arizona state legislature" (208).

The move to pretend that Dickens no longer exists breaks the heart of Hominy Jenkins because he is Dickens's most famous resident. With the town's dissolution, he fears that he will no longer get any visits from fans. This thought makes him suicidal distraught. He ends up begging the narrator to keep him as a slave. Hominy involuntarily becomes Bonbon's slave. Bonbon is always trying to free him, but Hominy refuses freedom for most part of the novel. Hominy is a kind of inspiration for him in the community because he is also broken hearted by the loss of the City of Dickens. Hominy, the sole surviving member of the "Little Rascals", has decided that he wants to become the slave of the narrator. The narrator agrees to take Hominy as a slave because he cannot shake Hominy's determination. He is the only famous person in the community and hence the people actually occasionally come to Dickens looking for Hominy. He is despondent on and beaten down by a lifetime of humiliating roles in Hollywood- Stable Boy, Paper Boy, Shoeshine Boy, Errand Boy. He yearns "to fell relevant" again. Even though the narrator frees Hominy Jenkins, he is not ready to get away from the narrator:

Hominy, you're not a slave and I'm definitely not your master."  
"Massa," he said, the smile evaporating from his face, and shaking his head

in that pitiable way people who you think you're better than do when they catch you thinking that you're better than them, "sometimes we just have to accept who we are and act accordingly. I'm a slave. That's who I am. It's the role I was born to play. A slave who just also happens to be an actor. But being Black ain't method acting. Lee Strasberg could teach you how to be a tree, but he couldn't teach you how to be a nigger. This is the ultimate nexus between craft and purpose, and we don't be discussing this again. I'm your nigger for life and that's it (77).

Hominy proceeds to address Me as "Massa", demands to be slashed by whips, and begins "donning a shiny pair of emerald green and pink silks, holding a gas lamp at arm's length, and posing in my front yard as a life-size lawn jockey" (81). Jenkins constantly asks Me to beat him and he even says that it is only through this act he can be made happy. He demands Me that: "Then beat me. Beat me to within an inch of my worthless black life. Beat me, but don't kill me, massa. Beat me just enough so that I can feel what I'm missing" (78). The narrator in turn asks Hominy whether there is something that would make him happy and he replies to this as "Bring back Dickens." (78)

The two starts a movement to bring Dickens back, erecting renegade road signs, putting up segregation signs all over the place and an ad-hoc painted border around the town. They institute segregation in the community. The most pervasive form of discrimination occurs in the context of ordinary, daily interactions on the street, in work, in stores, in classrooms. This is often very difficult for an outside observer to detect, but it can be acutely felt by a person subjected to the discrimination. More than half a century after the end of legal segregation, the schools in many American cities remain sharply segregated, largely as a by-product of extreme residential segregation. This is particularly an issue in large American cities where the confluence of race and poverty means that inner city schools typically have very high concentrations of poor minority students compared to suburban schools. It is not just slavery Me and Hominy reintroduce to Dickens, it is also segregation. It appears fragmentary, first on a city bus, and then at the local middle school. He segregates the school, which is kind of all black and all Latino. He weeds the schools called Chaff Elementary. He does some fairly ingenious ways of racially segregating an already segregated community, and the school systems and all other things. He calls it localized apartheid. Me grows more ambitious, posting "priority seating for whites" signs on the towns public buses, "no whites allowed" or "coloured only" signs in storefront windows, a "white and non-talkers only" sign on the floor level of a movie theatre and in the balcony, "black, latinos and the hearing impaired." These segregation policies are to be discussed in detail to analyze the segregation as a main weapon for eradicating racism.

Beatty's characters do more than acknowledge their racism or our racism. They revel in it. Racism becomes a path to honesty and even self-knowledge. It is an improvement on the current status quo, at least better than the denial of racism that pervades our culture and our institutions. *The Sellout* tries to make sense of a time in which acts of racism are not as taboo as the acknowledgement that no Americans are actually colorblind. A strange and terrible thing happens to both Hominy and Me when they re-enact slavery. They start to feel free. *The Sellout* is a comic masterpiece

and is one of the honest reflections on race and racial identity in America written by an author who truly understands what it means to talk about the history of the country. Beatty, like his narrator, manages to discriminate against every race at the same time. Each ethnic and identity group is held up to ridicule, the stereotypes are taken to absurdist extremes.

*The Sellout* succeeds in presenting a vivid alternative to this type of collective dithering about America's institutional racism. Bonbon is like the curator of a museum of racist stereotypes who goes crazy, tosses all his exhibits out on the sidewalk and offers guided tours of the broken pieces. In Beatty's California town, every era of racism in American history lives on. Beatty's prose is deranged, though never fully able to suppress an undertow of profound pain. "I've whispered 'Racism' in a post-racial world," (262) says Me. He is punished for it; he is dragged to the nation's capital to defend himself before the nation's highest court. But he does not regret anything. By mocking his own powerlessness, Me empowers himself. He saves Dickens, his homeland and thereby restores his pride.

*The Sellout* is a comic masterpiece, but it is much more than that. It is one of the smartest and most honest reflections on race and racial identity in America for a very long time. It is written by an author who truly understands what it means to talk about the history of the country: "That's the problem with history, we like to think it's a book that we can turn the page and move...on," the narrator muses. But history isn't the paper it's printed on. Its memory and memory is time, emotions, and song. History is the things that stay with you" (115).

The novel nudges us to understand and then conveniently forget that while black Americans have always been watched, imitated and disciplined, we have rarely been loved or cared for or fairly treated by those watching. Our communication, like the communication between black characters in *The Sellout*, will always be incredibly nuanced, comically basic and ultimately private precisely because we have always been under surveillance by a nation obsessed with watching and listening but wholly unable to see or really hear us. The novel firmly situates itself between thick anti-blackness and communal black innovation.

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**A Withering Self Trapped Inside a Non-cosmopolitan World:  
A Study of the Character Nila in *French Lover***

*Taslima Nasrin is a Bangladesh origin novelist and poet. She has been exiled from her country because of her bold writing style. One of her such spirited protagonist is Nila from French Lover. She marries Kishenlal who owns a restaurant in Paris thinking that she could escape to a world of love and fantasy. The reality she had to face in Paris was oppression and bitter fraudulence. She was not able to accept the blatantly self-conscious customs of French people. Her alienated self from betrayal and hostility, from the land she immigrate has forced her to take a decision which could liberate her from the alienated self and surroundings.*

Nilanjana Mandal or Nila is not the typical woman character who is submissive and tolerates abuse by her husband. Though she is once cheated by a man she never succumbs like any other women protagonist would have done. Nila is not a perfect protagonist but she has her own opinions and views about her life that she takes responsibility of everything that happens in her life and stands her ground firmly. Yet the reader could find her as charmless women who lose her ground often, and find it difficult to muddle through in an unfamiliar strange world. Nila is born and brought up in Calcutta in a rather wealthy family. She was well educated and taken care pretty well by her parents even though many unsaid resentments are there. Unlike her mother who is submissive and never dared to speak a single syllable to her husband, Nila is very outspoken and enjoy individuality.

Nila marries Kishanlal to escape from her homeland. Though her mother advised her to wait till a Bangali match comes, she was in a hurry to escape from the alienated society to a heavenly city of Paris. The reason why she was alienated hated her own native place was because she was ditched by her lover Susantha. Everyone thought that they both would marry but in the end she was deserted by him. A woman once have a reputation of falling in love with a man is never respected well in the society. Thus she wanted leave her place in order to escape from this injustice of the society. Before she reaches France, she thought that it is a country of dreams and it is a paradise. The reality she has to face when she arrives in Paris is totally opposite to her imagination. She is held back by the officers in the emigration for reasons unknown to her. She knows that her passport and visa is legible yet she was flushed to a corner to wait for the approval. "The nuisance was flushed out, into the corner.(French Lover 2)". She has to wait for many hours before they finally let her enter into Paris."Lucky you! If Monsieur Bess wasn't so kind, you would have had it.'(French Lover 9)"

She thought that she could have a new life, new identity in the new world. She assumed that she would adjust with the new culture easily, yet it is not as easy as she supposed. She asked for a maid to clean up the house only to know that there are no poor people in Paris who domential works like in India. "They told her in this foreign country there were no maids to do the household chores; there were no poor people here who would do those things. If she called in someone to clean the place, they'd

charge her at least fifty francs for an hour's work.(French Lover 14)" She is also not able to leave behind any of her Indian influences on her that she persisted her husband to get her tea. "What! You don't drink tea?" Nila's eyes were tinged with skepticism. She had never come across a person in India who didn't drink tea. (French Lover 23)" She could not accept with her husband's preference in vegetarian since she is used to eat meat and fish. She had even made remarks about cooking non Bengali food for her husband.

Nila is very surprised to see how these Indians are treated in France. She once visited her husband's restaurant and came to meet with the Indian employees there. She was surprised to see these men working in the kitchen. "Nila said, 'it's quite a sight: men chopping onions and cooking and cleaning. I have never seen this in all my life (French Lover 35)". They were all highly graduated that even one among was a doctor. Though they had good degrees from their country they were not accepted in France just because the country where they coming from is poor. All these had effect Nila's opinion about the "heaven (French Lover 12)" she dreamed about. Though Nila is married to Kishanlal and he provides her every comfort, she is still not happy about her environment that she expects the Bengali touch everywhere. "She noticed that she was more at home here than at Kishan's. There were pictures of Rabindranath Tagore, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and Vivekananda on the walls: the three famous Bangalis (French Lover 43)". She has searched around for element of Indianness everywhere.

This introduction to an alien culture which she once thought was paradise leads her to a cultural shock. She could not even fathom certain culture of these French people. Once Nila started to live with Danielle they were invited for a party in a one of Daniel's friend's house. Nila did not get ready on time and she was very surprised to see Daniel getting angry for such a mere incident. "Nila couldn't understand what was the harm in reaching a half- hour or so later. In Calcutta they always attended invitations a few hours late. It was rude to reach at the invited time (French Lover 87)." She was also torn by the way these French people viewed about her country and people. Though Nila tried to convince them that not every Indians are poor, their prejudiced mind never accepts it. "Danielle laughed, 'But the TV channels wouldn't be interested in the rich people of India! If they want riches, they'll show Bill Gates. Besides its good for India if they focus on the poverty, she'll get more aid (French Lover 97)."

She was very much disappointed by the prejudice of this people and feels alienated in a foreign country where everyone treats her country people as cheap and poor. She could not accept their overly sophisticated culture and feels so uncultured and like barbarian in front of them. Once Nila agreed to do a show for Daniel, and Nila was flabbergasted by their overly curt way of talking about using restroom. Daniel even scolded Nila for not taking up the offer to "powder her nose", means to use restroom. All her experience adding to the personal trauma made her weak woman and she was not able to tolerate this overly modest culture of French people. Yet when she gets back to India everything feels strange to her. "Calcutta was just the way Nila had left it. Yet, she felt it looked a little dingier, there was more filth on the footpaths, the air was a little more polluted, there was more traffic on the roads, and the incessant honking seemed a little louder (French Lover 131)." Nila was torn between her

personal traumas, an unacceptable foreign culture, and strange but familiar culture of her own. She could not accept the French culture because everything feels very superficial and false to her. And the familiar culture of her own Calcutta is also loses its charm when she comes back from Paris. Here Nilanjana is like a withering flower uncertain about her own identity torn between an inherent culture and an acquired culture.

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**Images of Women in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors***

*Shashi Deshpande is one of the post independence Indian woman fictions writers. She presented social status of women in new society as the 'second sex.' Through her novels, she raises voices against gender equality. This present paper discusses the image of women from traditional portrayals of enduring, self sacrificing women toward female characters searching for identity. Her work depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each women, rather than limiting the lives of women to ideal one. Deshpande's women protagonists had lot of struggle to prove their identity in society.*

Feminism is an ideology against oppression and exploitation of women in patriarchal system. It focuses to establish equal political, economic and social rights and equal opportunities for women. These main themes were handled in the works of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Githa Hariharan, Kamala Markandaya, Shobha De, etc. These Indian women Novelist have portrayed women's issues realistically both psychologically and physically in their novels. They broke the literary and social norms of the past. They studied deep into psyche of their character and projected various images of women and their status in society. The Indian women writers create a pattern of new study because they have dared to shatter the myth of a male dominated society. They made a new foundation in the realm of female study in Indian Literature in English. This paper is an attempt to focus different images of women in Indian English Fiction with reference of Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*.

The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of self sacrificing women to conflicted female characters searching for identity, no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. In those days women characters were portrayed as an obedient and responsible manner. But the recent writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman. The novel emerging in the twenty first century furnish example of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition, some offering an analysis of the family structure and the caste system as the key elements of patriarchal social organization. Deshpande's novels revealed the true state of Indian society and its treatment of women. She used women –centered narrative in most of her works. In one of the interviews she answered about it: "I am a feminist. In my own life, I mean. But not consciously, as a novelist. I must also say that my feminism has come to me very slowly, very gradually, and mainly out of my own thinking and experiences and feelings. I started writing first and only then discovered my feminism. And it was much later that I actually read books about it."

Shashi Deshpande's first novel "The Dark Holds No Terrors," Sarita is a protagonist who experiences the real life and realizes that the dark no long holds any terror to her. She is known as 'Saru' an ordinary, modest, sensitive, middle class woman, aware of her own drawback. She always wishes to crack the rigid traditional norms and wishes anew environment where, the mother, father and husband may not play oppressive role towards her daughter wife respectively. She is a successful doctor during the day time and at night a terrified and trapped animal in the hands of her husband Manohar, who is an English teacher in a small college. Saru comes to her father's house after fifteen years of marriage. She had once determined and had proclaimed that she would never come back to her father's place but circumstances forced her to return back as she was unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. Here she had an ample opportunity to review her relationship with her father, husband and her dead mother. She emerged with a better understanding of herself and others. Saru remembers all the past, a brief confession to her father about her trauma and her courage to confront reality.

Society treats the male- child, the son as an ultimate solution of all problems, the girl-child, the daughter, is always treated as an unwanted burden, as she cannot fulfill, the parental needs. It shows discrimination by her mother in favour her brother, Dhruva. Her brother's birthdays were occasion for puja to be held in the evenings and a general sense of joyous excitement prevaild. Her birthdays were hardly remembered and acknowledged. This discrimination clearly picturized Indian society gives importance of male child. Saru goes to Bombay to study Medicine in spite of her mother's opposition and got a degree with the connivance of her father. Her mother doesn't understand the importance of girl's education and express her thought: But she's a girl.... And don't forget medicine or no medicine, doctor or no doctor, you still have to get her married, spend money on her wedding. Can you do both. These shows Saru's mother never looks both the son and daughter with one eye. Saru has also put up with this gender- based discrimination, typically common to the Indian middle class society.

Saru thinks, she gets freedom in the marital life. But it also makes problems and pains. Manohar, Saru's husband who did not accept the superior economic position of reputed lady doctor in the society. All his love full flat at the confused state of social hierarchy and the common problem of egoism in man. Sufferings arising from man's attitude to woman in the Indian context bring to the latter feeling of a wasted life and the curse of utter helpless and dry up the principal of human happiness. Shashi Deshpande deals with the predicament of the Indian women, especially the educated middle-class woman, torn between an assertion of herself and submission to her various roles as daughter, wife and mother; but as she herself puts it, her concern is primarily human relationships, about which she feels "we still know very little" She says

A human relationship is what a writer is involved with. Person to person and person to society relationships these are the two primary concerns of a creative writer and, to me, the former is of immense importance. My preoccupation is with interpersonal relationships and human emotions. At her father place, slowly she loses the awareness of her femininity, she stops thinking about herself as a women. The aspect of a doctor is more than the wife and the mother. As a educated woman Saru, who comes out all the



traditional bondage and tries to prove her individuality. This makes her inner recess of consciousness in order to discover the root of her silent suffering and passing resistance. Her life is a kind of journey. Journey from self-alienation to self-identification, is also from negation to self-assertion and from frustrations to confidence. Saru who was not prepared to face her father also and go away somewhere ultimately comes to grips with her situation.

Shashi Deshpande's fiction clearly conforms to the "open" pattern of the novel which reflects and conveys a new attitude towards the process and the goals of experience. Sumitra Kukreti quoted, "Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* depicts the journey of modern woman towards financial independence, emotional balance and social recognition." Saru, who is educated intelligent and economically independent women. She could not accept her destiny as fate written on her forehead, turn into a 'New Woman.' Now Saru faces her husband fearlessly. The modern woman is more than a mother, sister or a daughter. She is a multifaceted personality, capable of any work or any role, but the only vitamin she needs a strong and healthy mind. Saru realizes that problems and sufferings are counterpart of all life. She overcomes these obstacles with the help of self-confidence. Once the realization comes, all the problematic things are shattered away.

This paper conclude the new flux of experience that emerges insist on a new vision of existence. It is widening openness in the possibilities of life. The central "self" Saru, moves through the process of events from a limited experience to a wider one, from relative innocence to relative sophistication, from a narrow to an expanded perception and interpretation. A new relation of the inward self to the outward world emerges and the protagonist is able to come to terms with even the most distressing and disturbing of events.

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**Transgressing Boundaries:  
A Study of Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises***

*Jaishree Misra's debut novel Ancient Promises revolves around the life of Janaki who dares to challenge fate and finally wins but, this victory is a Pyrrhic victory where she has to pay a heavy toll. Her unsuccessful marriage and the birth of her mentally challenged daughter add to her miseries. Janaki is transplanted from her home in Delhi to Kerala at an age of eighteen. She had to be accepted by her husband's family and for this she had to transform or metamorphose into a person who was totally different from her actual self. All her efforts were futile because her in-laws could never accept her as one among them. It was for her mentally challenged daughter that she continues her education and travels abroad to do a course in Special Education, which was indeed a turning point in her life. Just like a Phoenix bird emerges from its ashes Janaki too emerges out of her problems.*

Indian Writing after independence has changed immensely. The type of writing and characters depicted are based on the experiences of the writers. Jaishree Misra is an Indian author of world repute and her debut novel *Ancient Promises* was widely accepted by readers. Her characters are real flesh-and-blood characters that make us admire them and look up at them with awe. There are certain elements that can be discerned from their writing such as, the way they challenge the existing patriarchal powers and the stereo type role women are supposed to conform to.

This paper is an attempt to bring out how the character comes out of her confines and recognizes her 'self'. Women, who as human beings wish to comprehend what they really want and an honest understanding of their choices and their fulfillment by acquiring strength to stand on their own.

In this novel the protagonist Janaki is a girl who was brought up in Delhi and she wanted to pursue her studies but gives in to her parents' wishes and agrees to get married. She was made to believe that this was a very prestigious alliance. Misra tries to add a little humor by describing the patriarchal system of 'pennukanal' (bride seeing) and the formalities. "He asked if I knew how to cook and what sort of food I liked. He asked me if I'd ... lot of questions. Without intending to, I was passing my pennukaanal with flying colours" (Misra 59-60). Janaki was in love with Arjun who studied with her in Delhi but she abandoned her love and according to her parents' wishes got ready to marry Suresh. Her protests for continuing her studies fell on deaf ears. Her family members advised her "What are they going to think? They could even retract their offer by tomorrow!" "Be grateful for what you're getting." "They don't even want a dowry.. It's nothing less than arrogance to say no to people like that" (Misra 61).

Janaki depicts a contemporary urban, educated woman who is caught between tradition and modernity. She wanted to challenge her victimization and attain freedom but she also wished to retain domestic harmony through compromise. Perhaps that is

the reason why Janaki says that she could not challenge her parent's decision of getting married.

Post independent Indian writers have depicted women in all shades. They have classified married women under three categories- first the women in older generations who accept willingly or unwillingly their husband as 'pati parmeswar' and second, who fight for their individuality and tried to question the social forces but they do this without crossing the boundaries of wedlock and the third category where the woman steps out of her conjugal bond when they find it difficult to adjust with their spouse and sometimes even violates the path of morality.

Janaki's life was full of miseries as her marriage lacked understanding and compatibility. According to Dharma, which a traditional Indian woman follows, a wife should be very tolerant and patient, no matter what adverse situation she faces in her life. And even as she faces all these calamities she feels that it is a result of her Karma or her actions in the previous birth. Apart from this they believe that more the suffering, the more the sins will be washed and they will have a good life ahead. She is made to believe all this by the society. " I certainly didn't know then, and would have found it very odd indeed, that weddings were decreed in some other worldly place where accounts were being totted up and revaluated all the time to decide who should marry whom" (Misra 39-40).

In this male dominated world where men pass orders and women carry them out, where men create certain situations and women are supposed to live them there is a possibility that a woman can be understood by another woman since her experiences are identical. But, in Janaki's case she was married into the Maraar household where a daughter-in-law was supposed to observe rules and there were a lot of restrictions in her way of dressing and even the manner of talking. The Maraars always considered themselves superior and Janaki – the Delhi brought up girl was always an outsider for them.

Michel Foucault observed " One of the first things that has to be understood is that power isn't localized in the state apparatus and that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that operate outside, below and alongside the state apparatuses on a much more mine and everyday level are not also changed. (Foucault 60) Thus, if we do not try to change the attitude that is prevalent in our homes, in our families or in society we will not be able to bring about significant changes in our society.

Janaki feels that if she became a mother she would be given a better treatment. Motherhood is considered to be a woman's highest achievement. According to the Hindu traditions a woman who is not able to bear children is considered a bad omen in society.

That's what I'd do, I'd have a child! She, as their grandchild would be loved. Especially if she turned out to be the much-longed-for- first grandson. And as his mother, I'd receive a sort of instant double promotion, so as to speak. Be elevated to the position of Good Mother and Good Daughter-in-Law (M 113)

Janaki delivers a baby girl but to add to her miseries her daughter was intellectually challenge. Janaki's husband Suresh had an indifferent attitude and he never cared about Janaki or his daughter Riya. He was always busy going on official tours and trying to expand his motel business. Janaki's involvement with Riya was like an armour against her husband's detachment and non-caring attitude. Janaki is blamed by her mother-in-law and other members for Riya's inability and slow learning.

Kate Fullbrook in *Free Women* opines that "Women are born into social structures which they did not make, but from which they nevertheless benefit or suffer, and which place boundaries around them making it hard to alter who and what they are, what they can say, what it is possible to think and do or how they perceive ethical decisions (6).

Janaki fights against the Maraars and their traditions and applies for a course in Special Education abroad. She is selected by the University of Arizona and she travels to London in spite of objection from her husband and in-laws. It is here that she meets her lover Arjun. Love in itself is treated as divine and sublime but there are internal standards set by the Indian society like any other society which does not tolerate love accompanied with sex outside the orbit of marriage. Sexual transgression is considered a sin and as a mark of feminine fallibility and the violation of the norms set by the society which considers such an act as a complete moral and aesthetic degradation of a virtuous woman. Janaki is also overcome by guilt for having physical relationship with Arjun. She feels that she will have to face the wrath of her family members both living and dead.

Arjun helps her to regain the custody of Riya from Suresh and wished to start a new life with her. Janaki has been transformed from a woman under the confinements of patriarchy and one who would have been drowned into a world of depression to an admirable woman who has the ability to take independent decisions. Janaki wins but this was a pyrrhic victory for her. The author ends on optimistic note saying that "Tomorrow, the next chapter would begin" (Misra 305).

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**The Pain and Strain of Transgenders**

*Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life. Gender focuses on the conventions and hierarchies which determine women's and men's position in the family, community and society at large, whereby women are usually dominated by men. When we speak about gender equity, we have to take into consideration the equal enjoyment by men and women socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equity does not mean that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal.*

Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies and often governs the processes of production and reproduction. There is a major difference between sex and gender. Sex refers to biological status as male or female. It includes physical attributes such as sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures, and external genitalia. Gender is a term that is often used to refer to ways that people act, interact, or feel about themselves, which are associated with men and women. While aspects of biological sex are that same across different cultures, aspects of gender may not be.

Gender identity refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being either woman or man or something other or in between. Gender identity, is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others. In contrast, a person's gender expression is external and socially perceived. Gender expression refers to all of the external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.

Transgender people are individuals of any age or sex whose appearance, personal characteristics or behaviors differ from stereotypes about how men and women are supposed to be. Transgender people have existed in every culture, race, and class since the story of human life has been recorded. Only the term 'transgender' and the medical technology available to transsexual people are new, In its broadest sense, transgender encompasses anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms.

Transgender, though human beings are not recognized as persons in violation of human rights as they are deprived of their fundamental rights as well as also other civil rights. The lack of recognition isolates transgender, in the matter of civil rights. The Constitution of India prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Since gender is taken to mean only male and female, the eunuchs and transgender cannot effectively exercise or avail the benefits of constitutional rights and avail of facilities and benefits available to the male and female genders.

The problems faced by transgender are discrimination, lack of educational facilities, unemployment, lack of shelter, lack of medical facilities like HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse and problems relating to marriage, property, electoral rights, adoption. They have very limited employment opportunities. They have no access to bathrooms, toilets and public spaces. The lack of access to bathrooms and public spaces is illustrative of discrimination faced by transgender in availing each facilities and amenities. They face similar problems in prison, hospitals and schools.

Transgender persons remain marginalized and may remain closeted and at risk for negative psychological consequences. For those that do come out, other issues present, including the navigation of gender, transition and psychological and physical changes that may be positive and or negative. The positive effects may include satisfaction of living authentically and decrease in depression. Negative effects may include social discrimination and loss of relationships. The society need to be aware of transgender lives in social and cultural context and of their needs for livelihood. For cultivating a supportive environment, the society must include the usage of sensitive a supportive environment, the society must include the usage of sensitive language and an appropriate social atmosphere.

It is important to note that transgender youth typically enter adolescence with no preparation for the social identity that comes with being a sexual minority person. Transgender people commonly do not see themselves reflected in their families, among their neighbors or within their faith communities. Positive role models are not nearly so easily visible and available for them as they are for heterosexual people. They may, indeed, witness numerous episodes of insults, negative language, jokes and actions in their social and family environment. The process of developing a transgender identity in youth is usually a fairly lengthy one. Many youth go through a questioning process before arriving at an understanding of a Transgender identity. The average age of awareness of having gay or lesbian sexual orientation is 10 years old. The average age of labeling oneself as gay or lesbian is 14 years old, and the average age of first disclosure of sexual orientation to a friend is 16 years old, and the average age of first disclosure to family is 17 years old. Parents are among the last to know about their child's sexual orientation.

The youth who disclose their sexual orientation or transgender identity to their parents are at risk for parental rejection, withdrawal of financial support, authoritative restrictions of their social lives, forced counseling and even violence and removal from the home. A lack of social support can contribute to internalized homophobia and a negative self-concept, which can hinder the development of a positive transgender identity. The transgender youth may perceive that something is wrong with them and that they must keep their sexual orientation of transgender identity secret so as not to disappoint the family.

The Indian supreme court has recently delivered an important judgment in the case of National Legal Services Authority V union of India (NALSA). A two judge bench comprising Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri declared, among other things, that hijras (a traditional Indian male to female trans group) must be treated as a third gender for all legal purposes, and that transpersons in general have the right to decide

whether they want to be identified as male, female or belonging to the third gender. The second part of the verdict held that transgenders are socially and economically discriminated against, and that they have every right to benefits and privileges like education, employment, property and marriage.

The court compares gender identity to the paradigm ground in Indian discrimination law-caste-by acknowledging that transpersons are treated like 'untouchables.' In India there are a host of socio-cultural groups of transgender people like hijras/kinnars, and other transgender identities like-shiv-shaktis, jogtas, jogappas, Aradhis, Sakhi, etc. These communities perceive that they have been excluded from effectively participating in social and cultural life; economy; and politics and decision making processes. A primary reason of the exclusion is perceived to be the lack of recognition of the gender status of hijras and other transgender people. It is a key barrier that often prevents them in exercising their civil rights in their desired gender. Transgender persons must be properly documented in census. There is need for statutory reservation in education, elections and employment both in the public and private sectors.

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**Elements of Diaspora in *The Mistress of Spices* by  
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni**

*Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (born on July 29, 1956) is one of the most notable writers of the Indian Writing in English. She is an Indian-American writer and poet. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) is made into a film bearing the same title. This research article aims to explore the diasporic experience of the Indian emigrants namely Tilo, the central character, Lalitha, Haroun, Geeta and her grandfather, Jagjit, Shamsur and Hameeda in *The Mistress of Spices*.*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the prominent writers of the diasporic literature. Some of her novels are *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Vine of Desire* (2002), *The Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008) and poems such as *The Reason of Nasturitioms* (1990) and *Black Candle* (1991) and *Leaving Yuba City* (1997). Chitra Banerjee founded a non-governmental organization named Maitri to help the refugees. The writer has won many awards namely American Book Award, Hackney Literary Award and Pen Syndicated Award Fiction. The main theme in all her novels is based on diaspora.

This research paper deals with the diasporic experiences of the Indian immigrants namely Tilo, the protagonist, Lalitha, Haroun, Geeta and her grandfather, Jagjit, Shamsur and Hameeda. The diaspora comprises of migration, discrimination, different identities, nostalgia, displacement and homelessness. The novel *The Mistress of Spices* encounters the positive and negative aspects of the diasporic writing.

The protagonist of the novel is born during the unusual time where the land is severely affected by dryness; the paddy field is heavily cracked, thundering, lightning and heavy downpour. The child is born and appeared to be brown in colour and she is fed with the milk of white ass. The child's parents' calls the astrologer and he is completely shocked and surprised by her horoscope. The astrologer suggested the child's parents to name her Nayan Tara. The child is born with the great power to sense the gold buried in the ground, has got the ability to give the information to the village headman before the calamity, has got the control over the winds to blow according to her wish.

Nayan Tara has become a great fortune teller and people from neighbouring places visited her to see their destiny by the touch of her hand. She became so famous and her power of greatness reaches a pirate group and they decides to abduct her. The pirates raided, robbed and set fire to the village. The pirates killed Nayan Tara's parents and kidnapped her. The pirates named the child as Bhagyavathi, as the days pass by she became the queen of pirates. She is sickened with the life there and she thinks to put an end to it. There is a complete change in the atmosphere and she is completely released from her body. The sea serpents say about the land of spices to Bhagyavathi and she goes to the land of spices.



When the girls wish to go to the land of spices for apprenticeship to the first mother or Old One, She touches and examines the hands of the girls because the hands call out the power of the spices. The hands should not be neither too light nor heavy, neither too cold nor warm. When the hand is kept against the sun there should not be any gap between the fingers and in the centre invisible printing of the lily should be present and the spices should sing. The First Mother finds the spices singing in the hands of Bhagyavathi. The First Mother takes her to the island for the training and there are several other girls undergoing the apprenticeship. Among the girls Bhagyavathi appears to be the most brilliant and loving to the First Mother. The Mistresses of spices master the power of spices. The Mistress of Spices should follow certain rules like they should not use spice for themselves, they should stay in the spice store, they should not touch any human being, they should not use mirror and they should not love anyone except spices.

After the completion of their training, the Mistresses of Spices have to go through the fire of Shampati. The mistresses are sent to different places or they stay along with First Mother. The Mistresses of Spices are given names and Bhagyavathi is named as Tilotamma and sent to Oakland. Many immigrants in Oakland consult Tilo for their problems. Tilo diagnoses them and gives correct spices for them. The characters in the novel namely Lalita, Haroun, Jagajit, Geeta and her grandfather, Hameeda, Shamsur and Raven approach Tilo for their problems to get solved. Tilo loves Raven and she gets a new name as Maya.

The characters in the novel have multiple identities and identity crisis. Tilo has got five names for example when Tilo speaks to raven she says, "I too have had more than one. But only one of them is my true name" (*The Mistress of Spices* 152). Tilo is born as Nayan Tara and she is named as Bhagyavathi by the pirates who kidnapped her, she is named as Tilo by the First Mother who trained in mastering the spices. Tilo is named as Maya by Raven, an American. When Raven meets Tilo at the spices store she asks his name and he says "What name shall I tell you? I have had so many. I'm not sure I can tell which one it is" (152-153). Raven's mother has also got two names namely Evvie and Celestina. This shows the significance of the diasporic multiple identities and identity crisis.

Another diasporic aspect is "migration" or "exile". Migration may be defined as voluntary or involuntary. In this novel Nayan Tara's exile from the place to the land of pirates is said to be involuntary but to the land of spices and to Oakland is voluntary. Lalita's migration from Kanpur to Oakland is involuntary because she isn't ready to marry Ahuja to lead a life with him but considering her family and her sister she goes with Ahuja to Oakland. Lalitha's life gets trapped and she undergoes torture's by her husband. Later she joins an organization to help women. This migration is a voluntary migration by Lalitha. The other characters in the novel like Haroun, Geeta's parents and grandfather, Hameeda, Shamsur, and Rehamansab migration is voluntary because they all landed in United States of America in search of job for their livelihood.

The emigrant characters in the novel do not do one particular job at one place but they keep on change from one place to another. For example Haroun in Oakland did many jobs like working in garages and petrol bunk and then he became a driver for Mrs.

Kapadia and then again as a taxi driver for another Kashmirian. Later he owned a taxi for himself. Tilo, the protagonist of the novel keeps on moving from place to another place. Tilo is taken away from her place and to the pirate's land and then to the land of spices and from there to Oakland. Lalitha from Oakland goes to unknown place and decides to set up a tailoring shop.

Another diasporic element in the novel is racial discrimination. The characters in the novel experience racial discrimination. Jagjit experiences brutal discrimination in the school. Jagjit only knows Punjabi and his teacher makes him to sit in the last row and the very first word he learns is, '*idiot, idiot, idiot*' and the second word is '*Asshole*' (38). Even at night also "he lies with his eyes open" seeing "the jeering voices, the spitting mouths, the hands that pull pants down in the playground and the girls looking" (39). Tilo helps Jagjit by offering him cinnamon because it is the destroyer of enemies. Haroun says that the emigrants are cheated and attacked by the native people. When Raven in Tilo's store, Haroun meets Tilo and says that, "Ladyjaan, you must be more careful... All kinds of bad people roaming around this neighbourhood. Did you read or not in *India Post* just last week some man broke into one ... shot the owner. His name was Reddy I think. Just because he's dressed all fancy does not mean you can trust him. I've heard of men like that, dress up and pretend they're rich, out to cheat you" (111).

When Haroun is attacked by some strangers Rahmansaab says, "His kismet was good this time. Next time who knows. Looks like they used an iron rod. Skull could have cracked like snail shells" (230). Another Indian man named Mohan Maintains a mobile food stall is blocked by two white men and they throws the stack of paper plates at him and says, "soofabitch Indian, should stayed in your own goddamn country"(170). Mohan is completely broken by this incident and Tilo says, "your story is story of all those I have learned to love in this country" (170). Tilo also feels the racial discrimination and doubts herself whether the white man loves her or not. After the retirement when Rahmansaab comes to Oakland to set up a clinic he faces a very tough time by the natives.

Even though the emigrants face number of challenges like racial discrimination, homelessness etc., their migration has liberated them. For example Hameeda is divorced because she could not bear a boy child and she comes to Oakland with her brother. Hameeda learns English and computer to earn and she becomes a independent woman. Shamsur works as a chef in a small inn and then in the big inn and then becomes a manager in the restaurant. Lalitha is forced to marry and undergoes torture by her husband. Lalitha writes a letter to Tilo stating that, "I cannot write what else he did to me. It is too shameful" (270). In order to get away from this she contacts the people and they help her by setting up a tailoring shop. Geeta gets a good education and gets a good job in a company. These characters in the novel elevate themselves.

The novel *The Mistress of Spices* diagnoses the problems of the emigrants and cures the problems by offering the suitable spices to the customers. This shows the magical working of the Indian spices. The next diasporic element is conflict or in-between. Most characters think in two ways eastern and western. The emigrant parents give education based on western model but they expect the children to follow the Indian

tradition. Ultimately the children face the in-betweens, for the children the foreign land is to be their home but their parents insist India to be their native land. Thus they have many homes. Geeta till the completion of her education she follows her parents words and she obeyed them but after getting a good job she comes to home late and it is disliked by her grandfather and says, “If a young girl should work late-late in the office with other men and come home only after dark and sometimes in their car too? Back at Jamshedpur they would have smeared dung on our faces for that” (85).

When Geeta proposes to marry Juan it is completely opposed by her family and she leaves her home and lives with him hoping to get the consent from her parents. Lalitha faces the torture by her husband and in a conflict whether to remain same or to get rid of it. Tilo too faces conflicts at various contexts. Being a Mistress of Spices she should not touch any of her customers. Haroun comes to Tilo asks her to read his palm and she faces conflict and finally she reads his hand. When Geeta’s grandfather requests Tilo to go her office to convince her she faces the conflict. The Mistress of Spices should not go out of the place but she makes a try to go out. The spices warn her but she neglects and goes to Geeta’s office. Tilo even visits Haroun and gives him the spices. Tilo loves Raven being a mistress of spices she is not supposed to love anyone. Tilo uses spices for her own self which she should not do. Tilo takes the king of spices, Makaedwaj and uses it and she goes out with Raven and spends a night with him.

This research paper has explored the diasporic elements in the novel *The Mistress of Spices*. Besides this, the novel throws light on several feminist issues. In this book, the first person narration, non-linear plot, shift in time and place, flash back technique, magic realism, story within a story, epistolary method, hybridity of language, intertextuality are clearly seen.

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**Digital Diaspora: An Outset towards Betterment of Diasporic Literature**

*India has a rich cultural tradition with a harmonious blend of art, religion and philosophy which are interwoven and are inseparable. Indians are proud of their cultural heritage and they preserve it well for the future generation. The vast distinguishable cultural heritage of Indians laid the foundation of Indian diaspora. The objective of this paper is to analyze the role of digital diaspora in contributing to diasporic literature. It also examines the evolution of diaspora, the emergence of diasporic literature, its significance, new initiatives and advancement of diaspora in the digital era. The term 'diaspora' was primarily used in association with the banishment of Jews from their motherland, later with the forced migration and at present with the immense migration caused by globalisation. Many Indians have been moving towards developed countries on their own agreement for their professional and academic development. The migrants in the foreign culture live in the reminiscences of their motherland. The displacement made them to experience a sense of alienation which eventually got expressed in literature.*

The father of American literature, Mark Twain remarked; "India is the cradle of human race, the birth place of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and great grandmother of tradition." Indians are proud of their cultural heritage and they preserve it well for the future generation. The vast distinguishable cultural heritage of Indians laid the foundation of Indian diaspora. The paper examines and explains the following concepts; Evolution of Diaspora, Emergence of Diasporic Literature, Diaspora in the digital era, Significance of diasporic literature, New initiatives for diaspora engagement

Evolution of Diaspora: The term 'diaspora' was primarily used in association with the banishment of Jews from their motherland, their nostalgia for their lost country and the cultural alienation experienced by them in the culture of a new land. Many millions of Indians have been migrated to more than 75 countries around the globe. Earlier migrations in the colonial period were in terms of indentured labour and it continues in the modern period as a way seeking better prospects. At present it is governed by historical, political, economic reasons including higher education and marriage. Migrants tried to maintain their inheritance while integrating with the adopted culture thereby developing a dual identity.

Emergence of diasporic literature: The broken psyche of immigrants torn between two places with varying culture makes them to take a different style in literature. The pain of being far off from their homes and getting isolated, the memories of their motherland and issues of acculturation and assimilation paves way for a new literature that reflects the conflicted minds. Diasporic literature reveals the sense of alienation they experienced as a result of cultural, social and geographical displacement. It deals with displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest for identity and on the issues related to disintegration of cultures. It occupies a place of great significance between countries and cultures. Diasporic writers proved justice

by seeking protection and security as a refugee and projecting his own culture as an ambassador. The concept of diaspora has been changed with the advancements in various fields. The earlier expatriate writers were just tourists who stayed for a short period away from home but most of the present writers have chosen to settle abroad. In contrast to the first generation diasporic themes of dislocation and rootlessness, the post modern English novelists have concentrated on the issues related to globalization.

**Significance of diasporic literature:** People of Indian diaspora have been contributing a lot to Commerce, Industry, Fine Arts, Science, Technology, Agriculture, Politics and Literature. In the field of literature they are aiming at re-inventing India through their nostalgia. Diasporic literature has emerged as a powerful network connecting the entire globe. It works as a channel strengthening the bonds among various countries. It acts as a ventilator to the grievances and provides a platform for expressing the fiery emotions. It synergies the security and prosperity all around the world. There are many writers of Indian diaspora who contributed enormously to literature. Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, V.S Naipaul, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Manjula Padmanabhan, Kamala Markandeya are some stalwarts in this field. The diasporic sensibility experienced by them mirrors the plural identity in their works.

**Diaspora in the digital era:** Each period adds its new means of telecommunication. Prepaid phone cards and mobile phones are now replaced by open discussion forums and interacting media. With the advent of technology the migrants developed cross border relationships and remain actively engaged with their homeland. The numerous web-based news portals and forum sites dedicated to specific diaspora communities, offers a great chance for them to stay connected. The Indian diaspora do not want to break their relationship with their motherland and their sense of homelessness has been minimized and made less intense through the social networking sites. The proliferation of digital technologies has facilitated a lot to nourish old relationships and to rediscover their lost ties. Social media sites help them to engage with each other and to exchange their emotions. Face to face interaction is replicated through online collaboration using digital media. This in turn provides a chance for brain circulation, a mechanism of cooperation in which highly skilled people who left their native countries can contribute for the development of their homeland.

**New initiatives for diaspora engagement:** Since the diaspora community plays an important role in the development of their homeland, the Indian government has taken many initiatives to maintain their relationship. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was launched in 2004 to provide easiness in migrants' transition to India and to engage with them. The South Asian Nation also invested much in communication technology and social media for the diaspora to engage with India. In 2007, India's Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with a nonstate entity launched the Overseas Indian facilitation Centre (OIFC) which targets mostly on Indian diaspora community. The OIFC, with its headquarters at Gurgaon, Haryana, near New Delhi, was set up with the aim of expanding economic engagement between Indian diaspora and India. India has been trying to make the better use of digital technology and soft power to provide a great help to the diaspora community. The public diplomacy division of India makes use of web 2 technology to open accounts on Twitter,

Facebook, YouTube and blogspot which facilitates diaspora community to engage with their motherland. Indian Online Nodes (ION), Ethnic Group Online Nodes (EGON), Local/Regional Sub Ethnic Group Organisation (LRSEGO) are some websites dedicated to diaspora which are best connected to India.

Know India Programme (KIP) is a flagship initiative for Diaspora engagement which familiarizes Indian-origin youth (18-30 years) with their Indian roots and contemporary India, through a three-week orientation programme organised by the Ministry of External Affairs. KIP provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations and experiences and to bond closely with contemporary India. An online portal ([kip.gov.in](http://kip.gov.in)) has been launched in 2017 exclusively for Know India Programme. Since 2016 six KIP's are being organized in a year. A maximum of 40 Indian Diaspora youth are selected for each programme and provided full hospitality in India. These programs are designed to provide the Indian diaspora an exposure to the country of their origin so that they can understand it better and more intimately.

The globally dispersed people have turned towards internet to maintain social relations and to share general concerns. The digital media has been embedded in the life of the young generation, particularly upon those living in developed countries. The twin forces of mass migration and electronic mediation have altered the ways of imagination. This forecasts the arrival of a new era of digital literature. The digital media would allow Indian diaspora to come together to reinforce the concept of big family in cyberspace thereby contributing to diasporic literature. Conscious and deliberate monitoring of the newly launched diasporic websites and portals would bring a new fortune to diasporic literature in the near future.

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**The Blessed are Wicked:  
The Supernatural Possession Trauma in the Novel**

*Christian scriptures describes the belief against demons, who force to possess a human being and cause them to behave strangely and also it is identified through human history and innumerable religion as the act by an outside force, either demonic or spiritual in nature. It is the culture of most controversial belief in world today. It holds religious practice of Satanism a part of ancient survival of demonic worships. On later days Satanism begins with founding of the church in 1966, founded by Anton La Vey in San Francisco. A splinter group, The Temple of Set in 1975, was organized by Michael Aquino; prior to the public practice satanic culture existed by an accusation by various Christian groups rather than self-identity. Satanists call the "left-hand path" is the religion of Satanism indulgence worldly pleasures that other religion forbid. Devil worshipping culture or Satanism comes through main account towards haunting through possessing and also it holds certain expressions and symbols.*

During twentieth century Satanism or devil- worshipping culture were transformed in to murder, abuse and cannibalism by means of rituals. Satanism holds demonic possession that exists through the variety of ceremony and dogma. This novel *Blessed Are Wicked* is a sequel of *The Uninvited* by Steven Lachance has a satanic culture which holds demonic possessions. Demons take a physical control of individual's body or an object. Humans, animals, places and objects also take control over these supernatural forces. Some demons require human body to manifest, a gain to access the human psychologically and emotionally vulnerable to harm a person until it remains within the body while possessed. The human may have injuries or even be killed but they do not require consent for possession will continue to animate the body until it leaves. These possessions can forcibly end by exorcism or using anti -possession symbols will kill demons and they leave human body unharmed.

Steven Lachance has been called one of the most prolific supernatural writers of this revolution. He released the bestselling non-fiction, *The Uninvited* (2007), is the true story of Steven Lachance's own personal haunting and living in Screaming House. He released the ground breaking short story collection, *Crazy* (2010). Steven released the long awaited sequel of *The Uninvited* (2014), which completed the two book Screaming House series, named *Blessed are the Wicked*. *Confrontation with Evil* (2017) is a true life paranormal books of 2017. He discovered the aftershocks of a demonic possession are more dangerous than the initial haunting itself by supernatural trauma.

The book is based on his research towards into horrifying case which reveals new evidence that never shared with the public. He also worked with the famous documentary series called *Supernatural*. He discovered the aftershocks of a demonic possession are more dangerous than the initial haunting itself by supernatural trauma. Trauma can leave you struggling with upsetting emotions, memories, and anxiety that won't go away. It can also leave you feeling numb, disconnected, and unable to trust

other people. When bad things happen, it can take a while to get over the pain and feel safe again.

The Roman Catholic Church issued a 156 page report calling his haunting a clear case of demonic infestation, oppression, and possession. His first work *The Uninvited* quickly gained critical praise from the audience world wide. Many fiction which deals with demonic possession consults with paranormal investigators, psychics, and priests, but the demonic attacks that screams, growls, putrid odors, invisible shoves, bites, footsteps and other physical violations which only grow worse, those entities clearly demonstrate wrath and power. This novel is about a small town at Missouri exactly at southwest place of Louis. Steve Lachance is a father of two children rented a three bed room home was originally built in 1932. After entering in to the home they started feel some strange things that happened in the home. Steven's son claimed that he saw a man in his room. From then Steven had strange dreams at night and also he screams in his sleep.

Over a month has passed but terrifying demonic attacks also increases. They felt mysterious growls, heavy breathing, singing, voices, prayers, and screaming. Pets, including puppies, cats, and a hamster inexplicably died. People were thrown, held against walls, pushed, shoved down stairs, bruised, bitten, and more. Several people who visit the home became physically ill simply by coming to the house.

After two and a half months filled with terror and possession Steven moved out with his children but Helen, who is a friend of Steven, moved in after him but haunting never stops. They carried on, terrifying Helen with mental and spiritual attacks, even physical rape, such that she was moved to murder, madness, and suicide. Last second intervention by Lachance saved her life. Later he starts with the real haunting to a terrifying horror that gets help from a paranormal investigator, prayers and priests. Steven Lachance's named his reality through a topic called facing your demons were famed by Lorraine Warren.

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**The Concept of Other in Wole Soyinka's *Telephone Conversation***

*This paper is an attempt to analyse the concept of 'other' in Wole Soyinka's Telephone conversation poem. People are defined by their identity having an identity of our own, gains self-respect and freedom in society. When you suffer from identity crisis, you no longer belong to that particular space; it means you are colonized by a colonizer. Majority of the blacks suffered from identity crisis which gave rise to 'Black Literature'. The African American literature explores the very issues of freedom and equality which were long denied to Black people in the United States, along with further themes such as African American culture, racism, slavery and a sense of identity. This is where 'othering' comes in. 'othering' is a process of the grand-autre having the 'others' as its focus. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak clearly puts it as, "othering is a process in which the imperial autre creates its others. There is a double-bind or a tension between the binary opposites".*

Wole Soyinka is Nigerian playwright, novelist, critic and the first African writer to get the Nobel Prize award for Literature in 1986. Soyinka has published hundreds of works, including drama, novels, essays and poetry, and colleges all over the world seek him out as a visiting professor. In addition to drama and poetry, he has written two novels, *The Interpreters* (1965) and *Season of Anomy* (1973), as well as autobiographical works including *The Man Died: Prison Notes* (1972), a gripping account of his prison experience, and *Aké* (1981), a memoir about his childhood. *Myth, Literature and the African World* (1975) is a collection of Soyinka's literary essays. Among his famous works, 'Telephone Conversation' stands out to be one of the most extraordinary poems that depict racism.

Soyinka's 'Telephone Conversation' depicts a conversation between a white lady and an African American man which casts a harsh light on the racism and prejudice which prevails in the society. The title reveals the fact that two people are talking on the phone, so the beginning of the poem is on a positive note. The man is searching for a house and the land lady has named a considerable price, and the area where it is located is an impartial and not racially prejudiced. Also the man could enjoy his privacy as the land lady does not live under the same roof. The African man is ready to accept the offer, but maybe there has been a similar incident in his past, for he stops and admits to her that he is black, saying he prefers not to waste the time travelling there if she's going to refuse him on that account. The landlady is described as a polite, well-bred woman, even though she is shown to be purely racist. The speaker is described as being genuinely apologetic for his skin color, even though he has no reason to be sorry for something which he was born with and has no control over. In this short poem, we can see that the speaker is an intelligent person by his use of high diction and wit, not the savage that the landlady assumes he is because of his skin color. All of these dissimilar things between what appears to be and what really is, create a sense of verbal irony that helps the poem display the ridiculousness of racism.

The price seemed reasonable, location  
Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived  
Off premises.

The first sentence of the poem includes a pun that introduces the theme of the poem and also informs us that things are not going to be as straightforward as they appear. If we read over these lines quickly, we would assume that the speaker meant "Being neither good nor bad" by the use of the word indifferent. But, indifferent is also defined as "Characterized by a lack of partiality; unbiased". This second definition gives the sentence an entirely different meaning. Instead of the apartment's location being neither good nor bad, we read that the apartment's location is unbiased and impartial. But, we learn from the poem that the location of the apartment is the exact opposite of unbiased and impartial. The speaker is rudely denied the ability to rent the apartment because of bias towards his skin color.

But self-confession. "Madam," I warned,  
"I hate a wasted journey—I am African."

After this introduction, the speaker begins his "self-confession" about his skin color. It is ironic that this is called a self-confession since the speaker has nothing that he should have to confess since he has done nothing wrong. He warns the landlady that he is African, instead of just informing her. "Caught I was, foully" he says after listening to the silence the landlady had responded with. Again, the word "caught" connotes that some wrong had been done, that the speaker was a criminal caught committing his crime. By making the speaker actually seem sorry for his skin color, Soyinka shows how ridiculous it really is for someone to apologize for his race.

Silenced transmission of  
Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,  
Lipstick coated, long gold rolled  
Cigarette-holder pipped.  
Considerate she was, varying the emphasis--  
"ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT?" Revelation came.  
"You mean--like plain or milk chocolate?"  
Her assent was clinical, crushing in its light  
Impersonality.

The landlady, on the other hand, is described with nothing but positive terms. The speaker mentions her "good-breeding," "lipstick coated" voice, "long gold-rolled/Cigarette holder," all possessions that should make her a respectable lady. These words describing her wealth are unbiased in regard to her personal character. Even when we find that she is a shallow and racist person who exhibits extreme insensitivity by asking crude questions, the man seems to think that she is 'considerate; and her clinical response to his question shows only 'light impersonality.' The speaker seems almost grateful for her behavior. Of course, these kind descriptions of the woman are teeming with verbal irony. We know that she is being very judgmental even while she is seeming to be so pleasant.

"HOW DARK?" . . . I had not misheard . . . "ARE YOU LIGHT  
OR VERY DARK?" Button B, Button A. Stench  
Of rancid breath of public hide-and-speak.  
Red booth. Red pillar box. Red double-tiered  
Omnibus squelching tar.

After asking the important question, "How dark?," the poem pauses for a moment and describes the surroundings to give a sense of reality that shows that the ridiculous question had really been asked. The speaker describes the buttons in the phone booth, the foul smell that seems to always coexist with public spaces, and a bus driving by outside. His description gives us an image of where the speaker is located: a public phone booth, probably somewhere in the United Kingdom. The "Red booth," "Red pillar-box," and "Red double-tiered / Omnibus" are all things that one might find in Leeds, the British city in which Soyinka had been studying before writing this poem ("Nobel"1). A sense of the anger running through the speaker's mind is portrayed by the repeated use of the word red. Then when he hears her question regarding how dark he is, he is so humiliated and angry that he sees red everywhere. The imagery of the huge bus squelching the black tar is symbolic of how the dominant white community treats those belonging to the minor black one..

Rapidly, wave-length adjusted,  
I chose. "West African sepia"--and as afterthought,  
"Down in my passport." Silence for spectroscopic  
Flight of fancy, till truthfulness clanged her accent  
Hard on the mouthpiece. "WHAT'S THAT?" conceding  
"DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS." "Like brunette."  
"THAT'S DARK, ISN'T IT?" "Not altogether.  
Facially, I am brunette, but, madam, you should see  
The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet  
Are a peroxide blond.

In the end, the landlady repeats her question and the speaker is forced to reveal how dark he is. "West African sepia," he says, citing his passport. She claims not to know what that means. She wants an exact expression of his darkness. His response, pretending to be simple is that his face is "brunette," his hands and feet "peroxide blonde" and his bottom "raven black". He knows that she just wants a measure of his overall skin-color so that she can categorize him, but he refuses to tell her. Instead he details the different colors of different parts of his body saying that he isn't all black, the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands are completely white. As it was meant to, this annoys the landlady and she hangs up the phone.

Friction, caused--  
Foolishly, madam--by sitting down, has turned  
My bottom raven black--One moment, madam!--sensing  
Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap  
About my ears--"Madam," I pleaded, "wouldn't you rather  
See for yourself?"

The speaker, sounds as though he is asking whether the landlady would like to meet him in person to judge his skin color for herself. The irony in this question, though, lies in the fact that we know the speaker is actually referring to his black bottom when he asks the woman if she wants to see it for herself. The speaker offers to show his backside to the racist landlady.

The poem deals with a foul subject, that of racism and prejudice, in almost comical manner. A most important device which Soyinka has used to highlight this sense of racism, which was previously widespread in western society, is that of the telephone. Had the person been speaking face to face with the lady, this whole conversation would never have taken place. She would have either refused outright, or would have found a more subtle way of doing so. The whole back and forth about 'how dark' the man is wouldn't have occurred. Thus the telephone is used to make the issue of racism clear and prove how nonsensical it really is.

Wole Soyinka uses two main literary devices to drive home the message of the poem. The first of the two is imagery. Right at the beginning, the imagery used to describe the mental image the man has of the woman: "lipstick coated, gold rolled cigarette holder piped", just from listening to her voice shows one that he thinks that she is, socially speaking above him, from a higher social class. Throughout the poem, yet another form of irony is created by the speaker's use of high diction, which shows his education. Although the landlady refuses to rent an apartment to him because of his African heritage and the supposed savagery that accompanies it, the speaker is clearly a well educated individual. Words like "pipped," "rancid," and "spectroscopic" are not words that a senseless savage would have in his vocabulary. The speaker's intelligence is further shown through his use of sarcasm and wit in response to the landlady's questions. Although he pretends politeness the entire time, he includes subtle meanings in his speech. The fact that a black man could outwit and make a white woman seem foolish shows the irony in judging people based on their skin color.

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**Culture as a Tool of Manipulation: A Study of Urmila Pawar's  
*The Weave of My Life : A Dalit Woman's Memories***

*Culture can be interpreted as the sum total of practices, customs, beliefs, norms and ideas held by a particular group of people or society. For Raymond Williams, the Welsh critic and academic, culture is a way of life. It conveys itself through various modes of signification like novels, films, television and advertising. Marxists interpret culture in relation to the underlying system of production. In their opinion, the elite class use culture as a political tool to manipulate the lower classes and create a false consciousness. Stuart Hall, the Jamaican cultural theorist in his essay Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms, interprets culture as a system of meanings embodied in all social practices (60). He viewed culture as a massive apparatus used by the dominant classes to subordinate the powerless. These powerless people do not revolt against this domination or the hegemonic control as most of them have accepted the system as it is and they do not find anything to revolt against.*

Indian culture is heavily influenced by the concepts propounded by dharmic religions like Hinduism. As per Hindu caste system there are four varnas namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Dalits are considered to be belonging to the fifth varna also known as Panchama. They are placed at the lowest strata of Hindu caste system and are made to believe that they are impure because of their actions in the past life. Even the very touch of a Dalit is considered to make the upper castes impure. Manusmriti, the ancient Indian text of 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. affirms the dominant or higher status possessed by the upper classes and impurity and servility of the outcastes. It also legitimises the social exclusion of the Dalits and makes inequality the guiding principle of social relations.

Dalits were portrayed as insignificant or minor characters in mainstream Indian literature. Even though some of the prominent writers like Mulk Raj Anand and Mahashweta Devi have captured their miserable experiences, it is in Dalit autobiographies, that the realistic and true accounts of their personal lives are portrayed. Dalit self-narratives gained prominence in Marathi literature. N.S. Suryavanchi's *Things I Never Imagined* (1975), Daya Pawar's *Baluta* (1978), are some of the pioneering works. Other major works include, Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi*, Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan*. Dalit women autobiographies capture their experiences of angst, social exclusion and discrimination. *Karukku* by Bhama Faustina Soosairaj, *The Prisons we Broke* by Baby Kamble and *Aaydan* or *The Weave of my Life* by Urmila Pawar are some of the prominent Dalit women autobiographies. Urmila Pawar is a Dalit feminist activist and Marathi writer born in 1945 in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. She has published collection of short stories like *Sahava Bot*, *Chauthi Bhint* and *Hatcha Ek* and a travelogue named *Mauritius: Ek Pravasa*. Her

autobiography *Aaydan* or *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* (2003) addresses the very hegemonic structure of the caste system. Hegemony is the naturalised or invisible kind of domination by the upper castes. Caste system could be maintained only through the subordination of the lower classes. The lower position of the Dalits are constructed through social practices and made to appear natural. Urmila Pawar challenges the conventions of both caste and gender to emerge as an activist and a strong literary voice.

The word 'aaydan' means the utensils like baskets and containers made of bamboo. According to the tradition, the Mahar caste to which Pawar belonged to, undertook the task of weaving bamboo baskets. In the preface to her autobiography, Pawar links the act of weaving done by her mother to her act of writing because both reflect their agony, pain and suffering. Mahar community lived far away from the town area. The women had to travel long distance covering steep hills, rivers and difficult roads for hours to reach the market and sell firewood, grass and rice to earn money for living. They cursed their ancestors for choosing that village named Phansawale which lies at the far off corner of the hills.

Earlier the Brahmin priests performed the rituals of marriage and ceremonial worship for the lower castes like Mahars and Chambhars. But he would never enter the Maharwada to perform the tasks instead he climbed a tree on the outskirts of the neighbourhood and muttered the chants. The brahminical community considered themselves polluted by the touch of not just Dalit people but also the things used by them. He received his *dhakshina* of coins after sprinkling holy water on it "to wash away the pollution and make them clean" (*The Weave of My Life* 13). When the Christian missionaries tried to convert them, many of the poor Dalit people resisted it because of their false caste pride. They were made to believe that they must stick on to their caste under any circumstances because it is their god-decided destiny.

In the schools run by Brahmins, the Mahar children had to sit outside the courtyard. Teachers treated them as outcaste and taught them from a distance. They would even hit the children with stones if they make any mistakes. Thus, most of these children lost interest in attending such schools and remained illiterate. But Pawar's father recognised the value of education and the freedom it can give to women. So, he always insisted on his daughter's education. 'Let the girls go to school. They have to stand on their own feet, be independent. They must also learn to ride bicycles'. (*The Weave of My Life* 33)

The idea of caste hierarchy is deep rooted in people's mind that once when Pawar's sister, Shanti went for a job in a mental hospital, a mentally disturbed woman there, came to know that she was Dalit. She started abusing Shanti for her caste and refused to take food from her. Pawar also remembers that houses of Marathas and Brahmins were at some distance from their house. Certain castes like Bhandaris and Kulwadis could drink water from their wells. But the lower caste people like Mahars were forbidden from having water from there. But Pawar's father allowed people to draw water from their wells, no matter what caste they belonged to. Urmila Pawar recounts a customary celebration in their village called Tera Shimga. They would cover the huge rock named Chandaki Devi's rock with dry leaves and grass and worship it. It was burnt later. The task of collecting wood was assigned to young Mahar boys. But

even after all the toil, they were not allowed to participate in the ritual. The boys, who are tired, would drink liquor to forget their toils. Mahar people were not allowed to touch the palanquin carrying the idol of the God, decorated with tassels. If they try to take the palanquin on their shoulders, they were beaten up by the upper castes for polluting it.

When fighting began over the issue of Mahars touching the palanquin, we would quickly run away with the jute sacks to return only after things cooled off, and squat in the dust again. Many of the Mahar boys, beaten up in the fights, intoxicated, would lie down on our sacks, whining, crying in pain from the wounds they had received. Their mothers would try to take them in their arms, soothe them, pat their faces but the boys would ramble incoherently, their eyes swollen and red with liquor. They would curse and try to go to the palanquin again and again. Their mothers and sisters would try to stop them. (*The Weave of My Life* 48)

After the festivals, Mahars were made to beg for the festive food from the houses of upper castes like Kulwadis, Marathas and Brahmins. Dalits were made to believe that this was their right. The Kulwadi women, who gave them food, would pour everything together in their baskets, making sure they do not touch the Mahars. Some were given stale food also although they served in the upper caste's houses in different ways like labouring the field, weaving the baskets, disposing dead animals and reaching messages for them. She was not allowed to enter into the house of upper class people and was humiliated.

They made me stand at the threshold; I put the baskets down and they sprinkled water on them to wash away the pollution, and only then would they touch them. They would drop coins in my hands from above, avoiding contact, as if their hands would have burnt had they touched me. If the house belonged to one of my classmates, the shame of it was killing. (*The Weave of My Life* 65)

Even while they were considered untouchables, Dalit women had to face sexual abuse from Brahmins. Once, Urmila Pawar remembers how a brahminic priest in the Maruthi temple near her house abused a Komti nomadic girl called Ulgawwa. He took sexual advantage of the small girl inside the temple which was considered sacred. There are many incidents which again prove the inhuman attitude towards lower caste people. Their conversion to Buddhism was not encouraged by the savarnas or the upper castes as they no longer could enslave them and might lose their superior position in the society. So, they tried to provoke Dalits deliberately in many ways.

The dalits were supposed to collect drinking water from a particular part of the river. One day, early in the morning, people from the Maratha community deliberately took their buffaloes and bullocks to the designated part of the river to wash them. The dalit women from the wadi had to wait for a long, long time before the muddied water settled down and they could collect some clean drinking water. (*The Weave of My Life* 85)

Mahars did not have the courage to question the atrocities meted out to them because they too believed that according to the norms of the society, they held an inferior position and were not powerful enough to raise their voice or fight against Marathas who are wealthier. In spite of all discrimination they faced, Urmila Pawar and her siblings were educated and settled well in their lives. Pawar passed the matriculation in the year 1964. She also got a job in Public Works Department under the Government of Maharashtra. She married Harishchandra in spite of family's objection and continued her studies even after that. Education gave her a new strength and vigour and she started viewing Dalit related problems in a new perspective. Acting in plays and reading Dalit writer's books led to her inner transformation. Pawar's husband too had to face caste discrimination at his office. Even the educated people treated him like an untouchable. He was inspired by Ambedkar's call for the youngsters to go to the city and forget the caste barriers. Apart from caste discrimination Dalit women were oppressed for their gender and class. Male children were always preferred even in Urmila's husband's family.

The attitude towards Dalits remains the same even now. Pawar recalls that Dalits changed their derogatory first names by adopting English initials in the front like L.R. Tambe or K.D. Kadam etc. Through which they redefined their relationship with the English language in an innovative manner. (*The Weave of My Life* 337) Pawar became part of Dalit movement and Dalit literary society. But there she faced the secondary treatment given to women members. All the importance was given to the male leaders and women speakers were made to wait outside. Even when Pawar became the chief in her office, the attitude of her subordinates did not change as they saw her as a Dalit woman. Urmila Pawar in *The Weave of My Life* provides insight into different ways in which Dalits are marginalised from the mainstream society. They attained a social strength through conversion and self-awareness by following Ambedhker's philosophy. She gives a new definition to the word Dalit as 'people who have been oppressed by the repressive social system, and challenge the oppression from a scientific, rational and humanitarian perspective'. (*The Weave of My Life* xii) But she believes that in this modern age caste still hides as a wild animal in the bush and has not completely disappeared from the society.

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**Requiem to Mother Nature: An Apocalyptic Forecast of  
the Future of Forest in the Works of ONV Kurup**

*Ecology is that umbrella term which brings land and man under one roof. The concept of dying earth and vanishing greenery has ever been on discussion since nature starts responding to the uncouth activities of man. The poet's perceptions of man as self-indulgent and destructive in these lines are equally significant as in so called 'tree poems' of major Malayalam poets. This paper aims at analysing the poems by the most prominent nature poet, ONV Kurup, and locates the essence of deep ecology and apocalyptic notions portrayed in his poems.*

ONV Kurup, the poet of masses has been regarded as the pioneer among pink poets in Malayalam Literature. The way he reached out to people was unique except for the fact that he never recognized himself to be a humanist. He had a great concern for the poor and the oppressed which has started from a rural set up in his own village where he agitated against mineral sand based industry that defaced the agricultural and rural set up of the native village. Thus, the poet's eco consciousness germinated that have paved way for his inspiration to act upon Silent Valley Movement. As Raymond Williams observes, "it is not only the loss of what can be called [...] a piece of unspoiled country. It is also [...] the loss of a specifically human and historical landscape, in which the source of feeling is not really that is 'natural', but that it is native" (p 138). ONV is uprooted in his deep sense of considering mother earth as native beyond the notion of being 'natural'. The resources of forest, whether it's renewable or non- renewable, must also be treated in the same way as if ONV transforms a mere, mundane subject, the planting of a tree, into a poetic concern in the poem *Oru Thai Nadumbol*. Kurup writes:

"When a seedling is planted,  
A shade is planted.  
A soothing shade to  
Stretch oneself is planted.  
A bed of flower  
For a siesta is planted". (1-6)

The lines dwell into the symbiotic relationship that man and nature possess. When a man lays his hands to plant a seed, he plants a life. The life in its prima facie provides shade which soothes man in giving him the shade. Realizing the magnitude of present day global environment crisis, many writers feel the need to write about earth and life supporting systems which are under increasing stress. The rising environmental problems and the upheaval of heat are implied in the lines. The poem written and recited during 1970's and 80's tried to reinforce the Silent Valley campaign and extolled trees and plants for their ecological functions. Thus poets like ONV Kurup eschews mere forestall description and extols the act of planting trees. The above lines also connote the same idea proposed by Sugathakumari, the leading poetess and environmentalist in Kerala who in her poem *Thaivekkal*, writes about the significance

of planting a tree. The poem portrays a mother and her son engaged in planting a sapling on the banks of a waning river. According to William Rueckert, ecocriticism [is] “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature”. While taking into consideration, the poems of ONV Kurup, we might see a common concern entrusted with moral responsibility of Environmental restoration. But unlike other nature poems, ONV regards nature as mother. One of the basic assumptions of Deep Ecology is the motherly providence of nature. Nature, the great mother, provides and protects everything. Such a providential mother is image in Kurup’s *Requiem to Mother Earth (Bhoomikoru Charamageetham)*.

As poet puts it:

“You did deliver in pain children countless,  
But one eating up the other before your eyes,  
And you stood hiding your tears unseen by others,  
Then, as they devoured you bit by bit  
And rejoiced.” (p 29, *This Ancient Lyre*)

Human beings, as giving birth to young ones, find an extra ordinary pleasure and the same gift is attributed to nature by the poet as well. Man is not a separate entity. He himself was created by nature and we are bound to keep natural laws. But the poet’s voice turns a little vigorous in the form of denouncing the act of man against his mother. The greatest pain a mother can bear is the worst that happens to her children and this is what happens when they quarrel each other, fight each other to grab profit out of natural resources. The poem is a desperate attempt to foresee the plight of Mother Nature when she was devoured by the act of man. The ruthless behaviour of present day life in rejoicing by destroying mother providence is also shown here. A Requiem to Mother Earth is a moving verbal picture of how man exploits the planet. Often, it presents a disturbing and gloomy picture of the earth like ONV says:

‘Tearing apart the lustrous garment  
In which the Sun had dressed up his favourite bride,  
They pierced nails into your body naked  
Drank the blood that flowed from your wounds” (p 29, *This Ancient Lyre*)

The man devastated the entire planet, stripping off her clothes, the clothes of mother. He is even ready to take off her lustrous green. The poet portrays the green vegetation of nature as her bridal dresses. The Indian concept of the sacred woman in her bridal dress is depicted here. When man exploits greenery, he tears off his own mother’s sacredness. Mother Nature is always the epitome of aestheticism. The mother as a universal teacher is employed in the lines of A Requiem:

“I have known you  
Startle at the hoot of an owl  
Only to soothe as the melody of the koel.  
You weave designs in my heart with colour varied,  
You turn dusk golden and vanish in the forest with  
Dusk in your arms.

And reappear with Dawn on your shoulder;  
To awaken me, to feed me with nectar” (p 29)

William in his *Green Language* observes “Nature [as] a way of seeing [that] has been connected with a lost phase of living, and the association of happiness with childhood” (p 130). Likewise, Kurup here associate his memory and past of how he has been grown up in the lap of nature. He recollects the way in which nature has woven designs in his heart. The vivid imagery through which his childhood has been passed and the time when nature amused him by turning the dusk golden and vanish in the forest are fine examples of how he makes earth or nature or greenery providential. Darkness ends in forest. The poet enunciates the lustrous green of the forest into a place of darkness. Darkness reveals the mystery, hence the forest mysterious. The idea reminds us of Emerson’s note in *Nature*, In the woods we return to reason and faith... In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in the streets and villages” (p 30)

Deep ecologists underscore the need for an ecological consciousness rooted in bio species equality. Against the views of shallow ecology, which is human centred, deep ecology recognizes the value of all living beings and human beings as just one particular strand in the web of life. It completely dissolves the man-in –environment concept. And the idea completely transforms into a new idea called biospherical egalitarianism which implies close partnership with other forms of life. And this is what Arne Naess says: “Diversity enhances the potentialities of life.” Kurup regards poetry not just as a medium for verbal expression, but a means of emotional communication between man and the natural world. *A Requiem* serves the purpose of being a pastoral poetry which romanticizes the bygone past in the disillusionment of anti- ecological present. He writes:

“Even in the dew-drop on the forehead of a darbha  
Grass sprouting from you,  
There is a tiny sun,  
And seeing it, amazement dawned in my heart.  
I have known you  
Startle at the hoot of an owl  
Only to soothe as the melody of the koel.” (p 29)

The poet is mesmerized by the wonders that nature creates even by looking at the dew drops in the grass blade, where he could see the blazing sun. He gives intrinsic value to those forms of nature where he could see tiny sun. Sun is the greatest source of energy. Thus it equivocates human beings along with other organisms. Personifying darbha may cater to the equality of all living organisms. Darbha, which is considered as a sacred plant epitomises the lost value and green culture prevailed in our universe, where we depend on plants for human needs.

A requiem by ONV Kurup presents some of these traits- disillusionment in an ecologically destructive present and revisiting a supposedly golden past. A requiem is a moving verbal picture of human exploitation of the planet. The poem effectively blends the romantic note with an apocalyptic vision without marring its elegance. “*A Requiem*” presents a rather disturbing, gloomy picture of the earth, powerfully

enough to agitate readers. No other poem in Malayalam has so triumphantly merged the aesthetic with the environmental crisis. *A Requiem* is an elegiac composition for the Earth who is not yet dead:

“O, Earth, who is not yet dead,  
On your imminent death, peace for your soul.  
For your obsequies (and mine too)  
This song is inscribed in the heart to day.  
As Death blooms dark and venomous,  
And you, beneath its shadow turn numb by tomorrow,  
None will be left here not even me to mourn  
In final oblation of tears on your frozen face;  
So shall I inscribe this” (p 29)

*A Requiem* powerfully presents the variations in the climatic stability in Kerala. The picture of cloudless monsoons, flowerless spring, stagnant rivers and the leafless trees has more potential to invite readers’ interest in such matters than the factual, statistical descriptions of the same. The earth, which is not yet dead, shows the eccentricity of death threat posed by earth in near future. The Apocalyptic literature essentials the elements such as the foresee of future, the immediacy of death as well as the intervention of angel to proclaim and the nature of death one going to have.

“The author of this apocalypse describes it as a divinely imparted revelation of future events whose fulfillment is imminent. The revelation was conveyed through angelic mediation to a human recipient, who testified to others concerning the revelation he had received” (p 31, Taylor, *Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature*)

In the poem, the poet assumes to be an angel who is unaffected and sympathises with the plight of earth and informs others about the huge big-bang, the planet earth is going to face. The poet’s concern went beyond the narrow constraints of their immediate region. To him, the local was just a symbolic microcosm of the entire human race. His efforts aim at evolving, reinventing and reconstructing an ecologically viable habitat that is vital for the continuance of the humankind. The writer’s emphasis is not on creating and sustaining exotic landscapes, instead they long for a new sense of living that values the ecological principles of coexistence and cooperation.

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**Exploring Radical Feminism in Meena Kandasamy's  
*When I Hit You, or A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife***

*Meena Kandasamy is an emerging Feminist, poet, novelist and an activist of contemporary India. Her book titled 'When I Hit you or, A Portrait of the writer as a Young wife' is an auto biographical novel written from the perspective of an unnamed protagonist who voices out her painful experiences of social isolation, domestic violence and marital rape. The protagonist gives the readers a glimpse of her past life who has fallen head over heels in love with a professor who attracts her with his kindness towards homeless children. Charmed by their exceptional love for each other, the two decide to get married and move to mangalore city.*

She being a newly wed has lots of hopes and dreams about starting a new phase of life until she realizes that language is a form barrier for her to socialize and connect with people. Initially this turns favourable for her husband to hegemonize her, he slowly tries to overrule her by demanding her to be less attractive, ceases her mobile and laptop, insists her to submit all her passwords and even replies to all her mails. He always begins his accusations against her by asking questions like why have you cleared your mail inbox? Whose number have you deleted? Why haven't you washed the sink? Why are you trying to kill me by trying to over salt my food? etc. He considers she being on Facebook as Narcissim. He blackmails her to come off Facebook by burning his bare left hand elbow with a matchstick and keeps on repeating it until she accepts to do so. Being a writer, coming off Facebook means a complete isolation from her family circle and her artist friends in Kerala. It also means an entire full stop to her professional link.

Both Radical and second wave feminism substantiates the concept that the career growth of a women is denied by the male dominant society. Which is clearly evident in the case of this novel's protagonist? He is the type of an anxious husband who stands outside the door of a toilet in a train carriage afraid that she would seize the opportunity to escape from him. Another example of Radical and second wave feminism is that, to him she is a mere object of flesh that he uses to satisfy his sexual hunger. When she is in the bed with her husband she has to stay still and silent. He beats her for moaning during their intercourse because he doesn't want anyone to know that they are indulged in the act of sex. Some days he beats her the whole night until she becomes unconscious. Sex is the opposite of intimacy to her. He believes in eliminating all the evidence that they had sex.

He uses the power cord of a Mac, his leather belt, and twisted electric cables to drive out the demons that he thinks has possessed her. He kicks her in the stomach asking her to prove that she is not thinking about any other man. He gathers her hair up in a bunch with his hands and lifts her by her hair. To her the pain, scarring or the shame is not the frightening part when he hits her but the thought of failure that she cant beat him back or prove equal to him. Everyday she inches closer to death; she has no one to share her feelings. She is a slave who is beaten up ruthlessly, her feelings are torn

apart. She has no hope. She is devoid of her identity. All these characteristics show her mental trauma. She undergoes tremendous pain and isolation inspite of sternly playing the role of a responsible housewife. She keeps humming these lines to herself: “three four, sweep the floor, three four, do the chore, three four, come here whore”

She faces blatant gender bigotry from her parents, who insists her to adjust with him inspite of knowing all the violence caused to her, for the fear that society would talk bad about their upbringing. In spite of all such humiliations, she swings on a pendulum of choice to whether live or to die. Somehow “Hope” prevents her from taking her own life. She lives a life of a dead corpse with him. She now lives an emotionless, meaningless and a detached life with her husband. Neither his words nor his actions bother her anymore because finally she has become numb to whatever he does.

She gathers courage, takes her passport, ATM card, phone and laptop. Calls her mother and says she is coming back to them, bruised, torn and shattered but alive. She sheds her miserable marriage life like a second skin and walks off from the shame that she has endured so far. The protagonist, despite being a writer herself is unable to protect the sexual violations of her husband. The husband targets her physique as a rival, infuses scars and violence on her, considering her only an object of sexual gratification. Though the protagonist is in complete opposition to the sexual abuse meted out on her body, she lays fettered by the social belief that it is the rightful duty and claim of a husband to own a woman’s body. Even though the realization dawns upon her, it takes some time for the writer protagonist to accept her freedom of choice to dissolve the marriage.

Radical and second wave feminists seek to abolish sexual objectification of women, violence against women and challenge the very notion of gender roles which is very much evident from the case of protagonist who emerges from the pit that she had fallen in the name of marriage. Meena Kandasamy is now a real life activist who rebels against any injustice or suppression caused against women and dalits. By writing this novel she has not only voiced out the abuses that is meted out to her but has also given her voice to many thousands of women who are still silently suffering from all the prejudices and constantly getting subjugated by the patriarchal society. Meena is an epitome of courage and fortitude who through this novel spreads an important message that women can have equality in the society and lead a prosperous career life without any troubles from the male dominant society.

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**A Subaltern Study on Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea***

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a story of a Creole, Antoinette Cosway, who grows up in the Caribbean. She has a disastrous arranged marriage with an English man, goes mad and ends up imprisoned in an English country house. The novel is a prequel to *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, as it is about the life of Bertha Mason, the mysterious and marginalized character of the classic. This novel can simply be called the untold story of Bertha Mason and is divided into three parts. The first part is about the isolated childhood of Antoinette. The second part deals with the tragic effects of mixed cultural background and identity crisis of Antoinette and the third, the disastrous end of the protagonist who is imprisoned treated as a sub-human and reduced to nothing in an English country house. The main aim of this paper is to highlight the colonial and patriarchal impact on the life of Antoinette Cosway and to justify the novel as a voice of the voiceless.

Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* is an indispensable subaltern novel, which is a perfect reply to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* by deconstructing the classic. Rhys adroitly plays upon the theme, characters and general plotline of *Jane Eyre*, which makes *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a flawless subaltern parody of the classic. In rewriting the main parts of *Jane Eyre*, Rhys gives voice to the deliberately silenced characters with a postcolonial attempt to unearth the "other" side of the novel.

The mad woman in the attic, Bertha Mason, Edward Rochester's first wife who is a mysterious character of Bronte, has a Creole origin and manifests to the readers as a woman with a dark and horrifying image. Hence the writer's intention of "othering" becomes Antoinette Cosway. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* the othered, repressed and silenced "mad woman's" story is retold to uncover the oriental attitude of Bronte's story towards the West Indies and Creole culture. "The author transforms the first Rochester into an individual figure whose madness is caused by imperialistic and patriarchal oppression." (Swietlik 2). Thus the novel serves as an excellent platform for several post-colonial, subaltern, inter-textual and feminist critical reading. The main aim of this paper is to highlight the colonial and patriarchal impact on the life of the protagonist, which makes her a subaltern and to justify the novel as the voice of the voiceless.

Jean Rhys (1890-1979) is a contemporary British writer born in Caribbean. Her father was a Welsh doctor and her mother, a white Creole (white West Indian). Rhys got educated in a convent school and at the age of 16 she left the island for England and lived with her aunt Clarice. She visited the island only once in 1936 as she lived in England and France for the rest of her life. It is evident through her works that she longed to belong and was in search of a comfortable environment. She had married thrice during her life time and after the first failed marriage, she survived on writing with the support of Ford Madox, an English writer.

Rhys' novels predominantly focused on female survival and a better quest for identity. Most of the major characters of her novels were marginalized females in the western patriarchal society, who were exiled both culturally and sexually. Her major works are, *The Left Bank* (1927), *Postures* (1928), *After Leaving Mr. Machenzi* (1930) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939). In 1966 *Wide Sargasso Sea* was published. The book won the Royal Society of Literature Awards and WH Smith Literary Award, which brought Rhys to public attention after twenty-seven years of silence. Also, the novel was considered the best and most successful one of Rhys as *Times* included it among the 100 best English novels since 1923. This created a special status for Rhys in the 20<sup>th</sup> century writings.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a story of a Creole, Antoinette Cosway, who grows up in the Caribbean, has a disastrous arranged marriage with an English man, and goes mad, imprisoned in an English country house. The author uses the classic, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte as an imaginative starting point but changes the point of view from the first person narrative of Jane to that of Antoinette. The novel can thus be considered as a prequel to *Jane Eyre* as it is about the life of Bertha, the most marginalized character. *Wide Sargasso Sea* can be divided into three parts. The first part is about the isolated childhood of Antoinette. The second is the tragic effects of mixed culture and confused identity of Antoinette and the third, the disastrous end of Antoinette who is imprisoned in an English country house where she is reduced to nothing.

The social context plays an important role in the marginalization of the protagonist of the novel. She was born in a slave-owning family in Jamaica, in the nineteenth century. This was the time when the West Indies abolitionist movement was surging. The natives, who were treated as slaves by the colonizers began to fight for their freedom and equality. Antoinette's father dies suddenly, leaving the family on its own during this critical condition. Besides poverty and hatred, Antoinette was doomed to suffer confused self-identity. Since the white Creole of West island of Jamaica were intermediate race between the "white" colonizers and the natives. They became the veritable social class and were known as the "sandwich class". Rhys clearly describes this condition through Antoinette as she says, "They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing. 'go away white cockroach, go away, go away... nobody wants you go away.'" (Rhys 16). The natives called these Creoles as "white cockroach" and "white nigger". Antoinette was constantly addressed by these terms and they acted upon her like a curse that got deeply rooted in her heart. She was convinced that nobody liked her and she profoundly lacked sense of belonging to a particular place or culture. As the social conflicts intensified, the colonizers chose to leave but the native mestizo whites from Martinique had no choice but to stay back. Antoinette was one of them. She grew up in this chaotic social setting with hostile people that led to her mixed socio-cultural condition and lack of identity. With all the above grounds, it would not be farfetched to mark *Wide Sargasso Sea* as the story of the "othered" (Antoinette who is "othered" and the "others Creole women in general).

The social depression that Antoinette and the other Creole characters suffer in this novel stems from her mixed ethnic origin which is termed as 'hybridity' by Hommi. K. Bhabba. The result of hybrid culture is the 'in-betweeness'. Bhabba in his book,



*Culture's in Between* accounts that, "hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialect that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty... the outside of the inside, the part in the whole" (212). The Creole culture which Antoinette belongs to is no exception. A new estranged Creole way of culture is created that neither purely fits into the English society nor into the native society thus creating a hybridity which results in lack of identity. Also, Antoinette lacks enough attention and support from her family. She is found helpless and lonely during her childhood. Her mother is always found taking care of her sick brother who stands as a blockade between Antoinette and her mother. "But she pushed me away, not roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she has decided once and for all that I was useless to her... I was a little afraid of her." (Rhys 82). This vividly describes Antoinette's disturbed relationship with her mother who is also a victim of the society.

In the second part of the novel, Antoinette is married to an English man, Mr. Rochester in whom she tries to find comfort. To her, the marriage was the only hope to change her present situation, she hopes to gain her freedom, equality and reclaim her identity through marriage. She considered herself as a "white" woman and assumed that her marriage with Mr. Rochester would free her from the oppression of the Caribbean culture, society and people. She also dreams to establish a solid self-identity through her marriage. But to her dismay, the tomb of marriage resets racial and gender inequality in another level. In addition to the cultural oppression she suffers patriarchal oppression through her marriage. Once again she is reminded of her mixed identity and sense of displacement as she says,

... a white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you I often wonder who am I and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. (Rhys 102).

Rhys in her attempt to give voice to the silenced portrays what was generally marginalized and othered as a crucial and dominant figure, displaying the importance of the perception in which the margins could also have the ability to become the centre. She throws light on the triple marginalized Creole women. According to Howells, "Rhys speaks from a self-consciously marginal position raising issues of gender and colonial difference in fiction of resistance which are always compromised by the conditions of female dependency" (58). It is understood that Rhys was well aware about her position as a narrator and has brought out the oppressed as the central figures to bring out their untold point of view.

The triple oppression that Antoinette undergoes is relatively much evident within the context of the novel through several relationships that she develops such as the morbid marriage to Mr. Rochester, her pathetic pursuit of relief from Christophene, and her grudging relation with Amelia, the maid. Even the social space in which Annette and her daughter were fated to live in, in search of rich white English husband is enough to identify their restricted in-between status. The patriarchal subjugation that Antoinette experiences as a woman intensifies her repression, causing her to endure double othering in the society, both as a woman and as a Creole. The triple oppression under which Antoinette tries to acknowledge her self-

identity leads her to the final place of resolution, which is nothing less than a desirable madness. The hybrid ethnicity of Antoinette can be given as the basic reason for her lack of self-identity, which is manifested as an ambiguous condition. Her female status also blurs her acknowledgement of a precise individuality. This is evident throughout the novel as she is referred by the public as the daughter of Annette, or as the wife of Mr. Rochester, or Bertha (a name and individuality totally imposed on her by her husband). Owing to the imposed ideas on her by other power holders, Antoinette cannot strike a balance with her individual self. All these identity crises arise as a result of her in-betweenness and displacement.

The triple oppression that Antoinette tries to endure in life consigns her to a kind of madness, the reality of which is disputable. All the ideas of hybridity, in-betweenness, unhomeliness, isolation, estrangement, lack of belonging, identity crisis, insecurity, distrust and all kinds of economic, racial, patriarchal, sexual, colonial and class oppression becomes the reason for Antoinette to step further towards madness. However, it would seem that the madness that she is pushed into or that she 'prefers' to be with, is an ideological reaction that Antoinette manifests against all oppressive powers in her life. Gayatri Spivak, in her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" questions the status of subaltern women, who are oppressed female postcolonial subjects. She attempts to find a new way for these double oppressed women to raise their voice against the patriarchal and postcolonial power exerts. Upon reviewing the current situation of the subaltern through the theories of post colonialists, subaltern writers and theorists, with the liking of Derrida's Deconstruction, Spivak answers the very question she directed in the beginning. She believes that, "As long as the west denies judging the subalterns or the postcolonial subjects on their own authentic values, and instead, favors a system of judgment, which is Eurocentric universal, the subaltern cannot speak." (144).

The subalterns have never been able to speak and if the world power structure and economic systems do not alter, the subaltern will most possibly not be able to raise their voice of freedom. However, there is an assured way out for the subalterns, from all the economic, racial, patriarchal, colonial oppressions and that is through their madness and dreams. Antoinette revolts against all those odd subjugating factors of her life in her recurring dreams in which she sets fire to the whole captivating British prison house, symbolizing her liberation from all her dreadful ties. The subalterns, like Antoinette should have dreams and desires to protest against all the power structures that captivates them and decreases their identity. It is time to wake up from their solicitous dreams and act out their desires of freedom, claim their self identity and voice out their voiceless state of being.

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### **The Concept of New Women in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence***

*The dusk of nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a new variety of female insurgence, the ideal of New Woman, which was incongruent from the concept of feminine from the prior epochs. The New Woman seemed more sovereign, autonomous, aspiring, educated, ambitious and challenging consuming force. That Long Silence is the magnum opus of Shashi Deshpande or in her words "the one closest to her personally"(Jain, 210). She is a remarkable Indian Woman writer, who portrayed her protagonists being in combat with existing social values of the present-day society.*

*That Long Silence* is bred in the soul of every Indian woman, no matter they are married or not, or educated or illiterate. The novel points to the life of countless Indian women who promised to adjust, compromise, submission and thus lose her identity to preserve her marital life respectable. *That Long Silence* marks the rise of Indian woman after a long silence of suffering and stomaching, breaking the traditions, norms and laws of the patriarchal society. Olive Schreiner, an indomitable devotee of New Woman concept described her priorities by locating herself opposite to the theorist who believes, "Woman should seek to fields of labour in the new world of social conditions that is arising around us, as she has her function as child bearer and bears no children"(Olive, 108).

Shashi Deshpande has taken great care not to portray her protagonist women as someone who do something extraordinary, but place them as ordinary women who are double-minded, like Jaya, the protagonist of the novel *That Long Silence*. The novel is about the self-realization and discovery of a convent-educated English-speaking lady, Jaya who has a taste in literature and the conflict in her inner consciousness between her role as a dutiful wife and the aspiration of becoming a writer. This paper analyses Jaya as a New Woman.

The novel, *That Long Silence* is an expression of silence of modern Indian house wives. The silence which transformed them into non-entities. Shashi Deshpande notes down the life of Jaya without adding any soap elements but as real life experience. She says, "And then I wrote *That Long Silence* almost entirely a woman's novel nevertheless, a book about the silencing of one-half of humanity. A lifetime of introspection went into this novel, the one closest to me personally; the thinking and ideas in this are closest to my own" (Jain, 210).

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande present the concept of 'New Woman' through the character of Jaya, the protagonist, a woman who is not confined into the cocoon of gender roles of wife and mother, but flies out to the free world like a butterfly. The novel is the transformation of Jaya from being a typical Indian woman who needs help of a man for anything and everything. She thinks, "I'm scared of cockroaches, lizards, nervous about electrical gadgets, hopeless at technical matters, lazy about accounting... almost the stereotype of a woman: nervous, incompetent, needing male help for support" (Deshpande,76).

Jaya was a submissive, tender and a meek lady who tamed herself to suffer without any complaints to serve her marriage, because she has been taught, "the importance and necessity of stable marriage and family- family as security, as a source of emotional strength" (Uma, 4). She even gave up her career as a writer for Mohan, her husband. "Looking at his stricken face, I had been convinced I have done him wrong. And I had stopped writing after that" (Deshpande, 144). The novel then acquires a new turn when Jaya ascertains that she has victimized herself and made herself weak and depended upon others just like Kamat, her neighbor and friend warned. When Jaya said, "A woman can never be angry. She can only be neurotic, hysterical, frustrated" (Deshpande, 147). But to this Kamat cautiously replies as, "Beware of this 'women are victims' theory of yours. It will drag you down into a soft squishy bog of self-pity. Take yourself seriously, woman. Don't skulk behind a false name. And work- work if you want others to take you seriously" (Deshpande, 148). The concept of New Woman according to Mary Ellen Snodgrass, as she defines in her work *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature* is:

Replacing the submissive, apathetic female of sentimental novels was the decisive, career minded, un-chaperoned go-getter, whom the French dubbed a *nouvelle femme*. With no nostalgia for matrilineal tradition the emergent New Woman, the precursor of the liberated woman of the 1970s, educated herself, travelled, explored her sexuality, bicycled and competed in sports and choose life enhancing experience over domesticity" (Snodgrass, 393).

Thus in short a new woman is career-oriented, eager to take her own decisions, ambitions, exploring, educated and enthusiastic in finding out her own identity. When the novel begins, Jaya the protagonist is accompanying her husband Mohan to Dadar flat, burying themselves from the public as Mohan was caught in the act of malpractice of funds in his company and an enquiry is set against him. She followed her husband like Seetha of Hindu mythology, but with a difference. Seetha did it willfully while Jaya did it in compulsion. She was as if stuck with her husband. She became an introvert and goes into deep contemplation of her past and childhood.

Betty Fridan states that educated housewives are:

Two-headed schizophrenic... once she wrote a paper on the graveyard poets; now she writes notes to the milkman. Once she determined the boiling point of sulphuric acid; now she determines her boiling point with the overdue repair man... the housewife often is reduced to screams and tears... No one, it seems, is appreciative, least of all herself, of the kind of person she becomes in the process of training from poetess into shrew" (Fridan, 18).

According to her, the woman suffers from "crisis of identity... it has been called 'discontinuity' in cultural conditioning; it has been called woman's role crisis" (Fridan, 69). It occurs when a woman begins to sense "I have no personality. I'm a server of food and putter on of pants and a bed maker, somebody who can be called on when you want something else. But who am I" (Fridan, 17).

Jaya even states that laundry and ironing of clothes has become a daily routine to her. She do it now, just do that again after wearing it. The novel also depicts the plight of Indian woman in the patriarchal society who seldom has any rights, even on her

name. Her father named her Jaya, meaning victory, but after marriage, it was changed to Suhasini, because her husband found the name more suitable for being a dutiful wife as compared to the name Jaya. She tamed herself to adjust with the wishes of her mother and brothers after the death of her father, and later after marriage she lived to the conditions of Mohan's family, playing the roles of a perfect wife and mother. This situation could be directly connected to the plight of Nora in Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, where the protagonist Nora says, "I was simply transferred from papa's hands to yours. You have arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you or else I pretended to."

Jaya was a writer by nature, but Mohan was least interested in her stories and criticized it. She left her passion for him and starts writing gossip in a newspaper column about middle-class women, which her husband wishes. A typical Indian woman who is barred from chasing her identity. The rise of new woman in Jaya begins with her relationship with Kamat, her neighbor which is against the traditional values, who guided her through the hard times. She finds his company comfortable that her womanly inhibitions wither and she opens up her problems to him. Kamat offers constructive criticism to Jaya's writing. She doesn't feel any regret in her relation with him. New Womanhood represents a shift from emphasis on maternalism and the family and promoted instead women's pursuit of individual happiness. Jaya's denial of subordination to Mohan starts right when she opens the doors of Dadar flat instead of handing the keys to him. "It is not he who relinquished his authority; it was I who no, longer conceded any authority to him" (Deshpande 9).

According to S. Prasanna Sree:

Her giving up writing for the newspaper column 'Seeta' symbolizes giving up her traditional role model of wife, now she will write what she wants to write and will not look up at Mohan's face for an answer she wants. This makes her voyage of discovery complete (Sree, 191).

Her concept of marriage "two bullocks yoked together" so that they can walk along together, because walking in separate direction makes it difficult for them. The lack of communication is the reason for silence which grows in their marital life. Mohan considered anger as un-womenly. Silence was the representation of Jaya's anger. Kamat advises her to express her anger, her real self into the stories. As Sonima K. K. Suggests:

In *That Long Silence*, Jaya has reconstructed her identity and along with that her capacity to dream. She decided to get rid of silence, which women have lived with for ages to stop speaking prakrit (Sonima, 6).

The moment she felt she was the one responsible for her own misery and victimization, her transformation from a submissive and docile role starts. She decides to stop playing the life as a role model but to live a purposeful life. The metaphor of silence does not mean an intrusion into the world of silence, but a silent communion with the oppressed self-training for articulation for a voice. When the novel begins, Jaya was a lady who lacked confidence in her writing, but as the novel progress, all she does is writing a book in which she enunciates their own life- lives of Mohan, Jaya, Rahul and Rati. She also portrays that illusion of husband as a

sheltering tree as taught by elders shatter. Her liberation is culminated when she decides to live her life with her own rules instead of advices from other people. The novel suggests hope and change for better. "We don't change overnight. It's possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope, without that life would be impossible" (Deshpande, 193). This suggests a new beginning to Jaya and Mohan. The novel, *That Long Silence* starts with a meek and submissive character of Jaya, the protagonist, who was, as she admits, even afraid of cockroaches and Lizards. When the novel concludes she becomes stubborn enough to say, "I am not afraid anymore. The panic has gone, I am Mohan's wife. I had thought and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan's wife. Now I know that kind of fragmentation is not possible" (Deshpande, 191). Shashi Deshpande states that, "The women in my book are people who come to realize what it is to be a woman in the process of their own lives and the situations they face, not through the books and theories. I think feminism is entirely personalized. It is when you start questioning the pre-conceived notions about your roles."

The novel, *That Long Silence* portrays the transformation of Jaya who realizes that being herself is the only way to be happy. She has hopes about her career and feels that she could convince Mohan. She decides to erase the silence in order to make others aware of her feelings and frustrations.

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### **Aesthetic Culture and Havoc Caused by Civil War in the Late Twentieth Century**

*The largest continent on Earth holds in its centre the country of Afghanistan with its rich, unique, proud culture. A land that almost got crushed of its original form due to Taliban militia and civil war followed by insurgency after a decade of its rise. The paper aims at zooming into the pride of Afghans, unsmooth political history in the Islamic Republic country. Also, in bringing out the non-public cries of exiled community in political asylums and the aftermath of immigrants in USA. Thereby resulting in the study of culture and civil clashes in a place eluded of visit, the emotional strife of abandoned aborigines and the result of being stripped of one's soul honour which is independence.*

*The Kite Runner* is an English novel by the San Francisco based Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini. Published in 2003 by Riverhead Books, it is Hosseini's first novel which has sold over 3 million copies worldwide. This is the novel that made Afghanistan the talking point of every book group reported *Guardian* and listed it among the fifty books that Defined the Decade. The novel is a beautiful-bitter intense ride from its pre-invasion of Russia, the glorious times; through the Taliban terror to the evolution of modern Afghanistan. Spanning from before 1979 Soviet invasion until the reconstruction following the fall of Taliban. It takes place in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States of America.

The story is the shoot system. A well-favoured unravelling friendship between the two friends who are actually half-brothers, Amir and Hassan. The atonement for Amir's sin being redeeming Hassan's son, Sohrab, from the Taliban. The emotions are far more intriguing even after turning the final pages of the book. However, the root is Afghanistan - its history, political conflicts and cultural context. Hosseini writes against the backdrop of collapse of civil society and the violation of fundamental human rights that commonly takes place in such settings - ethnic and racial discrimination, religious intolerance, the oppression of women and children, war crimes, the plight of refugees.

The Afghan culture is aesthetic indeed but also borrows grim looks from readers of *Kite Runner*. The honour and pride of Pashtuns, their true hatred for Russians who stole their soul-love independence is a little overwhelming. Afghans considered death over ill-honour. 'Lost her to a fate most Afghans considered far worse than death. She ran off with a clan of travelling singers and dancers.' (p.6) 'We may be hard-headed and I know we're far too proud, but, in the hour of need, believe me that there's no one you'd rather have at your side than a Pashtun.' Amir recalls what Baba had once said. (p. 147) Hosseini also puts in that, 'Afghan tendency to exaggerate- sadly, almost a national affliction; if someone bragged about his son was a doctor, chances were the kid had once passed a biology test in high school.' And, "I don't care where he was born, he's Roussi . His parents were *Roussi*, his grand parents were *Roussi*. I swear on your mother's face I'll break his arm if he tries to touch me." Baba screams

at Amir refusing to let the Russian doctor treat him at the hospital after what his fellow people had done to his native land.(p.143). There's also another place where Baba stands up for not his honour but for a women, being protective of his fellow passenger at the cost of his own life. "Ask him where his shame is. Tell him he's wrong. War doesn't negate decency. It demands it, even more than in times of peace." (p.107)

Their refined ways of living, their passionate games like Kite Flying tournament, resuming their cultural life in the States: at the flea market, following *khastegari* tradition are the beautiful aspects. "I want you to go *khastegari*. I want you to ask General Taheri for his daughter's hand." Amir asks shortly after Baba gets discharged from the hospital to which Baba gladly approves. (p.148,149)

Again, the dark side of its beauty is also evidently high-lighted in Hosseini's words. "Oh, they're just men having fun! I make one mistake and suddenly everyone is talking *nang* and *namoos*, and I have my face rubbed in it for the rest of my life." Soraya, Amir's wife breaks down complaining about how Afghans treat women unequally. (p.164) "*Bachem*, this adoption ... thing, I'm not so sure it's for us Afghans. For one thing, they grow up and want to know who their natural parents are. Nor can you blame them. Sometimes, they leave the home in which you laboured for years to provide for them so they can find the people who gave them life. Blood is a powerful thing, *Bachem*, never forget that." Soraya's father says to her. (p.172)

The true nature of the political conflicts in Afghanistan that the world was unaware of is revealed in the novel. In the foreword to his tenth anniversary edition of the Kite Runner, Hosseini wrote, "As an Afghan I am honoured when readers tell me that this book helped make Afghanistan a real place for them. That it isn't just the caves of Tora Bora and poppy fields and Bin Laden for them anymore. It's quite an honour when readers tell me that this novel helped put a personal face on Afghanistan for them, and that they now see my homeland as more than just another unhappy, chronically troubled, afflicted land." It is true and compulsive. Afghanistan was ruled for half a century by King Zahir Shah. The king was on a trip in 1973 when his cousin Mohammad Daoud Khan seized power and remained president for six years. He was shamefully defeated by the People's Democratic party of Afghanistan in 1978 and their tie-ups with the Soviet union disturbed the peace of the country once and for all. The strong proud Afghans who adhered to culture and religion refused to follow the political and social reforms insisted by the Soviet Union and that caused the Russian army to enter the land. The Muslims who could resist had a chance and those who were rebellious had no other option than to fled their country. Bad things done, the worst scenario for Afghanistan awaited. After a decade of Soviet reign, they were overthrown and taken over by Taliban. People rejoiced the change but not for long. They made life in Afghanistan worse than ever before as Rahim Khan, Baba's business partner says, "The infighting between the factions was fierce and no one knew if they would live to see the end of the day. Our ears became accustomed to the whistle of falling shells, to the rumble of gunfire, our eyes familiar with the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble. Kabul in those days, Amir jan, was as close as you could get to that proverbial hell on earth." (p. 196)



The Taliban rule was a nothing less of a nightmare. They massacred Shia Muslims, banned kite fighting, music, dance, cinema and restricted women of every right they could have. Amir, the protagonist rises his voice for the very first time against Assef, the Taliban official. “What mission is that? Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazaras? All in the name of Islam?” (p.261) The Taliban used fear and unbearable violence to control the people. Finally after the Twin tower attack, the United States invaded Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban. Almost five million refugees returned to their homeland after 2002.

Thus having learnt the beauty and the dark side of a culture of an Asian country, it would be inappropriate to support or oppose the traditions that had been practised for ages. Any culture for that matter is just like a black and white photograph. Without either of them it is nothing more than a plain card. The meaning is put in spotlight only when both the colours coexist. It is only advisable to embrace culture and wear it as a pride as far as it does not destroy humanity.

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**Replacement and Relocation in Bharati Mukharjee's *Jasmine***

*Bharathi Mukharjee is one of the prominent novelist, short story and nonfiction writers. She focuses on Migration, the sustenance of immigrants in a new world, struggle of female characters to attain sovereignty and so on. In the novel Jasmine, through the life of the protagonist, the writer is able to portray some of the distasteful and unsaid truths about the cultural conflicts an immigrant has to face in an immigrant country. This paper entitles as Replacement and Relocation in Bharati Mukharjee's Jasmine explores this cultural dilemma caused in the life of the protagonist by migrating to America and the subsequent incidents.*

Bharathi Mukherjee was born in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. She later migrated with her parents to Europe after independence. She pursued B.A. from the University of Calcutta 1959 as a student of Loreto College, and subsequently earned her M.A. from the university of Baroda in 1961. In addition to writing numerous fiction and non-fiction, Mukherjee taught at many colleges and universities. Mukherjee considers herself an American writer, and not an Indian expatriate writer. Bharathi was the first among Asian immigrants to make distinctions between immigrant writing and emigrant writing.

Bharathi is a prominent novelist, short-story and non-fiction writer. In her works, the main focus is on the phenomenon of migration, the experiences faces by the female protagonists to achieve self-ruling in the new lands, and the contentment experienced by the immigrants in the country of the immigrants. In her novel, *Jasmine*, its protagonist *Jasmine* has to encounter various cultural identities; yet she negotiates with every new identity she faces. This paper depicts the experiences faced by the leading character, her resistance to the popular dominant culture of two different countries and her reactions towards the existing culture.

Words like "Expatriate" and "Diaspora" need no introduction in postcolonial literary scenario. Indian diaspora, today, has emerged with the "multiplicity of histories, variety of culture, tradition, and deep instant for survival". Indian diaspora, though counting more than twenty million members world-wide, survives in between "home of origin" and "world of adoption". The process of survival of diasporic individual /community in between the home of "home of origin" and "world of adoption" is the voyage under taken in the whole process from "alienation" to final "assimilation".

Rejecting the laws of ability to move exilic consciousness, Bharathi Mukherjee embarrasses the culture diaspora of America to create a transformed identity of her own physiological evolution is reflected in her fictional character demolish and participates in the leadership notion of the immigrant identity and tries to carve out a different selfhood by participating in th violent process of decolonizing the mind.

The novel opens with an astrologer's prediction about Jyoti's widowhood and exile. The novel continues beyond the expectation of the prediction indicating repositioning of the stars and the protagonist gaining strength for a peripatetic transformation. She

blossoms from the meek bottom Indian wife to a strong independent Indo-American woman who lives to stop worrying about the future and is different to the past. She then marries Prakash and he renamed her as Jasmine. He wants her to be modern city women. Thus Jyoti was transformed to Jasmine. She perceives herself to create her own envisions and creating Prakash's wishes. Bharati depicts that identity is created not only for one's own will but also they are looking for the surrounding or the society in which they live in. Here Jyoti and Jasmine are created as two separate selves, but then Jasmine finds herself occupying both identities.

Jasmine's husband induced the dreams of going to America in her. But Prakash was murdered and Jasmine goes to America all alone in order to fulfill his dreams. After her arrival at Florida, she was raped by Half-Face the captain of the ship, in which she was travelling to the country. In order to regain her identity she stabs him and gains her courage to live and start a new life in America.

Jasmine then meets with Lillian Gordon, with whom she starts to learn about America. She puts her own effort to mingle with the American people. Lillian calls her by the nickname "Jazzy", which she sees as a symbol of entrance to America and her glad welcome of American culture. Later she moves to New York with a traditional Indian family in Hushing. There she found that everything out there was completely relied upon Indian which stands as a stasis for her admired American life. So she starts to separate herself from the family and to forget about the past completely. Jasmine then stays with an American family Taylor, his wife Wylie and their daughter Duff. She creates another identity over there. Even though when she creates new identity for every new situation her past remains unchanged. There Taylor calls her as Jase. She finds herself comfortable with her sexuality which she tries to express earlier, even after her traumatic experience.

The end of the novel she moves with Taylor to California uncertain about what the future would bring for her. The transformation from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jane to Jase suggests about the death of one identity and rebirth of new assimilation. It does not give any negative implications. These create a tension within her and she feels the need to reconcile the conflicting perceptions, so that they do not wage a psychological war inside her. Though she had to go through many a trials and she was relocated and replaced her identity more than once she was able to overcome all these trials through her strong personality. Not every woman could have passed through these hard ordeals without falling apart. Yet Jasmine was able to hold herself and gathered her will to find a new beginning for her.

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**Cultural Conflict and Cultural Alienation in  
Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Name Sake***

*This paper examines Cultural Conflict and Cultural alienation in the novel The Name Sake by Jhumpa Lahiri. She is the Pulitzer Prize winner for the year 2000, is a significant writer of Indian Diaspora who has enriched the corpus of international writing in English. The Name Sake is a story about the struggles and hardships of a Bengali couple who immigrate to United States. The author tries to confine the experiences and cultural dilemmas of 30 years (1968-2000) struggle of a Bengali family and their American born children. The novel continues to develop further themes like Cultural alienation and loss of identity. Lahiri tells about the continental immigrants and their journey towards home and identity, being recognized as unsettled people, cultural conflict and hybrid culture. Lahiri has convincingly shown the need to go 'beyond' the manmade boundaries like culture, religion and she makes the reader to acknowledge the universal aspect through her writings.*

Jhumpa Lahiri is known as for her fiction works. Her debut collection of stories, interpreter of maladies, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. She has won many awards. Lahiri has always written in rather short, abrupt sentences, packed with exact detail. Lahiri reveals that "Because of my divided identity", or perhaps by disposition, I consider myself an incomplete person. Lahiri recalled, "I always felt so embarrassed by my name, you feel like you're causing someone pain just by being who you are." In the novel the name sake the author discusses the cultural conflicts of growing up in America as the child of immigrants. Literary circles described the novel as thoroughly engaging, terrifically moving family story that's rich in beautifully observed and lovingly conveyed human detail. Some other critics tell some drawbacks like, the story feels flat, not interesting and so on.

*The Name sake* follows the Ganguli family and its journey from Calcutta to Cambridge to the Boston suburbs. Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli reached America at the end of the 1960s, shortly after their arranged marriage in Calcutta. Ashima gets lot of instructions from her family members "not to eat beef or wear short skirts or cut off her hair and forget the family the moment she landed in Boston" (*The Namesake*,37). His young bride is far less to change isolated and extremely missing her large family back in India, she will never be at peace with this new ambience. Soon after they arrive in Cambridge, their first child will born, a boy. She doesn't want to rise up her child in alien land."I'm saying don't want to rise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go back."(*The Namesake*, 33) According to Indian culture, the child will be given two names by the family, an official name, given by the great-grandmother, and a pet name to be used only by a family. Ashoke chooses a name that has concrete significance for him, several years before on a train trip back to India. He had been reading a short story collection by one of his most favourite Russian writer, Nikolai Gogol, when the train deviated from the track in the middle of the night, killing almost all the sleeping passengers on the train. Ashoke

had stayed awake to read Gogol's short story and he believes the book saved his life. So he kept that author's name for his child as Gogol.

The Bengali immigrant family living far away from their home culture but they try their best to preserve the home culture in the alien land, wearing their traditional dresses, having Bengali food and speaking pure Bengali language etc. Ashoke and Ashima's constant struggle to keep Bengali culture alive in their foreign land. They decide to send Gogol for Bengali language and cultural classes at the home of one of their Bengali friend but the children took that as a burden and he studies without interest. "The children in the class study without interest, wishing they could be at ballet or softball practice instead," (*The Namesake*, 66). Ashoke and Ashima finds a temporary relief in the foreign atmosphere in the rice ceremony.

The second generation people Gogol and Sonia hesitate to accept the Bengali customs. The Indian and American culture creates identity crisis. Gogol loves Ruth, a white American but their relationship lasted only for a short period. His next love Maxine who is also a white American ethnicity, this relationship breaks because of Gogol's emotional struggle after his father's death. "It was a Bengali son's duty to shave his head in the wake of a parent's death." (*The Namesake*, 179) After all these things Ashima tells Gogol to keep friendship with moushumi, that relationship lasted only for a year, later moushumi doesn't want to continue her relationship with Gogol, so she flees to New York.

The cultural displacement damages the bond of marriage especially in the lives of Indian immigrants. Ashoke and Ashima who belongs to the first generation, according to them marriage is a sacred thing and its compulsory to stay loyal but the second generation people Gogol and moushumi fails to stay loyal in their parental tradition. Indian immigrants trying to be in both sides, they go behind Indian heritage and American dream, Lahiri from her childhood, she experienced all these conflicts. In *The Name sake* by Jhumpa Lahiri it focuses on Gogol's relationships. These relationships reflect Gogol's attempt to become more American as well as the requirement he thinks that his relationship should be successful in America. Gogol has three types of relationships in the novel which includes family, friends and girl friends. Gogol moves into an apartment in New York, after he has completed his studies. The reason for moving is because Gogol wants his space from his parents but his parents don't like Gogol's decisions

He lost himself in the midst of alien culture. Gogol is disconnected with the name and hates his name for lacking self-respect. The name which defines a person's individuality became a burden to him. It doesn't give him an identity instead puts him in a dilemma. The first encounter, Gogol introduced himself as Nikhil to someone who once knew him as Gogol. For most cultures the naming of children varies depending on tradition. North American's have never adapted to a certain tradition. Many foreign children who begin school in abroad will sometimes be asked to change their name for pronunciation. When Gogol is about to start kinder garden he is asked to change his name to a more formal name. "He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know. Who doesn't know him" Gogol is afraid of losing his name. He feels that changing his name may end up changing him or make him become a different person.

In the end the novel "*The Namesake*" we find Ashima preparing to go back to Calcutta. For thirty-three years she missed her life in India. Now she will miss living with her daughter, the surprising companionship they have formed. She will miss the country in which she had grown to know and love her husband. Though his ashes have been scattered into the Ganges, it is here, in this house. "He will continue to dwell in her mind." (*The Namesake*, 278-279) Towards the end of the story Lahiri portrays the imbalance feeling of Gogol. Now he feels comforted by the mystery behind choosing that name for him. At 32 he feels proud for his name and its meaning. Nikhil Gogol Ganguli accepted his name and destiny. He deeply ponders over his name, his identity, his namesake and realizes that one has to take the responsibility to carve his own path to explore the life in this world. He comes to the realization of the grim truth that it is not a way to diminish either Indian or American culture.

There are many books that tell us about how characters have suffered because of change in culture. There is some book that welcomed new culture with open arms too. In the novel discussed here, the character accepted and adapted the Indian-American culture. It shows that there is no harm in adapting new culture all of it depends on the mind set of every individual.

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**Multicultural Identity: A Study of Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age***

*Multiculturalism is an attractive and persuasive notion which is an outgrowth of the complexities of the twentieth century. Tahmima Anam's stunning debut novel A Golden Age is the first volume of a planned trilogy which covers the birth of Bangladesh. Anam, the native daughter of Bangladesh prefers to write in English because she is not comfortable writing in the language of her own country, as she herself is the daughter of different worlds. This paper is an attempt to suggest that multiculturalism is an increasingly significant psychological and cultural phenomenon. Being a person born and raised in India and married to Pakistan Rehana finds it difficult to relate herself to any one of these countries. The author traces the mental growth and psycho cultural development of the protagonist through various adverse situations. Throughout the war Rehana learns countless new things about love, loyalty, courage, resourcefulness etc. What I really enjoyed in this story is that of the growth of the female protagonist Rehana.*

Tahmima Anam who comes from an illustrious literary family in Bangladesh was born in Dhaka and grew up in Paris, New York city and Bangkok. Anam's stunning debut novel *A Golden Age* which came out in 2007 was the best first book winner of the 2008 Commonwealth writer's prize and it was shortlisted for The Guardian first book award. *A Golden Age* Was the first volume of a planned trilogy which covers the birth of Bangladesh. Her second novel *The Good Muslim* was nominated for the 2011 Man Asian Literary Prize long list. The last part of this trilogy *The Bones of Grace* was published in 2016

Anam picked the Bangladesh liberation war as her first subject to write the novel. The plot of the story is inspired by the true story of the writer's grandmother during the Bangladesh liberation war. Anam was also inspired by her friends and Bengali parents who were freedom fighters during the war. *A Golden Age* is thus a war novel which deals with the Bangladesh history and at the same time it can be rightly interpreted as a multicultural fiction.

Between 1948 and 1971 Bangladesh was actually known as East Pakistan. The British attached the halves during the partition of India because they both had Muslim majorities. Unfortunately apart from their shared religion the two sides didn't share a common geography, language, culture, traditions or ethnic character. Moreover they were separated by 1000 miles of Indian territory. On top of this the West Pakistan political elite claimed descent from foreign Muslim conquerors such as Arabs and looked down on Bengali Muslims whom they regarded as converts from other religions. Along with economic exploitation and military oppression, indifference and neglect towards Bengali Muslim interests finally led to the war of independence in 1971.

Ever since 1948 the Pakistani authorities had ruled the eastern wing of the country like a colony. The Dhaka university students had been involved in the protests from the very beginning as soldiers target the university and the Hindi sections of Dhaka-

the capital. Operation search light is described as are the attacks on east Pakistani /Bangladeshi Hindus. In March of 1971, a civil war broke out between East and West Pakistan—the Bangladesh War of Independence. For nine months, West Pakistan waged war on East Pakistan, killing, maiming, raping, and destroying as much as they could. It was genocide. East Pakistan fought back with a guerrilla army called the Mukti Bahini. When India finally got involved, the Pakistan Army was cast out in December of 1971 and East Pakistan declared independence, becoming Bangladesh. *A Golden Age* tells the story of widowed Rehana separated from her children by a family rift that mirrors the geopolitical fracture that freed Bangladesh from Pakistan. This novel tells the story of a widowed mother's fight to keep her children safe during Bangladesh war for independence- functions as both a riveting tale and a lament for the atrocities the people suffered during Pakistan invasion in 1971. The protagonist of the story Rehana Haque actually embodies the divided nature of Pakistan. An Urdu speaking woman from the wealthier west. She has made the Bengali east her home. And years before the rest of the country she suffers an invasion from western Pakistan.

'Shona' is their small dwelling where this story of emotion swells into a scintillating abode of sensitive humane reality. Rehana has lost her husband Iqbal and is desolated. In 1959 her children are taken from her to her brother in law. As a young widow Rehana was declared an unfit mother in court as she doesn't have the means to provide for either her children or the lawyer. It takes Rehana more than a year to raise money to bribe the judge and bring her children home. She builds a house atop hers and rents it out.

Rehana has struggled for her children since the death of her husband Iqbal. When atlast she brings her children back in to home another force threatens to take them away. The civil war between east and west Pakistan that ultimately resulted in the formation of the nation Bangladesh. On the night of the neighbour's engagement party in March 1971 Pakistan invades after Bangladesh declares independence. Outraged by the invasion Rehana's children both Sohail and his sister Maya, both university students decided to join the rebels. They wanted freedom. They want to have their own government instead of being ruled by the Pakistanis. Rehana is torn between admiration for her children's bravery and terror for their safety. There was a part of her that wanted to allow her children anything. "Any whimsy, any zeal , any excess" while another part of her wanted them to have nothing to deal with it all to keep them safe at home. Her children are swept up in the passion of new era. But Rehana will do anything to preserve their lives and bring them back safely. She says "Ah yes I sent my children to India where it is safer." The story covers the inner conflict of Rehana. Yet the turbulence in Rehana's world is not all political; some of it is also domestic. As a mother Rehana's character is sketched out flawlessly. She pains to keep things calm around her despite her own discomforts. She struggles to keep her family knit together at all odds.

This novel has three themes that really stood out to me. More than anything this story is about motherhood. Rehana emerges from her motherly emotions to a mother of children of the nation. She gives herself into the struggles of war and refugee camps. Rehana herself is shown escaping to Calcutta, becoming a refugee in the very city where she was born. Rehana finds herself becoming an involuntary revolutionary.



She starts by sewing blankets made from her silk saris. Then she lets Sohail's rebel friends set up a base in her rental property and bury guns under her rose bushes. She also has to deal with her daughter Maya - a passionate and serious girl that Rehana has difficulty relating to. As Rehana puts more herself into the war effort she is better able to understand and sympathize with Maya. Well I think mothers have different roles in our lives at different stages. And learning to move through stages and adapt to the changes that occur as children grow up can be very difficult for a mother. *A Golden Age* presented this in an interesting and touching light.

Multiculturalism is increasingly significant psychological and cultural phenomenon. The term multiculturalism allude to a person whose essential identity is inclusive of different life patterns and who has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities. The identity of a multicultural person is based not on belongingness to a particular culture but on a style of self consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality.

In this novel Rehana must deal with is whether or not Bangladesh could be considered her home. Born and raised in India – a nation soon seen as an enemy she must determine if she should feel more affinity to the country of her birth or to the country she was married to, raised her children and developed friendships. I liked the questions and inner conflict about this through out the story because I think it raised the question of what Rehana was personally fighting for. Did she want independence for Bangladesh? Did she want things to remain the way they were? A close attention to this question definitely demonstrated her motives and allowed a depth to the story that went beyond actions.

A multicultural person maintains indefinite boundaries of the self. Multicultural in the words of Peter Berger (1973) "is a homeless mind". He or she can never accept totally the demands of any one culture nor are they free from the conditioning of their culture. Their psycho cultural style must always be relational and is driven by psycho biological psycho philosophical and psycho social motivations. Yet the configuration of these drives is perpetually in flux and situational.

Another issue that I really enjoyed is that of the growth of Rehana. She is a widow never remarried living a quiet life in a nice home and renting out a second home to tenants. Throughout the war Rehana learns countless new things about love, loyalty, resourcefulness and courage. I traced and enjoyed her development and the people she helps along the way. Cultural identity is a functioning aspect of an individual's personality. Erik Erikson (1959) focused the greater portion of his analytic studies on identity conflicts. In psycho analytic literature, most notably in Erikson's writings, identity is an elemental form of psychic organization which develops in successive psychological phases throughout life.

The multicultural person embody sequential identities is open to the continuous cycle of birth and death as it takes place within the framework of his or her psyche. The life style of a multicultural person is a process of dissolution and reformation of identity yet implicit in such a process is growth. Suggests Kazimierz Dabrowsky (1964) "is the basis for developmental thrusts upward. The creation of new evolutionary dynamics and the movement of personality to a higher level".

Rehana the widow protagonist still mourns for her husband and holds imaginary conversations with him, But in the midst of the war the widow protagonist lets her heart out to a stranger who she almost falls in love with despite being aware of the fact that it is a futile effort. According to Robert J Lifton (1961) “a multicultural person is always recreating his or her identity. He or she moves through one experience of self to another. Incorporating here, discarding there responding dynamically and situationally. “ the multicultural person is always in a flux and life is an ongoing process of psychic death and rebirth. A multicultural person in Erikson’s terminology is a “diffused identity” where the configuration of loyalties and identifications is constantly in flux and where boundaries are never secure. A multicultural person is open to any and all kinds of stimuli.

To me this story is a solid example of excellent literature presenting a complex plot with many themes. This paper suggests that a multicultural person is not simply the one who is sensitive to many different cultures. Rather he or she is always in the process of becoming a part of a given cultural context. He or she is a formative being – changing and evolutionary. Intentionally or accidentally multicultural persons undergo shifts in their total psycho cultural posture; their religion, personality, behavior, occupation, nationality, outlook, political persuasions and values may in part or completely reformulate in the phase of new experience. A multicultural person can be defined by a psycho cultural pattern of identity that differs radically from the relatively stable forms of ‘self ‘found in the usual cultural identity pattern.

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**The Relevance Including Gender Studies in Today's Curriculum**

*Gender is a theme that been for quite some time bantered about. There have been numerous researchers who have had their opinion on gender, many getting criticized for the same while many have come up being acknowledged as torch leaders as dynamic individuals without bounds. They have been granted numerous honors all through the history. Gender studies have therefore prospered in the course of recent hundreds of years. Its foundations have spread not simply in the academic territories but rather and in addition in the regions of social and financial territory.*

Women Studies takes an important space in the field of gender studies. In the previous hundreds of years we have seen a rise in the freedom of women and women's liberation. This has reshaped the character of women in the general public. Prior, in a close knitted society of man centric society, women once in a while had rights and any opportunities. As times changed, women took up to themselves to ensure that they and others had similar opportunities that men delighted in. Men Studies is another territory that is between disciplinary and includes the investigation of men, manliness and governmental issues. Its primary concentrate is on manliness and understanding the different parts of the same. Numerous specialists have contended that manliness is a development of society. With substantiating oneself as a man, in the nineteenth century, this thought has seen to be gotten by an expansive piece of the general public. The comprehension is in this way as far as history, science, brain research, culture and legislative issues. Strange examinations Queer investigations are scholastic teach contemplating different parts of the substitute introduction and gender personalities. The examinations thought of rise of individuals with alternate gender identities in public and acknowledgment of the same.

Gender studies are instructed both as an individual course of concentrate and in addition an elective or simultaneous course to the fundamental subject of study. In addition LGBT and men's studies likewise fall inside the domain of gender studies. Women's/Gender Studies looks at noteworthy contrasts in the encounters of the genders in Canadian culture and all inclusive. A portion of the essential issues of life rotate around being a man, or being a woman, or occupying a post-parallel development of gender. The program tends to normal encounters and in addition those of distinction – being diversely abled, or molded by encounters in an alternate nation or culture. Various courses in this program concentrate on the female portion of humankind and different gatherings that are frequently under-represented. The program urges students to reassess the customary controls, coordinating inquiries of gender, sexuality and 'distinction' in the curriculum.

This is an interdisciplinary program second to none. Students take another major regarding this degree, so the WGS degree frames a second major or minor that supplements the first. The methods and theories of anthropologists, historians, philosophers, psychologists, sociologist, scholars, and of the dialect/ visual/ performing expressions all add to the investigation of Women and Gender. A few students include extracurricular movement through the Women's Center and different

gatherings inspired by value on campus and beyond. Women's/Gender Studies degree benefits in all vocations that include gender and equity issues. It is important for instructing, government, law, social equity work, universal improvement, HR, promoting and the wellbeing callings, to give some examples. The program likewise addresses life issues, for example, equity and duty inside connections, relational unions and families.

Feminism is the field chosen by most of the literary writers to explicit the sufferings of the women. For women empowerment such studies have been done by the literary writers. The sufferings of the women have been brought to the limelight by the feminist writers. But as far as public concern gender discrimination is still existed in all endeavors. A boy or girl doesn't have the freedom to choose his/her own course like they wish for instance a less number of boy students opt nursing as well as a less number of girls opt fitness field. This happens because they feel insecure to choose or not an appropriate field for them. Women lack in freedom not only opt the courses rather doesn't have the freedom to move around in the streets after hours.

Those who have a burning passion about gender issues in the society should be definitely going for this course. Enthusiasm for politically, socially and financially important subjects with regards to gender and portrayal of the same in the society, taking a shot at how separation, isolation and brutality can be controlled and disposed of, will likewise is a core interest. Concentrate different cases will give an understanding to various situations, and information from such research can be utilized for assisting other people who might experience something like that of the contextual investigation. As this is a scholastic train, with a want to know and help, one should also have the ability and capacity to take up academic studies. Research is an important part of Gender studies, and it must be continued.

The question surrounding the importance of gender studies considers repeats given the advancement in the comprehension of sex with the development of women developments, presentation of laws concerning sex personalities, the spate of violent incidents against ladies, as additionally the LGBT.

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**Culture and LGBT Issues**

*LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. They are more likely to experience intolerance, harassment, discrimination and threat of violence. This is because many people have fear or hatred for homosexuality. In some countries, people who are homosexual are punished with fines and they are considered to be illegal as well. There are also life imprisonment and sometimes death. Although many societies have raised their voices for human rights, LGBT rights struggle to find universal acceptance.*

In the future years major issues for LGBT rights on global scale will be: Protection in law from hate crimes. Equal rights and privileges like marriage, medical decision making, parenting, adoption etc..Work and educate others on homophobia and heterosexism. These people are discriminated in schools, hospitals, colleges and disowned by their own families. In almost 76 countries these people are beaten and tortured still now. Even in at least five countries, there is death penalty. Some of the major issues faced by these LGBT people are highlighted here. LGBT people face tremendous difficulties growing up in a society where heterosexuality is often presented as the only acceptable one.

Marginalization and social exclusion: It is preventing the person from fulfilling the social lives of an individual. They have relatively little control over their lives. Their opportunities are difficult and they have little access to education, work, income, leisure activities etc.. They also face multiple marginalization such as racism, poverty, etc. Impact of Discrimination: Dropping earlier from schools, leaving home and family, unable to find jobs, being ignored in the community, Mobility – moving from one place to another, Lack of family support, Attempt suicide

They are affected with lack of housing and services to meet their needs. For example Almost 40 – 50% homeless people in New York are LGBT. It is because they are thrown out of their homes. They are not allowed to choose a comfortable living. Homeless LGBT people, who are without economic support, often engage in drugs and risky sexual behaviours and develop mental disorders. Being a teenager, it is very difficult for LGBT people to survive in schools. All over the country LGBT students gets harassed everyday in schools. According to reports 9 out of 10 students face harassment in schools. Too many LGBT students find it hard to speak up about harassment because it is so embedded in our culture.

Most of these people face considerable level of discrimination and harassment in their daily lives. But they are able to cope up with it if they have the support of their friends and family. However, a certain number of people, most particularly younger LGBT people had to cope up without any support. Many had experienced mental stress because of bullying in school and psychological attack.

In addition to this, these LGBT people are on poverty on a daily basis. Gay and transgender individuals suffer from socio economic inequalities in large part in their workplace. Discrimination directly causes job inability in large part. This results in greater unemployment and poverty rates of gay and transgender people. LGBT people are more likely to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs than the general population. They are more likely to the use of heavy drinking into later life. They use these things for the same reason as others, but their likelihood for doing is so personal and cultural stress. Anti- gay bias also resulted in many hate crimes on LGBT people.

LGBT people are regularly targeted as victims, of hate crime and violence. They experience sexual and physical assault, harassment and hate crimes. Another fact that may impact on mental health and well being of LGBT people includes isolation and alienation, loss of family and social support, impact of HIV and AIDS.

Research survey says 21% of LGBT adults survived, said their employees treated the unfairly because of their sexuality and gender identity. Another report found 50% of black LGBT people have experienced employment discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted in 1948 stated, “ Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind”. Nowadays more and more people are demanding for their rights. Because if the work of many groups the acceptance of LGBT rights around the world is growing and government in certain countries are bringing some rules in favour of LGBT people and come up with anti discrimination laws. Influential International Human Rights Organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights watch continue to run effective campaigns.

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**Self-Exploration and New Woman Culture in  
Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror***

*This paper contains new women culture in the novel 'Dark Holds No Terror' by Shashi Deshpande. She is an important Indian feminist writer and won Sahitya Akademi Award and Padmashri award. This novel is about women's self-quest and struggle to free themselves from the restrictions imposed by the society, culture and nature. In this novel protagonist Sarita, creates her own independent image by her self-exploration against traditional rituals and gender prejudice which rejected her every aspects in this society.*

The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional enduring, self-sacrificing, searching for identity and defined simply in terms of their victim status. Recent writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each women, rather than limiting the lives of women to one ideal. The novels emerging in the twenty –first century furnishes a whole range of women attitudes towards the imposition of tradition in patriarchal social organisation.

The rise in the levels of education is the key element for a woman which nourishes a progressive outlook. The advent of industrialisation and modernisation has affected a vast change in the culture, attitude and thinking patterns of women in patriarchy society. Shashi's heroines are against traditional customs or gender prejudice. The rejection in every aspect of this society is an indication of their autonomy and their ability to see their lives independent of their mother/past.

These heroines shudder at some of the natural biological functions of the female and they have developed, from their childhood, apathy towards their body. Sashi has encountered with the problem of what the mother stands for and the only way out for her is to seek a new environment where the mother cannot exercise her will. The women in order to achieve their freedom seek marriage as an alternative to the bondage created by the parental family. They resent the role of daughters and look forward to the role of wives with the hope that their new role will help them in winning their freedom.

They like to be empowered. They gain their empowerment and prove their efficiency while getting a chance. When those chances are discorded and disillusioned by the rituals of tradition bound society, their prolonged mental dilemma and a long drawn introspection women empowerment or women's quest for self -exploration and their passion to achieve their dreams intense them to get out of their restricted culture and made them to build their own.

Shashi deals with the women quest for self-exploration in the novel *The Dark Holds No Terror*. The protagonist Sarita is standing next to a cross road of traditional society and wanting to create her own independent image in the society. She subdues

the anguish and conflict of the modern educated Indian women who caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand and self-expression, individuality and independence on the other. From which she shattered all the re-creatory society's culture and nailed her own.

Saru's experiences at home have lead way to a dawn of realisation of inferiority in herself as affixed and preordained essence. She considers her mother as a rival. She was dominated by her own mother. Her mother never forgave her son's death and the grief caused her to blame resulted in guilty self. This made Saru to feel insecure, and she realised that she wanted to become a powerful dominant person and can fulfill her ambitions through her education in her life.

When Saru got admission in medical college her mother strongly, opposed and made her to 'stay back in the house within four walls'. Her mother said that, "But she is a girl ...And don't forget medicine or no medicine, doctor or no doctor, you still have to get married, spend money on her wedding. Can you both?" According to the patriarchal society, women should stay in the kitchen and her primary aim is to look after house and her children. But Saru's passionate aim made her to shatter all the restrictions, opposed her mother's words and she got admitted into the medical college.

As she stepped into first step of her success, she met a man named Manohar, a dynamic college student and a poet. His charismatic attitude made her to fall for him. They both fell in love with each other. She confronts with her mother in the intention of marrying Manu and her mother reacted negatively by asking, "what caste is he? I don't know. A Brahmin? of course not. Then cruelty....his father keeps a cycle shop." Oh they are low-caste people, are they?". It reaches its peak when she decides to marry Manu. Her choice of a boy from a lower case is a sign of her rejecting the traditional ways and values her orthodox mother adheres to. But Saru seeks marriage is an alternative bondage, in the hope that she can change her role in getting for freedom. Thus she married Manu against her parent's will and she left her maternal house ; she doesn't feel any remorse at this separation.

At the beginning of their marriage they both had a happy married life. Within few days Saru become a famous and successful lady doctor in the society and Manu become a teacher with low salary. After marrying Saru, Manu had a luxurious and high financial status in the society. One day Manu was ashamed by his own colleague for leading a luxury life by his wife's money. He could not tolerate that his wife enjoys better social prestige and it gradually destroys their happy marriage life which made Manu into a sexually aggressive husband. As per the patriarchal society, Man should have all control of the family and he must earn huge than the other people in the family. But when it comes to Saru and Manu, she is the superior, who earns more than her husband. This made Manu to feel inferior. Thus she changed old patriarchy rules and nailed her own.

From the beginning to end Saru struggles a lot to create her own social independent status in the society? She shattered all her traditional rituals, culture and subdue all her hardships, in the end she become one of the successful lady doctor in the society. Her total revolt between her aim and tradition, culture made some gradual change in



the society. She put an effort to bridge the gap between 'happy and sad', a between 'old and new generation'. In which the new generation consists educated women who holds a job as equal to man, educated house wives, has their own independent image and made the male chauvinism to feel inferior by their success in this patriarchal society.

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### **Feminism in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things***

*This paper explores the elements of Feminism in Arundhati Roy's Novel "The God of Small Things". Roy has taken up the issue of feminism to fight for their Individuality, Economic and Social freedom. She has beautifully and effectively shown the struggles of women in Indian society. Her female characters in the novel stand out as persons and not as role players. In this novel, Ammu, the protagonist, had been tortured in many ways by the family and the society. Through this novel she had conveyed some important things of life like how love is always associated with sadness, how a person's childhood experience affect his/her whole life.*

Arundhati Roy has won Booker prize award in 1997 for her debut novel *The God of Small Things* and it became the biggest selling book by an Indian author. She was born on November 24, 1961 in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. Suzannah Arundhati Roy is a political activist, writer, and an essayist. Her childhood days in Kottayam play a critical role in her literary career.

Her debut novel "The God of Small Things" is published in the year 1997. It tells the story about two fraternal twins whose lives are destroyed by "Love Laws". Roy has described the book as "A mix of experience and imagination" In Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* the particular theme feminism plays a major Role since the female characters are dominated by the society. Women were not given either enough freedom or significance but were ill-treated and tortured by male chauvinist society. Women were not given equal rights in the society during 70's and 80's and gender discrimination like abortion of girl child, poor educational status of women, dowry system, child marriage, stereotyping of women and so on. It was accepted in the society that men were meant to dominate and rule whereas women were to be docile and tamed by men. Though women had achieved freedom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet they face many a new issues and restrained by the patriarchal prejudice. Even today some women are not considered as a human being but rather treated like a dog who nods its head when the master commands.

In this novel Roy focuses on the injustices faced by women. She points out that female gender is never allowed to pass a judgment or opine their concern like how men are allowed in the society. This novel is an argument for and against the good and evil in the society with special reference to women. In the novel *God of Small things* there are three generations of women. Each of them was born and comes under different circumstances starting from old generation Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, and then the generation of Ammu and the youngest generation is Rahel.

Mammachi got married to a man who is 17 years older than her in her puberty. She was controlled by him and has to leave behind her violin lessons to live with her husband. She was insulted by him and tortured by him. Another person who dominated her is her son Chacko, returned home as divorcee. He takes over Mammachi's pickle factory and says that the factory is "...my factory, my

pineapples, my pickles”(57)without asking her .She had to accept it because it was accepted by the society.

In the second generation, Ammu too faces lots of struggles. Her parents give more attention to her brother since he is a man and neglects her since she is a woman. She falls in love with a man and marries him and even has children. Though she loves him enough to tolerate his abuse and drunken beatings, she could not bear it too long and she has divorced him. Being a single parent who has no one to support, Ammu has to rely on her parents.

The society has no ill will to Chacko even though he is a divorcee but treats Ammu as an abomination since she is a woman and yet gets a divorce. This demonstrates the inequality prevalent in the society. Ammu is all alone, bearing the evil eyes thrown by society. In her solitude she finds solace in Velutha who sincerely cares about her. Though he is an untouchable, a social outcast, only meant to do menial and disrespectful work, it took such a man to understand and support Ammu in her desperate moments.

Despite the social status and other boundaries, Velutha and Ammu fall in love with each other. They did not care about a society which considered them as some mere flies. Aijaz Ahmad calls her “a women of great grit” (prasad, 2006 p.39). Ammu’s relationship with Velutha causes uproar in her household only because he is a lower cast man. Ammu is sent out of her house and she dies as a destitute. She becomes a symbolic personification of all women before her acceptance of such fate in desperate attempt of self-realization.

Ammu’s situation could represent the typical problems face by an Indian women, depends on her husband. Her relationship with velutha is considered to be a sin, as it is extra-marital, and a crime because it is between the members of two different classes. The narrator also refers in the novel to velutha as “The God Of Small Things”;

If he touched her, he couldn’t talk to her, if he love her he couldn’t leave, if he spoke he couldn’t listen, if he fought he couldn’t win. Who was he, the one-armed man? Who could he have been? The God of loss? The God of small things? The god of goose bumps and sudden smiles? Of sour metal smells-like steel bus-rails and the smell of the bus conductor’s hands from holding them? (Roy 2017)

Ammu as a women is punished and totally silenced, like how Velutha was silenced because of his caste. As Sunainasingh also emphasizes,”in India women’s life is goverened by traditions and family customs. A good woman is the one who is good daughter, wife and mother. To be good means; sacrificing, self-abnegating, meek, and quiet nature.(27). Since Ammu does not follow any of these categories, got divorce, fallen in love with a man from different caste, has an extra marital affair she has become an eye sore in the society.

Whereas Chacko is also a divorcee, he takes over his mothers business without giving any credit to her, whoring around the woman who comes for work, never criticized by

the society just because he is a man. For a man having an extra marital relationship or to get divorce is not a big issue in the eyes of the society. Chacko is never serious in his relationships and he sleeps with many women with the knowledge of Baby Kochamma. Yet she never raises her voice against this.

Velutha and Ammu truly loves each other, cared for each other beyond the sexual pleasures they were sharing. Yet Baby Kochamma calls names on Ammu and categorize her as a whore. She could give up her proud as a Syrian Christian and let Ammu marry a low caste man whereas she does not take any measures to stop Chacko's sexual encounters with other woman.

From the character of Ammu one could learn that Ammu is the women who tries to rebel against hindu values and their system in indian society. Unlike her mother, she cannot accept the bad attitude and actions of her husband and prefers divorce. Ammu is the best example of the society who breaks the comunal moral of India.

Baby Kochamma is the daughter of reverend John ipe and sister of Pappachi is the another victim in the novel. She is in love with Roman Catholic priest, father Mulligan. To win over him she converts to Roman Catholic faith. However she does not dared to challenge the traditional ideas of love and marriage prevalent in post colonial India. She did not run away to fullfill her dreams and upholds very reactionary ideas of her dream of marrying father Muligan. So she met her failure living in isolation in the Ayemenem house.

Though Baby Kochamma could not marry Father Mulligan, she showed enough courage to spend her life in spinsterhood preserving all her love for the only man she ever loved. Though other people mock and made fun of her she never changed her mind.

The novel *God of Small things* deals with many untouched issues of woman. The way society views the women and their ideology about woman always ends up in the sufferings of woman. Though everyone talks about gender equality, woman is always ostracized in the society. Mammachi, Baby Kochama, Ammu are all victims of this mentality of the society.

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### **The Warmest and Closest Colour: An Analysis on French Movie *Blue is the Warmest Color***

*A lesbian is a homosexual woman who is romantically or sexually attracted to other women. The term lesbian is also used to express sexual identity or sexual behavior regardless of sexual orientation, or as an adjective to characterize or associate nouns with female homosexuality or same-sex attraction. The concept of "lesbian", to differentiate women with a shared sexual orientation, is a 20th-century construct. Throughout history, women have not had the same freedom or independence to pursue homosexual relationships as men, but neither have they met the same harsh punishment as homosexual men in some societies. Instead, lesbian relationships have often been regarded as harmless and incomparable to heterosexual ones unless the participants attempted to assert privileges traditionally enjoyed by men. As a result, little in history was documented to give an accurate description of how female homosexuality is expressed.*

Women in homosexual relationships responded to this designation either by hiding their personal lives or accepting the label of outcast and creating a subculture and identity that developed in Europe and the United States. Following World War II, during a period of social repression when governments actively persecuted homosexuals, women developed networks to socialize with and educate each other. Greater economic and social freedom allowed them gradually to be able to determine how they could form relationships and families. With second wave feminism and growth of scholarship in women's history and sexuality in the 20th century, the definition of lesbian broadened, sparking a debate about sexual desire as the major component to define what a lesbian is. Some women who engage in same-sex sexual activity may reject not only identifying as lesbians but as bisexual as well, while other women's self-identification as lesbian may not align with their sexual orientation or sexual behavior; sexual identity is not necessarily the same as one's sexual orientation or sexual behavior, due to various reasons, such as the fear of identifying their sexual orientation in a homophobic setting.

Portrayals of lesbians in the media suggest that society at large has been simultaneously intrigued and threatened by women who challenge feminine gender roles, and fascinated and appalled with women who are romantically involved with other women. Women who adopt a lesbian identity share experiences that form an outlook similar to an ethnic identity: as homosexuals, they are unified by the heterosexist discrimination and potential rejection they face from their families, friends, and others as a result of homophobia. As women, they face concerns separate from men. Lesbians may encounter distinct physical or mental health concerns arising from discrimination, prejudice, and minority stress. Political conditions and social attitudes also affect the formation of lesbian relationships and families in open.

*Blue Is the Warmest Colour* is a 2013 French coming-of-age romantic drama film co-written, co-produced, and directed by Abdellatif Kechiche, starring Léa Seydoux and Adèle Exarchopoulos. The film revolves around Adèle

(Exarchopoulos), a French teenager who discovers desire and freedom when a blue-haired aspiring painter (Seydoux) enters her life. The film charts their relationship from Adele's high school years to her early adult life and career as a school teacher. The premise of *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* is based on the 2010 French graphic novel of the same name by Julie Maroh, which was published in North America in 2013. Production began in March 2012 and lasted six months. Approximately 800 hours of footage was shot, including extensive B-roll footage, with Kechiche ultimately trimming the final cut of the film down to 179 minutes. The film generated controversy upon its premiere at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival and before its release. Much of the controversy was centred on claims of poor working conditions on set by the crew and the lead actresses, and also the film's raw depiction of sexuality.

At the 2013 Cannes Film Festival the film unanimously won the Palme d'Or from the official jury and the FIPRESCI Prize. It is the first film to have the Palme d'Or awarded to both the director and the lead actresses, with Seydoux and Exarchopoulos joining Jane Campion (*The Piano*) as the only women to have won the award. The film had its North American premiere at the 2013 Telluride Film Festival. The film received critical acclaim and was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film and the BAFTA Award for Best Film Not in the English Language. Many critics declared it one of the best films of 2013.

Adèle is an introverted 15-year-old high-school student whose classmates gossip constantly about boys. While crossing the street one day, she passes by a woman with short blue hair and is instantly attracted. She dates Thomas, a boy at her school for a short while and they have sex, but she is ultimately dissatisfied and breaks off their relationship. After having vivid fantasies about the woman she saw on the street and having one of her female friends kiss her, she becomes troubled about her sexual identity. One friend, the openly gay Valentin, seems to understand her confusion and takes her to a gay dance bar. After some time, Adèle leaves and walks into a lesbian bar, where she experiences assertive advances from some of the women. The blue haired woman is also there and intervenes, claiming Adèle is her cousin to those pursuing Adèle. The woman is Emma, a graduating art student. They become friends and begin to spend more time with each other. Adèle's friends suspect her of being a lesbian and ostracise her at school. Despite the backlash, she becomes close to Emma. Their bond increases and before long, the two share a kiss at a picnic. They later have sex and begin a passionate relationship. Emma's artsy family is very welcoming to the couple, but Adèle tells her conservative, working-class parents that Emma is just a tutor for philosophy class.

In the years that follow, the two women move in and live with each other. Adèle finishes school and joins the teaching staff at a local elementary school, while Emma tries to move forward with her painting career, frequently throwing house parties to socialise with her circle. At one of these, Adèle meets some of them, Lise, a pregnant woman and colleague, Joachim, "the biggest gallery owner in Lille", and Samir, an aspiring actor who feels out of place amongst the intellectuals, with whom she strikes up a friendship. Emma belittles Adèle's teaching career, encouraging her to find fulfilment in writing, while Adèle insists that she is happy the way she is. It gradually becomes increasingly apparent how little they have in common, and emotional

complexities manifest in the relationship. Out of loneliness and confusion Adèle sleeps with Antoine, a male colleague.

Emma becomes aware of the fling and furiously confronts Adèle, refusing her tearful apologies and throws her out of their apartment. Time passes and although Adèle finds satisfaction in her job as a kindergarten teacher, she still cannot overcome her heartbreak. The two eventually meet again in a restaurant. Adèle is still deeply in love with Emma and despite the powerful connection that is clearly still there between them, Emma is now in a committed partnership with Lise, who now has a young daughter. Adèle is devastated, but holds it in. Emma admits that she does not feel sexually fulfilled but has accepted it as a part of her new phase in life. She reassures Adèle that their relationship was special, and she will always have infinite tenderness for her. The two part on amicable terms.

Later Adèle goes to Emma's new art exhibition. Hanging on one wall is a nude painting that Emma once did of her during the sensual bloom of their life together. Though Emma acknowledges her, her attention is primarily on the gallery's other guests and Lise. Adèle congratulates Emma on the success of her art and leaves quietly after a brief conversation with Samir. He chases after her but heads in the wrong direction, while Adèle walks away into the distance.

Director and screenwriter Abdellatif Kechiche developed the premise for *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* while directing his second feature film, *Games of Love and Chance* (2003). He met teachers "who felt very strongly about reading, painting, writing" and it inspired him to develop a script which charts the personal life and career of a female French teacher. However, the concept was only finalised a few years later when Kechiche chanced upon Julie Maroh's graphic novel, and he saw how he could link his screenplay about a school teacher with Maroh's love story between two young women. Although Maroh's story takes precedence in the adaptation, Adèle's character, named "Clémentine" in the book, differs from the original as explored by Charles Taylor in *The Yale Review* "The novel includes scenes of the girls being discovered in bed and thrown out of the house and speeches like "What's horrible is that people kill each other for oil and commit genocide, not that they give their love to someone." In the film, Adèle's parents are seemingly oblivious to her love affair with Emma and politely greet her under the impression that she is Adèle's philosophy tutor. Further themes are explored in Maroh's novel, such as addiction to prescription pills. Regarding his intention portraying young people, Kechiche claimed: "I almost wish I was born now, because young people seem to be much more beautiful and brighter than my generation. I want to pay them tribute."

The film portrays Adele and Emma's relationship with an overarching sense of realism. The camerawork, along with many of Kechiche's directorial decisions allow a true-to-life feel for the film, which in turn has led to audiences reading the film with meaning that they can derive from their own personal experiences. In *The Yale Review*, Charles Taylor puts this into words: "Instead of fencing its young lovers within a petting zoo... Kechiche removes the barriers that separate us from them. He brings the camera so close to the faces of his actresses that he seems to be trying to make their flesh more familiar to us than his own."

*Blue Is the Warmest Colour* is also filled with visual symbolism. The colour blue is used extensively throughout the film—from the lighting in the gay club Adèle visits, to the dress she wears in the last scene and most notably, in Emma's hair and eyes. For Adèle, blue represents emotional intensity, curiosity, love, and sadness. Adèle also references Pablo Picasso a number of times, who famously went through a melancholy Blue Period. As Emma grows out of her relationship with Adèle and their passion wanes, she removes the blue from her hair and adopts a more natural, conservative hairstyle.

Lesbian sexuality is one of the strongest themes of the film, as the narrative deals mainly with Adèle's exploration of her identity in this context. However, the film's treatment of lesbian sexuality has been questioned by academics, due to its being directed from a straight, male perspective. In *Sight & Sound*, film scholar Sophie Mayer suggests that in *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, "Like homophobia, the lesbian here melts away. As with many male fantasies of lesbianism, the film centres on the erotic success and affective failures of relations between women". The issue of perspective has also been addressed in a *Film Comment* review by Kristin M. Jones who points out that "Emma's supposedly sophisticated friends make eager remarks about art and female sexuality that seem to mirror the director's problematic approach toward the representation of women".

One recurring thematic element addressed by critics and audiences is the division of social class and the exploration of freedom and love between the two central characters, Adèle and Emma. The reference to social class is juxtaposed between the two dinner table scenes in the film, with Adèle's conservative middle-class family engaging in discussion over comparatively banal subjects to Emma's more open-minded upper-middle-class family, who focus their discussion primarily on more existential matters: art, career, life and passion. Perhaps one of the most significant differences between Adèle's and Emma's families is that Emma's is aware of their lesbian relationship, while Adèle's conservative parents are under the impression the women are just friends. Some critics have noted that the difference of social class is an ongoing theme in Kechiche's filmography: "As in Kechiche's earlier work, social class, and the divisions it creates, are a vital thread; he even changed the first name of the story's passionate protagonist from Clémentine to that of his actress, partly because it means "justice" in Arabic.

Kechiche explores how food can evoke varying levels of symbolism for instance, through sexually 'suggestive food metaphors – the appetitive Adèle likes the fat on ham, and learns to eat oysters via Emma'. Additionally he looks at how food can be seen as an indicator of social class, 'cooking her father's bolognese as the pièce de résistance for Emma's graduation party offers a neat class observation; inevitably, however, the dripping spaghetti becomes the pivot for a flirtation with Emma's friend Samir, positioned as a potential future partner by the film's end.

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**The Savagery Condition of Black Women  
in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple***

*Men all through the globe have always been the dominant sex ever since the early former ages. The Afro-American womanist Alice Walker who was awarded with the Pulitzer Prize in 1983 for her epistolary work "The Color Purple (1982)", that focuses on the problems of African American women faced during the 1900's to the early 1940's by exploring the effects of male domination, the frank treatment of sexism and also explores the white racial oppression of blacks. Most of the black female characters in this novel tend to be the victims of violence and men attempt to exert their dominance over women-particularly their wives-by beating and raping them.*

"Black Women" are not an inferior gender and so they wish to be a part of literature. Black women do not want to lose their status and identity. They need their basic rights in their social, political and economic life. Most commonly the black women writers want to save their status, self-realization and their sexual awareness.

Alice Walker was an active participant in the civil rights movement. Her best known novel *The Color Purple* (1982), which presents black-on-black oppression as well as bisexual and lesbian love. It also reveals about the internal disorders causing the spiritual decay of the Afro-American women. The women bear abusive male dominated relationships silently. Both the black women and Afro-American lose their rights in society and so they are considered and treated as animals. This made them in a need to ruin the handcuff of patriarchy. Alice Walker doesn't give a hopeful voice only to black women but also she tried to provide them and their liberty.

"Black Feminism" is a school of thought stating that sexism, class oppression, gender identity and racism are inextricably bound together. This term was first coined by legal scholar Kimberl Crenshaw in 1989. Black Feminism became popular in the 1960's in response to the sexism of the Civil Rights Movement and racism of the Feminist Movement. Black Feminism reached a wide audience in the 2010s, because it argues that black women are positioned within structures of power in fundamentally different ways from white women.

Among the theories that evolved out of the black feminist movement are Alice Walker's womanism and historical revisionism with an increased focus on black women. During the Black Nationalist movement, Alice Walker and other African American women writers like Gayl Jones, Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison etc... They describe the view of black unity and revolution without paying any attention to the relationships between black women and men but by addressing the particular issue of black woman's lives. Blacks belong to an underclass by virtue of their race and black women are considered as a separate caste by virtue of their sex. Alice Walker says that black women had the pride because of their double identity, which is

the evidence of both racism and sexism. Black women disproportionately experience violence at home, at school, on job, and in their neighbourhoods. Black women face high rates of intimate partner violence, rape and homicide. Black girls and women also experience institutionalized racism. More than four in ten Black women experience physical violence from and intimate partner during their lifetimes. White Whitman, Latinas, and Asian/ Pacific Islander women report lower rates.

Black women face a particularly high risk of being killed at the hands of a man. A 2015 Violence Policy Center study finds that Black women were two and a half times more likely to be murdered by men than their White counterparts. More than nine in ten Black female victims knew their killers. Girls and women of color are the fastest growing populations in American prisons.

In Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple*, Celie is the protagonist, who was treated as a slave throughout the novel. Here, she appears as a fourteen year old girl, who is poor black, ugly and uneducated girl. "I'm poor, black, I might even be ugly, but dear God, I'm here". Walker's characterization is sometimes conditioned by themes. Celie builds a bond between Shug, a confident singer. The case of sexual love between Celie and Shug, conditioned by two themes that overlap in metaphor of familiar relationship. The first is natural bonding between mother, daughter and sisters. The other is sexism that men direct against women unless generate relationships among themselves and create their own community.

Sofia is the type of assertive woman, who takes an immediate revenge against a man Harpo that Celie is not and she is the moving figure in the novel for getting gender equality. In the novel, Celie gets repeatedly raped and beaten. Even, she was raped by her father and suffers by both physically and psychologically. Through this novel Walker had given a hopeful voice over gender dynamics and also says that the difference between masculinity and femininity leads to the classification of gender roles.

In *The Color Purple*, Alice has beautifully woven many themes such as estrangement, reconciliation, redemption through love, sisterhood, racism and sexism, oppression, and suppression, political and economical emancipation status of women, relation between men and women, gender discrimination etc. Thus, through *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker provides an opportunity for black female characters to defend themselves in patriarchal system and to gain their individual role. As a result, Celie is transformed from a timid non-fighter to a courageous fighter who stands up for her rights.

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**Hierarchy behind Closed Doors in Khaled Hosseini's  
*A Thousand Splendid Suns***

*This paper is written to analyse the hegemony in marriage present in Khaled Hosseini's novel A thousand Splendid Suns. The novel revolves around two women in Afghanistan, during the time of Taliban. How they survive their marriage and how they come out. This paper is written to throw light on how a male writer writes mostly about a how a woman should be and how she should serve her husband, and how it is always the man who is superior in the marriage and his word is the final verdict The paper is divide into three parts. The first part is an introduction to Khaled Hosseini and his novel A Thousand Splendid Suns, the second part discusses about Mariam and Laila the two women who are married to the same man and how they suffer under him and how they deal with him and his atrocities, the final part tell us about the findings and how this paper is apt to the topic.*

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. His father was a diplomat in the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother taught Farsi and history at a high school in Kabul. In 1976, the Foreign Ministry relocated the Hosseini family to Paris. They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then their homeland had witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet Army. The Hosseinis sought and were granted political asylum in the United States, and in September 1980 moved to San Jose, California. Hosseini graduated from high school in 1984 and enrolled at Santa Clara University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1988. The following year he entered the University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine, where he earned a medical degree in 1993. He completed his residency at Cedars-Sinai medical center in Los Angeles and was a practicing internist between 1996 and 2004.

In March 2001, while practicing medicine, Hosseini began writing his first novel, *The Kite Runner*. Published by Riverhead Books in 2003, that debut went on to become an international bestseller and beloved classic, sold in at least seventy countries and spending more than a hundred weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. In May 2007, his second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list, remaining in that spot for fifteen weeks and nearly an entire year on the bestseller list. Together, the two books have sold more than 10 million copies in the United States and more than 38 million copies worldwide. *The Kite Runner* was adapted into a graphic novel of the same name in 2011. Hosseini's much-awaited third novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, will be published on May 21, 2013.

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them—in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul—they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own

lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival.

Mariam is a *harami*, an illegitimate child, who only sees her adored father once a week. On those precious days they go fishing, he reads to her gives her beautiful presents, but she can never live with him. She decides to visit his home, a visit he not acknowledge, and returns to find her mother has hanged herself. Determined that she will not secure a place in their household, her father's wives marry her off to Rasheed, an elderly widower from Kabul, far enough away for Mariam to be safely forgotten. It is a marriage that soon deteriorates into brutality and misery made worse by Mariam by Rasheed's decision to also marry the orphaned Laila. When Laila disappoints Rasheed by bearing a daughter, she too finds herself the target of his cruelty. But out of the unhappy household grows a friendship which will bind two women in a union as close as any marriage, and which will endure beyond death.

Marriage for most women is a cage where they locked in; no matter how hard they try they can never escape. Some accept and stay inside the cage and admire the world outside and there are some who decide to break the cage and soar with the wind. And who is captor of these beautiful birds it is a husband who has narrow ideas about life and how women should be treated. A superiority complex that has been fed to them, that he is the protector of the family the bread bringer, and any ideas that oppose it are wrong and against the good name of the family and that a wife's face is the business of the husband and nobody else and women do not need education or see the world, cause if they see it they will start questioning things and that is not good. And that is where hegemony in marriage had begun, when women silently agreed, when they hushed their voice, when they decided to endure and accept their lot in life is to suffer and not utter a word. That is when the roles became clear that Men are always the dominant and woman the submissive came into existence.

Hegemony in marriage is topic that is a hushed, hidden and accepted idea in most parts of India. Khaled Hosseini in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* portrays how two women, who are completely different except for the one thing they share, their husband. Mariam and Laila two women different in age, ideas and education how these two women share a husband and how they work together and find freedom from their perpetrator is the story of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Rasheed a typical man who thinks it is his duty to protect the women of the family and it is his duty to run the family, in short he is a typical husband or a typical man. Who believes that a woman's place is inside the house and not outside, he is not a person who accepts modern ideas or anything modern. He is an abusive and patriarch who uses any opportunity to show who is boss around the house.

"Women like us. We Endure. It is all we have". (18ATS). Khaled Hosseni in his book tells us that like any man does that a woman's job is just to endure everything and keep quiet, but what changes is the ending where the women who endured everything finally break free. He gives more importance to women and he also tells us how men are not loving and caring as they seem to be, Miriam learns a lot even though she is uneducated at a very young age, life decides to teach her lessons that she will think

about in the future and then understand. Mariam's mother is the one to tell her not to be fooled by her father because she is a "Harami" an illegitimate child, she warns her about the future, like any mother does.

"A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed, it won't stretch to make room for you. I'm the only one who loves you. I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You *are* nothing!" (27ATS).

Just like any mother warns her about her future but Mariam never listens and goes her way only to be haunted by her mother's words. Mariam is later married to Rasheed who is 45 years old and Mariam was 15 when she married Rasheed. She was treated with love in the beginning, praised for her cooking and when she became pregnant she was hailed as his queen, but when her child died, she was ill treated and the queen fell from her throne and then things started to go downhill from then on. The abuses started the beating started and Mariam told a new story to every one of her friends, she decided to "endure" because it is her lot in life to endure. Likewise opposite to Mariam was Laila a beautiful girl with blond hair a daughter of a teacher and Mariam's friend. An educated girl who had future not as a submissive wife but as a teacher in the Afghanistan of the future. Her father kept telling her.

"Marriage can wait, education cannot. You're a very, very bright girl. Truly, you are. You can be anything you want, Laila. I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afganistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even more. Because a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila. No chance." (114ATS).

It is these kinds of ideas according to Rasheed are modern; he calls himself a different breed of man. He says that he is all for honor and pride "*nang* and *namoos*" (69ATS). He is as like any man his will is the final verdict and when Laila's parents died in the bomb blast, he saved her from under the rubble. He nursed her back to health and no one sensed the underlying motive behind his good deed, cause nothing good comes without a price and Laila's prize for her life is her freedom, she was forced to marry Rasheed because of his little act, where he paid someone to tell her that the one she loved has died in a crossfire. It was an act well played out and Laila fell for it. Laila did marry him and she was also praised as the queen of his palace and when was pregnant with her first child, it was not Rasheed's but her lovers, and Raheed was overjoyed when he found out that Laila was pregnant, cause she has given him what Mariam had failed to give him. But Rasheeds dreams were shattered cause it was a girl and not a boy as Rasheed had expected and later she did deliver a boy and he was well pampered by Rasheed and he also received a lion's share in everything, the division is visible, Like in most Indian homes the boy gets the biggest share and the girl gets the left over and it was no different. "Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always remember that, Mariam." (354ATS).

As life went on along with the war Rasheed's torture began to increase along which was evenly distributed to all the women in the family and no one was spared from his

wrath. Sometimes his torture knew no borders, he once forced Mariam to eat stones and few of her teeth fell out, Laila was locked inside a room with no food or water along with her baby for weeks. It was the littlest things that aggravated him, like the rice being over cooked or under cooked, the daal bland. Or sometimes grave things like Mariam and Laila trying to escape and being returned by Taliban officers. Like always Rasheed found some reason or the other to rain blows and curses on them. Why women should endure all this, is this their lot in life, to endure and keep quiet about this. But on the outside they seemed like a normal family, a family filled with love but what happened behind those closed doors no one knew. So they finally decided to do something, behind the closed doors Rasheed breathed his last and final breath. While one found her freedom, Mariam was arrested for her crime and Laila found her freedom reunited with the love of her life.

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### **Feministic Aspect in Rajam Krishnan's *Lamps in the Whirlpool***

*The aim of this paper is to explore the marginalization of a married woman through feministic aspect in *Lamps in the Whirlpool*, the masterpiece of Rajam Krishnan. This work is translated from *Suzhalil Mithakum Deepangal* (Tamil novel). Author gives space for a woman to represent their emotional and physical problems. The problems were more or less marginalized in the sake of gender and sex. It perpetuates the dominant social position of men, one who thinking to do as in his thought and vision, i.e., Hitlerism. Throughout the history of our knowledge, women were treated as sub-ordinate to men. The novel portrays the suffering of Girija, a Protagonist of the story and showcases the depression of women who always under the control of a superior power in name of husband, mother-in-law and relatives too. The paper also reveals how Girija faced the struggles in her family belongs to the Orthodox Brahmin family and marginalizing her through the 'madi' rules which followed from half a centuries ago.*

The novel *Lamps in the Whirlpool* translated from the Tamil novel *Suzhalil Mithakum Deepangal* presents the struggle of a woman in an orthodox Brahmin family to find her and come out of its stultifying routines and not to submit to its painful demands. The novel is frontally feminist in its theme, treatment and language. The Indian woman in the family is worshipped as an angel if she annihilates herself for the sake of others. Or else she is cast away as monstrous, if not demonic. The novel is frontally feminist in its theme, treatment and language. The title of the novel is charged with feminist significance. The central image in the novel is the small leaf boat carrying an oil soaked wick sailing in the Ganga.

Rajam Krishnan, a Tamil writer, who won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1973 for her Tamil novel *Verukku Neer*. She was a prolific feminist writer who always presents the plight of woman in Indian society in her works. Life was kind and cruel to her throughout her career. She is so irate at the self-righteous middle class Brahmin community and makes it as a point of focus in this novel. In fact, she challenges through the central crisis of the story the legitimization of the atrocities perpetrated in the name of the family. *Manalur Maniammal*, *Mullum Malarum*, *Alaai vaaikarai* were some of the notable novels of her and mostly showcases the struggle of women.

Girija, the Protagonist is a typical middle class graduated women and married off to perform the duties of a Hindu wife. She has been used as a linchpin of the family and used as a draught animal by her mother-in-law and her husband and there is not even an appreciation of her sincere works. Though Girija is a graduate, she can't overrule her rituals and followings of her home. The problems which were faced by Girija were more or less marginalized in the name of gender or sex and also by the mean of community. The Brahmin terms 'madi' and 'aachara' constitutes the social ideology of a Brahmin society. Girija is an educated women but she is equally to a foolish woman to sacrifice her life for the domestic harmony. She realizes her state of inane abstraction and ignorance once Ratna makes it clear. She has all along been exploited both by her husband and mother-in-law.

“What a disgrace! They treat you like a worm and make you work like a machine. Harmony is achieved only when all the notes are in perfect accord. A single note, however melodious, does not create harmony. I cannot bear to see a talented person like you trapped in a life ruled by blind orthodoxy. The *madi* concept is quite outdated and only a means to torture people” (Ratna’s statement)

Ratna is the mouthpiece of Rajam Krishnan. Girija's conscience finds a voice through Ratna. Girija's husband is the embodiment of callousness. He is totally insensitive to the feelings of his wife. She is awakened by the talk of 'consciousness raising' by Ratna. In male egoistic anger he throws down the plate when the food is not to his liking. He humiliates her and goes away. His crude shocks her and rouses her dormant sense of self-respect. Girija's mother-in-law selfishly makes her observe strict rules of austerity and piety described in Tamil as “*madi*” and “*aacharam*” always.

After all the consequences and controversies faced by Girija, she left as a loose woman and has a runaway. Ratna and her friends understand her predicament, give her temporary shelter in the hostel and take her as if she were a wounded bird. Her part of life is somewhat better as she gets an employment with a nun. The perennial river Ganges has been sacred to the Hindus from time immemorial. It is a symbol of our cultural unity. Its water reminds us not only of the flow of life but its current warns us of the danger as well. The holy places of Haridwar and Rishikesh, the plain and the higher reaches of the Himalayas. Girija visits these places at the age of forty-six. She is able to comprehend the complexity of our lives. For in a crisis she seeks the Ganga not only for escape but also for enlightenment which she receives in the encounter with the widow in Rishikesh. If the lamp in the Ganga is at the centre of spiritual imagery, the network of rituals and observances designated as the novel's material imagery.

An "ideal" housewife with grown-up children leaves home to spend a few days in Haridwar, for she badly wants a change from her unappreciative husband, her vulture-like mother-in-law. When she returns home, her entry is barred, for she has broken the rules of middle-class morality and lowered the prestige of the husband. Even the mother-in-law, herself a woman but can't understand the situation, mentality of the woman. Of course, it's unsympathetic, and that is the greater tragedy of the Indian scene. The old lady encourages her son: "The milk is spilt and nothing can be done about it. Let her take her belongings and leave". A patriarchal system considers female as independent self-hood, unnecessary and unhealthy. Samu, the mother-in-law, and Rojamami are also women but not representing a social truth as a woman. They seem to be a superior power.

The women were educated as much they can, but they were caged once they got married. This is the status of woman mostly in the rural areas till now. Girija had received a good education and had even worked for a while. Rajam's heroine will not wear sackcloth and ashes. She would rather rebuild her life outside. In home, the women were ill-treated and marginalised by the house member even by the women bond like mother-in-law, sister-in-law etc. At some situation, husbands were caged with the bond of mother's love where they left free and tortured their spouse. The



recent situation and problems were happening similar to this novel. The marginalization is common between the community but its astonishing that its happening in the home only in the name of community and the sake of relatives. The marginalization leads to divorce of the couples may be young married or else so. Marginalizing the woman is a sin but our society is repeating the same. Rajam Krishnan directly shoots out the castes rituals especially Brahmin community in this novel.

The novel perpetuates the system of dominant social position of men, one who thinking to do in his own thought and vision, i.e., Hitlerism. The novel deals with Brahmin formalities and its orthodoxy. It also evokes the image of the Indian woman and her plight caught up in obligations towards Girija's family. Though an educated woman is sunk in ignorance and inactivity, society suffers more because the possibilities of her enlightening its members become remote. Rajam Krishnan gives space for a woman to represents their emotional and physical problems. The problems were more or less a marginalized in the sake of gender and sex. *Lamps in the Whirlpool* is a well-wrought novel translated into expressive English, a triumph for the novelist, the translators and the readers. It pains us to see that the majority of Indian women have no sense of self at all. They lose their identity after the marriage. Education does not give any rationale of their life. They become sacrificial goats in the ritual of running the family.

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