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# ***Critical Space***<sup>®</sup>

A Peer-reviewed (refereed) International Journal  
in English Language and Literature



**Editors**

**Prof. P. A. Attar     Dr. H. B. Patil**



## ***Critical Space®***

### **A Peer-reviewed (refereed) International Journal in English Language and Literature**

The journal '*Critical Space: A Peer-reviewed (refereed) International Journal in English Language and Literature*' aims at to publish unpublished, original research articles and make available a new platform to the scholars of Language, Literature and Culture. It deserves to promote the young researchers and attempts to cultivate the research aptitude among teachers in the higher educational system. It is a four monthly journal (February, June and October). Each issue of *Critical Space®* will be sent to the members of the journal and the respective libraries.

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## Editorial

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I feel happy to present the February issue of the *Critical Space*. As usual the articles, contributed in it, interestingly undertake a close scrutiny of the established facts, accepted literary forms, critical theories and responding to the vibrant changes happening into the contemporary arts and other human discourses.

Baby Pushpa Sinha in her article, 'Historical Events and Postmodern Narratives: A Reading of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five*' explores how Vonnegut Jr. experiments with time of the novel by displacing the historical facts in order to achieve the surreal literary motif. The article depicts how the author deviates from the accepted generic fabric and fuse different narrative styles in order to create a collage to signify the issues of contemporary world. In '(De/En)-coding Bangladeshi Photo-studio Culture' Md. Zaki Rezwana focuses the dynamics of cultural production. In this case too, the author is keen in depicting the changing scenario of the art of photography as it is influenced by the undercurrents of socio-cultural entities. The logical line of change and re-examination is continued in the article 'Re-Contextualization of the Myth of Ashwaratha in Kamal Desai's *Kala Surya*' written by Dr. Dattatraya D. Khaladkar. It is amazing to understand how the myths are re-contextualized in contemporary literature to signify the present reality.

The literature of contemporary period deviates from its predecessors in the stylistic and thematic concerns. Dr. Umed Singh in his article investigates how Arvind Adiga in *The White Tiger* represents India from different perspectives. Dr. Ravi Bhushan, in his article 'Orality and Feminism: A Study of Indian Oral Traditions,' throws light on how Indian oral tradition reveals the principles of modern theory of 'feminism'. The author foregrounds his research argument in the light of mythical women figures from the great Indian tradition. Prof. Kuldeep Singh J Sisodiya and Dr. Vikas Raval in their article 'Beyond the Classroom: Mobile Learning the Wider World' explore how the mobile technology can be used to enhance the teaching and learning process. Garima Kaushik in 'The Grotesque Body in Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol's *Dead Souls*' analyses the Gogol's novel in the light of Bakhtinian terminology of 'grotesque realism'.

Israt Taslim's article 'Ananta Jalil: Jocker or Croaker?' focuses the media tricks used in contemporary period in order to seek the mass attention for commercial success of the film. The paper analyses the attitude, aptitude and

tendencies of the contemporary audience and the tricks used by the media personalities to make their films viral fame among the young generation. Manik Shantinath Patil, in her article 'Surveillance of Parental Anxiety with Young Adult Literature,' gives critical response to the emerging field of 'Young Adult Literature'. The paper reveals how the young-adult novels are helpful to understand the problem of emotional detachment faced by contemporary parents.

Rajani Moti, in her article 'The Postmodern Dilemma of Identity Crisis in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*,' deals with how the social and cultural entities generate the dilemma of identity crisis in the postmodern period. However, the logical line of social change due to the postmodern premises is also found extended in Dr. Muktaja Mathkari's article, 'Postcolonial Feminism: The New Ethics in the Globalizing World.' She analyses the undercurrents of the process of globalization in contemporary culture. This contemporary attitude of deconstruction or challenging the established facts can be traced in Vipin Pal Singh's article 'Fanon's Discourse of Decolonization'. The paper is a good critical commentary on Frantz Fanon's theory of 'Decolonization' with appropriate textual references.

Jayant R Salve in his article 'A Room of Her Own, the New Age Woman in Indian TV Ads: A Feminist Discourse' rightly points out the reciprocal relations between advertisement and culture. The paper with appropriate examples shows how advertisement influences the contemporary culture by influencing the habits of the people; however it also focuses how the traditional cultural codes indirectly influence depiction of women in the advertisement. Mrs. Deepa Patil's article 'The Corruption of the American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*' analyzes the novel in the light of destruction of American Dream. The researcher's knowledge of sociological, historical and political facts makes the analysis convincing. The Issue ends with the poems of Dr. N.G. Wale and Shivkumar Agrawal. The poems selected for the issue are distinct in the use of language and thematic concerns.

Thus the articles contributed in this Issue are from different fields of knowledge and significantly pave a way into the new avenues of research. I hope that you will find the issue interesting and enlightening.

- Dr P. A. Attar  
- Dr. H. B. Patil

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## Historical Events and Postmodern Narratives: A Reading of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five*

\*Baby Pushpa Sinha

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### Abstract

The postmodern writers like William S. Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. etc. give due emphasis to narrative displacement. One of the constituent thematic dimensions of the postmodernist fiction from America is to mock at the official version of historical events. Most of the writers seem to be revising their position and their views in relation to the historical events they themselves participated. *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an obvious example in which the protagonist (Vonnegut himself) returns to the place where he participated in the war, but not to remember how it was, not to relive what he did, but to rethink and revise his vision of that moment. The author attempts following the genre of science fiction to liberate his characters from the prison-house of the fiction. Kurt Vonnegut Jr. is the author as well as the narrator of the first and the last chapters of *Slaughterhouse-Five* who is seeking for a way whereby he can vent out his experiences of war. Using a postmodern device, he tries to emphasize the fact that the events in the novel more or less did happen and that this novel is a complex one with a blend of fiction and non-fiction. We also see the narrators moving back and forth ranging between his pre-war life and his coming back to Dresden in 1967 with an old war friend named Bernard V. O'Hare. Using the autobiographical material, Vonnegut is creating worlds on thresholds-real people travelling to worlds of fantasy and trans-world identities. What accounts for the success or failure of the novelist under discussion is his attempt in redefining not only the changing concept of reality, but fictionalizing the same.

**Key words:** Postmodern reality, narrative displacement, disjointed, polyphonic.

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In the *Slaughterhouse-Five*, what we find is that the plot is presented to us but not in the chronological manner as we observe in the traditional novels. In the traditional novel, we see that the novel tries to describe the reality as an attempt to give it some kind of moral validity whereas the postmodern fiction like Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five* tries to demonstrate that the form rather than the content of the novel is important. The term 'postmodern

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literature' is used to describe some features of post-war ii literature depending on allusions, paradox, fragmentation, references, paranoia, hyper reality etc. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a science fiction concerned with World War II experiences dealing with journeys through time of a soldier named Billy Pilgrim. A confused and fatalistic American soldier, Billy is captured by the Germans at the time of the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. He is taken to a Dresden Slaughterhouse and kept in a makeshift prison. Billy and his fellow prisoners are kept in a building called "Slaughterhouse number 5". The German guards and the POWS hide themselves in a deep cellar. They survive the firebombing of Dresden during World War II because their hiding place turned to be a safe one. We see Vonnegut's novel relying on his own experiences at the time of fire-bombing of Dresden in Feb. of 1945. But his specialty is that he constantly shows us the fictionality of the central narrative arc that has fictional elements like extraterrestrial creatures and 'time travel.' In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, we notice the narrator informing about Billy who has become "unstuck in time" due to his traumatic experience in the course of the Dresden air-raid. What we basically see is that as because Billy has come "unstuck in time", so his life does not come to an end with death. Instead he re-lives his death prior to its time. *Slaughterhouse-Five* follows a nonlinear mode of narration. In this context, we can quote Jerome Klinkowitz who in his work *Kurt Vonnegut* maintains that *Slaughterhouse-Five* created: "a radical reconnection of the historical and the imaginary, the realistic and the fantastic, the sequential and the simultaneous, the author and the text." (69)

It has hardly any resemblance to the traditional novel. There is nothing called the linear movement of the narrative, no intricate plot, crying for resolution. The protagonist of the novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five* named Billy Pilgrim is a time-traveller. He with a blink of his eye can find himself in fire-bombed Dresden in 1944 and, with another blink, in Ilium, his home town in 1961. He had been an eye-witness to the fire- bombing by the Allies of Dresden at the fag-end of World War II. The experience is so tormenting and agonizing that he becomes "unstuck in time" (*Slaughterhouse-Five*-26). Being "unstuck in time", he does not feel it meaningful to differentiate between past, present and future, or, between the living and the dead. Vonnegut was around twenty years old when he experienced an event that changed his life as he puts it to William Rodney Allen: "I was present in the greatest massacre in European history,

[2]



which was the destruction of Dresden by fire-bombing." (*Understanding Kurt Vonnegut*, 3)

He along with his few fellow prisoners could survive only because they were locked in a meat locker sixty feet beneath the ground. He could come out of this world only by writing the novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*. He depicts experiences of his own life in his works. He does not necessarily use specific events, instead uses the emotions he feels during the events in his life. He was cut off from the rest of society for a period of five months of his life. From December 1944 to April 1945, Vonnegut was taken captive by the Germans as a prisoner of war during World War II. He was captured during the Battle of the Bulge, and lived through the fire-bombing of Dresden in February of 1945. During this period of time, he was totally isolated from the rest of American society. In describing about this experience in his work, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, he not only established himself as an author of literary merit, but pioneered with others, the genre of postmodernist fiction in America. Hence, his novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* has some autobiographical elements which are very authentic.

*Slaughterhouse-Five* is Vonnegut's very popular novel and perhaps his magnum opus. He (Vonnegut) said about this novel to James Lundquist: "I felt after I finished *Slaughterhouse-Five* that I didn't have to write at all any more if I didn't want to. It was the end of some sort of career".<sup>(71)</sup> *Slaughterhouse-Five*, with its temporal non-linearity blends science fiction, the fantastic and the horrible realities of World War II. This novel derives its structure from Vonnegut's fascination for depicting the reality of a thing which is beyond the human imagination. And here in this context we can quote James Lundquist who in his work, *Kurt Vonnegut* remarks: "The method he chooses is outlined in the explanation given to Billy Pilgrim of the Tralfamadorian novel as he is being transported toward that whimsical planet. The Tralfamadorians allow him to look at some of their novels, but warn that he cannot begin to understand them. But he finds that the novels consist of clumps of symbols with stars in between. Billy is informed that the clumps function something like telegrams, with each clump containing a message about a situation or scene. But the clumps are not read sequentially as the chapters are in an earthling novel of the ordinary sort. They are read simultaneously. *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an approximation of this type of novel. Its chapters are divided into short sections (clumps), seldom more than a few paragraphs long. The time-tripping also serves to eliminate suspense.

[3]

What the Tralfamadorian structure does for Vonnegut is to enable him to embody a new reality in his novel—at least new in contrast to the sequential ups-and-downs reality of the traditional novel. Vonnegut's method accords well with the major changes in the conception of physical reality that have come out of contemporary science" (*Kurt Vonnegut*, 71). Just like the Tralfamadorian novel, Vonnegut's novel is also designed and Billy is subjected to go through this kind of literature. The text in itself indicates the postmodern way of reading. At Tralfamodore which is a planet, what we see is that life is not viewed as something real, significant and serious but there everything is viewed very casually. The words like ambiguity, change and subjectivity which are in a sense synonyms therefore become the ways of defining what we call human reality. The speaker in *Slaughterhouse-Five* says to Billy: "There isn't any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. What we love in our books are the depths of many marvellous moments seen all at one time." (40) James Lundquist in his book *Kurt Vonnegut* is of the opinion that the Tralfamadorian scheme helps him in tiding over the problems of change, ambiguity and subjectivity involved in objectifying the incidents concerning the fire-bombing of Dresden and the participation of Billy Pilgrim and the author in them. In the constant movement of back and forth in time of Vonnegut's narrative involving Billy, we see Billy becoming Vonnegut's history, being present all at once as though he were an electron. We can very appropriately quote James Lundquist in his work *Kurt Vonnegut* who maintains: "Of course, all of Vonnegut's earlier central characters are somewhat like Billy in that they are seen as aspects of a protean reality. But it is not until *Slaughterhouse-Five* that Vonnegut develops a way of fully representing the context of that reality" (72). *Slaughterhouse-Five* is a postmodern "antiwar book" based on his personal experiences as a prisoner of war (POW) during the World War II. Vonnegut in this novel tries to project his own disjointed experience as well as the chaotic contemporary experience with a sense of moral cruelty. This book has war and its unspeakable horror as its important theme. It moves around time and place and also makes use of unusual blend of fiction, nonfiction and science fiction. We see how Vonnegut has mixed his personal experiences as POW in *slaughterhouse-Five* with humour and

science fiction. *Slaughterhouse-Five* is also a representation of some kind of real experience as encountered by him and not merely a fictional narrative constructed by its author. Just like his protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, Vonnegut himself was also captured by the Germans and held as a POW. Vonnegut was taken to Dresden which was a beautiful German city as a POW. He, along with his fellow prisoners, was kept in a Slaughterhouse. And in 1945 on the 13<sup>th</sup> Feb., this city was badly destroyed resulting in 135000 deaths leading to the largest massacre in European History. But this was not declared as such. His disappointment and despair arising from his experiences of World War II goaded him to publish "an anti-war book" (*Slaughterhouse-Five*), drawing heavily on his personal experience as a POW during the world war ii. This book depicts the cruelty of human beings of western societies exposing their moral vacuum of contemporary life. Billy pilgrim's narratives stand for the mockery of the sanctity that one usually associates with Pilgrim. It is a non-religious pilgrimage where wars have been adored. Through the experiences of Billy, Vonnegut is perhaps trying to show to the contemporary society the absurdity of war and the need to make a humane society. Just as in a postmodern novel, so also in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, we see the self of Billy and Vonnegut himself in the form of a decentred entity engaged in a chaotic situation (context). In this novel, we see that the actual historical incidents are projected and there is the presence of intrusion of science fiction, the self-conscious presence of the narrator as well as the use of nonlinear narration. The self-conscious presence of the author in *Slaughterhouse-Five* stands to break the author's authority or claim over the text.

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## (De/En)-coding Bangladeshi Photo-studio Culture

\*Md. Zaki Rezwana

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### Abstract

This paper proceeds with a basic background check on the Bangladeshi photo-studio culture of decaying past and tries to analyze it critically with focusing on both the consumers and the producers of the cultural industry. This paper also shares a brief comparative study between the consumers and producers and their interactive communication in the social space (in Bangladeshi context) with relocating the findings to create conceptual yet very much visible transformation of this so called decaying past.

**Keywords:** Media, photography, visual discourse, consumer culture, culture industry, cultural studies, and subculture.

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### Introduction

I was quietly redrawn to the memory lane when one of my friends posted a photo in his facebook page with caricaturing one of his old photos taken at photo-studio. For Bangladeshi people, the photo-studio culture is not a best a way to represent the *selves* within a boundary of decisive moment and its surroundings anymore. These people — hailing from both urban and rural areas — are now favoring the new technological inventions hoisted by the consumerist ideology. This study will be investigating the practice of visual culture back from a certain state of technological condition which has been transformed into something large and affiliated with more sophisticated section of cultural industry. The photo-studio culture once was spread among the whole country because of its overwhelming popularity, and perhaps for its socio-cultural acceptance, necessity and convenience. But gradually its necessity has become none other than for printing photos (taken outside) and taking passport sized photo for official purposes. The visual representation of self has taken a new medium and become a powerful source of consumer hypocrisy. This paper intends to explore how photo-studio cultures — an extremely practicing culture in previous times which is now almost a bygone one — is still being practiced now. It will also try to find out why and how the transformation of this culture relates to technological invention and capitalist consumer society. Initially this

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[7]

paper starts with a background on the photo-studio culture. After that the focus will shift towards unveiling and decoding the myth of traditional photo-studio culture. With analyzing the transformation of the photo-studio in the modern age, the later parts will give a comparative analysis of the both era and how the traditional practice is still being continued.

### **A Background Check**

Visual culture is being practiced for a long time. We may not need to start from Altamira's bison drawing now. Representing the self has been and is still one of the major types of visual culture. We all have some vintage family photo attached to some old album stored in a shallow corner of the drawer. Some went considerate enough to put those photos on the living room's wall. Most/some of those remind us of the culture that was popularized by the photo-studio sometimes ago. As a way of representing the self the photo-studio culture had gained numerous popularity among the mass and strived itself as an influential popular culture. The photo-studio culture may not only relate to the official purpose (passport photo or stamp photo). It was sold as well as well-liked. The question of high art vs. low art raised by the people who could afford a portable camera device home and take their own shots in home or wherever they like. But, unlike human evolution, the technological evolution is not something that someone would call blasphemous and unobvious. This evolution brought out a massive change into today's culture. If we clearly notice the contemporary Bangladeshi society, we will notice that photo-studio culture is almost a bygone culture and presumably a low medium of art. If none, it has taken a different shape and lost its previous essence. Now, what appears to be much more popular than the previous one is DSLR/Digital camera and cell phone based photo or visual culture.

### **Photo-Studio Culture: Unveiling and Decoding the Myth**

To be precisely, what commonly meant as a photo-studio here and to others is a purposive production of visuality with distinct feature of characteristics that interacts with the mass people. To answer what makes that traditional photo-studio culture *the photo-studio culture*, we should look into some random photos taken at that period.



**Fig. 1.** Anonymous. 04 December 1992  
Family Album, Print. 14 February 2014



**Fig. 2.** Anonymous. 04 December 1988.  
Family Album, Print. 14 February 2014

Every photo taken at the photo-studios has one thing in common. The subject is most times relocated outside its comfort zone and somehow captured in a closed space with a limited background to offer. The background may differ but what is interesting is the background somehow opts for the openness within that closed space. The expression and clothing is very random yet skillfully bears the subject's social status. Žižek's two veils can be used to carry out an investigation of their appearances. These are intersubjectivity and the inherent transgression. If considering the veil of intersubjectivity, what the subject wishes to convey through their expression and apparel in a photo can be simply the way s/he wishes to please the others (Žižek 8). If considering the veil of inherent transgression, we all know that the "explicit symbolic structure" which subject wishes to show with his/her photo (along with all the other elements) is apparently a possible intention to hide the "phantasmic background" where the truth is hidden beneath (24).

Interestingly, almost every other photo-studio puts some poster of smiling celebrities on their stores. Even inside, they put some printed photos of their customers who are mostly woman, happy couples and family, attractive woman/girl, fashionable males and better looking kids. In most cases these



photos work influentially on the customers. These images teach the customers what to desire which is exactly similar to Žižek's veil of "transcendental schematism." (7). By not simply conveying the explicit visual messages, these images also work as a Barthesian myth at the same time. These images try to constitute the social norms — executed and imposed by the capitalist ideology — which eventually stands for the benefits of that certain cultural producer by convincing the consumer that no matter what any individual's social status or class is, wish can be fulfilled if desired.

### **The *Pixelization* of Film**

The question should be asked why and how the photo-studio culture went through such massive change. The photo-studio culture can be called as a "culture industry" which from Horkheimer and Adorno's definition is a sort of factory producing standardized cultural goods to manipulate the masses into passivity from the state of being a popular culture (120). And this photo-studio culture emerged as a popular culture mainly because of its association with technological and consumerist aspects. Even though, for some or many owning a camera device was less than a problem, but the technology for processing and exporting a negative was quite expensive and had always needed an expert hand. The photo-studio culture gave the mass consumer a standardized solution as a whole with keeping them within the boundary which was operated and regulated by the producers. But a clear distinction between high and low culture was always visible. As the photo-studio culture was available and specially designed for mass people, it had gained its position as being the popular culture as well as less in art. On the other hand, those who could afford a camera device with their own gained the elitist position for their ability of owning and having direct access to the production. The decline of photo-studio culture began with commercial boom of photographic equipment's availability and cost-cutting. The gap between high art and low art still continued on the basis of its "sites" — as Gillian Rose termed it — until the emergence of digital age and the postmodern age (16).

Adorno and Horkheimer indicated that those in control of the economy have power over society by means of technology as well (121). The digital age commercializes the individualistic boom of such visual culture. Owning a camera device or tendency to visually represent the self as well as the others is technically attached with everyday electronic consumer device such as mobile



phones, tablet, laptop needless to mention the camera-only devices like digital camera or DSLR camera. Previously, the cost of printing of average size of photo required 5-10 taka which now stays the same, but can be easily avoidable by watching in other devices like mobile, computer, digital photo-frame etc. Now an average middle class family hardly goes to a nearby photo-studio; let alone the rich one. Even the people from so called lower class prefer to shoot with their mobile handset. Another thing may appear in the people's mind is the fear of losing privacy. Many cases have been noticed where people (especially woman) fall victim to photo-theft and blackmailing by taking photos at the local photo studio. With the technological, corporate and capitalist invasion, it was evident that the photo-studio culture would take a new form. It has actually transformed into three parts. These are: Internet based photography, commercial studio photography and the struggling photo-studio based photography. The first one revives with declining the traditional method of photo viewing experience. The circulation can easily be numerous if the author and consumer want. This production can be both categorized under high and low art depending on the author and the subject. As the technology has achieved portability, the shooting can equally be done in indoor and outdoor location. The second one, commercial studio photography, is now basically done for print media, commercial media and other official purpose. Because of its distinctive features and usages, it is really hard to categorize this photography under either high or low form art. However, the traditional official photo (passport and stamp) can still be executed here. And the last one, the struggling photo-studio based photography is the survived remaining of the traditional photo-studio culture. This is merely considered as a form of art now and currently surviving as a subculture.

**Film vs. Pixel**

Even though owning a camera and the medium of watching let the consumers think that they are free of tyranny of cultural industry, it is merely unnoticed that they fall victim to the same tyranny but with a different chain or handcuff. The best benefit the producers of the technology get is to connect the consumers with a range of electronic products. With the continuous procedure of technological revolution the media acts an influential role in handcuffing the consumers with capitalists' "propaganda" forever (Horkheimer & Adorno 140). You already got a camera? Then buy a flash or a better lens to get better images. You have a smartphone? Then buy an app that can help you take a better image.

[11]

And don't forget to buy a HD monitor that will give you clearer picture! Or even buy that new phone that can take good pictures. It is a continuing chain of consumerism that is keeping the capitalist ideology alive for a long time. The advertisement given below is published in Bangladeshi media to advertise a phone which is capable of "producing" quality image apart from its other competent features.



← **Fig. 3. Mobile, Walton. Walton Primo ZX. Walton BD Official Facebook Page. Facebook. 06 February 2014. Web. 18 February 2014.**

The recent technology has offered more freedom to the consumers with an abundant supports of (re)production where an individual consciously can function as an independent producer of cultural goods. This is exactly what Michael de Certeau termed as "secondary production" (xiii). S/he can easily

manipulate, crop, or enhance whatever photo s/he wants and however s/he wants. The loss of quality is nearly zero depending on the mode of production. With the boom of internet, the representing the self as well as the others has acquired more popularity than ever. Both of this two era of photo-studio culture (the previous era and the era of its descendants) can be analyzed with Žižek's veil. The photo as we take it and how we take it now strongly suggests the influence of second veil "intersubjectivity" (8). We take photos to please the others. We fantasizes our desire by taking photos and showing them to the others. The narcissistic exposure in social networks clearly justifies this idea.

The new space in social media gives the low art (and yes popular culture) and high art a common platform to be operated within which enables the both to get judged by its own quality. Selfie or mobile photography competently becomes a comprehensive part of visual culture which not only blurs the barrier of low art but also the acceptance of DSLR or high-end camera as a weapon of high art. On the other hand, with fulfilling the commercial needs and purpose, the distinct feature that blocks the high art and low art from mingling is

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gradually being diminished as the contemporary postmodern era massively blurred the boundary between these two sections (Jameson 14). However even though, Jameson tries to erase the border between high and low art in postmodern period, the traditional photo-studio culture is somehow still struggling as a castrated culture with being a low form of art. The reason perhaps lays on the motives of capitalist ideology and the dominant social groups.

### The Contemporary Sub-cultured Photo-studio

A report published in online based newspaper Bangla Express claims that rate of taking normal family photos at the photo-studio for family purpose have almost been vanished as the common people preferred to take their own photos by themselves inside their own comfort zone (Mira n. pag.). But still, Samsul A. Helal — a veteran photographer — submitted an investigative photo series titled “Love Studio” which shows how a fraction of people are still using photo-studio as a medium of representing the self to find their “own unique world”. Here are few photos from that photo series:



**Fig. 4-7** (clockwise). Helal, Samsul A. “Love Studio” Photo Series. *In & Out: New Generation Photographers*. Wordpress. 2013. Web. 20 February 2014.

This decaying traditional photo-studio culture can be tracked as a subculture. Dick Hebdige, in his notions of subculture, elaborated the Gramscian term “specificity and conjuncture” to define the British subculture (448). This photo-studio subculture — during this modern contemporary period — is not only a resistance against the cultural hegemony, but also an aid to construct their own identity with the help of resources and cultural material available to them. In some points this culture is merely a resistance; rather it is an outcry of a certain social group for an identity that could define them.

### **Conclusion**

The photo-studio culture may be approached as a bygone culture now, but the truth is, this culture seems to manage its survival in its own way. The traditional photo-studio culture may not have the same name or same features now. But the purpose of the capitalist ideology is still being served in a different way. To the consumers, this whole thing seems to as a choice of free will. But deep inside, it is nothing but an addition to their recurring defeat to the dominant social class and its ideologies. This research may help the readers to explore the practice of consumer-based visual culture in Bangladesh which can be deconstructed and understood in terms of cultural studies theories on popular culture, ideology, forms of art, consumption and production etc. This study has investigated the practice of mass visual culture back from a certain state of technological condition which has now been transformed into something large and affiliated with more sophisticated section of cultural industry. This research remains from evaluating the visual aspects of mentioned cultures. Rather it looks into the background and structures formulated by the social groups. For further study, a comparative and investigative analysis can be done in order to explore and theorize the distinctions of visual aspects within these cultures which could trouble the conceived notions of high art and low art.

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## Recontextualization of the Myth of Ashwaratha in Kamal Desai's *Kala Surya*

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### Abstract

The present paper, 'Re-Contextualization of the Myth of Ashwaratha in Kamal Desai's *Kala Surya*' tries to analyze Kamal Desai's novella *Kala Surya* in the context of 'Recontextualization'. It examines how Desai uses the *Pouranic* myth of Ashwaratha to unfold the inner-outer psyche of a young girl Meera. The initial part of the paper seeks to furnish the general information of the writer and the novella with some stark remarks. As Desai utilizes the mythical artifacts in the novella, it is necessary to have brief account of the term 'Re-Contextualization', therefore, the paper further discusses the 'Re-Contextualization' by defining it with reference to the various scholars. With the help of Ashwaratha's myth Desai tries to explain the modern woman's strange anguished journey and barren state of the mind by compelling her character to rebel against societal norms. Like Ashwaratha, Meera, the protagonist of the novel, rejects traditional beliefs; sin and virtue, sacred and profane, good or bad, such things are nothing for her; prefers to live the aloof and deserted life. Besides this, the Myth of Ashwaratha also counters Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Like Camus Kamal Desai has explored the absurdity of the human endeavour by using the 'Myth of Ashwaratha'.

**Key Words:** *Myth of Ashwaratha, Kala Sun, rebel, sin, recontextualization etc.*

### I

Many creative minds of East and West have used the ancient myths to explore the modern sensibility in the present context. For example, Camus has used the myth of Sisyphus and has explained absurdity of human being, myth of Ulysses is used by James Joyce in his novel *Ulysses*, etc. In this context the present paper attempts to investigate the re-contextualization of the myth of Ashwaratha in Kamal Desai's Marathi novel *Kala Surya* (1975). Kamal Desai (1928) is one of the most significant contemporary Marathi writers and perhaps the best feminist woman writer of her generation. She has been steadily writing for the last forty years, with her peculiar style and diction, and has been loyal to her own convictions about life. Her stories do not easily satisfy the reader, as

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they are not love-stories and lack humour in the traditional sense. *Ratrandin Aamha Yuddhacha Prasang* (1963), *Kala Surya* (1968), and *Hat Ghalnari Bai* (1970) are her most popular novellas. Without prior knowledge of *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat*, Indian Philosophy, Greek mythology or Christianity, one cannot understand her novels easily. It is, because they demand certain references from these epics or history which are consistently peeped in her works. Besides this, her narrative style of the story telling is not plain and simple; some examples, which she gives to make her views more comprehensible, are never described in certain chronological order. In her narration present and past events always mingle. Near to the existential traits, mostly her work represents the defeat, disappointment, alienation, concept of sin, dread, death, and meaninglessness of human life.

*Kala Surya*, Desai's well acclaimed novel was first published in 1968 in *Satyakatha* and in 1975 it was published in a book form, along with *Hat Ghalnari Bai*. Meera is a protagonist of the novel, who unfolds her autobiography, from her childhood days to her death. She says that she had a long stay with her aunt. After getting education, she gets a job in post-office; on transfer she joins her duty at Viranchi, a taluka headquarters. During a visit to Viranchi she observes that the area is totally barren, without any green shrubs, and is sated with huge black stones. At Viranchi she stays with her maternal aunt for some days, and later on she goes to live alone in government quarters. She is quite an unusual character, intense liking for darkness instead of light. Sin is nothing for her therefore she keeps relations with Bendre and Mr. Washinde, the boycotted persons by the society. At the end of the novel her liking for the Ashwaratha, an expelled son of Bramhadev, leads her to somewhat suicidal death; as per her plan she blasts the temple of the 'Kala Surya' in which she herself meets to the death.

## II

By depicting the alienation of an individual from the norms of societal constructs, *Kala Surya* ascribes a woman's anguished journey of self-realization. To unfold the modern man's dilemma and the barren state of the mind Kamal Desai has used the myth of Ashwaratha. As deWinter says, "When texts and artifacts appear in different cultural contexts, the decoding process of meaning-making leads to new interpretations, as well as new understandings or

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misunderstandings, sometimes depending on and sometimes in spite of those shared maps of meaning. (66)," Kamal Desai tries to explore self-realization of a woman by interpreting her life with creation of new meaning of 'Ashwaratha Myth'. In other words Desai recontextualizes the myth of Ashwaratha to explain the nature of sin and how modern individual responds to it. "Texts or artifacts placed in any context other than their original are recontextualized" (67). The linguist Per Linell defines recontextualization as, "... the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context ... to another. Recontextualization involves the extrication of some part or aspect from a text or discourse, or from a genre of texts or discourses, and the fitting of this part or aspect into another context." (154)

In the novel the temple of the 'Kala Surya' has a mythological and geographical reference. The reason of scorching heat of the Vidarbha\* is, especially Viranchi, explains the local folklore, that the Sun itself chose this dilapidated shrine to escape its own heat, and was trapped in it forever. From Shiva, she learns the story of Ashwaratha, a son of Bramhadev, who tried to fetch the sun in the temple, despite the Gods' protest to his act. Ashwaratha had erected sun temple in Viranchi in which he wanted to install idol of SUN. To invite the God Surya for the ceremony function of its temple, he creates very high ladder in the space with the help of arrows supple and tensile and tried to ascent the sun. The Gods warn him and ask to go back, and dare not, but Ashwaratha is not perturbed, he doesn't put off; he continues to climb the ladder, even though the ladder is hollowed out by termites. Just near about he reaches to the God and with folded hands going to say, 'proceed, your majesty, your rest-house is ready' the scorching flames pierced his eyes; he fell down on the earth and was left blind. Since then he is declared enemy of God, man and the earth. He is therefore, securely chained and assigned task of taking continuous rounds like a bullock turning the oil press as a punishment. He is not to stop for a single moment and undertakes this as a punishment by the Almighty. However with this punishment he adjust himself and feel happy: "prmkvran Tyal a saq; dDan ba2l Aahē Aai` tē aCya 6a-yawovtI ZaapD ba2l Łya rDyan. iFrav| txa gol gol fēya ka! -yac Tyac. kam Aahē to dmt nahI| "Arē fēya

\* Vidarbha (Marathi: विदर्भ) is the eastern region of the Indian state of Maharashtra, where normal temperature is up to 40oc and during the summer 45oc -48oc.

6al -yathl kaly Aahe ki!" Tya fēlxlc to Oktan zal a| toc fēl zal a|" (Desai 37). It reminds us Camus' 'Myth of Sisyphus', where he is accused of a certain cheerfulness in regards to the gods that is he stole their secrets. As a punishment the gods had assigned Sisyphus to eternally rolling a rock to the top of a mountain. Camus Says, "But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy." (Camus 78)

The myth of Ashwaratha, as told here by Shiva, weaves several mythological strands together, already well known to many Marathi readers. "... , the conventional moral exempla of the traditional epic give way to a dynamic recontextualization of myth, legend, and biblical narrative within framework of secular Pattern of events that recall the past chiefly *to reinvest it with present and future meaning.*" (Martin 145) (For emphasis Italics is mine). With this context, Desai's own additions are also in the style of *Pouranic* oral narration. Viranchi is indeed one of the names of Brahmadeva, the god of creation. However, the accounts of the creation of the town of Viranchi, Ashwaratha's birth and his attempt to bring the sun down to rest in the black stone temple that he built, the punishment that he was subjected to, are fictitious. Desai mixes them with known details. This admixture of known stories treated as 'facts' in new fictions, the divide between fact and fiction and draws attention to the making and circulation of 'facts'.

When Meera comes to Viranchi, the story of Ashwaratha and her own meets together, and a wish, to reject the dream-life and to face the reality becomes stronger in her mind. Her arrival at Ashwaratha's Viranchi is not just a coincident, but an acceptance of certain life style, which contains rebel against the certain power system and challenges to the values, rules traditions, and customs. After the failure of in his efforts to fetch the sun in the temple, Ashwaratha becomes lonely like Prometheus and the enemy of the Gods and Human; this act is considered as a sinful, because it is against Gods' order. His enmity suggests that he is against all the established norms and conducts. However, in the novel, Meera is attracted towards Ashwaratha and she accepts him as her husband. She says, "AXvr4 4or Asl a paihj ꣳ ml Tyal a mnan. vrl .

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Aah! Aai` ml kHyaT Tyal a wB`ar Aah! Agdl nKklc" (Desai 37). Thus, her choice to accept Ashwaratha as a husband is radical decision; rather it is an act of rebel against the traditional beliefs and practices. In fact, Ashwaratha is an enemy of the people and Earth itself, but she surrenders herself to the enemy of the people. Her acceptance of Ashwaratha suggests that she is against the social norms and values. She prefers to go from light to darkness which in her opinion is natural. She develops intense desire to die in sorrow and has fancy for something which is uncommon for ordinary people. The concept of sin and its place in social life is the main subject discussed in this novelette. Broadly speaking, 'sin' is a religious concept, any action against the rules of God or any action disapproved by religious convention is treated as Sin. Majority of the religions on the earth have their own concepts of Sin and have certain remedies to compensate from the acts of sin. However, some intellectuals feel that the concept of sin is the product of 'man' with a good intention, to protect and maintain social fabric. Meera is one of them she supports so called sinful acts compared to pious life.

In Viranchi 'Kala Surya' colony is already boycotted and Kedarnath Bendre has boycotted by this colony, because he becomes the friend of Ashwaratha for that he has sacrificed his own daughter. He has made incestuous sin with his daughter, therefore he is charged by society for spoiling his own daughter. Aggrieved and angered of his sinful act, a mob attacks his house to punish him. However, Bendre has his own strong plea in defence; he accepts what he has done but refuses to call it a sin. He says that did not create the 'sin' nor did he bring it with him since his birth and if it is sin, it is that of the 'soil'. He challenges the mob with a counter question that the same action could be done by anybody among the people gathered there.

Bendre assumes that he is Shishupal and refuses to call himself Kalyavana because, Kalyavan was just an ordinary, brainless but brave soldier he was deceived by a very simple tricks thinking it was Krishna sleeping under the shawl, he got burnt up along with it. Shishupal's case was different. Shishupal, in Mahabharata, was belonged to the Chedi dynasty. He expanded his kingdom to the banks of the Yamuna, thereby posing a threat to the Yadavas. Born with three eyes and four hands, it was prophesied that he would die at the hands of the person in whose lap the extra limbs drop off. The limbs fell off in the lap of Krishna, his maternal cousin. At his aunt's request Krishna agreed to

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pardon her son and promised to overlook ninety-nine of his sins, but said that the hundredth misdeed would not go unpunished. Shishupal committed his hundredth offence. He accused Yudhishtir for partiality towards Krishna for having conferred on the latter the status of chief guest during the Rajsuya Yajna, even though Krishna was neither a king nor a *kshatriya* by upbringing. Raged with this offence Krishna beheaded him with his sudarshanchakra. It is said that at the moment of his death a flame from his heart mingled with a flame in the heart of Krishna. This miracle is cited as an example of devotion through affront or opposition. The divine Sudarshanchakra had to be aimed at him. Krishna himself had to fight. There was no other way out for him but to let Shishupal be absorbed into him. In this context Shishupal is more important and equally great to Krishna, therefore, Bendre wants to call himself Shishupal rather Kalyavan. He deliberately declares the battle with God by following the path of Ashwaratha. Thus he does the sin by making the illegitimate relation with his daughter he wants to be absorbed into the God Almighty like Shishupal.

Meera is so much haunted by his argument, that she approaches him and expresses her desire to marry him (who was already a married person). "ml a tizaxl l Gn krayc. Aahē papat ml a j ; th j ayc. Aahē pap ha matlca 2mR ASLyan. tU 2maBha`. Vaagl a Aahs" (53). She wishes to get buried in the so called 'sin'. In her opinion SIN is the religion of soil. God in fact, is an inelegant entity and therefore we should not follow the path from darkness to light which is unnatural. Once we accept this natural position we shall not make difference between happiness and sorrow, moral and immoral, good or bad. Whatever comes across in our way, we should simply bear it. As Ashwaratha never feels unhappy with his punishment and never wants to stop it, and never wants salvation, but prefers to remain as it is forever, Meera feels the same. She thinks, in fact man has only one dominant basic urge, that of sex. Due to such revolutionary thoughts, she has been outcaste by the people, along with Bendre. She feels very happy and regards it as her special individual identity. Compared to traditional social norms it is an absolute sign of her existence. As Ashwaratha prefers to be alone, Bendre also shuts the door and locks himself from inside saying, "Aata mlc ml a va; It 3akth 6dō" (51). Meera chooses both, Bendre and Ashwaratha; therefore, she has also been derelict by the colony. Like Ashwaratha, Meera prefers to live a lonely and deserted life as she says-

ml ahl ca; ln. va; lt 3akl | TyaCyā dʒln. p4m ml naSl d l, w/3 Aai`  
 Mh`th ntr nsl d l | Aata ml a AiStIvc nVht. TyaCyā sdwaŋ | / p`  
 AS. va; lt 3akl. Ja`. ittks. wypd nVht | ] l 3 mo#l imj axlcl ch  
 ml wogt hotp ml a Ok3p`a kivtsarq. AaSvadta dā hot | | | Tya  
 svaŋl ml a va{3 #rvth 4orp`ac inixct maZya pdrl 3akl a hota | p`  
 Tyamu. maZya AiStIvac l t l(` qth p3t hotl | (56)

In the fifteenth canto of the *Gita*, Krishna describes his existence in every living organism as the sacred fire, *Vaishwanar*. The fire in the ancient forest of Khandavavan, on the contrary, is a negative life-devouring form of fire. After mortal attacks of people on Bendre, Meera's opting to stay with him is disapproved by the people of the Dark Sun. In this context, the protagonist asks if the fire will consume her too and be appeased by the offering.

Desai uses this myth of Ashwaratha to explore the rebellious nature of Meera. Like Ashwaratha she rejects traditional beliefs such as sin and virtue, sacred and profane, good and bad, because these things are nothing for her. For the first time she experiences the pre-marital sexual intercourse with her cousin, Avinash without any moral consideration. This act comes as a shock to the readers as it is against the Hindu's way of leading life. From this incident her father deliberately avoids to speak with her, even on his death bed he does not allow her to see him. Later on she asks the boycotted bender to marry with her and lives with him till his death. After Bendre's death she develops the sexual relationship with Mr. Washinde an accountant in Viranchi post-office, though he is quite an ugly and shapeless person and has been abandoned by his father in his childhood. Due to a hunch on his neck, he is supposed to be an ugly and sinful person. This causes a boycott of the society on him; nonetheless, Meera gets satisfaction with his company.

In the Indian context to live alone in the society, without marriage, is not quite fair thing, such woman is always considered as bad and sinful. But Meera prefers to live alone instead to live with her maternal aunt. Even, she gossips with the painter and poet at the late nights, and sometimes drinks with them. It is her rebellious nature that she goes against the social paradigms. When her mother dies no one comes to her help but Shiva, for the cremation of the body. With his help she does complete funeral process. In fact, according to the Hindu religion cremation process must be done by a son, but here Meera does it alone, which in itself is a progressive act or act of deliberate rebel.

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At the end of the novel, Meera decides to desecrate the temple- Possibly, that is her lifetime achievement. It has a blot on the city and decides to make the city free of this stigma. If the outcome a bad act is good, let us do a sinful act which be converted into good fortune. In the Mahabharata, after the war was won by the Pandavas they went to pay their respects to their blind uncle, King Dhrutarashtra. Dhrutarashtra, who hated Bhim, was led to an iron statue of Bhima. By way of an embrace, he shattered the statue and injured himself badly. Here, in the novel, the protagonist, out to destroy the temple, which represented the patriarchal binary episteme, is prepared to embrace the consequences of her action. Thus, Kamal Desai re-contextualises the ancient myths in the novel and goes to unknotting the different types of human threads to prove that human existence is nothing but an empty ship in the stormy world.

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**Problematics of Representation in Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*****\* Dr. Umed Singh**

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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to examine the problematic of representation in Adiga's *The White Tiger* which has been criticized for its alleged misrepresentation of India. Adiga portrays India in a way which challenges the official version made available to the people through Govt. propaganda via print and electronic media. The novelist presents a true and detailed account of contemporary Indian society through various characters, events, anecdotes, representational devices which form the narrative of the novel. He presents India from a perspective which may not be the perspective shared by every reader. He is looking at the "real world" from some angle, with some experience and expectation and the readers are at liberty to endorse or discredit the portrayal of India in the novel. Using irony as a principle of structure, the novelist offers a critique of some of the contemporary problems of Indian society.

**Keywords:** *Uneven development, Mis-governance, Corruption, Violence, Globalization*

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Indian English novel has developed as a distinct genre after its gradual progression from various stages—from imitative, realistic, and psychological to the experimental stages. The genre as we find it today has been universally acknowledged for its variety, richness and its gradual maturity. In the thirties the "Big Three" of Indian Writing in English started writing fiction in English and they inevitably portrayed the village life and the revolutionary fervour of pre-partition days. They had to grapple with the problem of 'medium', the medium of writing in an alien language which would not render Indian sensibility so easily. The Gandhian philosophy, consciously or unconsciously entered the creative writing of this phase of Indian English literature. The excellent novels like Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) are a testimony to this fact.

In 1950s, Indian novelists' interest moved from the public to private sphere. They began to delineate in their works the individual's quest for the self in all varied complex forms along with his problems. In their eagerness to find

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new themes related to human psyche and other issues related to 'self', they deliberately kept the larger social/public issues out of focus in their writings.

Novelists like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Nayantara Sahgal changed through their works the face of Indian English novel and enriched it further both in quality and quantity. The publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* in 1981 gave international recognition to both Indian English writers and Indian English fiction. Thereafter came more writings especially fiction which was quite rich in terms of quality, content, and craftsmanship. Arundhati Roy won Booker's prize in 1997 for her brilliant Novel *The God of Small Things* and Arvind Adiga bagged the prestigious the 2008 Man Booker prize for his *The White Tiger*.

This paper attempts to examine the problematic of representation in Adiga's *The White Tiger* which has been criticized for its alleged misrepresentation of India. Adiga portrays India in a way which challenges the official version made available to the people through Govt. propaganda via print and electronic media. The novelist presents a true account of contemporary Indian society through various characters, events, anecdotes, representational devices which form the narrative of the novel. He presents India from a perspective which may not be the perspective shared by every reader. He is looking at the "real world" from some angle, with some experience and expectation and the readers are at liberty to endorse or discredit the portrayal of India in the novel. Adiga chooses Laxmangarh, Gaya, Dhanbad, Delhi and Bangluru as the locale of his novel and keeps on changing the focal point of his narrative from rural India to semi-rural and then to metropolitan cities of Delhi and Bengluru. Written in an epistolary form, the narrative encompasses almost every aspect of Indian life: back-breaking poverty of the poor and the opulence of the rich, pollution, malnutrition, black money and white people, illiteracy, unemployment, road accidents and jail proxy, illegal mining which reminds us of the latest mining scam in Karnataka and infamous Coalgate Scam, caste and culture conflict, superstition, dowry practice, economic disparity and uneven development, Zamindari system, exploitation of marginal farmers and landless labourers, rise of Naxalism, corrupt and unproductive education system, poor health services, tax evading racket, master-servant relationship, flesh trade, crumbling family structure, the working of BPOs and entrepreneurial success and its fallout etc. Some critics object to the negative

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picture of India portrayed by the novelist who, they argue, misrepresents India and leaves out the progress and the progressive aspects of Indian society in order to sell better the poverty and corruption of our country to the western world. The popular perception and the commonly held view is that Indian poverty and illiteracy are exotic things for the western mind and these sell dearly in the international market. The elite society and politicians are obviously annoyed with Adiga because all the ills and evils of the society are attributed to them and worst of all the murderer "from the darkness remains untraced and uncaught due to a small offering of [my] gratitude to the police"(300). The rich have been portrayed as parasites who feed on the labour and work done by the poor. The novelist's pro-poor sympathies are very evident as he speaks many revolutionary ideas through Balram, the narrator. The ironic tone clearly suggests Adiga's 'commitment' to the welfare of the poor and downtrodden who create wealth for the nation by working in inhuman conditions. The farmer, the miner, the petty shopkeepers, labourers,-- all work hard and earn wealth not for themselves but for the elite and dominant class including most of our corrupt ministers, MLAs and MPs, bureaucrats and industrialists who consume "without producing". In the Orwellian sense, "He [the rich] sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself (Orwell 9). If any part of India shines, and it shines brilliantly in metropolitan cities, it is because of the wealth created by the ill-paid and under-fed labours and weavers, vendors, milkmen and underpaid farmers who live in poverty and but ceaselessly earn wealth for the nation. Their labour is lost as somebody is stealing it and stashing it "in a small, beautiful country in Europe full of white people and black money(79-80). In her amazing book *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* Arundhati Roy rightly observes: "India does not live in her villages. India dies in her villages. India gets kicked around in her villages. India lives in her cities. India's villages live only to serve her cities" (Roy 70-71).

In *The white Tiger* Adiga presents a contrasting picture of India neatly cut into two worlds: the India of darkness and the India of light. The riches of a few are sharply contrasted with animal-like existence of the majority of people who live in perpetual poverty, helplessness, hopelessness, and misery. Hardly anything escapes from the penetrating eyes of Adiga who toured India as a journalist of the prestigious magazine *Time*. The critics and commentators differ

in their assessment of Adiga's portrayal/ representation of India in *The White Tiger*. In critics' opinion Adiga is exaggerating corruption, hypocrisy, and other negative aspects of Indian life and intentionally underestimates India's noticeable growth in the fields of space science, economics and telecommunication. But India as portrayed in the novel is not shining for majority of its people. The majority of population lives without basic amenities of life. Adiga notes it in his inimitable style:

Electricity poles – defunct.

Water tap- broken.

Children – too lean and short for their age, and with over- sized heads from which vivid eyes shine, like the guilty conscience of the government of India (20).

There is no doubt about the fact that the country is progressing on economic front but the fruits of this development and growth are not fairly distributed among different sections of society. The Human Development Report 2013 released by United Nations Developmental Programme (UNDP) clearly indicates the dismal picture and dangerous consequences of inequality and uneven development in third world countries including India.

Unless people can participate meaningfully in the events and processes that shape their lives, national human development paths will be neither desirable nor sustainable. People should be able to influence policymaking and results—and young people in particular should be able to look forward to greater economic opportunities and political participation and accountability. Dissatisfaction is increasingly high in both the North and the South as people call for more opportunities to voice their concerns and influence policy in order to ensure basic social protection and social progress. Among the most active protesters are young people. In part this is a response to limited employment opportunities for educated young people. History is replete with popular rebellions against unresponsive governments. (Human Development Report 2013 P-6)

It appears that there is no difference between India as portrayed by Adiga in *The White Tiger* and the real India we see on day- to- day basis. It is evident in the following description that details the criminalization of Indian politics:

You see, a total of ninety-three criminal cases—for murder, rape, grand larceny, gun-smuggling, pimping, and many other such minor offences—are pending against the great Socialist and his ministers at the present moment. Not easy to get convictions when the judges are judging in Darkness, yet three convictions have been delivered, and three of the ministers are currently in jail, but continue to be ministers (79-80).

Politics has become a haven for criminals who can easily circumvent law if there is a loud noise about their criminal activities. Today criminalization of politics is major issue which seriously undermines the spirit of democracy in our country and which is a major reason for mis-governance which largely accounts for corruption and other afflictions which ails Indian polity. Adiga does not hide this ugly aspect of Indian polity and portrays a realistic picture of corruption and criminalization in body-politic of Indian democracy. The poverty and lack of hygiene of the urban poor who live in juggis has been graphically portrayed. The description may sound vulgar to the urbanite but it is a true picture of filth and squalor with which the urban poor live. It is the most common and conspicuous sight in Indian cities:

The men were defecating in the open like a defensive wall in front of the slum: making a line that no respectable human should cross. The wind wafted the stench of fresh shit towards me.

I found a gap in the line of the defecators. They squatted there like stone statues.

These people were building homes for the rich, but they lived in tents covered with blue tarpaulin sheets, and partitioned into lanes by lines of sewage (260).

The very idea of a driver slitting the throat of his master is seen by the rich as an act of subversion. The plot of *The white Tiger* is simple and shows the rags-to riches story of the protagonist who slits his master throat and decamps with money “that ultimately changed the half-baked person from a hunted criminal into a solid pillar of Bangalorean society”(290). This act of

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premeditated murder raises ethical and existential questions. The murder is most foul as Balram bites the hand that feeds and after the crime he not only gets away from it but also justifies it as an existential act. With crime thriller plot, the story unfolds through the letters of Balram addressed to the Chinese Premier Jiabao. The narrative unfolds layer after layer and the reader gets the bitter taste of all the afflictions most of the Indians live with. What is remarkable about Adiga's narrative is that it instantly transports the reader to the real-life situations in real India. Note the following:

Go to a tea shop anywhere along the Ganga, sir, and look at the men working in that tea shop – men, I say, but better to call them human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties or fifties but still 'boys'. But that is your fate if you do your job well – with honesty, dedication, and sincerity, the way Gandhi would have done it, no doubt. (51)

No doubt Adiga chooses stereotyped themes like poverty, inequality and corruption, and initially the reader finds it stale and outdated as these clichéd themes have stopped moving the reader. But the reading of the novel assumes more importance in the context of globalization and other economic forces which are increasingly impacting the lives of millions of people living in India and other third world countries. The novel realistically details the ineffective system and the poor quality governance at all levels of society. Our efforts to combat poverty, illiteracy and inequality have proved futile in the sense that majority of our population, even after 67 years of independence, lives ignoble life without the basic and bare amenities. The post-90s phase of liberalisation has created immense wealth and now cinema halls have been replaced with multiplexes, and traditional bazaars with shopping malls. One can easily note the mushroom growth of more branded cloth shops, wine shops selling foreign liquor, the Chinese toys shops, foreign university campuses, international automobile companies and many other consumable goods marketed by MNCs. All restrictions on the trade of foreign companies have been lifted.

The entry of Wall Mart in Indian market is our latest gesture of generosity towards foreign trade and investment. Balram, the protagonist of the

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novel, finds himself in an alien land when his employer Ashok takes him to Delhi. The tall multi-storey buildings, malls, multiplexes, smooth and wide roads, five star hotels, casinos, beautiful brown haired prostitutes from foreign countries and everything is available for a price which only a few individuals can afford. Adiga presents two India in the narrative: "Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness" (14). The affluent live in posh colonies and enjoy the world class facilities and the poor perpetually remain dispossessed and deprived. The world is neatly divided into separate categories, one thriving at the cost of the other.

There is no doubt about the fact that globalization has created wealth and economies, and improved living standards and quality of life of people in some parts of the world. The sense of isolation, as was earlier experienced by the isolated countries, has now been replaced with connectedness. The technological advancements in communication, transport, industry, space and agriculture are easily and speedily exchanged among, men, institutions and nations. It is important to note here that corporate globalization operates mainly through three international institutions: the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. The IMF and the WB were created immediately after the World War II as "a part of a concerted effort to finance the rebuilding of Europe after the devastation of World War II and to save the world from future economic depression" (Stiglitz 11). The IMF is an international institution that reports neither to men and nations whose money finances its working nor to those whose life and destiny it affects. It is accountable to the ministries of finance and the central banks of governments of the world which control its working on the basis of an intriguing pattern of voting that takes into account the economic strength of nations at the end of W.W II. "There have been some minor adjustments since, but the major developed countries run the show, with only one country, the United States, having effective veto" (ibid 12). The WTO has been constantly pressuring the developing countries to curtail subsidy in agriculture sector. Very recently during the Ninth Ministerial Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia, in the first week of December 2013, the key players adopted tough stand against liberal policies of the developing countries for providing food security to the poor population. Arundhati Roy has similar views about these global institutions:

For all the endless chatter about democracy, today the world is run by three of the most secretive institutions in the world: the

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International Monetary Fund; the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, all three of which, in turn, are dominated by the United States. Their decisions are made in secret. The people who head them are appointed behind closed doors. Nobody really knows anything about them, their policies, their belief, their intentions. Nobody elected them. Nobody said they could make decisions on their behalf. A world run by a handful of greedy bankers and CEOs whom nobody elected can't possibly last (Roy, 2005:43-44)

Written in a realist mode the novelist uses different representational devices to expose the oppressive power structures which deprive the majority of people of all benefits of science, technology, and the growth of economy and democratic intuitions. The country takes pride in the empowerment of a few women in politics, banking sector, sports and civil administration but these few iconic women—Sonia Gandhi, Mayawati, Jai Lalitha, Mamta Banerjee, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, Kiran Bedi, Chanda Kochar and a few more -- do not represent the majority of women who remain uneducated, unemployed and uninformed throughout their life and face discrimination and humiliation at every step and stage of their life. Various welfare schemes, introduced by the Govt. from time to time, in the name of Women Education, Food Security Act, Health Insurance Scheme, Kisan Credit Card, Employment Guarantee Schemes and other pre-poll sops hardly serve any purpose due to the poor implementation of Govt. Programmes and the poor and inefficient system of governance. Most of the schemes are poll gimmicks which do more harm than good. These create false consciousness and hide from public view the unequal relations of production. These present distorted images of reality and people are made to believe partial truths as whole truths. The entire game "implicitly or explicitly [supports] the interests of the dominant groups who socially, politically, economically and culturally benefit from the economic organization of society" (Storey 4). People do not need free laptop, free cycle, free mobile phone, or free electricity, instead they need a sensitive political system which can understand the aspirations of the people, take care of quality education and upbringing of our children, and which can provide more free and fair opportunities of jobs for the youth. A country with rich human resources, which takes pride in its rich heritage,

glorious past and its technological advancement esp. in the area of space science, maintains two parallel systems: one for the rich and the other for the poor.

The poor men's children go to Govt. schools, the rich men's children have many options from Public Schools to DPS, Doon schools and foreign institutions; the poor when they fall sick, go to the doctorless government hospitals, the rich go to the best corporate hospitals; the rich travel in chauffeur-driven car, the poor waste the whole day waiting for a bus maintained by the public transportation system. This disparity is most conspicuous in education and health sectors which are run most inefficiently and run with public money or taxpayer's money. The standards of school, college and the university education vary and depend on the class that these institutions cater to. With the introduction of RTE Bill free and compulsory education has been promised to the poor and underprivileged. The conditions in which most of the schools in rural areas function are deplorably and hopelessly poor. The school teachers are more worried about the Mid-day Meals, census work and preparing list of BPL families and old age pensioners. One can easily understand the causes of poor quality of education in Govt-run schools which produce half baked persons like Balram Halwai, the protagonist of the novel. The result is that now India has a large army of unemployable youth. Our best brain trained in good institutions serve other countries. The half-baked persons like Balram remain engaged in the Rooster Coop and there is no way to break this coop. All opportunities are foreclosed. Adiga aptly argues: "These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat –or get eaten up" (64). Amartya Sen in his *The Argumentative India* aptly remarks:

Nehru's hope of overcoming class divisions in the economic, social and political progress of the country remains largely unfulfilled. The barriers to progress come not only from old dividing lines, but also from new ones. Sometimes the very institutions that were created to overcome disparities and barriers have tended to act as reactionary influences in reinforcing inequalities. There are many examples of such 'friendly fires', of which I have discussed two particular cases.

A major difficulty lies in the weak institutional structure of primary schools in much of India, which are often run inefficiently

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(Sen 216). ...Effective elementary education has in practice ceased to be free in substantial parts of the country, which of course is a violation of a basic right. All this seems to be reinforced by a sharp class division between teachers and the poorer families. (ibid, 217)

The only option available with the poor is to live in poverty and despair and when they cannot bear any more of it, they commit suicide or they kill someone they can lay their hands on. Balram kills Ashok because he had no choice and that is why he justifies it as an existential act and as Sartre argues "there is no reality except in action". He gains his essence through individual choices and actions. Balram asserts his identity and existence though the act of killing. The causes of the growing culture of violence and intolerance are not difficult to understand as the resources of the country are not fairly and justly distributed among the people. The corruption is inherently political and unequal power distribution between different sections of society lies at the root of it. As a result marginalized sections of society feel alienated from the mainstream society and politics and the gap "between those who make the decisions and those who have to suffer them" (Roy, 2005: 81) keeps widening. This gives rise to the mood of cynicism which breeds unending cycle of violence and hatred. Now violence has become a national menace where underprivileged sections of society take recourse to violence in order to get their voice heard. The killing of police and military and CRPF personals and more recently the brutal massacre of Congress leaders by the *Naxals* in Chhattisgarh is clear indication of disconnect between the peripheral and main stream population. Our Govt. appears helpless in the face of such conflicts where one section of our society is pitied against the other

A careful analysis of various representational devices, used by the novelist, points towards the fact that Adiga is neither misrepresenting India nor its corruption, maladministration and poverty. The use of letters (epistolary form) as narrative technique gives an edge to the narrator who gives a detailed account of society, its practices, the working of its institutions, and its problems. The symbols and imagery used by the novelist are perfectly in tune with tone and the tenor of the narrative. Animal imagery has been extensively used in the description of characters both from 'darkness' and 'light'.



My whole life I have been treated like donkey. All I want is that one son of mine –at least- should live like a man (30).

The narrative is replete with animal imagery which suggests the meaningless and animal-like existence of the majority of population: Lizard, mosquitoes, tiger, monkeys, dogs, cockroaches, the white tiger, zoo and many other images from the animal world have been used to comment on human affairs. For example, the landlords are given animal names: “the Wild Boar, the Raven, the Stork the Buffalo. All four animals lived in High-walled mansions just outside Laxman Garh—the landlord’s quarters.” (25)

Adiga uses irony as a principle of structure and as one of the representational devices to highlight the difference between the ‘India of darkness’ and ‘India of light’. The following illustrations show Adiga’s ingenuity in the use of irony as a trope. The truth thus conveyed is realistically true and artistically probable.

- i) There – I’m revealing the secret to a successful escape. The police searched for me in darkness: but I hid myself in light (118).
- ii) Around six o’clock that day, as the government ledger no doubt accurately reported, my father was permanently cured of his tuberculosis (50).
- iii) Like eunuchs discussing the Kama Sutra, the voters discuss the elections in Laxmangarh.(98)

There is no way to get the ‘real world’ into a work of fiction except through language, and other representational devices like symbols, similes and metaphors. The symbols used by Adiga adequately present to the reader the worldview which he wants to convey. The characters are symbols who represent the whole class to which they belong. One of the notable symbols is the symbol of Rooster Coop which accurately defines and describes the helplessness and despair of the poor and dispossessed.

The greatest thing to come out of this country in the ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop....Go to Old Delhi, behind the Jama Masjid, and look at the way they keep chickens there in the market. Hundreds of pale hens and brightly coloured roosters,

stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space; the whole cage giving off a horrible stench – the stench of terrified, feathered flesh. On the wooden desk above this coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped-up chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop.

The very same thing is done with human beings in this country....

Or you wouldn't need the Communist Party to shoot people and a secret police to raid their houses at night and put them in jail like I've heard you have over there. Here in India we have no dictatorship. No secret police. That's because we have the coop. (173-74).

Chandelier is another potent symbol in the novel that signifies the need of light to illumine the dark area. And the novelist makes repeated use of this symbol.

The novelist shows that colonial conditions and colonial relations exist in the country with the only difference that there are native colonisers who colonise their own people more systematically, more legitimately and more frequently. They are more ruthless in oppressing the poor because there is no fear of the 1857- like mutiny. The same people get elected term after term in the State Legislature and Parliament. They get popular mandate to colonise their own people for next five years. The way most of our ministers and public representatives conduct themselves in public and flaunt their muscle and money power and the power of Red bacon atop their official vehicle followed by a contingent of Escort vehicles with sirens carrying Security forces would belittle or put to shame the imperial show of strength by the Britishers during the Raj. That is why there is a noticeable disconnect between the rich and the poor, between the people and the people in power. And there is a noticeable gap between what they have and what 'India of darkness' does not have: As Fanon observes:

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The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly is always full of good things, the settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners. The town belonging to the colonized people or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, people by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there; it matters not where, nor how. It is world without spaciousness; men live on top of each other. The native town is hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light.... The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dream of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife, if possible (Fanon<sup>30</sup>).

One can easily understand the mind and mentality of the perpetually exploited people who long for a life of comfort as 'they' have in 'India of light'. Balram represents those uncountable Indians who remain without a name and exact date of birth. They get a name and a date of birth when they get enrolled in a school during some special drive for the implementation of Right of Children to *Free and Compulsory Education Act* /RTE. Balram represents those uncountable faces, 'muna', 'chotu', 'chutku' whom we encounter on tea shops and road-side dahba all over India. Child Labour Law appears too small before their superhuman struggle for existence.

When Balram is in Delhi with his master Ashok, he finds that there are many people like his master who enjoy the best things of the world. He tries to mimic, perhaps unconsciously appropriating Bhaba's concept of mimicry, his master in every possible manner. Balram wants to taste the same whisky that his master drinks, shops at the same mall where the master shops, sleeps with brown haired blonde as his master does. It is here that Balram finds some space for subversive resistance. Balram is constantly reminded of his mother's death, his father death in a Govt. doctorless hospital, his brother's wasted life. One can easily note he disconnect between the neo-coloniser and the neo-colonised. They live side by side but they do not understand each other as they exist at different existential plane.

To have a madman with thoughts of blood and theft in his head, sitting just ten inches in front of you, and not to know it. Not to have a hint, even. What blindness you people are capable of. Here you are, sitting in glass buildings and talking on the phone night after night to Americans who are thousands of miles away, but you don't have the faintest idea what's happening to the man who's driving your car!(257)

Though cast in the mould of a crime thriller *The White Tiger* is a consciousness raising novel that brings to the fore some of the disturbing facts about contemporary society: the problem of misgovernance, our inability to use our vast human and natural resources, our inability to combat corruption in all walks of life, our inability to build a democratic culture, our inability to enforce discipline in public institutions like education, health, transport to name only a few, our inability to choose honest and dedicated leaders for governance from local panchayat to the Parliament, absence of democratic spirit in our democratic institutions, our inability to build a just and egalitarian society. The present system of governance has promoted indiscipline, corruption, casteism, regionalism, and religious fundamentalism, and the culture of violence and intolerance. The incidents of violence and the growing civil unrest and insurgency in various parts of the country are mainly due the lack of vision and foresight in the policy makers of our country and inefficient system manned by corrupt political leaders and bureaucrats. As a creative writer Adiga does offer any solution to any of these problems but he underlines the need for radical transformations not only of the *structure of government* but of the whole polity. The novelist does not in any sense glorify the act of violence of a half-baked person Balram. The rooster coop of poverty and helplessness traps many millions of men and women effectively and induces in them the feeling of anxiety, despair, anguish and forlornness. There is an urgent need to break this rooster coop by quality education and quality and participatory governance and to understand and address the contradictions of our contemporary society. The contradictions as underlined by B.R Ambedkar are very serious and demand immediate attention of those who make decisions and whose decisions impact the life of millions of people.

How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and  
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economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has laboriously built up. (Quoted by Yechury in HT June 04, 2011)

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## Orality and Feminism: A Study of Indian Oral Traditions

\*Dr. Ravi Bhushan

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### Abstract

India's culture which is more than 5000 year old has been transmitted orally for several thousand years. The two major epics that shaped the Indian sensibility, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, were preserved and spread as oral epics. Bhakti movement (5-18 Century) was one of the long lasting movements of India that has significantly contributed to the propagation and preservation of Indian culture. The phonocentrism of the Indian mind was perhaps the result as well as the reinforcing factor of the orality of Indian culture. Though the contemporary discourse asks the modern world to improve the status of women but Indian women of Vedic lore; Gargi, Maitreyi Avvaiyay, Karaikkal Ammaiars, Andals, Akka Mahadevi, Meera, Lal Ded etc had enjoyed high status. The West had classified women as the weaker sex, thus, gender conflicts inhered in the Western traditions. But such gender hostility has no philosophic source or traditional roots in India. In India, from ancient times, female divinity has equated women with power and, God as confluence of man and woman (*Ardhanareshwer*). Though the liberation of women is a concept that gathered force in the latter half of the twentieth century, India has a much earlier history and tradition of intellectually emancipated women during the Vedic period. There were Vedic women like *Ghosha*, *Vach*, *Lopamudra*, *Maitreye*, *Sulabha*, *Apala*, *Vishwavara* and others, who were free to pursue scholarly studies. Even the Bhakti movement gave the golden opportunity to learned women in expressing their feminist writings. The paradigm of 'rights sans traditional duties' has disrupted the family system. Any ancient Indian text is unanimous on the householder's responsibility to elders, infirm, unemployed and even unsupported strangers. Feminism or women's liberation is a term that escapes clear definition, as it depends on the individual, one's culture, the place one belongs to, and how far one is able to practice one's feminist ideals.

But unfortunately contemporary Indian women do not internalize these profound ideas. It tends to copy the Western thoughts that have no philosophic or social comparability or compatibility with the Indian values. My paper would attempt to understand feminism in the comparativist mode of Indian oral traditions.

**Key Words:** Orality, Vedic Indian Women, Feminism.

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## Introduction

Indian culture has been transmitted orally for several thousand years. The two major epics that shaped the Indian sensibility, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, were preserved and spread as oral epics. The stories in the *Kathasaritasagara* and the *Jathaka* are structured for oral rendering by wandering minstrels. Vedic chanting is the world's oldest oral tradition. The famous 8<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Kumarila Bhatta says, "Knowledge of the *Veda* is useless, if it has been acquired from writing". The sole purpose of the Vedic mantras is to be recited because sound is a key parameter of oral transmission. Even the stories in *Puranas* have come to us orally.

The phonocentrism of the Indian mind was perhaps the result as well as the reinforcing factor of the orality of Indian culture. Even when an oral culture gets written down, it continues to be oral – texts such as *Mahabharata* that remain recitative performative texts even when rendered in different languages. Bhalchandra Nemade notes in his book *Nativism* (2009) "for centuries we have been accustomed to literature primarily as an oral manifestation of language and our rural literature has meant only the spoken word. No language is primitive in any sense and the spoken norm is not in any sense underdeveloped. He notes that of the 1952 distinct languages spoken in our country, not more than 24 can be associated with the written culture. Even in these so called 'recognized' literary languages, only a very marginal population has had a hand in their written literatures. In fact nearly all our literature was purely oral manuscripts that were interpreted by some body to a gathering of expectant listeners".

## Bhakti Movement

Bhakti movement was one of the long lasting movements of India that started virtually in 05<sup>th</sup>-06<sup>th</sup> Century and lasted until 18<sup>th</sup> Century; it spread across India from North, East, West and South. Andal ( 08<sup>th</sup> Century) and Alvars ( 06 -09<sup>th</sup> Centuries) of Tamilnadu, Jayadeva (12<sup>th</sup> Century) of Orissa, Lal Ded (1320-1392 CE) of Kashmir, **Narsinh Mehta** (1414-1481 CE) of Gujarat, Srimanta Sankardev (1449-1568 CE) of Assam, Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) of Punjab and Meerabai (1498-1557 CE) of Rajasthan are some of the distinguished poets of Bhakti movement. They created devotional literature in vernacular poetry in the ethnic oral languages of their communities.



### **Feminism in the Past**

While talking about emancipation and empowerment of women in modern times we forget the high status enjoyed by women like Gargi, Maitreyi, Avvaiyay, Karaikkal Ammaiyar, Andal, Akka Mahadevi, Meera, and Lal Ded in Vedic times. The tradition of *Brahmavadinis* (women celibates pursuing intellectual studies for life) existed in ancient India. These great women have not only played a big role in molding our culture, civilization, arts, religion, but also handled statecraft from the time of Draupadi to Chola Royal women, from Rani Padmini, Rani Jhansi and many others, something which no other society in the world can possibly claim.

Feminist scholars have proved that Vedic traditions enabled Indian women to participate in public domain, contrary to the traditions in the West. Jane Freedman says that the Western political culture did not offer women any positive model of female power, in fact excluded women from the political field. Stephanie Tawa Lama in her essay, 'The Hindu Goddess and Women's Political Representation in South Asia: Symbolic Resource or Feminine Mystique?' studied the impact of the Hindu Goddess (figure of feminine power) on the political role of women in India. She observes that the Indian freedom movement was driven by the symbol of 'Mother India' which singularly inspired the freedom fighters to undertake high sacrifices.

### **Gender Hostility**

The Swiss women got voting rights in 1972- after Indira Gandhi had already ruled India for a full six years as its most powerful Prime Minister. American women got franchise rights only in 1924 and the British women two years later. Thus, gender conflicts have been innate to the Western traditions whereas such gender hostility has no philosophic source or traditional roots in India. Since ancient times women in India have been symbol of power. God as confluence of man and woman (*Ardhanareswara*) symbolizes gender harmony. The Vedic pantheon consisted of female gods viz. *Durga* (goddess of power), *Lakshmi* (goddess of wealth), *Saraswati* (goddess of wisdom), *Kali* (goddess of destruction) and *Prithvi* (goddess of earth) which indicates matrilineal family organization. The ultimate reality (*Brahman*) which transcended all forms of life is gender neutral.

## Patriarchy

During the ancient Vedic period, there were equal rights between men and women; but the later Vedic period polarized the sexes. The desire for equality with men on the social and political fronts took the form of an organised movement in the West. Gerda Lerner in her book *The Creation of Patriarchy* says "It (feminism) is not always a movement, for it can be a level of consciousness, a stance, an attitude, as well as the basis for organized effort "(237). The feminist consciousness is a consciousness of victimization by the dominating males of the society which leads to women's subordinate status and their consequent oppression.

## Vedic Period

Though the liberation of women is a concept that gathered force in the latter half of the twentieth century, India has a much earlier history and tradition of intellectually emancipated women during the Vedic period. There were Vedic women like Ghosha, Vach, Lopamudra, Maitreye, Sulabha, Vach, Apala, Vishwavara and others, who were free to pursue scholarly studies. Besides their intellectual and spiritual pursuits, they were actively involved in administration, finance, agriculture and crafts. A girl had the freedom of either marrying or staying single. She could choose her sexual partner. Men treated her with equality and respect.

Kanwar Dinesh Singh in his book *Feminism and Post feminism: The Context of Modern Indian Women Poets' Writing* writes that the pre-Vedic and Vedic ages, women enjoyed considerably high status and freedom of thought and expression. They used to participate in *yajnas* (religious performances). Great Indian Women like Kaikeyi and Vishalaya used to accompany their husbands to battlefields. The feminine sensibility was well expressed by the women of Vedic age. Apala in her prayer to Lord Indra says, "make these three places sprout, O, Indra; my daddy's head and field and this part of me below my waist". Ghosa's mantra about women's marital life and social status finds place in the 30<sup>th</sup> & 40<sup>th</sup> *sukta* of the 10<sup>th</sup> *mandala* (division of *Rigveda*). The *shakti-cult* of Vedic times is the manifestation of high esteem enjoyed by women. The right to select husband (*swamvara*), right to divorce, and widow marriage all indicate the freedom and high status enjoyed by women in Vedic times. Even the Bhakti movement gave the golden opportunity to learned women in expressing their feminist writings.

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A few such women like Mirabai, Janabai, Ratnawali, Indramati, Dayabai are remembered even today.

### **Present Status**

Thus the present concept of women's liberation is not a new one to an Indian who is familiar with ancient Indian history and tradition. The efforts to achieve women's emancipation can be seen as the effort of Indian women to win back their past glorious Vedic tradition of equality with men.

### **Awakening Feminist Consciousness**

Though in the West, feminists emphasize a separatist culture that avoids the influence of men; in India, feminist position does not include any negation of man, or the influence of men in the progressive strides taken by women. Men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who struggled for the abolition of *sati*, Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Keshav Chandra Sen, and a host of others clamored for reforms to put an end to the practice of child marriage, ill treatment of widows and ban on widow re-marriage. These men, while trying to remove such evil practices, were also involved in educating and raising the status of Indian women. M.K. Gandhi was a great supporter of women's liberation. He gave an impetus to his ideal of *stree-shakti* when he called upon all Indian women to come out of the confines of their homes and contribute their mite to the freedom struggle. This led to an awakening of a feminist consciousness.

### **Western Feminist Trends**

A feminist perspective requires us to have a brief overview of the major western feminist trends that have influenced the Indian women. Western critics have many varieties of feminist thought: Liberal, Marxist, Socialist, Radical, Psycho analytical, Existential and Post-modern feminism. There are also other categories of western feminism like individual feminism, relative feminism, cultural feminism, and lesbian separatism. The concept of feminism or women's liberation is never static. What was once considered as part of a radical stand in feminism may in course of time become a moderate view. So also, the type of feminism adopted by a particular group of people depends a lot on their socio-cultural and regional background, and the particular type of oppression that they have to face due to their culture and tradition as well as their geographical

locality. Going by these facts, we could possibly isolate a typical Indian variety of feminism that is an offshoot of the Indian cultural ethos and its past traditions.

The concept of feminism set forth in Simone De Beauvoir's *Second Sex* is existential and Gennaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* is individual that goes to radical extremes. In *Second Sex*, there is an implicit call by Simone De Beauvoir to woman to assert her autonomy in defining herself against men. Beauvoir considers marriage as harmful when taken as a career for women; motherhood also should not be imposed upon. Gainful employment is must for woman though a vote and a job will not guarantee her personal emancipation. Gennaine Greer, like Beauvoir objects to the idea of women being viewed as a stereotype of the 'Eternal Feminine'. She feels that such a passive woman is sexless, castrated, a eunuch. She traces the source of oppression to the nuclear family that makes great demands on women. Greer's emphasis is on liberating the sexuality of women. The chief means of liberating women is to replace compulsive and compelled behaviour by the pleasure principle. Existential feminists like Beauvoir exhort women to aim for transcendence in their daily activities rather than being satisfied as just 'the other' sex.

Cultural feminists argue that the body cannot be so separated from the mind, and that the body should not be seen as a physical limitation to thought. They also see that different people undergo different experiences; therefore all cannot agree on one objective truth. This insight has been termed by cultural feminists as 'stand point epistemology'. Thus different cultural traditions have different epistemological premises; different subgroups that are related to power positions within a society may have different insights about the same culture. Thus modern cultural feminist theory highlights the relation between social positioning, experience and understanding of the world. Another example of a post modernist is Nice Jardine who in her book *Gynesis* considers feminism as configurations of woman and modernity as a movement from the point of view of, by and for women.

### **Paradox of Freedom**

The 'rights sans traditional duties' paradigm has disrupted the family system. *The Dharma Sastra*, *Thirukkural* or any other ancient Indian text are unanimous on the householder's responsibility to elders, infirm, unemployed and even unsupported strangers. Relational feminists stress women's rights as

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terms of their child bearing and or nurturing capacities men, insisting on women's distinctive contributions to these roles. By contrast, individual feminist thought emphasizes more abstract concepts of individual human rights and celebrates the quest for personal independence, dismissing all socially defined roles. Feminism or women's liberation is a term that escapes clear definition, as it depends on the individual, one's culture, the place one belongs to, and how far one is able to practice one's feminist ideals.

### **Indian Feminism**

Indian feminism seems to follow a middle path that stands between the extreme radical feminist stance and the liberal, individual, socialist and cultural feminist stances. The paradigm of respect for women in India transcended and avoided the conflict prone gender rights paradigm. But the Western women, denied respect by tradition, repeatedly rebelled and fought for rights. This has resulted in the modern paradigm of rights without a sense of filial duties in the West and caused social disorientation. Here is its fallout: over 42% of the babies in the United States, 47% in the United Kingdom and almost 60% in Scandinavia are born to unwed mothers; almost half of them teenagers; more than half the marriages end in divorce in 10 years, as do two-thirds of the second and three-fourths of the third marriages; most families are run by a single parent. But unfortunately, contemporary Indian women intellectualism does not internalize the profound ideas propounded by the Vedic age. It tends to copy the Western thoughts that have no philosophic or social comparability or compatibility with the Indian.

### **Conclusion**

The Indian value system is the result of the carefully nurtured continuum of Indian womanhood. This is the biggest Indian intellectual and cultural idea for export to the West. Time has come for India to introspect on what it needs to import from the West and what it need not. Here comes the relevance of Swami Vivekananda who proclaimed that the barometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women. There is an urgent need to invoke and foster the type of feminism practiced by ancient Indian women.

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## Beyond the Classroom: Mobile Learning the Wider World

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### Abstract

Using mobile technologies, particularly mobile phones, for teacher professional development in developing economies is extremely rare. This article presents a case study of English in Action (EIA) and its use of mobile technologies that moves beyond documenting their functionality as ubiquitous handheld hardware to enhance and extend the reach of teaching and learning. It presents compelling evidence of an effective and innovative professional development intervention that simultaneously improves communicative English language teaching. We argue this small-scale intervention was significant in enhancing teachers' professional knowledge and presents important implications for using mobile phones in developing countries for teacher professional development and classroom-based English teaching and learning.

**Key words:** *English in Action (EIA), teacher professional development, Communicative Language Teaching, mobile phones.*

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### Introduction:

English in Action (EIA), a project designed to contribute to the professional development of English teachers by providing innovative practices of mobile learning. We have surveyed a number of teacher professional development initiatives that have transformed English language teaching. EIA aims to assist 5 government secondary schools of Gandhinagar (Gujarat) district for the improvement of English language skills. It leverages mobile technologies within a program of school-based teacher professional development to present new opportunities for teachers and pupils to acquire English to levels that enable them to participate in economic and social opportunities.

In this paper we describe EIA project which centers around targeted ICT-enhanced teachers' professional development and the introduction of a variety of audio resources, both through using handheld mobile technologies. We first surveyed availability of audio and video teacher professional development

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training resources and audio resources aligned with Gujarat Secondary Education Board language curriculum and textbooks used in government schools. We used low cost mobile phones audio classroom resources on secure digital (SD) cards. EIA has two stages approach to meet its primary objective of assisting 10 teachers and 50 pupils to improve their communicative English skills.

The first stage focused on development research and was carried out with 10 teachers and 50 pupils from government secondary schools of Gandhinagar district. The developmental research phase helped us determine the most effective, scalable and sustainable models of mobile learning for English language teachers and the most appropriate forms of mobile technology to support this. The research focused on three key areas:

1. The reach of the training provided (e.g the extent of training, tools and resources, and the numbers of teachers, pupils and schools participating), and the participants' perception and evaluation of that reach;
2. The classroom practice of teachers and pupils participating in the project: and
3. The English language competence of teachers and pupils in the project.

During the first phase, to better understand the unique context EIA also conducted survey to identify the contexts in which the project was beginning. This included: small scale examinations of teachers' classroom practice; teachers' and pupils' competence in speaking and listening in English; pupils' and communities' attitudes and motivations towards English language learning; the materials and training programs currently used in Secondary schools for teaching and learning English; and the communications technologies and power supplies used and/or available within schools and communities.

During the second phase we concentrated on the research completed in Phase I and take low cost model of teacher professional development and delivery of EIA's audio materials on mobile phones forward at scale.

We also surveyed available literature in this area. The real purpose of this review was to find out recent changes in this area as well as to understand the exact methodology of the study.

### **Review of literature:**

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Mobile technologies, particularly mobiles phones, for teachers' professional development and ELT teaching and learning are still an emerging field in developing countries. But studies, in developing and developed countries do offer evidence of mobile phones' impact across various global contexts in regards to the aforementioned fields as well as other area of development. The mobile devices are understood to be helpful in providing a good support to the learners to the extent of removing the feeling of isolation and lowering the rate of attrition (Simpson 2003). The text messaging (SMS) has been found to have particular and peculiar effects for counseling which has implications for the educators (Haxell 2008). Hendrikz (2006) has reported the use of mobile phones both for academic and administrative purposes. Some of the researchers from the third world countries consider mobile learning as the state of the art future educational solution for all despite a limitation of access to educational facilities and infrastructure (Abdullah and Siraj 2009) There are many remarkable case studies outside education that highlight the efficacy of mobile phones economic development in relation to microenterprises in Rwanda (Donner, 2007); Social innovations in health in Tanzania (Mulgan, 2006) and India (Biswas, 2009). Of key importance to EIA is leveraging the power of mobile phones, in similar ways, to provide effective teachers' professional development that concurrently improves teachers' English language fluency and communicative English language teaching practices to bring about increased student proficiency in communicative English. The literature review briefly outlines various global initiatives with mobile phones that provide a situating contextual background to EIA's ICT-enhanced program of school-based teacher professional development using mobile phones. We then argue how our use of mobile phones presents new opportunities for teachers and pupils to acquire English to levels that enable them to participate in economic and social opportunities.

In the Indian context, it is significant to mention the recent developments in mobile technologies. The growth of mobile phones in India has been phenomenal. Indian Telecom market is one of the fastest growing markets in the world. With its 562.21 million telephone connections as on December 31, 2009, it is the second largest network in the world after China and also the second largest wireless network in the world. About 15 million connections are being added every month (Annual Report 2009-2010). Research studies in India have

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shown that learners in various programmes have benefited by various forms of student support services. Fraunholz and Unnithan (2006) have carried out a preliminary research to assess the potential of m-learning in India. Significant collection of details on mobile technology use for health care has been provided by Singh et al (2010), who have indicated a list of key applications of mobile devices.

The above reviews attempted to achieve three goals: Assessing the overall effectiveness of uses of technology in language education; Exploring patterns of recent efforts in using mobile phones to improve language learning, and Identify effective ways to use mobile phones in education.

**(a) Mobile phones for development:**

Mobile phones offer increased opportunities by providing more choice in when, where and how teachers teach and how pupils learn. Largely, research on mobile phones in developing countries tends to provide anecdotal, rather than qualitative evidence of technologies' impact on teaching and learning.

EIA's videos and audio resources are designed to both provide professional development to teachers and help them and their pupils acquire English. The audio resources provide examples of near native speakers reading aloud part of the national textbook as well as additional dialogues, songs and poems directly related to primary textbooks' lessons.

EIA aims to design a program that goes beyond using mobile phones' functions for administrative purposes (student registration, attendance functions etc) and interactive purposes (e.g. self-quizzes and feedback systems). Rather it wants to build on and extend those aspects of the project that used mobile phones. SMS and video recording to create interactivity and provide teachers with the pedagogical knowledge needed to teach in more communicative ways with their students alongside and EIA's extensive range of corresponding print, visual, tactile and audio resources.

**(b) Mobile phones for teacher professional development**

Technology-enhanced teacher professional development on mobile phones in emerging economics, like India, is a promising field whose applications are context specify and largely absent from the literature. While not about teacher professional development in the developing world, Walton et al [52]

(2005) describe a project in the USA which explored the potential for mobile technologies to give health students in the community access to learning resources. Students in the study place great importance on accessing learning resource using mobile technologies, particularly PDAs, laptops, mobile phones and portable radios. Similarly, Kinsella (2009) describes open source software that allows large numbers of students to provide their lectures access to instant feedback via SMS on the material printed presented in lectures to give them more personalized input over the direction of the lecture or ask questions on content that was unclear. EIA understands the relevance of these studies and as a result has tested a number of available mobile phones in the market which help to increase opportunities for more target and innovative teacher professional development through SMS messaging.

### **(c) Mobile phones for ELT teaching and Learning**

There are very few examples of the use of mobile phones to teach English in developing countries in the research literature, but there are examples from developed countries. Salameh (2011) used an offline Flash-based prototype system for English language learning on mobile phones in Palestine. The system consists of ten learning objects constructed using a multimedia approach. Cavus and Ibrahim's (2009) research explores the potential of learning new technical English language words using SMS to 1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate students in Cyprus.

EIA's use of mobile technologies to provide ICT enhanced teacher professional development is critically different to what is reported on in the literature. The study was conducted only on 10 teachers and 50 pupils with the help of available low cost resources of teaching and learning.

### **EIA's technology strategy:**

EIA' strategy does not view information communication technologies (ICT) as simply software and hardware systems adopted by teachers, but rather they are powerful tools applied to human needs (educational and English language learning) within specific cultural contexts across a diverse country. EIA's technology strategy is incorporating these new mobile phone based resources alongside a program of school-based teacher professional development to present new opportunities for teachers and pupils to acquire

English to levels that enable them to participate more fully in economic and social opportunities.

### **Methodology**

During this study action learning was used as an educational process whereby the participants studied their own actions and experience in order to improve their performance as a teacher. This is done in conjunction with others, in small groups called action learning sets. Each action learning set was located in one of the five participating schools. 10 English teachers involved were divided into action learning.

### **Equipment**

The participants had access to mobile phones which have email, messaging, and web access capabilities. In addition they can be used as PDA, as a digital camera (static and video), audio recording and as well as an MP3 device and internet radio. As the budget was limited web browsing and email functions were not used.

### **Participants**

10 participants (2 female, 8 males): All owned a mobile phone and were very familiar with the basic functions. Three of the 10 participants owned BlackBerry mobile phones and were familiar with the advanced features offered by this device.

### **Research questions:**

The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What is the experience of teachers and students towards the use of mobile devices for English language teaching and learning?
2. What is the opinion of teachers and students regarding the use of mobile devices in enhancing teaching and learning?
3. To what extent mobile phones can be used in the classroom?

### **Training**

As a part of EIA we provided training to all participants in a computer laboratory that contained 20 computers. We discuss how they could use the mobile phones to record and reflect on their teaching. In addition, they were to

consider how they could use the mobile phones with the pupils in the classes they would teach. They were also informed available online resources to upload material on mobile like use of mobile camera to post a photo or message to blog from mobile, use of photo bucket to upload material on mobile phones. A user-friendly manual had been prepared and this was used as the basis of the training session. After the session, for one week, the participants spent one week practicing the skills they had learnt. The following week they re-met to demonstrate the skills they had practiced and learnt. All schools had given consent for children's learning activities to be recorded; in addition there were no restriction on the use of mobile phones for educational purposes.

### **Teaching**

The mobile phones were used in selected topics of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard English text book. In each of the five host schools, teachers were allocated to a class to teach for four hours per week for two weeks. At the conclusion of each teaching session participants were required to meet in the computing laboratory to download files and to share their teaching experiences. The facilitator attended these meetings where further ideas about using the phones were shared and additional training was provided on a just-in-time basis by a combination of peer teaching, facilitator teaching, and also the expertise of an academic who had proficiency with all features of the phone.

### **Teachers' use of mobile phones:**

1. Use of the mobile phones was as a video recording device or as a digital camera.
2. Teachers captured episodes from their lessons that illustrated the impact of their lessons on pupil learning.
3. The audio function was seen as useful when teaching pronunciation.
4. Bluetoothing project material among participants
5. Downloading and listening to foreign language podcasts
6. Receiving SMS & email reminders from group members
7. Recording students' participants in ELT related activities and later on uploaded on computers for further analysis.

### **Methods of data collection:**

Data was collected through three different methods:

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- (1) Questionnaires (for teachers and students)
- (2) Interview (for teachers and students)
- (3) Online recording of classroom teaching through mobiles.

The questionnaires included items categorized into three main types. The first was related to the general information on the type of mobile phone they possess, the frequency of the use of computers and mobile phones. The second type sought their opinions and experiences about the use of mobile phones in teaching and learning process and the third type sought their opinion regarding the use of mobile phones for enhancing the teaching-learning process. The last category of items forms the basis of the future study envisaged to be taken up in the next phase of research.

The interviews with teachers and students were structured and sought a qualitative picture of the issues raised under aims of the study. It was an opportunity to capture details of the actual usage of mobile phones and to go beyond-seeking the future prospects. The questions asked were very precise as to what is their feedback on the use of mobile phones by the teachers and students? Do they think that mobile phones could be used effectively for English language teaching? How are they using mobile phones for giving support to the learners? What is the future use of this device?

The researchers had also recorded the actual use of mobile phones in the classroom. It also included active participations of teachers and learners in teaching and learning process.

### **Findings**

The findings are as below:

1. Teachers and students participating in the project found the use of mobile phones an effective tool for learning English language and for teachers to both learn about and view CLT practices.
2. The learners have expressed high level of satisfaction in relation to the use of mobile devices for learner support services through information exchange (device aspect and device usability intersection)
3. The study also shows that there is an increasing use of English in the classroom both by the teacher and the students.

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4. Mobile technology-enhanced ELT materials improved teachers' English and their confidence in using English in their lessons.
5. EIA's research, monitoring and evaluation also suggest that the students enjoyed English lessons because they were engaged in student-based or 'interesting' activities like listening to songs and dialogues which they had no access previously.

A secondary teacher summed up the increasing use of English in English lessons:

*Before [EIA] there was no difference...no distinction.....the English class was the same as the Gujarati class. If you walked in, you would not have been able to tell which was which.*

*But now we can differentiate....we [the teachers and students] are speaking English much more now...*

*...The students are using English with their families too, outside school...Their pronunciation has improved...they are using English confidently.*

### Acknowledgements

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## The Grotesque Body in Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol's *Dead Souls*

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on the representation of the human body as grotesque in Nikolai Gogol's fiction with reference to the *Dead Soul*. The nineteenth century Russian writer, Gogol represents the human body as grotesque in his writings. There is application of the Bakhtinian term- "grotesque realism" in the descriptions of the Gogolian characters in the novel- *Dead Souls* and in Gogol's short story- 'The Nose'. Grotesque is a term in Italian for the cave which is called the grottesca or the grotta. In general, grotesque stands for something which is abnormally and un-naturally ugly. It is comically ridiculous since it is unconventional and pathetic. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, grotesque stands for "a style of decorative art characterized by fanciful or fantastic human and animal forms often interwoven with foliage or similar figures that may distort the natural into absurdity, ugliness or caricature". The term grotesque body is derived from the term - "grotesque realism" coined by Mikhail Bakhtin. He used this term to describe the work of the French writer- Francois Rabelais. The grotesque body inhabits the carnivalesque space. The grotesque body is always feasting, defecating, bringing forth other selves out of the primary self. It indulges in constant activity through the bodily apertures. This paper studies the representation of the grotesque body in Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*. The paper also investigates how the concept of the grotesque body confirms with the Bakhtinian understanding of the term.

**Key words:** Bakhtinian, grotesque realism, etc.

The grotesque body is constantly ingesting, digesting, defecating and being sexually aroused. It is not merely a biological body, but a universal, always transforming- expanding, disintegrating, severing or uniting, and rejuvenating body. Each limb has an entity of its own. It is not an old and degenerating body. "In grotesque realism, therefore, the bodily element is deeply positive.... The material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed. This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable." (Bakhtin 19) Gogol confirms to the carnivalesque trope of the grotesque realism in describing the characters of his novel. The body is represented as grotesque to challenge the sanctity of human body, and in turn

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the sanctity of religion. In Christian theology, humans are considered to be made in the image of the God. However, Gogol's characters bear bodies that resemble animals and even the inanimate objects. The human bodies merge easily with the external world, in Gogol's fiction. This is done to challenge the Christian theology and the hierarchy of the upper body over the lower body. There is a celebration of the base and the earthly elements, while the top of the bodily and the cosmic hierarchy is subverted. The grotesque body is the momentary subverting of hierarchies, which is the theme of the Bakhtinian concept of the Carnival.

In Book 1 of *Dead Souls*, the human body is compared to an inanimate object or plants or flowers, or even animals - "What kind of faces aren't there in this world of ours. Take any mug you like and it's really not any other mug. On one of the rose does duty as commander, on another the lips, on a third the cheeks as they extend their territory even at the expense of the eyes, ears and even the nose itself which appears as a result no bigger than a waistcoat button; or on yet another the chin is so long that he has to keep covering it up with his kerchief so as not to spray every one with spit. And how many are there that don't resemble people at all. This one's a perfect dog in a tailcoat so that you wonder why he's holding a stick in his hand; it's as if the first passerby would snatch it from him." In another description of human body in Book 1, chapter-1 of the *Dead Souls*, Gogol observes that "in a corner shop, or, to put it more exactly, in the window of it, sat a man who sold hot spiced honey drinks next to a red copper samovar, so that from a distance one might think that there were two Samovars in the window, were it not that one of the Samovars had a beard as black as pitch." Furthermore, in Chapter-1 of the book, at the governor's dinner, the male guests are described as "black frock-coats glided and flitted about singly or in swarm here and there like so many flies on a sparkling white sugar loaf."

The grotesque body exists in union with the external world. "It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits." (Bakhtin 19) Emphasis is put on the bodily apertures – "the parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world." ((Bakhtin 26)) For example – a gaping mouth, the genitals, the phallus, the breasts, a protruding belly, the nose. Thus, the body in

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grotesque realism is understood as a “principle of growth”, (Bakhtin 26) a continuous transforming phenomenon that transgresses a definite independent micro-cosmic existence by necessary and natural bodily actions like eating, drinking, defecation, copulation (which may not be necessary), pregnancy (which is the natural outcome of copulation), and childbirth (which again is a natural outcome of pregnancy). The body is unfinished and is always in the process of re-creating itself. “The unfinished and open body (dying, bringing forth and being born) is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects, it is cosmic, it represents the entire material bodily world in all its elements. (Bakhtin 26) For example in Chapter 5 of Book-1, in ‘*Dead Souls*’, Sobakevich’s back is compared to a “thick-set Vyatka horse” and his legs “looked like the iron-posts stuck at the side of pavements”. His torso is compared to a sturdy animal while his lower body is compared to the inanimate constructed pavement. The human body becomes grotesque here, since it does not strictly inhabit the animated, human features. It can become anything of the outside world. It resembles the exterior world whether animated or inanimate. Thus, the sanctity of the human body is challenged in Gogol’s *Dead Souls*.

In *Dead Souls*, people are always celebrating through consuming extravagant and inhumanly large quantities of food and liquor. “The material bodily principle in grotesque aesthetics is a triumphant, festive principle; it is a ‘banquet for the entire world.’” (Bakhtin 26) For example, the gastronomic delights of the Russian aristocracy and the state officials in Gogol’s *Dead Souls* confirm the festive bodily principle of consumption of the grotesque. Chapter-one of part – one of the novels is full of feasts and parties. Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov (the hero of the novel) attends a series of dinners and parties soon after his arrival at the provincial town. There are dinners organized at the house of the Chief of Police, at the liquor tax collector’s, at the public prosecutor’s and “a buffet lunch” at the mayor’s. In Chapter 7, of Part 1 in the novel, after the transfer of the dead souls onto Chichikov, there is a feast organized at the house of the chief of police. In a manner of a fantastic occurrence in *Dead Souls*, “there appeared a white sturgeon, ordinary sturgeon, salmon, pressed caviar, fresh caviar, herring, stellated sturgeon, cheese of all sorts, smoked tongue, and dried sturgeon. Then there appeared all sorts of supplementary dishes from the kitchen : a pie made of the head, gristle, and cheeks of a three – hundred – pound

sturgeon, another pie stuffed with mushrooms fried pastries, dumplings cooked in melted butter, and fruit stewed in honey" (Book 1, Chapter 7). Thus, in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, the emphasis on the body is in terms always consuming food and drinks. The identification of the grotesque body with constant feeding and devouring is to achieve "degradation" (Bakhtin 26) that is, to trivialise everything that is considered "high, spiritual, ideal, and abstract," (Bakhtin 26) and to uphold the base, material body and the sphere of earth. The element of earth which is located downward is associated with the acts of "devouring, swallowing up (the grave, the womb)." (Bakhtin 26) The earth is also "an element of birth" (Bakhtin 26), and fertility. Similarly, the body is divided into the upper region "face or the head which is related to the cosmos", (Bakhtin 26) and the lower body, comprising genital organs, the belly, and the buttocks, is identified with the transforming characteristic of the earthy element. These are sites of defecation, copulation, conception, and birth. The grotesque body constantly transforms, undergoes "unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming". (Bakhtin 26)

In Gogol's 'The Nose', the nose of Kovalevsky, a Collegiate Assessor, voluntarily departs from his face. It assumes the identity of a State Councillor, and attempts to flee the town – St. Petersburg under a fraudulent passport. The grotesque nose strives for existence independent of the rest of the human body. It upholds the carnivalesque aesthetics of the grotesque realism which undermine the sanctity of the human body. The divine order and uniformity accorded to the body is challenged and momentarily subverted. In *Commedia dell'arte*, the body has a different benchmark of perfection from the aesthetics of the beautiful and the sublime. The grotesque body combines heterogeneous elements, and violates its natural proportions. For example, in the 'Tom and Jerry' cartoon series, the cat and mouse pair often gets run over by a car, get sliced in a shredder, or toasted in an oven, yet they are alive and within seconds regain their natural whole and unified bodies. The grotesque body is not a unified whole, but is made up of independent elements. Daniel Panday in 'Narrative Performance in the Contemporary Monster Story' refers to Stafford's observation that "by the late eighteenth century the model of the body as an integral whole finally falls apart, in large because of a fundamental shift to seeing bodily components as independent". (Panday) Similarly in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, Chapter 8, at the Governor's ball, the ladies of the town N. are described as a

"whole row of elbows, cuffs, sleeves, ends of ribbons, perfumed chemisettes, and dresses". In a similar incidence in T.S. Eliot's poem, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', the ladies at the salon are described as "arms that are braceleted and white and bare", and "arms that lie along table, or wrap about a shawl". The grotesque body bears independent units and subsystems. The carnivalesque grotesque body also accommodates the outer world. The body is an ever expanding self that integrates "the cosmic, social, and bodily elements" (Bakhtin 26) into an "indivisible whole". (Bakhtin 26) For example, in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, the body of a landowner comprises his serfs, his carriage, his material belongings, his children, his conduct and dress during dinners and balls, and his appetite. Chichikov (the so-called hero of the text) is introduced in Chapter 1 as having arrived in the town N. "in a small, rather smart, well-sprung four-wheeled carriage with a folding top." His trunk is carried by the driver Selifan, "a shortish man in sheepskin coat, and the gentleman's valet Petrushka, a fellow of about thirty in a large worn coat..., a fellow – with a somewhat surly expression, very thick lips, and a big nose".

Chichikov's maiden physical description in the toilette scene is thus – "he spent an extremely long time soaping his cheeks, pushing them out with his tongue from inside; then, taking a towel from the water's shoulder, he wiped his chubby face all over, beginning behind his ears, first snorting twice right in the waiter's face. Then he put in his shirt-front before the looking – glass plucked two hairs sticking out of his nose". Chichikov is also described in terms of his large appetite and strong digestion. His body further expands throughout the narrative as he acquires more than a thousand dead souls from the various landlords of the N. town. The notion of the grotesque body is not a reductive one but an ever expanding one. The body is simultaneously absorbing and ejecting. The body in Gogol's *Dead Souls* is in a constant state of metamorphosis. There is simultaneous expansion and ejection. The body renews itself, and never wanes or degenerates. Thus, it departs from the biological body which grows, but eventually wanes.

Gogol confirms to the Bakhtinian understanding of the term- grotesque realism in his novel- *Dead Souls* and his short story- 'The Nose'. His characters are forever feasting, rejoicing and merry-making. They devour food with great relish. There is also an instance in *Dead Souls* when an aristocratic couple indulge in a leisurely long kiss in the living room. The act is akin to the couple

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devouring each other. It alludes to the constant feeding of the characters. Their need to keep ingesting is proves that these are not biological individuals who consume for necessity or pleasure. These individuals consume because their insatiable appetite for food, drinks and sexual gratification defines them. They know no other state other than that of actively engaging their bodily apertures. These grotesque bodies are always in a state of flux. They expand in gigantic proportions. Their limbs depart from the unified body to lead an independent and self-sufficient existence, as is the case in 'The Nose'. Even the concept of degradation affirms to the celebration of the lower body which is defecating, uniting with the other bodies in a sexual union and reproducing. The lower body interacts with the outer world by expelling parts of itself. It represents the fertile, earthly elements. The upper body, especially the mind has little role for the grotesque body. Only the facial apertures are given importance because of their ability to ingest and expel objects. This confirms the positive principle of the grotesque realism of merging with the outer world, and becoming a part of the universal body, instead of a parochial, individual and biological body.

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## Ananta Jalil: Jocker or Croaker?

\*Israt Taslim

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### Abstract

Whatever used to be considered as low culture, it is now practiced by elite people in their virtual or real world; all because of Ananta Jalil's power play of popularizing himself and his films in an opposite direction from our normalized elite culture. In these recent years this new viral in electronic media and virtual world has spread its net to be ridiculed as a subject willingly to get all the attention of being popular. This new trend has suddenly become popular among the young generation and they are the main consumer of our popular culture. For the sake of consumerism and bringing a new trend among the young generation, this new trend of commercial successful films is appreciated in our culture in some point. But when it enters in our recent culture of film in Bangladesh, it is hard to tell how long people will be able to take this same ridiculous trend? Ananta's dialogues are all over the facebook and his popularity is increasing day by day with his interview dialogues. For example – "are you pom Ghana?" Do Bangladeshi people understand this politics behind his popularity? Or are they too blind in their stressful life that they don't even need any logic to laugh at someone?

**Keywords:** *Popular culture, High culture, low culture, Myth, SIGN, discourse, parody, pastiche, production and consumption of culture.*

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### Introduction

This paper tends to analyze the real intention of making these kinds of films with an open declaration of being ridiculous and it seeks to understand the reason behind a huge audience. It is high time when the mass people wake up for a meaningful logical film and not to waste any time after watching culture destroyer films. There was a time when the meaning of Bangla movie was sophisticated and theatre based because of some genuine film makers. Then the culture was destroyed with the time being and those cultural products were basically produced for what is now called "low culture." Unlike telefilms or drama no films were appreciated in the past decades, while Ananta Jalil became successful to bring the elite class people into theatre even on the cost of negative marketing.

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**Bears the Meaning of Ultimate Ideology**

Have we ever considered the fact that what kind of message these movies try to give in our culture? There is always a hidden politics inside the ultimate message because message is not free from knowledge of discourse. Barthes followed the theory of Saussure the way language and parole works and the same way Ananta's myth making works. His projection of stupidity or dialogue utterance bears the sign of mockery to elite culture. The way he speaks English with Bangla is a clear sign that he did not produce his films for low class people who does not know English rather it is 'SIGN' to ridicule the elite class people intentionally who knows the perfect English and even after that they would die for Ananta's inadequate English (Barthes 115). Again he is indicating every time that his films are big budget films and mainly made for high class people. If money is the fact then he is doing the right thing by bringing a polished enhanced post-processing and foreign outdoor location in our film industry to make those sophisticated people satisfied. In a review of the film *The Speed*, Feroze mentioned that, "ethics, morality, triumph of the good over bad and some great enjoyable bits make this a one hundred per cent powerful medicine to forget all of life's tensions. Ananta rocks and we rocked with him." (n. pag.). This obviously indicates that his films are well polished and soothing for eyes visually and no one needs to bring his/her brain to the theatre to watch his films which is not very different from any other commercial Bangla movie. Even though the mass seems responsible for the popularity of his films, it is Jalil who is controlling the spectacle of the mass. It was never in the hand of audience to choose their entertainment. So, the ideology was never changed even with this new trend rather it became another way of slapping the elite class.

**Man is Reluctant to Gaze at his Exhibitionist Like**

This chapter headline is taken from Laura Mulvey who showed the active man and passive women in the visual narrative where women will always remain as an object to looked at and men will be the activist to do all the action (837). Our main stream culture could not get out of these rules of guilt of a woman where her visual presence works against the development of the storyline. Ananta faces problem because of his lover Barsha in most of his movies and he is the savior who controls all the actions in the film. As this is the mainstream culture, people does not expect anything different from him. On the



contrary to reverse this body politics, Ananta is the center of all attention of exhibiting his male body. But Susan Bordo would not be able to help herself from laughing by watching Ananta's body and the way he displays it (171). An extremist photo might be an example:

Susan Bordo said that "some psychologists say that the circuit from eyes to brain to genitals is a quicker trip for men than for women" (169). In that case this series of image might allure the male viewers than women even when it is an image of a male body.

**Fig. 1. Shaheb, Choudhury. Why Ananta? Why? 10 June 2013. *Moja Loss???*. Facebook. Web. 11 December 2013.**



In a sense this kind of exhibition of a male body is working against the concept of Laura Mulvey that, "women as image, man as bearer of the look." (837). Even after all these negative marketing all over the Facebook, he seems reluctant to male gaze and he does not seem to be interested in fitting in their normalized body politics. He knows he is being looked at all the time and he is aware of both male gaze and female gaze. But, he ignores all those gazes and never stops from sowing

off his body parts with those same kinds of clothes.

### **Ananta's Control over the mass, But How Long?**

Popular culture or mass people are accepting Ananta Jalil for his ridiculousness and negative marketing over the media. Some people who have never seen his films would recognize him from his popular incorrect English accent or from his body structure. It is not always the consumer who produces the production of their needs rather a production is imposed on the consumers or mass people by the politics of capitalist producers. Pickering said, "The focus is not on those individuals who produce culture but on the structures, external factors and high-level decision-makers which come to influence and shape mass-

produced culture" (54). This might be a politics of Jalil to manipulate the consumer to accept his ridiculous trend every time without a failure. At the very beginning of his production this could be called as mere imitation or parody but now when this style is continuing day by day it has become "pastiche" (Jameson 15). He wanted to be the subject to be laughed at for the sake of establishment. But, according to William Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying*, if there is no structure then there is no establishment. If we only depend on the unique style of Jalil, style is inter-textual and no uniqueness can be there when no signature move is left to do for the hero. That is happening with him all the time and he thinks he can continue with this for long time which has already become cliché.

That is why he finds a way to keep the Jalil myth alive through his negative marketing all over the face book and other social networking sites. These images are mainly used by those elite class consumers to laugh at him. Some demonstration might help to understand his popularizing strategy where he controls the consumers and permits them to laugh at him:

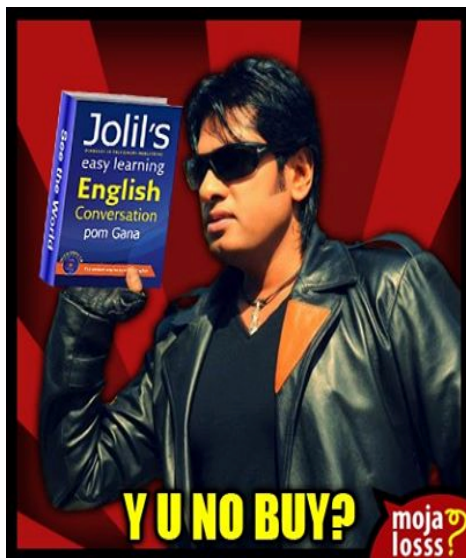


Fig. 2. Shaheb, Choudhury. Y U NO BUY?.  
12 September 2013. *Moja Loss???*. Facebook.  
Web. 15 February 2013.



Fig. 3. Shaheb, Choudhury. Untitled.  
20 November 2013. *Moja Loss???*.  
Facebook. Web. 21 February 2013

When the girl asks Ananto that has he brushed his teeth, he opens his mouth and twelve seconds later his bad odor turns into tornedo and terminates everything (Fig. 3).

These are the common scenario of any social networking site where young people like to share or post these kinds of jokes. Noticeable thing is that his interviews are more popular than his films because of these social networking sites. Interestingly his dialogues in the movies or interviews become so popular that people like to make those dialogues legendary. But no one ever questions why and how this ridiculous meaning of Ananta Jalil is tagged upon him? Because he wants it to be like that.



**Fig. 4. Anonymous.**  
**Grameenphone Emergency**  
**Balance. 2013. Grameenphone.**  
**Grameenphone. Web. 20**  
**February 2013.**

After the advertisement of Grameenphone (Fig. 4) he became the talk of the city that the way he appears he is the new Bond of Bangladesh. So, it suggests that whatever he wants to be people would never deny him rather appreciate him with his James Bond look. His dialogue that – nothing is impossible for

Ananto is another viral among the young generation. This was the main campaign of Grameenphone which provides emergency balance for five taka. So, in this advertisement his dialogue declares that – it is the work of Ananto to turn the impossibilities into possibility. That is why whenever there is a question of possible or impossible Ananta is there to become an advertisement.

**Removing the veils of Anonto Jalil**

Every time with the release of Ananta's film a huge audience will gather in front of the theatre. When they are the one who ridicule this actor for his ridiculous acting, why would they waste their money on him? "The truth is out there" (Zizek 1). Actually Jalil's ridiculousness is making him a hero and it is a way of earning money by negative marketing. Another truth about our consumer society is also revealed that they are supporting his ridiculousness while they are being ridiculed by him and instead of that he is getting all the money through these films. From the concept of *the empty gesture*, we think we are watching his films on our own will but the truth is we are manipulated by the politics of Jalil. When our friends find him funny something to laugh at they want to see those movies. But we never think twice to be the part of mainstream culture and we like to be watched by our friends in this way. If we consider this from Lacan's *Inter-subjectivity*, we would never prefer what we actually like rather prefer to see what others like to see in us. So, we are certainly forced to see his films just to be accepted by our friends and be under the impression of normality.

**Conclusion**

While there was no hope for our film industry, Ananta Jalil brought the elite class by his new kind of commodity ideology to become the main consumer to add to this hopeless industry. Though it is a ridiculing trend to dominate this ruling class through ridiculous production, something good out of bad is coming out of Ananta Jalil. After all – nothing is impossible for Ananta Jalil. A new message is created by him where he makes the ideology to ridicule elite class against consumerism. His negative marketing works in a positive way over the mass people where consumer does not know who is maintaining the spectacle and who is imposing this ideology upon them. The truth is out there; all we need to do is find out the truth about the producer and consumer so that we can understand the politics of mythmaking and deconstruct the construction of knowledge.

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## Surveillance of Parental Anxiety with Young Adult Literature

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### Abstract

The parents and the children are closely related with each other. Both reciprocally form the family. One's suffering disturbs the whole scenario of whole family. The present paper examines the parental anxiety for the young adult children. Young adults who are though still immature inwardly, outwardly act with the maturity which provokes them to face many mishaps in the life. The present research article has signified the Young adult literature as being the guide for the adults and adolescents as it shows the ways to solve the problem in the real life. The young adults do not like the inspection of the parents. They want to prove that they also can lead in the life without the guidance and assistance and control of the parents. The present study claims the solution over the anxiety of the parents that the parents should love their children but should not compel their decisions on them. The proper care and love will enforce the children to adopt the good culture which will lead them on the right path of the life. The young adults who are well-bred, well-cared and well-loved can't break the trust of the parents.

The present research study is the analysis of Young Adult Literature to examine the parental anxiety for the adolescent children and to understand the parents' role in their growth. Analysis in this study is of the select novels *Someone Like You* of the American Young Adult fiction writer, Sarah Dessen. The aim of the study is, to analyze the characters in the select novels with their dialogues, communications with other characters, their emotional expressions to interpret the actions and the opinions of the characters and the novelist.

**Key Words:** *Young Adult Literature, parental anxiety, adult Fiction, etc.*

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What is the role of parents in the lives of the adolescents? What do they expect from the adolescents and what do the adolescents expect from their parents? Does the young adult literature reflect the parental anxiety? What does this anxiety states? And whether the parents in real life may seek relief through it? It is the significant task that is to know the parental anxiety that reflects through young adult literature. There is little discussion how the young adult literature pictures the parental anxiety. The parents of the adolescents are

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always very much worried about their children. They feel quite restless about them.

Young adult Fiction is quite popular term in the present age. It is also called as YA and also as Juvenile Fiction. The Young adult Library Services (YALSA) of the American Library association (ALA) defines a young adult as, "someone between the ages of twelve and eighteen ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/young\\_adult\\_fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/young_adult_fiction))". The young adult literature draws the attention of the readers at the variety of issues-such of identity, sexuality, science fiction, depression, suicide, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, family struggles, divorce, friendship etc. Young adult literature is a broad term, and this paper will examine the select novel and the characters that are performing the role of the parents as well as those who the children of them of the age range to be between 12 and 20, the adolescents or young adults. Much of young adult literature ignores parental figures — they're often inconvenient to the plot of the story, which is why so many YA novels are set in boarding schools or feature orphaned protagonists. When they do play a part in the story, it's often a source of conflict. Since YA literature is about coming of age and gaining independence, it makes sense that many plots are predicated on tension with parents. Teens are trying to forge their identity, which often means rebellion. The best stories are built on a foundation of conflict, and for young adults that means the main characters are at odds with people in positions of authority, including parental figures.

The select author Sarah Dessen is the most prolific, leading and appreciated young adult fictionist. She has contributed much to enrich American literature by writing young adult novels. Sarah Dessen has been dominating young adult fiction since 1996. She has succeeded in drawing the attention of the critics, Scholars and the readers by effectively handling the young adult fiction. Sarah Dessen through her young adult novels has handled various themes which relate and affect the young adults- search of self identity, friendship, mental agony through physical lacunas, poverty, drug addiction, fear of truth, agonies of the children of drug and alcohol addicted parents, parental divorce, insomnia etc. From the beginning she has focused her attention on the young adults through her novels. Her novels speak freely about the various issues, aspects and problems of the young adults. Sarah Dessen has laid excellent analysis of the critical situation that parents of the adolescents face through her writing.

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The present research critically studies the same through her select literary work *Someone Like You*. The select work for study *Someone Like You* (1998) is honored with the titles: An ALA Best Book for Young Adults; A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, A Barnes and noble.com Best Teen Novel of the Year. It also won the Young Adult Book Award 2000-2001 of the South Carolina.

*Someone Like You* (1998) depicts a year in the life of two sixteen-year-old best friends, Scarlett and Halley. They have been best friends since they were eleven, when Scarlett and her mother moved next door to Halley's family. Although Scarlett is much bolder and more self-confident than Halley, the two girls immediately become friends. The novel begins at the end of the summer before the girls' junior year of high school. Scarlett has fallen in love with a boy named Michael Sherwood over the summer who is just a 16 yrs old, and the day after she enjoys with him for the first time, he is killed in a motorcycle accident. Halley, who has been going through a phase of separating herself from her mother after a trip to the Grand Canyon earlier in the summer, comes home from camp to be with Scarlett and attend the funeral. Scarlett tells Halley that Scarlett's boyfriend, Michael Sherwood, died in a motorcycle accident that afternoon, and she asks Halley to come home. Halley knows it is hard for Scarlett, who has never been the needy one, to even ask for her help, and Halley tells her that she is on her way. Halley lives in a middle class family with her parents very happily in quite safe atmosphere. Her mother is a therapist, an expert on adolescent behavior. She has written two books, dozens of seminars and done many talk shows advising parents on how to handle The Difficult Years. But she herself is quite confused for dealing with her own daughter. She used to advise her friends to stay in touch with the teens. This is the mockery Sarah Dessen has focused as her this experiment always irritates her own daughter, Halley, the protagonist of the novel. Though the therapist she can't understand the nature and behavior of her own daughter.

The select novel is an excellent example of the anxiety of the parents for their adolescent children. Halley's mother always complains that Halley speaks lies frequently and doesn't tell the things that happen in the school. She wishes that Halley should tell her everything in her life, about her friends, teachers and her mind. But considering the adolescents' point of view one can understand that the teenagers think themselves capable of handling the things. Moreover the fact is that though Halley is much loved and cared by her parents for the

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friendship of Scarlett she lies with her mother. It is the friendship which makes the both friends to help each other in the crisis as well as in the happiness. Halley accompanies and supports to Scarlett from start to end – in her grief, in her pregnancy; she helps her to face the society. She does each type of help which a child of father does in the pregnancy of his wife does. She hospitalizes her, reads the books for pregnancy, accompanies her in teenage pregnancy club, reminds her about her nutrition, understands her mental as well as the physical situation and supports even at the time of delivery. She slips away from the school and brings back to Scarlett from the hospital and saves her from abortion. While performing all these actions she has to speak lies with the parents. As a result Scarlett names the child as Grace Halley Thomas. Sarah Dessen comments on the friendship in *Someone Like You*, "...life is an ugly, awful place not to have a best friend." (Dessen Sarah, P. 23) The young adults are ready to do anything for the friendship. It is the friendship of Scarlett which saves Halley from the loss in the life as she smoothly drives her away from Macon, Halley's boyfriend that shows that he is in love with her but actually he just believes in the momentary pleasure. When the mother asks her about Macon Halley very angrily reacts over it in her mind, "You don't know everyone I know (Dessen, Sarah, p. 118)." She dislikes her life incapable beyond or without her mother. The adolescents feel insulted to see the interference of the parents in their lives. They are fed up of the extra care of the parents. Young adults do not like to be treated like the children. Though for the parents the children are always the children, the children dislike this approach. Especially young adults think their parents humiliate them. Halley's father, who is a radio jockey once refers the humorous account in the life of Halley when she was just five years, she feels embarrassed to listen it. Her mother also freely utilizes the example of her daughter, Halley in her books, lectures, articles as a therapist. Halley in select novel says, "My parents both made their living humiliating me" (p.73). In a particular group the adolescents like the company of the same aged. They want to be away from their parents. The young adults do not like the inspection of the parents. They want to show, prove that they also can lead in the life without the guidance and assistance and control of the parents. Halley dislikes the self approach of her mother in Halley's case.

The novel depicts tension of adolescents' parents. They know the mind of the young adults is quite sensitive and can be easily caught. Everywhere there

are temptations before them. Halley's parents are very much in the same. There are many attractive things lying before Halley which are easily accepted by her classmates without thinking their consequences. Even Halley who never misses a single lecture tempts to miss it by speaking lies with the rector as well as with the parents for Macon. Even she prefers to celebrate her birthday with Macon instead of with the parents.

The novel reveals the anxiety of the parents. In all the phases of life parents are caring for their children but adolescence is the biggest caring phase for the children. The parents can't imagine the disturbances in the lives of their children. So at each and every moment they try their level best to protect their children from the problems. It is the worry and tension of them for their children which provokes them to apply strict treatment if and when they find any mistake committed by their children. When Halley's mother finds her daughter's misbehavior she feels very angry and even declares the punishment for it. She declares one month's ban on Halley to go outside. She offers strict punishment, prepares rules, and keeps watch and what not for her. Whereas the father reacts very silently on each event but every time he discusses with his wife about Halley. He never stops his wife to speak angrily and take strict actions against Halley because he needs the welfare of the daughter. She feels very disturbed and angry for Halley. Halley feels surprised to see the changed nature and treatment of her mother. Halley's mother feels guilty to know the ingenuousness of Halley. She feels relaxed to see Halley's innocence and the lies she has spoken for the sake of her friend, Scarlett.

Whenever he realizes the solution of the problem he expresses his love for Halley by offering the milkshake. Milkshake is a kind of peace offering by Halley's father. It seems that they will be easily tempted but if the children are nourished proper love and care the culture never fails

One of the greatest worries for the parents is that the company of their children. Though the parents think about the welfare of the children, the children consider it as their insult. The adolescence is the phase where the young adults can be easily trapped. It is the company of Ginny Tabor which attracts Halley towards smoking and drinking; Elizabeth Gunderson refers the dirty place Rahta again and again before Halley so Halley decides to express her love to Macon on that place; it is Macon who himself is a careless boy tempts

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Halley but at another side Halley's mother finds solace whenever Halley is in the company of Scarlett.

The novel focuses on the problem of teenage pregnancy which is one of the biggest problems before the young adults and the cause of parental anxiety. "Instances of rape, violent crimes, shooting, murder, suicide, etc. are increasing every year during last few decades. Babies have babies; the proportion of unwanted teen pregnancies and peer pressure to have sex. The incidents of depression have doubled at puberty and adolescents are becoming the victims of drug addiction. All these facts clearly indicate deficiency that is known as 'emotional illiteracy (Emotional Illiteracy...P. 31)." Scarlett becomes pregnant and unfortunately she loses her boyfriend, Michael Sherwood. Marion, her mother feels shocked and sad to see her daughter's teen pregnancy. But her love for her daughter makes her to take the decision of abort the child. When Scarlett decides to keep the child she gives one more option of adoption to rescue from the unwanted child. But Scarlett dislikes both the decisions and rejects to accept them. Though her mother, Marion and many more in the society insist on her to abort the child she decides to keep it and succeeds in giving birth to the child with the help of Halley, her mother, Marion and Halley's mother.

The present study consoles the suffering parents that however the young adults drive themselves away from the parents; they can't break the trust of the parents. The young adults who are well-bred and well-cared and well-loved get the same experience. In the select novel, *Someone Like You* Sarah Dessen shows the protective parents. The parents in it always care for the safety and happiness of Halley. But Halley is fed of over care and worry of her mother. So still there is divergence of opinions among the mother and daughter and results into the clashes. At New Year's party Halley's mother uses her last weapon of trust in the case of Halley and allows her to go outside to attend the party. Halley has much self-respect and she doesn't feel excited in the case of Macon. She expects the acceptance of love for her by Macon and wishes to express her own. The young adults who are loved and cared properly are much responsible and self-controlled whereas Scarlett's mother Marion pays very less attention towards her daughter. She is always busy with her dating and smoking. As a result Scarlett misses in her life.

Young adult literature is about growing up and finding out who you are, which often means navigating challenging relationships with parents. It's a big part of growing up, and YA lit reflects According to, MB Mulhall, "Tossed into a seemingly hopeless situation, the protagonist rises to the occasion and takes advantage of the circumstances to learn and grow. He is pitted against unfair or unusual problems and uses his wits and instincts to solve them. In the end he is all the better for his sufferings and difficulties, often in a happier position than before as a result" (<http://www.examiner.com/article/common-themes-youth-fiction>) that.

Young adult literature is also called as the Problem novels which reveal the problems with the proper solutions to the problem. The adults and adolescents, for both, young adult literature shows the ways to solve the problem in the real life. The present study signifies the truth that the parents should love their children but should not force their decisions on them. They should be aware of the likes and dislikes of the children. They must be aware of the fact that sometimes they also can fail in their decisions. Halley's mother dislikes Macon which is her right observation but her finding about Noah about whom she is quite confident and always tries to bring Halley near Noah. But at last she realizes her mistake when she finds his ill behavior with Halley. The young adults wish their parents to consider their happiness. Scarlett is emotionally attached with the baby she is carrying of Michael Sherwood but her mother tries to abort it without considering Scarlett's happiness.

The word 'family' is quite sensitive for both the parents and also for the children. It is incomplete if one is absent. It is quite natural that one is anxious for other. This anxiety is doubled in the case of the adolescent children at the side of the parents. Such an anxious position may add the stress in family and may create critical situation as Halley and her mother or Scarlett and her mother suffer through. On the contrary the emotional health may reduce the stress. The proper care and love for children will nourish them properly with good culture as Halley. Halley looks many temptations in her life but the culture she has received never permits her to do ill behavior and provokes her to act for the welfare of the friend. The children need the company of the parents but the parents must be conscious that the place of love and care should not be taken by the peer pressure. Alice Trupe in her article 'Addressing Addiction' says, "Peer

pressure seems more often to lean young people into self-destructive behavior than into healthy and constructive experimentation" (P-23).

Love and culture of the parents perform the role of a torchbearer in the life of the young adults which lead them to avoid all the mishaps in their life and also help to lead them on the proper way of the life.

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## The Postmodern Dilemma of Identity Crisis in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*

\*Rajani Moti

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### Abstract

One of the major concerns of Postmodern literature is the issue of 'identity' which figures prominently in its fiction. The critique of characters in terms of Postmodern values like individuality, independence, personal freedom, etc. finds a large focus in its discourse. The writers depict the dilemma of individuals affected by the highly transitional times that pose new challenges to their belief system. The problem is more explicitly expressed in the New Woman, whose desire for individual identity has brought her into conflict with the male dominated society, precipitating her identity crisis. This is well represented in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* (2001) where the characters are victimized due to the clash of values. The present paper attempts to trace the identity problem of six women of varying ages and class who are together on a train journey. Sharing space in the ladies' coupe, they are befriended by Akhilandeswari the protagonist, to seek answers to her existential questions. Emboldened by the temporality of their acquaintance, each woman divulges her past life that is fraught with catastrophes. The grit of the women for survival and their will to live life on their own terms prove to be a revelation to Akhila. Their resilient resolution to steer life out of the trodden path to re-define themselves as individuals in their own right affirms their existential identity.

**Key words:** male-domination, identity crisis, individuality, independence, selfhood.

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The Indian Writing in English has continued to prove its presence in the world literature through significant contributions in the Postmodern era which have won accolades. The Postmodern literature, though engaged with postcolonial concerns of space and freedom for the subaltern/marginalized, moves further to deal with the impact of modernization and globalization in terms of Postmodern values like individuality, independence, personal freedom, difference, plurality and so on. It represents Postmodern sensibilities in terms of reaction and responses that are non-generic or individualistic. One of the major concerns is the theme of 'identity' that is well explored in all the genres. A close study of fiction reveals that many writers have dealt with the issue of identity that has emerged to occupy a prominent place in its discourse. The writers

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depict dilemmas of individuals who are affected and influenced by the highly transitional times. The problems of identity are fore-grounded through characters representing educated and enlightened men and women. The reaction and responses of these characters are at par with the changing socio-cultural realities that have posed new challenges to their belief system. The problems are more explicitly expressed in the New Woman who is empowered with education and economic independence. The attempts to carve her own identity in the male dominated society have brought her into conflict with the system. She finds herself in a crisis as she is torn between tradition and modernity, family and career, others and self. But there is also the resilience and fortitude to overcome the crisis as she makes efforts to accommodate modernity in the face of resistance and to strike a balance amidst the clash of values.

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* (2001) is one such novel that portrays women who are victimized and suffer from identity crisis due to clash of values. These women combat against adverse conditions and survive to emerge as independent individuals. The present paper attempts to trace the problems of identity of a set of women of all ages and class brought together on a train journey. The five women in the ladies' coupe are strangers to each other and to the protagonist Akhilandeswari, a spinster. Going on a trip to Kanyakumari – the journey as a pilgrimage of self-discovery – Akhilandeswari befriends these women to seek answers to her existential questions. The co-travellers emboldened by the temporality of their acquaintance, bare their souls in narrating their turbulent lives. Akhilandeswari learns that all these women have experienced some crisis in their life but have bounced back and made fresh beginnings. Their grit to live and their will to lead a life on their own terms prove to be a revelation, affirming their existential self. Following is an analysis of the efforts of the protagonist and the five women to steer their life out of the trodden path to re-define themselves as individuals in their own right.

Akhilandeswari or Akhila, who is forty-five years old, has remained a spinster as a victim of circumstances. She has had a career thrust on her due to the untimely demise of her father. She has stepped into her father's shoes as a clerk at the Income Tax office when barely nineteen and looked after her mother and three younger siblings. Bearing the burden as the "man of the family," she has sacrificed all the dreams of her youth. She is trapped in a pathetic situation as the mother has left it to the daughter as a captain to "chart and steer the

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course of the family's destiny to safe shores" (76).

Akhila's early life is devoid of promise with no hopes or claims for any individuality or independent thinking. Deprived of educational opportunities and taken for granted, she has no prospects for a life of her own, no expectations other than those of her family. Akhila is exposed to all kinds of oppression like social deprivations, cultural oppression and psychological repression. She leads a mechanical life, pursuing a monotonous routine as the tragic circumstances have reduced her to an automaton.

Akhila's physiological oppression in her role as a provider goes unnoticed by the family which has achieved complacency. She ceases to exist as an individual as neither her mother nor her brothers think about her life or her future. Even after the brothers settle down with Akhila's assistance and also get married, nobody ever talks of finding a groom for Akhila who ought to be married first, in the order of age and in terms of propriety. To them, she had "already metamorphosed into a spinster." As Indira Nityanandam (Chakravarty, 2003) aptly remarks,

In spite of being the bread winner and hence occupying the centrist position, she still continues to remain on the periphery because she is still seen as a woman and her needs are never considered important enough to take precedence over the needs of the other members of the family. (128)

In her double role, Akhila becomes the victim of double standards of her family. She is marginalized even by her mother who, while claiming Padma to be of marriageable age, ignores the elder daughter's eligibility and legitimate claim. It is Akhila's responsibility once again to manage her sister's dowry and arrange for the marriage. It is the height of paradox when the alliance becomes subject to approval of the in-laws' condition that Akhila accepts her sister's guardianship for the posterity. Akhila is exploited not only by her self-centred family but also by outsiders.

Akhila hits the nadir of identity crisis at thirty-four when she is done with the responsibility of all her siblings and becomes a lonely soul. She ponders over the irony of her name, "Akhilandeswari. Mistress of all worlds. Master of none" (84). Her resolution to come out of the crisis is evident on her thirty-fifth

birthday when she decides to enrol at the Open University to pursue graduation. This decision, though late, is seen to be her first real attempt to overcome oppression. It is a definite step towards re-defining her identity and actualizing the self.

Akhila begins to resist against social oppression in the process. Self-conscious of spinsterhood and her singleness amidst her married colleagues, she has kept her distance for sixteen years. She is a victim of the complex that she is the 'other.' But Akhila initiates a change when she breaks out of her shell to befriend the new recruit, Katherine Webber, an Anglo-Indian. When her Hindu colleagues object to this friendship, she counters them actively. When Akhila develops a penchant for eggs due to her association with Katherine, it marks not only a bold transformation but a bold transgression – a blasphemy for a Brahmin. Akhila, who has embarked on the fulfillment of self, overrides the traditions and overpowers her mother in asserting her will to satisfy her desires.

The psychological oppression due to the loneliness of single life awakens Akhila to another appetite. Her sensualities are aroused by the lewd advances of a stranger during her bus journey to work. She craves for the touch and allows the pursuits of this faceless stranger till stopped by the bus conductor. Akhila's responses and behaviour are direct consequences of her forced spinsterhood. Though a victim of her mother's disregard of finding her a groom, neither has she ever dared to break conventions to find one on her own. Physically and emotionally starved, Akhila is lured to fall prey to dissolute temptations at a late stage in her life.

Still a victim of psychological oppression, Akhila develops friendship with a co-traveller on train. She allows her association with this twenty-eight year old Hari (probably the same faceless stranger of the bus) to grow into a serious relationship. Her suppressed desires crystallize in the form of love for this man who is not only younger to her but belongs to a different caste, creed and culture. But when Akhila overhears some stray comments about the discrepancy of their age, they evoke dubious feelings in her. The socio-cultural incompatibility of age and caste that foreshadows their alliance makes her apprehensive and diffident. When this uncertainty is compounded by Hari's inordinate delay for marriage, she realizes the futility of the affair. The fear of being spurned by him makes her insecure as she dreads becoming a social

outcast. Unwilling to compromise her social identity, she rejects him and ends the relationship abruptly. While the thwarted affair serves to boost Akhila's confidence in her femininity, it strengthens even more significantly her desire for single life with an independent identity, sans any tag or taboo.

Akhila's march for identity suffers a setback further due to reasons of cultural oppression. Upon losing her mother, she is forced to take a transfer to Bangalore to stay with her sister Padma. Her life takes this unexpected turn as her family thinks that a woman should not live alone. Akhila's relocation brings its own problems. It is a suffocating experience as she has neither privacy nor peace in living with her sister's family. When she decides to move to the government quarters, she is again opposed by her sister who argues against her living alone. Akhila is forced to compromise and take her whole family with her. This move proves to be a *faux pas* as she is socially discriminated by her sister as well as the neighbours at her new residence. Akhila begins to resist when her desire for eggs comes into conflict with Padma's ideology of race and religion. Though accused of sacrilege in "a brahmin household," she insists that she is the master of the house and wields her power for fulfillment of the self. Akhila's assertion of independence and her desire for personal freedom are richly suggestive of the Postmodern values.

Akhila's resistance to oppression is strengthened by her renewed friendship with Karpagam, now a widow but a carefree optimist. Inspired by her, when Akhila is emboldened to plan buying a single bedroom flat for herself, she comes into a serious conflict with her siblings. She faces stiff opposition as they criticise her move and try to talk her out of the idea of living alone. Akhila as a single woman is subjected to the same restrictions and bonds as a married woman by her family. She feels suffocated as the whole system of family operates like a jail under the guise of being a protective haven.

Akhila rebounds to all kinds of oppressions when she escapes on a trip to Kanyakumari. The train journey is a metaphor of her search for identity, a pilgrimage in seeking selfhood. The five women in the ladies' coupe, who represent a cross section of the society, attempt to answer Akhila's questions about a woman's right to live alone. The narration of their own turbulent experiences of womanhood makes Akhila realize that there are no generic answers or solutions, which is a postmodern reality and response. She is greatly

impressed and motivated by the women's strong determination to go on despite the crises in their lives. Their attempts to break free and chart their own course of life prove to be a revelation. Akhila reaches her destination as a changed person, strengthened by the catharsis of all the women including her own. She arrives in Kanyakumari with a new perception of life, convinced about her own self and revelling in her existential identity.

Akhila's affair with the young man she befriends at the beach is a test to affirm her femininity, "A point proven to herself" (275). As Sunita Sinha (Sinha, 2008) observes, the brief liaison with Vinod is an act of registering her "... own private rebellion. She is empowered to reclaim her lost love and releases herself from the hold of conventions and family expectations" (157). It is Akhila's revolt against her forced spinsterhood and the denial of happiness licensed by nuptials. It emboldens her to pick up the threads of her life and get back to Hari. The episode demonstrates her wish to break free of socio-cultural restraints and to lead a life on her own terms.

Akhila overcomes her identity-crisis through the recognition of self and a re-ordering of her priorities. She achieves her selfhood by breaking free from the past and investing in the hopes of a renewed life. She moves towards new beginnings with a renewed identity. Akhila is a representative of the Postmodern times, especially in terms of attitude to sexual mores and morals, as she rejects all conventions and settles for nothing less than sexual freedom.

The other passengers, Marikolanthu, Margaret Shanthi, Janaki, Prabha Devi and Sheela are also women who are oppressed, irrespective of age or class, and have suffered personal crisis. Marikolanthu who has not the privileges of being rich, educated or sheltered like her co-passengers, seems to be the most oppressed as her "anger poured forth like a stream of lava" (209) during her narration. She becomes a victim of lust repeatedly while working as a nurse-maid at the Chettiar's house. The first blow comes when she is raped by Murugesan, a relative of her employers, and becomes pregnant. Unable to abort, she delivers the hate baby. She is then used as a surrogate to satiate the carnal desires of her mistress, Sujata Akka. Marikolanthu also becomes a victim of her master's lust and is fired by her mistress when discovered. The alliance between Sujata Akka and Marikolanthu that begins as a master-slave relationship transforms itself temporarily into a lesbian bond only to revert to the inevitable

power relations of class difference.

Desperation drives Marikolanthu to plan revenge when she and her illegitimate son are cast away by her own family. She mortgages her eight year old hate-child as a labourer at Murugesan's looms in exchange for an amount for his upkeep and her surgery. Marikolanthu's revenge is poetically achieved during the last rites of Murugesan who dies suddenly. The pyre that doesn't burn when lit by his legitimate son burns righteously when his eldest and illegitimate son lights it with other labourers. Marikolanthu's redemption is achieved when the hate for her son and herself burns away in the same fire that burns her hate object, Murugesan. Remorseful of having reduced her son to a *chandala* and weary of having been "a sister to the real thing. Surrogate housewife. Surrogate mother. Surrogate lover... I wanted to be the real thing" (268), she accepts her son and starts life afresh. Marikolanthu's struggles signify her zest for survival against all odds and her determination to re-define her life despite the numerous crises. As a character, she is reminiscent of Santiago, the fisherman in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* who demonstrates that, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."

Margaret Shanthi is driven to the brink of identity crisis by her own husband, Ebenezer Paulraj, the ambitious school teacher. Margaret, who has had a love marriage, is disillusioned when she discovers her husband to be a bully and a tyrant. She is terrorized by this narcissist and perfectionist who treats the house "like a hotel" expecting "everything to run by itself" without his participation. The blow comes when she is forced to abort her first pregnancy and is deprived of motherhood. Life becomes unbearable when Ebenezer becomes a Principal at Coimbatore and his ego swells. Margaret, a working woman, is frequently faulted in her house-keeping. She is compelled to host elaborate dinners for the school coterie every month as her ego-maniac husband loved to show off his superior intellect before them. Reduced to a nonentity, Margaret leads a robotic life and suffers from a near break-down. When she feels utterly hopeless and is almost suffocated by the condition, she hits upon a plan while watching the pair of goldfish. She observes that the male fish has died because of its greediness. Taking the cue, Margaret begins to take her revenge by cooking irresistible dishes. Although Ebenezer is a health maniac, good food is his Achilles' heel and the results are soon obvious. He gains weight and with it comes a mellowness that makes him human again. Margaret conceives and

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delivers a baby-girl, bringing winds of change in their life. Margaret, who propels herself out of the margins, comes to assume a central role in Ebenezer's life. She is successful in conquering the crisis and shows her husband his place as well as her own.

Janaki, though happily married for forty years, has no chance of an independent life as she lives in a golden cage. She was married at the tender age of eighteen when she found it difficult to respond to sex. Even in later life, she regards it as a forced and mechanical act. She finds her husband too demanding from which there is no escape. She begins to resist only in late age, insisting on privacy when she becomes dependent on sedatives. But Janaki, who is pampered and over-protected by her possessive husband, dreads a life without him. The induced vulnerability has incapacitated her of independent thinking. Her only escape from fearful thoughts is her prayer, "let me fall asleep so that I don't have to think" (35). Janaki finally retaliates against her vulnerable condition by resorting to the only life she has known but with a difference – by making it conditional that her husband seeks her on her own terms, subject to her willingness. Janaki, though a docile woman of the upper middle-class, learns to heed the needs of her own self. She rises slowly but successfully in her claims for identity and assertion of self.

Prabha Devi, the blessed wife of a prosperous businessman, constantly revelling in the thought, "How lucky I am to be me" (172) finds life in the ivory tower too conservative and boring. She yearns to free herself from the shackles of the traditional role and responsibilities of a housewife. She craves for sophistication and individual identity as a result of her travel abroad. She even flirts with her husband's friend but soon learns her lesson when he takes it seriously. She feels stifled by the monotony of her life and the bindings of her elite class. Pining away for what she cannot do, she plans a secret adventure on the rebound. She goes to learn swimming, without her husband's knowledge, and gradually achieves success. She feels elated to "triumph over her innate timidity and rise above traditions to float" (208). Prabha Devi finds her own way out of her predicament by doing something unconventional that gives her joy as well as a sense of fulfillment in changing her life for the better. Though a typical housewife of a bourgeois orthodox family, she breaks the tradition by introducing modernity into the traditional lifestyle and achieving her selfhood in the male-dominated household.

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Sheela and her dying grandmother represent the complexes of a woman at the two extremes of her life – entering into womanhood and exiting from life. Both are acutely conscious of their individual self. As a teenager, Sheela aspires for freedom and defies typical restrictions of her grandmother – like not being allowed to play badminton with men – which she sees as outdated. As for the grandmother, she has always lived in great dignity and wants to die a graceful death, keeping her wealth and her authority with her. But she is a marginalized woman, neglected by her sons and sought after only for her property. She lives with her eldest daughter to punish her sons. A woman of status, she loves to be immaculately dressed and bejewelled, even when she is on her deathbed with cancer. When the grandmother is in comatose condition preceding death, she is dressed up by Sheela in all her usual finery, much to everybody's mortification. But Sheela, who understands that her grandmother's passage should be as gracious in death as in life is convinced that, "Ammumma would have been pleased" (74). Assisting her to make a triumphant passage, she learns that old age, disease, decay and death are but stages and certainly not everything in life. She is initiated into affirmation of life and all that it has to offer and learns to look at death squarely. The two women are complementary in representing the dependency complex at the two extreme stages of womanhood. Both women seek to gain and retain their own identity, maintaining an optimistic attitude to life.

The six women characters take bold steps in overcoming identity problems and attempting to re-define themselves in the changed conditions. They struggle against rigid convictions of the deep-rooted social institutions to seek their own ideal of emancipation. They grapple with crises, natural or evoked, but come through as changed beings with a changed outlook. They make fresh beginnings to live as entities of their own, acutely conscious of their uniqueness in this world. They are bold skeptics of the value system and believe in individual truths. The stories of Akhila and other women affirm the belief in existential identity and superiority of the self – in exercising choice, making or breaking conventions, renewing values and paving the way for new perceptions of newer generations.

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## Postcolonial Feminism: The New Ethics in the Globalizing World

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### Abstract

Feminism established in the West has always been considered to be the centre of knowledge and theories available in the present world. Post-colonial perspective questions older forms of globalization (Westernization and Americanization) based on the centrality of the nation and theories of modernization. It maintains the understanding of cultural margins and social difference and doing away with Eurocentrism. Globalization and post-colonialism are the most important terms in the post-colonial world. These two have been closely related to the transformation of political, economic and socio-cultural relationships in the world which is interdependent and of which the centre is lost, for good. National boundaries have been, in a way, erased. Globalization can be considered to be a defining element of social reality and globalization and post-colonialism deal with socio-cultural organizations and provide a tool to do away with homogenous Eurocentric interpretation of development, progress or social change. Against this backdrop, it is necessary to consider the Western feminism, its claims and the post-colonial interpretation of the Western feminist theories in the globalizing world as post-colonialism seems to be one of the effects of globalization.

Therefore, this paper aims at evaluating Western feminism from the post-colonial perspective and brings out how post-colonial feminism tries to establish new ethics in the globalized world by overcoming the dilemmas concerned.

**Key words:** *Globalization, post-colonialism, Postcolonial Feminism, Western feminism, Eurocentrism., etc.*

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Globalization and post-colonialism are the most important terms in the post-colonial world. These two have been closely related to the transformation of political, economic and socio-cultural relationships in the world which is interdependent and of which the centre is lost, for good. National boundaries have been, in a way, erased. Globalization can be considered to be a defining element of social reality and globalization and post-colonialism deal with socio-cultural organizations and provide a tool to do away with homogenous Eurocentric interpretation of development, progress or social change. For critics

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in the post-colonial countries, globalization is interesting as it talks about universalism and reconciliation of 'the local' and 'the global' and in spite of the sublimation of the national boundaries, it indicates so spaces between and across cultures and traditions or in nations. According to Simon Gikandi, "Globalization appears to be sign of coming into being of a cultural world order that questions the imperial cartography that has defined global relations since the early modern period." (Connell 110)

Gikandi further states that globalization "seems to harmonize the universal and the particular and in the process, it seems to open up to a multiplicity of cultural relationships unheard of in the age of empire". Therefore, hybridity is something through which globalization works against homogenization, standardization, cultural imperialism, Westernization and Americanism. Post-colonialist who value hybridity disavow "any nationalist or nativist pedagogy that sets up the relations of the third world and first world in any binary structure of opposition" (Bhabha in Connell 111) and post-colonialism also understands that the social boundaries between the first and the third worlds are far more complex.

Post-colonial perspective questions older forms of globalization (Westernization and Americanization) based on the centrality of the nation and theories of modernization. It maintains the understanding of cultural margins and social difference and doing away with Eurocentrism. Post-colonialists like Appa Durai refer to displacement of modernity, homogeneity and Western universalism.

Against this backdrop, it is necessary to consider the Western feminism, its claims and the post-colonial interpretation of the Western feminist theories in the globalizing world as post-colonialism seems to be one of the effects of globalization.

Therefore, this paper aims at evaluating Western feminism from the post-colonial perspective and brings out how post-colonial feminism tries to establish new ethics in the globalized world by overcoming the dilemmas concerned.

Feminism established in the West has always been considered to be the centre of knowledge and theories available in the present world. Britannica

Ready Reference Encyclopaedia, 2005 defines feminism to be a "social movement that seeks equal rights for women." (30) It states that feminist philosophy,

emphasizes the role of gender in the formation of traditional philosophical problems and concepts and the ways in which traditional philosophy reflects and perpetuates bias against women. (10)

If the development of feminism is traced, it is evident that from early nineteenth century to 1950, there were marginal movements in the West. In 1953, *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir appeared and proved influential on the women's liberation movement. The writer studies, in detail, issues like girl's education, female sex, marriage, position and her work. Her thesis is that since patriarchal times, women have been placed as the 'Other', in relation to men, a position comparable with that of racial minorities. Women are forced by strong environmental forces of educational and social traditions to be 'feminine', which results in women's inability to take a place of human dignity as free and independent existence with intellectual and professional expertise. This position of women is responsible for social evils and conflict between the sexes. Of course, there are exceptional women but there exists some, subtle prejudice against such women. This prejudice suggests that their right place is home according to men. S. de Beauvoir finds, 'sharing' as the only solution to the problem of man-woman relationship.

However, in 1953 de Beauvoir's work did not initiate any movement as it happened in 1963, when women's movement took the shape of a revolution with the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan. The work took American society by storm and can be said to be the basis of feminism as it exists now. Friedan names the problem of women, as the problem that has no name and asserts that for woman, just like man, the needs like self-fulfilment, authority, self-realisation, independence, individuality and self-actualisation are as important as the sexual need, with serious consequences when they are thwarted. The feminine mystique ignores women's potential as human-beings and in turn, creates women's problem. Friedan did not discard the institution of marriage as the militant feminists later did.

*Sexual Politics* by Kate Millet (1969), marshalled the historical argument for feminism that women ought to be given equal treatment in society. There is politics in the relation between sexes whereby 'one group of persons is controlled by another'. According to Millet, the aim of freeing women is to free them from the immemorial subordination which in the process can bring us a great deal 'closer to humanity'.

Another landmark in feminism was *Female Eunuch* (1970), the aim of which was to restore to women their uncastrated femininity and it worked as a part of the second feminist wave. The book brings out how the myth of the eternal feminine rules our culture. So, the writer appeals to the free woman to devise her own mode of revolt, a mode which will reflect her own independence and originality. During 1970, a group of radical feminists advocated their theory of equality. Shulamith Firestone, Eva Figes and Juliet Mitchell rejected discrimination on the basis of sex and declared that the fault lies "in our institutions . . . Woman is made and not born" (Stannard 37). According to these feminists, the social and family structures based on patriarchal ideologies were responsible for women's oppression. The cultural conditioning was the culprit and not only biological differences. So, the radicals urged the women to fight such conditioning by attaining position of power and prestige and by eliminating gender difference. This group rejects outright the institution of marriage and considers it as an organised rape but less militant feminists like Friedan seek fulfilment within marriage itself but oppose nuclear family system. These feminists also plead for control over one's own body and freedom from male oppression to promote women's rights and thereby, break down stereotypes.

Bourgeois feminists believed that their demands could be met within the context of their present capitalist society. But socialists feminists like Toril Moi believed that women's inferior status was rooted in private property and class-divided society. Black feminists alleged that the radical group was dominated by white women who were racists. Black feminists discussed female sex openly and believed that their biological function has some meaning in their emotional and psychical life.

In 1980's, for certain feminists, equality does not mean a rejection of femaleness. They think that rights can be sought within the existing social and familial patterns. In *The Second Stage* (1981) Friedan states that women's

compromise is essential for the survival of humanity. In the first stage, women break the stranglehold of the feminine mystique and in the second stage, Friedan emphasises on women's abandoning their rage, their anti-family and anti-male position and going back to family. Thus, femaleness according to her can become the source of women's power. Marilyn French supports Friedan's views by defining feminism as, not only, "a political movement demanding access to the rewards and responsibilities of the male world but it is a revolutionary movement intending to use political power to transform society, to feminise it" (French 139).

Lynne Segal argues that in order to alter and understand the power-relation between men and women, one must look at the diverse patterns of dominance and exploitation in the home, at work and in our cultural and political lives and work for strategies to forge a new future for women and men and give equal significance to feminine values.

All these feminists propose to bring about a moral revolution for betterment of the whole world and 'all women' and seek more meaningful reality based on trust and companionship than on power-politics where one sex dominates the other.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century however, post-modernist feminist brought out the potential racial, cultural and class biases of academic feminists who declared to speak for 'all' women and the post-modernist feminist also argued that generalizations in women's experience and oppression cannot be valid. Post-colonial feminism is a prime theory which analyses range across representations of women in once-colonized countries and Western locations and juxtaposes the first world feminism and the third world feminism in the globalized world. These feminists raise a number of political, conceptual and methodical problems involved in the study of representation of genders. The issue of international cross-cultural sisterhood between the first and the third world women, the issue of first world women being the spokesperson for the third world women, the question of agency and the 'I will save you' attitude are the various areas of thrust.

Post-colonial feminism aims at challenging forms of oppression, the major one being patriarchy which appears in different forms and with specific effects. "Patriarchy" as John McLeod says, 'refers to three systems-political,

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material and imaginative-which invest power in men and marginalize women" (McLeod 174). McLeod equates patriarchy to colonialism.

If one considers post-colonial feminism with reference to the first world, then it becomes evident that the first world feminism which has been discussed earlier produces generalizations which obscure the variety of feminisms, women's issues and their solutions in the third world. Again, the relationship between colonialism and patriarchy is very close as both normalize oppression and therefore, colonialism which glorifies male roles like emperors, freedom fighters or missionaries can be seen making women subject to representation in conformity with patriarchal values. This results into a double colonization of the first world women as well as the third world women. Yet it does not mean that colonizing and colonized women are placed in the same position. According to Rana Kabbani, Victorian Western colonial travellers depicted the orient in patriarchal terms, abated the colonizing mission and followed the patriarchal imperatives of colonial discourse by objectifying Eastern women as figures of licentiousness and Western heterosexual male desire and exoticism.

In *Imperialize: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge, 1992), Mary Louise Pratt illustrates this very point, even Sara Mills' critique of travel writing supports the same.

Colonialism not only did this but imposed a different frame of reference upon the colonized at the cost of the loss of the indigenous ideology. This was a kind of intervention through which more women were victimized in the sense that the so-called individualistic way of the colonizers disrupted the kinship patterns and reduced the power and autonomy that women had due to female organizations which were based on kinship systems. Hazel Carby argues that "in many colonized countries British colonialism interrupted indigenous familial and community structures" (Carby in McLeod 177). This certainly was disadvantageous to the third world women.

Most of these colonized countries belong to third world which according to Gayatri Chakrabarti Spivak is not an identifiable reality but an 'effect of discourse' and therefore, the third world women also become an ideological construct produced within the first world intellectual debates. So, Western feminist construct "the average third world women" (McLeod 199) without any regard for their specific contexts. They do not take into consideration the

historical or cultural differences but only impose a homogenous identity on the third world women and thereby, also become a sort of messiah or agency for challenging patriarchy forgetting that there may be indigenous ways of fighting against patriarchal forces. The first world feminist also forgets the fact that the lived experiences of the women in once-colonized countries may exceed the homogenizing category of third world women. Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that

Western feminism cannot escape implication in these global economic and political frameworks and must be careful not to replicate unequal power relations between the 'first world' and the 'third world'. Yet Western feminism is in danger of doing this in its analysis of third world women. (Mohanty in McLeod 187)

Post-colonial critics believe that first world feminism perceives 'women' existing in a coherent group with identical interests and desires regardless of class, ethnic or racial location'. No attention to context and difference is paid and it is established that all women are 'powerless' forgetting the fluidity of the relations between men and women and women and women. This results in maintaining 'universal womanhood' by the first world feminist. They rely upon the experience of majority to make any statement but this process leads to the neglect of minority experience and therefore, supports marginalization of women who then become doubly marginalized.

Even the concepts like patriarchy, reproduction, marriage and family are also used in a very general manner. The difference, the borders, the specifics are not at all recognized in the convenient way of generalization.

Resultantly, as Helen Carby states, 'Black and Asian women are barely made visible within its 'Western feminisms' discourses'. Western feminists seem to assume that their 'enlightened outlook' is the most progressive and liberating.

The 'feminist' version of this ideology presents Asian women as being in need of liberation, not in terms of their own herstory and needs, but into the 'progressive' social mores and customs of the metropolitan West. The actual struggles that Asian women are involved in are ignored in favour of applying theories from the point of view of a more 'advanced', more 'progressive' outside observer. Western feminists are horrified to imagine arranged marriages of



Asian women. According to them, these marriages are only oppressive and nothing else and therefore, they maintain the need for ending such marriages. While doing this, these feminists do not seem to consider Asian women's views or their cultural practices.

Therefore, the researcher feels the need for rethinking and reviewing the very idea of Western progress. One cannot forget the development of science and medicine accompanying the third degree torture and the nuclear bomb. The feasibility and propriety of the solutions offered to the third world women by the Western women in combating their oppression have to be questioned. The Western women's benevolent position towards Asian women also has to be interrogated. The authority of the Western feminist to speak for the third world women should also be analysed and it should also be understood that there is a need for Western feminism to be more 'interactive' as Spivak says, in order to understand the divergent cultural context so that a better understanding of the invisible problems of the third world women becomes an easy task. According to Spivak, the first world feminist must "learn to stop feeling privileged as a woman" (Spivak in McLeod 136). Spivak criticizes Julie Kristeva who failed to engage dynamically with the specifics of Chinese women, her subject matter. Spivak brings out the appropriation of Chinese culture by Kristeva and also the lacuna in such a research as Kristeva undertook. Spivak sees Kristeva's attempt as the inbuilt colonialism of the first world feminist towards the third world. And therefore, Spivak argues that Western feminist must learn to speak to women and not for women. So, it is obvious that first world feminists' grand design to assimilate differences is a failure and they should instead respect the borders, the difference and the specifics.

Therefore, it may be concluded that globalizing world needs new ethics, the walls have to be respected; the borders have to be respected by revisiting women's history and Western feminism. Globalization assumes the fall of all the walls but the walls are necessary as they respect specifics of economic, socio-cultural and political context. Western feminists should do away with generalizations and the idea of universal sisterhood or women in the world forming a coherent group. They should perceive the so-called master and the so-called servant on an equal plane whereby, the agency or the power of the third world women is not taken away and they become the subjects in the true sense of the term, on their own terms.

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## Fanon's Discourse of Decolonization

\*Vipan Pal Singh

### Abstract

Frantz Fanon's critique of colonialism draws on a broad range of disciplines from anthropology to psychology and philosophy to literature. His *Black Skin, White Masks* is an investigation of the psychological damages done by racism and colonialism combined. *The Wretched of the Earth* is an internationally famous work which speaks more directly and profoundly than any other single anti-colonial work on behalf of and to the colonized. During the late 1950s and 1960s, Fanon shaped an increasingly influential account of the consequences of colonization, which developed both Marxist and psychoanalytic strands of Western thought. In two of his collections of essays, *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* and *Toward the African Revolution*, Fanon drew on the earlier theorization of modern black writing by the Negritude movement. He committed himself to the violent overthrow of colonial regimes as the only solution to the problem which he identified as the continued existence of exploitative structure of the postcolonial situation. This paper is an attempt to postulate that how Fanon's discourse of decolonization brings together psychoanalytic notions of the alienation of the colonized, with Marxist notions of the economic and historical forces which have brought about that alienation and suggests a vision for the liberation of the oppressed and the marginalized.]

**Keywords:** Fanon, decolonization, discourse, psychoanalysis, Marxism

*Our soldiers overseas, rejecting the universalism of the mother country, apply the 'numerous clauses' to the human race: since none may enslave, rob or kill his fellow man without committing a crime, they lay down the principle that the native is not one of our fellow man.\**

–Jean-Paul Sartre

Analysis of the cultural dimension of colonialism is as old as struggle against it. Anti-colonial discourses have been the staple of anti-colonial movements everywhere. These discourses entered the agenda of metropolitan intellectuals and academics as a reflex of a new consciousness attendant on Third World independence movements. A general leftist reorientation of the Third-World liberation struggles from the 1950s onwards has direct bearing upon the concomitant intellectual developments. Thereafter, postcolonial

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\* From Sartre's preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*.

studies overtook the troublesome ideological category of Commonwealth literature to emerge in the 1980s as a set of concerns marked by the decenteredness, which is otherwise associated philosophically with poststructuralism and particularly deconstruction. Edward Said's *Orientalism* published in 1978 gave a newfound legitimacy to a form of a critique that gradually began to be labeled "postcolonial." However, the impetus of this critique shared much in common with predecessors as varied as Frantz Fanon, Mohandas Gandhi, C. L. R. James, Amilcar Cabral, and Chinua Achebe. In this context, postcolonial theory, referring as it does to the rapid growth in the eighties of scholarly interest in colonial relations and nationalisms, is best understood as a belated project. It is based on a long history of debate about issues such as the struggle for independence, the appropriateness of the colonial languages, the role of regional cultures in nationalist traditions, the marginalization of gender and women's issues in many newly independent nations, and the role of indigenous traditions in shaping a postcolonial modernity. These discussions that took place among creative writers and critics, theatre workers and teachers, revolutionary thinkers and nationalist leaders at various moments and sites of the colonial and newly independent world continue to be echoed in contemporary postcolonial scholarship. A history of the continuities of such debates is significant, but the "rediscovery" of earlier activists like Aime Cesaire, Amilcar Cabral, Che Guevara, and Frantz Fanon has become an important dimension of postcolonial scholarship around the globe.

The ancestry of postcolonial theory can be traced to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in French in 1961, and voicing what might be called "cultural resistance" to France's African empire. Fanon argued that the first step for colonized people in finding a voice and identity is to reclaim their own past. For centuries the European colonizing power has devalued the nation's past, seeing its pre-colonial era as a pre-civilized limbo, or even as a historical void. If the first step towards a postcolonial perspective is to reclaim one's own past, then the second is to begin the erosion of the colonialist ideology by which the indigenous past has been devalued. Fanon placed the cultural aspects of colonial and postcolonial history at the centre of his discussion. Various anti-colonial critical theories have been influential among the oppressed people of the world. However, *The Wretched of the Earth* has spoken more directly, profoundly and lastingly than any other single anti-colonial work on

behalf of and to the colonized, with the result that many writers and critics, whether or not they agree with Fanon's assumptions or conclusions, consider that his work deserves repeated reading. During the late 1950s and 1960s, Fanon shaped an increasingly influential account of the consequences of colonization, which developed both Marxist and psychoanalyst strands of Western thought, primarily in *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. Besides this he developed his thought in two collections of essays, *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* and *Toward the African Revolution*. Fanon also drew on the earlier theoretization of modern black writing by the Negritude movement. *Black Skin, White Masks* was written in a fragmentary, aphoristic style which, as Homi Bhabha points out in a Foreword to the 1986 edition, reveals Fanon's desperate sense of the extreme alienation of the colonial subject, driving him from one conceptual scheme to another, from psychology to sociology, from phenomenology to existentialism, without finding a "dialectic of deliverance." *The Wretched of the Earth* is altogether more coherent and thorough-going, as Fanon brings together psychoanalytic notions of the alienation of the colonized, with Marxist notions of the economic and historical forces which have brought about that alienation. With the Algerian revolution as the model for successful independence struggles, Fanon commits himself to the violent overthrow of colonial regimes as the only solution to the problem he identifies of the continued existence of exploitative structure in the postcolonial situation.

*The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* are the acknowledged texts in shaping postcolonial aesthetics and cultural theory. Influential beyond Africa is Fanon's basic arguments that, "blackness" is a white construct of linguistic opposition, disguising a deeper cultural opposition of controller/controlled, wealth/poverty, self-fulfilment/self-denial. Born in the French colony of Martinique in 1925, Fanon grew up with little sense of the fact that he was black. He drifted into the literary circles of Martinique whose leader was Aime Cesaire, the Communist poet and politician. As a member of Free French Army, Fanon was carried to Morocco, Algeria and finally into metropolitan France. Till that time, Fanon was a French patriot. But the traumatic experience of war changed him and soon he realized that he was seen as a Negro, despised by the French and the Arabs alike, and someone whom even children hated. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he tells of meeting a French child and her mother on a street. The child pointed out and said repeatedly: "look, a

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Negro!" Initially it amused Fanon. Soon the child repeated "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" (112-13). This traumatized Fanon, making him realize that being black and becoming an object of terror were not of his own choice, but something fixed on by others.

During the Algerian War of Independence, Fanon discovered that patients with physical ailments were being clinically diagnosed as psychologically disturbed because their doctors were not asking the right questions. In ways reminiscent of Sigmund Freud and Michel Foucault, Fanon saw that personality displacement was culturally induced; illness was reflected in linguistic dysfunctioning, i.e. the African did not think like the French doctor. The experience and language of the colonized were denied and despised, leaving them marginalized, dispossessed, subjugated within their own land. Fanon says that Africa had become a metonym for a new slavery, because, "[t]he emotional sensitivity of the native is kept on the surface of his skin like an open sore which flinches from the caustic agent; and the psyche shrinks back, obliterates itself and finds outlet in muscular demonstrations which have caused certain wise men to say that the native is a hysterical type" (*The Wretched* 44).

Fanon's deconstruction of so-called respectable ideologies within a tolerant colonialism point to the extension of French power during liberation and independence, an alienating vocabulary of the "other" as "exotic", as "curiosities", the strategic vocabulary of patronage. In its place he argues for a structure in which two constructed oppositions can meet, thus liberating both the repressed and the privileged. "Universality," he claims in *Toward the African Revolution*, "resides in this decision to recognize and accept the reciprocal relativism of different cultures, once the colonial status is irreversibly excluded" (44). He emphasizes the need to decode embedded assumptions of power, relocating cultural centres and disempowering closed static colonial discourses. Perhaps nothing in Fanon's life so decisively represented his politics of translation as his dramatic entrance to the hospital at Blida-Joinville, translating the patients from passive, victimized objects into subjects who began to recognize that they were in charge of their own destiny. This was a journey from disempowerment to empowerment, from the experience of *Black Skin, White Masks* to the revolutionary *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Fanon made graphically visible what real mental illness in the colonies could look like. By the time Fanon wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* his experience and understanding of colonialism had deepened. The last chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* is entirely devoted to the subject of "Colonial War and Mental Disorders." In this chapter, Fanon presents some case histories of patients he had treated during the Algerian War. Some of them are drawn from the colonized population fighting the war of independence; others are drawn from the colonizers in charge of bringing the colonial rebels to account. This chapter by Fanon makes stark and unpleasant reading. Far from cataloguing a series of generalized behaviours and attitudes like lazy, ungrateful, passive natives, Fanon describes the mental and physical torment of living with colonial conflict and being forced to play a part in that conflict. This includes the physical symptoms and personal dilemmas that result from, for example, surviving mass murder, living in the knowledge that French soldiers have raped and degraded your partner, committing terrorist activity and torturing other human beings. The psychology of colonial conflict, then, is not a realm of abstract complexes and personalities, but a bloody and destructive encounter between a set of people who aim to dominate and another set of people who will not accept that domination anymore.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that the black man and woman have already been translated not only as colonial subjects in the regime of French imperialism, but also internally, psychologically, and their desires have been changed into another form, carried across into the desire for whiteness through a kind of metempsychosis. Their very desires have been transposed, though they have never, of course, actually become white. They have black skin, with a white mask. Fanon's project is to understand this so as to find a way to translate them back again. This begins with a refusal of translation, of black into the values of white. Like psychoanalysis, it involves a de-translation, as a result of the failure of translation. In the same way, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon writes of how the native has been created as, translated by colonialism into, "a native", and inscribed with the schizoculture of colonialism as it devalued others. He says that if psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, then he owes it to himself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization. Fanon felt that the events in Algeria were the logical

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consequences of an abortive attempt to decerebralize a people. Decerebralization made them to see themselves as other, alienated from their own culture, language, and land. In *The Wretched of the Earth* the task Fanon sets himself is gaining of self-respect through revolutionary anti-colonial violence, where violence for the colonized native is a form of self-translation, the act, the grasping of agency. As a doctor, Fanon was equally emphatic about the possibilities of auto-translation through a dynamic, dialogic model of education, a pedagogy of the oppressed, so that the translated became themselves, translators, activist writers, the subjects and not objects of history. With Fanon, translation becomes a synonym for performative, activist writing, which seeks to produce direct bodily effects on the reader, of which his own writing is one of the greatest examples.

In *Black Skins White Masks*, Fanon deals with Octavio Mannoni's argument and devotes an entire chapter to the analysis of the so-called "Dependency Complex" of the colonized people. Fanon makes use of psychology and psychoanalysis for critically elaborating the social and psychological realities of black man's experience of colonialism. Fanon attempts to show that the subject of psychology as wielded by the colonialist does not just describe the innate or essential characteristics of the native population. Instead, it is a subject which has been used as a tool to colonize and create damaging effects on the colonized. Fanon focuses on the social contexts, influences and real conditions of psychic phenomena, and simultaneously attempts to destabilize the claim of psychoanalysis to be a universal theory. Fanon opposed the standard medical profiles of the day that deemed the male, colonized Algerian patients lazy, passive, depressed or withdrawn. Instead, he tried to understand how their experience of the colonial world produced such symptoms, and attempted to improve their experience of the world by cultivating and ameliorating cultural atmosphere for them. There is obviously a difference between the psychology of colonialism described by Mannoni, and that described by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Violence was beginning to erupt in Madagascar as Mannoni was writing, just as it erupted in Fanon's colonial Algeria. Mannoni may have not have seen the potential or actual violence of the psychological universe he lived in, but Fanon saw it all too clearly and tried to make his readers understand the full horror of colonial conflict with his account of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis in the colony.



Fanon punctures the claims of psychoanalysis to be a universal theory. He attempts to prove that any such universal categories are in fact intended to describe the human functions as a “mask over the assimilation of the human itself with European values” (Young, *White Mythologies* 122). Against the universals of psychoanalysis, Fanon insists on the specifics of the colonial situation that he is seeking to describe and understand. He describes this objective at the beginning of the most psychoanalytically engaged chapter of *Black Skins White Masks*, “The Negro and Psychopathology”: “One should investigate the extent to which the conclusions of Freud or of Adler can be applied to the effort to understand the man of color’s view of the world” (141). He notes his sense throughout his own readings of psychoanalysis that something in the theory does not quite resonate with his life as a black man: “I have been struck by the disparity between the corresponding schemas and the reality that the Negro presents” (*Black Skin* 150). Anticipating his readers’ comments that he is, in fact, only describing particular variations on universal themes he insists that there is something in the life of the man of colour being described which alters the whole framework. This is not merely a question of providing an example of how, in the particular case of the black man, the theory does not work. It is a case of showing how the lived experience of the colonized black man “stretches” psychoanalytic theory. In some instances, then, Fanon dispenses with concepts as they apply to the life of the man of colour, in other instances he provides refinements and corrections in order to make the concepts applicable to a psychology of colonialism.

Fanon believed that the urban proletariat of traditional Marxist thinking will not overthrow the rulers. Western workers were both the beneficiaries and the accomplices of latter-day colonialism; and the native proletariat, like the colonial bourgeoisie, remained tied to the privileges they had enjoyed under foreign rule, hence their support for the corrupt national elites governing so many post-independence countries. Only the veritable “wretched of the Earth,”\* wielders of the sickle and hammer, retained sufficient sense of community and self-value to reclaim their country and their dignity, by violence. Ultimately, this was the only way out of the so-called “Manichean delirium” created by colonialism, a phrase coined by Fanon to suggest the absolute dichotomy between the world experiences of colonizer and colonized, most strikingly demonstrated, he said, by apartheid South Africa.

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\* The phrase comes from the first line of the Left-wing anthem “The Internationale.”

Fanon resigned his position as chef de service at Blida-Joinville, on the grounds that it was impossible to cure with psychiatry the psychic wounds that were the direct result of the continued oppression of the colonial system. He was ordered to leave Algeria within two days by the French authorities, and went on to join the FLN in its struggle against French colonial rule. Fanon spent the rest of his short life with FLN, working tirelessly towards the ends of political and social transformation of Algeria. As an engaged intellectual, Fanon demonstrated how important political interventions could be achieved by developing the connections between his intellectual work, his medical practice, and his collective political activism. The impact of Fanon's analysis of colonialism can be felt in a number of related or distinct spheres. His insistence on a nexus between colonial hegemonic oppression and psychological repression of the colonized developed a psychoanalytic version of political discourse. This discourse of decolonization gave Fanon the status of a political philosopher who inspired anti-colonial liberation movements. Robert Young aptly says, "Postcolonialism remains irrevocably haunted and inspired by [Fanon's] analytical work and his impassioned example, as translator, empowerer, liberator" (*Postcolonialism* 147).

Fanon offered a vision, not a programme and he provided subversive insights into the cultural aspect of the postcolonial condition, which he repeatedly refined. Fanon's call to liberate the Third World through development has fallen on deaf ears. Governments in the Third World did not heed Fanon's warning against the pitfalls of nationalist consciousness. Self-styled revolutionary movements in the Third World and in Africa have failed to achieve a genuine decolonization. The questions with respect to the project of decolonization have become acute since the end of the Cold War. In an age where oppression lurks behind globalization, reading Fanon is urgent. It is important to revisit *The Wretched of the Earth* and to re-read it as we enter into a new age of globalized terror and violence.

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## A Room of Her Own, the New Age Woman in Indian TV Ads: A Feminist Discourse

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### Abstract

Indian Television advertisements enjoy a tremendous influence on our culture and society. While on the one hand the ads have the potential to change our habits, tastes, attitudes, perceptions and notions of the self and the society around us, they also are in turn shaped by the existing values traditions, customs, practices and behavioral patterns. The Ads also try to adopt and respond to the winds of change and demands of the contemporary society. The ad agencies are doing smart work in blending business and social commitment in a very subtle and discreet manner. In doing so they are playing a very positive role in reinforcing certain values that address, among other issues, the age old issues of women's liberation and emancipation. The paper attempts to highlight how some of the recent TV ads, unlike most of the ads in the past projecting women as stereotypes, are becoming more revolutionary, progressive and positive in the portrayal of the women today. The paper tries to analyze and revisit the role of television as a media in general and TV ads in particular in the light of feminism and cultural studies. A close study of the selected TV ads in this paper includes the description or summarization of each ad followed by its analysis from the feminist perspective.

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According to a study of the portrayal of men and women in television commercials Valerie Hooper observes-

Gender is one of the most studied social concepts as it is the main standard that people use in determining how to act and interact with others. Because television advertisements transmit cultural ideas about gender, they help to socially construct gender. Commercials may affect the way that people think about their own gender, and contribute to the ongoing social stratification of genders in our society.

(<http://news.healingwell.com/index.php?p=news1&id=615779>)

The *Nirma* detergent cake ad shows an ambulance stuck in a muddy pit. Four young women in their immaculately clean dresses get out of their car hurriedly to reach the place. They express shock and disappointment to see that the men

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who have gathered there are not making any efforts to push the ambulance out of the muddy pit. On the contrary they have become just onlookers, some even clicking pictures with their mobile phones. A man in his posh suit even expresses disgust at the mud on his coat. Without wasting a single second the immaculately dressed women look at each other and determinedly step into the muddy pit and apply all their strength to successfully push the ambulance out. As the men hang their heads in embarrassment and shame, we see the four young women proudly walk together in the backdrop of the fast moving ambulance.

The ad depicts a reversal of roles of the men and women involved. While the stereotypes of physical strength, the motivation to do dirty and difficult jobs, taking initiative for facing any challenge or crises have been the male prerogative traditionally, we see the women playing these roles in the advertisement. The old man cleaning the mud off his coat contemptuously stands in stark contrast to the way the four women without bothering about the clean and pretty dresses and make up, step into the mud. This again challenges the belief that women (especially modern woman) are too much beauty conscious and would not risk their looks and appearance for anything.

The second Advertisement is of Hero Pleasure scooter. In An apparently upper middle class house hold, the son and the daughter both are shown to be going out. While the mother very happily says 'bye' to the son, she asks the daughter disapprovingly where she was going. The daughter boldly tells her without any inhibitions that she is going out with her friends. When the younger brother asks the same question, she warns him '*chota hai chota hi reh*'. She also curtly answers the inquisitive neighbors that she is going out to have *masti* (fun). The questions posed by the people are represented by the signs of colourful question marks that follow her as she rides her scooty. The question marks are shown going to the dustbins, being trampled under the wheels of her scooty, and shunned by her. Other young women too follow her on their scooties. Finally she too throws a very important question that perhaps summarizes all the feminist argument- '*Ab Ek Sawaal AAP ke liye...Why Should boys have all the fun?*'

In this ad the questions asked by the characters and the colourful animated question marks represent the patriarchal values that give women unequal status and keep a constant watch on her to see her in bondage and

subjugation. It also reveals the darker truth that even today in the so called upper middle class, educated families and society, women are not free. The Ad also points to an important aspect that those who are asking questions disapprovingly are mainly women. This is a testimony of the extent to which women have internalized the fact that she cannot be equal to man. The irony still remains that a Woman herself is discriminatory. The young brother asking the sister the same question also is a matter of concern as he too at an early age has internalized the discriminatory values which would perhaps manifest in his behavior in future ensuring the status quo in society. But the power of the ad resides in the way the girl treats the same question boldly and fearlessly. The fact She tells the truth instead of giving falls answers itself is the strength of the ad. Finally her last question that she poses to the male dominated society challenges the superficial tenets created by man that keep women in slavery.

To quote Simone De Beauvoir- "Women, enjoined by patriarchy to be selfless, to be responsive to others but to silence themselves, were holding up, it turned out, half of the sky. The long-standing and vaunted divisions between mind and body, reason and emotion, self and relationships, culture and nature, when viewed through the lens of gender turned out to be deeply gendered, reflecting the binaries and hierarchies of a patriarchal culture. Mind, reason, self, and culture were considered masculine and were elevated above body, emotion, relationships, and nature, seen as feminine and like women at once idealized and devalued"

In the third ad of Fair and Lovely fairness cream we see a father convincing the daughter to get married to a boy of his choice. But the girl says she wants to work. Father tries to convince her - why he has a job, a good house, well settled! The overtone is that if he has everything why she should bother about anything else. (why does she need to work). According to his view it's a perfect match one doesn't get every day. The girl says she will marry the boy only after three years, after she gains a 'job , a house ... well settled!'. Only then it will be perfect match. 'Equal equal.'

The ad gives us two contradictory definitions of a good match. The father's idea of a good match is based on acceptance of woman's immanent status, a situation conditioned by the male dominated version which assumes that woman's happiness lies in a system where she is dependent on man for

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economic safety, prestige, security and identity. It also makes a very dangerous assumption that a woman will be happy if she gets such a package. But such a package puts women at the mercy of her male counterpart. This is the major reason for her 'immanence' that comes from becoming independent in all respects. The Daughter's version of the perfect match is based on the principle of equality and justice where woman demands the right to explore her potentials as an individual, find a secure place in society on her own terms and use her own potential like her male counterpart. The tagline ' *kahaan chupi thi abtak*' (where was she ?) suggests the arrival of the new woman, a woman who questions the male domination, who asserts her individuality, who doesn't want to live a safe, secure life given to her by her man at the cost of losing her identity. A woman too wants a 'transcendent status'. The tagline also purports that the voice of protest and assertion was hitherto missing

Mary Wollstonecraft rightly puts it-

. . . the only method of leading women to fulfill their peculiar duties is to free them from all restraint by allowing them to participate in the inherent rights of mankind. Make them free and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, as men become more so, for the improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of the human race are obliged to submit to retorting on their oppressors, the virtue of man will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet Let men take their choice. Man and woman were made for each other, though not to become one being: and if they will not improve woman, they will deprave them.'(192)

In the next ad selling Titan watches, we see two friends, a man and a woman meet after many years. On being asked by the man why she did not get married, the woman answers, she doesn't get time from her heavy work schedule. '*kaam se time kahaan milta hai*'

The man blames her and regrets that they could not get married. "We could have made it work you know, if you had only quit working'. The woman answers nonchalantly-*tum bhi toh quit kar sakte the*. (you too could have every well quit your job. Why me?) The man says *meri baat alag hai* (Its different in my case.) The woman asks 'how is that?' He says in somewhat arrogant and

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surprised manner, 'How can a man not work yaar? The woman smiles confidently and exclaims *Tum naa aaj bhi vaise hi ho jaise maine tumhen chodaa thaa.* (you are just the way you were last time I had met you. Not changed a bit.)

The ad like the previous ad focuses on the new age woman who is full of aspirations and ambitions, who loves her new found success, freedom, fame and money that gives her independence and identity. She also finds the reversal of the traditional role of a man and a woman defined by the age old patriarchal values of the Indian society absolutely fine. Even today, this is a revolutionary statement as hardly any husband would opt for not working simply for allowing the wife to work. The tag line is also a very strong manifesto of woman's empowerment- '*khud se naya rishta*, (connecting with the self) The woman has found a new relationship with herself, her dreams, her values, her individuality, her honour. She has found a new meaning of her life which she doesn't want to lose at any cost. She is ready to take responsibility of the consequences...of forgoing the promise of a secure life ...with someone who she loved..It is indeed revolutionary and path breaking that more than the man she loves, she values her 'self', her identity. Her priorities have changed. In this new avatar she appears to be very powerful and in total control of her life and her situations. The watch shown in the end perhaps symbolizes how women have changed with the times in acquiring a completely new position as regards men.

An excerpt from the article titled 'The New Age Woman is Here To Stay' published in *The Times of India*, dated 7th March 2009 is very relevant in this context.

... Irrespective of the challenges she has to face or people she has to leave behind, she has no qualms paying the cost to tread her own path. Well, that brings to mind the latest Hollywood sensation Freida Pinto, who didn't mind bidding adieu to her man when she was about to touch the pinnacle of success. ....she only did what men had been doing for ages - set priorities, exercise choice and move ahead to taste success. It's now that she's learnt the game of enjoying equal rights, equal pay, equal respect and equal opportunity, which was only a theory till now.

Havells Appliances have come up with a series of ads dedicated to woman. Their tagline asks the viewers to "respect women". In the first ad a man



who is a general manager, asks his wife to iron his clothes. The wife places an iron in front of him and says that a general manager should know how to iron. In one more ad of Havells, a husband asks his wife to make a juice for him and his friend. She keeps a juicer on the table and introduces herself to the husband's friend, 'by the way I'm his wife. He thinks I'm a kitchen appliance. No way!

The family of a man working in America has come to a household with a marriage proposal. The mother of the boy says that she insists on her son getting married as he has to go out in the snow in US even for a cup of coffee. The Girl brings the coffee machine from the kitchen and places it in front of them. She tells them flatly he can very well marry the coffee machine that would give 24 hours coffee. She emphatically says, 'I'm not a Kitchen appliance'.

These three ads present women revolting against the traditional gender prejudice. She wants the man to learn once for all that she too is a human being and can no more be treated like an object represented by the iron and juicer. She no more wants to be controlled by the man who thinks her to be his slave. The second and third advertisements want the viewers and the society at large to make a distinction between a kitchen appliance and a wife. The distinction is clear. Wife is a human being at par in all respects, with the husband demanding the same status, dignity and opportunity.

In one more ad by the same brand a man is struggling with the tune of the famous Bollywood number humma, humma on his guitar. The wife corrects him by singing the right tune. Offended, the man mockingly orders her to go to the kitchen and make sandwich for him. The woman says very determinedly, 'I will show you what I can do in the kitchen'. She is further shown to create class music with the Havells electronic kitchen appliances. While she is preparing the sandwich she sings fantastically in the background music of the appliances that she has orchestrated. Impressed, the husband joins her with his guitar. In the end she poses a question, 'Now say, you still think a woman's place is in the Kitchen? The Man admits that he was wrong. The woman's place is, 'wherever she wants to go.' She further asks him to make a sandwich for her. He laughs the idea expressing the embarrassed that he can't. The ad shows that the man can't accept the woman to be better in doing anything than him. His age old superiority and power would go if she gets an opportunity to prove herself. It is in the larger interest of the hegemonic values that he keeps her in the state that



forebodes her from social participation. But the merit of the ad lies in the way the woman creates in her own world with limited or no resources, a parallel and better creation than her male counterpart. Once again the ad shows the boundless capacities and power of a woman that was for ages locked in the dark dungeon of male hierarchy. The positive message is that man in the ad admits this truth. The embarrassment of the man can be seen when the woman asks him to make sandwiches, something that he can't do. The catch line is that woman can do anything that a man can, but the man can't do everything that a woman can. So the inadequacy, the limitations, the weakness and the "fault" lies in the man, not in the woman.

To quote Nietzsche-

What inspires respect for woman, and often enough even fear, is her nature, which is more "natural" than man's, the genuine, cunning suppleness of a beast of prey, the tiger's claw under the glove, the naiveté of her egoism, her uneducability and inner wildness, the incomprehensibility, scope, and movement of her desires and virtues.

In another ad, we see a wife serving *idli sambar* to her husband who regrets that had his mother been there he would have got three different types of chutneys. Wife keeps the Havells Mixer grinder on the table and says that he can make 25 different types of chutneys using the same. She sarcastically exclaims, 'chutney....Patni (wife)', trying to make him realize the difference. The noteworthy fact is that the man has been pampered by his mother who perhaps has spent her life serving her family, keeping her husband and children happy at the cost of her own happiness. The effort and time that goes into making one chutney is tremendous. Making three, is an indicator of the exploitation of woman as a housewife where cooking is just one part of her endless work.

The free woman is just being born ; when she has won possession of herself ...when woman's unmeasured bondage shall be broken ,when she shall live for and through herself, man – hitherto detestable having let her go, she too will be poet! Women will find the unknown....she will come upon strange, unfathomable, repellent, delightful things: We shall take them, we shall comprehend them.

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The ads mentioned above depict the protagonists representing the confident, bold and assertive voice of women. These ads show little or no component of male voice speaking for equal rights of woman. The following two ads however have male voices expressing feminist concerns.

In one such Havells' advertisement we see Vikas Parmar and Shanti Pandit go to a marriage registrar's office for getting their marriage registered. The registrar tries to write the changed name of Shanti as Shanti Parmaar as is the custom in India. The husband Mr Vikas Parmar corrects the registrar saying that Shanti would remain Shanti Pandit. Rather, it's he who would become Vikas Pandit. He says 'I will take her name'. The jingle plays, '*koi tazaa hawaa chali hai abhi*'. And the tagline says '*hawa badlegi*'. The ad is a classic example of the initiative a man can take to challenge the hegemony and patriarchal social structure created by him. For a victim to raise voice of dissent and protest is but obvious. But for the perpetrator doing the same is the true indicator of the promise of change. The jingle sings that the fresh winds of change have already started blowing. The tagline too holds the promise for the future, the winds will change, for the better.

In the Airtel ad too we see such a reversal of situation where the wife, who is the boss of her husband assigns a project and deadline for the same. She leaves the office before her husband to reach home and prepare variety of dishes for him. The husband working till late in the evening to meet the deadline receives the wife's call asking him to leave the work and come home immediately. While the ad shows how a working woman manages the demands of work and personal life deftly and happily, it also shows the man in a secondary and subordinate role at work than his wife, happily accepting the reversal of role. The message is very strong and positive. Unlike the traditional belief, men and women can live a happy life even if the husband is lower in status than the woman. The two ads prove Caroline Heilbrunn wrong when she says 'The price of wifehood is abandonment of self.'

Soma Munshi's study of the portrayal of women in TV ads of 1990 found that traditional women's roles in the family were being subverted, and often with humour and ironic subversion, women were being given more power through consumerism. The traditional roles of women as wives, mothers and daughters law were being modified and changed to reflect social changes in the

interests of giving them more consumer power, and equation of liberation with product purchasing. The present study is the analysis of ads aired after 2013 which show women taking further leap towards emancipation.

In conclusion we can say that television as a media is showing more gender sensitivity. The discussion underscores the role of TV ads in furthering the cause of woman's rights. The discourse in TV ads constructs and reinforces the image of the new age liberated woman. The ads discussed are in themselves a document of woman's liberation. Advertisers make ads to sell products and earn profits but they also provide a platform for the feminist discourse. The visuals in these ads repeated continuously on the screens of millions of Indian households play a very important role in gender sensitization and creating awareness about gender equality. Its true indeed...

*Koi tazaa hawa chali hai abhi.....*

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## The Corruption of the American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

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### Abstract

The present paper analyses the corruption of the American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The 'American dream' is most affectionate subject of the American literature; however Fitzgerald in *Great Gatsby* depicts how, this American Dream, during and after 1920s, was collapsed. The era evidenced decayed social and moral values, in its overarching cynicism, greed, and empty pursuit of pleasure. In the novel Fitzgerald shows the reckless jubilation that led to decadent parties and wild jazz music by the opulent parties resulted ultimately in the corruption of the American dream. Paper also tries to show how the novel explores West Egg and its denizens representing the newly rich, while East Egg and its denizens, especially Daisy and Tom, and how they represent the old aristocracy. The newly rich people being vulgar, gaudy, ostentatious, and lacking in social graces and taste with unrestrained desire for money and pleasure surpassed more noble goals American dream.

**Key Words:** Corruption, American Dream, aristocracy, social and moral values, etc.

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The concept of the American Dream with reference to the statue of liberty signifies freedom and personal liberty. The statue is the Icon for the American Dream. Coming to the origin of the term 'American Dream', it was James Truslow Adams, a Historian and a writer who coined the phrase "American Dream" in his book *Epic of America* (1931): He observes:

The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable and be

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recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (Website)

The American Dream is an idea which suggests that all people can succeed through hard work and that all people have the capacity to live happy successful lives. The term has different shades of meaning. The idea of the American Dream dates back to the 1600s, when people from all over the world began to come up with all sorts of hopes and aspirations for the new and largely unexplored continent.

Today it generally refers to the idea that a man's prosperity depends upon his own abilities and hard work and not on any class structure. For some, it is the opportunity to attain more prosperity and success than they could have had in their countries of origin. For some others, it is the opportunity for their children to grow up with education and career opportunities. On the whole we can say that the American Dream can be defined as the dream that provides the opportunities and freedom to all the inhabitants/immigrants of America in order that they may achieve their goals in life through hard work and firm determination only.

The U.S. constitution states that Americans are entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" But this was denied to some of the Americans because of their race, class and color.

Anybody who manages to achieve his or her vision of the American Dream may be said to be 'Living the dream.' Everyone has his own interpretation of the term, the American Dream and what it means to them. In brief, according to the original meaning of the American Dream it refers not only to owning the material possessions but also to spiritual happiness. Happiness comes from appreciating and being grateful for what we do have.

The original sense and significance of the American Dream suffered a great loss in the course of time. Several writers in America have dealt with the loss and corruption of the American Dream. The American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) is also corrupted. We see the characters running behind or giving more importance to the materialistic life, forgetting their culture and becoming morally corrupt.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was a very influential author throughout the 1920s because he expressed the personality of the time. The 1920s was known as the "roaring 20s," and also for the large amounts of wealth, sophistication and carefree innocence that were enjoyed by the upper class. The era was also known for prohibition, an idea that was supposed to bring purity and innocence back to America, but prohibition really just encouraged more people to drink. In *The Great Gatsby* the corruption of the American Dream sustains throughout the novel. Fitzgerald portrays the 1920s as an era of decayed social and moral values.

Gatsby represents the American Dream of self made wealth and happiness. Gatsby was born as James Gatz, his original name, on North Dakota farm. He changed his name at the age of seventeen from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby when he began his career with Dan Cody. Jay had all of ties, with his family who were unsuccessful farm people. In order to increase his social and financial set up for his livelihood he used to work very hard as a clam digger and a Salmon fisher along the South shore of Lake Superior and though he attended college at St. Olaf's in Minnesota, he dropped out after two weeks. Disgusted by the janitorial work by means of which he paid his tuition fee and he returns to Lake Superior. One day he saw a beautiful Yacht owned by Dan Cody, a wealthy copper mogul and saves him from an impending storm. The grateful Cody took young Gatz on his yacht as his personal assistant. Traveling with Cody to the Barbary Coast and the West Indies, Gatsby fell in love with wealth and luxury. When Cody died, he left Gatsby \$ 25,000 but Cody's mistress prevented him from claiming his inheritance. Gatsby then dedicated himself to become a wealthy and successful man.

With some wealth of his own and dreams of more, Gatsby goes into the army. While he is stationed at his army post in Alabama town he comes in contact with a popular young girl, Daisy. Daisy falls in love with Lieutenant Jay Gatsby and becomes the embodiment of the American Dream for him. Gatsby was impressed with Daisy's beautiful home and her wealth. But unfortunately when Gatsby is called to fight at war Daisy marries a wealthy Midwesterner named Tom Buchanan. When Gatsby found that he could not win Daisy due to his low social status as compared to Daisy's. Jay, after completing his military obligation, returns to America and becomes involved in a drug ring. He acts in the guise of Cody, one of the remarkable self-made men. He switched on to

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corrupt get rich-quick schemes like bootlegging and gambling. Here Fitzgerald mirrors the ambition, despair, disillusionment of America in the 1920s. Its moral ideals are lost in order to gain the material success. V.N. Arora comments:

Psychologists might call Gatsby's case an example of arrested growth but it has more significance than that it represents an aspect of the American experience as well! At the age of seventeen when he changed his name (reminding the reader of the change of nationality of the immigrants), the orgiastic future was before him. At twenty-four, though the promises of his destiny were still promises, he met Daisy, who showed him a glimpse of his destiny, and its promise. At thirty-one when he acquired that palatial house opposite Daisy's dock, " he had come a long way... and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it" (P.162). This dream got drowned in a swimming pool, while its corpse remained floating. (Arora, 64)

Gatsby uses a corrupt form of the American Dream to acquire the wealth he thinks which is necessary to win back Daisy. He dreams as many children do of a bright world where all his fantasies would be fulfilled. Daisy was just like a motivation for Gatsby in the pursuit of happiness that is the American Dream. Similarly, Gatsby's powerful dream of happiness with Daisy had become the motivation for his excessive amount and criminal activities.

Nick, through whom Fitzgerald speaks, suggests that America in the 1920s had lost its way deliberately. America had become a materialistic nation and the dream of which people thought had turned into a cheap and vulgar substitute for the real thing. But Gatsby believed in the dream. Nick believes that Gatsby had failed to understand that the dream was already behind him, "Somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night." (182)

The Americans have belief in their dream; they pursue it and struggle, like Gatsby, to attain it. But they are like "Boats against the current borne back ceaselessly into the past." (182) It means that the Americans go on rowing against the current of time, trying to get back to that dream, bearing themselves backward like Gatsby who believes that the past can be repeated. When Nick



tells Gatsby, "Can't repeat the past?" Gatsby replies, "Why, of course, you can!" (111)

Even though Gatsby has amassed wealth through criminal ways, his dream is pure. His dream is to get Daisy through wealth. But Gatsby is not interested in power for his own sake nor in money nor even prestige. What he wants is his dream, and that dream is embodied in Daisy. He must have her and will do anything that is required in order to win her and it is this dream that ends up ruining his life.

Next to Gatsby, the character who is an example of the corruption of the American Dream is Meyer Wolfsheim. Wolfsheim is a 50 year old gambler by profession. He is one of Jay Gatsby's underworld contacts in bootlegging and racketeering. Fitzgerald based this character on a real gangster who fixed the 1919 World Series, Arnold Rothstein. Wolfsheim accumulates wealth through criminal, illegal ways and not by hard work. When Nick calls Meyer Wolfsheim to come to Gatsby's funeral, as he is Gatsby's friend in criminal activities, he refuses to attend the funeral by saying that, "I can't do it I can't get mixed up in it. There's nothing to get mixed up in. It's all over now." (173) The corruption of the traditional values and ideals of the American Dream can be observed in Meyer.

Coming to the Buchanan's Tom Buchanan, whose first view in the novel reveals that he is a very powerful man who thinks of himself to be an intelligent man. Tom lives according to his way, as he is both rich and strong. Nick describes him as having "A rather hard mouth" and "Two Shining arrogant eyes" Tom feels very proud of his superiority.

As he has lots of wealth that has come easily from his ancestors, he thinks that he can live life and enjoy it according to his own will. He has an affair with Myrtle Wilson, the wife of George Wilson, who runs a garage in the valley of ashes. Tom feels no shame or any feeling of guilty conscience, when on one side he is betraying his friend and on the other side he is betraying his wife, Daisy. Tom makes a display of his low qualities when he breaks Myrtle's nose with the back of his hand, because she is shouting "Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" in a vulgar fashion. It is Tom who pushes the affair between Gatsby and Daisy into open by asking Gatsby, "what kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?" (130) It is Tom who verbally attacks Gatsby to win his wife's belief back and destroy his rival's dream. And it is Tom who, after the death of Myrtle

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Wilson, tells George Wilson that Gatsby was the killer and then takes Daisy out of the area until the matter cools down.

Daisy, wife of Tom is beautiful, rich and white in color. But that whiteness is mixed with corruption that money brings. Fitzgerald suggests the nature of this mixture beautifully regarding her voice through the conversation between Nick and Gatsby:

She's got an indiscreet voice" I remarked "It's full of" I hesitated "Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly. That was it, I'd never understood before. It was full of money-- that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it ... high in a white palace the King's daughter, the golden girl .... (120)

Daisy promises more than she gives. She is the sort of person who is better to dream about than to actually possess. Fitzgerald knows very well both the attractions and the invitations of women like Daisy, who is modeled, in many ways, upon his wife Zelda. Daisy focuses on the outward and not on the inward life. Moreover she does not have a strong will and she turns or behaves according to the situation. She is not a trustworthy or believable person. Tom gained her love with a three hundred thousand dollar necklace, and then Gatsby tries to regain her with his huge mansion and a lot of nice shirts which fascinate Daisy. The following extract from the novel proves this point: They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds." It makes me sad because I've never seen such –such beautiful shirts before (93, 94)

Though the main culprit responsible for the death of Myrtle Wilson is Daisy herself, she has no sense of guilt nor the feeling that she is the murderer of a person. She is not bothered about Gatsby who loves her so much. She flees away with her husband from the situation, leaving it to be dealt with by others. It can be said that Tom, Daisy and Jordan belong to the "rotten crowd" because they are selfish, materialistic and cruel. They are without spiritual values or compassion. While talking about the character of Gatsby C.W.E Bigsby observes:

Gatsby, the sun-burned attractive young man who had discovered that 'people liked him when he smiled', is thus an inheritor of an already tarnished dream. Having naturalized his

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alien-sounding name he pursues a romantic vision but does so in a country whose primal innocence has long since been destroyed. Gatsby's experience is in many ways a simple re-enactment of the American experience. He has lost 'the old warm world' and in return has inherited 'an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves... A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts', like himself 'breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about'.

Even in the face of corruption and defeat there is an attraction in that man who can preserve his illusions intact....Gatsby has all the wrong dreams but the single-mindedness, the spiritual integrity with which he pursues them, commands respect. (Bigsby,133,136)

Kenneth Eble has aptly and succinctly brought out the failure of the American Dream in the following passage:

The American dream and the American disillusion come together in *The Great Gatsby*. The image of the Western past is the green past; the image of the ash heaps, the contemporary wasteland. Tom Buchanan and Daisy are both provincials and both have come East, he vowing to stick it out. Both are careless and corrupt, two qualities for which modern America has been condemned by a succession of writers from the close of the century on. So strong is Nick's reaction to both the dream and the disillusion that he cannot separate Jordan baker from the society which infects her. He can leave her behind and go his way alone to the West. (Eble,97)

*The Great Gatsby* emerged during the Jazz Age in adherence to false material values. Thus we see in the novel that all the characters lack moral and spiritual values. This depicts the moral irresponsibility of the affluent American society of the 1920s. The main character Gatsby accumulates wealth illegally solely to gain acceptance into the sophisticated, moneyed world of Daisy, the woman he loves. Tom, Daisy and Jordan also tend to lose their moral values. They are called the foul dust and careless people by Nick. Throughout American History, the West

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has been seen as a land of promises and possibilities—the very emblem of the American ideals. Tom and Daisy like other members of the upper class, have betrayed the American democratic ideals. The wealthy class is morally corrupt in the novel. There is no place for the spiritual values in a place where money rules. The traditional ideas and religion are dead in such a society and thus the American Dream is corrupted. We find many illustrations in the novel where the American Dream has gone in a wrong way. For example Meyer Wolfsheim's ways to make money are criminal; Jordan Baker's attempts at sporting leads her to cheating and the Buchanan's thirst for the good life victimizes others to the point of murder. Through such characters Fitzgerald mirrors the ambition, despair and disillusionment of the 1920 America which gave much importance to the material success rather sticking to their ideals.

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**POEMS**

**Songs of love**

Dr. N.G. Wale\*

---

Sing out my soul, thy songs of love,  
For love is eternal,  
That resides in the human heart.  
Love is tender and delicate.

Love is a golden mansion,  
Where all live delightfully.  
It is omnipresent.  
And continuously flows like a river.

Love gives peace and happiness.  
And brings two souls together,  
And all the countries together.  
Thus it makes the world happy.

---

\* Assist. Professor, Department of English, Balasaheb Desai College, Patan

## **Waiting for the Dear**

Dr. N.G. Wale\*

---

Standing on the college ground,  
I'm waiting only for thee.

My heart is beating,  
For I know the time of our meeting.  
Whenever I study in my custody,

Thou art seen in my heart.  
And I burn midnight oil,  
For thee only.

Standing on the college ground,  
I'm waiting only for thee.

And When I recall thee,  
Forget I myself only for thee.

Oh! Dear Examination!  
To acquire knowledge is my mission.  
Standing on the college ground,  
I'm waiting only for thee.

---

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## A Soldier in His Tent at Night

Shivkumar Agrawal

### A Soldier in His Tent at Night

\*Shivkumar Agrawal

A soldier in his tent ay night  
 Dreaming was he how to fight  
 Was it wrong or right to fight  
 Thinking he in darkness bright  
 Thinking was he what to do  
 How to kill man with heads two  
 .....  
 He ate his food n cleansed his gun  
 Played with mates n had little fun  
 Went to bed, he closed his eyes  
 Opened the kingdom of dreams n flies  
 In dream came his beloved wife  
 King he became of kingdom of life  
 Daughter and son were his two eyes  
 His dad and mom gave him surprise  
 The school where he had been taught  
 Came in dream, it made a spot.  
 Love is life, his teachers taught  
 Hate is death, he made his half.  
 The memories of his college day  
 Came in calmly and made a way.  
 Soon his eyes shed some tears  
 Nestled he had for many many years.  
 Soon one order dashed his ears  
 Burnt his eyes with red red fears.  
 .....  
 Standing on field, loaded with arms,  
 'Kill him at once', he heard one command  
 Hate in one and love in one eye

\* Arts and commerce College, Vaduj, Tal-Khatav, Dist-Satara

Standing he stunned, he torn in "Y"  
 Before him came a woman in white  
 Begging at his feet in the rays of light.  
 The woman was in tears with hands in fold  
 Wrinkled her cheeks as age made her old  
 In her face, he saw his own wife  
 Begging at his enemy's feet for life.  
 His heart was melted when he saw two  
 Babes and grands, he knew them who  
 At the feet of enemy, begging his wife  
 Begging she was but only for his life.  
 His wife in white at enemy's feet  
 Trembling she was in mid of street  
 He had her habit of seeing at home  
 Now she was standing on world's dome  
 A stroke, he broke, he shattered in sky  
 Standing he stunned n torn in "Y"  
 Hearing he was the words of captain  
 Seeing he was the scene of pardon.  
 Hate in one and love in one eye  
 Standing he stunned, he torn in "Y"  
 Skies, the flies, the seas and bees  
 Looking all were at him at ease.  
 Winds were stopped and ceased to blow  
 Brooks and rivers said "no" to flow.  
 .....  
 Soon he turned and saw men two  
 One had no head and one had two.  
 He entered his tent and asked his mate  
 "Can't we spread a bit love for death?  
 We are the humans and not any beast  
 On their blood, we can't have a feast  
 The blood, the blood, here we waste  
 Is enough to cure wounds of the rest

Here we spoil our blood in flood  
There men die for a drop of blood."

His mate was a man with no head at all  
And saw he his tears ready to fall  
And said "no place you can have here  
Here speaks gun and not thy tear.  
Dear, you don't have a lion's heart  
Homeward, you have to make a start."

He heard these words, of his friend  
Stunned he startled, with age old trend  
I am a human and not a beast wild  
Thought he again and again he smiled.

Oh! I don't have a lion's heart  
I have to make homeward start  
Here gun speaks and not my tear  
So there is no room for me here.

.....  
A long long breath, he took in sigh  
I have to fight, is right, but why?

Can't I love my enemy too?  
Can't I go with him on a family tour?

After all he is a man like me  
What, If he lives in beside country?

His blood is also rose rose red  
Two eyes, two lips and one head.

What, if he is a Muslim or Hindu?  
Or what if he is a Christian or Jew?

He, too, is a man like one "me"  
Can't we live together like one "we"?

He is my neighbour and that is fine.  
Who made him my enemy? What is his crime?

I am his neighbour, and that is also fine.  
Who made me his enemy? What is my crime?

My eyes are closed and blocked my head.  
I am a living being or a thing dead?

What to do next, I cannot decide.  
Though I know rightly, what is right.

Who made him my enemy, I know, I know  
He is my age old neighbour though.

Oh, I am an Indian and he is not one  
So, he is my enemy. Oh! What a fun?

I want to love, but I am asked to kill  
Is that the only way to climb this hill?

"Certainly not", my conscience says  
But I am not allowed to use my ways.

He is my enemy and bound to be killed  
With this one thought my head is filled.

If I kill him, I am bound to be crowned  
If I love him, then, I will be drowned.

Five fathoms deep into the seas unknown  
A traitor, a coward is what I will be known.

Crowned, or drowned, his head shook  
His eyes were open but had empty look.

Crowned or drowned, only two ways  
As love and peace are only two rays.

The choice was clear, he unable to define.  
Left all alone, he turned to the wine.

A bird he was left with feathers cut  
He wanted to fly in the high sky but

He was the deadest thing on the earth  
His thoughts were good but had no worth.

"The gold you sold to prepare my crown  
Could have been used for bread for the down.

Many men in this world go without food.  
Many men on this earth do not have hood.

To teach them culture, schools are wanting.  
For one bellyful, they spend day in hunting.

The world we live in is miles from them.  
Many of them today, do not have a name.

Can't we do something for them sir?  
With the money, money, we spend here?

Are wars must and can't we avoid?  
Can't we ride this world on the tide  
That goes and goes to the shores afar  
Where only love grows and not any war.

I know, I know this is not so easy.  
When in the task war we busy.



This world has capacity to accommodate one  
War and peace together create just none."

All he was talking to the man who  
He was the man who had heads two.

When in public, he used one head  
Talked he shouted he of books and bread

For those who had no food in head.  
For those unknown to shelter and shade.

When to himself, he thought of coins  
Gold and silver and bronze in size.

He killed his men and named them 'gold'  
He called them fire to make them cold.  
He slaved his men and sold them too.  
Caste, and creed and coloured them too.  
He was the man with two heads he got  
Two heads he had got but used them not.

.....  
Boiled his blood that made him hot.  
Stepped he ahead, but fired he not.  
Stopped he thinking and blocked hid head  
Hours he spent in lying on the bed.

Spoke he to none and offered he the lamp  
Went he straight to the enemy's camp.

A friend or foe, what him to call  
Both they same and same was all.

Night was starry and sky had a moon  
She was so bright, it looked as a noon.

"You are my enemy is what they say.  
What plus you have and in what way?"

He found his enemy in same state of mind.  
He was also trying a friend to find.

Eyes their met, and he was in tears.  
He was safe now but had little fears.

Fears, he felt but from his own men.  
Inside, he pulled his enemy then.

Love they said and kisses they had.  
Asked they about their moms and dad.

Spoke they about their farms and rains.  
Shared they their pleasures and pains.

Dashed one order their ears with fears  
Hearts with pains, eyes filled with tears.

"I am your enemy, you kill me, dear friend.  
I made a start, now you make the end.

Close this chapter or they will close thee  
If they see thee here loving thy enemy.

You kill me, you kill me or they will kill us two  
But he was not sure though it was true.

I am fond of dying ten times in thy lap.  
Let me die thy near and let's change the map.

He was all stunned, dumb and deaf and dull  
A living man he was or a dead skull?

Skies were seeing the scene of hate and love.  
Flies were echoing the sighs of painful dove.

They stepped ahead one foot only to come  
close.

Stepped ahead one foot, breezes of two those.

Flowers looked at them with open wide  
mouth n eye  
The lark was singing a song or was it saying a  
sigh?

"A thorny bush of yours that gives its shade to  
me  
The clouds on my land will give some water  
to thee."

Saying the soldier to his neighbour, it was  
time to home  
Calling they were sounds near when dust  
were to home.

Unknown to hate and stranger to fate  
The two had become rather late to get.

The monster in man who had heads two  
He shot his man first then his friend too.

They met the earth that gave them birth  
Mother's womb their tomb and hearth.

Crossed they the boundaries of land, men and  
What, if they were buried in no man's land?

---

**Hey Where you Going**

\*Shivkumar Agrawal

---

The sun is bright, the tide is full  
Roses due fresh and singing is bulbul.

The earth is green and blue is sky  
Where are you going and going you why?  
I am here, dear, thy deep near  
Let us make one, we two sphere  
You are my earth and I the sun  
Burn me not dear, have little fun.

The space between this life and death  
Though very small, is dear to all.

Come, come near, let's make love  
Cross all boundaries and break every wall.

Don't waste time, come near at once  
Open not heart but arms and lips.

Look not you, hey, here and there  
In the game of love, all is fair.

Hey, I am your lover and not any fool  
I am not a sheep with white wool  
Always you are crazy in love's game  
You are very dear to love and fame.

But what happened dear to you today?  
Looking you cool and such faded  
Fearless you are, then why do you fear?  
You are half me come my deep near.

Hey, where are ye going, leaving me alone  
Why are you going, none is at home.

You are my heart, my eyes, my beat  
What has happened, o my heart sweet?

The sun is still bright, the tide full  
The earth though green, you are pale gray  
Where are you going, going that way?

---

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