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IJ MER, Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, concentrates on critical and creative research in multidisciplinary traditions. This journal seeks to promote original research and cultivate a fruitful dialogue between old and new thought.
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Editorial ........

Provoking fresh thinking is certainly becoming the prime purpose of International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research (IJMER). The new world era we have entered with enormous contradictions is demanding a unique understanding to face challenges. IJ MER’s contents are overwhelmingly contributor, distinctive and are creating the right balance for its readers with its varied knowledge.

We are happy to inform you that IJ MER got the high Impact Factor 2.735, Index Copernicus Value 5.16 and IJ MER is listed and indexed in 34 popular indexed organizations in the world. This academic achievement of IJ MER is only author’s contribution in the past issues. I hope this journey of IJ MER more benefit to future academic world.

The current issue deals with South asian women writers of Indians, New Diaspora Women Writers, Communicative language teaching, Self Realization to Self Actualization, Bama’s Karukku and Baby Kamble’s The Prison we broke and etc. These applied topics are a fund of knowledge for their utilization.

In the present issue, we have taken up details of multidisciplinary issues discussed in academic circles. There are well written articles covering a wide range of issues that are thought provoking as well as significant in the contemporary research world.

My thanks to the Members of the Editorial Board, to the readers, and in particular I sincerely recognize the efforts of the subscribers of articles. The journal thus receives its recognition from the rich contribution of assorted research papers presented by the experienced scholars and the implied commitment is generating the vision envisaged and that is spreading knowledge. I am happy to note that the readers are benefited.

My personal thanks to one and all.

(Dr. Victor Babu Koppula)
REFLECTIONS ON THE USAGE OF LANGUAGE AND REALITY IN WRITING NOVEL BY SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN WRITERS OF ENGLISH

Prof. S. Prasanna Sree
Department of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

“There is easy reading. And there is literature.” – Anon Signpost

Given the intertwining of politics and poetics in the novel, which has been referred to as “an incorporating quasi-encyclopedic cultural form,” (1) the stylistic changes and innovations introduced by South Asian women writers to the body of literature written in English could well reflect and impact upon the changing social order being depicted. The roles and uses of mythology in South Asian women’s writings of today, and of the continuing influence of mythologies on the attitudes of South Asians towards women, these structural innovations succeed in reconciling form to its material, in producing a writing which is simultaneously distinctively South Asian in identity and also adept in conveying the reality of this hybrid and complex identity in English prose.

The Rise of the Novel in South Asia

The novel is not an art form intrinsic in the South Asian literary tradition, and the novel written in English is an even younger branch of its literature. As for the novel written in English by South Asian women writers, this represents a very recent development on the South Asian English literary scene.

The male writers have long been celebrated by the literary world, with Rabindranath Tagore winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 and V.S. Naipaul winning the same in 2001, and Salman Rushdie and Michael Ondaatje winning the

However Mukherjee, Spivak, Seshadri and other critics have already voiced growing concerns that serious literary criticism is still painfully inadequate both in quantity and quality in this young but rapidly growing branch of literature this lack of serious literary criticism may partly be due to the fact that this literary subculture has yet to be accepted into mainstream Western literature, but it may also partly be because the novel is an adopted form in South Asian Literature.

The publicity of successes of Roy and Lahiri on both sides of the Atlantic has brought world recognition for South Asian women writers and encouraged aspiring writers who are currently more prolifically published than ever before in the history of the genre. South Asian women’s writings have become more popular and widespread as a consequence. However Mukherjee, Spivak, Seshadri and other critics have already voiced growing concerns that serious literary criticism is still painfully inadequate both in quantity and quality in this young but rapidly growing branch of literature this lack of serious literary criticism may partly be due to the fact that this literary subculture has yet to be accepted into mainstream Western literature, but it may also partly be because the novel is an adopted form in South Asian Literature.

The Western novel has mainly been rooted in the concern over an individual’s situation or experience in a certain or particular given time and place. Many literary genres such as poetry and verse, epics and mythologies, religious writings, and oral literatures, have long been developed to very high art forms in South Asia, but the novel was a distinctly foreign and even alien genre.

It was alien in two fundementals.
A central underlying assumption of the classic Western novel is that it will contain an individual or individuals playing his or her role(s) in a specific place and at a specific point in human history. It also usually supposes that the individuals would be either coping with significant social changes or making significant social changes in their lives. The novel depicts and comments upon change - which is one of its most basic themes - as opposed to continuity. In this, the novel form was eminently suitable to writers who wished to depict the changes that were crowding thick and fast into urban and industrialized parts of South Asia, and it also was the perfect medium in which to record and detail the many and drastic social changes taking place as a result of the economical and political policies which were being implemented.

The South Asian literary shores giving importance of the individual transcending or escaping the constrains of his community, the notion not of the hero (for heroes are plentiful in South Asian epics), but of the protagonist. It has been argued by Mukherjee that where the Western protagonist is an individual free to seek his or her destiny and make his or her choices, the tradition-bound South Asian cultures leaves its people far less freedom of choice, (for its women in particular,) mapping or chartering their lives according to the dictates of culture, patriarchy and tradition, to a large and encompassing degree. Moreover, Hinduism and Buddhism, which are widely practiced in South Asia contain the concepts of destiny, reincarnation, and one's present life being the product of past lives, which is then portrayed by writers as a possible tendency of many South Asians to a certain passivity, resignation and acceptance. Characters in South Asian writings are therefore far less likely to be in the mould of the hero single-handedly charting his course in life.
and being the master of his fate and captain of his soul, defying the norms of his community in the process. Characters in South Asian novels are portrayed to be deeply embedded in their community, often seen to be wrestling with multiples of duty, tradition, expectations and familial claims, and their own culturally instilled passivity. This, of course, is in stark contrast to "the classical Bildungsroman(3) plot [which] posits 'happiness' as the highest value."(4)

According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, "It is ... impossible to write a good novel today that remains suspended out of time and space; it must have a definite location in the temporal and spatial reality."(5) Mukherjee further contends that the late development of prose fiction in Indian literature is related to the late emergence of historical sense amongst Indians.(6) Whether or not it would be impossible to write a good novel irrespective of time and place may be open to debate, but it is true that as an art form, the novel only began in earnest in India in the 1920s. The first novels were written in Bengali, and Mukherjee suggests that this may be because Bengal was the first region to have close contact with the British. The very first Indian novel to be written in English was by Bankim in 1864, entitled Rajmohan’ s Wife. This novel has been described as a "dud" by Rushdie and similarly by other critics, and Bankim himself reverted to writing in Bengali (with far more literary success) after his single attempt at writing a novel in English. According to Rushdie, for a further seventy years after Rajmohan’ s Wife, no English fiction of any remarkable quality was produced in India until "the literary stimulus offered by the English language gave rise to the Indian novel in English in the Thirties ..."(7) Meenakshi Mukerjee suggests that it may be no coincidence that the novel in English emerged in India in the 1930s, the decade just
prior to Independence, when “there was an urgency to foreground the idea of a compositenation.”(8) In the 1950s and 1960s, it was unsurprising that many, if not most, of the novels reflected the political upheavals of the age. The few women novelists of the time - Anita Desai, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, and Nayantara Sahgal, for example - wrote novels strongly threaded with political consciousness. The best of the pioneering South Asian women writers wrote in polished prose and fluent, standardized English. The women writers of the Fifties and Sixties were the few who had access to English education and publication opportunities due to family or social connections. The majority of these women authors could be classified as members of the elite; a relatively privileged class and/or caste who had the luxury of social or family support, adequate financial resources, and leisure time in which to write -they had Virginia Woolf's proverbial “room of one's own”.

The 1970s were, in Mukherjee's opinion, a barren decade except for the writings of Shashi Deshpande, and it was not until Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children burst upon the literary scene in 1981 that there once more emerged a profusion of liveliness in South Asian Literature in English. “Prose writing ..... created in this period by Indian writers writing in English is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 “official languages” of India ..... in the 1980s and 1990s, the flow of good writing has become a flood.”(9) In the 1980s, there was a rapid increase of publications by women writers in certain parts of South Asia, and this was probably in part due to the increased opportunities for education and employment, especially for women of the middle classes, an economically as well as socially defined class which was swiftly expanding.
By this point, a significant change in the genre had occurred. In the Fifties, authors may have displayed an inclination to idealise protagonists, acutely aware that many of their readers would be Western ones, consciously or subconsciously writing to portray “the authentic” character, and also the most virtuous. These writers of the 1980s were of the new generation brought up in a post-Independence Indian-subcontinent.

Authors were now choosing the man-on-the-road, the ordinary character, the everyday, middle-class protagonist, as their subject. To be sure, some like Githa Mehta still wrote novels like Raj, claiming to tell a tale of a princess and her extraordinary life, but the vast majority of writers had turned to depicting a social reality likely to be shared by millions of others.

The protagonists of these writings faced a common and central problem of seeking individual fulfillment in a culture which had traditionally proudly prioritized the welfare of the community over that of the individual. While this has much to do with the changed and changing readership, and consequently with whom the readers can identify, it also represents the third phase predicted by Showalter (10) that of self discovery, the quest for freedom now being turned inwards. The works of South Asian women writers follow this pattern and the novels are increasingly introspective, open-ended, and questioning. Issues are no longer black and white, answers are neither stereotypical nor easy to find, and there are fewer obvious villains. Men are no longer seen as the enemy, but society, norms, customs and traditions, continue to be regarded as hampering the growth and development of women. A new order seems to be emerging with the rapid changes of women’s economic circumstances, the disintegration of large joint-families, and the migration from rural to
urban areas. Female protagonists are seen to be in search of self-fulfillment, order, meaning and security amidst the confusions and uncertainties of their new conditions. No longer do authors look to larger-than-life characters and extraordinary scenarios to write about; they have chosen to draw their material from the known, the familiar, and the immediate. However, although it is understandable that these changes and the subsequent immediate effects on their lives may be uppermost in the minds of South Asian women writers, there is a curious lack of attention to politics and the effect that may be having on the lives of women in the subcontinent.

H.C. Harrex had noted that "the early Indian fiction in English may not have been innovative in form and technique, but it certainly was rich in its wide variety of themes", which he then divided into six categories: protest, reform and proletarian progressivism; India's modern destiny; social change and cultural transformation; regional and communal identities; the East-West encounter; questioning affirmation of tradition." Ironically, the contemporary South Asian women writers of today are not drawing on such a wide variety of themes, and of the six broad themes outlined by Harrex, only half are still being actively discussed. If Harrex were to comment on contemporary Indian fiction in English today, it is unlikely that he would be able to praise it for a "wide variety of themes". Protest, the destiny of India, regional and communal identities, and generally speaking, politically inclined topics, are largely avoided or neglected by South Asian women writers of today. On the other hand, there is a definite focusing and prioritizing of the East-West encounter and the mutually influencing factors; much is being written about the yielding of tradition to the demands of
modernity and technology; and there is little doubt that South Asian women writers are deeply engrossed in recording and depicting social change and cultural transformations over the generations.

In addition to the themes outlined by Harrex, South Asian women writers have included themes of domesticity, marriage, food, gender discrimination, and perhaps most significantly, the theme of victimhood. As will be discussed in greater detail in the course of this thesis, this theme of victimhood has secured such a central place in the genre that it effectively sidelines a number of other themes. It is a theme particularly favoured by the South Asian women writers. The concerns of South Asian women writers do naturally overlap with those of South Asian men writers, but there is a difference in emphasis and focus.

References
2 The only previous woman writer based in South Asia to win the Booker Prize is Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in 1975 for Heat and Dust; Arundhati Roy is the first South Asian woman to win the Booker Prize.
3 Franco Moretti, The Way of the World. The Bildungsroman in European Culture (London: Verso, 1987). According to Franco Moretti, Bildungsroman is the form which will dominate or make possible the Golden Century of Western narrative.
4 Moretti 3.
6 Ibid.

10 The three broad phases of development undergone by a literary subculture as outlined by Elaine Showalter as discussed in the fourth section of the Introduction.

11 Taken from Usha Bande, Victim Consciousness in Indian-English Novel (Jalandhar, India: ABS, 1997) XV111.
CONQUERING STYLE: STYLISTIC PROBLEMS OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN WRITERS WRITING IN ENGLISH

Prof. S. Prasanna Sree
Department of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

Any South Asian writer writing literature in English would be faced with the daunting knowledge that there already exists a considerable body of literature written in this language, not only in UK, but in USA, Canada, Australia and a large number of other Commonwealth Countries.

Regardless of whether South Asian writer cares to be regarded as a postcolonial writer, by writing in English, he or she would be keenly conscious of entering into competition in the most prolific writing language in the world. It would be difficult for the South Asian novelist to escape an awareness of the possible Western and global audience, simply due to his/her choice of language apart from anything else.

As much as English as a global language offers the author the opportunity to reach a global audience, the author is also challenged with the finding of a distinctive voice in this vast body of literature.

It was once assumed that the most insurmountable obstacle for South Asians writing in English was simply that they were attempting to write in a foreign language, the language moreover of their colonizers, a language other than their mother tongues.

Writing in English bore a tag of servility as well as the badge of elitism. Today, at least two generations after Independence, many South Asians are either bi-lingual or multi-lingual, claiming English not only as a mother tongue,
but as their language, and therefore, a language of South Asia. It is also an official language in India and remains in general use in other South Asian countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka, for official, educational and even military purposes. This proficiency and familiarity with English has meant a shift or change in stylistic problems for South Asian writers rather than a decrease of the same.

In the words of Bourdieu, "language is an integral part of social life, with all its ruses and iniquities, and that a good part of our social life consists of the routine exchange of linguistic expressions in the day-to-day flow of social interaction."(12) This being the case, the first and perhaps the most fundamental problem which continues to confront and challenge South Asian writers is the problem of presenting a South Asian reality in a language neither evolved to articulate it, nor comprising the necessary inherent concepts, notions, sentiments, attitudes, ideology and vocabulary. Even to this date, one of the criteria of a successful piece of literature written in English by South Asians would be the extent to which it is successful in employing the English language with fluency, yet remaining distinctively South Asian without sacrificing either clarity or aesthetics.

According to Mukherjee, one cultural reality in South Asia may differ largely from another cultural reality and the differences can be articulated in regional languages and dialects, "..... Cultural units in India tend to be aligned on linguistic lines."(13) In the vernacular languages of South Asia, or in bhasha, literature is inclined to be regionally distinctive; for example, Bengali Literature and Tamil Literature which originate from the north and south of India respectively, differ in their literary history, tradition and practices. Given this difference, it is significant...
that the works of a Bengali writer writing in English and that of a Tamil writer doing the same, a part of names of foods, clothing, places, and rituals which have been retained in the vernacular, are virtually impossible to differentiate, let alone identify by style, in written English. This 'disappearance' of the regional differences or distinctiveness is further compounded by the choice of material, particularly by South Asian women writers, who in their desire to strike a chord of common understanding across the spectrum of South Asian regions, have been inclined to select themes with broad or universal appeal. Moreover, because the target readership is diffused and may include those who have no first-hand experience of India, the anxiety on the part of authors is manifested in the pull towards homogenization, "an inability to perceive those realities situated outside the cognitive limits imposed by English and which cannot be appropriated into the East-West or colonial-indigenous paradigms." (14).

In general, the nuances and connotations contained in language depend on certain complicity on the part of writer and reader, or between two speakers, and rests on a foundation of shared beliefs. (15) Writing in English therefore, puts South Asian writers in the difficult position of not being able to simply and freely imply and connote, but of also having to explain and educate the reader in the process of reading. A South Asian writing in English cannot assume the understanding of his/her readers, or expect too much by way of common assumptions. "No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality." (16) In the translation of cultural notions through the vehicle of the English language, the author runs numerous and likely risks of symbolism and imagery being misinterpreted, of nuances being missed altogether, of signifiers falling on stony ground, of
innuendoes and intimations missing their marks

It has been noted by many critics that the problem of nuances and connotations appears most acutely in the writing of dialogue. If an author is writing of people who do not speak or think in English, the problem is acute, and unrealistic dialogue sequences may well be the result. Even if the author is writing of South Asians who do ordinarily converse in English, it may not be in Standard English but a brand of English which may be nearly incomprehensible to native speakers of English.

However, it is not only in dialogue that this stylistic problem rears its head; it can be in the choice of material too, although this is a problem which offers more obvious and ready solutions. Mukherjee explains it thus: "Generally speaking, his [the author’s] area of intimate experience is limited to a small geographical area. The quality that marks his writing is often the quality of that particular area, its typical responses and its distinctive spirit."(17) during the contemporariness this problem gets diminished with the increase in travelling and in the promotion of national identity. Many, moreover, are very cosmopolitan, and this cosmopolitan outlook is in fact one of the solutions to the problem of finding common ground and common themes in the choice of literary material. In choosing to write of urban situations and settings, for example, South Asian authors find they can trigger that chord of common understanding, both nationally and internationally, and thereby side-step the problem of regionalism. This however, once again inclines South Asian women writers to limit themselves to a handful of themes.

Some South Asian authors have discovered that problems can be opportunities. In attempting to convey new concepts, or concepts which would have been
unacceptable by traditional standards, or even concepts which directly conflict with culturally ingrained habits and expectations, writing in English is one way in which to find words, articulation, and notions, for change, protest, and difference. For example, in certain Indian languages, the word for independence, especially where it applies to women, may carry strongly negative connotations, and even the stigma of shame. In using English to depict and even express independence for women, authors are less constrained by the negative cultural baggage which traditionally burdened the concept. This unique position of the perpetual outsider has perhaps afforded them a unique springboard from which to make creative linguistic experiments. The novel has perhaps been the literary form which has offered South Asian women writers the best opportunity to engage and converse with their culture, to chart social and cultural changes, and to anchor notions and ideas in specific times and places. That these writers elect to write in English is a particularly pertinent point; while it is a choice loaded with political and social implications, English may also be the language in which they can experiment and recreate, offering them a new literary territory to be claimed and conquered.

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17. Mukherjee, Twice Born 174.
EXPERIMENTS AND EXPRESSION: RECRITIQUING THE CONCEPT OF INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH BY SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN WRITERS

Prof. S. Prasanna Sree
Department of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

As the problems of writing in English have changed over time, so too are the solutions so ingeniously devised by the authors. Literal translations may be neither adequate nor appropriate, and new linguistic experiments have become the order of the day.

Mukherjee identified three areas of linguistic experimentation tried by South Asian novelists, although she had her reservations as to the varying degrees of their success.

Experimenting with Diction

One of the most widely tried literary experiments by South Asian women writers is experiments with diction, and this is a many-pronged experiment. It may include direct and literal translations of words, proverbs and clichés, which may either be glaringly obvious and even disruptive to the reading process, or which may be subtly interwoven into the rest of the text. Literal translation however, is seldom the best solution, and most contemporary novelists choose to leave only single words untranslated, words which they either cannot or choose not to translate. Generally speaking, most South Asian women writers identify these experiments for the benefit of their readers by italicizing the relevant words. Some may choose not to do so, perhaps preferring to insert foreign words in the English text without drawing too much attention to the insertion, both for...
the purpose of reflecting their natural mode of thought and expression, and for a closer intertwining of their culture into the English language. Some authors provide translation lists at the back of their novels, which others, again perhaps deliberately, do not.

Words which are most commonly left untranslated are nouns, and more seldom, verbs. The untranslated nouns most popularly included in South Asian women's writings fall into a number of categories. Names of South Asian dishes or foods or fruits are commonly left in their original language, either because this imparts the cultural flavor more successfully, or perhaps there is no English equivalent. For example, one often comes across words like paan (betel leaves wrapping lime and nuts, which are then chewed), halwa (dessert made of grated carrot and milk and sugar), ghee (clarified butter), dhal (dish cooked with lentils).

Apart from names of foods and dishes, ties of kinship are often left in their vernacular also, perhaps for the sake of authenticity in dialogue, and again, perhaps to convey a South Asian approach to kinship and other relationships (for even non-blood related South Asians may well address each other as kin). Examples of these include didi (older sister), bhaiya (brother), bahu (daughter-in-law), chacha (paternal uncle).

However, it must be noted that such terms differ tremendously from language to language and from region to region in South Asia. Names of items of clothing are also commonly left untranslated. Examples of such would be sari (length of cloth worn wrapped around the body in specific ways), shalwar kameez (combination of tunic and pants), dupatta (long, scarf-like item), and even accessories like bindi (the coloured round dot in the centre of the foreheads of women), kumkum (the red powder sprinkled by married women in the
parting of their hair), mangalsutra (a string of black beads worn by married women).

Other words left untranslated are exclamations, and in this case, it is most likely that they are included in their original form for the sake of authenticity; especially in dialogues (because in moments of crisis and high emotion, it has been observed that many fluent but non-native English speakers are likely to revert to their mother tongues). Exclamations may include those ranging from pride to horror; shabaash (congratulations, well done), bas (enough, finished), hai ram (with religious reference and most commonly used to express surprise or shock), chichi (a chiding which is not directly translatable but the sentiment “for shame!” comes close to this). Conversation fillers which may either contain a whole array of possible meanings, or no particular meaning at all, are also deliberately included on many occasions; words like accha (okay), arrey (oh no, shame).

Apart from names of dishes and foods, items of clothing, ties of kinship, and exclamations, there are a number of other miscellaneous words left in the vernacular which are quite liberally besprinkled in South Asian women’s novels. The word Puja is one which makes a frequent appearance, perhaps because it not only translates as “prayer”, but it involves a certain set of rituals carried out in the process of the praying.

Another such word is Besharam, which could be roughly translated as “shameless” or “without modesty”, but which actually appears to be a word which encapsulates many cultural expectations and stereotypes and connotations. Used sparingly and appropriately, all these categories of words left in the vernacular which are included in literature written in English are justifiable and even desirable. The criteria in judging the
successful inclusion of these words would be relevance and clarity. Besides inclusion of words foreign to English(18), another linguistic experiment tried by many authors is the distortion(19) of or alteration or addition to English words. This, again, falls into several categories. The misspelling of English words is one form of alteration. An example of this would be saar for “sir”, which may be deliberately misspelled either to indicate the approximate sound of the mis-pronunciation of the word, or to indicate illiteracy, class, education levels, or regional dialectic influences. Often, misspelling is a successful device because in context, comprehension is seldom disrupted or threatened, and very often, a humorous note is added: “Excellent discipline, sooparb manners.”(20)

Another form of alteration is in adding to words, for example, gad-bad, politics scholitics, which is immensely common in bhasha. The latter two examples where the addition is an invented word made to rhyme with the English one is more often than not used to express contempt, disparagement, and discouragement, though sometimes it can be used in a playful vein. The alteration of English words also signals the possibility that these may be the English words which are included in vernacular speech.

One author who has revolutionized the use of the English language and made some of the most innovative and numerous of linguistic experiments, is Arundhati Roy. Her linguistic experiments are novel and largely successful; successful because they manage to infuse the English words with a South Asian (and perhaps Malayali) set of connotations without distorting the English language. The rest of this subsection will therefore focus on illustrating some of Roy’s novel and potent linguistic experiments. Roy’s novel The God of Small Things is full of capitalized words, and even phrases. “Crawling
Backward Days”, for instance, is Roy’s invention of another way of referring to the days when the caste system was legal and Untouchables suffered a certain set of social indignities. “Love Laws” is another such example. “... Love Laws laid down who should be loved. And how! And how much.” (21) Roy does not capitalize without attaching explanations and meanings, but once having capitalized and explained, she then uses these words or phrases again and again, thereby compiling a vocabulary of her own, creating a set of definitions pertinent only to her writing. The capitalizing of words, which by Roy’s usage almost amounts to sloganeering, enables Roy to encapsulate very complex cultural connotations in a compact manner, which makes for a very rich and unusual usage of the English language.

Not only does Roy capitalize as a set of referrals, she also does so to illustrate the workings of the minds of the twins, the protagonists in her novel. “If you ever ... disobey me in Public, I will see to it that you are sent away ... “(22) This chastising of the twins by their mother indicates to the children that “Public” is not only referring to the opposite of private, but refers to certain situations. “When Ammu was really angry, she said Jolly Well.” (23) Equally, the capitalization of the words “Jolly Well” indicates the perception of the twins of a certain mood of their mother’s, a certain mental state which is signaled and conveyed by her use of those certain words.

Roy does not limit her system of referrals to known words. She creates new phrases through the telling of little side tales, tales which feed into the mosaic of background or emotional inheritance of her protagonists, and the consciousness of which is seen to affect them in their lives. “Pappachi’s Moth” is one clear example of this, summing up in two words the tale of frustration
and grief of the protagonists' grandparent, which filters through with all types of negative connotations into the existence of the protagonists, "A cold moth with unusually dense dorsal tufts landed on Rahel's heart. "(24)

One stylistic device which many authors employ, and which Roy exploits to perfection, is the combining of two or more English words to form a new word which taps into pre-existing codes or triggers a certain understanding. For example, "sour metal smell", is explained by Roy through the process of association of experience, "like the steel bus rails and the smell of the bus conductor's hands from holding them."(25) This is a method which works very effectively, both linking the reader from the a posteriori to the a priori, as well as conjuring up a whole set of associated memories.

Roy is an author almost playful in her use of English. Besides capitalising words, Roy also reads words backwards, "BE INDIAN, BUY INDIAN." "NAIDNI YUB, NAIDNI EB." She combines words like "bluegreyblue" to describe the colour of a person's eyes, and she separates words, "A wake. A live. Alert." Through the use of all these devices, Roy deconstructs and decodes English words to enable a new and culturally different perception of them. In this, Roy is amongst the most successful of South Asian novelists for her mastery of the English language to the extent of being able to make it serve her ends in expressing and depicting a South Asian set of values and realities. This is the process of reconciliation of two realities being carried out painlessly and with true elegance. Roy has much explaining to do in the course of her novel - which does not make for easy reading - but she blends the education of the reader into overall the construction of the novel without running the risk of losing the narrative thread. "For me, the way words, punctuation and paragraphs
fall on the page is important as well - the graphic design of the language. That was why the words and thoughts of Estha and Rahel, the twins, were so playful in the page...I was being creative with their design."(26)

It would be useful to juxtapose Roy’s linguistic experiments with those of another woman writer who also sought to express herself and her reality in a novel form. Ntozake Shange is an African American dramatist, who was very self-aware in her alteration of the Standard English. Instead of capitalizing words or phrases, she put names and other normally capitalized words in the lower-case, seeking the right to redefinition and re-identification. Shange experimented with the omission of punctuation marks, intending to upset the ordinary perception of readers, derail expectations, and thereby deconstruct."I cant count the number of times I have viscerally wanted to attack deform n maim the language I waz taught to hate myself in/ & yes/ in order to think n communicate the thoughts n feelings I want to think n communicate/ I haveta fix my tool to my needs/ I have to take it apart to the bone/ so that the malignancies/ fall away/ leaving us space to literally create our own image.’m

This quick glance at Shange’s work indicates the myriad of ways in which cross-cultural writers of literature in English experiment with methods, forms, and stylistic devices, to reconcile their subjects with their mediums. South Asian women writers, however, are notably far less aggressive or confrontational than one such as Shange in their linguistic experiments and usage of English. Theirs is seldom a challenge to the mainstream literature; their tone is persuasive rather than defiant. Anger is not a tone commonly found in literature by South Asian women writers. In fact, this lack of anger is a significant
characteristic of South Asian women’s works in the context of Third World women writers.

References

18 It must also be noted that the English Language may intend to or already have incorporated some such words.

19 I use the word “distortion” without necessarily wishing to imply any misuse of the English language.

20 Taken from Anita Rau Badami’s Tamarind Mem (London: Viking-Penguin, 1996) 22.


22 Roy 148.

23 Ibid.

24 Roy 112.

25 Roy 72.

SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN WRITER'S EXPERIMENTING WITH SYNTAX WHILE RE-PRESENTATIONS AND REFLEXIONS IN INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Prof. S. Prasanna Sree
Department of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

The second form of experimentation as identified by Mukherjee is experimentation with syntax. Constructing what would be considered back-to-front sentences is a fairly common device because it suggests literal translation: from a language which may differ tremendously in sentence construction from the English language. For example, this is a sentence in a novel spoken by a Sindhi horoscope reader/priest in his opening remarks to a client, "'Nowadays, even for God, people will not pay,' Bhai Sahib grumbled." (28) Such sentences may deliberately be included by the author to indicate that the character is not a native English speaker, or it may indicate that the conversation is not actually taking place in English. In other similar instances, it is unclear as to whether or not such sentence constitutes the manner of expression most natural to the author, which is then transposed onto the character. It may also indicate that the author is partially under the influence of second language interference. There are occasions where Indian-English syntax may come across to the native English speaker as quaint or amusing. For example, Bhai Sahib of the paragraph above, when recommending a sapphire to his client which would defend her against evil influences, says, "The quality is not mattering, only the stone is mattering." (29) This particular type of English is instantly recognizable to those who are familiar with Indian-flavored
English as being a very typical instance of how English is indeed commonly used (or misused) on the subcontinent. Deliberately incorporating grammatically incorrect English and experimenting with misspelling words may be one way of imparting a South Asian flavor to the writing, but as has been mentioned, it is also a literary device to indicate the social background or circumstances of the speaker.

One South Asian author who employs syntactic experimentation with a notable degree of success is Anjana Appachana. Appachana records or composes grammatically incorrect English in dialogue with such skill and consistency that she successfully depicts an Indian brand of English, and retains that note of authenticity. Appachana deploys this technique in a sympathetic manner, infusing humour without malice into her writing.

"Mr Aggrawal chuckled. "Madrasis, they are speaking such badly pronouncing English." "Yes," Mr Singh guffawed. "These Yannas, they are saying yex for x, yam for am ... when they are speaking English, no one is understanding."

"How it matters what English they are speaking?" Mr Srivastava groaned. "All I am wanting is good Madrasi tenant for my barsati and only tenants I am getting are from north." Mr Singh nodded sympathetically. "I myself being Punjabi am seeing this."(30)

Appachana's other writings include instances of sentences in dialogue being short and abrupt, ungrammatically cut off, repetitive, circular in thrust, and generally capture in written form typical speech patterns. Appachana reconciles her two realities by rearranging English words to express Indian sentiments. Anjana Appachana is one of the few women writers who have succeeded in discovering and manipulating the porosity in the language boundaries between English and the Indian languages.
Experimenting with Imagery

The third mode of experimentation Mukherjee outlined involves the use of imagery. It may be imagined that the imagery and symbolism employed by South Asian women writers would differ tremendously from their European or American counterparts, for instance. The use of imagery is closely allied with cultural understanding of stories, myths, and legends. The role of mythology will be analysed in the last section of this chapter, and the use of imagery will be differed to the same section.

Other Experiments

In concluding this study of the various stylistic experiments employed by South Asian women writers, it is worth mentioning two other authors, Bulbul Sharma and Rama Mehta, who have imaginatively employed techniques of bridging the cultural divide. Bulbul Sharma wrote a collection of short stories which was remarkable even in its form alone. The Anger of Aubergines. Stories of Women and Food intersperses short stories with recipes for the dishes mentioned in the stories. The stories highlight and analyze the relationship between South Asian women and their food, and it not only mentions wide selection of dishes, but also explains the ingredients and methods. The recipes and the careful explanations convey a sense of the author attempting to communicate directly with her readers, and it also suggests that readers of different cultures could bridge their differences in coming together on such common grounds as culinary interests. It is amongst the most accessible of South Asian writings in English, structured, as it is, to be accessible.

Sharma’s work is also significant because it can be seen to be forming the recently emerging pattern of contemporary women’s writings, which explore new forms and styles which some women writers are most comfortable with.
and through which they feel best to be able to express themselves. African American women writers have also displayed many instances of including recipes and herbal concoctions in their young literary tradition, and otherwise using distinctively feminine modes to convey their multi-layered meanings.

Sharma draws attention to many aspects of the South Asian culture while writing in conventional English, using form and content, rather than medium or language, to communicate a South Asian ambience. This technique is contrary to many other authors who deliberately seek to keep the names of foods and dishes in the vernacular, but it is a technique no less workable. For Sharma's South Asian readers, there would be the pleasure of meeting the familiar in an unfamiliar, and to her non-South Asian readers, there would be the complementary pleasure in reading of the unfamiliar in a familiar language and syntax.

Apart from the style and literary devices used by South Asian women writers to infuse their writings with a sense of place, there is one more significant and oft overlooked technique of writing which manages to convey a way of thinking, a mental approach to issues which is natural to people of certain ethnicities, for example, and wholly alien to people not of those ethnicities. The following illustrations of this technique are drawn from Rama Mehta's Inside the Haveli, published in 1977. Mehta's novel is written in fluent English, but it is also clearly the work of an author fluent in at least one other language judging from the sentence structures and manners of expression, which are far from being those of conventional standard English. Published in London, this novel describes a lifestyle which would be totally alien and unknown to the average Briton. Mehta
attempts to convey to her readers the internal workings of a Haveli” in Rajasthan, a social set-up which is feudal in structure.

To this end, Mehta retains rather than translate many terms, such as terms of kinship and address for example, “Bai Sa, Bua Sa, Kaki Sa, Mami Sa”, the honorific “ji” attached to names, and also names of foods such as “roti” and “laddoo”. Mehta does translate some phrases which she judges would be incomprehensible to her English speaking readers, phrases which also convey the flavour of the place and period, such as the traditional blessing of “May you have eight sons”, or “May the Haveli flourish for ever”. The narrative itself contains much explanation, ostentatiously for the benefit of Geeta, the haveli’s newest arrival, but also for the benefit of the reader uninitiated in knowledge of Rajasthani and haveli customs. However, Mehta’s most successful experiments in conveying the practices and ideology which governs a haveli in Rajasthan lies in her characters’ dialogue, which reveals their mental approach to issues, their expectations, their values, and their social norms. For example, the mistress of the haveli comes upon a quarrel between two of her servants, Lakshmi and Lakshmi’s husband, Gangaram: “Leave my maid alone. Get out of here. Who are you to talk to her in this fashion in front of me? I have brought her up. How dare you raise your hand in my presence? Did I marry her to you that you treat her like this? Remember, she is your wife.” (32)

It is edifying to follow the mistress’s train of thought as she reacts to the tensed situation where Gangaram accuses Lakshmi of infidelity and adultery. Her very first command to Gangaram is given referring to Lakshmi as “my maid”, not “your wife”, which stresses the priority assigned to the relationships within the haveli, and stresses too
the authority of the mistress, which is apparently above even the traditional conjugal authority of a man over his wife. Next, she forcibly reminds Gangaram of his lowly position with regard to herself, emphasizing not only her authority over Gangaram’s wife, but also over Gangaram himself. She goes on to say, “I have brought her up.”

This seemingly is a fact which carries much weight and substantiates her claim both to the authority she assumes as well as to her role as Lakshmi’s defender. The mistress’s anger flashes out again as she rebukes the man servant for forgetting himself and what is due to her as a mistress in daring to “raise his hand in [her] presence”. Only after all this does she finally mention the fact that Lakshmi is Gangaram’s wife, and once again, with reference to the part she played in the arrangement, which almost implies a transfer of ownership, and which certainly implies that the duty Gangaram owes to his wife is secondary to the duty he owes to his mistress.

In all her arguments, the mistress of the haveli reveals the control the haveli has over the personal lives of its inhabitants, the internal hierarchy of power, and the demand for loyalty, obedience and awareness of one’s proper place and position on the part of servants. This short passage alone illustrates the social values of such a society.

Mehta writes in English, but in certain sentences, she appears to be mentally translating her ideas from another language into English, such as “Did I marry her to you that you treat her like this?” [italics mine]. Although the general purport of the sentence is easily understood, it is a rather odd manner of expression.

Having examined all manners of experiments with the usage of the English language by South Asian women writers, it would also be instructive to turn our attention to how the writings are constructed,
the framework within which all these literary experiments are made.

**Forms and Frames**

It is unsurprising that even today; many successful contemporary South Asian novelists are also short story writers. In terms of historical and geographical coordinates, short stories differ from novels and even from novellas in that they need not be (although they often are) rooted in a particular time and place.

"The difference between the novel and the short story is primarily in the contrasting treatment of the same material. The same personages may appear equally in short stories, or in a novel, but the point of view is entirely different, for the short story observes people from the outside, the novel from the inside. The short story writer describes impressions of life which he [sic] has seen, the novelist sympathetically portrays the life he has entered into and made his own."(34)

Although there have undoubtedly been some South Asian women writers who appreciate the differences between short stories and novels, and have skilfully employed the short story form, there have also been others who seem to use the short story as a way of trying their hand at writing, as a preparatory ground to writing a full length novel. Further, a fair number of South Asian women writers appear to either deploy the short-story form simply as a mini-novel, or to regard the novel as a extended version of a short-story. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (a diasporic author from USA) goes so far as to have produced one story in her short story collection which she then used again, with the same plot and characters, and even using many of the exact same sentences in a later novel, merely embellishing the original short story and detailing the scenes a little more. The entirely differing point of view as explained in the quotation above, which
differentiates and sets the two forms of writing apart, are completely lost in Divakaruni’s handling of her material. Juxtaposing the following quotes will provide a clearer idea as to the extent to which Divakaruni reuses material and reproduces sentences verbatim, with no appreciable change at all in viewpoint. In Arranged Marriage (a short story collection), the protagonists are Anju (married to Sunil) and Runu (married to Ramesh), while in Sister of My Heart (a novel) published 2 years later, the protagonists are Anju (again married to Sunil) and Sudha (married to another Ramesh).

From Arranged Marriage: “There is a lot of disturbance on the line. I can hardly hear Runu’s voice as she says hello ... ‘What’s wrong, Runu? I’ve been worried sick. Is it Ramesh? Or your mother-in-law?’ ‘No,’ says Runu, ‘They are fine,’ she adds with venom .... Then she says, ‘They want to kill my baby. ‘What?’ I am sure I heard it wrong. ‘They want me to have an abortion.’”

From Sister of My Heart: “There is a lot of disturbance on the line. I can hardly hear Sudha’s voice as she says hello. ‘Sudha, what’s wrong? I’ve been worried sick. Has something happened to Ramesh or your mother-in-law?’ ‘No,’ Sudha says, ‘They are fine,’ she adds with venom ..... Then she says, ‘They want to kill my baby. ‘What?’ I am sure I heard it wrong. ‘My mother-in-law wants me to have an abortion.’”

Many of the contemporary South Asian short story writers write with a particular and somewhat narrowly specified theme in mind. For example, Jhumpa Lahiri’s Interpreter of Maladies deals mainly with the adjustment Bengalis have to make when making the transition from a life in the East to a life in the West, while Shauna Singh Baldwin’s English Lessons and Other Stories revolves around a similar theme - that of Sikhs
learning to cope with life in Canada and reconcile two identities.

In writing a number of short stories with a common theme, these writers attempt to present a number of facets of the same social issue, and consequently, a number of ways their protagonists have chosen to deal with these issues. This technique has become increasingly popular and even celebrated of late. It is a form of framing not only tales, but of framing the diasporic experience.

The latent danger in this technique is that there exists within it, an underlying tendency, or at least temptation, to reduce complex social issues into bite-size (or at least short-story length) episodes. This “neatly-packaged” style of writing seldom progresses beyond being an exercise in depicting a social problem - as skilfully, lyrically, authentically, and completely as possible, but nevertheless depicting a definite problem, not simply a scenario - and then suggesting or at least portraying various solutions or possible methods of coping. I would argue that this very form of writing is a potentially limiting one because it restricts the worldview of the writers and encourages a prescriptive and oversimplified portrayal of lifestyles (either workable or non-workable), trapping the writer into a continual process of categorisation. However, it must be kept in mind that short stories are more apt to embody timeless themes and are generally less dependent on social context than novels. Consequently, “short stories are more likely to identify characters in archetypal terms and are more patterned and aesthetically unified than novels are.”

Not all South Asian women writers subscribe to this technique, which moreover, appears more popular with the diasporic writers than those writing from within South Asia? To take an example of an excellent short story collection which produces archetypal
characters but which is far from limited in its content and depth by its form, we may turn to Appachana’s Incantations and Other Stories. This collection of short stories is not constructed thematically, appearing instead rather more like a kaleidoscope of the social scene, giving the reader intriguing glimpses of a broad cross-section of Indian day-to-day life. This collection includes a tale of a young daughter-in-law struggling to cope with traditional familial pressures while maintaining her identity as a autonomous career woman, stories of parent-child relationships in a rapidly changing social and economic environment, the tale of a young girl traumatised by the knowledge of a beloved sister victimised by repeated and regular rapes, and perhaps most charming of all, it includes the caricature of Sharmaji. Clearly, Appachana realised the potential of this fictional character, and given the structure of her short story collection, was at liberty to include not one, but two stories of Sharmaji, the brazen, talkative, perpetually wronged Indian clerk, merrily exploiting the inefficiency of Indian bureaucracy. In her writing, Appachana reveals herself to be a humorous, perceptive, and sympathetic writer, observant but never prescriptive. Her stories are open-ended, non-moralistic both in tone and conclusion, and frequently tinged with amusement. Many South Asian women writers may have written collections of short stories, but few have yet utilized the montage form or the short-story-sequence. A montage differs from a collection in that each story, complete as it is in itself, is also linked in some way to the other stories, either through the plot, or through the characters, or both, eventually forming a unified whole. An example of this can be found in the work of an African American writer who first wrote a short story sequence because she was not certain of being able to write a whole
made, and thus chose to begin by writing short stories. Gloria Naylor wrote The Women of Brewster Place, a sequence of short stories where each story told the tale of different women living in the same block of apartments called Brewster Place. Naylor repeated the montage in another piece of writing, Bailey's Cafe, where each character who ended up at Bailey's Cafe had his/her own chapter and story. In both cases, Naylor added concluding chapters which brought all the characters together at one time and in one location, thus completing the montage in full. This stylistic device has yet to be widely adopted by South Asian short story writer. Given the increasingly favored style of writing short stories along a single major theme, the montage which encourages interaction between the characters of the various isolated stories, may serve to broaden the scope of the writing and reverse any tendencies to stereotype.

However, it is interesting to note that the montage form or short-story-sequence is gradually beginning to be employed by some South Asian women writers. Tahira Naqvi (a Pakistani author) and Thrity Umrigar (an Indian author) have both published works in 2001 which could justifiably be regarded as montages, in slightly differing forms. Umrigar's 'montage' is similar to that of Naylor's, and is a novel formed out of a series of chapters, each chapter devoted to individual Parsi residents in an apartment block in Bombay. Naqvi's short story collection could be considered a montage by virtue of the characters in each short story being related (sometimes tenuously) to the characters in the other stories, thus forming a network across the collection.

In both cases above (in Naqvi's work as well as in Umrigar's), neither author appears to have set out to use the short-story-sequence - it was almost by chance their

South Asian women writers seem to have experimented at greater depth with the use of language than they have with the narrative form or structure. Much fiction written in English by South Asian women writers is relatively linear in form and straightforward in plot construction. Flashbacks to the past in the memories of various characters, or characters digressing from the main story line to relate stories, are common enough, but they usually feed directly into the main story line rather than forming sub-plots or counters plots.

There have however been several experiments with interesting forms, and the following paragraphs will provide some thumbnail sketches of examples of literary structural experiments tried by South Asian women writers; some of which have only been partially successful.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in Sister of My Heart for instance, employed in a rather unsophisticated manner, a form of writing in which the two narrative voices of her protagonists took turns to be heard, each in alternate chapters. The form itself may have worked except for the fact that both narrative voices neither appeared to be one and the same character, a character with two names, the dual accounts neither conflicting nor individualized, the two opinions simply two halves of a whole. This somewhat oversimplified attempt at even-handedly presenting two protagonists did, however, succeed to a certain extent in juxtaposing two very different possible lives led by the women of one family.

Arundhati Roy portrayed most of her novel through the eyes of children, thus enabling her to question the most basic of traditional assumptions, even
inverting them, turning them on their heads with a child-like playfulness, to incredibly strong effect.

Roy's novel was constructed architecturally, influenced by her early training as an architect. Like rooms being built around other rooms, each character, furtively grinding away at his/her personal axe, contributes to constructing the catastrophe. Each action, petty or significant, goes a little way further towards exposing and straining the faultlines of the society, until the hapless Velutha, who is as much a victim of circumstances as he is everybody's victim, is eventually murdered. Roy's novel is also largely constructed back-to-front. It begins with the climax and oscillates back and forth in time, back to delve into the past for whys, and forwards into the present to see how the climax - a turning point in the life of many of the characters involved - has affected those who survived. Roy's time frame is not of a past-present-future, but of the hidden past-past-present. With the destruction of Velutha and the consequent crumbling of other sections of the social edifice of Ayemenon, Roy's novel exposed the hidden ramifications of the social structure and the effect it has on its individuals.

Another author whose writings dealt with the hidden past and the guilty secrets of communities is Anjana Appachana. However, the construction of Appachana's Listening Now is not along a time frame, but along a frame of characters. This long novel of 510 pages is segmented into nine sections, most of which are named after the women characters who feature significantly in the life of the chief protagonist, Padma.

Each section presents Padma's story from the point of view of the character it was named after, inviting the reader to take different angles of viewing, and offering the perspective of distinctly differing personalities. In each section, the
story is reiterated, but the plot is revealed a little further as more and more pieces of the mosaic of Padma’s life fall into place. This story line is neither linear nor circular; it is a spiralling one. The story is told and retold several times over, each retelling taking the plot a little closer to the conclusion. (Retelling and reconstruction in the work of South Asian women writers will be discussed at greater length in the following section.)

A South Asian novelist whose forte is form rather than language, and who habitually uses the structure of her narrative to emphasise her point, is Githa Hariharan. One of the most eloquent of structures found in her novel The Thousand Faces of Night is the protagonist’s communications with her husband. (The very title of this novel is reminiscent of The Thousand and One Nights which also features a wife attempting to hold her husband’s attention and to communicate with him.)

The conjugal exchanges in Harihan’s novel, (for that is what they are, exchanges rather than dialogues or conversations) slice repeatedly into the narrative, rupturing the flow of Devi’s life, jolting and abrupt. Hariharan times the insertion of these exchanges to perfection, reflecting Devi’s experience of married life with a husband who appears briefly and disappears frequently. This particular novel of Hariharan’s comprises three parts. We first encounter Devi in America through an omniscient narrator, but as soon as Harihan returns Devi to India, Devi’s voice begins to tell her own story, taking over from the voice of the omniscient narrator. This change in narrative voice is significant because by so doing, Harihan distances Devi from her American experience and hints that for Devi, her life like her voice only becomes distinct when she is home in India. In Parts One and Two, Harihan produces a heavy flow of smooth narrative, merging Devi’s
memories with her present, mingling fairytales with Devi's reality. This seamless intermingling is indicative of Devi being all but overwhelmed by tales, submerged into momentary forgetfulness of reality just as the reader is submerged into momentary forgetfulness of the main story line. In the third and final part however, the stories end for Devi when she leaves her husband. In this final part of Hariharan's novel, there are no more legends of princesses and splendours, no more fairy tales, perhaps signalling Devi's choice to turn from fairy tales of her girlhood and hopes, to confront the stark reality of the present she has chosen.

Hariharan is one of the few contemporary South Asian novelists to experiment with the narrative voice. The majority of the South Asian writers of the 1950s and 1960s writing English fiction, wrote in the voice of the omniscient narrator, distancing themselves from their characters, but selecting this as a position from which to write all-knowingly, to present an aerial view so to speak, of the scenes they observed. The omniscient narrator was a natural choice for the authors of this age, reflecting as it does their concerns with the wider political and social issues. As we have noted earlier in the chapter, there was a shift of focus from the community to the individual in the next two decades of writing English fiction, and this in turn has been reflected in the shift of the narrative voice from the omniscient to the first person narrator. Moreover, where personas were of both genders in the Fifties and Sixties, increasingly in the following decades, the personas chosen by South Asian women writers were women. It is thought that the contemporary novels of South Asian women writers are many of them at least partially autobiographical.

By the 1970s, there was also a definite pattern emerging of South Asian women writers projecting
their childhood memories and experiences into their novels, drawing upon this rich and relatively untapped vein of material for their writings. Anita Rau Badami in Tamarind Mem for example, uses the first person narrator to tell the tale of a girl growing up as a daughter of a strong but unfulfilled mother, whose husband's job on the railways meant a life of continual uprooting and resettling. Shama Futehally, in Tara Lane also employs the first person narrator to portray the life of a sheltered and privileged girl growing up to take her place in a sheltered and privileged world created by her men-folk, a persona haunted by an active conscience and burdened with the guilt of class privileges, yet terrified of disrupting the delicately balanced equilibrium of her comfortable life. Anjana Appachana also uses the first person narrator predominantly, but hers is a slightly different usage in that Listening Now is a novel with many first person narrators. Appachana democratically hands the narrative voice from character to character, and this structure highlights the complex, confusing, and close-knit gallimaufry of voices and influences in the life of her protagonist. A recent diasporic voice on the literary scene, that of Meera Syal, offers yet another twist on the use of the first person narrator device. Syal in her most recent work, Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee has three first person narrators (as well as an omniscient narrator to organise the progression of novel), but she shows that none of the three are reliable narrators, that each believes they are speaking the truth reliably, but in actuality, none are able to see the complete picture. Syal's undermining of the reliability of the narrator questions the reliability of the opinions and ideas which she has been fed and or which she has otherwise imbibed. Syal's work also questions the validity of the role models and moral code taught to South Asian women.
References

28. Ntozake Shange, for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow hasn’t been enuf(1978. London: Methuen, 1992) 68.
30. Chand 12.
31. This excerpt was quoted at some length in order to impart the full experience of this brand of English. Taken from Anjana Appachana’s Incantations and Other Stories (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1992) 65.
32. The term “porous language boundaries” was taken from Mukherjee, Perishable Empire
34. Mukherjee, Twice Born.
37. Ibid.
38. Harihan’s 1999 novel, When Dreams Travel, deals directly with the characters from A Thousand and One Nights. In this novel, Harihan deconstructs the original story of Sheherezade
Story telling has been identified by South Asian women writers as part of the oral tradition, a tradition predominantly practiced by women, and one of the traditions common to women of all classes and castes. In a patriarchal culture which imposes many and varied restrictions on women, storytelling serves to inform while concealing, to inspire and caution, to threaten and entreat. Story-telling is a very important aspect of South Asian culture, being an indispensable tool of communication in a world of oblique and unspoken rules, imbibed and ingrained fears and taboos, unwritten but inflexible behavioral boundaries. It features most prominently in the women’s world where straightforward and frank discourse may be neither approved nor permitted. Like the African Americans who evolved forms of signifying in language in order to retain, conceal, and convey meanings in the face of oppression while escaping detection and punishment, South Asian women have also evolved their own forms of signifying, one of which is story telling. (39)

Story-telling involves the recounting of legends, myths, and also the tales of one’s family and familial history. Mukherjee commented upon the use of myths in South Asian writing as the part of the novel which was not imported. In all other respects, she noted that the South Asian novelist was at liberty to take a leaf out of the book of his or her Western counterpart,
but in recounting legends and tales, South Asian writers had to turn to their own culture. It has been argued that this is a relatively comfortable situation for South Asian novelists because South Asians are closer to their mythologies than many others, and experience their legends and tales on a day-to-day basis rather than in any textbook. Myths are very widespread across South Asia, and many cultures and regions may share the same mythologies, but these could appear in many variations.

Mukherjee identified two ways in which myths are used by South Asian writers; the "digressional technique", which is the story told within the story and generally used as mini-moral lessons or fables, and the "structural parallel", where a mythical situation underlies the whole or a part of the novel. She further noted that the use of mythology by South Asian writers may either be conscious or subconscious. As a literary device, myths are generally used to enrich and enhance a tale, by extending the understanding of the reader and tapping into an already existing knowledge or set of ideologies and cultural norms. Using myths as touchstones or reference points may be a quick way of neatly presenting a complex social situation. Myths work on the basis of readers and authors having common assumptions, depending upon the reader to make the connection between the new protagonist and the mythical character. Critics, both Western and Eastern, have commented upon the danger of myths which both provide and reinforce archetypes and obsolete moral codes, thereby informing, shaping and exploiting expectations.

"Few myths have been more advantageous to the ruling class than the myth of woman; it justifies all privileges and even authorizes their abuse."(40) The proximity of South Asians to their myths and legends, the interweaving of such
tales into the fabric of ordinary living, may therefore represent a problem. Myths, by their nature, are given to abstraction and oversimplification. "Easy binaries that are deployed in explaining the position of Indian women have been habitually the ideological enclaves of exploitation.' (41) If, as said above, it is predominantly the women who tell the stories and recount, augment, and otherwise keep the myths alive, than it may be ironic that it is the women who, partially at least, forge the very chains which may be used to bind them.

Story telling is so integral in the lives of South Asians that many South Asian women writers explain that it is common practice for girls to be named after heroines from myths and stories. Names like Devi (princess) and Sita (princess and wife to Rama) are common examples, and women are encouraged to live up to these names. (I have not yet come across a case of a woman being named "Kali" after the powerful and fearsome mother/warrior/avenger goddess.) Vrinda Nabar warns against underestimating the hold that myths have over the minds of South Asians, and tells us that when she was a child, she was "a victim to [the Sita myth’s] hypnotic charm" and plagued her parents to change her own name to Sita. (42)

The effect of these tales and myths, the magic of them if one may call it that, is so pervasive that the grown woman may not manage to completely shrug off the aura of fantasy or the mythical associations, and all too often, as a consequence, life could then contain a series of disillusionments. Githa Hariharan in _The Thousand Faces of Night_ gives us adequate illustration of this. From her novel which employs the digressional technique, it appears that the fairy tales told to little girls mostly concern marriages, with the implication that this should be the climax of a woman's life and ambition. Marriage certainly
features as a prominent theme in South Asian women’s literature, but although the authors do indicate the centrality of marriage in their women protagonists’ lives, they constantly write of the unfairy-tale-like quality of life after weddings, insisting that marriage brings a whole new set of difficulties and problems to be dealt with, rather than solving any. South Asian women writers consciously choose to portray the much unhappiness which usually lies in store for women after being given in marriage. These novels depart from the practice of the earliest novels written by women, gothic novels of romance and horror, which customarily depicted the marriage of the heroine to her desired hero as the destination of her life’s journey, and as the climax and close of the novel.

The Thousand Faces of Night is a novel which incorporates an exceptionally large number of fables and myths. The tales told by Pati, the protagonist’s beloved grandmother, almost without exception, are embellished with material riches and opulence, “Priceless gems, the size of ripe pumpkins, hung at the tips of chandeliers; the marble pillars shone like mirrors”. The effect of such exaggerated embellishment is a dangerous one, imparting as it does the implicit message that good behavior (which includes adherence to and acceptance of traditions) will be rewarded with riches, and that womanly virtue is defined as patient endurance, self-sacrifice, suffering, and obedience. Stories are told to children in order to educate, chastise, discipline, and curiously enough, entreat them to acceptance, more, to an accustomed acceptance. The child who questioned the logic of love as a result of marriage, is told, “When you marry, Devi, your heart moves up to your shoulder and slips down your arm to the palm of your hand. The hand that holds yours tightly as you walk around the fire receives it like a gift. You can’t do
anything about it: when you marry, it goes to him and you never get it back". (44) This fanciful explanation which is passed off as rationale is so deeply ingrained in Devi that as a newly married woman, she is “bewildered by my own response, my acceptance of our nightly rituals”. (45) Devi, fed as she had been on a diet of fantasies, is apt to accept the tales she hears in too literal a manner, to ascribe too much credence to these tales. She even reaches for more to sustain her, drinking in Baba’s stories with avidity although at that point, she is no longer a child. For Devi, the boundary between reality and fantasy alternatively blurs and re-emerges with painful vividness when applied to her daily life. Manisha Roy, in her analysis of Bengali women, gives an example of the social and practical uses of this cultural ritual of disillusionment, which Hariharan had described in her fiction. Roy points out that a young bride crammed with expectations of the perfect husband, as is common enough in Bengali culture, and will necessarily undergo a sense of disappointment in the early days of marriage. (46) (Roy also identified that men do not appear to labour under the same illusions and are more inclined to regard marriage in the light of a necessary arrangement rather than a romantic attachment, “marriage as a necessity, a milestone like any other.”) However, Roy also explained that in a culture where the girls are aware they will be married by arrangement, these myths and romantic illusions appear to help prepare them to accept such arrangements with as much equanimity as possible, and as such, have their uses as well as pitfalls.

Vrinda Nabar, however, insists that the influence of the myths is an insidious one, and serves to strengthen the fears and illusions which are used to govern women and instill docility, “there is a fundamental parity between our
perpetuation of mythical stereotypes like Sita (47) and Draupadi (48) and our present-day reluctance to admit any change that threatens the andocentric, patriarchal set-up.” (49)

“In that country where doors are adorned with flowers and mango-leaves the houses decorated with lighted lamps, in that country the woman is still a slave. Where Sita had to pass the ordeal by fire’

Nevertheless, both Roy and Nabar in their arguments, and Hariharan in her fiction, strongly support the suggestion that myths do indeed form the identity of Indian women: “Indian womanhood is constituted by a multi-layered accretion of myths. From the ways in which Indian womanhood has been ‘invented’, ‘imagined’, and ‘defined’, a map may be drawn of the contours of class formation in modern India.” (52)”

Authentic portrayals of women began to appear in English fiction [in the 50s and 60s], but the literary prototype into which the female figure was molded can be traced back to the Sita/Savitri/Sakuntala models.” (53)

Being only too aware that many female figures can indeed be traced back to the Sita/Savitri/Sakuntala models, South Asian novelists of today regularly portray their protagonists grappling with the problem of reconciling these time-honored role models with the changing times and their changing needs. Although many tales are still told of exceptional women, goddesses, princesses, selfless wives of holy men, and women of extraordinary beauty and/or virtue, contemporary South Asian women novelists appear to be reacting to the way such tales permeate their lives by consistently bringing to their readers realistic, ordinary protagonists, confused, struggling and erring. With the rise of authentic portrayals of women in fiction, the influence of myths has receded slightly into the background and became far more a digressional technique than a structural one. As
much as the finding of a voice (and being articulate) is the finding of autonomous identity, retelling is the process of deconstruction of gender and racial myths, and of reconstruction, the unveiling or resurrecting of other stories, real life stories. It is a characteristic of South Asian women's writings that generations of women appear in their tales, inheriting emotional legacies, their lives interwoven and interconnected. These are the myths and tales of their mothers and foremothers which have long remained silenced and overshadowed, and which the writers are now identifying as sources of influences. Legends may have receded into the background, but stories of one kind or another appear to continue being interwoven into the fabric of South Asian women's perceptions and realities.

Contemporary women writers are even beginning to rewrite myths, to expose the myth of the myth, as part of their attempt to retell tales from their perspective and in the light of their experiences as women. Retelling tales features significantly in the writings of South Asian women novelists who seek to tell of a patriarchal society in the voices of its women, retelling in a form and a language peculiar to women. In some of her short stories, Shashi Deshpande retells myths from the point of view of mythical characters like Karna and Kunti, who speak of other mythical characters like Draupadi, Ghandari, Arjuna, and Bhima, as contemporaries. Deshpande retells in an attempt to recreate the mythical atmosphere in present times and invites the reader to experience the depth of emotion which she imagines must accompany the events and occurrences. By so doing, Deshpande seeks to bring her readers closer to experiencing the myths by fleshing out the abstractions of the myths and making the characters both emotional and introspective.
However, in her short stories, Deshpande does not realise the potential power of retelling to the full. Deshpande neither exposes nor undermines the implication of a myth, as Hariharan, for example, does. In juxtaposing the fairy tales and myths with the life of her protagonist, Hariharan shows how distanced these myths are from the reality of day-to-day life. The answers given by the story-teller when questioned by the child about the story are fanciful, illogical answers, in keeping with the tone of the tale.

Hariharan embellishes her tales lavishly, opulently, and even lovingly, but by emphasizing and even exaggerating the splendors, she is signaling to her reader the absurdity of attempting to emulate heroines who dwelt in and under such different circumstances. In The Thousand Faces of Night, we see that the protagonist Devi is conscious and aware of the huge influence myths have had over her, and therefore, her declaration, “If I was going to play out a travesty of the myths that have filled my childhood, I would tear aside all pretence ... “(55) is ironical in the extreme. For Devi, the arranged marriage was part of the childhood fairytale which as an adult, she was encouraged to accept and enact. This further blurs the boundary between reality and fantasy, suggesting how closely entwined the two can be for even the modern South Asian women.

Not only are the legends and myths of long ago retold by South Asian women writers, but their own stories are also constantly retold and revised. The tale of Mayamma, another character in The Thousand Faces of Night, is retold by Mayamma herself and no longer by the omniscient narrator in the later stages of her life. Hariharan, in permitting Mayamma a voice, acknowledges the development of this character’s self-assertion after passing through the stages of being
a daughter, a wife, a daughter-in-law, a mother, and eventually a widow. The retelling enhances the first version with further details; Hariharan achieving through the written form a fairly credible reproduction of an oral tradition with its multiple layers of stories within other stories.

Many South Asian women novelists make no secret of their love for myths and stories and fairy tales, but increasingly, the purpose of their writing is to tell their own stories, stories which are testimonies of strength and struggles, not fantasies of wondrous beauty and unimaginable riches. It is clear that many South Asian women writers are willing to toy with fables, myths and legends, to not only appropriate but also reinvent these aspects of their culture. Far from seeking to escape the reality of daily life in their story-telling, South Asian women writers use their writings to analyse and disentangle the complexities and conflicts of their lives and problems. Their narrative voices are clear and articulate, and increasingly unafraid to be less than perfect, ready to question and experiment and tell their tales in their own particular language.

References:

44. Hariharan 37.
45. Hariharan 50.
47. Sita: wife of Rama in the Ramayana, abducted by Ravana and required to prove her chastity by walking through fire (the agnipariksa).

48. Draupadi: a princess won by Arjuna and shared amongst the five Pandava brothers.

49. Nabar 118.

To prove she was a pativrata Ahilya (50) to sacrifice herself to Indra’s sexual desire, and Draupadi was divided up among five men, the woman of that country still remains a slave...

“(51)

50. Ahilya: a woman seduced by the god Indra who disguised himself as Ahilya’s husband.


52. Bagchi 1.


55. Hariharan 23.
'FREEDOM FROM PHYSICAL SLAVERY: EMOTIONAL BONDAGES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPPRESSION: IS THE REAL VICTORY OF SELF'; REFLECTION ON HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S 'UNCLE TOM'S CABIN'

Prof. S. Prasanna Sree
Department of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin is a classical example of the writer's stand of slavery and freedom. This novel, first of its kind deals with the plights of the unfortunate slaves who were treated as 'human property' in the hands of their masters.

The concept of freedom has been a hotly debated topic in literature for a long time. The question of 're interrogation' of freedom often brings with it several challenges of historical processes which continually shape and alter the very definition of freedom. It matters to every individual who believes that freedom is a fundamental condition for human progress. Though the core meaning of freedom remains unchanged, it is still difficult to find out what decides, determines, defines, and denotes freedom. Freedom is often perceived to be 'freedom from oppression', particularly 'freedom from slavery'.

The modern conception of freedom has implying certain fundamental or basic rights dates back to the writings of seventeenth century theorists such as Francis Hutcheson and John Locke. It is to be noted here that the writers such as Rousseau, Hage, Max, T.H. Green et al., interpret 'freedom' from the angle of positive concept whereas theorists like Constant, Humboldt, Spencer, and Mill look at 'freedom' from a contrary angle. The last two decades have witnessed an explosion of interest on writing by and about black women.
Black women writers they constitute the foundations of the African American women's literary traditions, containing as they do, the first book of poetry by an African American Poems on Various Subjects, Religions and Moral By Phyllis Whitely (1773); the first book of essays by an African American, Essays by Ann Plato (1841); and the first novel published by a black person in the United States, Our Nig by Harriet Wilson (1859).

Black women writers' contribution to concept of freedom is very significant for several reasons. The most important reason being: black women beings at once black, female and poor have been victimized on several grounds such as racism, sexism and capitalism. These women writers who themselves have experienced such tortures in their real lives give a profound understanding to the world about their world of slavery. They have to fight against various forces of oppression within their home and outside. Hence black feminist perspective dominates the spirit and tone of African-American literature.

In today's world, women have started asserting their rights and getting themselves properly represented in appropriate forums and bodies. More particularly black women are dealing with political machinations of the racial and sexual beliefs, feelings and actions that black men writers have maintained toward their black females, in the street, in the family, and in the bedroom. Their perspectives and approaches are more realistic and consistent with the aesthetic and faithful to the actual experiences of black women in America.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, though a white woman, has been influenced by the best values of the time that she speaks vociferously for the sake of justice and truth. Stowe belongs to a group of writers who can transcend their immediate
landscape for a broader and better understanding of the fundamental issues which concern humanity. Stowe is remembered today for her bold and courageous statements against human slavery at a point of time that slavery was a legally sanctioned institution. Her campaign for human rights, particularly for the rights of black women who were double-marginalized has brought about a great social change.

Stowe is a representative writer of nineteenth century. She brings to light the agony, pain, restlessness, alienation, physical and mental torture faced by the slaves the in hands of the white masters. In her own words, Stowe tells her readers in "Preface" to Uncle Tom’s Cabin that The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us; to show their wrongs and sorrows, under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust all to defeat and do away the good effects of all that can be attempted for them, by their best friends under it (xiii).

Stowe attempted to revolutionize the genre of anti-slavery fiction. The broader canvas of the novel enabled her to combine and develop the plots of children ton away from their parents, young women hounded by lecherous slave holders, husbands and wives severed from each other, and slaves lashing out against theirs masters and that children were relegated to separate stories and compressed into brief vignettes.

Readers come to know Uncle Tom and Aunt Chole, Eliza and George, Cassy and Emmeline with an intimacy unprecedented for African-America characters. And readers arrive at a visceral understanding of how slavery pervert family life as Stowe takes them from the flawed patriarchal household of the Shelby’s in which a well meaning wife is powerless to prevent her husband from selling his most faithful slave, to the overtly dysfunctional household of the St.
Clares, dominated by a monstrously selfish wife and mother who keeps her slaves apart and puts them up for auction in defiance of her husband’s wishes to the pandemonium of Simon Léger’s plantation, where a bachelor master imposes sadistic regime of rape and concubinage. Stowe was successful in restructuring the plot that she borrowed from her predecessors and made it suitable for her purpose. Stowe’s commitment to the cause of liberation of Blacks and particularly women’s liberation is evident invariably all through her writings. She attempts to portray the injustice done to the slaves through her powerful sentimental writings by appealing to the mercy of the right thinking and conscious humanity.

Black women literary tradition can be traced back to Philis Weatley in the eighteenth century down to boom period—the seventies and eighties with its remarkable talented writers such as Paule Marshall, Alice Walker and Gloria Naylor, encompassing the pioneering work of Zora Neale Hurston in the forties. Barbara Christian calls it the “Development of a Tradition” meaning that it has been a continuously evolving process, if one can trace the development of the black women’s self from its infantile stage of invisibility to its present stage of self-definition and self-assertion. A detailed study on the writings of black women writers helps the reader understand the responsibility they have on their shoulders to ‘fight within’ and to ‘fight out’ to establish their ‘self’ in all dignity and respect they deserves. A noted critic Alexis De Veau says, I see a greater commitment among black women writers to understand self multiplied in terms of community, the community multiplied in terms of the world. Barbara Christian rightly observes to be able to use the range of one’s own voice, to attempt to express the totality of self, is a recurring struggle in the tradition of
those writers from the nineteenth century to the present. African American women writers have long felt the need to express and assert their self despite all the odds. Early African-American women writers such as Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, Ann Petry and Frances Harper have clearly expressed their bounded duty and mission. Francis Harper in her preface to *Iola Leroy* writes that her story’s mission would not be in vain if it awakens in the hearts of our countrymen a strong sense of justice and a more Christian like humanity (281). Harper makes a forceful plea through her writings for “freedom” and “justice” for Americans who in 1890s were being lynched, burned out, raped, humiliated and deprived of their rights as citizens in the wake of failure of Reconstruction. But the intention of Harper is to please and impress the white readers by creating a lady-like version of the heroine, Iola Leroy, whom Americans are expected to respect even though she is black.

First *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was written as a protest against the Fugitive Slave Law, which was, for many northerners, the most controversial element of the compromise of 1850 in that it has legally mandated them to cooperate in the capture and return of the runaway slaves. Second, it was written as a lamentation in response to the death of her infant son, Charley.

The novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* has elicited in the course of its one hundred and fifty years in print responses ranging from tears to outrage. The tears were the result of her harrowing and, for many, effective representation of the cruelties of slavery, in particular its devastating impact on slave families. The upset generated by her novel has a more complicated trajectory. Not only were readers devastated by the fact that such brutal senses were being enacted in slaves states, but many readers for very different reasons outraged by Stowe’s
depiction of them. For example, Southern whites, in general, objected to Stowe’s allegedly false depiction of the peculiar institution. Despite all this, it is a deeply moving novel which appeals to the finer sentiments of people. It shows humanitarian sympathies extended by the writer to the cause of freedom of African American. Indeed the responses to Uncle Tom’s Cabin provide a medium through which one could construct a history of U.S. black/white relations.

The story of Uncle Tom’s Cabin is strong appeal to the right-thinking citizens in an effort to prompt abolitionist action. The author with her seemingly paternalistic attitude has created an impression of feminist implications with the expressive female characters that voiced their beliefs and showed moral superiority over their male counterparts. The novel has made it very clear that both women and slaves were victims of male domination, and she depicted women in the novel that led to their abolitionist views by their moral and Christian beliefs. This novel has a great impact in the pursuit of abolishing slavery in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin takes the reader through different kinds of setting suggesting different situation. At the outset, it starts out in Kentucky, where Tom is owned by a kind-hearted master name by Arthur Shelby. Mr. Shelby is shown to be having the appearance of a gentleman in the midst of an earnest conversation with Mr. Haley, a slave trader. The conversation is over a deal which Mr. Shelby is forced by debt to part with two slaves; Uncle Tom and Harry, the young son of his wife’s servant Eliza to a trader named Haley. Eliza overhears the conversation between Haley and his wife and, after warning Uncle Tom and his wife, Aunt Chloe, she takes Harry and flees to the North, hoping to find ‘freedom’ with her husband George.
in Canada. Haley pursues her, but to other Shelby slaves alert Eliza to the danger. She miraculously evades capture by crossing the half-frozen Ohio River, the boundary separating Kentucky from the North. Haley hires a slave hunter named Loker and his gang to bring Eliza and Harry back to Kentucky. Eliza and Harry make their way to a Quaker settlement, where the Quakers agree to help transport them to safety.

Eliza accidentally hears the discussion, warns Tom and his wife, and runs away with her child, followed by Haley, who is prevented from catching her when she crosses the Ohio River and is aided by helpful citizens. The trader, Haley meets two slave-catchers who agree to pursue Eliza and Harry. Meanwhile Tom refuses to runaway and is taken by Haley towards New Orleans. Sometime later, Eliza’s husband, George, himself an escaped slave in disguise, discovers that Eliza is headed for Canada and sets out to find and to join her. Meanwhile, Eliza and her son have been taken in by a Quaker family and joined by George to prepare for the next stage of their escape.

Tom, on a Mississippi river boat, meets a little white girl named Eva St. Clare, is touched by her beauty and gravity, and rescues her from drowning. Eva’s father ‘buys’ Tom from Haley at Eva’s request, and Tom accompanies the family (father, daughter, and cousin Ophelia) to their New Orleans home. There he meets Eva’s mother, a spoiled and bigoted woman, and the slaves belonging to the household. He and Eva from a close relationship, by reading to Tom from his Bible, Eva herself grows to understand and love Christianity. After the unfortunate death of St. Clare and his daughter Tom is sold to a wicked plantation owner, Simon Legree up the Red River. Tom being a man of spiritual strength and honesty is put to rigorous test here. He endures his fate while helping others in need.
Tom's new owner Simon Legree who owns a cotton plantation on the Red River is man of crudest nature. He tries his best to take the religion out of him. He also buys two women. They are taken to the man's run down plantation among the swamps. Tom is set to picking cotton, and tires to make the best of his position by prayer and hope. He meets Cassy, Legree's black concubine, and learns her horrifying story. Tom is whipped mercilessly for attempting to help his fellow slaves, and Legree vows to break his spirit or kill him. Cassy does her best to save Tom. During his stay, Tom wields a powerful influence on the slaves. He gives the slaves 'a feeling of hope, moral support in times of adversity and request them to wait for God's help'.

He reads to them The Bible. Tom reads: "come unto ME, all ye that labor and re heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (318).

Back in Midwest, Tom Coker, a slave catcher has warned the Quaker that Eliza and her family being sought at the Lake Erie port where they expect to cross into Canada. But Eliza, George and Harry cross into freedom. But Tom, in the months to follow is put to excruciating pain and suffering. He is tortured, traumatized, yet can't be shattered. The faith in him grows stronger and stronger. He can't be made spiritually weak. He is just waiting for the last hour of 'deliverance' to come. He longs for his home. His spiritual strength in the face of adversity brings hope to other slaves. He is given the grace to prevail in spirit against Legree's torture. Finally Legree gives up, and dying Tom forgives him and the men who whipped him.

George and Shelby arrived to buy Tom's freedom are in time only to hear his last words. He says," Oh, Master George, you're too late. The Lord's bought me, and is going to take me home— and me long to go. Heaven is better than Kentucky" (381), "I have been poor fellow; but that is all past and gone,"
now. I am right in the door, going into glory. Oh, Master George Heaven has come! I've got the victory—the Lord Jesus has given it to me" (381). Finally George could get only the mortal remains of Tom to give him 'a decent burial'. Tom has become a martyr, dies for the cause of the poor creatures. It is to be noted here that the death of Tom was highly symbolic that it signifies the culmination of the suffering encountered by the slaves and hope for a new life for the unfortunate slaves.

Although Stowe had set out to 'make the whole nation feel' the horrors and injustice of slavery, she couldn't have anticipated the enormous and unprecedented impact her novel would have on the national psyche. The novel appealed to a wide audience by drawing upon mainstream religious and cultural beliefs. Stowe mobilized evangelical doctrine and the ideal of domesticity to argue that slavery was both unchristian and destructive to family life. Above all, Stowe intended to convince the nation that slavery was a sin that harmed both slaves and the souls of slave owners. By treating human beings as property that could be bought and sold, slavery separated husbands and wives and parents and children, thus standing in opposition to both familial and Christian love.

Using sentimental rhetoric and melodramatic situations, and writing in clear, accessible language, Stowe appealed to her culture's investment in the sacredness of home, family and Christian salvation. Stowe, being an advocate for the cause of justice brings to light the injustices done against the unfortunate humans which reduce them to 'things'.

References
HUMAN EFFORTS ARE EITHER TO PENETRATE OR TO SUB-DUE: UNDERSTANDING HARRIET BEECHER STOWE’S ‘DRED’

Prof.S.Prasanna Sree
Department of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp published in 1856 as a follow up to Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1853), the most successful and controversial abolitionist tract ever written. Dred is set in Chowan County, near the Great Dismal Swamp. The title character is an escaped slave and religious zealot who aids fellow slave refugees and spends most of the novel plotting a slave rebellion. He is a composite of Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner, two real leaders of slave insurrections. Dred is a character of great strength and intellect who represents a much more assertive and potentially dangerous slave character than the loyal slaves, passive victims, or doomed escapees who inhabit Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

On the other hand, Stowe imbues Dred with many of the prevailing racial stereotypes of African American men as savages. As Stowe describes him: The large eyes had that peculiar and solemn effect of unfathomable blackness and darkness which is often a striking characteristic of the African eye. But there burned in them, like tongues of flame in a black pool of naphtha, a subtle and restless fire, that betokened habitual excitement to the verge of insanity (241). Dred is George Harris, the refractor slave from Stowe’s first novel—a whole volcano of bitter feeling burned in his bosom, and sent streams of fire through his veins.... He had been able to repress every disrespectful word; but the flaming eye, the gloomy
and troubled brow, were part of a
natural language that could not be
repressed (UTC,II). Dred reacts like
George, looks like Tom, and speaks
and acts like no one else in Stowe's
first anti-slavery novel. Unlike Tom,
who forgives his masters, Dred
represents the possibility the
punishment may be followed by
retribution, human and divine. He
echoes the warning at the end of
Uncle Tom's Cabin that the "signs
of time" may portend for the United
States a coming day of vengeance,
rather than a "day of grace
(UTC,388).

Dred, however, is only a
peripheral character in the novel.
Instead, most of the plot is centered
on white and mixed race, or mulatto,
characters and the way the Southern
legal system supported slavery.
Indeed, it was not so much the
cruelty of masters towards their
slaves, but rather the violence
between white pro- and anti-slavery
forces, which had erupted since the
publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin,
that helped inspire Stowe to publish
Dred in 1856. That year, South
Carolina United States Senator
Preston Brooks caned Senator
Charles Sumner, the irascible
abolitionist colleague from
Massachusetts. The Kansas territory
had also erupted into civil war over
the extension of slavery. Then, in
1856, a group of antislavery
guerillas, under the leadership of
John Brown, murdered several
proslavery men.

The major characters in the
legal drama and star-crossed
romance come from two slave-
owning families, the Gordons and
the Claytons. The two most
sympathetic members of the Gordon
family (of Canema plantation) are
Nina and her mulatto half-brother,
Harry, who is the son of their father,
Colonel Gordon, and his slave
mistress. Colonel Gordon and his son
Tom, are cruel-hearted masters who
also wield great political power. Nina
Gordon is in love with Edward
Clayton, a lawyer and planter who
secretly hopes for an end to slavery and treats his slaves kindly in the meantime. Edward's father, Judge Clayton, is the Chief Justice of North Carolina Supreme Court.

There are two central court cases that propel the action of the novel, complicate familial and romantic relations, and present Stowe's thesis that slavery corrupted Southern justice and humanity. Both of the lawsuits are based on actual state court decisions, as Stowe records in her second appendix. The first legal challenge is set in motion when Nina hires out Milly, her personal slave, to Mr. Baker in order to raise money for the ailing Canema plantation. Canema is a plantation in North Carolina. It is presided over by Nina Gordon. She begins as a flighty young woman and develops a sense of moral responsibility under the guidance of her suitor, Edward Clayton. Along with his sister Anne, Clayton supervised Magnolia Grove, their family plantation in South Carolina. Nina's moral education is cut short when she dies during a cholera epidemic. On the Gordon plantation lives the Mulatto Harry, who is the son of his master and a secret brother to Nina. Harry is unfitted to be a slave by his parentage and his education. Aunt Milly also serves at Canema. She is majestic and devout, and she tells Nina her harrowing story of losing fourteen children to slavery and finding rage and religion. When Milly is shot by her temporary employer, Stowe recapitulates the Mann case, which the budding lawyer Edward Clayton argues and wins, only to have his father, a judge, overturn the verdict on appeal. Niana's racist brother Tom plays the Legree role. In the pine woods near the swamp, loyal, steely Old Tiff takes the visionary slave rebel, inhabits the Great Dismal Swamp.

Edward Clayton uses Magnolia Grove to conduct a series of "experiment(s)" to prepare African Americans for freedom (309). Dred is part of a wider literary
imagining of alternatives to slavery in the decade before the Civil War including **Sarah J osepha Hale's** 1853 Liberia; or Mr. Peyton’s Experiments and Frank’s **J. Webb’s** 1857 The Garies and Their Friends. Both these novels respond to Stowe. Clayton is certain that the day of liberation will come, and he insists that enslaved African Americans “be emancipated on the soil” (310).

According to Clayton and his sister Anne, education is the key to advancement. In *Dred*, Stowe refuses the status quo, the position that slavery is wrong but that nothing can be done about it. Whenever characters voice this opinion, they are condemned. Through the Claytons’ “experiments,” Stowe tests contemporary efforts at legal reform and gradual emancipation. She at her paternalist, or materialist worst when she describes the entry into the schoolroom of Anne’s uniformed, synchronized hymn-singing elves (314-315) Edward is more serious than his sister, and he himself is taught several lessons. Edward hopes that the example of Magnolia Grove will spur emancipation. He insists on teaching his slaves to read and write, despite the resistance of his fellow plantation owners and the threats of Tom Gordon. His firmness leads to his being beaten senseless with a cane by Tom, after the fashion of the chivalry of South Carolina as Stowe pointedly notes (493). Here she refers to South Carolina representative Preston Brooks’s attack on the anti-slavery Republican senator Charles Sumner in the Senate chamber in May 1856. In addition to this physical education in southern hostility to reform, Clayton receives legal education about institutional violence in his father’s courtroom. Jude Clayton reverses his son’s conviction of the employer who shot Milly, using works taken from the mouth of Jude Ruffin: “THE POWER OF THE MASTER MUST BE ABSOLUTE, TO RENDER THE
SUBMISSION OF THE SLAVE "PERFECT" (353).

In an exchange of letter with Harry, now escaped from Canena, Clayton acknowledges the justice of the argument that African Americans under slavery have a right to resist oppression to declare their independence, but he maintains that they are not yet ready to govern themselves. Clayton's gradualism and paternalism are allied with his racial essentialism, and all three are undermined by the fastidious metaphors in his odd parley with his sister Anne: The Ethiopian race is a slow-growing plant like the aloe... but I hope, some of these days, they'll come into flower; and I think, if they ever do, the blossoming will be gorgeous. There is no use in trying to make the negroes into Anglo-Saxons, any more than making a grape-vine into a pear-tree. I train the grape-vine (328).

Clayton receives education in Swamp, too. Recovering from Tom Gordon's blows in Dred's stronghold, Clayton, like Stowe, becomes interested in Dred, as a psychological study (509). The effort to imagine and to represent Dred's perspective is part of Stowe's novelistic experiment in reckoning different points of view, which she defends as an artistic and political necessity (445). Finally, Clayton resign from the bar, protesting the law of slavery and of his father. He risks his property and his life in continuing to instruct his slaves. But it is to be noted that Clayton is not Dred. While acknowledging their irresistible force of emancipation, he defends his reformist model as an "escape value," a way of yielding gracefully before the growing force of the people (460-470). Disillusioned by the violent resistance to his plans, he buys land in Canada. There, we are told briefly at the end of the novel, he and Anne have moved with their slaves, who now have become tenants. They have established a thriving agricultural community.
Clayton relinquishes idea of emancipation on United States soil. Yet both Clayton and Dred share a moral resoluteness.

Milly is the opposite of Dred. She embodies the loyalty of slaves and the femininity and Christian grace of women. When Baker, in a drunken rage, tries to punish a slave for a small offense, Milly intervenes. Baker hits Milly, then shoots her when she tries to escape the punishment. Nina is outraged and retains Edward to sue Baker. (The suit was based on state law, which allowed slave-owners to seek recompense for damage to their personal property.) Edward jumps at the chance to both please Nina and strike a blow against the abuse of slaves. Edward wins the case, but loses when Baker appeals to the state Supreme Court. What is worse, Edward’s father, Chief Justice Judge Clayton, writes the opinion. (Stowe notes in the preface that she based Judge Clayton on the real North Carolina Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin, who presided over a similar case, State v. Mann, in 1829.) In a fashion typical of sentimental Victorian fiction, Stowe has her hero resign from the practice of law, and Nina, too pure to live in a sinful world, dies of cholera.

The second lawsuit in the novel involves Cora, the slave sister of the mulatto Harry Gordon. Colonel Gordon’s sister, Mrs. Stewart, takes Cora with her to Louisiana there. Cora is emancipated after she marries Mrs. Stewart’s son, George. When George dies, the former slave Cora inherits his plantation. But Mr. Jekyl, an evil lawyer, uses the law to rob Cora of her property and return her to slavery.

In the meantime, Edward Clayton and his sister, Anne, have become devoted to the uplift, if not the emancipation, of their slaves. Edward and Anne begin to tutor their slaves, but an angry white mob sabotages the effort. Only the intervention of Edward’s friend, the
pragmatic lawyer-politician Frank Russell, who opposes slavery in private but supports it in public, stops the destruction. The siblings soon leave North Carolina for Canada.

Harry Gordon's battle of conscience mirrors that of Edward Clayton and Frank Russell. Stowe seems to use Harry to represent the divided mind of Southern slaves. On one extreme is Milly, a loyal slave, who counsels love for the master and patient endurance of earthly tribulation for the reward of eternal freedom in heaven. On the other extreme is Dred, the leader of a potential slave insurrection. Despite Milly's warnings, the wavering Harry eventually brings his family to join Dred's forces. Just as they are preparing to assault the white community, however, Milly appears in the swamp, singing a gospel tune. Miraculously, the song touches Dred's heart and his thirst for vengeance disappears. Instead, he leads his band of refugees out of the swamp and north to freedom.

There are several ways in which Dred represents both a continuation and an extension of the abolitionist arguments Stowe made in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Like its predecessor, Dred was aimed primarily at Northern white readers in an effort to convince them of the humanity of slaves and the ways in which slavery corrupted white Southerners. Uncle Tom's Cabin, however, had presented both kind and cruel masters, thus placing blame on the individual, not the larger institution. By contrast, in Dred, Stowe indicts the entire system of Southern slave statutes. Stowe argues that enshrining slavery in law did not prevent abuses. Rather, it released the passions of slave-owners from personal control and gave social sanction to the horrors of slavery. In addition, Stowe uses the swamp setting of Dred to represent the indolence and stagnation of Southern civilization and morality caused by slavery. Aside from its
symbolic value, the Great Dismal Swamp was also where runaway slaves from nearby plantations in North Carolina and Virginia actually did hide out. Some of them even plotted rebellions. It is part of an immense chain of swamps, regions of hopeless order, where the abundant growth and vegetation of nature, sucking up its forces from the humid soil, seems to rejoice in a savage exuberance, and bid defiance to all human efforts either to penetrate or subdue (209). It is to be noted here that in Stowe's novel, and in the nineteenth century, this "immense chain of swamps" and this "hopeless disorder" provided a sanctuary for African Americans attempting to escape from bondage.

Reference


CONSTRAIN ETCHED THE CRISIS': REFLECTION ALAN PATON'S CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY

Prof. S. Prasanna Sree  
Department of English  
AUMSN PG Centre, Kakinada

Introduction

"Keep the Land, Guard the Land, Care for the Land", for the Land keeps men, Guards men, Cares for men. “Destroy it and man is destroyed”. It is warning for the white rulers and black inhabitance of Africa, but also for all the people of the earth the careless disregard and indifferences towards the earth which is holy ground is the cause of the tragic condition of man not merrily of the tragedy of Africa.

Cry, the Beloved Country it is “the plain and simple truth”. Appearance and reality are no longer separate. They have been interchangeable. Johannes Burg is referred to as the ‘great city’ “but, in fact, it is a fine modern city with some tragic slums”.

Protest is the beginning of change by raising a question, the man opens the door. Once made, a promise will have to be fulfilled sooner or later. Opening of the letter is understandable because once opened it cannot be shut again. To open a door is the commit oneself. Though one can shut a door, it is not a thing lightly done. When people go to Johannes Burg they do not come back not easily or not innocently at least. When a door is open we must go through even though we do not know what awaits us at the end of the passage. But without asking questions or opening doors, it is impossible to discover answers to reach anywhere ultimately, what will bring one to the end of the search is not external help but the individual’s‘readiness’. The journey
must nevertheless be undertaken by the individual himself.

In Cry, The Beloved Country, Stephen Kumalo is a priest of the Church at Ndotsheni he is interested in reuniting his own family come to understand the greater problems facing his race. The white man has disrupted the old man’s but refuses to accept the native in the new world. But the natives live in an instructed world where there are no values and no order to adhere to. Kumalo is the suffering hero, he comes to complete awareness of life, he has undergone to intense suffering in all aspects of life. His suffering is seen partially in the fact that he wants to restore the family and the tribal system. He comes to an awareness that the tribal system can never be restored and he fails in his attempts to restore his own family this failure and suffering caused him though he matures into a man who has a larger appreciation for the trials that the others must undergo.

Stephen’s sister Gertrude she went to Johannesburg to search for her husband but she never back to her native place circumstances changed her to prostitute, Stephen’s brother John Kumalo who was settled in Johannesburg was corrupted merrily by the power of his own voice and he is thankful in such a coward and Stephen’s son Absalom Kumalo who went to search for his aunt and he too never back to the native place. Stephen’s money, belief in the goodness in the society and for one moment even his religion and he finally sustained by his faith in man and god and sees salvation around him in the acts of James Jarvis the death of a white man’s son Arthur Jarvis the father James Jarvis understanding the racial problem of South Africa and trying to understand his son. Jarvis also gains a feeling for Kumalo’s suffering and attempts to alleviate the old man’s suffering in many small ways.
Stephen Kumalo leaves his native district to search for his three he found them but he faces his greatest test that his son has made murder that is the white man(Jarvis) but Stephen Kumalo unable to understand what went wrong and where is Absalom's childhood that made him kill a man, a white man Stephen being a priest feel ashamed of the failure of his son to battle with temptation and overcome it. What must have broken in Absalom that he could bring himself to kill another man.

One can face change, however fearful it may be, but one cannot face the unchangeable. Paton conceives of a possible answer for all our questions in a greater reverence for and greater humility before the earth we live by. We ought to cherish in human life. If we don't care for it, if we don't guard it, it will destroy the land. The ground is holy and cannot bear too much profanity. Stephen Kumalo feels as "strange pride and strange humility" that the son does not know the "custom of the land".

The knowledge that power corrupts and love alone cleanses the heart will remove that veil of darkness from upon their eyes and show them standing, stripped of the mask of colour in the full light of truth, the writer speaks not only for Africa but for whole world which has become darkened continent!

Stephen kneeling upon the summit of a mountain should pray "long and earnestly" for his kith and kin and for the beloved country he holds on to the faith that god will save Africa when men will cease to fear its salvation and when love will cast out a fear so deep it had cast out kindness from human hearts.

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Communication is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures. Scheflen 1974 rightly pointed out saying Communication is an organized, standardized, culturally patterned system of behavior that sustains, regulates and makes possible human relationship. Communication may be defined as any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person’s information about that person’s needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states. Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes. Language is a system of symbols with standard meanings. Through language, members of society are able to communicate with one another. It is an integral aspect of culture. Language allows humans to communicate with one another. "Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom" (Jack C. Richards, 2006, p 2).
Noam Chomsky argued that language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy. CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than as a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices. As such, it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features. One of the most recognized of these lists is:

David Nunan's (1991) five features of CLT:

- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the Learning Management process.
- An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

The communicative approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language. They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions; in brief, they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied.

Margie S. Berns, an expert in the field of communicative language
teaching, writes in explaining Firth's view that "language is interaction; it is interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this light, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)" (Berns, 1984, p. 5). CLT approach which developed as reaction away from grammar focused approaches to teaching which give priority to accuracy and the sentence as unit of presentation. CLT's goal of language learning is communicative competence which we develop through making communication the focus of classroom. CLT is essentially a general set of principles that refer to how communication can be the focus of teaching and learning. It is a scaffold engaging the students and supporting them. Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more and becoming active facilitators of their students' learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Communicative language teaching is an approach to language teaching. The goal of CLT is to enable students to communicate in the target language. The method is learner centered with emphasizes on communicative activities that are related to day to day life situations. CLT characterizes the following features:

- To engage learners in authentic environment.
- Focus on all four components of communicative competence (grammar, discourse, sociolinguistics and strategic competence).
- Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary ideas.
- Spontaneity of the language.
CLT is completely learner centered. The role of the instructor is entirely different in CLT unlike the traditional methods of teaching, where teacher speaks and students listen. The learners remain passive. In CLT on other hand the students are active participants and learners. The teacher serves more as a facilitator setting up the activities that require students to communicate with one another. If the students feel that they are doing something useful with the language they will be motivated. The activities emphasize on fluency without worrying about perfect grammar. Pair works, role plays, group talks are used extensively to engage even the weak students in the learning process. We can memorize Einstein’s words, I never teach my pupil. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn. Same here in CLT. In student centered teaching like CLT we centre our planning, teaching and assessment on the needs and abilities of the students. The main idea behind this is learning becomes more interesting when topics are relevant to the students level, needs and interests and when students are themselves are engaged, involved in creating, understanding and connecting to knowledge. This creates vitality and motivation within the students.

Essentially learners are treated as co creators in the learning process as individuals with ideas and issues that deserve attention and consideration. CLT is a holistic approach. It doesn’t focus only on the traditional structural syllabus. It takes into consideration communicative dimension of language.

In a world where communications of information and information technology have been broken new considerable ground, CLT can play an important role in education. Target language should not only be used during communicative activities but also for
classroom management such as giving instructions, explaining activities, assigning homework etc. In this way students will realize that the target language is a means for communication not just an object to be studied. Though there were certain amounts of criticism in CLT viz. The various categories of language functions are overlapping and not systematically graded like the structures of the language. Notional syllabus was criticized as merely replacing one kind of list, namely a list of grammatical structures, with another list of notions and functions. The communicative approach focuses on the use of language in everyday situations, or the functional aspects of language, and less on the formal structures. There must be a certain balance between the two. It gives priority to meanings and rules of use rather than to grammar and rules of structure. Such concentration on language behavior may result in negative consequences in the sense that important structures and rules would be left out. CLT has gained widespread acceptance in the world of language study. CLT can succeed, as long as teachers don’t completely reject the need for the structure provided by grammar. Teachers must strive for moderation and don’t neglect the merits of other methods. CLT, in the hands of a balanced teacher, can bring new life and joy to the classroom. Its vitality makes it an important contributor to language learning approaches.

Conclusion

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the levels of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit. Today CLT can be seen as describing a set of core principles about language learning.
and teaching, as summarized above, assumptions which can be applied in different ways and which address different aspects of the processes of teaching and learning.

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GENDER DYNAMICS IN MANJU KAPUR'S "DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS"

Aditi Abhishikta
Ph.D Research Scholar
Department of English
Andhra University,
Visakhapatnam

Novels became immensely popular at the turn of the nineteenth century. It even surpassed Poetry and Drama and became the only form which attracted readers of varied tastes and temperaments. There have been a number of reasonable causes contributing to the exceptional popularity of fiction in the twentieth century such as variety and complexity of themes, treatment of sex, man-woman relationship, art and technique, foreign influences etc. The first Indian women Novelist who made a pioneering efforts in writing novels of profound psychological significance was Toru Dutt renowned not only as a poet but also highly recognized as a novelist for her fictional work like Le Journal de Mademoiselle Arvers written in French or The Young Spanish Maiden written in English.

The works of Indian women novelists in English show a harmonious blending with the touch of feeling and form. These assets of works have occupied a significant place in the horizon of not only Indian Literature but also of world Literature. Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Bharati Mukherji, Gita Mehta, Jhumpa Lahari, Kamala Markandeya, Mahasweta Devi have been crowned not only with the success of luminous international accolades and awards but also in the establishment of new identity and reawakening of omen in the history of Indian Society.
Since time immemorial there has been unmatched unique contribution by Indian women novelists not only in the making of successful creative writing in the field of fiction but interpreting and rewriting issues related to pre and post colonial experiences as they appeared on the platform of English Literature in Indian context. In these works one can have a clear insight of feelings, sentiments, emotions and psychological themes imbibed with the experience of partition and more specifically focusing the woman’s experience in particular. This paper discusses the gender dynamics prevailing in Indian Society. It intends to explore the message that a woman who tries to create an identity for herself is branded as a ‘difficult daughter’ by the family and the society. It showcases the social realities on how a woman negotiates in social relations. It is not just a literary work about the protagonist ‘Virmati’, alone but it is about Indian omen predicaments in general. This paper is a portrayal of women who are torn between family responsibilities and their aspiration for education. The protagonist dares to cross one patriarchal threshold but she is caught into another where her free spirit is curbed and all she does is mere adjustment and compromise with situation, people and life.

This paper is also an attempt to knock at the consciousness of the et-knit family structure that are inbuilt in Indian traditions and value system. It tries to invoke one’s intellect to answer to the questions asked many a times but unheard and unanswered whether E of whom a society is made have left any scope for women in a deep patriarchal society to create a space for them in the journey of quest for identity.
Manju Kapur is one of the contemporary Indian Women Novelist. She is a Professor of English Literature at Miranda House, New Delhi. "Difficult Daughters" was published in 1998 and it won The Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1999 for Eurasian Region. It is a careful presentation of three generations of women written during the time of partition. 'Virmati', the protagonist, her mother Kasturi, and Virmati's daughter Ida who is narrating the story of her mother and grandmother. The theme of the novel centers around the backdrop of gender dynamics and social realities in education concern.

Though the seed of the story is seen sown in the events of pre and post independent eras its depth and the matter of concern has the same intensity at the present time scenario having little difference with the passage of time. The question of education of women has gained momentum after independence. Its significance and the ultimate analysis of its adoption or negligence is the chief area where one needs to probe into. "Difficult Daughters" also revolts against deep-rooted family tradition, resolution and acceptance of life. It also makes one conscious of the stereotypes with regard to the status of women as 'Karyeshu Daasi' confined to the traditional role of a daughter, wife and mother. Since ages this status in the Indian Society has witnessed shadows and echoes at the backdrop of socio-cultural reality.

‘Virmati’ is an epitome of feminine suffering. Being the eldest child in the family at the age of only ten she is shouldered with the responsibility of upholding the culture of a Hindu Punjabi family. She takes the burden of not only the household work but becomes the second mother to her eleven siblings owing to her mother Kasturi's ill health. She becomes quite mechanical in the chain of duties but at some corner of her heart she always yearned for little love, affection, sympathy and care from
her known ones particularly from her mother which she seems to be missing a lot. The relationship between a mother and a daughter is universally acknowledged to be the strongest one and most delicate tied with the sweet string of love, care, affection and endurance where both reciprocate more than just a mother and a daughter, either as two close friends or sisters. In case of Virmati and her mother Kasturi it is found that Kasturi has not one but eleven children to take care of. In this process her love towards the eldest daughter Virmati is unknowingly found missing.

"At times Virmati yearned for affection, for some sign that she was special. However when she put her head next to the youngest baby, feeding in the mother’s arm, Kasturi get irritated and push her away “Have you seen to their food-clothes-studies?"

After repeated deliveries mother Kasturi’s health is deteriorated. She is sent to Dalhousie for fresh air and improve her health along with her youngest daughter Paro. Viramathi stays with them to take care of both. This is the time and place where, Virmati’s educated cousin Shakuntala who visits them. Shakuntala’s modern, independent, ideas, attitudes ignite in her mind the light of education.

It makes Virmati believe in her own potentials that she can also create her own identity without becoming weak against any adversity.

Virmati takes her study seriously, she fails in her first attempt of appearing F.A. exam, but she does not want to give up, as she knows this is the only medium to fetch her freedom from the old orthodox, rigid restrictions and value based traditions. This is the only way to be in her own self-where her ambitions, desires, sense and sensibilities are faithfully expressed.
she attempts for the second time and succeeds. She wants to study further, but is caught by the decision of the family, they arrange a suitable match of a canal engineer to get her married.

She does not want to stick to the generation of her mother Kasturi where women’s role is confined to child bearing and domestic chores. She wants to take a bold and radical step of liberating herself from the restrictions imposed by the conservative family.

She feels suffocated, choked and lonely in the hands of tradition. Her mother Kasturi discourages for education explaining it would be a sin on her part to refuse marriage as it will create a problem for her sister’s marriage.

Now Virmati stands on her fight against the power of patriarchal set up. Crossing the orthodox conventional family values and unpalatable remarks of the society, she steps out from conventional roles for higher education. She completes her B.A, stays in a hostel in Lahore, completes her M.A, even gets a job as a Principal in a School. But earns the title of ‘Difficult Daughter’ and gets negative stereotypes from her known ones of her temperament and attitude. While making a comparison between a society of century ago and a society of today quite often a question is raised – how many Virmatis have really conquered all these hurdles in the journey of self identity and how many remained unheard. In the process of attaining her existential self Virmati undergoes uncountable agony and suffering.

At the sudden demise of her father, when she comes back home to pay her deep condolences, she get the treatment of a stranger. She is made conscious that she had no place in the family any more. More miserable was the blame that she had to bear of being responsible for her father’s death.
Neither her family nor the society try to comprehend her true desire for education. Thus Virmati remains lonely, feels being in exile among her own ones. Is it just because she aspire to study more and got involved in an intellectual love with the Professor which paved way towards opening new chapters of higher studies, job, marriage and suffering?

But where was her fault then? Lack of maternal love, loss of familial affection and her growing desire to be educated drew her towards the Professor who was the only hope for her to fulfil this need and achieve the desired identity. Thus "Difficult Daughter" showcases the difficulties, agony, humiliation and turmoil of a woman who tries to overcome her cultural identity in search of a self identity and this process leaves her hard hearted and desolate. Her suffering and psychological crisis unheard. Virmati's tragedy is the tragedy of the ambition and existential self.

Viramati represents the Indian women's psyche as a victim in the hands of social approval of man, family and society. Where as it becomes a big issue in case of "Women'. The same thing becomes quite uncommon, unnatural and finds difficulty to be accepted and recognized by the family and society as well. Moreover, if any women tries to achieve it they are embalmed to be 'difficult daughters' or 'self centered' and 'selfish wives' or 'unsuccessful mothers'.

It is all about the attitude and prevailing stereotypes towards women in our society with regard to birth of a girl child, education, dowry, employment and health aspects. It is mere stupidity to point out fingers towards society, because society has not made us rather we made the society. If at all we plead for any change, it has to start with the change in every individual's attitude.
Since ages, till date history has witnessed many ups and downs in the status of Indian women in social, religious, political, economic, education and health aspects. There have been deliberate efforts by the Indian Constitution, Feminist activism, civil society activism, social reforms both historically and contemporary in the process to bring a social change in the society towards women empowerment. It is widely accepted that though there is some mobility in the social status of women in our society, yet there is a lot to be done to see a gender equal society. In the words of Simone de Beauvoir, "the factors which unite us are far more important in our lives than the gender differences that divide us". In the words of Gandhi, the progress of any country depends solely on the education of women. If you educate a boy, you educate only one individual. If you educate a girl, you educate the whole family. Before making a concrete division of gender in the mental frame work, one needs to perceive the human being as an independent entity to have come to this world, to make his or her life purposeful, meaningful and worthwhile in the pursuit of his/her dreams, ambitions entitled to the complete liberty of the expression with the best use of one's senses but it has been found again and again that in the case of 'Men' these things are quite common, natural, accepted and recognized by the family and society and they get full support and encouragement whereas, it becomes a big issue in case of women. The same thing becomes quite uncommon, unnatural and finds difficulty to be accepted and recognized by the family and society as well. Moreover, if any woman tries to achieve it she is embalmed to be 'difficult daughter' or self centered and selfish wife or unsuccessful mother. It is all about the attitude and the prevailing stereotypes towards women in our society with regard to the birth of a girl child,
education, dowry, employment and health aspects. It is mere stupidity to point out fingers on the society because, society has not made us, rather we made the society, if at all we plead for any change in the society, it has to start with the change in every individual attitude.

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GENDERED HAUNTINGS: THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD, INTERPRETIVE ACTS, AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

S. Prasanthi Sree
Department of English
AUMSN PG Centre, Kakinada

In most traditional African societies there was a fairly well defined pattern of duties and responsibilities shared by Males and Females. By enlarge the male was the dominant partner; and most societies had a patrilineal kinship pattern. In some societies the women had to show excessive deference to her husband she had to address him as her master, was not allowed to eat at his table and had to kneel before him. She has often been referred to as a beast of burden on the other hand there were also matrilineal societies where women had considerable powers and exercised political influence that women still lack in advanced western societies today and even in tribes where male authority was largely unchallenged, such as the Ibo tribe of Eastern Nigeria, she often enjoyed a considerable amount of independence socially and especially economically.

Buchi Emechetas the joys of motherhood (1979) opens with a haunting scene. The protagonist Nnu Ego, flees her home in great distress and despondency, frantically placing as much distance between herself and the latest of the misdeeds attributed to her spiteful “spirit”; the sudden death of her newly born son. Running “like someone pursued” - here, by the absent presence of her vengeful chi, the guiding spirit from the realm of the living dead who has rendered her life unbearable Nnu Ego seeks to terminate the excruciating pain that accompanies her long succession of failed attempts at motherhood. Her arduous efforts to achieve
motherhood the very standard of success for women according to the customs of Nnu Ego’s community have yielded nothing but grievous loss culminating in the death of her first son. Faced with this failure presumably orchestrated by her harassing Chi, she prepares to throw herself off the extended carter bridge in the port city of logos.

The Chi in this scenario actively contributes to Nnu Ego’s misery by ceaselessly haunting her, but neither the spirit nor the dreadful inequities it carries out are isolated phenomena in this novel. Nnu Ego and her community read her situation as resulting from her spirits malevolence drawing our attention to the connections between questions of interpretations, constructions of justice.

Emechetas Novels focus us to help our attention on the ways that sensual politics of interpretations are practiced in cultural and post colonial studies. In an overview of Nnu Ego’s life reveals a narrative saturated with pathos. Her struggle for achieving the ideal of motherhood she encounters many obstacles.

She is apparently plagued by her Chi who offers her the worst of both worlds when desirous of children and economically capable of providing for them, she is rendered barren but “now that (she) cannot afford them”, Nnu Ego gives birth to nine children her difficulties and functions as a powerful testimony regarding the undue burden placed on her and the women she represents the opening haunting scene which affords Emecheta the opportunity to level a powerful critique against the workings and trappings of gender as encoded and structured in a multi layers social hierarchy. For which Nnu Ego’s misery is the “Sins” of her father, Nwokocha Agbadi namely his hand in the slave trade and in particular “unfair” acquisition of one woman who had been “promised to a river
goddess”. The slave woman is placed in Agbadis compound as primary servant to Agunwa. Agbadi’s first wife upon Agunwa’s untimely death, however, the slave woman is forced to accompany her mistress into the spirit world as local custom dictates.

Nnu Ego’s unfortunate gendered haunting is established through the act of interpretation. The tie between Nnu Ego and the slave woman is underscored in part in dibias analysis of the infant Nnu Ego’s seemingly abnormal lump on her head. Convert the cause of the slave woman’s death, the young protagonist’s physical characteristic leads the dibia to an unsettling conclusion.

“The child is the slave woman who died with senior wife Agunwa. She promised to comeback as a daughter now here she is. That is why, this child has the fair skin of the water people and Painful lump on her head is from the beating your men gave her before she fell into the grave” (27: emphasis added)

The slave woman figures not simply as guiding spirit of Nnu Ego; she is Nnu Ego. The protagonist, in other words, becomes an avatar of this captive servant, so that one embodies the other. The rest of novel teases out the implications of this ostensibly metaphorical association, trough which Emecheta eventually conjoins the condition of slavery and the condition of womanhood.

Emecheta also places under her critical lens the interpretive work of the mediator between the living people and the ghostly matter, the seething absent presence, that surrounds them(Gordon 195).

This signal contrasts in focus, interpretation and therefore tone between Emecheta’s and Bhaba’s construction of the colonial condition opens up questions about resistance to which we will return towards the end. It also provides us with a means for further exploration of their initial premises from which other differences emanate. For instance where as Emecheta
represents a variegated colonial landscape ranging from city to rural village, Bhaba's theory for instance silently privileges the contact zones between cultures as the metonym of the entire colonial space, when in fact little or no cultural contestation can be found in some areas of a given colonial territory. The terrain outlined by Bhaba is only one of many spaces in the colonial sphere.

Emecheta's attention to the fraught politics of interpretation via her representation of the dibia leaves us with much to consider, particularly when placed in relation to Bhaba's work. By the novel's conclusion, she extends her interest even further by joining it with questions of justice to provide an implicit critique of gendered interpretations of ghosts. Through the circumstances surrounding another ghost of sorts in the narrative, Emecheta carefully exposes the masculinist constructions of justice that help preserve the foundations of patriarchal rule. Upon her return to her native rural Ibuza, Nnu Ego finds her father on his deathbed, hovering in the luminal space between life and death.

After Agbadi passing, the scene of his death (and preceding liminal state of partial consciousness) is subsequently (re) interpreted for Nnu Ego by Adankwo, the senior wife of her husband Nnaife's brother (and eventual inherited wife of Nnaife):

"[W]e all knew that your father died in the actual sense of the word about five days before you arrived[...]. People die or should die gradually, familiarizing them-selves with their ones on the other side step. Your father, however, kept coming back, waiting for you." (158).

She follows this up with a judgment, strict warning, and mild admonishment of Nnu Ego, who has no desire to return to Lagos, "where conditions were so demanding" (156):
“Would it then be right for you to offend such a father? [...] you’re not doing him justice by backing away from the responsibility he left you with [...] you are running away from the position your chi has given you and leaving it for a woman your husband inherited from your brother [Adaku, NnuEgo’s co-Wife], a woman who we here all know to be very ambitious [...]. What to you think you are doing? [...] You have done your duty to your father [...] Now it is to your husband that you should go.”(158).

The difficult, haunted life of Nnu Ego has its own haunting effect on the reader. Emecheta’s portrayal is bleak indeed, and resistant in the afterlife leaves little hope or inspiration for the living. This returns us to the contrasting tones and emphases in Emecheta’s and Bhabha’s endeavors. How are we as readers to negotiate Bhabha’s celebratory theorization of the colonial relationship and its much more desolate fictional rendering by Emecheta? How, in this light, to map the modalities of resistance and subjectivity? The ruptures and fissures in the colonial discourse that render hegemonic power less than total are well worth celebrating, but to overlook the hardships that emanate from the various types of interstices, as instantiated in the case of Nnu Ego, is to miss a fundamental element of social contestation. Conversely, representations of unqualified desolation coupled with pure lack of agency do not entirely square with the complex texture of lived experiences. It is perhaps the space between the absolutes- between the exuberant jouissance that characterize some readings of resistance, on the one hand, and the decimating pain that attends loss and turbulent, sometimes violent, change, on the other- with which we might concern ourselves. Attention to this interstice resists simplistic and polarized formulations that feature the colonized ad either
implied victor or vanquished victim and commits us to mining for and teasing out the ambiguous, contingent, and blurred contacts between colonizer and colonized. In this uneasy interstice between Bhabha and Emecheta, we may very well determine the outlines of “Complex Personhood” situated within an equally complicated cultural terrain. Phantom-like, troubling, and elusive though it may be, this formidable issue is one well worth grappling with pursuing – not one from which we should run away like Nnu Ego.

References


CASTE DISCRIMINATION ON ARUNDATI ROY'S
THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

V.Kavitha
Research Scholar
Department of English
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

B.Rajesh Kumar
Research Scholar
Department of English
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

Evolution of Dalit literature has a great historical connotation in India. Traditionally Indian society is organised by caste or (varna’s). It provides to the individual an identity in the locality. The Hindu Society has been traditionally divided into four varnas. In modern times Hindu society is much more complex with thousands of castes. Castism may defined as the discrimination of persons on the basis of castes, especially the upper caste people treating themselves as superior and others as inferior or dalits. Most appropriate definition of dalit is given by Gangadhar pantawane a professor of Marathi at milind college and founder and editor of Asmitadarsh(mirror of identity) the organ of Dalit literature. He said “To me dalit is not a caste” he is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of his country. He doesn’t believe in god, rebirth, soul, holy books, teaching separatism fate and heaven because they have made him a slave. “He does believe in Humanism”, Dalit is a symbol of “change and revolution”. Dalits are come from the poor communities who under the Indian caste system were considered to be “untouchable” and “downtrodden”.

Here in this paper I examine how dalits are suffered in society. The entire novel shows the focal event of the novel is a socially transgressive and ultimately doomed love affair between Ammu and low-caste carpenter velutha. A person born into particular caste. Caste determines your position and
function in society. Dalits were not free to choose any profession he likes. The low caste people were not allowed to acquire wealth, land, and Education. No one can change their caste. Marriage is often restricted with caste. So it is frowned upon to marry outside your caste. Within each caste there are many sub castes or (jati). Even more tightly defined social groups defined by birth, marriage and occupation. The higher your caste, the more privileges and benefits. The lower caste the more menial work and status.

A large number of people in traditional India were kept outside of the chaturvarna system. In the olden days untouchability was practices against them. During the british rule they were called scheduled caste, the term scheduled caste was first used in the government of Indian act 1935.

Dr. B.R.Ambedakar wrote in one essay “why the Dalit people lived outside of the village “. the caste system is unique to india and so Ambedkar also pointed out that in india not only the division of labour. But also division of labourers, social status, and occupation of a person.

The novel is stuffed with illustrations of caste politics. The dizygotic twins are let known their grandmother mammachi “when paravans were expected to crawl backward with a broom, sweeping away their foot-prints so that Brahmin and Christians wouldn’t defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a paravan’s foot print. In mammachi time, paravans, like other untouchables were not allowed to walk on public roads, not allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed.”

This amply reveals how a sensation of abhorrence and dominance is installed in children, who are rather naive to comprehend
all these racial myths. Writer attacks the society ridden with untouchbility.

Inequalities in wealth and land ownership are largely responsible for the persistence of caste problem in India. The social and economic relationship in traditional India highly unequal. Although the lower caste people foiled hard for generations together they did not have the ownership over the land they cultivated. They led a life of bonded labourers and serfs. While situation has improved during the last 10 years. Their general conditions remains far from satisfaction.

The historical truth reflected in Arundati roy's "The God of Small Things" The women protagonist who is born in upper Syrian Christian and died on untouchable. When a women is deprived of higher education, harassed by husband, neglected divorce and moreover unlawfully imprisoned in home. While her beloved is killed in fake. On counter by the police pushed out of the house by her own sibling, vexed at searching for a job for mere livelihood and found dead after some time in a lodge. She is undoubtedly a dalit though she was born in caste family. When velutha falls a victim to the police cruelty and dies in the night. Roy describes his death "The God of loss, The God of small things". he left no foot print in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirror. They do not realise that is doing so, they are trying to dismantle the traditional rules put down by the so called protectors of Indian culture. For ammu and velutha caste on status do not matter.

Attitude changes are necessary to remedy this situation. One welcome feature is the growing resistance from the victims and the tendency to assent their constitution and legal rights. For the depressed classes like tribals and those destined to live in the lower rungs of social hierarchy literature
had always been means to achieve “self-respect”.

This literature encapsulate the pain, humiliation and poverty of this community. Which has lived at the bottom of India’s social pyramid for millennia. These are truly inspiring book that reveals untouchable quest for dignity and the recognition of their human worth, rather than to India’s own success in eradicating the evils of the caste system.

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WHY GIRLS RIGHT MATTERS? TABOOS, HARMFUL TRADITIONS OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Teshome Tola Turo
Research Scholar
English Department
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

Introduction

Background

Ethiopia, one of the countries in the east of Africa, has a diverse mix of many ethnic groups with nearly 80 languages. As it has a diverse mix of ethnic groups such as Oromo, Amara, Tigre, and Sidama and so on, in each ethnic group and in the country as a whole, there exist a number of traditions, customs and norms. These cultures, traditions, values and norms which have the power of unifying and tying communities together are transmitted from generation to generation. The traditions and customs a given society believes to be helpful are therefore preserved for the next generation because cultural and social norms are highly influential in shaping individual behavior. In the same culture, as useful practices exist, there are also harmful practices. This paper deals with how some traditions affect young girls' right particularly in their early childhood in some local communities in Ethiopia. These traditions include family oriented "Do's" and "Don'ts". It also presents how parent son preference affects the girls' right and educational achievements.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to disclose the concealed but harmful traditional practices which particularly violate the right of young girls in some local communities of Ethiopia. These traditions exist in the form of Do's and Don'ts and have been supported by different taboos. More specific
objective is to describe how such harmful practices like taboos related to food, play, fart, and circumcision are contributing to the violation of girl’s right, and how parents’ son preference affects the girls’ right and their educational achievements.

Review of Literature

Harmful practices are violent or devastating acts against one’s natural right. They may wreck the physical and psychological health and integrity of individuals (WHO, 1996). The social norms can protect against violence but they can also support and encourage violence. WHO (2009) listed many cultures and norms that support violence across the world. Only few which are related to this paper are cited here under. Here are the examples of norms and the violence it supports.

a. Child Treatment Violence
- Female children are valued less in society than males e.g. Peru
- Communities adhere to harmful traditional cultural practices such as genital mutilation or child marriage e.g. Nigeria, Sudan, Somali, Ethiopia

b. Intimate Partner Violence
- A man has a right to assert power over a woman and is socially superior. A man has a right to “correct” or discipline female. e.g. India, Nigeria, Ghana.
- A woman is responsible for making a marriage work e.g. Israel
- Intimate partner violence is a taboo subject. e.g. South Africa and reporting abuse is disrespectful e.g. Nigeria
- Divorce is shameful e.g. Pakistan
- A man’s honor is linked to a woman’s sexual behavior. Here, any deviation from sexual norms disgraces the entire family,
which can then lead to honor killings e.g. Jordan

c. Sexual Violence
- Sex is a man’s right in marriage e.g. Pakistan.
- Sexual violence is an acceptable way of putting women in their place or punishing them e.g. South Africa
- Sexual activity (including rape) is a marker of masculinity e.g. South Africa

(WHO, 2009:5)

Ethiopia has also been quoted as a country that long been known for exercising genital mutilation, early marriage, male over female domination, gender inequality such as high son preference (Almaz, E, 1991; Teshome, 2002; Hirut, 2004). The Ethiopian government strongly opposes female genital cutting and early marriage, designating them as Harmful Traditional Practices and proscribing them in law. For example as noted in Boyden et al (2012) the 1995 Federal Constitution prohibits laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women. The 1997 Federal Cultural policy also mentions the need to abolish harmful traditional practices. However, regardless of the measures taken, some harmful traditions persist violating the girls’ right often supported by taboos.

Harmful practices generally have some cultural, social or religious foundation (SRSG, 2013). Social tolerance of violent behavior is likely learned during childhood, through the use of corporal punishment or witnessing violence in the family or in other settings. In Ethiopia, the socially transmitted values, cultures, norms and costumes have partly helped society and partly made them handicapped. Females are the disadvantaged social group just in similar way as other African countries. In Ethiopia, men and women seem to have clearly defined roles. Traditionally men
have been responsible for providing for the family and for dealing with family contact outside the home whereas women have been responsible for domestic work and looking after children. Parents treat their children quite in a different manner; they give more freedom to sons than daughters.

As of the tradition, Ethiopian men neither cook nor do shopping and housework because such activities are regarded as women’s job. Women are considered to be subordinate to their husbands. For instance, a female informant in Arsi (One of the regional state Zone in Ethiopia), as Hirut (2004) noted, stated that a man is a big person who has higher social position and knowledge, who can govern others and think in wider perspectives; while a woman is a person who can serve a man, who is like the husband’s object transferred through marriage, and whom a husband can do anything he wishes to do. These socially induced differences between males and females result in discriminatory rewards, statuses, opportunities and roles as shall be discussed below. The differences in the ways in which individuals are treated through the socialization process lead to the development of real psychological and personality differences between males and females (Almaz, 1991).

Traditions are often protected by taboos, according to SRSG (2013) are strong social bans related to human activity or social custom based on moral judgment and religious beliefs. Ethiopia has both beneficial and harmful traditional practices. The helpful traditional practices such as breastfeeding, relieving women from work before and after delivery, providing special care and a nutritious diet for a newly delivered mother are few examples. Harmful traditional practices are those customs that are known to have bad effects on health, equality and social rights. Those harmful practices
indicated in different literature (Lott, 1987; Hirut, 2004; Ashenafi, 2003) commonly mentioned in other African countries and other parts of the world are also found in Ethiopia like genital mutilation (FGM), early marriage, and marriage by abduction, forced marriage, polygamy, menstruation and Nutritional taboo. These are the most and widely known harmful practices on which tremendous measures have been taken. The following harmful traditions are also widely performed clandestinely (undercover though not publicly) and persist regardless of measures or withstanding the measures taken on it for having strong and deep-rooted acceptance by the society.

Concealed Harmful Traditions in Ethiopia

There are some traditional practices that initiate the maltreatment of female children in remote part of Ethiopia so far used as the Do’s and Don’ts. These harmful practices are often protected by taboos. Families use most of these practices as a rule to teach their children grow behaviorally good by getting aware of the wrong and right social norms. They are harmful acts but persist because they are often not either questioned or are a deep-rooted social value that can’t be altered in short course of time.

Taboo Related to Play

Studies have shown that recreation plays a vital part in a child’s emotional and mental development. When time for play is found by girls, it often takes place near the home. Young boys, however, have full right and are allowed to go for any play outside the home. When girls wanted to have any play of their interest, they need to hide somewhere and play in a secret, but, unfortunately, if found doing it, then they are blamed of evil play not allowed, they shall be cursed, intimidated and penalized. Because they violate the norms, they play like
male. Then question comes aren’t they circumcised?

**Taboos Related to Excretion**

The other funny practice allowed for the boys but shame for the girls is being found farting. While a normal man/woman biologically expected to fart 14-20 times a day (Clark and Kumar, 2005) it is like a curse for a lady to fart and may be penalized. If the father hears the whistling fart belongs to lady he scolds, “you donkey come and shit on my head!” soon the mother may pinch, kick, or corporally punish her. To this opposite, very surprisingly, the family members feel very happy when sons fart and it’s assumed blessing that the children eat to their satisfactions.

**Taboo Related to Food**

The other traditions girls not allowed to do at family level is drinking water standing. No girl is allowed to drink water while standing. This is because it is the act of a male and if she does she will conceive on her knee or urinates in her stand. A girl should not eat too much. To protect female from eating too much males including father tell a proverb, “one ‘enjera’ is a lunch for male but one is to search spoon for a lady and two is her lunch.” This is just to warn her not to be a belly. After having either breakfast, lunch or dinner it is a shame for a girl to belch as it is forbidden to do in the presence of any elders. If a father hears his daughter belching, he soon insults, “You dog, come and vomit before me!” So to cleanse from such a curse she needs to eat very small amount, chewing in only one of her check so slowly, as expected.

**Taboo as reinforcing Circumcision**

According to vast literature, for example Boyden et al (2012) the main reason for circumcision are, to constrain from errant sexual behavior and ensure purity, or otherwise, according to Ashenafi (2003), uncircumcised girl is unclean, remain standing, damage
house furniture, and so blood of circumcision washout disease. With this and previously mentioned concealed traditions, the society relate with circumcision so as to give firm stand the practice should exist. Thus, a girl found quarrelling, jumping, struggling with calves or doing anything like her counterpart, boy, shows also the warning sign of being uncircumcised and assumed she has totally gone out of way. This is why it is believed that uncircumcised girls are assumed to run wild, are considered to bring shame and disgrace to her parents. Fortunately, the uncircumcised ones even may also refrain from free plays as equal as male because of the interpretation follows it. These Do’s and Don’ts grow as sinful behavior in their late college or university education particularly while enforced to express themselves freely.

**Son Preference as a Cause of Social Inequality**

Within a family, we have seen different social inequality, particularly gender inequalities in the examples raised so far. One of the manifestations is gender-based discrimination that is the son’s preference in the family. A number of literatures indicate that it is a common practice in most African and Asian countries to have more son preference than girls. Where it is mostly concerned, the educational and economic implications of son preference are so serious.

The following traditional practice depicts the son preference over girls in Ethiopia. On functional ceremonies like "Atete" in some Oromo communities, the boys are told to see towards inside of their home and the girls to see towards outside of the house. This is to show boys remain home even after marriage and has an indication of belongingness for the family forever. The girl, however, as she will leave for marriage in the future, her membership is disregarded and lack
such belongingness. On similar occasions, abided to such norms and perceptions, girls serve with foods and drinks to the whole member of the family including boys even the younger ones and eat after males. To that worst, it is not only eating after the rest of the family, they may eat the left over or may receive food of lower nutritional value.

WHO (1996) indicates that preference for sons is a powerful tradition. WHO explains this preference manifests itself in neglect, deprivation, and discriminatory treatment of daughters to the detriment of their physical and mental health. In South-Asia, a son-preference leads to abortion of girls in India (Rangamuthia et al, 1997) and additional children if the first born is a girl said (Hatleback, 2012:1). Male preference, as mentioned by Hatlebakk, adversely affects females through inequitable allocation of food, education, and health care, a disparity frequently reinforced throughout life (WHO 1996). Ethiopian society is socialized in such a way that girls are held inferior to boys. In the process of upbringing, as clearly noted by Haregewoin and Emebet (2003) and Hirut (2004) boys are expected to learn and become self-reliant, major bread winners, and responsible in different activities, while girls are brought up to conform, be obedient and dependent, and specialize in indoor activities like cooking, washing clothes, fetching water, caring for children, etc. Thus, such gender-based discrimination no matter girls reach even university in their adolescent would have a serious negative impact in their educational and at large their life success.

**Impact of the Harmful Practices**

Playing like male, eating like a male, drinking like male, sitting like male, farting like male, spitting, belching, etc are all what a girl is humiliated for. These embarrassing traditions have negative cumulative
impact on her humanly moral and education while she grew up in such a manner in all educational setting including university. No doubt that her fate would be resulted in lacking confidence and self-esteem, admitting inequality, powerless to decide her own future, lack of autonomy, failing to reclaim her own right or to get freedom from such a concealed home right violence. No semesters education could easily freed her from such firmly entrenched norms. This has an inbuilt psychological pressure when they come to university and feel shy in group formation such as free talk, cooperative and peer feedback in writing.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In Ethiopian case in the current two decades a number of measures have been taken and there have been fruitful results. Though such certain localities based practices still generate and regenerate, those severe ones which call attention of worldly effort such as early marriage, genital mutilation, abduction, raping etc are pacing towards the control. Despite international and national efforts to eradicate them, those traditions which are harmful to girls addressed so far, are being practiced undercover though not publicly.

One way to mold children with good practice is to mock on these harmful practices and present best examples as a model. What parents teach their children and what children read, see, and learn from adults, from one another, and the media, is also what teachers typically model in the schools and reinforce in the behavior of the children in their classes (Lott, 1987:64). Teachers are the important figures, as central as the textbook in actively transmitting messages about gender. This is not something done only in primary or secondary school; it should extend to all levels. The frequent harassment and core source of frustration and
nervousness we often encounter in universities is the cumulative effect of these practices, too.

Men and women have to refuse and avoid all the harmful customs and traditions. These should include the following motto. Girls should no more be forced to learn such gender role socialization which disregard their humanly right making them second citizen or prepare themselves to be 'good' wife and mother. Rather they should be given rights to study well their education, right to challenge hardship, right to aspire leadership, right to have a far sighted vision. Girls should not suffer from the man-made customs, like that of early marriage, polygamy, and the do's and don'ts traditional rules.

To do these, there should be inter-institutional interaction such as family and school, family and local governors, family and religious leaders to uncover the concealed but harmful practice that impede inequality so that the coming generation shall be free of such underground operations. As the traditional socialization is the product of patriarchal social system, the ball (power to decide) is in the court of men; therefore, raising the level of male awareness by employing them in gender inequality at home, office, religious institutions, has paramount effect.

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In Indian English writing, drama is sparsely cultivated field. Consciously the fear of women intruding into the boundaries of writing plays might have trigged the men writers not to encourage women venturing into the dramatic creation. It is almost impossible to trace out the women dramatists from the Sophocles to Shakespeare as there is no mention of them in literary history. There arouse a women dramatist, Aphra behn, a friend of john Dryden who earned her livelihood by writing plays. She challenged the dominant literary men and dared to write and establish herself as no other woman could do ever before. she became the mother of all women writers around the world. Virginia woolf hail from contribution of Aphra behn and pays tribute to her in the essay “A Room of one’s own “.she acknowledges that all women ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra behn ,for it is she who earned them the right to speak their minds. Though there are less number of women dramatists, but still one can find some silverling in the clouded atmosphere of Indian English drama. The foremost playwright is Bharati Sarabhai followed by Mrinalini sarabhai, Swarna kumara devi, Ghoshal, Smt.k.b.thakur, shanta rama rao and few others. Sarabhai has to her credit, two Plays : “The Well of the people (1943) and two women (1948).In the play “the well of the people” the writer tries to give a new meaning to age old beliefs and customs. She projects a picture of synthesis of religion and social service. Sarabhai uses this story for
her play with her personal symbolism and crafts it into the contemporary social and political situations of Indian society.

As Dr. Premnanda Kumar says, “It is a bold attempt on the part of Bharati Sarabhai to have taken up a challenge to present a spiritual problem in terms of physical action, she achieves success not because she controls the use of symbols and at the same time avoids the monotony of a long vague story. What she has chosen is also a simple theme.” (Kumar 254). This play is one of the first plays in Indian English drama by a woman, set in the pre-independence period. The Vedantic concept that god is within, is presented in the story. Sarabhai was the only woman playwright of pre-independent times. Though the theme of the play is social reform, the verse contains the mysticism of Kabir, The Kabir philosophy of the Tagore, the romanticism of Wordsworth and Keats and Keats and the symbolism of T.S. Eliot, Yeatsian influence is seen in the opening line, Things take sudden shape. (wp)

The well of the people has its origin in the Haridwar Kumba Mela. In 1938 Bharati Sarabhai was touched by a story that appeared in Harijan, (wp preface) a Weekly journal edited by Gandhi. An old woman fails to achieve her ambition of going on pilgrimage to Kasi and Haridwar and she decides to please God by building a well for “The Untouchables” in her village with her savings. Sarabhai has taken up the bold task of merging themes—social, individual, political, mystical and philosophical. The play comes in a period when the term “Feminism” was unheard of in the Orient. A study of the work “The Well of the People” is attempted in this article.

It is evident that the story is symbolic charged with Gandhi’s socio-political ideologies, the Saviour of all these people is
Gandhi. He is a prophet, who has come to show the right path to the pilgrim who has to show the right path to the pilgrim who has wrong visions. "THE WELL OF THE PEOPLE" is the poetic and symbolic and seems to be influenced by Gandhi’s thoughts. The workers says that Gandhi is the saviour. Rani is the first female protagonist in Indian English drama. She is a Maithili behari Brahmin widow with out enough money to go to benaras and kasi. Rani like mother India is old with centuries of age behind her and but with the burden of tradition and culture. Metaphorical, lyrical and philosophical significances beautify the I am not see benares, god does not Push a sick vessel like this body to Each post of earthly pilgrimage, always To full and fill, still stop and fill to full, But my soul, my free swan, can Bring indeed On a small well, with water pure as mother ganga. (WP 41)

Rani is also the spokes woman of gandhian ideas. she is physically weak but mentally strong in spirit. Rani’s condition is pathetic as she has lost her husband and son. she lived by weaving Dhaka muslin which had become a dying
art. She worked for twenty years and once every seven days she takes the woven threads and sells it and money. With such hard labour she saves seventy silver coins and dreams,

With my own eyes I shall see benares
And my husband and will Reap salvation (WP 37)

The woman wants to go with the intention of bringing moksha to the souls of her dead husband and son but with her broken leg she cannot make it to the benares. No one risk making the long journey with her. She is loud voiced but kind-hearted. She bathes in the river and cooks her food on its banks.

The Darshan sight of Gandhi, who comes on foot to mithila, the mythological city of sita’s birth inspires Rani. She lifts a harijan sweeper boy who is straining to see Gandhi. The boy reminds her of her own son and it is then she decides to build a well near the temple of her own village and water of that could be as pure as Ganga. The well is not built in life time but there is a promise that it would be done as she had given her hard earned savings to build a well. So the karma yogi turns into gnana yogi as realisation dawns her. There are two scenes the village scene and the haridwar scene which are in total contrast representing modern british india and india of epic. The poor peasants are crushed constantly by one oppressor after the other feudal lords, moughul rulers, and the british, the women are the worst lot and they are helpless as in these image

“Generations crushed him, bullied Helpless in his mother’s stomach.” (wp 25)
And Brocaded land lord with tenant’s disgorged wife”. (WP 25)

The characters chetan, sanatan and vichitra represent younger generations. They are Gandhi an workers. Chetan is cynical in his attitude towards the women. He expresses actuality that
no miracles happen inspite of the long pilgrimage. If untouchability marginalised one section of the society, the women were twice moved from the main stream - one by the caste and then by their gender. The writer further describes the pathetic conditions of the women.

"Doorless, windowless mud raised 1. Huts exposed old and yound and child woman
Pottering about and men scarce, wonderful
As peacocks." (WP 34).

The villagers were full of widows as mentioned in the play as there was no widow-remarraige. The poor women were the one who suffered the most. Rani has taken up the her clean task of building a common well in the premises of the temple with the intension of breaking the barriers of caste and also allowing harijans into mainstream society. The class and the caste conflict, the practice of untouchability and the exploitation of the poor out caste is mentioned in the line,

"Better the cow that scavengers" (WP 24)

Like cow, the well is also an integral part of the hindu culture and tradition. It IS not only the source of life but also a strange force in sustaining the caste order and the source through which the upper caste can deprived the untouchables and exercise the power, authority and superiority over them. A common well for all the communities invalidates the caste based power politics and helps to remove untouchability and this revolution comes from a womens of higher caste. The play highlights a moral message that doing service to mankind by making available to many people the very source of life, water.

It's carries a very strong contemporary appeal and his highly per formative with it's vivid dramatic aspects. The women's
dying wish was that THE Well should be built. From the orthodox belief she moves to ADVAITA of sankaracharya’s philosophy of god lives within every human being and Gandhi an philosophy to humanity. She condemns blind faith and superstition and casticism. But the last stanza the feeling of despondency.

The youth do not take up the work of building the well immediately. They were involved in the freedom struggle, they are arrested and await the time for conditions to become favourable to take up such idealistic activity.

Sarabhai describes the protagonist “these love is filling her pitches from the well yet she has no rope where with to draw water”. She is full of love for mankind that she envisions a better life for them but her work is not fulfilled as the rope (i.e.) society doesn’t lend support to her to enable to distribute the water of love. The chorus pays home as to the great woman,

“Mother, you will, you will, Even now your senses love, Fall and watch, splashing along Within ,you will live, live To see the people’s well Spell in rose golden walls” (WP 46)

The old woman is not an individual but mother India who wants her children to live as one, and root out will of caste system. Though she is ignored as mother India is, she persists in her love for her children. Like the river and the well she only bestows and never denies. One realise that from despair and disappointment comes a social reform which will bring about a new social order.

Sarabhai asserts the truth that good lives within us and it is a futile attempt searching for good elsewhere. Life itself is a pilgrimage-a search for truth-all reverse have the same water, all image of god are lifeless, all scriptures’ are mere words and the itself is Maya AS KABIR SAY’S,

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"I laugh when I hear that fish in water is thirsty" (w p 23).

Meaning that god is everywhere, is as and around us. The old woman can be considered as a representative of all woman in India. Sarabhai’s ideas and aspirations are thus mouthed by the protagonist, Rani. India is a mother to her, neglected by her son and she is troubled. But she consoles herself that a mother can never be destroyed. Mother source of sustenance to her children. Finally she says it is not haridwar that a true Bhaktha that must aim at is humanism and social service that brings real moksha by washing away sin’s. The path of idealism is the path of moksha. The journey to holy place are dip in the gang doesn’t bring salvation. Hence, Service to mankind is service to god. The story /play gives us a clear picture of how spirituality had been transformed to humanity.

References:

1. Dr. Premamandh kumar, “Barathi sarabhai’s English plays, critical essays on Indian writing in English. 283
2. Bharati sarabhai’s, “THE WELL OF THE PEOPLE” P.2
Dalits in India live a precarious existence, shirked by their own society because of their rank as “untouchables” or Dalits, literally meaning “broken” people, at the bottom of India’s caste system.

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews, 4:10)

Dalits are razored by the serrated edges, the upper caste and the government, on both sides, like a double-edged sword that discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions, and routinely abused, even killed, at the hands of the police and of higher-caste groups that enjoy the state’s protection. Dalit women are frequent victims of sexual abuse. In what has been called India’s “hidden apartheid,” entire villages in many Indian states remain completely segregated by caste. National legislation and constitutional protections serve only to mask the social realities of discrimination and violence. Caste clashes, particularly in the states of Bihar and Tamil Nadu, but also in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat, reflect patterns which are common to many parts of the country: a loss of faith in the state machinery and increasing intolerance of their abusive treatment have led many Dalit communities into movements
to claim their rights. In response, state and private actors have engaged in a pattern of repression to preserve the status quo. The report also documents the government’s attempts to criminalize peaceful social activism through the arbitrary arrest and detention of Dalit activists, and its failure to abolish exploitative labor practices and implement relevant legislation.

“Untouchables” or Dalits, literally meaning “broken” people, at the bottom of India’s caste system. Dalits are discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions, and routinely abused, even killed, at the hands of the police and of higher-caste groups that enjoy the state’s protection. Dalit women are frequent victims of sexual abuse. In what has been called India’s “hidden apartheid.” 1

Like other Indian women whose relatives are sought by the police, Dalit women have also been arrested and tortured in custody as a means of punishing their male relatives who are hiding from the authorities. Dalits, who dare to challenge the social order, have been subject to abuses by their higher-caste neighbors. Dalit villages are collectively penalized for individual “transgressions” through social boycotts, including loss of employment and access to water, grazing lands, and ration shops. For most Dalits in rural India who earn less than a subsistence living as agricultural laborers, a social boycott may mean destitution and starvation.

In India’s southern states, thousands of girls are forced into prostitution before reaching the age of puberty. Devadasis, literally meaning “female servant of god,” usually belong to the Dalit community. Once dedicated, the girl is unable to marry, forced to become a prostitute for upper-caste community members, and eventually auctioned off to an urban
brothel. Bhanwari Devi's case is a typical example of the influence of caste bias on the justice system and the inability of lower-caste women to obtain redress. It is also a striking example of rape as a weapon of retaliation used to punish and silence women's rights advocates. The nature of the district judge's opinion sounded many alarms, and the case itself was taken up by several women's rights organizations in north India.

Bhanwari Devi joined the Rajasthan Government's Women's Development Programme (WDP), called Sathin, in 1985 as a grassroots worker. In April 1992 she reported the child marriage of the one-year-old daughter of Ram Karan Gurjar to WDP authorities. The police came to the village and tried to stop the marriage, but the family proceeded with the ceremony in secret. On September 22, 1992, in the presence of her husband, Bhanwari was gang raped by members of the Gurjar family in retaliation for her intervention in the child marriage. Upon approaching the police, Bhanwari was told, however, that she was too old and unattractive to merit the attentions of young men.

The trial judge acquitted the accused on the reasoning that "rape is usually committed by teenagers, and since the accused are middle-aged and therefore respectable, they could not have committed the crime. An upper-caste man could not have defiled himself by raping a lower-caste woman." Those accused of raping Bhanwari also enjoyed political support. BJP leader Kanhaiya Lal Meena reportedly organized a rally in support of the accused. As of February 1999, Bhanwari was still in court appealing the acquittal.

Bhanwari's case, and in particular the manner in which it was handled by the police and the courts, is not an isolated incident. Cases at all levels have the potential to be influenced by the judge's
personal perceptions of caste and gender that are brought to bear in determining the credibility of evidence or the likelihood of guilt. The case material that follows, though not specific to the report, is intended to illustrate the atmosphere of prejudice that Dalit women face – both as Dalits and as women. These biases are pervasive all the way to the top of the legal system. The few cases that manage to reach the Supreme Court still do not escape these deep-seated prejudices.

According to members of Bihar Dalit VikasSamiti, a grassroots organization, the events that unfolded in Bathe were more complex than a random attack on a Dalit hamlet:

CPI was organizing in Bathe because the residents were so poor and exploited, they couldn’t even feed themselves after a full day’s work. When they asked for more wages, they were beaten down even more. Some CPI (M-L) and Party Unity people had a split.152 A few people left them and gave information about party activities to landlords. The landlords contacted RanvirSena in Bhojpur, saying that they needed help controlling them. The RanvirSena came out at 4:00 p.m. They ate and drank liquor with the landlords and attacked at 9:00 p.m. They had a list of whom to attack but got drunk and killed anyone and everyone.153

The activists also claimed that the purpose of Bathe was “to teach others not to rebel or raise a voice. In so doing women became vulnerable and were sexually assaulted... They raped women and cut off their breasts. A woman whose pregnancy was nearly complete was shot in the stomach. They said that otherwise the child will grow up to be a rebel.”154

“The caste system is an economic order. It prevents someone from owning land or receiving an education. It is a vicious cycle and an exploitative
economic arrangement. andowning patterns and being a high-caste member are co-terminous. Also there is a nexus between [being] lower-caste and landlessness... Caste is a tool to perpetuate exploitative economic arrangements.”

– R. Balakrishnan, chairman, Tamil Nadu Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Constitutional provisions and legal texts exist to abolish untouchability and to protect the members of the scheduled castes and tribes but the policies adopted to improve the situation of members of the scheduled castes and tribes and to protect them from abuses are far beyond practice. Basic supplies such as water, and medical facilities and the better, thatched-roof houses are denied to them by the upper caste. “Untouchability” is further reinforced by state allocation of facilities in which dalits often receive almost next to nothing if they receive any at all.25 As part of village custom, Dalits are made to render free services in times of death, marriage, or any village function. During the Marama village festival in Karnataka state, caste Hindus force Dalits to sacrifice buffalos and drink their blood. They then have to mix the blood with cooked rice and run into the village fields without their chappals (slippers). The cleaning of the whole village, the digging of graves, the carrying of firewood, and the disposal of dead animals are all tasks that Dalits are made to perform.26

As Human Rights Watch was told by a government investigator in Tamil Nadu, one doesn’t practice untouchability when it comes to sex.”36 Rape is a common phenomenon in rural areas. Women are raped as part of caste custom or village tradition. According to Dalit activists, Dalit girls have been forced to have sex with the village landlord.37 In rural areas, “women are induced into
prostitution (Devadasi system)..., which is forced on them in the name of religion."38 The prevalence of rape in villages contributes to the greater incidence of child marriage in those areas. Early marriage between the ages of ten years and sixteen years persists in large part because of Dalit girls' vulnerability to sexual assault by upper-caste men; once a girl is raped, she becomes unmarriageable. Dalit women are also raped as a form of retaliation. Women of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are raped as part of an effort by upper-caste leaders to suppress movements to demand payment of minimum wages, to settle sharecropping disputes, or to reclaim lost land. They are raped by members of the upper caste, by landlords, and by the police in pursuit of their male relatives.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, upper-caste leaders deny the prevalence of sexual abuse against Dalit women. Dalit women are easy targets for any perpetrator because upper castes consider them to be "sexually available" and because they are largely unprotected by the state machinery. The BathaniTola massacre in Bihar in 1996 epitomizes this phenomenon.

The "landlords" wanted to reassert their feudal tyranny over the poor who have started becoming more vocal and by attacking the most vulnerable, women and children, they sent a clear message that they would not allow anyone to disturb the social structure... Women were raped and hacked. The huts and small houses in which the victims took shelter were burnt down. The shrill cries failed to draw the attention of the police posted a kilometre and a half away because their food came from the landlords' houses.42

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Dalit Panthers, and several groups with a Marxist/Leninist or Maoist orientation, emerged outside
the framework of recognized political parties and parliamentary politics to confront the established powers. The Dalit Panthers were formed in the state of Maharashtra in the 1970s, ideologically aligning themselves to the Black Panther movement in the United States. During the same period, Dalit literature, painting, and theater challenged the very premise and nature of established art forms and their depiction of society and religion. Many of these new Dalit artists formed the first generation of the Dalit Panther movement that sought to wage an organized struggle against the varna system. Dalit Panthers visited “atrocity” sites, organized marches and rallies in villages, and raised slogans of direct militant action against their upper-caste aggressors.46

The organized killing of poor peasants and landless labourers by middle and upper caste landed armies and [the ensuing] retaliation by Marxist-Leninist organizations [Naxalites] have been flashpoints in the agrarian scene in Bihar over the last fifteen years. This is not a new phenomenon. What is relatively new however is the entry on the rural scene... of a new upper caste landed organization called the Ranabir Sena. It has, over the last three years, been responsible for a series of massacres of the rural poor, such that the names of obscure villages have become known to a wider public through the national press...

In a region where tragic massacres repeat themselves with monotonous regularity, the state’s response is predictable and misdirected – setting up more police camps and increasing the financial allocation for anti-Naxalite operations... The issues remain the same; the landlord army is different each time. We are condemned to reiterate the same demands each time and like some ritual drama whose script is familiar to all, the same events are re-enacted each
time, drawing the same reactions from the state... One has to remember that the dreadful reality of bloody massacres are the outcome of [the state's] refusal to address basic questions of agrarian struggle.

– People's Union for Democratic Rights, Agrarian Conflict in Bihar and the RanbirSena, October 1997

The eastern state of Bihar, with a population of eighty-six million people, is notorious for its poverty and lawlessness. Political leaders who depend on landed elites for support have had little interest in pursuing reforms. Wages for agricultural laborers are also among the lowest in the country. In many districts workers are not paid in money but instead often work a full day for as little as two kilograms of rice.

Hundreds of Dalits have been killed in sena attacks since the early 1990s. The attacks frequently take place at night; in many cases, the victims, including women and children, have been shot in their beds while they were sleeping. Members of the senas have also raped women and girls during the attacks. They have often claimed responsibility for the attacks and have even announced beforehand which villages they planned to target. However, because the senas enjoy the patronage of powerful elites, they operate with impunity.

Scheduled castes constitute close to 14 percent of the population in Bihar; most of the agricultural laborers belong to these castes. The implementation of reservations in favor of the backward castes has improved their status throughout the state; the same has not held true of scheduled castes whose status continues to deteriorate. Central Bihar in particular has seen a consistent rise in abuses against scheduled castes since the early 1990s at the hands of upper castes and backward castes who employ them as laborers on their lands.
Rapes and murders of Dalit women in particular have reportedly increased during this period.\textsuperscript{64} In the districts of central Bihar, money-lending, bonded labor, sexual assaults on rural women, and abuse of the landless class by landowners have all contributed to violent clashes between various castes.\textsuperscript{68}

The RanvirSena was founded by upper-caste Bhumihars in Belaur village, Bhojpur district, in 1994.\textsuperscript{83} It first made international headlines in July 1996 with its attack on BathaniTola in Bhojpur district, Bihar, which left nineteen Dalits and Muslims, mostly women and children, dead. Sixty members of the sena reportedly descended on the village and set twelve houses on fire.

Since 1970 there have been problems. It has been difficult for farmers. We cannot even get out of our house. They steal our crops and call strikes. We are farmers. That's how we earn. They destroy that. It's like kicking us in the stomach. We have to save ourselves and our crops. We need protection from Marxist/Leninists. After we got together, we began to give them an appropriate response, a jaw-breaking response. For all of Bhojpur district, we chose our men and from that year on, we have been battling with CPI(M-L). Those who have land are with us, and those who do not are with them.\textsuperscript{92}

On the evening of January 25, 1999, at least twenty-two Dalit men, women and children were killed in the village of Shankarbigha, Jehanabad district. Police ignored early warnings and supported the upper cast. A little over two weeks after the Shankarbigha massacre, on the night of February 10, 1999 Dalits were killed. The police did not arrive until 8:00 a.m. the following morning.\textsuperscript{136}

Human Rights Watch also interviewed seven female residents of the village, many of whom
witnessed the rape, mutilation and murder of five girls. Thirty-two-year-old Surajmani Devi recounted what she saw:

Everyone was shot in the chest. I also saw that the panties were torn. One girl was Prabha. She was fifteen years old. She was supposed to go to her husband’s house two to three days later. They also cut her breast and shot her in the chest. Another was Manmatiya, also fifteen. They raped her and cut off her breast. The girls were all naked, and their panties were ripped. They also shot them in the vagina. There were five girls in all. All five were raped. All were fifteen or younger. All their breasts were cut off.

Twenty-five-year-old Mahurti Devi was shot in the stomach but survived her injuries after extensive surgery. She had returned home after a dispute with her husband and was living in her mother’s house. She recalled:

They broke in and tried to open our box of valuables. They couldn’t so they took my chain and earrings off my body. There were ten to twelve of them in the house. They didn’t wear any masks. I said I had nothing. They said open everything. My mother was shot, and she fell down. They flashed a torch on my face. Then they shot me, and I fell down. The police took me to the hospital. After a three-day operation I came to, and the police took a report from me. Some people have been arrested, others are still free. They looted all the houses.

At the time of the massacre, Jasudevi was at her husband’s home in another village. She arrived in Bathe the morning after the attack to find her two sisters-in-law and her fifteen-year-old niece shot to death. “My niece was supposed to go to her husband’s house the same day. She was expecting a child. When I found her it looked like she was trying to run away when she was shot.”
Seven-year-old Mahesh Kumar was being held by his mother when she was shot. She fell forward and protected his body with her own. She then died.150

Local police had been aware of the possibility of violence long before the Bathe massacre. On November 25, 1997, sena leaders openly held a strategy meeting seven kilometers away from Bathe. Sena leader Shamsher Bahadur Singh had also been touring the area in the months before the massacre openly seeking donations from supporters. Police officers claimed to be aware of these meetings but dismissed them as routine – missing yet another opportunity to intervene and preempt a sena attack. One officer was quoted as saying, “It’s like crying wolf. The Communist Party of India (M-L) keeps sending us complaint letters every week, we can’t take action every time.”151

According to members of Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti, a grassroots organization, the events that unfolded in Bathe were more complex than a random attack on a Dalit hamlet:

On the morning of April 10, 1997, members of the upper caste gunned down eight residents of Ekwari village in Bhojpur district in an operation that lasted two hours. Police officers stationed nearby forced open the villagers’ houses and then stood by and watched as the massacre took place.

The partisan role of the police could not have been clearer. While policemen pried open doors of houses let the killers in... Sagar Mahato said he saw the police running away and watching from a distance.163

Dalit women face the triple burden of caste, class, and gender. Dalit girls have been forced to become prostitutes for upper-caste patrons and village priests. Sexual
abuse and other forms of violence against women are used by landlords and the police to inflict political “lessons” and crush dissent within the community. According to a Tamil Nadu state government official, the raping of Dalit women exposes the hypocrisy of the caste system as:

“no one practices untouchability when it comes to sex.”

References


2. 44 “In Brief: Recent Rape Cases,” p. 20.

3. 45 Ibid.


5. 25 Human Rights Watch interview with Nicholas, director of Integrated Rural Development Society, Madras, February 14, 1998. In Tamil Nadu, the father's given name, which comes before one's given name (often in the form of an initial), often serves as the family name for his children. Throughout the country, Dalits and lower castes also use their caste name as their last name. Many of the people interviewed in this report, therefore, identified themselves only by their given name, and not their caste name or their father's name.


10. 38 “Statement made by the Dalit Liberation Education Trust on the Situation of Untouchable People (Dalits) in South Asia region, at the World Conference on Human Rights of the United Nations on 24th June 93 at Astoria Centre, Vienna during the 11th meeting of the Main Committee,” Annexure I in Human Rights from the Dalit Perspective (Madras: Dalit Liberation Education Trust), p. iii.

11. 41 See details in Chapter IV. Nineteen Dalits and Muslims, mostly women and children, were killed by members of the RanvirSena, a private militia of upper-caste landlords, in BathaniTola (a Dalit hamlet of BarkiKharaoon village) in July 1996. The attack was reportedly an effort to weaken the resolve of CPI(M-L), a leftist guerrilla organization, and to prevent a labor boycott on hundreds of acres of land.

12. 42 Neena Bhandari, “Sexual Assaults on Women: Women are being sexually violated in India for various reasons including land disputes and caste conflicts,” [no date] Inter Press Service.


14. 61 The People’s Union for Democratic Rights is one of India’s most respected national human rights organizations. RanbirSena is one of several spelling variations of the private militia’s name. Others include Ranbeer and RanveerSena. Throughout this report, the organization is referred to as the RanvirSena.

15. 68 Hindwan, “A question of economics...,” The Pioneer.


17. 136 Dipak Mishra and Satyendra Kumar, [no title], Times of India, February 12, 1999.

18. 147 Human Rights Watch interview with Surajmani Devi,


22. 151 Yogesh Vajpayee, “Police was aware of RanvirSena attack,” Indian Express, December 5, 1997.

23. 152 According to a press report, a year before the massacre the village was aligned with Party Unity but had since shifted to CPI(M-L) after the murder of Party Unity leader Chapit Ram. Party Unity members alleged that CPI(M-L) was behind the murder. “Bloodbath at night,” Rediff on the Net, December 3, 1997, www.rediff.com/news/dec/03kill2.htm. The same article also reported that villagers claimed that the killers shouted pro-sena slogans during the Bathe attack.


26. 163 Ahmad, “Pregnant woman raped...,” The Telegraph.

CLIPPED WINGS OF DALITS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF BAMA’S ‘KARUKKU AND BABY KAMBLE’S ‘THE PRISION WE BROKE’

P. Gouthami
Research Scholar
Department of English
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

The present paper compares two Dalit women writers’ autobiographies entitled The Prisons We Broke from Maharashtra and Karukku from Tamil Nadu. These two novels focus on the degradation and inhuman treatment of the Dalit community brought about by the Hindu caste institution. The caste system is the spine of the Hindu religion. The caste system has been bound in India but the discrimination based on birth has been widely practiced. Both the books focus also on how the Dalits converted to other religions are still subjected to subordination, etc. The Dalits of India have had undergone a variety of humiliations and sufferings at the hands of the hegemonic elites. Now they have become articulate enough to express the Dalit Experience in various literary forms. The plight of the Dalit who meekly move on with their suffering in patience, the twin trials of poverty and exploitation is portrayed as a saga of acceptance of humiliation without protest. Dalit literature echoes the agony of the experiences of untouchables. It portrays the caste humiliation, injustice, atrocities, and discriminations perpetrated by the upper caste people. It expresses the political consciousness that focused on the struggle for self-respect and dignity for the community.

Dalit literature is essentially a protest literature. Many writers have voiced the agonies and aspirations of Dalits. According to Khalid Akhter, Dalit literature’s “primary motive is to give a voice to the relentless oppression of Dalits in India’s caste hierarchy and the
possibility of their social, cultural and political emancipation” (1). To Sharankumar Limbale, a well-known Dalit writer. And “Dalit literature is the uprising of the written word against the millennia-old social injustice manifesting itself as brutalities committed on Dalits all over the country” (Basheer, 1). Arjun Dangle, a Dalit writer-cum-editor points out that “Dalit Literature is marked by revolt and negativism, since it is closely associated with the hopes for freedom of a group of people who, as untouchables, are victims of social, economic and cultural inequality” (vii).

Baby Kamble’s book was published in the year 1986 in Marathi and later on it was translated and published in English in 2008. Baby kamble is an activist and a writer. Bama’s Karukku was published in the year 1992 in Tamil, and then translated into English and published in the year of 2000. Baby Kamble lived her life as a Dalit in Hinduism till her conversion. The Prisons We Broke contains incidents and events in the life of Kamble before the mass conversion of the Dalits in Maharashtra in 1956. Kamble exposed the plight of the Mahar women. In the caste Hindu society, the Mahar women were reduced to inanimate objects. Kamble not only blames Hinduism for the ill-treatment given to the Dalits, but also condemns it as a religion of animals. Besides, she declares that the pride of the caste Hindus is at the cost of the lives of the ignorant Dalits. Kamble’s autobiography has depicted a realistic picture of the society in which she was raised. The following are some selected incidents and events in the life of Kamble, narrated in The Prisons We Broke. The Prison We Broke talks more about Dalits’ blind and superstitions. Both men and women possessed the evil spirit and considered it as the curse of God and Goddesses.
Baby Kamble is an activist and writer. She mobilized Dalit Women's Organization. She was a contemporary of Ambedkar and deeply influenced by Ambedkar's ideology. She also runs an ashramashal in Nimbuses. She was born in 1929 Veergao, a village in western Maharashtra, in her grandparent's house. Her grandparent worked as butler in European households in the cities around. Since they sent money home each month, their family was somewhat better off than the others around it. Pandhrinath was her father and was a contractor in profession. He earned and helped fellow people.

"The Prisons We Broke" is the first work that comes in Dalit Literature which is written by a woman. It is because of that itself, the book deals with the two major problems of the society: firstly, the oppression and exploitation of the Dalit by the upper class: secondly, the discrimination towards women in a patriarchal society. In the memoir, the retrospections of the author flow out profusely in beautiful colors. She talks about the life in her village, called Veergaon. In her memory, the Maharwadas never had a prosperous life. On one side, ignorance and lack of reasoning ruled them, on the other side, the Maharwadas life was dominated by poverty and epidemics. Death rate was high because of the ceaseless starvation and lack of medical facilities for the fatal epidemics. More over superstitions adorned their blindness.

The condition of the Mahar women was miserable. They had to do all the household duties, and go for selling wood to earn for their daily bread. They collected all the left over from other places to give them to their children. Most of the time women had to go on hunger unendingly. When a ritual comes, the work of the women got doubled. They had to plaster their house with cow dung, and clean the utensils and
the clothes. Girls got married at the age of eight or nine. And they became pregnant at a very tender age which created a lot of complications in their first delivery. They lead a very pathetic life in their husband’s home. If a girl could not do the house hold duties, she was abused by her in-laws. She could not go back to her home also, in the fear of scolding from her father and brothers.

The author talks about the influence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the memoir. Ambedkar was the light of their life. He asked the Mahars to educate their children, and inspired them to fight against the atrocities. He asked them not to give offerings to the gods who never cared about them. And he also asked them not to eat the dead animals. Baby Kamble and her relatives actively participated in the revolutionary activities. She was very much influenced by Ambedkar. By the end of the novel Kamble talked about the responsibility of the present society. Even now discrimination is not completely wiped out from our society. There are a lot of villages which should be brought into the light of main stream. The educated people should work for them. Once, Baba Sahib worked for the community. That is why the society got freedom. Now those who enjoy freedom should work to unchain others. I, as a reader could hear another reformer’s sound in Baby Kamble’s voice. A new inspiration is born out of her voice. Education, prosperity and comforts should not make us unaware of the problems of society. We will have to utilize our faculties to support and guide others to the main stream, only then we can enjoy the real value of our life.

Karukku portrays a realistic picture of the Dalits in Tamil Nadu. They are not educated people. As a result, they are not aware of the stratagems of caste conscious and casteist non-Dalits, which degrade the Dalits. They live their lives as
bonded labourers. They are the worst victims in the Hindu caste system, thus Bama makes attempts to bring about awareness among them by saying that they should know the truth and uplift themselves. Bama portrays a whole lot of family and social rituals even while cataloguing the woes of the so-called untouchables, their destiny and credulous acceptance of hypocritical ideologies. They become easy prey to passion and the notorious policy of 'divide and rule' cunningly practiced by the caste-Hindus.

Even the conversion to Christianity (which promises equality) tried out by many Dalits has failed to alleviate their woes. The new religion based on love and tolerance, still was powerless to remove the stains of untouchability. The church, the school, and the house of the priest continued to be located in the vicinity of the streets occupied by the upper castes. The Dalit students who were the majority had to trek a long distance to reach their school. They also had to bear the stigma of poverty. The children of the upper classes were well-dressed and decorated with jewels. The poor Dalit children were severely handicapped. They were mere shadows in comparison with children of the same age from other communities. In the hostels, their dress, bearing and eating habits were subjects of adverse criticism and comment. The nuns made uncharitable, unchristian remarks about the way Dalit children conducted themselves. In addition, all menial jobs in and around the church were allotted to the Dalit converts and their children. Even when Dalits became priests or nuns, they were victims of discrimination. This is exemplified in Bama's own experience as a nun.

Bama describes how faith was forcibly implanted in the children through bullying and intimidation. Children were told of the stories of the devil moving about
with a book and a weighing scale. The nuns, Bama feels, had spoken more of the devil than the guardian angels. She is at pains to show how baptism, confession, first communion, and confirmation were more a ritual than an initiation into a new faith and spiritual responsibility. Bama frankly traces her spiritual concerns, as she says: “When I finished schooling in my village and joined the convent boarding school to study in the ninth class, the fear-bhayam that I felt towards God gradually left me and love-paasam, grew (101).

After completing schooling, Bama enrolled herself in college. By now, she has developed an independent spirit. She didn’t feel the need of others’ help in reaching out to God. To quote Bama’s words: “I felt in my heart that I could go and speak directly to God without their intervention. I could no longer believe that God could only be reached, as they had taught us, through prayer learned by rote though. Pious practices, through the novena and the rosary. I came to realize that you could see God through the mind’s eye, in nature, and in the ordinary events of everyday. So all the rituals that I had followed and believed in so far, suddenly began to seem meaningless and just a sham. The desire to become a nun, fell away from me entirely at this time (102).

As a teacher in a school run by nuns, her experiences were worse. The behavior of the nuns upset her. They ran a boarding school which was nominally for the sake of destitute children but in fact they made those children do every menial task that was needed. They behaved as if they were the queens there, and everybody else was there only to run errands for them. The few nuns who were even slightly humane had a difficult time. And even amongst themselves there were caste divisions between the rich and the poor, and even divisions over the languages that they spoke... Besides
the usual lessons, they could have educated the Dalit children in many matters, and made them aware of their situation in the world about them. But instead, everything in the manner in which they directed them, suggested that this was the way it was meant to be for Dalits, that there was no possibility of change...(103).

The desire to be different impelled her to read the scripture with devotion and she saw the futility of formal religion “I learnt that God has always shown the greatest compassion for the oppressed. And Jesus too, associated himself mainly with the poor. Yet nobody had stressed this nor pointed it out. . . . The oppressed are not taught about him, but rather, are taught in an empty and meaningless way about humility, obedience, patience, gentleness”(104).

Finally she took the plunge; resigned her job and joined the order. But incongruity between the vows of simplicity and poverty and the rather luxurious life of the nuns pricked Bama to the quick. She felt the emptiness of serving the rich to the exclusion of the suffering and the down trodden who were left high and dry by the organized religion. It was not as though she did not try to continue an insider in search of reform. She read the life story of the founder of the order; felt an unshakable desire to be like her. She argued with her peers only to be reminded of her vow of obedience. She was burdened by the dichotomy of saying one thing and doing another. “There is something ugly in saying one thing and doing another. How long can one play—act in this way? Anyway it wasn’t possible for me. I could only leave the order and return into the world. And I don’t know if they have become so habituated to their play-acting that they can no longer distinguish between the role and reality”(107).

Naturally she could not be at peace in the order. She chose to quit though she did not what to do. But
She had her education as her amour. She was ready for hard work, but to live as a young woman, a Dalit woman remaining single and in employment was indeed a slippery ordeal. She had to penetrate many layers of prejudice and conventional expectation before she could assert herself and face society with confidence. It is this battle that is at the heart of the autobiographical work, *Karukku*. Apart from being a successful teacher, Bama emerged as a writer giving expression to Dalit consciousness and sensibility. The battle was by no means easy. She had problems as a Dalit, a woman, and as a single woman. But she did succeed in the end.

Speaking of *Karukku*-her-creation, Bama confesses: "I described myself in *Karukku* as a bird whose wings had been clipped. I now feel like a falcon that treads the air, high in the skies."

Lakshmi Holmstrom who translated the work into English feels that, "*Karukku* was written out of a specific experience, the experience of a Tamil Dalit Christian woman. Yet it has a universality at its core which question all oppression, disturbs all complacencies, and reaching out empowers all those who have suffered different oppressions."  

To sum up, *Karukku* is a path-breaking literary text which reveals the variegated responses of people of marginalized groups; while some are meek the other are vociferous and rebellious just like Bama.

Thus, Kamble and Bama both are neither Hinduism nor Christianity offers any concrete solution to the agony of Dalits. They seem to claim that their personal experience both as Hindu Dalit and Christian Dalit reveal the dominant features of Dalit suppression and subordination. Kamble is more vocal in the criticism of the educated Dalits who forget their roots and ignore the Dalit cause; *Karukku* of
Bama focuses more on the suffering of less educated and illiterate Dalit.

References


