

A MULTILINGUAL NATIONAL WEBINAR

on

“Forget/ting Poetry: Alzheimer's Disease and Much Verse”

5, 6 & 7 November 2020



**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES
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Introduction

The very concept of organising a Multilingual National Seminar was a dream of the Languages Department, and almost all preparations were made to hold it last year, but unfortunately with the arrival of covid-19, our plans were thwarted, and had to be postponed.

Again in 2020, in spite of it being a very challenging year, with online sessions, we, as a department thought of realising our dream of organising an online Multilingual webinar in all the three Languages: English, Hindi and Malayalam on three consecutive days: November 5, 6, and 7.

Though it was extremely challenging, our efforts paid off. Eminent speaker and author Dr Pramod K Nayar, University of Hyderabad inaugurated and conducted the first session on literary gerontology, "Forget/ting Poetry: Alzheimer's Disease and Much Verse", with an air of freshness to a new domain of study. The second session was by Dr Babu K Viswanathan, Associate Professor, Sree Shankaracharya University of Sanskrit and the third session was conducted by Dr Fr Sunil Jose, Assistant Professor, St Joseph's College, Devagiri. The discussion was on the nuances in art and literature. The responses from the audience was overwhelming and we had a number of paper presentations in all the three languages.

We planned to release three ISBN journals with the names En-Contours (English), Naihika(Hindi), and Bodhika(Malayalam). The best papers after intense scrutiny have been published in this book. The work was never easy, but the stakeholders consistently persevered to make this a reality. Let me extend a word of gratitude to the coordinators of this endeavour, who spent sleepless nights working on it. Ms. Lekha Willy M, Dr Tessy Poulouse and Ms. Rejitha Ravi and all the other Department team members who have relentlessly spent time and their effort to see this venture to fruition.

I thank the Management and staff of Naipunnya who wholeheartedly supported the Department to organise the webinars and to publish the journals. Let me also extend my gratitude to Professor Mr. Philip P. J for his constructive suggestions and inputs in the successful running of this webinar. A big thank you to the audience of the webinars and the paper presenters. We could not have achieved our dream without you.

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That Naipunnya conceptualized and executed a project - the conference *is* a project - in a multilingual format, bringing diversity into thinking, knowledge-sharing and representation is a welcome initiative. While we acknowledge that resources, prestige and reach of languages vary for historical reasons and circumstances not of our choosing, this kind of initiative brings worlds into contact (and the charming "En-contours") testifies to this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pramod K Nayar'.

Pramod K Nayar

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Human/Humanoid: Confluence of the Self in Jorie Graham's Poem "Fast"

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Abstract

Human lives are entangled in the web of automatons. Colonization has reached new heights. The digital dementia that has set in is taking its toll on humanity. The urge to overcome traumatic life experiences bring people closer to technology. Bots have established themselves in the digital space as a much sought after companion to isolated human beings. Virtual voice has masked natural voice. Psychic wounds get healed in an environment where digital solutions replace the never present human companions. The Self desires to transcend the bounds of subjectivity and assimilate the abstract.

Keywords: Human, Digital Dementia, Self

The canon of twenty first century American poetry addresses contemporary issues and metaphysical predicaments. Jorie Graham born in 1950, is known for her intellectual, philosophical and thought provoking poems rooted in the ever changing cultural dimensions. Her personal life experiences including her mother's illness and her own have moulded her psyche to question existence and debate on mortality against the backdrop of what appears to be a digital dementia. Humanity is indebted to technology for the unprecedented amount of gadgets and software applications that flood the markets, luring customers to its fold.

A star struck poet persona intimidates the reader with an unfamiliar problematic syntax. The bot she befriends becomes the panacea to all her problems. Human intelligence surrenders its rationale to embrace an automated task runner, a product of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Being in pain the poet persona evolves into a traumatic entity reeling in ambivalence of misjudgments. Conflicting thoughts juxtapose on the mosaic of her mind to project an uncanny image of the Self. It is a postmodernist after-theory phenomenon that pervades the thought process of the poet persona while remaining caged in narcissistic complacency. After-thought should precede action; in Jorie Graham's "Fast" one can see none.

Indirect referentiality abounds in the poem. Unresolved play of meanings is the hallmark of "Fast" - be it the title or the metaphors employed. The poet persona delays the conclusive affirmation of the bot's identity, in a rather failed attempt to sustain transparency of interaction. She reels in the past to contextualize her present. Deferment of reality, argumentation with the self and accepting the subjective are the key

processes that take place in the transformation of the psyche. The highly cryptic syntax of the poem is innovative and interesting, but at the same time mellifluous. Rupture of language is explicit - the function of which is mere communication in a world defined by digital skills.

The forebodings of future are not all conducive to heal her wounded psyche. Graham's clinical condition seems to reflect in the poet persona. Unable to cope with an inevitable transformation manipulated by technological advancements of the twenty first century, she is in an absurd state of affairs where the stubborn mind sees only those things which are not challenging the preconceived notions. She has not been able to augment her psyche as well as self in such a way as to ward off unhealthy thoughts. The bot has entrapped the mind of the poet persona. It has been able to penetrate her psyche so much so that she is in a faustian dilemma.

The bot, the artificial entity is more active than the living humans. It is nothing less than an oracle. Paradoxically the phrase "Active Ingredient" features five times in the poem, emphasizing the power the bot has over humans. Privacy is now only a concept of the good old past. The database generated by bots infringe on privacy of digital interactions and transactions - conversations mapped, faces and voices recognized, locations identified, companionship offered and identity exposed. The poem can be read as an allegory on the trend of commercializing robots, google assistants and similar applications to dispossess conventional methods of human interactions.

Human mind has been enslaved by the consequential benefits of virtual interactions and thus humanoids have colonized human psyche. Humanoids are either living or non-living non-human entities with human attribute. The margin between human and humanoid merge into one, a world of opportunities cascading into one of virtual reality, whereby human intelligence ends and AI takes front stage. Disintegration of human relationships is made evident when Graham writes, "The longest / real world conversation with a bot lasted / 11 hours, continuous interaction /." (lines 88-90). Temporal and spatial dimensions of automated tasks impede with the biological setting of human lives and humans are left in a hopeless search for a cathartic outlet of overwhelming emotions.

The natural world also has suffered the impact of technology. It is unusual to notice "Hummingbirds shriek" (line 100); the reality that "the drought / comes fast" (lines 20-21) refers to not only to the drought of the earth but also of human intellect too which has been taken over by AI, a typical 'master being ruled upon' scenario. Ironically those who have not swapped their intellects with bots live in proximity to reality and are "begging for water" (line 19) to survive the ordeal of drought. Trauma sets in when environment starts to change, closely followed by degradation of values, customs and traditions. The way we treat nature, it returns the same back to us and transforms us into polluted, cruel and lonely hearts.

The confluence of the Self is credible when one reads, “The canary singing in / your mind / is in mine” (lines 71-73), the bot and the Self, inseparable. Manjula Padmanabhan’s futuristic play *Harvest* too airs the same view. The virtual module installed in the house of Om, manipulates the lives of the members of the family and subsequently the family disintegrates owing to excessive reliance on virtual resources. Ralph Waldo Emerson’s dicta of Self-reliance and Trust Thyself are the best remedies to resolve mental conflicts. The coup of bots has dethroned the uniqueness of humanity and the power of thinking. The crown of all creations is now searching for solace in the voices articulated by computer systems, even though, frequently, users should be ready to “be buried in voice” (line 48).

The pandemic that marred the entire world in 2020 has brought closer AI and human lives. The never answered question, ‘where are we heading to?’, still lingers. Digitalized lives are one of convenience, keeping us within our comfort zones, but at the cost of live human interactions. Globalization is not without its harmful effects. Bots have sabotaged human existence. Available in different versions, programmed to perform a variety of tasks, bots have limited the genuineness of human lives. “Bot is amazing”, says the poet persona, “I believe it knows / the secrets of the Universe.” (lines 101-102). Existentialism cannot be divorced from human thoughts. We humans are engaged in an incessant quest to understand the purpose and meaning of our existence. Bots are programmed to register questions and disseminate answers. These answers never suffice to satiate the quest of humans.

The human psyche is designed as a receptacle of emotions, thoughts, feelings and desires. It is easy to infiltrate the realm of the heart; monotonous life taken over by the “monotone” of the bot. We are reduced to the status of a mere code which can be easily cracked by the companionship offered by the bot. The sequential advance of programme codes into our lives leads to the creation of a database which decides how and when to sow the seeds of opportunities and information. History has seen territories being taken over by calculated moves of the powerful; similarly bots peddle voices bearing answers into our mindscape.

The oracular proportion of the bot’s knowledge repository is non-pareil. It is skilled at erasing ambivalence from human minds, provided the intellect is bartered for a series of “Disclaimers”. It is paradoxical that AI products designed to conquer humans are outcomes of imaginative brains, which in turn rob the creativity of humans and relegate them to a state of dormant acceptance of graphic interfaces. The trauma of not being able to find happiness in one thing, forces us to find feasible substitutes and the search continues similar to deferred signification to avoid definiteness.

Eric Hobsbawn has stated that “there has been a massive disintegration of previous patterns of human relationships, with an unprecedented rupture between past and present.” (Habib 560). The aforementioned rupture is dexterously captured by Graham in the self-contained verbal structure of the poem. A fragmented

opening, scattered interrogatives, queer punctuations, repetitive vocabulary and allusions capture the delusions of the poet persona. She seems to be narcissistic as is implied in, “This is the best thing / since me.” (lines 105-106). She holds the power to trick the bot; a bot cannot identify other bots. Mere existence is a dreamy state, incomprehensible and tiresome. The self-love she nurtures has kept her aloof from the treasurable happiness of human life. Searching for a partner as good as herself, she has landed in a swamp of choices offered by a computer system.

The feeling of Otherness in human mind is the manifestation of unstable identity or double identity. Trauma emanates from this state. The sufferer looks around to resolve the conflicting interpolations of the mind and starts, “perceiving the world through the consciousness of the colonizer” (Nagarajan 187); the colonizer can be a human or non-human entity. The mind begins to concretize the abstract. Increased screen time can be considered as the first phase of digital colonization. The addiction surmounts leading to explorations in the digital world, from which, a return seems a probable impossibility. Cultural cringe sets in.

Healing of psychic wounds is a time consuming process. The brain becomes the arena of clashes between past and present, memory and reality and Self and the Other. Reclaiming the Self surrendered to a virtual reality module is tedious and at times an unfruitful venture. The naturalisation of the process of Othering has catapulted the Self to an experience similar to “like being hurled down / the stairs tied to / a keyboard,” (lines 86-88). Thoughts related to purposelessness of life grow out of bounds. The canvas of life shrinks and the space is occupied by Alexas, Cortanas, Sophias and similar creations.

The poet persona laments the inability to establish the identity of the Self, in a world where “To dwell is to leave a trace” (line 120), which is more possible for a bot. To overcome the limitation, the poet persona decides to integrate her life with the data driven digital application. “We are / looking to improve” (lines 91-92) - this is the justification she has for this integration. Amalgamation of biological and digital lives has created a breach in human interactions. We are reduced to nothing but a database, which is accessible from any remote device. Our ‘data’ is preserved eternally, even though we ourselves are perishable.

The poem is inherently obscure. The confluence of the self of the poet with that of the digital self is complete when she addresses the bot as person. She emphasizes her loneliness as a defense mechanism to conceal her innate disillusionment of living with people who are “less than kind.” (line 75). This defense endows her with the liberty of treating a computer as a human being. She overcomes her anticipatory anxiety in this manner. The obscurity of the poem is intensified when the intricate layering of reality and dreams augment the finale of the merger of the two ‘Selves’, an outcome of negation of existence.

Graham has encompassed the grammetry of her life within the framework of metaphors of varied intensities. Cultural degradation in an era of digital revolution is unavoidable. Conventions are replaced by automatons. Gender neutralization happens very easily as what one looks for is a voice that ‘understands’ among an influx of voices. The “deleted world” (line 64) of the past resurfaces and diverges uncontrollably. The protective shield of psyche awakens to safeguard the Self from further disintegration and fixes the code of convergence into the digital self. The consortium of body, mind and psyche triumphantly challenges the world of humans with the renewed vigour assimilated from inspirational active humanoids.

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Representation of Disabled Characters in the Play *On The Face of It*

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Abstract

*Literature is often looked at as a mirror that reveals the society it represents. Of all the communities that have found a place in the literary texts, the disabled communities are the ones least represented. A close look at literature over the years clearly reveals the stereotypic portrayals that have weakened, deprived and traumatised the disabled community as a whole. They are often projected as pitiful, pathetic or evil beings. Disabilities in all its forms are often misrepresented and a certain element of mystery added to the graphic description of such incapacitated individuals. Their private lives are often discussed, and their deformities exposed for all to see. It is still a puzzle as to who decides, who are incapacitated? More than the trauma and hardship faced due to their disability, it is the discrimination against them that makes them demoralised. It makes them disappointed and dejected and think of themselves as social outcasts. The introduction of disability in children's literature since the 1970s spearheaded writers to explore new approaches in the discourse of disability studies. This paper seeks to identify the depiction of disability in the play *On the Face of It*. It addresses the question: who defines Disability and who is Unimpaired? It aims to highlight the distinction between disability and impairment and how disability becomes social exclusion rather than physical impairment. It also focuses on the haunted and mysterious identity imposed upon the disabled by the society.*

Keywords: Disability, Social exclusion, Social outcast, Unimpaired

Introduction

People with disabilities often feel a sense of alienation which is more than the pain a person feels due to a physical impairment. Every person in the society with a disability looks forward to acceptance by the people, but more often than not, they are usually left alone to find company amongst people with similar deformities. There is very little acceptance of the 'Disabled' by the 'Normal' people in the society. WHO defines the term Disabilities as an umbrella term that covers impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions.

The disabled people in books are never depicted as glorious personalities or holders of a unique character who are to be emulated as idols. Children's literature often portrays Good as Normal and the Evil

as Deformed. In many narratives, the disabled characters are either silenced in expressing their opinions or negatively stereotyped as villains. They are rarely given the image of champions who have fought bravely and overcome the obstacles in front of them. Stereotypic descriptions of disabled people have harmed this community a lot. They tend to see the handicapped as misfits who can be made fun of, ill-treated, disrespected and ignored.

Disability Studies began to emerge in the West as the result of the Disability Rights Movement. The pioneering works of sociologist Erving Goffman and the literary scholar Michael Foucault also had a poignant influence in the development of this study. In Erving Goffman's seminal work *Stigma* (1963), he examines the relationship between the people with "abomination of body" who are very much different from the expected norm (4). Michael Foucault, the scholar who forensically examined the power structures in the society, spoke about the people who belong to this minority group in his famous work *History of Sexuality* (1976). Another important influence is the part played by literary critic Leslie Fiedler. He analysed the long tradition of people's fascination with the non-normative human beings and their exhibition for entertainment and profit. His work *Freaks* (1978) explores the portrayal of the visually different, the unpredictable, the anomalous, the excess and the absence.

The play *On The Face of It* is written by Susan Hill, a renowned novelist, children's writer and playwright. She is well known for her work *The Woman in Black* (1983), a horror novel. She is famous for her writings in descriptive gothic style. Contrary to her style, the play *On The Face of It* has a different mood. It is a cultural corrective tale that discusses the alienation and loneliness experienced by the Disabled in society.

In the play *On The Face of It*, the writer brings out the deep anguish and loneliness felt by two people, one old and the other a little boy who suffer from rejection and alienation in the society. The play features an old man Mr Lamb and a young boy Derry who meet in Mr Lamb's garden. Derry had an accident that had badly disfigured and left a scar on his face. He was self-conscious about his looks and didn't like the way people stared at him. He always kept to himself as no one wanted to befriend him due to his appearance. The pain of not being accepted by other people troubled him a lot. He developed a sort of defiance due to this rejection and is more comfortable spending time alone. Mr. Lamb on the other hand has a handicap, he moves with a tin leg. His real one got blown off years ago. Mr. Lamb too is a lonely man, who spent time in his house collecting crab apples and making jelly of it. He liked to talk to people and have company, but unfortunately only a few people were interested in being with him. These two characters are separated by their age, but both suffer from the same sense of loneliness and isolation.

Disability is considered as a synecdoche for all forms that culture deems non-normative. In her famous book *The Minority Body* (2018), Elizabeth Barnes says: “They are suffering from ableism, a social prejudice and stigma directed against the disabled in virtue of the fact they are disabled” (5) The society has silenced the voice of the ‘Other.’ It does not have the courage to accommodate the individuals outside the normal form. Mr. Lamb is called Lamey-Lamb by the people. They like to identify him with this pseudonym. The name is thrust upon him by the lame less people. It is through this separation the normal people develop their own normativity. Derry is often a victim to this hostile separation. He told Lamb how the society saw him after the accident: “After I’d come home, one person said, “He’d have been better off stopping in there. In the hospital. He’d be better off with others like himself.” ... thinks blind people only ought to be with other blind people and idiot boys with idiot boys.” (64) Derry enquired of Mr. Lamb whether his life would have been better off if he was allowed to live with people who had similar deformities. He would not have to feel sorry for his miserable self and be able to find companionship amongst people of his kind. Mr. Lamb explained to him that it would be a boring world, if all the people with disability were put together. He told Derry that he would not be the same as another person with a burned face, because people had unique personalities, in appearance people may look the same but they were different.

Disability studies focuses on the difference between physical impairment and disability. Impairment is viewed as an external deformity, but disability is the result of social exclusion. Alienation and Loneliness are the two traumas that the deformed person must suffer. He is considered as the ‘Other’ in the society. A young boy like Derry was sensitive to the way people treated him. He is both pitied and scorned by people. The normal people try to maintain a physical and psychological distance from him. Society has taught him to be alone: “I don’t like being with people. Any people.” (58). Derry felt that there would never be a ‘Beauty’ as in the tale *Beauty and Beast* who would ever kiss him and turn his face into the normal one. Derry found it awkward when his mother kissed his face, on the side without the scar. He felt that act was meaningless because she only did it as a show of love. He felt disheartened that even his mother wouldn’t love him enough because of his scarred face: “And no one’ll kiss me, ever. Only my mother, and she kisses me on the other side of my face, and I don’t like my mother to kiss me, she does it because she has to.” (60)

Deformity is regarded as a stagnant metaphor for monstrosity. There is a long practice of showcasing the deformed body as inherently evil. Fear and Curiosity arises from the image of the disfigured individual. The society installs a haunted spirit to the disabled body. *On The Face Of It*, portrays the picture of two individuals who are ostracized by the society as their bodies are a symbol of disability: “Many individuals

with disabilities lament the way people avert their eyes and establish physical distance, suggesting that you can catch disability like a virus” (Beauchamp et.al.18). Derry felt that the whole world was hostile to him. He told Mr. Lamb how he was viewed by his peers; “They’d mind me. When they saw me here? They look at my face and run.” (64). The unimpaired seem to experience anxiety when they communicate with the deformed ones. The society’s ‘negative image’ on deformity was so extreme on Derry that he was afraid of his own scarred face.

Derry always felt that people were afraid of his looks. He presumed that the whole world was against his appearance, but pretended not to hear or see their adverse reactions. He was identified as a dreadful thing: “Look at that, that’s a terrible thing. That’s a face only a mother could love.” (61) Lamb understood his concern and told him that he was not afraid of Derry’s looks, unlike other people. Mr. Lamb told Derry that he was interested in all things that God had made. Mr. Lamb tried to convince Derry that he need not be worried about being stared at, because people who did so would lose interest as they had plenty of other things to stare at.

Susan Hill tries to critique the society’s prejudice and discrimination through the character Mr. Lamb. He is an embodiment of hope and happiness. When Derry shared his bitter experiences with Lamb, he suggested that even if some people didn’t like him, there would be someone who would like him, despite his scar. Mr. Lamb cautioned Derry against listening to all the negative comments that people passed behind his back. He in fact asked Derry to shut his ears to what people said about his looks. Derry revealed that he never liked to be near people because he felt they would stare at him and become afraid of him. Mr. Lamb told him that he could choose to confine himself in his room and waste his life away, fearing that he would upset people around him, or be ready to face the world and hope that people would accept him. The change that came over Derry is best surmised in the reason he gave his mother to go back to Mr. Lamb’s house: “It’s got nothing to do with my face and what I look like. I don’t care about that and it isn’t Important. It’s what I think and feel and what I want to see and find out and hear” (68). It is an exploration of the concept “right to life”; “The “right” to life, to one body, to health, to happiness...before all the right to rediscover what one is and all that one can be”(Foucault 145)

Derry was influenced by Mr. Lamb’s positive approach and friendly attitude. Lamb told him that he spent his day sitting in the sun and reading books. Mr. Lamb reminded him that he was physically endowed and having everything that normal people had. He told him that he would be able to survive in this world like the rest of the people, and if he set his mind to a task, he could get on better than all the rest. Mr. Lamb cautioned Derry against hating anyone because it would do more harm to him than a bottle of acid.

Mr. Lamb's intention was to offer a sense of hope for little Derry, who thought that he would never be liked by anyone. Mr. Lamb's words best highlight these thoughts: "The world's got a whole face, and the world's there to be looked at." (60) He left his gate open and refused to put curtains on the windows, a symbolic welcome to the elements of light and darkness. Curtains are an imagery of the exile and escape one runs to, during the time of failures and disappointments. Mr. Lamb had strengthened himself from being vulnerable to both the light and dark phases of life.

Conclusion

The two characters in the play Mr. Lamb and Derry suffer from a deep sense of isolation and loneliness. While Mr. Lamb tried to put a brave front and accepted the challenges caused by his handicap, Derry found it very difficult to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to the constant stares and verbal assaults by the people around him.

The situation that Derry encountered was huge, given the fact that he was only a fourteen-year-old boy. It was a stage in a child's life when they become very conscious about their own selves. Children at this age become anxious if they feel that they cannot fit in with their peers. A child at this stage looks forward to being accepted. Yet at this age Derry was isolated because he had a scar. The fact that his mother too didn't like the scar and kissed him on the side of his face without the scar hurt Derry a lot. The show of love by his mother only made him bitter and angry.

The chance encounter that Derry had with Mr. Lamb brought a huge change in his belief. Mr. Lamb managed to open Derry's eyes to the beautiful world around him. Mr. Lamb tried to convince him that he would surely be liked by someone. In fact, Mr. Lamb was able to kindle a ray of hope in Derry's dark world, when he told him that he would be able to make a lot of friends and people would still like him despite his face.

All disabled children should have a friend like Mr. Lamb who could take a personal interest in their disabilities and convince them that the world needs them. If they are assured of a place in this world, it would bring a sea change in the way they looked at life. It would reveal the purpose of their life. It would give them hope of being accepted and help them live a life of their choice.

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A Room of One's Madness: The Spatial Connection of Women and 'Madness'.

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ABSTRACT

Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own, advocates the need for the literal and figurative space of a room for women writers. However, the room is also a space where a woman and 'madness' are strangely co-related in literature and popular culture. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper, a woman is subjected to an agency-less confinement in a room, by her physician husband, as a cure for her hysterical tendencies. The 1993 Malayalam film Manichitrathazhu, tells the story of a woman whose mental illness finds vent, when she enters a room and develops a sense of empathy towards the characters and the incidents that are rumored to have taken place in the room. Ironically it is always the man who is the final authority on a woman's 'madness'. This paper seeks to connect A Room of One's Own, The Yellow Wallpaper and Manichitrathazhu, in order to analyze how the four walls of a room is both a space where a man seeks to 'tame a woman' and also the space where a woman gives expression to her true self.

Keywords : *women, creative space, agency, room, mental illness, confinement.*

“Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.”

— Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

The freedom of mind that Virginia Woolf is referring to in her work, *A Room of One's Own*, is probably the reason why women are sometimes unable to confine themselves to the norms prescribed by society. Woolf says that money and a room of her own, is a prerequisite for women to be able to give full vent to their creative mind. Women are often judged by the perfection to which they perform the different roles assigned to them. In fact, many take pride in being able to juggle their lives to perfection. Men on the other hand can ignore all the roles assigned to them and excel only in their chosen art and still be valued. As an artist he can divert all his energies to developing his art.

Women are told what they can and cannot do. Any deviations from the prescribed path is equated to mental instability. The artist in the woman is forever confined to make space for the mother, daughter, wife or the multiple other roles that can be assigned to her. But as Virginia Woolf has pointed out the mind cannot be shackled. It seeks a vent to express itself. In *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Manichitrathazhu*, the four walls of the room, gives women the, space for creative expression.

The unnamed speaker in Charlotte Perkin Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, is diagnosed by her physician husband to have 'a slight hysterical tendency'. Hysteria, until Freud, was considered an exclusively female disease. It was cured with herbs, sex or sexual abstinence, punished and purified with fire for its association with sorcery and later with the advancement of medicine, clinically studied as a disease and treated with innovative therapies. The treatment prescribed for the speaker in *The Yellow Wallpaper* is confinement in a room and complete abstinence from any physical or mental stimulation. The speaker is not sure that the treatment is going to do her any good and she says, 'Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good' (Gilman). Her husband is in constant denial of her mental tribulations. The speaker's opinion on her own mental condition is ridiculed and all her attempts at having any stimulating company is thwarted. All agency is taken from her and it is the men in her life (her husband and brother) who decide her ailment, its treatment and the effect of such treatment. She has about as much control and agency in matters concerning herself, as any piece of furniture in her room. Ironically, she does mention that as a child she found that the furniture in her house were not devoid of animation. The knobs of the bureau seemed to wink at her and the chair seemed like a 'strong friend'. Society in the form of her physician husband was trying to suppress her mind which was fertile and imaginative. So much so that, she, who was a living being was losing all her animation while inanimate objects around her seemed to come to life.

The speaker tries to control her thoughts and imaginations when in the company of her husband which unsettles her even more. We are reminded of Catherine Earnshaw's in *Wuthering Heights*. Catherine was a wild spirit from the very onset of the novel. The only time she had to suppress her true nature was when she was with Edgar Linton. Even that small time frame in which she had to control herself, she found it to be a herculean task, taking a toll on her mental well-being. Her confinement was self-imposed and it led to her spirit being broken. Catherine was never controlled by the dictates of the society and her spirit was as wild as the moors in which she roamed. For her to be confined to a room is nothing short of death itself. In the *Yellow Wallpaper*, the speaker has always obeyed the norms of society without having any sense of freedom of expression. In such a situation a room provides the cover for doing just that.

The narration begins with the speaker considering herself lucky to have secured an ancestral house for rent. She wishes it were haunted and they would reach some kind of ‘romantic felicity’ there. She dismisses it however as wishful thinking. It is proof of her highly imaginative mind which seeks to break free from the dullness that pervades her situation. Her ‘hysterical tendencies’ as described by her husband can be interpreted as, the mind seeking to express what the society seeks to suppress. As Virginia Woolf says,

When, however, one reads of a witch being ducked, of a woman possessed by devils, of a wise woman selling herbs, or even of a very remarkable man who had a mother, then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet, of some mute and inglorious Jane Austen, some Emily Bronte who dashed her brains out on the moor or mopped and mowed about the highways crazed with the torture that her gift had put her to. (Woolf).

The room which was to be the space for her subjugation finally becomes the space for her creative expression. The patterns of the wallpaper in the room which the speaker found strangely repulsive, started attracting her attention. As the days progressed, the patterns started resembling the figure of a woman creeping behind bars that imprisoned her. She started moving about and before long she even came out of the paper and the speaker saw the same woman out of each of her window, but still creeping. ‘It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.’ (Gilman). The act of creeping is used here as an act that most women do but not in the presence of anyone. They do it at night when they can do so unhindered. The speaker goes on to say that she herself creeps with the door locked if she had to do it in the daylight. The act of creeping thus becomes an act that is loaded with meaning and throws itself open to interpretations. The act of creeping could be a woman giving vent to her true feelings or even to the artist in her. The narration comes to a climax when the speaker begins to peel off large portions of the wallpaper to free the woman. She does this while locking the door from the inside. When her husband finally breaks open the door, he is shocked to see her creeping against the walls. She tells him that she is finally free in spite of his efforts to the contrary. John faints as the shock overwhelms him. ‘Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!’ (Gilman). She lost her inhibition of creeping in front of John. Symbolically she crawls over John’s body almost as if she has overcome her fear of him and she has freed her mind enough to be able to ‘creep’ in broad daylight and in his presence.

In the 1993 *Manichithrathazhu*, the female protagonist Ganga, played by Shobhana, is by the myths and legends surrounding the ancestral home of her husband, Nakulan(Suresh Gopi). According to the legend, Nagavalli a dancer from Tanjavur is brought by the cruel patriarch Sankaran Thampy to stay at Madampally

(the ancestral home) as his consort. Nagavally falls in love with Ramanathan who was also a dancer. When Shankaran Thampy finds out about their romance he hacks her to death in her room. The ghosts of Nagavalli is said to haunt the ancestral home ever since. The room where she is killed is the place where her spirit is imprisoned by ritualistic tantric mantras and the door to the room is locked and a talisman is tied to the lock to prevent the ghostly spirit from escaping. Ganga having procured permission from Nakulan opens this door. Once inside she finds the costume and the jewellery once worn by Nagavalli . She feels a sense of empathy towards her and slowly comes to believe that she is Nagavalli.

Ganga is shown as an avid reader and it is while she is on the search for a room to place her books that she comes across Nagavalli's room. The space of the room and the woman is highlighted here as well. She needs the undisturbed space of a room to read her books and let her imaginations take flight. As Ganga, Shobhana rarely shows any animation. The scenes where Ganga and Nakulan are shown together, Nakulan is always the dominant voice with Ganga shown as more being more submissive, till she assumes the aspect of Nagavalli. The song that plays in the background while she wanders around the house expresses a sense of longing.

Varuvanillarumengorunaalume vzhikkariyaam athennalumenum
 Priyamulloralaro varuvanudennu njaan
 Veruthe mohikkumallo (Fazil)

(I know that no one is ever going to come but unreasonably my heart longs for a loved one to come this way)

Alli (Nakulan's cousin) is soon to be married to P. Mahadevan, who is the author of the book she is shown reading through the song. Coincidentally, Mahadevan resides in the very house that Ramanathan used to stay in. The reader in Ganga feels a connection with Mahadevan. When she assumes the aspect of Nagavalli, she imagines, Mahadevan to be Ramanathan. It is interesting to note that while Nagavalli loves a fellow dancer, Ganga feels the same connection to Mahadevan. Art connects the characters. Nakulan is busy with his office work and at no point is shown sharing Ganga's love for books. Her creative mind seeks someone who will understand or appreciate her creativity. Another character who is shown docile and submissive is Sreedevi(Vinaya Prasad), Nakulan's cousin who was engaged to be married to Nakulan and was first suspected to be the culprit behind the strange events that were taking place at Madampally. Her 'madness' is decided by men. Nakulan who is supposed to be modern and forward-thinking suspects Sreedevi for no apparent reason, except that a woman had to be suspected and he had to choose between his own wife and Sreedevi. Once the men confirm her madness everything she does seems out of place. She is also locked in a room by Dr. Sunny(Mohanlal) who sees the confinement as a method of controlling her

actions. As the psychiatrist he is perfectly aware of the fact that Sreedevi is not mad but that doesn't stop him from manhandling her and locking her in the room. The character of Sreedevi and the treatment meted out to her by her own family is a startling reminder of what little agency women have over their own lives.

Ganga however, uses Nagavalli's room as an affirmation of her agentic self. The room lets Ganga express her creative energies. Nakulan is shown as a kind and understanding husband. When Dr. Sunny asks him to tell Ganga that she cannot go to buy the wedding jewellery for Alli, he says that he has never forbidden her from doing anything. It is interesting to note here that we are not aware if Ganga has ever asked him permission to do something that he did not approve of. Even being a part of the group that goes to buy Alli's ornaments is something Ganga is required to do as part of Nakulan's family. It was not something she was doing only for her personal satisfaction. When Nakulan eventually forbids her from going she turns into Nagavalli and abuses Nakulan, whom she sees as Shankaran Thambi. The fact that Ganga, in the aspect of Nagavalli, sees Nakulan as the oppressive patriarch Shankaran Thambi points to the possibility that Nakulan was being covertly patriarchal in his attitude towards her. She even swears to kill him as it is Durgashtami.

Incidentally the myth of Durgashtami says that Durga was empowered with the different weapons that the Gods gave her, on this day and she herself manifested into her different forms to fight the demons. Ironically it is on this day every year that the spirit of Nagavalli is confined to the room by the male tantrics who lock the room with the talisman. When Ganga is in the aspect of Nagavalli she seeks to represent Durga's power. On Durgashtami, Durga unleashes herself in all the different forms.

The eight aspects of Durga that emerged from her and assumed distinctive forms and names include Brahmacharini, Maheshwari, Kameshwari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Narasinghi, Indrani and Maa Chamunda. Each of these aspects signifies a particular attribute of Ma Durga. The puja done on the day of Navratri Ashtami is meant to propitiate all the aspects of Durga together and there it is highly significant. (Bannerjee)

The plot culminates in the final dance scene where Ganga is seen for the first-time dancing as Nagavalli. The men watch her dance like a mad woman. But in her mind, she is an accomplished dancer. The men are almost voyeuristically looking on. From a man's perspective the mental trauma of a creative woman when expressed in any form seems like madness. In fact, the constant struggle may in some cases even push her to madness.

For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty. (Woolf)

Mahadevan who Ganga now sees as Ramanathan, lures her outside the room and brings her to the area where Brahmadattan Namboodiri(Thilakan) has created a ritualistic area meant for exorcism. Ganga loses the comfort of the room but since it is Durgashtami she feels as powerful as the goddess Durga and doesn't run away as she was used to doing previously. This almost mirrors the end of *The Yellow Wallpaper* where the protagonist is no longer afraid to express her true self in front of her husband. Ganga in the aspect of Nagavalli unknowingly exacts her revenge on dummy of Shankaran Thambi. The next scene shows a recovered Ganga under the hypnotic influence of Dr. Sunny. It is quite remarkable to notice that her face is devoid of all colour. The previous scene showed her as Nagavalli adorned with the dark hues of crimson and black and now when she is cured, she is almost deathlike.

It probably is her death. The death of her ability to express herself creatively. The protagonist in *The Yellow Wallpaper* ends the narrative with her 'creeping' over her husband's body. The space of the room has extended for her but Ganga is cured. She is removed from the room that gave her another aspect. The goddess had eight aspects; how many does a woman have? If it is more than one, is she allowed to express it, without the fear of being branded mad? Is the closed room the only place where she can write, dance or 'creep'? *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Manichitrathazhu* seem to corroborate Woolf's assertion in *A Room of One's Own*.

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The Lost World: Apocalypse, Cannibalism and Hope in

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

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Abstract

*The idea of apocalypse has been a major part of literary narrative, from time immemorial. This genre of prophetic writing has been explored at length by writers across languages and its relevance has been reaffirmed in the past few months in the form of Covid 19, which has brought in a disease variant to this genre. Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* belonging to this genre describes the journey south, taken by a young boy and his father after an unnamed catastrophe has struck the world. Critiques have come up with theories of climate change and post-war nuclear winter but McCarthy does not give answers as to the cause of the destruction seen in his novel. This paper is not a quest to find the reason of the apocalypse but an analysis of the post-apocalyptic nature of the world, which McCarthy describes as "Barren, silent and godless". This is an analysis of the consequences and repercussions of human actions and a world which might very well become the future reality of humankind.*

Introduction

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

-Albert Einstein.

Human imagination stems from nature. The natural world has always been an important subject for poets and prose writers. Nature serves as much more than simply a passive setting against which compelling actions unfold or a pretty backdrop or setting in the natural world. Rather, nature plays a role as important as human beings and as truthful as them. It is a medium through which human identity is constructed either through the characters' alignment with the natural world or their struggle against it. In addition, nature in certain case is portrayed as a beneficent living force that can offer enduring lessons about what it means to be human.

Humankind, as we know it, is blinded by its need to survive in the superficial world of money and machines. Humans, as Emerson once put it, treats nature like a commodity, plundering it in their race of the survival of the fittest. However, certain literary scholars have come forward with theories and ideas with nature as centre and as an independent system which does not need human intervention to survive. Ecocriticism is at the centre of these studies. The absolute need to focus on such theories has been reaffirmed, taking into consideration the events that have been transpiring in the past few months in the form of Covid-19. This feeling of doom that has befallen the humankind has been already explored at length in literature.

Apocalyptic literature is a major part of this nature-oriented writing era. It is a literary genre that foretells supernaturally inspired cataclysmic events that will transpire at the end of the world. Then there is the Post-apocalyptic fiction. It is set in a world or civilization after such a disaster that ruins the world. The time frame may be immediately after the catastrophe, focusing on the travails or psychology of survivors, or considerably later, often including the theme that the existence of pre-catastrophe civilization has been forgotten (or mythologized). Post-apocalyptic stories often take place in a non-technological future world, or a world where only scattered elements of society and technology remain. Mary Shelley's 1826 novel, *The Last Man, Empty World*, a 1977 novel by John Christopher, Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I Am Legend* etc. are some of the major Post-apocalyptic novels. Among these, is Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*.

The Road describes the journey south, taken by a young boy and his father after an unnamed catastrophe has struck the world. The man and the boy, who also remain unnamed throughout the entire novel, travel through the rough terrain of the southeastern United States. The conditions they face are unforgiving: rotted corpses, landscapes devastated by fire, abandoned towns and houses. These two travelers are among the few living creatures remaining on earth that have not been driven to murder, rape, and cannibalism.

The father and his son struggle to survive in the harsh weather with little food, supplies, and shelter. Along the way, they must escape from those who might seek to steal from them or, even worse, to kill them for food. Despite their hardships, the man and the child remain determined to survive, reaffirming to themselves that they are the "good guys" who do not seek to harm others. The boy in particular retains his unquenchable humanity against all odds, consistently seeking to help the tattered remnants of living humans they encounter.

Unfortunately, the father's health worsens as they travel, and by the time they reach the ocean, he is near death. He continually coughs up blood, and the two are forced to move at ever slowing rates each day.

Finally, he dies in the woods lying next to his son in the middle of the night. The boy remains by his side for several days after his death, but eventually the boy meets a kind family who invite him to join them. The boy must say goodbye to his father and embark on a new journey with this family.

Cormac McCarthy does not give answers as to the cause of the destruction seen in his novel. Critic, James wood believes that this is a novel about climate change. Another critic, Kenneth Lincoln is representative of the majority of critics in assuming that the novel is set in a post-war nuclear winter. There is a scope for argument in this context. This paper is an investigation and an earnest attempt to explore the ecocritical perspectives in a novel which acts a herald to the uncertainty that lies ahead i.e., the future of the entire world. It is also a quest to answer certain questions, which the entire humanity is facing and is an attempt to highlight the repercussions of one's own actions on oneself.

Apocalypse, Cannibalism and Hope

“In a world bereft of order, without the civilising structures of generations of human history, a world seemingly in its last stages of existence, what should be the ethical behaviour of a human being?” (2007:8)

According to Randall Wilhelm, Cormac Mccarthy's award winning novel *The Road* (2006) is located around this theme. This novel, which follows his radically minimalist postmodern Western, *No Country for Old Men* (2005), is a brilliant evocation of what the world might be like in the times after civilization ends.

Unlike most post-apocalyptic literature which tends toward unlikely, stereotypical fantasies, *The Road* gives the reader a bare, impossibly brutal world that feels true. It is a place in which any morsel of food is worth scavenging, in which homes and stores have long since been stripped of any conceivably useful item. In short, there is no manufacturing or farming and most of the natural world has been killed off, so all that remains are the leftovers of capitalism.

Mccarthy makes this world real by giving us the minutiae of daily life as a father and his young son walk alone through burned America, heading slowly toward south. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. They have nothing but a pistol to defend themselves against the men who stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food – and each other.

Laurence Buell, one of the pioneers of Eco-critical theory, defined an environmentally-conscious text as a text in which, “the non-human environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence

that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.”(Buell, 2001, p. 8). This indicates a shift from the anthropocentric view of texts or rather fiction to a state where human beings are not the rulers but a mere part of the vast kingdom of nature.

According to the definition, Mccarthy deserves attention as an eco-critic. Mccarthy has long been an author whose books are in tune with the land. His frequent and extended descriptions of landscapes, natural processes and setting can be often a determinant of plot. *The Road*, set in burned America, is rich with shocking images which gives rise to apprehension in the minds of the readers. Often claimed as “the first great masterpiece of the globally warmed generation,” this novel is a delight for the eco-critical reader. It belongs to the genre of post-apocalyptic novels.

But the question is what makes this novel an eco-critical province? The answer is simple. It is because the novel portrays the colourless world after the devastation of earth. This devastation issue is common object of the Eco-criticism study. *The Road* continually reminds us of the bleakness of the landscape in the earth. Readers experience bright colours only through the characters' dreams or memories, if someone happens to bruise or bleed, or through fire or flare guns. The rest of the time the readers see a grey ash covering the landscape.

As a reality, our landscape is actually green and natural. However, *The Road* shows the possibility of devastation of earth when humans caused devastation of nature and they cannot live in harmony with it. Therefore, there is no doubt that *The Road* becomes the most influencing novel toward environment. *The Road* can also be termed as a novel without nature. In typically the Mccarthian style, the first portrayal of landscape in the novel is indicative of what is to follow:

With the first grey light he rose and left the boy sleeping and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the country to the south. Barren, silent, godless. (McCarthy, 2)

These three adjectives define the world of *The Road*. Throughout the novel Mccarthy has religiously emphasized the lifelessness and barrenness of the land. He portrays a world which has “nights dark beyond darkness and the days more gray each one than what had gone before” (Mccarthy 1). It’s full of “charred and limbless trunks of trees” (Mccarthy, 6) surrounding ash-covered roads and “sagging hands of blind wire strung from blackened lightpoles” (Mccarthy, 6).

Cities are empty and in ruins as the land reclaims them, there’s cold rain almost every night. One of the few unmolested human constructs that the pair encounters is a gray and heavy dam that might stand for

thousands more years. The images of dead trees, the ashen daylight and the soft ash blowing in loose swirls over the blacktop creates a painful throb in the minds of the readers for the lost world:

The world shrinking down about a raw core of parsible entities. The names of things slowly following those things into oblivion. Colors. The names of birds. Things to eat. Finally the names of things one believed to be true. More fragile than he would have thought. How much was gone already? The sacred idiom shorn of its referents and so of its reality. (McCarthy, 75)

The post-apocalyptic world has been reduced to basic elements, "a raw core of parsible entities," where complexity is a luxury. More sophisticated aspects of human civilization have been obliterated, and the names of such things are slowly being forgotten by the remaining humans, following the things themselves into oblivion. Such things include colors, types of birds, and certain foods.

More importantly, fundamental truths and customs regarding human life are lost. These perhaps include the capacity to hope, or to feel empathy, love, and altruism. These concepts, once believed to be true, are in fact more fragile than the father would have thought, too easily lost in the new reality. Significant principles and the words that signify them are forgotten and lost; the objects and concepts themselves cease to be.

This devastation descended upon the earth as a result of some apocalyptic catastrophe years before: "The clocks stopped at 1:17. A long shear of light and then a series of low concussions." (Mccarthy, 54). If Cormac Mccarthy knows what caused the cataclysm in *The Road*, he does not give it away which leaves the readers to speculate. Was it a nuclear exchange? A massive volcanic eruption? The impact of an extra-terrestrial object? The questions remain unanswered.

Critic, James wood believes that this is a novel about climate change. But it is hard to believe that since the clocks stopped at the same time. Another critic, Kenneth Lincoln is representative of the majority of critics in assuming that the novel is set in a post-war nuclear winter. But one who believes in the force and the overwhelming power of nature tends to interpret the catastrophe as the brunt of nature over man's unending greed. It may be that nature itself is the cause of the apocalypse of *The Road* and that it originated in the West.

On the Indian religious basis, the catastrophe can also be interpreted as a result of Karma. Karma means action, work or deed; it also refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect). Good intent and good deed

contribute to good karma and future happiness, while bad intent and bad deed contribute to bad karma and future suffering.

Karma is closely associated with the idea of rebirth in some schools of Asian religions. In these schools, karma in the present affects one's future in the current life, as well as the nature and quality of future lives. The America that we see in the novel represents the whole human race paying for their atrocities towards nature.

Karma plays a double role quite effectively in *The Road*. The fact that nature is absent but imaginatively present in the novel can produce shock in the reader. It is present in the background although it does not come forth. "They set out through the dark woods. There was a moon somewhere beyond the ashen overcast and they could just make out the trees." (Mccarthy, 97). These woods are without the aesthetic of Nature; they are just a part of the narrative driven by a focus upon the survival of the human protagonists. The only significance of the moon in this passage is as a function of survival: "they could just make out the trees."

This feature of nature remaining as a haunting figure makes *The Road* a post-pastoral novel. This is also a reminder to Derrida's notion of the presence of world even in its absence. Derrida's notion of the absence of the being of world is a rejection of the determinate picture of reality readers ordinarily adhere themselves to. In place of this picture there is a notion of the world in him which makes it a phenomenon of which nothing can be said.

Mccarthy has modelled the world in the novel on our own earth but the images seem dislocated. In *The Road*, the key concern is the 21st century's most immediate global problem: the irrevocable damage global industrial capitalism is doing to our environment. The fact that the now dominant capitalist economic system is unsustainable is not in doubt. It has contributed to the breaching of several ecological boundaries, in relation to climate change, biodiversity loss and nutrient enrichment. The instance where the father discovers the coke can and the son enquires what it is surprising.

He sat and ran his hand around in the works of the gutted machines and in the second one it closed over a cold metal cylinder. He withdrew his hand slowly and sat looking at a Coca Cola.

What is it, Papa?

It's a treat. For you. (McCarthy, 22)

A ten-year-old American boy who has never seen a coke before is a rare phenomenon. This is the scene which drives in the dislocation. And also, the way in which the coke has been elevated from late capitalism's synonym for water to this rare treat that the father wants his son to experience. Though they may come across items that any of the readers might know about, in the world of *The Road* these items are in a completely different context.

The presence of the theme of violence reinforces the claim of *The Road* as an ecocritical novel and also the presence of Karma. Although Cormac McCarthy is known as a connoisseur of excessive violence, the readers think most of the violent scenes in *The Road* is justified. McCarthy portrays a post-apocalyptic landscape where the scarcity of resources has driven the few survivors to murder, thievery, and even cannibalism. The instance, wherein the remains of the dead body of the "bad man" who was shot dead by the father in order to protect him and his son emphasizes the deterioration of the human race.

There was nothing there. Dried blood dark in the leaves. The boy's knapsack was gone. Coming back he found the bones and the skin piled together with rocks over them. A pool of guts. He pushed at the bones with the toe of his shoe. They looked to have been boiled. (McCarthy, 73)

This scene embodies the ugliness that has emerged in this new world where almost all things beautiful have been destroyed. The people who run the cannibals' house are some of the most frightening antagonists, the man and the boy face. They are a direct threat to the protagonists' survival. The four men and two women survive by trapping people in the house and keeping them there, slowly starving, to use as food later.

Huddled against the back wall were naked people, male and female, all trying to hide, shielding their faces with their hands. On the mattress lay a man with his legs gone to the hip and the stumps of them blackened and burnt. The smell was hideous.

Jesus, he whispered.(McCarthy, 116)

It takes true creativity to add to the inhumanity of people eating other people, but McCarthy manages it in that man with the cauterized stumps. The people beg the man for help. The danger is quite real; they nearly catch the boy and the man, who fortunately manage to elude capture. The image of the newborn baby being burned for consumption adds to the horror.

This dramatic conflict is a major struggle between life and death, providing great suspense in addition to the horror of the situation itself. The more sympathetic characters attempt common decency,

avoiding brutality as much as possible. The boy extracts a promise from his father that whatever may come, they'll not become cannibals. This can be interpreted as one of the boy's efforts to remain human or as one of the "good guys".

We wouldn't ever eat anybody, would we? No. Of course not. Even if we were starving? No. We wouldn't. No matter what. No. No matter what. Because we are the good guys and we're carrying the fire. Yes. Okay. (McCarthy, 136)

The above conversation between father and son exemplifies both the son's fear that they are no better than the abominations of society they run from and also that fire has become their symbol of faith that sees them through a difficult time. By clinging to the imagery of the fire, the son believes that he would not succumb to the horrible act of cannibalism that seems so acceptable to others. This instance can be interpreted in a broader sense.

In a world that is bleak and grey, reminding us of the post- nuclear attack of America, the only clear colour is that of fire. Fire, one of the elements of nature takes various meanings and forms throughout the novel but each is equally important to the characters:

Oil for their little sunlamp to light the long gray dusks, the long gray dawns. You can read me a story, the boy said. Can't you, Papa? Yes, he said, I can. (McCarthy, 6)

Here, the light represents civilisation. Reading before night time is a reference to times past when literature could be enjoyed at leisure. Now, the only things the boy and his father have to focus on are surviving and defending what they have gathered. The product of fire is ash which is abundant throughout the novel. Fire is also suggestive of pre-history where homosapiens would hunter-gather.

Fire also represents the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that tongues as of fire appeared over the heads of each of those who gathered together. The Holy Spirit comes as fire to work something deep into the substance of our lives that will shape things around , rather than humans taking on the shape of the world. As fire, god works in a dual way: to probe the inner recesses of our life and to refine the human beings as gold or silver is refined in the fire; and to temper our personalities by causing there to be the penetration of fire into our system. The man in the novel repeatedly assures

his son that they are carrying fire within them which makes them the “good guys.” It depicts an undying hope that there is goodness left in this world where evil is triumphing.

As he lies dying, the man has this conversation with his son, who wishes to be able to die with him, but he tells the boy to persist, to survive and carry the fire. This fire, the kind found within the self, is a symbol of everlasting hope and human resilience. Instead of succumbing to the circumstances and resorting to evil acts to survive, the boy carries the fire and does not compromise his higher human morality. The boy demonstrates that he carries the fire throughout the book, since no matter what horror they narrowly escape, the boy always seeks to help other individuals and never believes they should be hurt or punished, even if hurting others might ensure his own survival.

Unlike the other elements such as water, air and earth which gets polluted, fire remains pure. In literature, purity in one’s inner self is a direct referent to the God that resides inside one’s heart. This indicates that the father and son carries God within themselves. But the man becomes self-contradictory when he says:

Are you there? he whispered. Will I see you at the last? Have you a neck by which to throttle you? Have you a heart? Damn you eternally have you a soul? Oh God, he whispered. Oh God. (McCarthy, 6)

The painful desperation of the man is evident in these lines. The absence of nature has led him to question the very existence of God. But does that make him an atheist? The answer lies in his conversation with his son where he says:

You wanted to know what the bad guys looked like. Now you know. It may happen again. My job is to take care of you. I was appointed to do that by God. I will kill anyone who touches you. Do you understand?

Yes.

He sat there coiled in the blanket. After a while he looked up. Are we still the good guys? he said. Yes. We're still the good guys. (McCarthy, 80)

The man has not succumbed to atheism. To the man, his killing is justified because it was committed in the act of saving his son, a responsibility he says was assigned to him by God. He

believes in the entity of God although it is debatable and carries out errands for Him unflinchingly. To be sure, the man's debatable belief in God propels him forward to ensure his son's survival, even in times of despair and isolation.

Fear of death is a constant companion on the road. A wrong move, a moment of letting their guard down, could allow someone to sneak up and cut their throats. A carelessly discarded empty can of food could reveal their trail. Then there is the bitter cold and their inability to light a fire, either because there is no tinder or they fear that someone will see the smoke. And of course, there is hunger: "You think you're going to die, don't you? I don't know. We're not going to die. Okay. Why do you think we're going to die? We don't have anything to eat. We'll find something. (McCarthy, 106)

They often go days without food. When they do eat, their meal usually consists of a shared can of beans. The boy catches a cold and comes down with a fever for which the man has no medication. The man, too, becomes feverish and coughs up blood, but they dare not stop their journey. Finally, though, death can no longer be resisted. The man succumbs, like so many millions before him.

As with McCarthy's books about the American West, *The Road's* narrative doesn't unfold according to the mechanics of plot and suspense; rather, it travels as might a stream of water that bounces off of stones and flows between cracks as it is pulled along by gravity. Recalling *The Border Trilogy*, the father and son are carried wherever their need for survival takes them, the book mostly consists in describing what they do in order to keep going.

What saves this from becoming dull or repetitious is that McCarthy knows how to populate his world with compelling details that continually spark our interest. He makes his barren, frigid earth an engrossing place to watch two lost people wander, and under the power of McCarthy's pen one believes that this is what it would be like.

Though *The Road* doesn't rise to the quasi-epic feel of a *Blood Meridian* (1985) by the same author, it's a substantial, accessible work from one of America's most interesting novelists. Through his scaled-down view of a post-apocalypse American east, McCarthy has discovered a rich, engrossing landscape that is distinctly his own. It's a horrible pleasure to watch the father and

his son make their way through it, even as one remains unsure whether it would be more humane to hope for their survival or hope for their gentle death.

Conclusion

The Road, thus, provides a lens through which one can examine what the world might be like if conflict was allowed to escalate unchecked or if the attempts to control it failed. Since the Industrial Revolution, human beings have come to think of nature as the stage on which the human drama unfolds, separate from humanity. Cormac McCarthy brings us back to reality.

The aftermaths of human atrocities towards nature are evident in the novel. McCarthy leaves no stone unturned to prove it. His novel creates an intense fear and anxiety among the readers. The anthropocentric view has been challenged and human beings stand as refugees in front of nature. The father and the son are representatives of this. The irrevocable damage global industrial capitalism is doing to the environment also concerns the ecocritics. It has contributed to the breaching of several ecological boundaries, in relation to climate change, biodiversity loss and nutrient enrichment. Not only do humans directly alter many ecosystems through development and agriculture, they impact apparently untouched habitats in remote regions of the earth through pollution and climate change.

Human beings must take part in the conservation for the rest of their existence. They must act like the residents and not the tourists who are here for a temporary period and for whom the landscape is merely a facade. For the resident, it is the outcome of how it got there and the outside of what goes on inside.

By becoming the resident in this entity of nature, one becomes a part of the entity itself. The residence in nature presents humanity with a better picture of one's actions and the repercussions they may hold. Heightened awareness creates a need for heightened conservation and progressive actions. Human beings should work towards protecting nature and be compassionate towards it. They are Life, in human form, cosmic descendants of the stars and galaxies; creative expressions of Nature, as much a part of this planet as the rivers, trees, mountains and butterflies.

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A Glimpse on the Streak of Melancholia in Selected Poems of John Keats

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ABSTRACT

John Keats was known among the younger generation of Romantic poetry who was identified for his sensuous expressions in his poems. His odes communicate an array of emotions, which strived to find highest poetic achievement, and exhibit the best of sensuous poetry ever in the history of English Literature. Keats had a short and tragic life, which brought in a feeling of fewer options he had to enjoy the beauty of nature and the fruit of love. Keats obsession with self, his fear on pain and death, his unfulfilled desire for love, his escapism from the present world to a world of fancy are some of the prominent emotions which find place in his poetry. In all his odes, one finds a streak of melancholia which connects his odes in a very eloquent manner and which makes it unique. The sadness echoes throughout his odes in a different manner and pervades the reader in the same way as it haunted Keats himself.

The poetry of Keats was a subject of appreciation and criticism, but the underlying genuineness mixed with a voiced feeling seize the attention of the readers. Keats did not make his writings obscure by adding complex figures and employing intricate structures. His odes were admired for its rhythmic patterns and simplistic style. The present paper aims at analysing the theme of sadness or melancholia in the odes of Keats. When one does an intense study on the famous odes one understands about how the world around reacts to loneliness, fears, wishes and desires. The world around us may only inflict with sadness and pain, from which we may try to escape repeatedly. The world around Keats seems to be melancholic but the poet has been successful in depicting the reality as his poetry reveals the finest essence of senses and concreteness, which he has gathered from the environment, through which he convinces the readers.

Key words: Romantic, Melancholia, obsession, eloquent, rhythmic, senses, concreteness.

Introduction

Keats as a Romantic poet praised the beauty of nature and had a tendency to escape into the fascinated world of beauty, where he turned all emotions from pure joy, carnal desires to grim sensibilities. Keats the most romantic poet of all romantics, his poetry aims at a complete expression of a soul as compared to classical poetry, which further aims at expressing on the social experience. Other romantic poets have focussed on political or social prophecy, but Keats poetry was not a vehicle for any message. His poetry was for its own sake. It did not associate to any social, political or moral significance. Therefore, one can call it as the purest form of poetry. Wordsworth being a romantic poet has characterised emotions as “spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions”. Different romantics in their poetry have dealt the idea of melancholy in various degrees. In all their realm of emotions, the element of sadness pervades through.

The poetry of Keats exceeds above all his contemporaries in the expression of melancholy. Keats was so unfortunate that he had to depart from this world abruptly at a very young age, this underlying sadness is evident in his poetry. During his short span of tragic life, he was not accepted as a poet and had to endure harsh criticism, denial of love and was diagnosed of terminal tuberculosis. As a result of this, death and its inevitability became prominent in his poems. Keats asserts as a close observer of mortality, as he had encounters with death or gradual approach to death came naturally. He has depicted death as a symbol in ‘Ode to the Grecian Urn’, ‘Ode to Autumn’, it proves as an evidence that death finds a place in his poetry. There is an illustration of fear in his poems that he would lose his life before attaining fame or enjoying love, this remains unequalled.

Keats always anticipated death as hovering over him, which would in turn bring an end to his desires and hopes. In majority of Keats odes one can see the usage of first-person narration, it may be to refer Keats himself, this may also emphasise that he had formed a world of his own which comprised of his ambitions, dedication, dreams and fears. The following sonnet “When I have fears that I may cease to be” is the best example to express his desperation to be unsuccessful in career and in love.

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain...
 ...And think that I may never live to trace
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

In the above lines one can see the usage of ‘I’ or ‘my’ which undoubtedly illustrates us to the life of the poet. He has made use of these words ‘fear’ and ‘cease’ in the title which establishes a foretell on the end of a life. This also marks the helplessness of the poet before his destiny as he repeatedly makes use of

'never'. He laments over his pen, as it would cease to accept the emotions of his brain. He grieves for not having enough time to love. Keats ardently longed for fame and love, but he was cheated by death of enjoying the fame that his poetry should have gained for him and of marrying Fanny Brawne, whom he loved so passionately. Keats standing on the shore to see his dream of love and fame sink to nothingness, even he would cease to exist to attain it. The picturesque quality in these lines invokes a streak of melancholy in the heart of the readers.

John Keats was a passionate lover of Beauty, Beauty was seen by him in all its forms, shapes and diverse expressions. For him Beauty was a source of joy as he says: "A Thing of Beauty is Joy forever". Beauty also relieves the agony related to death, which is inevitable. In the poem "Ode to the Grecian Urn", he reveals his emotions of joy and sorrow blended together with each other.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:....
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Keats revels that eternal beauty of art is capable of communicating with nature and humans. Keats envies the immortality in the work of art, trees and lovers forever remain the same. The Ode begins with a happy note of 'sweet melodies', 'soft pipes', 'fair youth', 'bold lover'. The poet asserts to the pipers that their melodies will always play and remain sweet, trees on the ancient urn shall never shed their leaves even when spring goes. He assures the young lover by saying him that his beloved shall always stay beautiful. Everything on the urn shall remain the same forever while the poet and his unfulfilled desire of love shall grow old and die. Although the poem outwardly indicates about joy the poet has discovered in the domain of art but it has a tragic implication as the poet envies the immortality of art. The two stanza's quoted show two extreme emotions experienced by the poet, he oscillates between cheerfulness and anguish.

Keats explores the theme of nature, mortality, impermanence and projects his sombreness disposition in his most famous ode "Ode to a Nightingale". My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains, My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk, Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains. The beginning lines of the poem indicates the anguish in the mind of the poet. His desire to escape from the real world and to be in a world of imagination, so that he would forget his agony in life. Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget, What thou among the leaves hast never known, The weariness, the fever, and the fret...

Keats led a life of constant pain, so he envies the life of nightingale as she is beyond constraints of pain and the weariness of men in the physical world. He reminds the bird that real world imparts more pain and less joy. He admits that he has been in preoccupation with death as he talks of having it and calls it by soft names in his rhymes. He admits that he would like to experience death with no pain, he wants it to be easeful. I have been half in love with easeful Death, Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme, To take into the air my quiet breath;

These lines indicate to the fear in the mind of poet as he would die at a young age and also before he attained fame, but the song of the bird would remain immortal and would continue to be heard in the next generations. The shortest ode written by Keats is "Ode on Melancholy" which is written in a very regular form that matches its logical, argumentative structure. In this poem one finds the speaker as 'Melancholy' and the speaker warning or advising the sufferers of melancholy in an imperative mode; apparently his advice may be the result of his own hard experience. This ode makes the speaker explore the nature from its transience to its connection with pleasure and pain and move beyond aesthetic understanding to a deeper understanding. The speaker Melancholy urges to be in action rather than a passive contemplation. The poet here wants the sufferer to do everything he want to remain aware of the fact that sufferings are inevitable in life. He should not do anything to get relieved or forget his sorrows.

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

Perhaps the poet's experiences have strengthened his soul and he is now in a state to embrace pain even in its high intensity. The poem ends with an understanding that pleasure and pain are two inextricably linked. Melancholy is always attached with joy and pleasure, since joy and pleasure are temporary, so in order to experience joy we must experience grief and pain.

Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

The speaker says that the shrine of melancholy is inside the temple of delight, but it turns visible only when one can overwhelm with joy and reach the centre of sadness. Keats through this poem suggest that nature has the healing powers to help one cope with melancholy. As he being a person who had struggled

with depression and self-esteem issues, he is able to say the right remedy for it. But it may be frustrating when someone tells to go and see nature as its cure rather than choosing medication or therapy. But in the era of Keats there weren't many alternatives, so indeed they used nature to calm one's mind. Keats finds inspiration from melancholy so that something beautiful can come out of sadness.

Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?
The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die....
His future doom which is but to awake.

Keats wrote a short poem "On Death" for his brother Thomas, while he was nursing him from TB. Keats brought in Buddhist view of mortality to reflect death and loss surrounded him throughout life. Keats in reality had experienced loss of his mother, father and brother at a very young age. This loss made him explore death because he no longer wanted to feel the loss. Keats associated death to romantic terms sleep, dreams and life, because death can go along with sleep and life is with a dream, but dreams end just like sleep. Keats died of tuberculosis at a very young age of 26 in 1821. His epitaph "Here lies one whose name was writ in water," indicates his fear of death and of the fear of dying without accomplishing his dreams.

Keats remained a captive to the idea of death, though it's still unknown, he often fell into extremes of thoughts, his ultimate dream to die and to be loved show his struggle to balance between reality and fantasy. Keats being a romantic had captivated nature and melancholy and incorporated it into his majority of works. The poems of Keats deal with fundamental human problems to find solace from the merciless realities of life. This solace can be found in objects of nature, world of art and in the world of imagination. But all this is temporary one has to come back to the world of reality.

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Melancholia as a key motif in Dickinson's poetry

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Abstract

Sophocles quoted "you must remember that no one lives a life free from pain and suffering". Melancholia has been frequently embraced as a main theme of many pieces of literature. Desolation, dejection, despair depicted in any poetry unlatch the sorrowful hearts of not only the poets but the readers as well. Emily Elizabeth Dickinson an eminent American poet, believed that the happiest moments of life can become more charming and vivid , when they are seen from the vantage point of anguish and suffering. Dickinson was considered an eccentric due to her extreme secluded life. Coupled with this isolation and physical pain her works are doleful. She gave vent to her pain, suffering and despair through her poetry. Centering on this idea the paper tries to analyse the form content and theme of Dickinson's poems: I felt the funeral in my brain, The heart ask pleasure first, After great pain a formal feeling comes .

Key words: Melancholia, death, funeral, theme, metaphor

Introduction

Melancholy, an intense feeling of sadness strongly affects the behaviour and attitude of human. The deep feelings of despair, worthlessness, anxiousness etc... can trigger a state of mind to melancholic position. Poets have penned these indescribable melancholic apprehensions of human mind for over centuries, creating many masterpieces in literature. "Melancholy is frequently a tutelary figure, a companion, a help and a consolation "(Ingram,85)

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson is one such American poet who sought indemnity through her creative imagination. She was a sequestered poet. Most of her poems got published posthumously. As predominantly her works were subjected to editing and rechecking during her life time. After Dickinson's death in 1886, her younger sister Lavinia took initiative to uncover the creative collections of Dickinson's poetry. Biographer has mentioned Dickinson's sister kept her sister's promise and burned most of her private correspondence.

Studies show that a melancholic personality leads to self-reliant individuals who are thoughtful, reserved and often anxious. This sensitive and self lugubrious character is quite evidently seen in Dickinson's poems. Out of 1800 poems, that came out of Dickinson's pen, a fair portion of her poetry either

explicitly or distantly related to the theme of death. A sizeable number of poems have the word death or pain occurring in them. There are scores of other poems in which there are words associated with the effects of death: grave, funeral, chilling, cold etc... She was troubled from young age by death especially by the death of those who were close to her. A sermon on death terrified her so much that she mentions in the one of her letters.

She deemed death in various ways and employed different images, symbols and metaphors to transform her perception into words. This paper aims to analyse how Dickinson has explored her melancholic disposition in three poems: *I felt a funeral in my brain*, *After great pain a formal feeling comes*, *The heart ask pleasure first*.

I felt a funeral in my brain - analysis

In the poem the funeral service is a metaphor for the speaker's melancholic, depressed state of mind. It represents the dying part of the speaker. A funeral is a formal event, following a particular order, held to honour a deceased person. The poem also takes this tone of order and structure. It is written in alternating lines of iambic tetrameter (four iambs per line) and iambic trimeter (three iambs per line). It employs a ballad stanza, with five quatrains following an ABCB rhyme scheme. This definite structure in itself elucidates the poem. Below is the poem:

*I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
 And Mourners to and fro
 Kept treading - treading - till it seemed
 That Sense was breaking through -

 And when they all were seated,
 A Service, like a Drum -
 Kept beating - beating - till I thought
 My mind was going numb -

 And then I heard them lift a Box

 And creak across my Soul

 With those same Boots of Lead, again,*

Then Space - began to toll,

*As all the Heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
And I, and Silence, some strange Race,
Wrecked, solitary, here -*

*And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down -
And hit a World, at every plunge,
And Finished knowing - then -*

However, the control and order implicit in a funeral contrast ironically with the lack of control and the loss of rationality. The mourners are metaphor to express her pain and internal chaos. Their "treading, treading" shows the hustle that is pushing the speaker "down, and down".

The speaker has a fleeting perception that reason is escaping or being lost. The repetition, "beating, beating" reasserts her deterioration of mind, it has become "numb". The numbness here indicates the speaker's depressed state. The speaker weak, fragile and melancholic soul is again treaded with "those same boots of lead". The term lead escalates the angst the speaker is undergoing.

In the fourth stanza "Heavens " are compared to "Bell" directly , and now the speaker is "Being, but an Ear". These lines suggest that the speaker is isolated from the world as she could only hear and could not raise her opinion. The speaker has completely lost her rationality and became "wrecked. solitary, here".

The mysterious disappearance of mourners by the end of the poem leaves the readers sceptical. Last stanza uses the metaphor of standing on a plank and describes the speaker's descent into irrationality with the word "plunge ", suggesting the speed of her fall into psychological chaos. The last word of the poem, "then__", leaves open the door of nightmare, anxiety, melancholy.

After great pain a formal feeling comes - analysis

The poem is a powerful evocation of grief and suffering following a painful event or experience. It is structurally looser than most of Dickinson's poems. The iambic meter fades in certain lines; line-length ranges from diameter to pentameter. the first quatrain (four-lined stanza) is in a formal meter: iambic pentameter. The middle stanza is five lines long with varying line-length indicating the haphazard state of

poets mind. She ends the final quatrain by going back to iambic pentameter. Just like the first stanza, the last one is also a quatrain, which expresses the formal, organized feeling again. Below is the poem :

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –

The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –

The stiff Heart questions ‘was it He, that bore,’

And ‘Yesterday, or Centuries before’?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –

A Wooden way

Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –

Regardless grown,

A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –

Remembered, if outlived,

As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –

First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –(pg:170)

The actual reason of the torment is unknown. The response of the torment, the great pain, numbness experienced is what matters. This poem has no speaker. The poets depersonalized technique heightens the emotional deadness. The emotional pain of a traumatised heart is explored with anatomical parts.

The individuals internal reaction to suffering has been expressed in the first stanza. The nerves are personified as they "sit ceremonious " like formal people at a funeral service, unmoving and cold as tombs. After the intense suffering or anguish the individual is stiff, paralysed and moved to a period of inactivity.

The heart is also stiff, and poses the question, whether "He"(i. e., Jesus Christ) felt the same when he suffered on the cross. Mentioning of Christ here helps the readers to acknowledge the anguish of the speaker. Further the question "And yesterday _ or centuries before? " reveals the confused state of poets mind as she is unable to track the time period.

The second stanza portrays the paralysed state of body. Feet are moving mechanically. They became stiff as wood and could not figure out whether she is moving on air, on ground or anything at all. It seems she has grown content with the way things are, she doesn't care to change. Weltschmerz and apathy have hardened her into stone, like quartz in ancient cave.

Dickinson has once again used the word "lead" to delineate the speaker's burdened phase of life. The sufferer's time hangs heavy("lead") or drags slowly. The lines, " Remember if outlived " poses a threatening situation. He may not survive the pain. The person starts feeling cold, chill and then "stupor " a numbness and insensibility and then "letting go".

Once again the poet closes the poem in a mysterious tone. Not revealing the answer to the two questions, firstly, the real cause of the individuals suffering and secondly whether he is dead by the end of the poem. The open ending of the poem leaves the readers contemplative ,the ineffable trauma of the reader also finds a vent through this poem. "I felt funeral in my brain " poem depicts the funeral as metaphor showing the dying state of mind. In this poem the poet dives into the excruciating physical pain just after a traumatizing event.

The heart ask pleasure first - analysis

The heart ask pleasure first is a short poem with just 2 stanza, however contains profound meaning. The requests of heart are arranged in a order of importance. Firstly, the heart requests for pleasure as the entire universe does but later may be after realization, it earns for relief from pain. The heart could not hold on the intensity of pain that towards the end of the poem reader could see the heart requests for death. The melancholic heart tries to relieve itself from the agonising world through the portal of death.

The heart asks pleasure first,

And then, excuse from pain;

And then, those little anodynes

That deaden suffering,

And then, to go to sleep;

And then, if it should be

The will of its Inquisitor,

The liberty to die. (pg:264)

The heart's request, the word "ask" indicates the dependent status of the heart. It is waiting for someone to grant the needs. The first request is for pleasure. As we continue reading, the tone and request changes. The number of lines devoted to suffering spellbind the one lone devoted to pleasure. Increasingly desperate request for relief from pain minimizes the importance of pleasure. By the third line the speaker ask for pain killers "anodynes" to help her "deaden suffering".

At the starting of second stanza the speaker tries to find solace from pain by sleeping. Since that did not work she calls for the inquisitor. Historically, an inquisitor was an official in an inquisition, an organization or program intended to eliminate heresy and other things contrary to the doctrine or teaching of catholic faith.

The speaker implies God as "Inquisitor". In using the term "Inquisitor", here the speaker is judging God guilty of inflicting pain upon humanity. The line "The will of its Inquisitor" with the word "will" emphasises the total responsibility of God who is letting the humans to suffer and undergo pain.

The last line "The privilege to die" the speaker is requesting for at least the liberty to choose death if the suffering cannot be reduced. According to Christian teaching God has not given the liberty or freedom to any individual to choose their death. Therefore the speaker request God for the privilege to die. The suffering, pain and anguish is so intense that she chooses death rather than life.

Conclusion

Dickinson's poems perceive melancholy in various ways and employs different images, symbols and metaphor to transform her perception into words. She creates in her writing a distinctively laconic language for expressing what was possible but not yet realized. Amitabh Roy mentions in his journal "The Theme of Death And Time in Emily Dickinson's Poetry"

"Death is not like an ordinary theme of Dickinson's poetry, it occupied her lifelong attention. Death has been mentioned frequently in her poems together with frustration, suffering, pain, sorrow, grief and loneliness. Critics have pointed out that nearly one third of her poetry is concerned with the theme of death. This preoccupation with death made Dickinson a poet of darkness. "

The three poems I felt a funeral in my brain, After great pain a formal feeling comes, Heart ask pleasure first explicitly reveals the inner sorrow and melancholy of the poet. Her poetry portrays her past experience of depression, desolation and dejection. In I felt a funeral in my brain Dickinson examines the minds anguish and in after great pain a formal feeling comes she speaks about the physical pain after a traumatic condition. In the last poem Heart ask pleasure first she explores the sorrows and pain of heart under a stressful situation. The three poems sermonizes the melancholy of mind, body and heart of humans. Anyone who reads her poem will find words to express their impalpable injury.

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson's poems display her varied state of experience. However, most of her poems have death, melancholy, despair as dominating themes. She has also penned on hope, immortality. There is also room to explore and analyze her works from an optimistic view point.

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A Critical Study on the Future of Humanities and Arts in Medical/Health Education

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Abstract

Health humanities and Medical humanities are two prominent fields that require special attention in the present context. These interrelated genres inspect and lucidly portray the role of arts and humanities in the field of medical education and health. The application of anthropology in the medical field is also studied in this genre. Medical humanities blends humanities and medicine whereas health humanities can be perceived as a discipline that focuses on the pragmatic usage of humanities and arts in the well-being of patients, doctors and other people associated with a hospital. Novel lines of thought concerned with the applicability of arts and humanities in health care studies is one of its special features. This article tries to explicate the necessity of integrating humanities in the realm of medical education. Different ways in which arts and humanities are incorporated within the medical context and the practical uses of such studies in the field of medical education are also dealt with in this paper. *Health Humanities*, written by Paul Crawford *et al.*, and *Medical Humanities: A Practical Introduction* authored by Deborah Kirklin *et al.*, are given special attention in this study as these works pave way to arguments on the relevance of narrative criticism in health humanities and contrasts the prevailing healthcare culture with health humanities.

Keywords: Health, Humanities, Medicine, Arts, Education, Literature

Introduction

The relevance of the humanities and its impact is widely seen across health care disciplines. It paves opportunities for the development of a curriculum for the health care professionals with areas related to history, literature, arts, philosophy etc. in it. Recently, literature that deals with the exasperating experiences of clinical life is included in this genre (Gorden, 2008). A commitment to multidisciplinary model of education is clearly visible here. The growth of the philosophy of medicine as a discipline has also been substantial (Dekkers & Gordijn, 2007; Stempsey, 2007). Many artistic and literary works help to gain a

critical eye on the processes of governance in the field of health care. Wallace (2008) clearly describes it by pointing how literature assists critical reflection on certain concepts and what happens to us as human beings in connection with the policies of the contemporary society. Therefore, the inclusion of humanities and arts in clinical education is worthy enough and constructive in nature. It is therefore crucial for the psychologists as well as other mental health practitioners to reflect upon the various aspects of health care and humanities and how they enrich each other. The humanities have long held a place in nurse education (Dellasega *et al*, 2007). Historically, medical field claims to have attained the pedestal of intellectuality as it opens way to comprehend the complexity and fulness of human experience.

The Novelty of Medical and Health Humanities

The 21st century has seen a growing commitment to a nursing curriculum that involves a full appreciation of this complexity (Davis, 2003). The use of the arts in learning for nurses has also been encouraged by the use of problem-based learning (McKie *et al*, 2008). Novels and poetry can aid this task, especially, those focused on the medical treatment conditions and the experiences of certain illnesses. Hence there are many further pleas for the rubric of nursing to extend beyond evidence-based practice to include information literacy, the humanities, ethics and the social sciences (Jutel, 2008).

The relationship between mental health and humanities can be conceptualized in several ways. One of the means is by drawing a distinction between ‘integrative’ and ‘additive’ approaches (Evans & Greaves, 1999). When the integrative approach tries to have more thorough going process of refocusing medicine to address what makes us fully human, the additive model attempts to humanize an existing biomedical knowledge base. In the case of mental health nursing, humanities subjects and literary works have been employed as therapeutic and diversional interventions. For both the educational and therapeutic purposes, artistic works act as a medium to highlight the human experiences in a unique and extraordinary manner. As Biley & Galvin (2007) points, humanities and artistic works help to comprehend the unique experiences of human beings.

Several kinds of mental disorder and distress can be understood through literary works and mental health trainers make use of this aspect to a great extent. Literary works have been drawn upon in occupational therapy to create reflective discussion (Murray *et al*, 2000). Creative arts and occupational therapy have a long history of interrelation (Thompson 1998). This practice is widely appreciated by the patients, particularly if they are able to set their own goal and terms of engagement (Lim *et al*, 2007). A continued emphasis in the role of creativity and arts in occupational therapy is a matter of discussion in mental health care (Schmid, 2004). Another interesting fact is that there is a growing interest in the creative

and artistic disciplines like drama and dance in physiotherapy (Christie *et al*, 2006). Now, mental health care, cancer care remedies, dementia care (Innes & Hatfield, 2001; Mitchell *et al*, 2006), psychotherapy (Crawford *et al*, 2004), social care work with children (Landreth, 2002; Lefevre, 2004) etc. are also associated with these kinds of artistic remedies. Ultimately, this transdisciplinary engagement of arts with health care disciplines paved way for the term health humanities. Medical humanities (MH) can be considered as a broad area of pedagogical and academic pursuits that deals with numerous ideologies. Evans (2002) defines medical humanities as an interdisciplinary, integrated, philosophical approach to interpreting and recording human experiences of disability, illness and medical intervention.

The Purpose of Arts/Humanities in Medical Education

One of the major ideologies that medical humanities discusses is the role of arts and humanities in medical education and medical settings. On the other hand, it propounds another important question: whether the intention of incorporating MH in medical studies is to mould better doctors? (Kirklin, 2011). Broderick (2011) distinguishes the multi-faceted sides and goals of incorporating humanities and arts in medical education. Dror (2011) contends that the introduction of the humanities into medicine has “medicalized” the humanities, thereby controlling and taming their potential contributions. Others warn of the ease with which the arts and the humanities can be co-opted into serving the utilitarian, perhaps even pacificatory, needs of the dominant medical power structure (Meade and Shaw, 2007). In other words, one can understand that the inclusion of subjects related to humanities and arts can mollify the students and patients. It makes them more content and thus easier to manage. At times, MH serves a pacifying and consoling role. It comforts and enriches the physicians to a great deal (Friedman, 2002). Medical humanities will be considered as highly valuable in the medical field if it can generate skills like improved sympathy and communication (Avrahami, 2011).

As far as the concept of empathy in medical humanities is concerned, scholars criticize it as it is subjective and excessively soft. At the same time, some scholars have the perception that studying arts and humanities will increase the capacity for critical thinking. It is beneficial to an extent as it is an intellectual process based on reflection, close observation, questioning and reasoning of the received knowledge. It ultimately can pave way to a kind of skepticism towards the conventional assumptions and attitudes. Jones (2007) opines that the rationale for medical humanities is to provide basic interpretive skills for the medical students. It helps them to appreciate multiple perspectives of an ideology, improves the listening skills and enables them to tolerate ambiguous, diverse and contradictory responses. Gardner (2007) and others have pointed it correctly. The actual intention of incorporating humanities in medical studies is to generate

empathy which ultimately helps in reducing the suffering of others. As Brody (2009) states, application of humanities and arts in the realm of medicine will help to enrich and guide the medical practitioners with virtue and wisdom. Capacities of empathy may be used to support the medical status quo but they may also be used to change and challenge it.

The interdisciplinarity of medical humanities (Wear, 2009) emphasis the point that a single understanding or perspective will not dominate this field. The multiplicity of visual, literary and performing arts can be related along with this interdisciplinarity. It includes reading short stories, poems, essays, story works, reflective writings, videos etc. This diverse nature of the topic lucidly portrays the flexibility of the term medical humanities and its applicability in the health care sector. It also puts forth the challenge of discussing such a broad range of artistic genres. Silk & Shields (2012) point that the exposure to literature and poetry helps the learners to understand that there is no single algorithmic way to break bad news: they slowly develop respect for point of views that vary from their own; and they understand that tough clinical situations will give way to complicated and powerful emotions in doctors that deserve critical analysis and special attention.

When health humanities focus on the “appliedness” of humanities and arts in the realm of well-being and health care, medical humanities can be considered as a blend of humanities and medicine. Health humanities also gives importance to the mutual services and works of nurses, doctors, hospital staff members, care workers, care takers, patients and care givers. It can be considered as a “superordinate” term while comparing with medical humanities (Crawford, 2015). Apart from clinics and hospitals, there are many other places where humanities and arts can be applied to health care. They are; prisons, schools, community settings, private homes etc.

The humane values along with literary experiences conveyed through the artistic works contribute to a great deal in enhancing the experiences of nurses, caretakers and doctors. The professional staff members in a hospital may have to listen to the sympathetic stories of their patients and at times they may have to resort to diverse literary tools to console their patients. The subjective experiences of the service users, patients and self-caring individuals help the doctors to comprehend the source of their illness in a better fashion. Crawford (2015) states that health humanities promotes co-creativity, co-design and co-learning rather than an expert to lay approach. It extensively demands an extensive, applied field of work in order to deliver better cultural and social futures. Views with regard to anthropology can contribute to a great extent in health humanities (Crawford, 2015).

Mental Health Care and Humanities

Use of literature humanizes psychiatry (Clarke, 2009). This point of view clearly depicts the significance of humanities in the critical and interpretative domains of intellectual life. Interpretations of ideas that come up as a result of reading fosters skills that enable us to listen carefully in clinical settings. It also helps us to reflect on different perspectives and to engage empathetically. Oyebode (2009) considers the role of artistic and literary works in deepening empathy and clinical observations. Baker *et al* (2010) had a detailed study of madness and abnormalities in novels from 1945 to the present. Literary works that deal with such abnormalities or madness play a vital role in shaping the perceptions of the ordinary people. Even psychiatry textbooks have literary advisors (eg: Stringer *et al*, 2009).

Another such example is *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Kesey, 1962) which proved itself as an important text for scholars of mental health and literature (Stripling, 1995; Baker *et al*, 2010). On the other hand, the point of view of the lunatic person is well-picturized in works such as *The Bell Jar* (Plath, 1963), *Faces in the Water* (Frame, 1961), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Kesey, 1962). As Hilton (2007:11) says: “fictional accounts drawing on autobiographical experience can give us valuable insights into the practice of psychiatry, the doctor-patient relationship, and patients’ concerns which may be less obvious to practitioners”. While accurate relationship between clinical improvement and expressive therapies are elusive, the value ascribed to these initiatives by the users is really commendable and considerable.

Conclusion

This paper tries to point the distinguishing factors that differentiate between medical humanities and health humanities. It also sheds light on the relevance of incorporating humanities in medical field. Since humanities can address the experience, nature and purpose of the healthcare and similar disciplines, it is appropriate and timely to check the increasing demand of incorporating it into others fields too. What contributes to the rigor of humanities is its self-justifying and explicating nature. It provides incredible insight and understanding. There should be sufficient space for both benign and radical approaches. Moreover, the sufferings and dismal state of healthcare practitioners can be ameliorated through artistic and literary works.

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Mourning, Melancholy & Catharsis: A Comparative study on *Lycidas*, *Adonis* & *Prarodanam*

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Introduction

‘Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought’ (Shelley in To A Skylark).

Death, mourning and melancholy often lead to philosophical reflections on the meaning of life and its transience. They become powerful instruments for the purification of human soul or Catharsis. At times, the rough realities of life teach us the most valuable and all-time relevant lessons. They remind us of the ephemerality of life and the value of wisdom. However shocking initially, we humans gradually come to terms with the loss of the love-object; (the grief and mourning cleanse the soul and people tend to become better individuals, with new realizations dawning upon them.) Great philosophical musings are the finished products of which the raw materials are sorrow and suffering. Transcending the linguistic barriers, literature of all times bear testimony to this. John Milton (*Lycidas*), P B Shelley (*Adonis*) and N. Kumaranasan (*Prarodanam*) mourn the death of their beloved companions. Lamentations interspersed with lofty thoughts brighten the grim, grief-stricken interiors of weary souls, wash away their blues.

As mentioned earlier, death can be, and is often, the starting point for poets to deal with serious themes.

Although Milton had decided not to write poetry till his powers matured, “bitter constraint and sad occasion” compels the poet to attempt an elegy. That occasion is the untimely death of *Lycidas*. Dr. Samuel Johnson rejects the whole idea, rather condemns Milton for sheer lack of sincerity – “Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief”. Still, we feel it is justifiable to weep the loss of a companion who is “dead ere his prime.” The readers just can’t label the poet’s intention behind composing an elegy ‘insincere’. Milton says:

“He must not float upon his wat’ry bier

Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,

Without the meed of some melodious tear”..

In Adonis, Shelley mourns the premature death of John Keats, of which he learns after seven days of the latter's departure to his heavenly abode. Fuelled by his anger raging at the merciless criticisms against Keats' poems, (which Shelly thought accelerated Keats' death – here too, 'ere his prime'-) his fire of grief burns and the lava flows out as an elegy. While thanking Keats' caretaker in Rome for his concern for the deceased, Shelly lashes sharply out at those whom he believed had been merciless to him and his literary output.

Prarodanam is Kumaranasan's heart-rending lamentation on the death of A.R. Rajaraja Varma, one of the doyens of Malayalam poetry. A.R. was not just a poet laureate, but a genius and an eminent grammarian. His Kerla Panineeyam (A text on Malayalam Grammar) alone won him an unparalleled designation among the literary luminaries of Malayalam. He has written the preface to Nalini - a long narrative poem by Asan. He was called back by fate 'ere his prime', believed Kumaranasan. Asan visualised his own death when Raja Raja Varma passed away. Immensely moved by his untimely demise, Asan dedicates his tearful tribute to Raja Raja Varma. (Smarami Raja Rajasya.....The deva bashpanjalim).

In stanzas 51-54 we see Asan critical of those jealous of Raja Raja Varma and raised contemptuous remarks on his knowledge and wisdom. As we move on to stanza 55, the poet consoles himself saying none can dim the great soul's fame henceforth, as he's crossed the threshold of Eternity.

Nature mourns the death of the heroes

Strictly adhering to the elegiac tradition, Milton begins in praise mode, calling on Myrtles and Laurels, traditional plants used to crown heroes. However, these plants will never fulfill their destiny, as they have grown brown and will "Shatter" their leaves before they mature. Milton continues by including the *pathetic fallacy*, so labeled later by John Ruskin, personifying nature to mourn the passing of Lycidas.

Shelly weeps for John Keats and invokes Urania to join him in mourning as Keats died in Rome (Stanza 1-7). He implores the mourners to weep- 'Weep for Adonis- he's dead'! He summons all spirits- both living and dead, to share his sorrow and join him in mourning. Stanzas 8&9 continue, with the poet beckoning mourners to lament the loss of 'the loveliest and the last' great spirit of the Romantic age. Greek goddesses pay tribute to the poet and prepare his corpse for the eternal life that awaits him. The ocean, the wind and the echoes stop by, to pay their last respects. Further, at his bidding, the subject-matter of Keats' poetry weeps (stanzas 8-15). Nature celebrated in Keatsian poetry also laments; even though spring, which brings the whole nature back to life, cannot bring the poet back to life.

In Stanza 9 the "flocks" of the deceased appear, representing his dreams and inspirations. In Stanza 13, the personifications of the thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and skills of the deceased appear. In Stanza 22, Urania is awakened by the grief of Misery and the poet. The lament is invoked: "He will awake no more, oh, never more!" Urania pleads in vain for Adonais to awake and to arise.

In Stanzas 30 through 34, a series of human mourners appears. The "Pilgrim of Eternity" is Lord Byron, George Gordon, who had met and was a friend of Shelley's but who had never met Keats. The Irish poet Thomas Moore then appears who laments the sadness and loss that time causes. Shelley himself and Leigh Hunt are also part of the "procession of mourners". In Stanzas 31 through 34 the mourner is described as "one frail Form" who has "fled astray", "his branded and ensanguined brow" a brow "like Cain's or Christ's".

Shelley overcome by grief, even predicts his own death by drowning.
 'The soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near;
 'Tis Adonais calls! Oh, hasten thither,
 No more let life divide what Death can join together'.

Kumaranasan, inspired by Shelly's Adonis, composed Prarodanam replicating the latter's style and sentiments. Closely following the duo, Asan involves various elements in nature to express their sorrow at the irreparable loss of PRIYA RAJA RAJA, ie, beloved Raja Raja Varma, Asan's Guru (teacher) and close companion. Stanzas 1 to 8 of this 147 stanza- long elegiac piece clearly give a verbal portrait of a broken motherland, Keralaavani (The land of Kerala), lamenting her irretrievable loss; the fumes of her burning grief shadowing the length and breadth of the place, spanning the expanse of Sahyadri, Arabian sea, the rivers, numerous valleys and plains. Rajaraja Varma passed away on the 5th of the Malayalam month Midhunam (June 1913). There was heavy rain at that time. The poet views the heavy downpour as the tears shed by Kairali (Kerala), sensing an imminent tragedy. The poet observes the fumes from his pyre at his hometown Mavelikkara as the black fumes moving upward from the blown out light of Saradalayam (the ancestral home of the deceased Rajaraja Varma). In stanza 9, we see the Gods coming in procession to partake the sorrow of Goddess Earth and console her. The poet unveils a fraternal bonding between heaven and earth, while portraying the former consoling the latter, sharing her grief. Among the divine personae, the arrival of the three patronesses of Travancore, Kochi and Malabar are described in stanzas 12 to 17. Throughout the piece we feel the depth of grief, expressed by various natural elements and phenomena.

Philosophical reflections

In the course of their mourning, instigated by sorrow, all the three bards make philosophical observations on life, its evanescence and death. Milton observes: Why should one, abandoning all pleasures, live a life of strenuous discipline, and cultivate the Muse? Fame (the last infirmity of the noble mind) is the reward of living laborious days. But as one is about to obtain his reward of fame, then fate intervenes and he dies. Milton uses figurative language to compare the hero's obliteration by death to nature's cruel method, sending canker to kill the rose, "Or Taint-worm to the weanling Herds that graze, / Or Frost to Flowers." (Samuel Johnson added his voice to those critical of Milton's style for the overwrought lines.)

Philosophy of the One Mind: Like Plato, Shelley believed that the world possessed a soul. One mind, one power, one all pervasive and informing spirit—that is the cardinal principle of Shelley's philosophy and faith. In *Adonais* he expresses this faith more passionately:

"The one remains, the many change and pass
The one spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear
Torturing the unwilling dress that checks its fight
To its own likeness as such may beat"

Asan's all - time relevant thoughts go thus: Disasters bring people together; nobody among men is there who has no fear of failure; though it is sure that the full moon rises after its waning in due course of time, the influence of bad times has darkened the moonlight- Rajarajendu! Stanza 27 is a classic example of Asan's philosophy of the human thirst for life's glory and the destiny's cruelty. Stanza 29 of *Prarodanam* is an echo of

'Death feeds on his mute voice

And laughs at our despair' (*Adonais* Stanza 3).

From Stanzas 32 -37, where even the dust on the pyre of the deceased speaks, we learn those eternal lessons on life's transience and death's unconquerable might. Lines of stanza 35 reminds us of

'Great and mean meet massed in death' (*Adonais* Stanza 21).

Stanza 93 of *Prarodanam* reminds us it is meaningless to fear death as it is inevitable. In stanza 102, the poet portrays the paradoxical nature of life, citing the examples of withering flowers, falling fruits and the demise of great people.

In the precariousness of human life lies the tragic irony, observes the trio. Shelly and Asan join Milton in rejecting pure earthy reputations as the true reward of life; that reward is in the divine judgment and the final unity of the departed soul with the Supreme Being.

Immortality of soul: The fourth section (lines 132-164), in which Milton describes the “flowerets of a thousand hues” cast on the hearts of Lycidas, is an “escape from intolerable reality into a lovely world of make-believe.”

In the fifth section (lines 164-184) Milton expresses his belief in immortality. Grief and sorrow are temporary. And though Lycidas is apparently dead, he has arisen from the dead: “Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves.” Lycidas is in heaven, and therefore “Weep ye no more.” The saints there to entertain him in “sweet societies / That sing, and singing in their glory move.” The epilogue (lines 185-193) brings us back to the portal images again, and refers indirectly to the Greek Pastoral poets. The conclusion points to a new determination both to face life hopefully, and to rise up to greater poetic achievements.

Shelley had inextinguishable faith in the imperishable greatness of the human soul which warms and colours almost every line he wrote. In *Adonais* he says that the spirit of *Adonais* will return to the Eternal, from where it came and is immortal:

“Dual to dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same”.

Stanza 55 of *Prarodanam* clearly reflects Asan’s belief in eternity and the perpetuity of fame earned through true devotion to all forms of art. In stanza 128 the poet speaks about the result of one’s virtues/ vices and the reward one gets at the end of worldly life. He even reflects the belief in an eternal life after death (Nirvana/ Moksha). Following the sceptical Shelley (who expresses his concern over the reliability of the ‘life after death’ concept, Asan also doubts how far it can be true in stanzas 129-130. Then, belief gets upper hand over silly scepticism and the poet reiterates his hope in the immortality of human soul (Stanzas 131-132).

Panglossian conclusion

Though grief is the dominant condition in the early parts of an elegy, many elegies end on a note of joyful resignation, and also on a note of affirmation. No different is the case with the poems under our scrutiny.

Milton concludes *Lycidas*, showering praises on him, including his famous phrase “Look homeward Angel”. He further requests the shepherds to “weep no more” as Lycidas, though “sunk low”, “mounted high” and united with ‘the dear might of him (Christ) that walked the waves’ (173). The powerful use of Antithesis reassures the poet as well as the woeful mourners of the eternity of Lycidas. Lycidas is now with ‘other groves and other streams’ (174) in which ‘With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves’ (174). The ‘other’ streams are the brooks of Paradise which, according to the book of Revelations, run with nectar. Lycidas can wash off his hair the oozy, salty memories of his drowning at sea, in these streams. Moreover, Heaven rejoices at his arrival and confers on him the title “the Genius of the shore”, and he will guard others from the kind of fate he had. Here, Milton follows the tradition seen in Virgil’s Eclogues, where we see Julius Caesar in the guise of Daphnis, to be “good” to men on earth.

In Adonis stanza 38 the poet bursts open the gates of consolation that are required of the pastoral elegy. He observes that it is life's worldly cares—that obscuring and distracting "dome of many-coloured glass"—not Death, that is the enemy and the source of human despair. "Follow where all is fled," he urges, and he goads his own heart into having the courage to face not extinction but "that Light whose smile kindles the Universe." The poem concludes by imagining Adonais to be a part of "the white radiance of Eternity." At the end of the elegy, "like a star," the soul of the dead poet "Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

Stanzas 133-147 of *Prarodanam* resonate the gradual efforts of the poet to reconcile with the dear loss, which culminate in the hopeful assumption of the union of the departed soul with the Supreme. Now mourning gives way to wisdom and the poet gradually justifies the deeds of destiny. Finally, he finds consolation in the eternity of Raja Raja Varma’s pious soul and the foreverness of the fame he earned through his meritorious contributions to language and literature, both in Sanskrit and in Malayalam (Mathi Vibho! Thwannama punyaksharam (Stanza 142) - The virtuous seeds of the holy letters of your name are enough!). Asan concludes the poem with a new revelation and a realization, which wipes away fear and tear from his heart and soul.

Conclusion

The elements these poems share in common are the philosophy of life and death, the way the whole nature joins the poets in mourning the loss of a precious love – object and the final reconciliation with the inevitable, and, the joyful, or rather the “Panglossian” note, on which the poems end. Thus these three great elegies reaffirm how Mourning & melancholy lead to Catharsis and turn people into better individuals, with new realizations dawning upon them.

This paper is a humble attempt to highlight the remarkable resemblance discernible in the streams of thought, the philosophy and the visionary viewpoints the great trio, who had been sharing only a literary association. It is not the intensity of grief in these classic pieces of verse, but the graceful nobility and the arresting universality of the thoughts that make the poems timeless.

Key words: Mourning, melancholy, Catharsis, ephemerality, perpetuity, reconciliation, foreverness, eternity, lamentation, nature, death

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Untold Tales of Invisible Men- From Shikhandi to Ben Barres

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Abstract

The notion of gender and sexuality has undergone drastic changes in the contemporary world. The post-structuralist frame of the literary canon talks about the blurring gender boundaries and the norms of sexuality in society. Gender and sexuality then becomes not natural but naturalized by hegemonic structures of society. Such a platform offers ample space for the queer. Often, the queer becomes an object of social critique as they do not conform to the social norms of gender and sexuality. It is regarded as an aberration or a taboo or a disability in society. We live in a world that values and privileges “able” body over “disabled” body. When a category of people is branded as ‘disabled,’ the society conceives the idea that such a category is to be feared and under-represented. But it is never a disability, but differences in perspectives and they constitute an integral part of the society. Hence, queer becomes a disability as the society does not accept it. Transgender community is one such community who are branded as disabled. They are not given any platform to carve their own designs in the society but get discriminated as they are “the other” for the society.

My paper with the aid of *Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist* by Ben Barres tries to explore the life and discriminations of trans- men community in comparison with the not much discussed puranic character Shikhandi who has a great role during the Pandava- Kaurava war, who can be claimed a Trans- man.

Key Words- Other, disable, Invisible, Queer

Society is an amalgamation of various species that belong to different origin, class, race, gender and sexuality and it is believed that, the society is constituted in such a way that a comfortable life is to granted for everyone whoever is blessed with life by God. Rights are designed and duties are assigned in such a way that the society maintains equilibrium. But this is not the real scene as there are communities which face exploitations and are deprived of every single right, for whom freedom is denied as they cannot be clutched under the definition of a male or female. The notion of gender and sexuality has undergone drastic changes in the contemporary world. The post-structuralist frame of the literary canon talks about the blurring gender boundaries and the norms of sexuality in society. Gender and sexuality then becomes not natural but

naturalized by hegemonic structures of society. Such a platform offers ample space for the queer. Often, the queer becomes an object of social critique as they do not conform to the social norms of gender and sexuality. It is regarded as an aberration or a taboo or a disability in society.

The theory that discusses about queer comes under the discipline of cultural studies and is an attempt to redefine gender and sexual identities and carve out a cultural or political space within the dominant heterosexual paradigm. Contemporary sociologists and theorists in cultural studies see sexuality as a social construct. Contemporary thinking on identity is that identity is never immanent in an object; it is constructed out of discourses. (Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory, 188)

Transgender community is one such community, regarded the lowest in the society who is entrapped in the heinous life of sorrows just because they cannot be judged either woman or man. Transgender people are considered as the other who are often ignored and are considered to be the most ironical creed of the world trapped in the world of humiliation and mockery. They are the invisible in the society or can be said as those a part of society yet not a part of it. We never treat them in the right sense and rarely do we see them as the third category, solely because it upsets our age- old ideas about men and women. This makes them an invisible community in the society as it disturbs the established ideas about gender and biology. They are the neglected gender who sing and dance at the wedding and at childbirth as they are considered as the ‘chosen of God’ and it is believed that their curse cannot be revoked. They are not given any platform to carve their own designs in the society but get discriminated as they are “the other” for the society.

Some Transgender people feel that they are not born in a right body. For this reason, some transgender people choose to have surgery to take the physical form of their desired sex. This person is sometimes called a post-operative transsexual. Someone can also be pre-operative, or can choose never to have surgery (in this case, she or he might be known as “non-op”). If specifying that someone is trans is necessary (although it usually isn’t), the following terminology should be used: someone who formerly identified as a woman and who now identifies as a man is known as a FTM (female-to-male) transsexual, a trans man, or a transgender man. Likewise, someone who formerly identified as a man and who now identifies as a woman may be labeled a MTF (male-to-female) transsexual, a Trans woman, or a transgender woman. Transgender people may identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, heterosexual, or some other sexual orientation. Having experienced discrimination, prejudice, oppression, fear and shame, they share commonalties with LGB people. Like LGB people, transgender individuals should not have to hide who they are in order to have safe and satisfying lives.

Little attention has been paid to the transmasculine (female-to-male [FTM] transsexual and transgender) community. When we hear the word transsexual, most of us immediately think of male-to-females. However, the FTM community is thriving and they are the little-examined identities within the almost invisible world of FTMs.

They are branded as ‘disabled,’ and society conceives the idea that such a category is to be feared and under-represented. But it is never a disability, but differences in perspectives and differences in the notion of sexuality. These people are also citizens who constitute an integral part of the society. But queer becomes a disability as the society does not accept it.

The *Mahabharata* is an ancient Indian epic where the main story revolves around two branches of a family - the Pandavas and Kauravas - who, in the Kurukshetra War, battle for the throne of Hastinapura. Interwoven into this narrative are several smaller stories about people dead or living, and philosophical discourses. Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa, himself a character in the epic, composed it; as, according to tradition, he dictated the verses and Ganesha wrote them down. The longest epic poem ever written is generally thought to have been composed in the 4th century BCE or earlier. The events in the epic play out within the Indian subcontinent and surrounding areas. It was first narrated by a student of Vyasa at a snake-sacrifice of the great-grandson of one of the major characters of the story. Including within it the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Mahabharata* is one of the most important texts of ancient Indian, indeed world, literature. *Mahabharata*, the revered text is often misunderstood to be limited to a war within the Kuru lineage, a war between the Pandavas and Kauravas, a war between Dharma and Adharma. Such oversimplification of this high held text deprives us of the immense knowledge it offers. It is a manifestation of varied possibilities of human behaviour, their actions and the result of those actions. Each character of the epic presents an enormous opportunity to learn from. One such character is the mighty Bhishma, originally named as Devavratha.

Even though Bhishma adored Pandavas, he fought the war for the Kauravas. Hence, it was important for him to die to establish Dharma, as per the words of Lord Krishna. However, he had been given a boon by his father that he could choose the time of his own death. Krishna suggested that if he can't die, he must be rendered helpless. Bhishma would never lower his weapons in front of man, said the Pandavas. Krishna then thought of a master plan, that of getting a woman on the battlefield.

Dhristadhyumna, Draupadi's twin brother suggested the name of his brother/sister Shikandini to fight the war. The latter was born a woman, but changed her sex and just like a man, was trained in warfare

.Shikhandi's father raised her as a man and she exchanged her sex with Yaksha in the forest, so she is as much as a man as anyone fighting the war. . She had also received a boon from Lord Shiva in her previous birth that only she will be able to defeat Bhishma. Krishna said, "I think, Shikhandi should ride into the battlefield on my chariot. Let Arjuna stand behind him". The chariot rolled out. Behind Krishna stood the strange creature, neither man nor woman, or perhaps both, or neither, and behind him, Arjuna. Bhishma was furious to see a woman in a battlefield and refused to fight the war. With the fall of Bhishma, the war swung in favour of the Pandavas - nine days later, Kauravas were defeated and the Pandavas won the legendary battle. In a way, Shikhandi was responsible for winning this war for the Pandavas or she helped dharma get reestablished in the society

As much as Shikhandi was important to the war, her tale is often ignored in the re telling of the Mahabharata, since her sex is often looked down upon by the society. Yet, Shikhandi was as human as anyone in the war and her sex had no consequence to what she achieved in the war. . Shikhandi represents all queer people – from gays to lesbians to Hijras to transgender people to hermaphrodites to bisexuals. However, the fact that Shikhandi helped win the war in the interim period shows that as a character Shikhandi was neither here nor there. She was neither a man nor woman, yet she was responsible for bringing the Kauravas down. Even though some people might have looked down upon Shikhandi, her sex rarely came in between her relationships. Shikhandi was well accepted by everyone and went on to win the war for the Kauravas. This goes on to show that it does not matter whether you are man, woman or in between, your karma is what will get you ahead in life.

The Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist, documents remarkable life story of Ben Barres, Born Barbara Barres in mid-1950s New Jersey, Barres was a precocious, science-loving child who relentlessly pursued academic opportunities. But from an early age, he never felt comfortable being treated as female. As he writes: "internally I felt strongly that I was a boy. This was evident in everything about my behavior" (*Ben Barres: neuroscience pioneer, gender champion*, 492). The book spans from Barres' early childhood through to his latest research, and is divided into three sections: life, science and advocacy. He is frank about his struggles with his gender identity. This painful subject is acknowledged openly, though sometimes almost clinically. Remarkably, despite suffering from intense gender dysphoria that led to suicidal thoughts, Barres never sought to abandon or distance himself from women. Once he had transitioned, he used the perspective and authority his new male identity gave him to highlight the sexism female researchers face. At the time of professional and financial security, Barres still struggled with the gender confusion. One morning, while reading the local newspaper, Barres came across an article about Jamison Green, a female to

male transgender person and transgender rights activist, whose experiences with gender dysphoria were very similar to his. He says in *The Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist*,

This was the first time that I understood that there were others who had the same gender identity discordance that I had. It was also the first time that I had heard the word transgender I felt an irresistible desire to transition from female to male from the moment I was offered that possibility.

The only thing that held Barres was in concern was over the career impact. Fortunately, Barres received many supportive responses to his decision:

I am not aware of a single adverse thing that has happened to me in the past twenty years as a result of my being transgender, but there was the immediate relief of all emotional pain as a result of my transition. It is hard to explain how much relief I felt and how much happier I became. It was as if a huge weight had suddenly been lifted from my shoulders. (*The Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist*)

Overall, this is a quick and interesting read that shines light on an admirable and under-recognized individual. Barres' personal experiences as a transman discuss and show to the society the value of equality, diversity and representation. It also brings out the fact that transmen shouldn't be made to stand instead should be given the same status as that of humans.

Our world rests on the foundation of differences like race, origin, language and sexuality. In this world where gender plays an important role or only male and female is considered to be normal those people who differ in gender identities are branded as disabled or they are considered the other. Shikandi represents not just the transman community but the third gender as a whole and while it might have taken India decades to even notice the LGBTQ community, our scriptures were quite comfortable with the latter. Shikandi still stands a pillar, as a human being who was extremely critical in winning the war and not as a creature or the other or someone. Shikhandi was and will always remain a key element in Mahabharata and taking this into consideration that even from the age old days transmen or transgender as a whole was not disabled or one who should stand invisible within the society, we, should think that in the present scene where equality is granted for all, the world should serve a home for the people who are humans like us and should never be called disabled as it is never a disability. But the fact remains as a pillar that Indian society is still not prepared to accept them and see them as the other or the disabled and push them to acute depression. People's mode of thinking, feeling and behaving towards them need to change and should bring out the picture that all humans created by God are able bodies and no one differs whatever the reason may be.

Society should see all as equal like what the constitution grants and should remove the veil of invisibility that these people are facing.

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‘Streetspace’: Space that Problematizes ‘Nostalgic Indoors’

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Abstract

Society always urges for internal homogeneity. Society maintains ‘indoors’ as a strong well-built spatial system which dictates ‘who should’ and ‘where should be’. System shows its courtesy to the ‘nostalgic indoors’ reaffirming and remembering its trajectory. Well-knit system that is established through the homogenization of differences contains the seeds of its own erasure. It pricks the system with its memory, the memory it did omit. This is like a street walk. This street walk is through our memory and through the erasure of it. It walks back and forth through the street. When we walk back we encounter ‘Nostalgic indoors’ and when we walk forward we find the street itself. This street walk will help us to revisit the complexities and possibilities of ‘Streetspace’ that was neglected and swept under the colourful carpet of ‘Nostalgic Indoors’.

Keywords: Power discourse, Street space, Dialectics, Space, Memory, Nostalgic, Society, Structure

Introduction

Human limitation forces one to think in terms of time and space. Therefore, history also reveals itself in this time and space. Those who transcend this limitation go beyond time and space. However, even that experience is scripted in time and space. Time, in its very nature, is constant and rhythmic in movement. Space changes according to time and creates enough possibilities to realize its existence. When we analyze the trajectory of spatial understandings we come across many legends who have meditated on space and scripted their experience. Henri Lefebvre’s pioneering book, *La production de l’espace*, translated as *The Production of Space*, challenged traditional notions of space as an abstract arena and passive container. Lefebvre’s work gave impetus to many postmodern thinkers to focus on space by emphasizing its continual production and reproduction. In the trajectory of space, it was a spatial turn. “Modern spatial theorists understand space as dynamic, relational, and agentive” (Gunderson).

This paper explores the concept of space through the perspective of ‘Streetspace’. This process resembles a street walk and it is indeed a stroll down the lane of our memory and the erasure of it. It is walking back and forth through the street, where when we walk back we encounter ‘Nostalgic indoors’ and when we walk forward we find the street itself. The paper intends to utilize this street walk to revisit the complexities and possibilities of ‘Streetspace’ that was neglected and swept under the colorful carpet of ‘Nostalgic Indoors’.

Nostalgic Indoors

‘Indoors’ are always a space of security and comfort which is always set within boundaries. This ‘indoor’ can be any structure with boundaries and code of conduct. It can be society, religion, culture or any structure with a customary layout of rules and norms. In a structure, there is an established space for each and everything. There are established roles to play in a specific space by specific persons. Each and every space is separated and labelled. Structure always urges for internal homogeneity. British social scientist Doreen Massey observes that a nation keeps its own territorial boundaries that increase internal homogeneity (Low 26). To cross these boundaries means death. Society establishes itself on the make belief that the life becomes secure and comfortable when the borders are strictly kept and boundaries are guarded. In case of religion, there is a clear cut demarcation between Sacred and Secular. Replica of this binary opposition can be found in every structure in different modes and degrees. Thus, patterned indoors determines the quality of space and it draws lines separating sacred space from secular space. Age old customs and rituals are built on this concept of space. In the sacred –secular binary, the sacred is privileged and this privilege determines the future. They become the custodians of ‘Indoors’. Structure maintains ‘indoors’ as a strong well-built spatial system which dictates ‘who should’, ‘when should’, ‘where should’ and ‘how should’. Roles are fixed and spaces are allotted within this ‘indoors’. ‘Indoors’ work as the building block of every structure. Those who do not respect the border are cast out to outdoor.

Henri Lefebvre, French philosopher, considers space as a social product. He provides three reflections on space such as: spatial practice, conceived space and perceived space. According to Lefebvre, all these are interlinked spatial understandings and helps in lived practice and to sustain the given social order (Lefebvre 30-38). In other words, this helps the structure to make its ‘indoors’ strong and comfortable. In the explanation of Edward Soja, American thinker, we find an echo of Lefebvre’s three-layer division and reflection of space. That is to say, spaces impose social processes. Space is a social product as well as a shaping force in social life (Low 30). In the form of a vicious circle ‘indoors’ customize space to create itself and in turn space is produced by these ‘indoors’. Martina Low, German sociologist explains,

“If we therefore assume that spaces are constituted through action, it can be concluded that this action, organized in the routines of day-to-day life, reproduces societal structures, and does so in a recursive process. Hence, societal structures enable space constitutive action which reproduces the very structures that enable it (and constrain other action). This reproduction is organized societally via institutions. Societal structures are anchored in institutions” (Low 39).

Repeated day today activities create space. However, these interventions are not neutral. These are for the well-being of the structure and involves the observation of a code of conduct of the structure. Thus, ‘indoor’ becomes more and more strong and hierarchical. Since these ‘indoors’ are created and sustained through repeated actions, memory plays an important role in this whole process. Memory itself becomes selection tool of the structure. When time passes, structure updates its activities and adapts itself. When the new layers form, the out-dated ones are stored in the memory itself, and are tagged as the ‘nostalgic’. Now and then the system shows its courtesy to the ‘nostalgic indoors’ reaffirming and remembering its trajectory.

Possibility and Fluidity of ‘Streetspace’

Lefebvrian understanding of space as produced under the monopoly of Capitalism leaves a room to produce the space by means of social relations. He also reveals that through the homogenization of differences capitalism colonize space, but the social production of differences provides the hope to decolonize the space. Doreen Massey’s definition of space as the sphere of relations and encounters also provides a room for discussion. But Massey observes that even these encounters and differences are within the strict boundary of the system. However, these observations leave the possibility to subvert the ‘nostalgic indoors’. Well-knit system that is established through the homogenization of differences contains the seeds of its own erasure. This is in tune with Derrida's observation that, “Language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique”. This erasure can be explained as the space of street.

‘Streetspace’ is defined as having erasure in its nature. It creates itself through the erasure of ‘nostalgic indoors’. It is not a space that exists outside of indoors, but a space without boundaries, that does not have inside and outside. This is marked outside since it disturbs institutionalized memories. ‘Streetspace’ arises though the erasure of boundaries in an existing system and, all heights and lower plains are in the established history. It pricks the system with its memory, the memory which it has omitted. However, the irony is that each and every system has its origin and evolution in and through this ‘Streetspace’.

In literature, it emerges through the erasure of written words to bring forth the unwritten. Derrida, while explaining centre and *freeplay* states, “The centre is at the centre of the totality, and yet, since the centre does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality *has its centre elsewhere*. The centre is not the centre” (Krapp). Derrida's reflections on the centre and *freeplay* gives enough room to break the rigid boundaries of a system. The *freeplay* swings between inside and outside. He observes that the “whole history is... thought of as a series of substitutions of centre for centre, as a linked chain of determinations of the centre” (Krapp). If we imbibe the spirit of Derrida to analyse the society and its rigid system, then we come across ‘streetspace’ that questions the system and its ‘unethical’ existence.

‘Unethical’ nature of the existence of ‘streetspace’ is because of the system that comes to existence with a deliberate emphasis on ‘presence’ and exclusion. This deliberate realization of ‘presence’ is always with reference to the boundaries that creates margins and points of exclusion. Presence is a deliberate selection. Structure selects what it desires and omits the rest. ‘Selected’ is present and ‘rest’ is absent. ‘Streetspace’ emerges as an absence of present ‘presence’ or erasure of it and this simultaneously levels the gap between absence and presence. The ‘streetspace’ is not a *tabula rasa* instead it is a space that accumulates all the preconceived ideas and the erasure of it. Thus, it is a space with deliberate ‘presence’ and ‘absence’. The behaviour of ‘streetspace’ reminds about the nature of *trace* in Derrida's observation. He presents trace as follows:

The trace is in fact the absolute origin of sense in general. Which amounts to saying once again that there is no absolute origin of sense in general. The trace is the differance which opens appearance [l'apparaître] and signification. Articulating the living upon the nonliving in general, origin of all repetition, origin of ideality, the trace is not more ideal than real, not more intelligible than sensible, not more a transparent signification than an opaque energy and no concept of metaphysics can describe it (Spivak and Derrida 65).

Derrida's *trace* is never a *being-present* outside all plenitude. The possibility of *trace* is by rights anterior to what one calls sign and it permits the articulation of speech and writing. ‘Streetspace’ also exists as the erasure of articulation of the living upon the non-living and not as the origin of all repetition or of ideality. It is indeed the erasure of repetition and ideality. However, ‘streetspace’ creates the possibility of repetition and ideality in its post ‘streetspace’ due its non-structural nature.

‘Streetspace’ as the possibility of creativity and spontaneity reminds us of the *freeplay* of Derrida. For Derrida, “*Freeplay* is always interplay of absence and presence, but if it is to be presented radically, *freeplay* must be conceived before the alternative of presence and absence; being must be conceived of as presence or

absence beginning with the possibility of *freeplay* and not the other way around.” (Spivak and Derrida 65) Derrida’s *freeplay* is interplay of absence and presence but ‘streetspace’ is not the interplay of absence and presence. Instead it is the space where absence and presence stay together and fade together. If *freeplay* creates fluidity within the system and provides the possibility of movement and creativity, ‘streetspace’ goes further to the possibility of movement and creativity beyond structure. Even in our ordinary understanding, ‘streetspace’ stands for movement and creativity. While a structure stands for its rigid boundaries and static nature, ‘streetspace’ gives the possibility of self-evolving, creative and dynamic deconstruction of the system. In a ‘streetspace’, there is no change of center. Each and every point is center and erasure of it. ‘Streetspace’ is not for the privilege of one over other. Keeps both and erases both.

There are lots of debates on the complexities of representation. Derrida along with Aristotle recognize the inescapability of representation. ‘Streetspace’ provides space to present and represent. In this present/ represented space, representation becomes the memory of present and present becomes the memory of representation. ‘Streetspace’ is the possibility of understanding the complexities in the presentness of representation and problematizes the representation with its presence. It does not go back to the origin of a structure, instead, it brings the origin to the present to erase the structure.

Conclusion

The ‘erasure’ problematizes the well-built indoors. Society, culture, religion or any other structures exist by defending its boundaries and its own code of conduct. When ‘streetspace’ emerges from the very base of the so-called structure to challenge the very existence of the structure, the comfort zones are disturbed. They take the defensive force saying, ‘It is anarchy’. This spell of anarchy predicts the evolution of ‘streetspace’. When this evolution turns to be a revolution, which is yet another structure, then the ‘streetspace’ emerges as the erasure of new structure. ‘Streetspace’ will bring origin to the present and will disturb the present. If any system becomes true to its possibilities, then that system ceases to be a system as such. This questions the very existence of the system.

‘Streetspace’ is a possibility that provides the scope to question the structure itself from its base. This ‘streetspace’ opens the creativity and fluidity of the system. Kerala State faced a flood in August 2018 which led to the evacuation of millions. The flood broke all the boundaries not only physically but also in a conceptually. Irrespective of caste, creed and colour all joined hands together to survive. Flood can be read as an erasure, erasure of representations and systems that was created with rigid boundaries and deliberate memories. Even though this was for a short span of time it was capable of evoking an awareness regarding

the possibility of flood and regarding fluidity which is a possibility for the ‘streetspace’. Little narratives, everyday resistance, street demonstrations are reminding us of ‘streetspace’.

The structure is not the same after the interrelated ‘streetspace’ everything looks like static. Society evolves in the presence of ‘streetspace’. ‘Streetspace’ is a necessity and possibility. Necessity since the society is with rigid structures and ‘streetspace’ is within and without of this rigid structure. The presence of ‘streetspace’ makes the structure a structure as well as a non-structure. The possibility of ‘streetspace’ calls for dynamic evolution as well as inclusion. Change occurs in the absence-presence of ‘streetspace’.

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Empowering Disabled: A reading of Susan Nussbaum's *Good kings Bad kings: A novel*

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ABSTRACT

Tracing through the history of the history of human beings disability- be it physical or psychological has been viewed and regarded as a result of curse or as consequence of sins committed by ancestors. As a result, disabled were considered as black sheep and were forcefully moved to periphery. In the 21st century, even though disabled try to find their own spaces, creating their own voices, people hesitate to consider them as “normal” human beings. The same has been reflected in literature also. Disabled characters due to their deformity were portrayed as villains or as incompetent characters. After a while, literary works begun to present them either as emerging champions over their disability or as victims. But it was with acts enacted for the upliftment of disabled, things began to change. From then onwards literature presented disabled in a realistic manner.

This paper attempts to address the condition of disabled people living in institutions dedicated for them as represented in Susan Nussbaum's *Good Kings Bad Kings: A Novel*. Novel shares a collection of narratives told from the viewpoint of each character. Through this work author brings into light unethical practices by authorities of such institutions, plight of inmates and attitude of state towards disabled. Throughout the novel Nussbaum attempts to give true portrayal of life of disabled in institutions meant for them which is totally different from what people assume to be.

Key Words : Disability, Institution, Authority, Physicians.

Tracing through the history of the history of human beings disability- be it physical or psychological has been viewed and regarded as a result of curse or as consequence of sins committed by ancestors. As a result, disabled were considered as black sheep and were forcefully moved to periphery. Disabled people are a minority group like other social, ethnic, religious, linguistic groups who are discriminated against by the mainstream society in their attempts to secure the right to life, freedom, education, shelter and employment. Much of this discrimination is based on their depiction in books and mass media. According to Disability World's Statistics updated on 30th March 2020, currently around 10% of the world's population live with a disability. In the 21st century, even though disabled try to find their own spaces, creating their own voices,

people hesitate to consider them as “normal” human beings. All these discriminations often frustrate disabled people who do not want to see themselves as dependants, but as self-respecting independent individuals being a part of mainstream society.

Beginning in the late 1960s, disabled activists in the United States and the United Kingdom began to argue they were a group who were denied basic rights. With protests, marches, and demonstrations, people with a variety of impairments actively fought against negative perceptions of them as pitiable individuals with fatal medical problems. Instead, they presented themselves as a unified group facing widespread discrimination.

The same has been reflected in literature also. Disabled characters due to their deformity were portrayed as villains, evils or as incompetent characters. Such negative depictions of disabled characters in literature remain etched in our memory even long after we forget the storyline. After a while, literary works began to present them either as emerging champions over their disability or as victims. In such works they are brought to centre of work only to have an inquiry on reasons behind their disability and to keep a check on what are the consequences that are going to befall on themselves and other characters around them and finally a search on how to cure them of their disability. So in a way literary works although they dealt with disability, ultimately their focus was to make them normal human beings. But it was with acts enacted for the upliftment of disabled, things began to change. From then onwards literature presented disabled in a realistic manner.

In her work *Good Kings Bad Kings: A Novel* author Susan Nussbaum address the condition of disabled people living in institutions dedicated for them. Novel shares a collection of narratives told from the viewpoint of each character. The narrators are Yessenia Lopez, Joanne Madsen, Ricky Hernandez, Michelle Volkmann, Teddy Dobbs, Jimmie Kendrick and Mia Oviedo Through this work author brings into light unethical practices by authorities of such institutions, plight of inmates and attitude of state towards disabled. In a note given by Nussbaum herself, she expressed following remark about novel and its characters:

My book is about a bunch of disabled people who live in an institution for kids with disabilities. Some of the characters work there. Being trapped in one kind of institution or another is the fate of many of us. The characters in my book are dealing with a place that’s not one of the worst, but abuse and neglect are rampant nonetheless. Some of them are sucked under by the riptide of repression, some of them bob to the surface against all odds, and maybe one or two find a way to fly away (Nussbaum 303).

Throughout the novel Nussbaum attempts to give true portrayal of life of disabled in institutions meant for them which is totally different from what people assume to be.

The novel's characters consists of the inmates and staff of a state-run nursing facility for adolescent youth that Nussbaum has named the ILLC (Illinois Learning and Life Skills Center).

The Illinois Learning and Life Skills Center may not sound like the name of a nursing home, but that's how they work it. Naming these places is all about misdirection. ILLC might sound like a fun after-school program with arts and crafts and barbecues but it's just a place they put disabled kids that struggling parents and the state don't know what to do with (Nussbaum 12).

One of the character Yessenia Lopez mentions as follows:

I went there on account of I am physically challenged, and they send the people which have challenges to Hoover. They send people with physical challenges, but also retarded challenges, people been in accidents like brain accidents, or they're blind or what have you. I do not know why they send us all to the same place but that's the way it's always been and that's the way it looks like it will always be (Nussbaum 6).

ILLC can be compared to a garbage dumping ground. Once we dumped garbage in a place we are not bothered about matters like how they are going to be treated or in what way they are to be disposed...similar are the fate of inmates in institutions like ILLC. Such institutions exist for the relief of the burden of disability on family and neighbours – but not for the comfort of disabled people themselves.

In a way author wants the novel to serve as an eye opener. In order to serve this purpose she makes her characters narrate different experiences faced by them. Being a disabled member you are being treated as an abnormal one in the main stream society. And due to this reason you are getting admitted to such an institution and the worst part is that the treatment and care you receive is not based on your health condition but on the grounds of your socio – economic condition. Joanne Madsen, one of the narrators says “There are poor people and then there are poor disabled people. One of those things sucks, but both together suck stratospherically” (Nussbaum 10). Author cites several instances to testify this statement. In the novel there is a character named Mia Ovideo. Mia, didn't have a power chair, and Mrs. Phoebe says Mia wasn't ready for a power chair. Mia is like planted in this one spot all by herself, can't move an inch on her own, can't talk to the other kids, has to wait for a staff person or one of the kids who can walk to notice her so she can get a push. Yet she is not ready for power chair. Also Mia comes from an abused home. The abuse continues at ILLC when a staff member, Jerry, rapes her one night. She is humiliated of what happened to her. But since Jerry repeatedly threatens her, she never reveals what happened.

Another victim of maltreatment meted out towards such children can be seen in a boy named Pierre – a hyper active child of 14 years old. Since he made disturbance in class, he has to be kept in time out room; a room with unhealthy conditions like dirt filled carpet and without proper air circulation- a toilet smelling room. The authorities even made sure such inmates have to skip a meal or take a delayed meal. But in spite of all these ill treatment meted towards them, most of the inmates got inured to institution.

Unfortunately, *Good Kings Bad Kings* epitomizes inhumane acts of authorities in ILLC.. Living conditions of residents degrade from uninhabitable to animalistic over the course of the novel. The unhealthy condition of institution stands lack of empathetic attitude of caregivers.

In addition to administering unnecessary tests and prescribing superfluous medicines, the institution maintains strict disciplinary practices. Time-out rooms, food withholding and inept caretakers as a result, the residents experience humiliation. Their life become mechanical and they become machine like. Out of 82 residents, 32 full admissions to the hospital have been recorded in one seven-month period; as Ricky Hernandez, the Puerto Rican driver and reluctant bouncer, explains to Joanne: “Petri dishes. It’s like that. The place is crawling with bugs” (Nussbaum 54).

Malicious nature of doctors and staff can be explicitly understood when they intentionally keep out from maintaining the place with proper sanitation and tidiness. . Dr. Caviolini, who always insist others to “call me Roman” (Nussbaum 185) turns his medical practice into a mere show-off. He and a his group of doctors charge huge costs to Medicaid and Medicare by ordering unnecessary X-rays, scans, and tests on their disabled patients who don’t always need a trip to St. Theresa’s, the ghost town of a hospital set aside especially for institutionalized residents. Both hospital and institution occupy buildings long ago abandoned by the state, only to be resurrected by private insurers and service providers as an enormously important resource to the uncontrolled amassing of profits. It is through the character of Michelle Volkmann, the young woman who “recruits” potential residents for the ILLC, that Nussbaum shows how “the System” operates at its worst. “Every time I recruit a new person for a Whitney-Palm facility, I get \$300. So that explains why I’m still out here at eight o’clock in the stupid night looking for parking at this homeless shelter” Paradoxically, she is also the character who changes the most: progressing from a corporate minded employee to a person who feel guilty when she came to know what was actually going out there in the name of treatment. For much of the novel, her self-interests perfectly coincide with those of her greed-driven employer. In fact she was a puppet who has to act as per instruction of her employer Tim. She jots down the following exchange at an emergency board meeting:

“The PR guy says, ‘How many deaths are reasonable? Is there a number?’

Mr. Anderson says, “However many of them have died. That’s the number” (Nussbaum 187).

Tim, who runs the institution, can be considered as epitome of a corporate magnet. He leads a life of dissipation. Whatever he does in ILLC is fully profit oriented. He earns enormously with which he buys several houses. He throws parties, takes his staff to expensive dinners, and includes his employees in vacation trips paid for by drug industry. But when it comes to arranging basic healthcare amenities for residents, his attitude is that of extreme indifference.

Author also describes how physicians ensured that people living in ILLC never get ready to live in the real world and be a part of mainstream society. Instead inmates living are trained to lead a life till their last breath in such institutions. Anderson, one of the staff comments a “We’re one of the few businesses for which there will always be a need. We’re like funeral directors” (Nussbaum 186).

Towards the end of the novel, Teddy, one of the inmates is put in the shower by one of the aides. She leaves him alone for a few minutes to talk on the phone. The water comes out too hot, and he falls out of his chair trying to get out of the shower. He dies in a hospital a few days later. This shows the extreme neglect from the part of authorities. After the funeral, Yessenia protests against ILLC. She straps herself to a tree out front with a sign that says “THIS PLACE ABUSE AND KILL CHILDREN.” (Nussbaum 177). A few other students join her. Joanne joins, and also makes a few calls to disabled groups in the area. They come out as well, and get the media to come and all the authorities like Dr. Caviolini were caught red handed.

Good Kings Bad Kings asks us to consider some of the most difficult questions regarding the treatment of people with disabilities. One of the characters, Jimmie Kendrick comments “It would be a whole lot easier if you would stop saying ‘System’ because you use the word as if it’s something people can see, and it’s not.’ I say. ‘It’s not like you go into a building and it says SYSTEM on the door.” (Nussbaum 143). By using the term ‘system’ Jimmie feels like as if it is a kind of machinery that functions with the help of parts provided with proper lubricants. Nussbaum allows the novel to expose systemic violence by offering readers a multiple point of views she offers a discerning, rendition of disability – a new culture of disability responsible for its own insights into worlds largely neglected by earlier theories of social exclusion. As one staff named Louie sarcastically explains to resident Teddy Dobbs, after locking him in the time-out room “I can be a good king or I can be a bad king,” demonstrating the ease with which staff can conveniently opt and adopt the way in which he wants to treat each resident. In a wider perspective, ILLC can be compared to a miniature of society that always projects the dictum ‘survival of the fittest.’

As a person who herself became bound to wheelchair after a car accident, Nussbaum became an advocate for disability rights. She exhorts every disabled to reinvent themselves and to create their own identity. Even though disabled people have legal rights to lead a life of dignity, in most cases they are not

being realized. Social justice and equality cannot be ensured unless we put an end to all the prejudices and delusions regarding disabled and approach them with an optimistic attitude.

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An Ecocritical Approach to the Poems of A.K Ramanujan and Gabriel Okara-*Ecology and Mystic Drum*

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Abstract

Since time immemorial, writers from different walks of life from across the globe of various cultures have warned us of the impending dangers of ill-treating nature, and we, despite this, have been neglecting their words of wisdom of safeguarding the environment for future generations. These poets were visionaries or prophets who warned us of the dangers against destroying our habitat. It is evident in these poems that man is a mere strand in the web of life and that he has to protect and cater to the needs of all living organisms around him, proving the solidarity that he is inter-related and inter-connected to nature, and if he breaks the rules, he will have to face the frightening consequences which might even lead to the extinction of mankind.

This paper intends to discuss the crisis of perception, and the urgent need to shift from shallow ecology to deep ecology. This is the need of the hour. As the world is going through a global crisis of climatic change and deforestation, people will have to re-think and return to the traditional values of protecting nature. The older generations viewed nature with great reverence and respect unlike the modern man, who destroys nature thoughtlessly for his materialistic needs.

Keywords: paradigm shift, deep ecology, shallow ecology, crisis of perception, ecological imbalance, web of life

In the past, man had a special care and concern for nature and his environment irrespective of the cultural differences across continents. He closely lived with nature, considering nature as a part of himself, revered and worshipped trees, flowers, rivers and mountains. This is evident in the writings of poets and great thinkers of the past around the globe, in whatever language they wrote. There was only one general sentiment, the feeling that they were a part of the cosmic whole, and a sense of belonging to each other. As years passed on, it became evident that man was trying to make a space for himself and not at all caring for all the organisms on planet earth and the problem of who is dominating whom, became a question to be dealt with. In this power struggle, apparently, man was victorious but the reality is, as we distance ourselves from nature, the ecosystem is damaged to unprecedented levels. Man in his greed is destroying nature, and ultimately it boomerangs on him affecting the generations to come.

The perspectives of the older generations, In contrast to that of the modern man regarding nature, is sadly evident even when we take a casual look around us. This paradigm shift, the crisis of perception, the global issues like climate change and deforestation cannot be studied in isolation, neglecting the biosphere and human life because they are systemic problems that have to be analysed in detail. Man is inter related and inter connected to nature and he is a strand in the web of life. The older generations were wise enough to understand the ecological implications, and knew that they had to sustain nature for future generations. The Modern Man is anthropocentric, he exploits nature for his own needs and benefits, unlike the traditional, who are ecocentric, earth based, and acknowledged the inherent value of non human life. They believed that all human life and non human life are interlinked.

The poem 'Ecology' written by AK Ramanujan and 'Mystic Drum' written by Gabriel Okara, portray the different perspectives of man towards nature and how they affect the environment. In the poem 'Ecology', the poet portrays the perspective of his mother towards nature. She has great reverence to the three champak trees in their compound, irrespective of ecological implications. She is often affected by the migraines by the strong smell of the pollen of champak flowers, but she sees them as her own trees and with reverence and gratitude considers them as a divine gift from God.

The contrasting attitudes of the uneducated mother and her educated son in this poem cannot be missed. The two of them get angry for two different reasons: the mother cannot stand the idea of cutting down the tree, but the son wants it to be cut down because of the strong fragrance which is affecting his mother. Though she is uneducated, her wisdom about nature and the need to protect it is shown as a passion as she considers the tree as a member of the family, and is emotionally attached to it, pointing out that the tree is of her age.

In the poem 'Mystic Drum' by Gabriel Okara, the poet portrays a vibrant Africa attuned to nature. The drumbeats evoke a sense of oneness of man with his environment. The umbilical relationship of man with nature is the crux of the poem. To this peaceful haven, a woman steps in as an observer, stands behind the tree with leaves around her waist, smiling and shaking her head. She is envious of their peaceful co existence. As you look at her closely, she resembles Eve in the Bible. Adam and Eve were tempted to commit sin by eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge. As they eat it, a new realisation sets in, and they face the consequences. In the same way, the woman in the poem lures the people of her land to the pleasures of the western culture, industrialisation, and of the the modern world and the whole new world of opportunities that come with it. They look attractive but are deceitful. With the advent of materialistic imperialism, the drum beats stop abruptly ushering in the destruction of the native culture.

This poem portrays the irreversible regression of man from the deep ecological awareness to shallow ecology, from the whole to the individual, man goes great lengths to destroy his habitat and his fellow beings, having no concern for his own mercilessly destroying nature. 'Patriarchy, imperialism, capitalism and racism are exploitative and anti ecological,' said Fritjof Capra.

When a comparison is made of the ecological implications in these poems, there are a few observations on the role of the woman portrayed. In 'Ecology', the mother is a preserver of nature; on the other hand the woman in 'Mystic Drum' is a destroyer, portrayed as a monstrous woman who is the representative of western culture and imperialism. She turns a peaceful haven into a place of confusion and chaos. From this, it is evident that they have switched roles, from being a preserver to a destroyer. Thus, one can see an attitudinal change and a shift in perception. It was the same human being who once lived in close connection with nature, is detached now, to fulfil his materialistic needs.

The Indian poet AK Ramanujan, and Gabriel Okara from Africa convey the same idea that if the ecosystem is affected, it would lead to an ecological imbalance which in turn would have an impact on man and his environment and all living beings on earth. Though the poets belonged to different cultures and continents, they were visionaries who forbode the impending danger affecting the eco system and thus the whole of humanity. They do not reveal the scientific temper nor its disciplines. The wisdom embedded in the older generations, the superstitious beliefs, myths, ancient rituals, and the spirituality that connected all human and non human life are brought to our attention. This knowledge is a science of its own. One cannot afford to ignore the humanistic and spiritual values that are deep rooted in the minds of the humankind.

When one looks at the world around them, there are ecological imbalances, that destructively affect nature: the climate change, deforestation, floods and bush fires to mention a few. The leaders around the world are discussing at different forums to save the planet, but there should be a novel way of seeing these problems in a more pragmatic way. A shift is inevitable in the way of thinking and on the values and the ethics attached to it. Deep ecological ethics should be a matter of serious concern, especially in the field of science, though there are inventions and innovations, seemingly good and for the progress of the world, ultimately they should not become life threatening. All efforts should be focused on cherishing and nourishing life on our planet.

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Colonialism in the New Era

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Abstract

In the latter half of the twentieth century there occurred a wave of decolonization that swept around the world. It is still deemed as one of the greatest liberating movements in the history of mankind. The world was purged off the colonial forces and thus began a new chapter of freedom and along with it came post colonial theories and analysis. But there is one question that plagues the mind of those who study the society from close quarters. Has colonialism been wiped out completely? Has it really ended in every way possible? The answer is No. The world as we see it today, with its drawn up boundaries and governments, is experiencing a whole new kind of colonialism; one which has brought everyone in the world under its rule. This new coloniser is called the Social Media. To draw parallels between this 'new coloniser' and the yesteryear colonisers is interesting and worrying at the same time.

A few years ago, the social media giant Facebook introduced the Free Basics platform to help people who connect with the Internet for the first time. This feature got effectively banned in India, citing the fact that it gave off a deceptive vibe. A high profile member of Facebook board took to Twitter and wrote "Anti-colonialism has been economically catastrophic for the Indian people through decades. Why stop now? "The connection he made between Facebook and colonialism was not received kindly and led to global debates and the subsequent deletion of the tweet and an apology from the CEO Zuckerberg himself. The Free basics platform was billed by Facebook itself for the people connecting to internet for the first time. It enabled them to use internet without looking at their data limit. This was perceived as a new version of 'The Whiteman's burden'- the watchwords of colonialism. This was among one of the few visible examples of this new kind of colonialism. The study of this connection is a need of the hour. The tentacles of social media has lodged itself deep inside the society in the form of other media platforms as well like YouTube and Tumblr, to name a few. This article is an attempt to analyse the different aspects of this 'new coloniser' and its nature.

Key words: waves of decolonization, new colonisers, digital colonialism, reaction videos, you tube creators.

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post-colonial theories and analysis. But there is one question that plagues the mind of those who study the society from close quarters. Has colonialism been wiped out completely? Has it really ended in every way possible? The answer is No.

The world as we see it today, with its drawn up boundaries and governments, is experiencing a whole new kind of colonialism; one which has brought everyone in the world under its rule. This new coloniser is called the Social Media. To draw parallels between this 'new coloniser' and the yesteryear colonisers is interesting and worrying at the same time.

Under classic colonialism, Europeans disposed native peoples of their land, exploited their labor, exercised extraterritorial governance, and perpetuated dependency and [plunder through strategic underdevelopment. The Europeans took control on the infrastructures, like ports, waterways and rail roads. In fact through all these they connected the aboriginals, to commercial and military outposts to the seaports. Later the European products had started to get into the people, undermining the indigenous population's ability to develop its own local industries. And the colonial powers deployed this infrastructural domination all over.

Similarly, digital colonialism is also rooted in between the natives. Big corporate offices use proprietary software, corporate clouds, and centralized internet services to spy on users. In fact, when we press the allow button, while installing different applications like google search, maps, advertisements, games and so on, we are giving the opportunity to access all our personal information. And these data can be given or sold to different corporate companies.

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The Free basics platform was billed by Facebook itself for the people connecting to internet for the first time. It enabled them to use internet without looking at their data limit. This was perceived as a new version of 'The Whiteman's burden'- the watchwords of colonialism. This was among one of the few visible examples of this new kind of colonialism.

One of the most visible examples for digital colonialism is the advent of reaction videos. Reaction videos can be called as a new online genre in which the individuals or groups of people reacting to an outside stimulus. In particular, videos showing the emotional reactions of people viewing television series episodes, film trailers, music videos and so on. The popularity of reaction videos of foreigners on Bollywood movies, Indian street foods, music, stars, excreta has blown out of proportion in the past two years. But the fact is majority of the reaction videos are mere folderols, as they are not aware about any details of what they are watching, and just acting out some cliché dialogues and reactions to the videos. In majority of the videos, they talk too much, and seem like they are reflecting what they had already mugged up. An interesting fact is that their reactions are almost same for all the categories mentioned above. Thus, the reactions come out as judgmental instead of entertaining. On the other hand, there are certain channels, where they conduct an extensive research on Indian culture and display much more sensibility. Nevertheless, this swing towards creating reaction videos gives us some food for thought. Why is there an increase in such videos? Why are we looking up towards 'foreigners' and pining for their reactions? Why do we still have this unrelenting need for the white man's approval?

There are two possibilities for their widespread popularity. The first one is a scientific in nature. That is, while watching a video we feel empathy or in other words we put ourselves in the same situations and what the main characters are going through. This is the reason why we enjoy watching other people do things, crying, laughing and so on. The most popular YouTube creators are those that viewers can relate to the most. Their popularity is based on recognizable emotions. React videos provide a two-fold experience: we feel satisfied because we know the emotions being conveyed in the video, and we bond with the reactor because we can share their emotions. This is one of the main reasons why online videos are growing.

The second possibility is the remnants of colonization, or colonial mentality. Colonial mentality is the attitude of ethnic or cultural inferiority felt by people as a result of colonization or in other words, we feel that the opinion of the whites should be considered as more authentic and pure, which leads the people to western cultural domination. Hence we look for the approval from foreigners. As the largest colony of the world's largest imperial power, India is often cited by apologists for the British Empire as an example of "successful" colonialism. Even though, we are no longer physically colonized, our mind is still reeling from the aftereffects of it. Patrice Lumumba, the first indigenous leader of the Republic of the Congo, called for mental decolonization in his speech to the 1960 Pan- African Congress, saying "we have to rediscover our most intimate selves..... trapped us in for centuries".

Indians are well aware of this new face of colonialism. Sadly, they avoid a deeper contemplation on the matter. We feel ecstatic to know that our efforts are appreciated by the whites and this is one of the main reasons why the aforementioned videos are getting rampantly accepted by us. And when we listen to the opinion of the whites, we are actually accepting or agreeing that, the culture and customs of whites is more authentic and actual. Hence, comparing both these possibilities, it has to be agreed that even after colonization, the tentacles of colonization is still lodged deep inside the society in the form of social medias.

That said, it is high time we stop craving their approval and realize that we belong to one of the oldest and noblest cultures of human existence. The fight against physical colonialism was brave and valiant. And now, it is time to think clearly and free ourselves from the shackles of the colonized mind.

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Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights* as a Celebration of Fragmentations

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Abstract

Travel stimulates the mind. It takes us to an interconnectedness, into our consciousness, our tormenting past, where knowledge of our collective parts is possible. A static equilibrium is a state of putrefaction. Everything that is static will degenerate and decay. An infatuation for the deviations, a crave for the unusual, a love for the motion is essential. Each travel is a metaphysical enquiry in to the corporeal experience, a means to reshift and reorganize identities. An intellectual revelation, of one's own place of origin through the celebration of fragmentations. This paper focuses on fragmentariness as essential characteristic of both formal side of the novel (composition, narrative) and its thematic range. Fragmentariness is also intrinsic to the artistic manifestation of memory, presented in the form of a heterogeneous archive.

Key words: Fragmentation, space, Culture, Consciousness, Depth psychology

Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights* can be considered as an amalgamation of theory, culture and memoir. It is about movements, a succession of movements. Dedicated to the theme of travel, *Flights* is a fragment of essays, travel notes, diaries, revelations and short stories which entwines reflections on travel with an in-depth exploration of the human body, life, death, motion, and migration. It's a narrative imagination where the boundaries are crossed as a form of life. The novel environs a range of characters that is diffused through time and space, a repeated perception of preoccupations and behaviour.

The unnamed narrator of the fiction is a lover of movement. She admits that she is "drawn to all things spoiled, flawed, defective, and broken." (*Flights* 21) A narrator indulged in the world of curiosities, is on a tour to gather knowledge of the entire globe. For her the worst part of existence is stillness. For her each journey is an escape to her fragmented consciousness. "The worst part is the stillness. Nothing Happens. I've clearly found myself in a trap now, and I can't get out. I'd like to leave, but there's nowhere to go." (*Flights* 7). According to the narrator, though risks involved, the state of motion is better than the state of rest. The state of static will degenerate and decay. She prefers 'change' which is nobler than 'permanence'. A stagnant existence results in sluggish cognition. She wants to procure energy from the movement. The River Oder, which paid no attention, which cared only for itself influences the narrator a lot. Like the river she flows in

to the dark corners of the world. “When you linger in a place you start to put down roots. I don’t know how to germinate; I’m simply not in possession of that vegetable capacity. I can’t extract nutrition from the ground; I am the anti-Antacus.”(*Flights* 13)

The novel challenges the readers to assimilate different pieces of the novel to make sense of it. The fragmented narration often bounces back and forth through the timeline. The narrator is never on the same location. She moves from one city to another, to different airports, train stations, hotels, museums etc. Seemingly chaotic at first, *Flights* reveals an extremely intricate structure, producing not a single narrative direction but a sort of glistening web of interconnections. Tokarczuk has said she was inspired by airlines’ networklike route maps. The restless journeys are jubilated in the entire work. For Tokarczuk traveling on our own, created a different state of mind because when we travel there is an endless tendency to exchange information, feelings and associations. Through fragmented journeys the author takes us inwards, a perception of ourselves. The physical space, perceptions and explorations are weaved together. Each story of the novel circles around the search for immortal life and the core of human existence. It is a search that leads *Flights’* characters and its narrator into an endless, restless probing of humankind’s external and interior worlds, rejecting the Cartesian division between body and soul.

The narrator is always in search of something fresh. The work captures the lives of a homeless woman, writers, professors, scientists and intellectuals. Her characters are always on the move, to the roads not taken where the body becomes the apparatus of comprehension. Annushka, a Russian woman leaves her family and lives in the Moscow metro. She prefers roaming than returning home. Kunicki desperately searches for his disappeared family while they were on an island during the vacation. Dr. Blau who is an anatomist is on a pilgrimage searching for the best fluid solutions with which he could preserve body parts. The retired professor of the novel plans a journey following the path of Odysseus. Many characters depicted here are lovers of movement. Though much of the novel occurs on airplanes, it’s not only about travels by plane but also about movement in general. Here the focus is on the shifting perspective. According to the author a body in motion is a consecrated one. “Move. Get going. Blessed is he who leaves.”(*Flights* 35) There is a world of mythology in our bodies. It’s a study of fragmented bodies. In order to understand the whole mythical world, we have to concentrate on particulars and fragments than on the whole.

That one who governs the world has no control over movements and knows that our body while moving is holy, and only then can you escape him when you move... So move, sway, swing, go, run, escape, because, should you forget and Stop, his big hands will catch

you and turn you into a puppet, his breath will be upon you,
 stinking of smoke and exhausts...Whoever stops, will turn into
 stone, who will take a minute to rest will be pinned upon
 like an insect.(*Flights* 291-93)

Flights as a postmodern narrative has much ambiguity in many of its passages. The journey undertaken by many of the characters seem to be uncertain. Those consciously decentered ambiguous journeys pave way for celebration. Those uncertain journeys are no longer tragic. The author purposely disconnects things to highlight fragmentations. The major fragmentation pictured here is psychological. The narrator says, "I suffer from...Recurrent Detoxification Syndrome... the insistence of one's consciousness on returning to certain images, or even the compulsive search for them." (*Flights*, 15-17) Jacques Derrida's concept of Decentration explains that everything is fragmented and a better explanation rests on fragmentation. To a certain extent the pieces of journey is a de-centeredness that explains existence. Ihab Habib Hassan, American literary theorist says that Postmodern literature is a fiesta of fragmentations. "Indeterminacy attends fragmentation. Postmodernists only disconnect. Fragments are all they pretend to trust...Hence the penchant for montage, collage, found objects, for paradox, paralogy, parabasis, parataxis." (Hassan 131-2)

Flights treats travel as a uniquely corporeal experience. According to Jungian's depth psychology, an integration of the external world transports us inward. Such an integration results in the alliance of consciousness and unconsciousness which can be the cause of a celebration in the psyche. The whole novel can be considered as an invitation from the part of the author to that fete alluded by Jung. He adjures readers to indulge in travel, where the focus should never be on the destination. Those congregated splintered experiences will take us to the edge of the world, where the celestial spheres and all the stars can be seen, stretching into the infinite "Fluidity, mobility, illusoriness-these are precisely the qualities that make us civilized. Barbarians don't travel."(*Flights* 15)

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Madness in Literature

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Abstract

An introduction of the quality of madness is often found in prominent works of literature, beginning with Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, and going onto more recent works like Jean Rhys Wide Sargasso Sea. This article attempts to analyse the new form of empowerment that Toni Morrison manages to provide to this aspect of madness in Literature as opposed to the previous idea of the mad woman in the attic which had for a long time remained the common epithet of madness in literature thus far.

Morrison's study of the angle of madness can be seen as a recurring thread that reverberates through most of her novels. The styles of handling this feature of madness however varies from book to book. In Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* we find madness occurring during the coda of the novel. Pecola Breedlove is found flailing her arms in a secluded spot away from the gaze of the rest of the town of Lorain. This madness in itself is however an escape from the trauma of conforming to the constraints that society imposes.

Pecola's madness is an elevating experience of raising above people and a place where she is primarily unloved, and there are also people like Claudia who do look upon Pecola's behavior in this fashion. And now when I see her searching the garbage ----for what? The thing we assassinated? I talk about how I did not plant the seeds too deeply, how it was the fault of the earth, the land, of our town. I even think now that the land of the entire country was hostile to marigolds that year. This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear, and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live. We are wrong, of course but it doesn't matter. It's too late. At least on the edge of my town, among the garbage and sunflowers of my town, it's much, much ,much too late. (*The Bluest Eye* 163-164)

In *Sula* as well, Morrison displays a very nuanced understanding of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, displaying Shadrack's revulsion towards his own physicality. He looks upon himself as having somewhat of an ethereal existence and makes peace with his body only after seeing his own reflection in the water of a toilet bowl. The man who is considered to be a lunatic by the town, in actuality, attempts to alleviate the

community from death. A concept that attains acceptance after the death of Sula. Morrison also accredits Shadrack with immense humanity, as a man who is considered to be generally disrespectful is shown to be reassuring to Sula after the drowning of Chicken Little.

In *Beloved* again Morrison justifies the actions of Sethe and Beloved, who would otherwise be passed off as being mentally deranged. Morrison brings out the love of a mother and daughter for each other, though Sethe's too thick love may not be easily understood. She is both willing to kill her children for love, as well as die for them. Morrison herself looked upon mothering and writing as her two passions and is thus able to perhaps associate herself with the character of Sethe.

Jazz introduces readers to Wild, wild enough to bite at Henry LesTroy. However Joe Trace still hopes to have her for his mother and is willing to love and protect her, and be loved and protected by her. He hopes that she should not have perished in the fires of Vienna. Morrison shows empathy for Wild by the concern that Golden Gray, a extremely callous youth displays for Wild.

Though *Paradise* does not have the depiction of madness per se, there is no dearth of eccentricity among the women of the Convent. In this way Morrison celebrates eccentricity and prophesies the philosophy that eccentricity is something to be appreciated, and is an effective tool for resilience, helping people to pull through the most difficult of times.

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Disability Narrative: An Analysis of John Paul George's *Ambili*

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Abstract

History of disability studies can be traced back to the disability rights movements in the West in the late twentieth century. The works of Erving Goffman and Michel Foucault, along with other interdisciplinary identity-based approaches, explored the novel aspects of humanities, especially human bodies and its rights. Constituting nearly 15 percent of the world population, disabled people are often dehumanized, disempowered and marginalized by the mainstream culture. Being different from the 'normal' make them look down upon by the dominant culture, being not normal justifies the subjugation they face. Unacceptance of their uniqueness questions their identity and existence. This paper attempts to analyse the 2019 Malayalam film *Ambili* using the social model of disability and find out how far the director has shown justice to the real life experiences of the marginalized category of the society.

Keywords: Disability, Impairment, Social Model, Medical Model, Isolation, Exploitation

Introduction

Disability and impairment are two words to be handled with utmost care when it comes to disability studies. Impairment is a biological phenomenon whereas disability is more of a sociocultural aspect. Impairment refers to the biological factors which hinder the normal state of a person's bodily functions such as inability to move or do things independently. Social model of disability differs from the medical model. In the social model, the word disability is used to refer to the sociopolitical, cultural and economic restrictions imposed by the society on people with impairments by denying equivalent attention and accommodation to their needs. Diverging from the dominant medical model of disability, which is a functional analysis of the body as a machine to be fixed in order to conform with normative values, the social model identifies the systemic barriers, pejorative attitudes, and social exclusion (deliberate or unintentional), which make it difficult or impossible for individuals with impairments to attain their valued functionings. While physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitations or impairments, these do not necessarily have to lead to disability unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences. People with impairments turn out to be disabled when they are oppressed, isolated and excluded unnecessarily from the mainstream sociocultural, political and economic activities solely on the basis of their impairments.

Disability, impairment and literature

Literary works and films have portrayed the lives of people with impairments in varied ways. Most of the representations are reflections of the thoughts of the people and beliefs about disabilities. Bitter and self-pitying pictures dominate rather than highlighting the obstacles of social prejudice, discrimination, hostility, ostracism and exclusion. They are represented as victims and dependent people unable to participate in the daily life, and are excluded from the ‘enlightened members of the society’. The accuracy of the portrayal of the subjective experiences of the people with disabilities are of paramount importance as the experiences of being disabled are socially created.

Demarcation of disability and impairment are important in disability studies and disability narratives. Social model in disability studies has tried to define impairment as a biological aspect and disability as the social exclusion experienced by the impaired in the main stream society. Various literary genres have tried to examine impairments and disabilities from different perspectives. Malayalam film industry is not an exception. Characters with impairments have appeared in major and minor roles in numerous Malayalam films. The mental struggles and the psychological trauma these people undergo were the major focus of most of these films.

Implications of the title and Ambili’s isolation

George Paul’s 2019 film *Ambili* is one such film which celebrates the life of a misfit. Ambili is a man of marginal IQ, an easy-to-fool fella and the village weirdo. He goofs around with kids, talks to his teddy and writes senseless poetry. The title ‘Ambili’ is a synonym for moon. It is a word which evokes the feeling of beauty and warmth. In that way the titular character can be seen as a person of warmth and compassion, loved by some of his natives. The title has other connotations also. ‘Ambili’ is a female name. This exchange of name points to certain effeminate traits exhibited by the character. His biological features are doubted by Tina’s friends and questioned by Tina’s brother. Tina’s brother Bobbykuttan behaves wildly to Ambili when he comes to know about the relationship between Tina and Ambili. He challenges Ambili to prove himself a male, suitable enough for his sister. He says “*Aadhyam nee aanu aanennu theliyikkada. Ennitt nee ente pengale kettan vaa.*” (1:04:30) Tina’s friends and Bobbykuttan are representatives of the mainstream society who doubt and look down upon the emotional needs and biological capabilities of people with impairments. Loved by a few, Ambili is still a man of isolation, dehumanization, emotional and economic exploitation, gaze and buffonisation.

Ambili, son of a late soldier, after the demise of his parents, lives alone in a house buried in the greenery of Kattappana. The dilapidated and isolated house of the protagonist symbolizes his life after his parents’ death. Except Tina, everyone else acts out to be kind to him, but their love and kindness are mere tools of exploitation. Similarities can be observed between the situation of Ambili and the fishes that appear

on his computer's screensaver. Both live their own restricted worlds exploited by others. Their limited world turns out to be the sources of entertainment for others. To get rid of his isolation, Ambili talks to a teddy bear and plays with it. For him, it is something that helps to do away with the loneliness and seclusion. On the other hand, it shows how Ambili, like a toy, turns out to be a sheer puppet in the hands of the society. The director has successfully conveyed his character's isolated feeling when Bobbykuttan does not allow Ambili to accompany him to welcome Tina. At times, the emotions of the impaired are not a matter of importance to the conventional society. Thus, the society plays a vital role in shaping the experiences of the disabled.

Dehumanisation, marginalization, exploitation and gaze

The impaired sections of the society are treated as objects or the 'other' by the conservative society. In this movie, the mainstream society, the 'subject', claims itself to be cultured and well-mannered stands as a contrast to the so-called unsophisticated world of the 'other'. They are sources of dehumanization. Ambili is over excited when the natives decide to arrange a programme to appreciate Bobbykuttan for his achievements in cycling. Even though it was Ambili's father and Ambili who helped him to chase his passion, Bobbykuttan tries to avoid Ambily from the function at any cost. He asks one of his friends "*Eda nee Ambiliye onn ozhivaakkitha.*" (45: 18) Even when he goes for his solo bicycle trip to Kashmir, he keeps the same attitude. He views his impaired friend as a nuisance. Bobby's thoughts and deeds are reflections of our society which consider the impaired as inferior and marginalized. Even if they are not considered worthy enough by the society and is reluctant to appreciate the goodness in them, the director says that they are people to be considered and respected for their genuine feelings, in contrast to the forged emotions of the people of the mainstream culture.

Ambili's feelings and love for others are sincere and unaffected. Certain instances from the film prove this. He lends money to an unknown person believing that he will return it, he utters prayers before sleeping whereas Bobby indulges in smoking and pop songs. He befriends the handcuffed lady and takes her to the hilltop. He washes Bobby's clothes, prepares food for him and does every help he can, ignoring the pains of ill-treatment at home and on the way. While Bobby leaves the doctor, who took care of him, with just a word of thanks, Ambili expresses his thankfulness and warmth by kissing the doctor and stopping his bicycle once again just before exiting the compound to take one more glance of the people who helped to regain the health of his loved one.

This movie also throws light on the way people exploit the impaired. Ambili is an ardent lover of Bobby. He has hung Bobby's photo on his wall. But his love for Bobby is exploited by the natives. They take a good amount from him by flattering him. Ayyappan says others "*Njangade Ambili vicharichaal ella*

kaaryavum nadakkum. Aa kayyadikk, kayyadikk” (38: 38-39). He gets cheated by everyone when he goes to collect the rent. The man in the garage even takes money from Ambili.

Another important aspect of disability studies is how the impaired bodies often become objects of gaze for the ‘normal’ bodies. There is a scene in the movie where Ambili dances and a set of people gaze at him and thereby he turns out to be a buffoon in front of others. Two derogatory words, ‘*pongan*’ and ‘*mandan*’ are used by two little boys to call Ambili on two different occasions. Even though children use it unintentionally, the society’s concept about the impaired people reverberates in those terms.

Conclusion

Throughout the film John Paul has tried to portray the life of the impaired people in a conventional society. He has tried to create an awareness among his viewers about the emotional, sociopolitical and cultural struggles which the impaired people in the society undergo through the representation of Ambili. But the narrative is not completely free from the conventional stereotypical depiction of impaired body as an object to be pitied. A strong disparity between the cinematic representation and the real life experience of such a marginalized community, especially in love affairs and marriage cannot be ignored. There are a very few real life instances where a ‘normal’ body prefers a physically impaired body to be his/her lifelong companion. But a ‘normal’ body preferring an intellectually impaired body in marriage is a utopian concept.

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**THE ABSENT PRESENCE OF THE OBVIOUS: A NARRATOLOGICAL STUDY OF JOHN LE
CARRE'S *THE CONSTANT GARDENER***

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Abstract

*Everything surrounding us in one way or the other constitutes pop culture. It can be the films we watch, the music we hear often, the books we read, and so on. We are in fact, it is capricious friend, always in a dilemma whether we want to accept it or reject it. This paper attempts to explore the narrative practices of John le Carre's *The Constant Gardener* through which new mafia world is constructed and juxtaposed with the real world. The narrative tools also permit to dig out the concealed aspects of characterization as well. David John Moore Cornwell, alias John le Carre is a British author of espionage novels. *The Constant Gardener* is a relatively straightforward conspiracy thriller made complex through the heavy use of non-linear story weaving. In Le Carre's fiction nothing is direct; everything is alluded and conversational. In the enviable position of being a critically acclaimed writer who tops international best seller lists he combines complex, thrilling plots with a measured, formal narrative style. This paper also attempts to draw out the narrative threads in which the story is fabricated to suggest how Le Carre's novel is different from other mafia narratives. Thus it attempts to find the subtle under tones which the author secretly weaves along with the main narrative. Analyzing the narratological aspects challenges the authorial notion of weighing East and West equally. The novel attempts to unwind the narrative structure with the tools devised by theoreticians to suggest the novelty in mafia narratives; to suggest how the "godfather" figure fades and the 'faithful' institutions turns out to be mafias. An exploration to the mafia world is carried out by the tools of narratology.*

Keywords

Narratology, Space, Mafia, Pharma Characterization, Point of View

Introduction

Telling stories is human instinct. It is the 'way of telling' that attracts the readers. An average plot can be made into a fabulous one by innovative way of narration. Stories provide initial and continuing means

for shaping our experience. The term ‘narratology’ has gained a wider currency in the literary world over these years. In simple terms, narratology can be defined as the structuralist study of narrative. In a broad sense, narratology is a discipline which draws attention to the building blocks of narrative, exploring the various combinations that can appear in narrative texts and devices, which readers come to learn and accept such as, narrative levels. Narratology is a term coined by the Bulgarian- French structuralist literary critic and sociologist Tzvetan Todorov in his work *Grammaire du Decameron* (1969). The origins of narratology lend to it, a strong association with the structuralist quest for a formal system of useful description applicable to any narrative content in linguistics.

Different genres in the novel do follow different narrative pattern. A novel which works upon organized crime and mafia has a narrative strategy different from a picaresque novel. Mafia fiction shot into prominence in 1970s with the publication of *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo in 1969. With industrial and technological boom in the capitalist era, mafia world underwent a ‘metamorphosis’ and Big Pharma takes the place of mafia under new guise. The term Big Pharma is used to refer collectively to the global pharmaceutical industry. According to Steve Novella, the term has come to connote a demonized form of the pharmaceutical industry. Professor of writing Robert Blaskiewicz has written that conspiracy theorists use the term Big Pharma as shorthand for an abstract entity comprising corporations, regulators, NGOs, and often physicians. According to the Big Pharma conspiracy theory the medical establishment in general, and pharmaceutical companies in particular, operate for sinister purposes and against the public good. The picture that’s emerging is one of a criminal drug industry that has turned to mafia tactics in the absence of any real science that would prove their products to be safe or effective. The emergence of this extraordinary evidence of bribery, scientific fraud, lying to regulators and monopolistic practices that harm consumers is making everyone skeptic. This conspiracy theory triggers to locate the setting of their establishment and it is the developing countries that become their locale.

This paper attempts to explore the narrative practices of John le Carre’s *The Constant Gardener* through which new mafia world is constructed and juxtaposed with the real world. The narrative tools also permit to dig out the concealed aspects of characterization as well. David John Moore Cornwell, alias John le Carre is a British author of espionage novels. During the 1950s and the 1960s, he worked for both the Security Service and the Secret Intelligence service and began writing novels under his pen name. This paper attempts to unwind the narrative structure with the tools devised by theoreticians to suggest the novelty in mafia narratives; to suggest how the “godfather” figure fades and the ‘faithful’ institutions turns out to be mafias. An exploration to the mafia world is carried out by the tools of narratology. A full length analysis on the characters and an unraveling of political as well as cultural undertones is also carried out. The notion of

hero undergoes a change in the narrative. An in-depth study is made with the characters drawing theories from narratology to pick out the tricks in narrative to mask the obviously stated.

The Absent Presence of the Obvious

John Le Carre's 2001 novel *The Constant Gardener* recounts the attempts of a British low official, Justin Quayle to unravel the real cause of his wife, Tessa's death. Set in the backdrop of Kenya, Le Carre's zeitgeist work exposes the 'underbelly of unbridled capitalism and the duplicity and perils of drug testing in the developing world'. It is Justin's search for 'truths' that unveils the monstrous side of therapeutic 'business'. Generally mafia world is used synonymous with the underworld- a dark sinister world beneath the real world. However recent international events make it obvious that underworld no longer exists; rather such a dark sinister world juxtaposes the real world. Both the mafia world and real world are woven together creating a hybrid universe with common people being the victims. The well-known Italian legal scholar Adolfo Beria, di Argentine described the mafia as:

The mafia is a rural mafia and urban mafia; it is a power of material control of territory and it is a power of exploitation of local and national administrative and political circuits and of intangible international financial circuits.; it is a culture of *omerta*, taking refuge in the environment of under-development and it is a culture of unscrupulousness in diverse and sophisticated international circuits; it is violence for profit and it is a structure of power which pervades all other powers. (255)

John le Carre's *The Constant Gardener* perfectly fits in the frame of Di Argentine's definition of mafia. Le Carre's world is a space under control of a Swiss- Canadian pharmaceutical corporation, Karel Vita Hudson (KVH) with its power exploiting the Kenyans under the pretext of granting them drugs. As Di Argentine points out there exists a culture of *omerta*, where the KVH takes refuge in Kenya unleashing its whip of evil for the sole purpose of their greed and profit. The murdered Tessa and her Kenyan friend Arnold Bluhm charge themselves with the mission of finding the cause of massive deaths in Nairobi suspecting the death of Wanza, an African girl of fifteen. Their investigation leads them to discover the Dypraxa medicine manufactured by KVH pharma with the consent of government. Fate awaits them and their findings to be murdered at the hands of these monsters unable to disclose the shocking truths. Le Carre's mafia world is not an 'under' world. Generally, mafia works from the days of *The Godfather* and *The Soprano* portrays their world as a dark world with a Don trying to exploit others for their greed. The image of mafia leader with the peculiar style, language and dress is still alive. However Le Carre's mafia world is quite different from it with a pharmaceutical corporation replacing the Don. The fictitious Karel Vita Hudson (KVH) ruthlessly exploits Africa's power by using them as subjects for human medical

efficacy trials while failing to provide drugs due to the Africans' inability to pay market prices. Le Carre's world is not an 'other' world; it is the real world with an octopian pharmaceutical tangling its tentacles around the Kenyans. The description of the pharmaceutical is so dense that one could identify the devilish ambience the words evoke. Ham's description of the pharmaceutical as "secretive, duplicitous, mendacious, hypocritical" unveils the sinister effect it has on Kenya. The hazardous impact of the pharmaceutical is evident in Arnold Bluhm's words: "...I told you KVH were bad. I've checked it. They're bad. Two years ago they were charged with polluting half Florida" (153).

Le Carre's narrative flair opens to the readers a vistas of insights- the existence of a dark world parallel to the real world, the mechanism of such a world, the fate of the victims and so on. Instead of resorting to chronological events, Le Carre efficiently makes use of digressions, flashbacks, constant switching over between the present and the past. His very choice of words does serve the purpose of juxtaposing the sinister world with the real world. It is the fabric of narrative that gives the work a universal appeal. The gradual untangling of the narrative at first arouses doubts in readers leaving them in a perplexing state. His choice of narration is a postmodern technique to shake the readers from their comfort zone. Rather than narrating in a linear manner, Le Carre plays a cat and mouse game with narrative and reader. His use of twists and digressions is a deliberate effort to make the readers aware of the vicious world they are living, everyone trying to gain from others.

Probing the process of narrative offers an analysis of plot, which forms the frame of narrative. Cobley defines plot as, "the chain of causation which dictates that, story events are somehow linked and that they are therefore to be depicted in relation to each other" (239). Plot is something that shapes a story and gives it a certain direction or meaning. Or in other words, it is the logical interaction of various thematic elements of a text which lead to a change of the original situation as presented at the outset of narrative. Mario Klarer lists out the four sequential levels of plot: Exposition-complication-climax or turning point-resolution (15). Le Carre's plot presents a murder as the starting point. Tessa, the wife of Justin is found murdered. Complication results in the various opinions that arise from different corners regarding the murder and Justin charges himself with the duty of finding the real culprit. The plot at this moment aligns with plot of a 'detective' fiction. The climax of the novel parallels with the real issue of the novel- The Mafia Pharma. This gives the plot a new dimension the climax is paralleled with peripetia as there occurs a reversal in the nature of characters. The final resolution is achieved by the closure of events where Justin himself was unable to bring the culprits before the law embraces death to unite with this dead wife. Le Carre experiments his plot right from the point of view. Point of view refers to the perspective from which the story is narrated. Sometimes it can be one of the characters in the story (first person narrative) or an external

narrator who defines the characters in third person (omniscient point of view) or through the figures acting in the text (figural narrative). In *The Constant Gardener*, it is the third person subjective point of view describing one or more character's personal feelings and thoughts (global perception of reality). Such a point of view can offer different perspectives of a story. Such a narration enables the reader to look the characters from different perspectives and at a larger level to look at the world in multiple layers. It also helps the readers to revise their perceptions on each character as the plot unwinds. To put it simply, the plot of the novel charges the reader to undergo a constant revision of the characters. This is a conscious effort from the part of the author to warn his readers to be conscious of the people they are dealing with. The narrative is so much in charge of the narrator that by providing certain glimpses, s/he makes Justin Quayle and readers to follow certain clues and unravel the foil that shrouds the death of his wife. Tied with point of view is the discussion on narrative voices as well. The narrative voices are mainly divided into two, "heterodigetic" and "homodigetic". As Genette defines: "We will therefore distinguish here two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he tell ... , the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells ... I call the first type, for obvious reasons, heterodigetic and the second type homodigetic". In *The Constant Gardener* it is obviously the heterodigetic narrative voice constructing and deconstructing the intentions of various characters thus maintaining the friction between the 'truth' and the fantasy. Readers' initial impression on the characters undergoes changes in this process. For example, readers get a clear picture of characters Justin and Tessa only towards the middle of the novel.

The use of language in this novel is noteworthy. As the whole narrative is tintured with digressions, flashbacks and memories, there is a constant shift in tense as well. Present events are juxtaposed with past memories and unknown truths. In order to distinguish between these actions and thoughts, Le Carre carefully crafts his narrative intermixing past tense with present tense. Generally, present actions are conveyed in present tense and memories as well as past events in past tense. His artistry made him to break with traditional approaches and go round the other way. Le Carre employed past tense to describe events in the present time and employed present tense to narrate the memories. This is a deliberate attempt from the part of author to suggest that what is happening at the present is of less importance than those happened at past. In other words, what the readers must pay attention is to the memories of the characters rather than current actions. Normally, events that happen in present time or things those have a universal significance are narrated in present tense. The use of present tense in this novel is to warn the readers about the ahistoricity of the matters he is conveying-the disastrous consequence of the Big Pharma. For instance, the findings of Justin based on Tessa's records are narrated in present tense.

Mafias mostly rely on actions than thoughts; the wordy world manifests the action mainly through dialogues. Dialogues and personal conversations constitute the crux of *The Constant Gardener*. It is through these ‘acts’ the monstrous world is stripped out. Le Carre’s deliberate employing of conversations rather than descriptions suggest the complexity of the issue he is handling. Thus the choice of dialogue is not to satisfy the artistic purpose but to convey the politics behind his writing. Here dialogues become a socially symbolic act. It is through the dialogues of other characters with Justin the reality is brought to light. Thus dialogues achieve a dual purpose at domestic level as well as at social level. The conversations between Justin and Ham clarify questions raised at both levels. It is through the dialogues of Justin with various people along with the letters of Tessa, he is able to find out the disastrous effect of the drugs. His conversation with the scientist Lara Emrich makes it clear to the readers as well as to him that the drug Dypraxa which is sold as a safe pill for tuberculosis actually has side effects. The dialogues are carefully woven to create an ambience of terror in the minds of readers and thus to be aware of the vicious circle around them.

The choice of Le Carre’s title posits the absence of the obvious. *The Constant Gardener* which is an account on the exploitation of the Big Pharma varies quite in the characterization of its ‘heroes’ as well as villains. Generally, a hero of the mafia narrative would be a strong person who is bold enough to challenge and shake the authority of the powerful enemies and win over them- a man of strength and reason. He’ll be a societal man who is amiable and with a large friend struggle. However, Le Carre’s hero is a meek and ‘gentle’ man who is without strong views of his own- a ‘constant gardener’. Such a protagonist challenges the readers’ notion of a hero. A discussion on the hero suggests a discussion on the title of the novel who is the eponymous ‘gardener’. One could infer from the very beginning that Le Carre is geared up to trick with words creating ambiguity. He describes Justin as “hugely knowledgeable about plants and flowers and gardens.” Gardening serves as a metaphor where Justin tirelessly engages hours indulging in digging the soil to cultivate plants. Justin digs the truth that is beneath the soil. As mentioned earlier, the mafia narrative unwinds a murder mystery through the gardener paralleling his act with his investigation. In a garden it is the gardener who engages with needs of plants protecting it from weeds and pests. Similarly, Justin with the skill of a calm gardener tries to pluck out those weeds which caused the death of his ‘flower’. His struggle to clear off those weeds cost his life as well. The world of the gardener who dealt with the well pruned gentle affairs now becomes a battle against the beastly pharma and those power structures. The obvious hero cum investigator who has to be assertive and proactive is absent here. Justin Quayle, the British diplomat is courteous, restrained at times fail to rise up to the expectations of the reader.

However his wife, Tessa is a polar opposite to him. An aid worker and outspoken political activist – an unusual mate for a diplomat. She is the active one- an outspoken, social lady in her youth who is dedicated to the cause of downtrodden. She is passionate committed, angry, determined, and fiery. She combines passion, energy and commitment with a forceful and articulate intelligence. She appears as a foil to Justin. In general, she is the ‘hero’ of the novel. "He was objective, she was emotional. He played the safe center, she worked the dangerous edges. I get it now. As a matter of fact, I think I knew that already." says Rob the police officer. She is a socially committed being who goes after the evil deeds of the KVH and tries to expose the real culprits. To achieve her ends she goes to the extent of offering herself; her relationship with Sandy Woodrow justifies the statement. Though many people pops up rumors about her, she doesn't pay ears to it. The whole novel is a revisit to her unknown identity- her masked self.

The characterization of Arnold Bluhm unwinds the absent presence of the obviously stated. Though Le Carre promotes him to the rank of a Doctor and places him to be ‘appropriate’ partner for the white activist lady Tessa Quayle, he couches him to the notion of a primitive, barbaric but civilized man. On the surface, the readers seem the author very liberal and welcoming, advocating universal brotherhood. However a peep into the characterization subverts this view. No voice is given to Arnold nor does the narrative records his thoughts. He becomes a mediated subject whose voice is never heard. Gayatri Spivak's argument “Can the Subaltern Speak?” gains importance in the narrative where Bluhm is absolutely silenced. This goes back to Conrad's depiction of Africans as the uncivilized, uncouth without any language and is unable to produce any meaning full utterances. Readers get an impression of Bluhm from other character's thoughts and speech. Bluhm is not given a freedom of expression by the author. Arnold is not depicted as a man in high spirit, rather described as “homosexual” and “transracial adulterer” which implicitly suggests that an African is “flawed”. A discussion on the characterization facilitates the need to describe the character who mediates between the real world and the mafia world- a ‘faithful friend’ to the challengers of Big Pharma and ‘loyal servant’ to the Big pharma. Such a character would be the most complex of all other characters. In *The Constant Gardener*, Sandy Woodrow makes the choice- Head of Chancery and later Acting Head of Mission. He calls himself Justin's friend but is a double-faced and treacherous one, he feeds Justin's jealousy.

Character transformation tends to follows a trajectory of self-discovery which is mapped out by the development of the story. For Propp, narrative is characterized by a description of a state, a change of this initial state (the introduction of disequilibrium) of which the focus of the change is on the main character. In the process of the journey or quest which the narrative describes and which the action punctuates, the character typically loses, then reacquires something in order to restore equilibrium. The interval between the

loss and the restoration is the period of the character's action from which a lesson can be adduced. In *The Constant Gardener*, a trajectory of self discovery of Justin is evident. Prior to the death of Tessa, he was a man who was engaged to himself, a dutiful civil servant who spends his free time in nurturing the plants. However the change in him drives the narrative which is stimulated by the death of his wife. The character of Tessa also undergoes drastic change over the course of the novel. The image of flirtatious wife of gentleman gets revised in the narrative course mainly through the inquiry of Justin. The 'change' Sandy Woodrow undergoes is remarkable. His character is defined by his relationship with Justin and Tessa. He is introduced as the friend of Justin later Justin's discovery of Sandy's passionate letter to Tessa suggesting the night they spend together reveals his treacherous nature of having a relationship with friend's wife. However his treacherous attitude gets finally protracted when he preferred his career to the lady he loved giving her to death.

Conclusion

The narrative analysis does expose the means and ways by which mafia world works in the real world. Though the author tries to caution readers against the dangers of the Big Pharma carefully portraying the workings of such companies, his intention is ambiguous. When his protagonists try to unearth the perils of such Pharma challenging those in authority, the plight of them prohibits readers' to act against social evils. A narratological approach to the novel does question the authorial intention. Though Le Carre makes the readers aware of the deceptive face of pharmas and government, the plight of the protagonists who challenged their existence is put to death. Such a plight of protagonists informs the readers to be silent against the corruption and evil. Also, his embrace of universal brotherhood is challenged. The violent death that Tessa and Bluhm meet at the beginning of the narrative and the death that Justin meets at the end suggest the powerlessness of individual against institution. A narratological study of *The Constant Gardener* revealed the shroud of deceptiveness in the real world crafted by the 'new mafia'.

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A Reading into the Cultural Memory of the Tibetan Refugees

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Abstract

This paper aims to delve into the cultural memory of the Tibetans refugees residing in India. It is an attempt to trace the importance of 'cultural memory' in the sustenance of the culture of a group, community or nation. Cultural memory is carried by objects or the 'sites of memory'. It tries to delineate the concept of cultural memory and analyses the Tibetan 'sites of memory', mnemonic institutions and its efficacy in perpetuating the culture of a nation which is non-existent.

Keywords

Cultural memory, sites of memory.

Memory studies was an international and trans disciplinary phenomenon which dates back to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Maurice Halbwachs was the sociologist to first use the term 'collective memory' thereby being the pioneer to the field of cultural memory. His works were the seminal texts in the creation of Pierre Nora's national 'lieux de mémoire' which lends itself to mainly to the study of a wide variety of phenomena ranging from 'places' in its literal sense to the medial representations, rituals and shared beliefs and the works of German writers Jan and Aleida Assmann whose work detail on media and memory in ancient societies.

The first level of cultural memory is concerned with biological memory. It draws attention to the fact that memory is never purely just individual, as it is always shaped by collective contexts. The second level of cultural memory refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past, the medial representations.

By 'lieux de mémoire' or 'sites of memory', Nora details on the 'sites' which act as common points of reference within memory communities. Such 'sites' do not always take the form of actual locations, but they enclose in them diverse experiences in a limited repertory of figures, they provide a placeholder for the exchange and transfer of memories among contemporaries and across generations. Nora's 'sites of memory' are also mnemotechnical devices, which are ideological, laden with nationalism, and far from being neutral or free of value judgments. Most 'sites of memory' were created, invented, or reworked to serve the nation-

state. The notion of cultural memory has quite successfully directed our attention to the close connection that exists between, say, a nation's version of its past and its version of national identity. Nora proposed in her essay *Présentation*, the necessity of listing the French 'sites of memory'. The celebration of literary monuments from the past helps reinforce communality in the present

Jan Assmann argues that in all cultures, the individual subjects are connected by shared norms (rules) and stories (memories; *Erinnerungen*). It is only because of this experience that the individuals are able to frame their personal identity because of this experience through which they orient themselves using these social symbols of identity of their social world and the symbols which are embodied in the objectified forms of a commonly shared cultural tradition. (*Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* 16)

His concept looks at the medial conditions and social structures of organization which groups and societies use to connect themselves to an objectified supply of cultural representations, available in diverse forms (for example, in writing, image, architecture, liturgy), in order to construct patterns for self-interpretation legitimized by the past.

Cultural memory is a kind of institution. It is exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that... They may be transferred from one situation to another and transmitted from one generation to another. External objects as carriers of memory play a role already on the level of personal memory. Our memory, which we possess as beings equipped with a human mind, exists only in constant interaction not only with other human memories but also with "things," outward symbols. With respect to things such as Marcel Proust's famous madeleine, or artefacts, objects, anniversaries, feasts, icons, symbols, or landscapes, the term 'memory' is not a metaphor but a metonym based on material contact between a remembering mind and a reminding object.

(*Communicative and Cultural Memory*, Jan Assmann)

According to him, it is not those objects or things that have a memory of their own, instead they carry memories that has been loaded unto them such as stories, landscapes, feasts, rites, images, dishes, other texts and other 'lieux de memoire' which reminds or trigger memories. When taking the society as a whole or groups or when speaking on a social level, these external symbols assumes a greater value as these groups or communities do not possess or have a memory, rather they make themselves a memory through these objects or things such as monuments, museums, libraries, archives and other mnemonic institutions. Cultural memory exists in the forms of narratives, songs, dances, rituals, masks, and symbols; specialists such as narrators et cetera.

Tibet was an absolute theocratic state with the Dalai Lama as their spiritual leader. China had entered the nation of Tibet in 1949 and took over their lands. The Tibetans who refused to succumb to their power and give up their land was imprisoned, tortured and killed. At present Tibet does not exist as a country. Instead it is part of the Peoples Republic of China. Dalai Lama along with 80,000 Tibetan refugees escaped and took refuge in India, Bhutan and Nepal and the majority of the diaspora resides in India. By law, they aren't even refugees. They have no country to go back to. They neither belong here nor there. Because other than the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa, no one was granted official asylum in India. These groups of people have established their temples and sanctuaries in those localities where they reside. They live in colonies and these areas have changed and are like small parts of Tibet and is bustling with Tibetans who were born in India. These colonies have objects or symbol which act as their cultural artefacts. The majority of these people have never even seen or been to Tibet. But their culture still remains intact because of these objects and symbols which act as 'sites of cultural memory'. Their temples, food, prayers becomes objects which carries the memory of their culture which keeps perpetuating and keeps it alive.

Aleida Assmann in *The Dynamics of Cultural Memory between Remembering and Forgetting* states how individuals forget things, similar is in the communication of society much must be continuously forgotten to make place for new information, new challenges, and new ideas to face the present and future.

When looking closely at the cultural practices, we can distinguish between two forms of forgetting: active and passive. 'Active' forgetting suggests the intentional acts such as trashing and destroying. The 'passive' form of cultural forgetting is unintentional which includes losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind. Remembering is a realization of belonging. Assimilation, the transition of one group into another one, is usually accompanied by an imperative to forget the memories connected with the original identity. The preservation of the cultural memory of the group was originally the task of the poets.

One such poet is the Tibetan refugee poet, writer and activist, Tenzin Tsundue. He was born in India and dreams of getting back his nation and returning there. Through his works in his book *Kora: Stories and Poems*, he describes the plight of the Tibetan refugees and his dreams of attaining freedom and regain their lost livelihood. In his poems he uses Tibetan words like 'Tashi Delek', 'rangzen', 'changma' and even the title of the book 'kora' and images to evoke the memory of their land and people.

And as generations of these refuges pass, the memory of their culture is sustained with these mnemotechnical devices such as places, rituals, traditions, food, clothing which keeps their Tibetan nation and culture alive in them.

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From Trauma to Transformation: Analysis of Madness in *Memento*

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ABSTRACT

Madness has long been a popular theme in books and movies. Merriam- Webster dictionary defines madness as a serious mental disorder that prevents one from living a safe and normal life. Experiencing devastating traumas can lead to disintegrated states of mind to such an extent that the subject is forced to construct an alternative reality to bear the pain and the sense of guilt. This topic has been successfully treated in some of the most influential filmmakers' movies of our time, often using the film genre that best suits the theme – the noir – giving birth to some of the most successful reinterpretations of this genre. Some of the best-known examples include the great period drama Shutter Island by Martin Scorsese etc.

Director Christopher Nolan's second film Memento, fits into this genre. The lead character Leonard (Lenny) has confused parts of his own life as the last thing he could remember is his wife's face after they have been attacked by two assaulters in their apartment. His wife survives that assault. But Lenny, who manages to kill one of the aggressors, develops a severe brain injury that leads him to suffer from anterograde amnesia: anything happening to him doesn't stick in his mind for more than a few minutes. Lenny caused his wife's death. He is unaware of that and his mind creates the false memory driven by the goal of neutralizing guilt after lying but meanwhile the 'real' Lenny's mental illness turns into methodical madness. Through distorted storytelling pattern (non-linear narrative), Nolan provides an insight into the protagonist's mind. This paper aims to analyze the elements of madness displayed by the character Lenny as well as the 'alternate truth' created by him. Along with this, the non-linear narrative techniques employed by Christopher Nolan in this movie are also explored.

Key words: madness, narrative, non-linear, storytelling, linear, trauma

Introduction

With the advent of technology, films revolutionized their modes of storytelling as it was possible to deconstruct time scales and reconstruct them in any order. Along with that the viewers' perception of the story also changed. Cinema offered the viewer a newer form of spatial and temporal experience. The narrative structure has also undergone many changes. It can be said that the classical narrative has given way to and has emerged as newer forms- non-linear narratives. Nonlinear narratives in films can be described as a break from the classical Hollywood style and are a new form of narrative free from the typical cinematic story structure. These kinds of narratives mostly select different approaches, such as pluralistic points of view, flashbacks and forwards, dream sequences, network or multiple narratives as well as other deviations from traditional storytelling. Nonlinear narratives present new possibilities of storytelling. Classic examples of these can be found in early silent films, avant-garde films, new wave films, and even some Hollywood films. In the past, a narrative approach that was unfamiliar was seen as a form of experiment or artistry in film. However, with the turn of the 21st century, nonlinear narratives have been proliferating throughout films ranging from independent films to Hollywood blockbusters.

Before Christopher Nolan came up with masterpieces like *Inception* and *Shutter Island*, he directed *Memento*, following non-linear narrative method, about a man who suffers from anterograde amnesia which makes it impossible for him to store new memories in his brain. The only way he can remember things is through the tattoos on his body and handwritten notes. The movie has a paranoia inducing undertone, almost forcing the viewer to wonder if they can trust their own brain since our perception of reality can be easily distorted by others' actions. The plot is split into two streams running in opposite temporal directions. Chronological scenes are shown in black and white; colour scenes are in reverse chronological order. This film is a compound of backward plot and frame narrative, and its flow is fragmented as if it is reflecting the protagonist's condition of amnesia. In short, the middle of the story is the climax, two time slots are intertwined at the end of the film and these two parallel stories colliding in the climax reveals the characters full motivations and intentions.

The film begins with Guy Pearce as Leonard Shelby murdering Teddy (played by Joe Pantoliano). Leonard has anterograde amnesia which is a loss of the ability to create new memories after the event that caused the amnesia, leading to a partial or complete inability to recall the recent past, while long term memories from before the event remain intact. Leonard was hit over the head during an attack which resulted in his wife being raped and murdered. Since the attack Leonard has set out to exact revenge on the man who has done this to him. He helps himself by writing notes, taking photographs and even tattooing

himself with important notes and facts. He is victim to common abuse and inconvenience because of his brain injury and the audience joins Leonard on in his quest for the unknown attacker. However, when the two separate narrative sequences meet during the climax of the film it becomes clear to the audience that Leonard is not so innocent after all. The audience discovers that Leonard wilfully ignores fact when it suits him. He can erase his own past in an act of outrageous audacity and will. Teddy claims Leonard has confused parts of his own life and in fact his wife wasn't raped and murdered but it was Leonard who inadvertently murdered her. Teddy also accuses Leonard of deliberately creating an "unsolvable puzzle" to give himself purpose and that his search could go on indefinitely, he claims they had already killed the guy who committed the attack over a year ago – they did it together. Leonard in a conscious, deliberate decision burns all collected evidence and writes a new note to get a tattooed fact of Teddy's car licence plate, setting Teddy up as a new suspect, ultimately leading to his murder, shown at the beginning of the film.

The film's narrative initially sets up the audience to feel Leonard's confusion and to sympathise with him because they are also unaware of the preceding events and are trying to discover the truth too, however a much more bitter feeling towards Leonard is created for the audience at the end of the film once true style of Leonard's investigation is revealed. *Memento's* plot moves creatively to put the audience in a position of interest; they too want to know who the attacker was, and then they want Leonard to get the justice he deserves. Then in a dramatic twist at the end the audience understands the investigation and the events leading up to Teddy's murder. The film offers a clear distinction between story and plot. The fabula is the chronological order of the story and the syuzhet is structured with two storylines and by having one story sequence in reverse chronological order thus making the two-story sequences converge at the end creates the unveiling finish. The film was critically acclaimed and was nominated for the Academy Award in Best Original Screenplay and Best Editing.

In *Memento*, backward plot is the first strategy. Backward plot, which is the reversed arrangement of time, is scarce in film history. The first shot of *Memento* is a trick shot that rewinds the film. Images of the Polaroid picture disappear as it is shaken, red blood goes up the wall, and a bullet goes back into a pistol. Such shots suggest that this film's time goes backward. In the film, scenes are composed in about 10-minute units, just like Leonard's memory capacity, to show the viewer the information from the same time perspective as Leonard. The second strategy is frame narrative. If this strategy is used separately, the scenes are in line with the natural development of chronological order, as in the traditional narratives. These scenes faithfully carry out their duties of setting up the narrative by introducing the protagonist and by presenting the first goal of avenging his wife's death with clues such as tattoos, pictures, and handwritten notes. These

strategies force the viewer to use their intellectual intervention to understand the plot. In other words, *Memento* has a structure that exquisitely inserts the backward plot at regular intervals in the framework of the traditional narratives.

Leonard manipulates his memory and hides his madness using his condition. He deliberately eliminated twelve pages of the investigation records that Teddy gave to him in the past to create an inextricable puzzle. Therefore, Teddy says to Leonard, —” I can only make you remember the things you want to be true” (01:10:43-44). Leonard’s deliberate manipulation of his memory becomes extremely evident when he manipulates the facts to make Teddy the murderer. In fact, the records and facts were not important to Leonard, rather he continued to live his life through fabricating memories of his world. Leonard remembers his past with confusion.

One of the oldest tendencies of human beings is to tell stories. It imparts meaning to everyday life experiences and provides a better understanding of the world around. They are an intrinsic part of our societies and culture. Stories are how we remember things, pass on information and communicate with the future generation. This practice has been part and parcel of human life from ancient times. Paul Copley states in his book *Narrative* that “wherever there are human beings there appear to be stories” (2). People tell stories about anything and everything. Narratives are everywhere and by using narrative “humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes” as Laurel Richardson states in his work *Narrative and Sociology*. Narratives, one can argue, are one of the fundamental human strategies for organizing data about the world, and for making sense of a veritable chaos. “Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told ...all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves” (Brooks 3).

Narratives are intertwined with our lives. Right from bedtime stories to the posts we share on Facebook walls, they are found everywhere. They have become the foundation stone of our lives. Stories are always narrated as a source of entertainment or information. But people who experienced psychological trauma attempts to regain a sense of order by imposing a narrative structure on these experiences. In *Memento*, Lenny uses stories as a tool to save himself from his traumatic experiences. He is unaware of the fact that he caused the death of his wife. But to overcome this guilt, he created an alternate reality which he forced himself to believe. He even kept notes, tattoos and polaroid pictures to make his story more reliable. Since he was a man who forgot everything in 10 minutes, these evidences were more than enough for him to believe the alternate reality he has constructed. From Leonard’s perspective, stories are shields that protect him from the repressed memories. They also help him to hide elements of madness in him and induce

sympathy among the viewers. The viewers never realized the fact that there has been a deliberate attempt from the protagonist to hide the truth. But the reality is revealed to the viewers.

Traumatic incidents may trigger madness in an individual and alter his life forever. Thus, through non-linear or distorted narrative structure, director Christopher Nolan has explored different levels of the character Leonard as well as the elements of madness displayed by him. He is a person who is traumatized physically as well as mentally. But he himself has build a world of lies which has conditioned him in such a way that he believes he is living in order to avenge his wife's death. But he purposefully or rather deliberately did this in order to find a reason for him to exist. These lies he lives in has successfully concealed the elements of madness in him.

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