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Editorial

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And ye shall eat old store long kept,
and ye shall bring forth the old from before the new.

Leviticus 26: 10

This special issue of *Sambalpur Studies in Literatures and Cultures* on modernist texts takes us back to 1922 even as literary criticism and research is gradually persuading us away from the past to give way to several different issues, opening up new pastures for writers, scholars and critics. The subject might appear to be a little dated, and one might wonder if there is a necessity to return to the modernists. But, with publication of new biographies like Robert Crawford's *Eliot after The Waste Land* (2022), and personal letters and diaries of canonical writers one feels compelled to throw fresh light on old texts.

The presuppositions of literary modernism as endorsed by academia, as a post-war phenomenon characterized by formal experimentation, and its self-reflexive quality, often unsettles the critical thinker making her uneasy about their contradictory aesthetic and ideological tendencies. The purpose of this special issue is not merely to provide an explanation of old texts but to look back and review the presuppositions, "the habits of assumption," as F. R. Leavis puts it in his *The Living Principle* (1975) in order to enrich academic discourse. Every revisit to the modernist texts, or a critical engagement with contemporary literature unravels undiscovered territories of this apparently innocent literary phenomena that has been confined to a 'period' in literary history. The homogenisation of the numerous, diverse and contesting theories and practices of the period, to a selected

number of post-war texts in Europe or America ignores the phenomena as a product of migration and globalisation, something that George Steiner termed as 'extra-territorial.' The product of a time not very different from ours, when frontiers appear to be fluid and nationalist identities are in a flux, the ideological debates that defined literary modernism also shape much of our thoughts and literature. It is, as Malcolm Bradbury would put it, "a usable past, leading into the present and future." Our contributors recreate the excitement that comes from original insights. Critical approaches range from postcolonial, feminist, nationalist, and diaspora, to even translation studies.

The focus of P. Muralidhar Sharma's article on Hilaire Belloc's *The Modern Traveller* (1898) destabilizes what might be seen traditionally as a shared ideology of European travel writing in the modern age. Sharma argues that Belloc's verse parody of a conversation between a recently returned colonial adventurer and a newspaper correspondent satirised British colonial expansion and the ideologies of imperialism. The desire for something new is often always invested with a contradictory yearning for the old. This is justified in N Suman Shelley and Sabita Tripathy's reading of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* where they explore the possible role of country houses in the construction of English national identity. Ishiguro, according to them, imitates the genre of the country house as a strategic measure to challenge the British imperial identity, a veiled metaphor for the criticism of the 'Englishness' of Thatcher's time. At a period in time when we have come to realize that societies and cultures are no more unitary, but ever mutating into heterogeneous bodies my own article reads Juan Rulfo, the Mexican novelist's *Pedro Paramo* (1955) as a complex narrative about the syncretism caused by the racial and cultural mix that destabilizes any possibility of interpretation through a singular theoretical perspective. Minati Mohapatra takes a feminist approach to discuss the psychological dialectics of an adolescent daughter and her mother in the short stories of the Canadian Nobel laureate Alice Munro. A close reading of Guru Prasad Mohanty's poem *Kalapurusha* by Nibedita Patel traces the influence of the modernists on Indian regional literature. Nilima Meher adopts the

Marxist theory to discuss the economic conditions that determine the miseries of Glasgow society in Scotland of 1980s as presented in Douglas Stuart's *Shuggie Bain*. Samikshya Das's essay looks at Hanif Kureshi's use of humour in *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a technique of racial subversion. Humour, according to the author becomes an effective cathartic force for liberation from racial oppression.

The articles will provide scholars and researchers with a revisionary perspective that goes beyond periodization, and supplement existing scholarship in the area.

Aloka Patel

"I have seen the Moment of My Greatness Flicker": Travel, Modernism, and Empire in Hilaire Belloc's *The Modern Traveller*

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P. Muralidhar Sharma

This paper attempts to examine modernism's engagement with the Victorian discourses of travel that crucially determined the European attitude to imperialist expansion. The paper argues that modernism's pronounced anti-imperialist stance and scepticism, as exemplified in the works of Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, and James Joyce, among others, can be traced back to the close of the earlier century, when lesser known and less celebrated texts like Hilaire Belloc's *The Modern Traveller* (1898) exposed the seamy side of British imperialism in a humorous, satirical vein. Through a lengthy verse-parody of the project of travel in the context of imperialism, *The Modern Traveller*, this paper establishes, paved the way for modernism's famed critical engagement with the ideologies of imperialism.

I

The idea of travel is integral to the English literary and cultural consciousness and has significantly informed literary writing since the age of Chaucer. English expansionism dates back to the 15th and 16th centuries, when explorers like Christopher Columbus and Francis Drake were iconized in the public imagination. Over the years, the notion of travel and exploration came to be inextricably linked to the idea of national pride, which has often been reaffirmed in texts like Richard Haklyut's *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589). Colonialist and imperialist ideologies impinged themselves upon, and were also embedded in, travel narratives. Travel

narratives facilitated colonial expansion and promoted the cause of the Empire. They endorsed many of the beliefs imperialist ideologies were founded upon. They created, perpetuated, and were influenced by the equations of power between European and non-European worlds. By their confirmation to established hierarchies, travel narratives participated in the projects of imperialist expansionism. In the hierarchical Victorian world order, travel to the non-European parts of the world was inextricably interlinked with a certain notion of 'Englishness' and cultural achievement. In her influential book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* Mary Louis Pratt argues how

> Travel books gave European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored, invaded, invested in, and colonized. .... They were the key instruments that made people "at home" in Europe feel part of the planetary project; a key instrument, in other words, in creating the 'domestic subject' of empire (3).

The end of the Victorian age also pronounced the eclipse of some of the ruling ideologies of the time. A strong sense of scepticism had crept into the hitherto confident outlook of the Victorians, voiced eloquently in the literary texts of the time. Notions of national pride in the Empire came to be questioned, as a strong group of thinkers and activists promoted what came to be known later as anti-imperialism. The vast British Empire could no more be written about without a sense of uncompromising unease, and as an unhappy reminder of the overt and covert ways by which the British imposed themselves upon other cultures. The close of the 19th century witnessed the decline of the prevalent jingoistic attitude of travellers to the question of territorial conquest. Concomitant to this paradigm shift was the gradual extinction of a readership that avidly consumed celebratory accounts of travellers' overseas exploits.

Contingent upon such unease with imperialism was the cosmopolitan consciousness of the modern artist, which encompassed all cultures and strove to address a wider international audience. The emergence of a highly influential group of expatriate writers, who had little or no vested interest in an 'English' literary tradition and national culture led to the shaping of a cosmopolitan cultural sensibility that countered the hegemonic discourses of Empire. In his essay "The End of English" Terry Eagleton suggests that the peripheral positioning of this group of writers revolutionized the way the English literary tradition was conceived: "Positioned as they were within essentially peripheral histories, such artists could view native English lineages less as a heritage to be protected than as an object to be problematized" (270). Scholars like Jessica Berman (2001) have shown how a revised notion of community and an unprecedented cosmopolitan outlook are indispensable to modernist writing. For the modernists, cultural difference was no more doomed by the complexities of unequal power relations but defined ideas of shared suffering and cause for solidarity. In this respect, Helen Carr maintains, "Modernist texts register a new consciousness of cultural heterogeneity, the condition and mark of the modern world; in both imaginative and travel writing, modernity, the meeting of other cultures, and change are inseparable" (74). Travel writing's complicity with the discourses of colonialism was rendered problematic by the cosmopolitan consciousness of the modern artist.

The modern intellectual's scepticism towards imperial achievement was nowhere more palpably felt than in early 20th century fiction, particularly in the work of novelists like James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling and E.M. Forster, among others. Interestingly, the idea of travel was central to much of the best work of the modernists. Travel and travel writing, as Robert Burden (2015) asserts, crucially informed some of the major narrative tropes of modernist fiction.

> …there is an effect of travel and travel writing on their fiction as narrative paradigm and as recurrent trope for questions of identity and otherness in the

> encounter with places and cultures. Perspectives gained from travel at home and abroad or simply the desire for expatriation spill over into the deep-seated concern with the emergent crisis of national cultural identity, Englishness or the new American identity (1).

II

Published in 1898, Hilaire Belloc's *The Modern Traveller* is a paradigmatic turn-of-the-century text which interrogates Victorian ethos and worldview and mercilessly exposes its limitations. This apparently humorous, parodical poetic venture debunks some of the dominant ideologies of Victorianism. The poem takes shape as a verse-narrative of the conversation between a colonial adventurer who has recently returned from his African expedition and a correspondent from a newspaper called *The Daily Menace*, a satirical dig at *The Daily Mail*, which avidly published and circulated news on travellers' experiences. The book is illustrated with sketches displaying the exotic curiosities of the Oriental world and mocks at the sojourner's fascination for them.

> And so the public want to hear
> About the expedition
> From which I recently returned:
> Of how the Fetish Tree was burned;
> Of how we struggled to the coast,
> [...]
> And how, like Englishmen, we died. (6)

The speaker begins to narrate his account of what is supposed to be a heroic mission of travel to the wilderness of Africa. The text parodies some of the well-known Victorian accounts of travel to Africa, like Henry Morton Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* (1890) and Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* (1897). The speaker is accompanied by Commander Sin and Captain William Blood, two formidable presences in his expedition. William Blood, an uncompromising patriot, is avidly interested in the imperial

ambitions of England. His career is a reflection of all that is ambitious and ruthless in an imperial officer of the time inclined to assist in the expansion of the territory:

> His soul with nobler stuff was fraught;
> The love of country, as it ought,
> Haunted his every act and thought.
> To that he lent his mighty powers,
> To that he gave his waking hours,
> Of that he dreamed in troubled sleep,
> Till, after many years, the deep
> Imperial emotion,
> That moves us like a martial strain,
> Turned his Napoleonic brain
> To company promotion. (22)

Both Blood and Sin are of a dubious origin. Their dubious, sinful origin also crucially informs their double dealings in the context of imperial expansion. Blood, we are told, was born of a man whose identity is not known; his unsure parentage being an important determinant of the origin of debasement in him. The emphasis on the ruthlessness of colonial violence and the unquenchable sense of avarice from which it springs is consistently reiterated through the actions and motives of Blood and Sin: "Was there by chance a native tribe/ To cheat, cajole, corrupt, or bribe?" (25). The speaker's hypocrisy is exposed in the way he is overcome with sympathy for the poor souls that were defeated. He affirms the need to uplift the 'native races' and suggests ways in which the imperial explorers could do so. Sin suggests they use the power of the gun to subdue the natives of Africa during a mutiny that ensued: "Whatever happens we have got The Maxim Gun, and they have not" (41). They victoriously declare, "We shot and hanged a few, and then/ The rest became devoted men" (42). The lines satirize the imperialist idea of complicity through violence.

The narrative has as its focus the adventures of the trio in the Eldorado Expedition. The later reference to the expedition in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and its thematic centrality may

not merely be a coincidence. The inter-textual resonances between Belloc's poem and Conrad's novel and the steady genesis of ideas in both texts is only one instance of how late Victorian texts anticipated and addressed some of the major debates of modernism. In *The Modern Traveller,* the fear and insecurity of "foreign foes" is overcome during the expedition by extremely ridiculous mechanisms. The Russians and Germans, both competing political forces, are perceived as potential threats to British imperialism.

The massive failures of the trio, in spite of their pronounced heroism exposes of the limits of imperial masculinity, which was premised on certain notions of infallibility and impeccability. The text underplays some of the dominant motifs through which imperial authority asserted itself. The notion of unquestioned reverence for everything English, which was a defining assumption of colonial supremacy is turned upside down, as the natives of Africa flaunt colonial authority and threaten Sin and Blood. The absolute possibility of the fate of the unfortunate but "noble" chief (74), their European predecessor, replicating itself in his case as well is shamelessly acknowledged by the narrator. The relics of the dead chief are displayed by the natives as proud markers of their victory over the colonizer. The awkwardness that the reactions of Sin and Blood evoke in readers at this point is a further indication of their obliviousness to such humiliation in the hands of the natives. In spite of the humorous tone, the narrator's propensity to failure and indignation repels the readers. The Mutiny that results out of the resistance of the natives to colonial presence turns out to be a complete disaster for the trio. They are vanquished by the natives, but strongly refuse to be subdued. The immediate Victorian audience of Belloc might have found the text shockingly unacceptable. The vulnerability of the characters might have been perceived as not just inadmissible, but impossible to the Victorian audience, accustomed as it was to consuming jingoistic accounts of travel to the colonized domain.

III

What makes Belloc's *The Modern Traveller* appealing is the trio's recurring tendency to fail in action, even while eulogizing

failure as martyrdom and heroism in rhetoric. The insurmountable gap between imperialist rhetoric and action and their incongruence is emphasized in the text. Imperialist rhetoric is high-sounding, unbelievably optimistic even in the face of irrevocable failure. The dubiousness of this rhetoric and its incapacity to legitimate its high claims to power and authority are exposed in Belloc's poem. Imperial authority relied heavily on this well-established rhetoric, which was often used to legitimize the action of the colonizer. This rhetoric has a refined appearance, and often promotes high and noble values like culture, civilization and morality while dubiously taking recourse to hypocrisy, corruption, and injustice. In his book *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (1993) David Spurr proposes that at a time of high imperialism, a well-established and popular rhetoric on the colonized domain was available to the Western writer inclined to write about the non-Western world. This rhetoric, he suggests, constituted "a kind of repertoire for colonial discourse, a range of tropes, conceptual categories, and logical operations available for purposes of representation." Further, he argues, these rhetorical modes were "the tropes that come into play with the establishment and maintenance of colonial authority or, as sometimes happens, those that register the loss of such authority" (3). Belloc's poem targets the palpable hollowness of this rhetoric and wittily subverts the prevalent belief in the 'White Man's Burden'. The narrative demystifies the binary of Western civilizational superiority and native moral debasement through the figuration of the native King and his representatives who are more rational and commonsensical than the European explorers. They see through the vile intentions of the trio and subject them to befitting punishment and torture.

By consistently focusing on the trivial and the petty in what was supposed to be a magnanimous, massive and noble venture, the text calls attention to the banality and mundane-ness of the enterprise. One episode in the narrative details the petty means by which the trio manages to deceive the natives. They pick up a brawl with a native king who, to make matters worse, keeps them imprisoned. They then settle a ransom and seek freedom. In his

Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire (2013) Saikat Mazumdar identifies banality and boredom as two important emotional impulses that inform some of the well-known texts of modernism and constitute an 'oppositional aesthetic' of modernist texts. He shows how the colonized people on the fringes of Empire are caught up in the inescapable banality of their situations, while at the same time defining their relationships to the (apparent) excitement and eventfulness of the imperial centre, London. The lives of imperial administrators, the chief agents in the enterprise, were not entirely free from banality, either:

> The oppressive banalization of everyday life on the margins of the empire is an ineluctable experience of colonial modernity… the iterative banality of colonial life is infective; it is a malaise that ails the agents of imperial administration, too. However, while the boredom of imperial bureaucrats captures a significant experiential dimension of everyday life on the colonial periphery, it is radically different, in its affective structure and political meaning, from the way large groups of colonized people etch their self-image through a sense of the banality of their individual and collective lives against the magnetic epicenter of historical, social, and cultural phenomena represented in the metropolitan centre of empire. (3)

Although the formidable trio in the poem is affected by this banality, they respond to it in seemingly heroic ways, laying bare the rottenness of the conquest. The mock-heroic tone of the poem disparages the apparently heroic venture and the notion of martyrdom attached to it. The unbearably savage torture inflicted upon the narrator is hardly seen as ignominy; it is celebrated as an indicator of his 'unflinching' patriotism. Referring to the excruciating pain of the punishment, he says:

They hung me up above the floor
Head downwards by a rope;
They thrashed me half an hour or more,
They filled my mouth with soap;
They jobbed me with a pointed pole
To make me lose my self-control,
But they did not succeed.
[....]
But did I flinch? I did not flinch.
In tones determined, loud, and strong
I sang a patriotic song
Thank Heaven it did not last for long!
My misery was past;
My superhuman courage rose
Superior to my savage foes;
They worshipped me at last. (76-79)

This bizarre demonstration of unearthly courage and patriotism even at the verge of a near-death situation is a shrewd maneuver to subdue the natives and demonstrate his cultural superiority. What the narrative helps the readers to unmistakably notice is the cunningness of the colonial explorer, a self-appointed custodian of national pride and community honour. Though the experience of getting flogged by the natives might have been demeaning, it translates into sacrifice and self-annihilation in the narrative, which is but a retrospective recounting of the disastrous encounter. This manner of attributing respectability to an otherwise humiliating incident and unconditionally dignifying it is a typical colonial strategy of self-legitimization.

By consistently attesting to its authenticity, the narrator's tale seems to affirm its falsity and constructedness: "And then—an incident occurred/ Which, I will pledge my sacred word, / Is absolutely true" (66). The narrative questions its own authenticity and obliquely comments upon its own fictive quality. What the narrator shares is also unreliable and mostly fabricated. This important fact of the Victorian travel tale is exposed in the closing

lines, where Commander Sin and Captain Blood, who would have testified to the authenticity of the exotic experiences, are dead.

> Oh! England, who would leave thy shores—
> Excuse me, but I see it bores
> A busy journalist
> To hear a rhapsody which he
> Could write without detaining me,
> So I will not insist.
> Only permit me once again
> To make it clearly understood
> That both those honourable men,
> Commander Sin and Captain Blood,
> Would swear to all what I have said,
> Were they alive; but they are dead! (79-80)

Incidentally, Belloc also wrote an essay arguing for the freedom of the press, entitled *The Free Press: An Essay on the Manipulation of News and Opinion, and How to Counter it* (1917). His reference to the 'popular opinion' or 'the public', referring to the anticipated readership of travel accounts is a self-conscious act. The narrator is seen noting down every minute detail in the exploration, hoping perhaps to publish it after returning to England. This significant Victorian trend of not merely undertaking travel to the colonized domain, but also mandatorily publishing an account of it, is used as an important satirical device in the text. He uses the readerly expectations of Victorian audience as a strategy to puncture and dismantle national pride in colonial achievement.

IV

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to establish any specific parallels between texts like *The Modern Traveller* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, for instance, it believes that such an analysis is both desirable and essential. Rather than curiously establishing thematic/structural parallels and locating similarities between late-Victorian and modernist texts, the paper indicates possibilities of indebtedness of the modernists to writers like Belloc. Such indebtedness, the paper suggests, was premised

mostly on grounds of ideological orientation and varying attitudes to the project of empire.

As a text arriving at the confluence of historically simultaneous currents of late colonialism and modernism, *The Modern Traveller* adequately thematizes the pettiness and triviality of the colonial project. The poem highly unsettles, for its late Victorian audiences, the dichotomies of domination and subordination. The hierarchical arrangement which established the imperial metropole as culturally superior and more powerful than the colonized periphery is rendered problematic. Though engendered by imperialist ideologies, the text also enables us address some of the major debates about this ideology, which are central to the modernist enterprise. Through its anti-imperialist stance, it complicates our understanding of literature's tacit complicity with the discourses of imperialism. By articulating its scepticism about colonial modernity and its civilizing effects, it dismantles the constructive claims of the political ambitions of the English.

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Re-evaluation of Nation in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*

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Sabita Tripathy

This paper will analyze Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) as country-house novel in the context of nineteenth-century England. It would also attempt to examine the text as a postmodern hypertext. In order to investigate the relationship between this genre and the creation of the identity of an English national, Ishiguro imitates the revival of an atavistic genre. The argument would be that of the country-house novel being reconfigured in *The Remains of the Day* to raise issues regarding the dominant nativist ideologies and "Englishness" of Thatcher's time, when the book was released. With reference to this idea, before a thorough analysis of the novel, country houses will be discussed as social establishments. In addition to it, the focus would be on their function as metaphors, and their role in the construction of English national identity.

Hayden White recapitulates the perspectives of Bakhtin and Jameson when he states, "genre, genericization, and genre-fication are interpreted as crucial elements of ideology, providing imaginary matrices (Bakhtin's chronotopes) on which real social conflicts can be given possible resolution in ways conformable to class aspirations and ideals" (603). Moreover, Russian formalist Boris Tomashevsky too focuses on the connection between the development of genres in history and actual social conflicts: "high genres are pushed out by low ones. This too may be analogous to social evolution, whereby the 'upper' ruling classes are gradually squeezed out by the democratic 'lower' orders-the feudal lords by

the petty service nobility, the whole aristocracy by the bourgeoisie and so on" (53).

England's imperial authority is always apparent in the background of books set in country estates. For instance, though it isn't stated specifically, Sir Thomas's sugar plantations in Antigua, West Indies, are the source of his wealth (and, by extension, the wealth of England in general), according to *Mansfield Park*. He doesn't respond to Fanny's question regarding slaves employed on the plantations. For instance, in *Jane Eyre*, there are allusions to England's colonial rule abroad with reference to the Jamaican Creole, Bertha Mason who inherits her riches in the West Indies, and Mr. Rochester's son are married by arrangement made by Mr. Rochester's father. Due to her alleged craziness stemming from her mother, he imprisons her in the attic of Thornfield and amasses her money. Moreover, St. John Rivers' journey to India as a missionary to convert the natives to Christianity touches on England's so-called civilizing mission.

Ishiguro challenges genre tropes that over hundreds of years helped to establish the imperial British identity with these hypertexts. In this work, Bakhtin's chronotope is used to analyze *The Remains of the Day* critically.

The stately home environment and idyllic landscape are criticised in *The Remains of the Day* for serving as metaphors for Englishness and for helping to maintain the imperialist notion of the English nation. Country houses are also criticised for serving as a symbol of the English nation.

Gérard Genette clarifies regarding the primary forms of textual imitation and transformation in his theory of connection between texts in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1997). In Genette's perspective, "the subject of poetics is transtextuality, or the textual transcendence of the text, which [he has] already described roughly as everything that establishes the text in a relationship, whether obvious or veiled with other texts is the basis of his study" (1). His discussion of "hypertextuality," which is defined as "any relationship uniting a text B (hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary," is the main focus of his classification of

these "textual transcendence[s]" under various sub-headings (5). A text that is "derived from another pre-existing text" or "a text in the second degree" is what hypertext is, in other words (5). He provides two approaches to further clarify the definition: "Any text created from a preceding text either via straightforward change… or through indirect transformation, which [he] shall call imitation," is the definition of hypertext. (7). Genette categorizes the "genres" of imitation as caricature, pastiche, forgery and the "genres" of change as parody, travesty, and transposition (25). His main emphasis is on the idea that it is impossible to imitate a text and that one can only imitate a style or on a genre, whereas transformation is "distortion of a text" (25). It is impossible to mimic a text and that one can only imitate a style, or a genre, or, to put it another way, "one can parody only particular texts; one can imitate only a genre" (85). When a hypertext humorously alters a hypotext, it is referred to as parody; yet, when it humorously mimics the hypotext's style, it is referred to as pastiche.

Every literary text to some extent based on the manner it is read, evokes some other literary work; hence all works are hypertextual in that respect. Julia Kristeva, and her idea of intertextuality in the essay "Word, Dialogue, and Novel", had earlier made a similar claim. Kristeva asserts that "every text is created as a mosaic of quotes; any text is the absorption and alteration of another" in a thorough research on intertextuality (Desire in Language 66). In a more limited sense, Genette asserts that intertextuality is interlatedness between two or more texts. In other words it is typically eidetic, as one text is present within another, and therefore, acknowledges Kristeva. He emphasizes on a style that makes use of 'quoting', 'plagiarism', or 'allusion' (2).

In a sense, hypertextuality is a greater degree of textual transcendence, and more expansive than intertextuality because it discusses connections between texts rather in place of individual words. Merely quoting a work is an example of an intertextual practice.

The first chapter of *The Remains of the Day* (1989) is written in the first person by Mr. Stevens, an ageing but devoted English butler who works at the prestigious rural estate of Darlington Hall.

The novel takes place over the course of six days in July 1956, but flashbacks provide Darlington Hall's history and its residents in the aftermath of World War I. Ishiguro uses a double-coded narrative in *Remains* to contrast his worries about the English national identity Margaret Thatcher's (the former Prime Minister of United Kingdom) leadership with the political upheavals following World War I. Precisely, Postmodernism is "happy with doing two conflicting things at the same time or representing both sides of an argument at once," claims Linda Hutcheon in her description of the movement in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1996). Ishiguro in his novel ironically imitates the genre while reconstructing the country-house novel with an intention to focus on some particular issues in the making of and its affiliation to English national identity. It does this as a postmodernist text that "is intensively self-reflexive and parodic, yet it also attempts to root itself in that which both reflexivity and parody appear to short-circuit: the historical world" (Hutcheon Poetics). In fact, postmodernism consistently approaches this amalgation of the dialogical and the historical ideas with a peculiar "attendant sarcasm," hence, in the text Ishiguro "depends upon and takes its strength from that which it fights" (Hutcheon *Poetics* 120). Irony allows writers to remain active within certain discourses while successfully challenging them (Nicol 32). *The Remains of the Day* successfully challenges the subgenre of the country-house novel while navigating its discourse.

Unlike the category of nineteenth century country-house novel in which typically the third person narrator narrates the subject of the middle or upper middle classes, it is the first person narrator who is also a marginalized character in *The Remains of the Day*, is overtly unreliable and barely mentioned in conventional narratives. In the perspective of Beedham, Ishiguro "foregrounds the small private history, and in doing so, demonstrates how readily it is able to revise the traditional grand narratives" (70). Instead of adhering to the principles of the traditional narrative style and depicting the wealthy families' history, a butler recounts his own personal history. Stevens fits into Gérard Genette's category of "intradiegetic-homodiegetic" narrators (*Narrative Discourse* 248). In other words, these narrators are not superior or inferior to the

story but directly engage within the story, narrate their own stories as well. The reader is forced to follow the plot through his narration because he is the one who describes all the events and dialogues in the book. Phelan and Martin's analysis of *The Remains of the Day* reveals that classical narratology is insufficient to explain Stevens's unreliability. They propose a novel's reading strategy that will do justice both to Ishiguro and Stevens. They conclude from reading Stevens' conversations, particularly those with Miss Kenton, which he is 'deliberately misleading' and 'is seriously either underreporting or underreading'. It is important to note here that the ethical positioning of the reader should be superseding marker while approaching the narrative because homodiegesis makes it impossible to "clearly determine Ishiguro's relation to Stevens" (102). In their opinion, "Our own ethics play a crucial role in shaping our response to the scene," (103). Lately, Phelan in his article emphasizes on narrative style's inconsistency and distinguishes on the unreliable factor between "estranging" and "bonding"; the former "underlines or increases the distance between the narrator and the authorial audience", and the latter "reduces the distance between the narrator and the authorial audience". With his circumstances, Stevens is a prime example of an 'unreliable bond'. In the conclusion of the novel, Stevens says, "In bantering lies the key to human warmth," which shows Stevens' learning by the narrative's course. He has edged near the ethical belief system of Ishiguro with regards to human connections in contrast to his earlier despondent responses to the bantering of Mr. Faraday. The authorial audience likewise turns toward Stevens as he goes in this path, both affectively and in an ethical sense. There are various "verbal indicators of mental habits that contribute to unreliability [which] are located inside the discourse itself" with regards to the interactions between the authorial audience and the narrator (Wall 20). With phrases like "As I remember" (Ishiguro 54), "I recall my impression" (67), "But there is another memory" (75), "I have become somewhat lost in these old memories" (167), and "One memory in particular has preoccupied me all morning - or rather, a fragment of a memory, a moment that has for some reason remained with me vividly through the years," (222) Stevens'

unsure comments and dependency on his memory is foregrounded. He recalls memories from the past, puts them together in his head, and then tells the reader his story, which makes the reader doubt his reliability as a storyteller. In addition, Kathleen Wall unreliability in her thorough analysis of Stevens' unreliable narration, lists Stevens' language use, his professional skills, rhetorical twitch, discrepancies between his feeling and words, the narrative deflections, and examples of misremembering things which vividly underlines the factor (23-25). As the narrative voice, Stevens in several ways makes a departure from the country-house novel tradition. The reader is first made aware of the narration's limitations because the narrator is obviously unreliable. Second, a simple butler such as Stevens is elevated to the centre of the narrative. It is interesting to notice that he doesn't belong to the upper class without which characters are hardly addressed in traditional country-house novels. Instead of detailing every aspect of the lives of 'important' figures, he is narrating his own tale.

The atmosphere of the country house and everything they symbolize have also been called into question with this unorthodox narrator in a usually trustworthy location. The narrator challenges the audience to consider the veracity of any narration while casting doubt on the supposed greatness of the country estates by adopting the persona of a butler. Typically, a stately house in a remote rural estate serves as the backdrop for conventional country-house novels. The house is typically the focal point of the story; it serves as both the beginning and the end of the narration. The opening scene of the novel takes place at the magnificent Darlington Hall, the country estate named after the Darlington family, sold it to an American after owing it for more than 200 years before selling it. This mansion as Stevens repeatedly mentions is neither the novel's central location nor the point at which the narration comes to a close. The house, however, holds a significant symbolic value for Stevens. Stevens replies, "It has been my joy to witness the best of England over the years, sir, within these very walls," in response to Mr. Farraday's invitation to go on an adventure in his Ford automobile (Ishiguro 4). Indeed, Darlington Hall, which routinely hosts members of the feudal elite, serves as Stevens' idealized

representation of England. By using this metaphor, he suggests that outdated hierarchical structures were caught in a wave of change and that owners of grand houses like Lord Darlington—rather than just the aristocracy—were now the ones who made important decisions. Stevens opines, "debates are conducted, and crucial decisions are arrived at, in the privacy and calm of the great houses of this country" (Ishiguro 121). Stevens emphasizes on the idea that the elite classes of British society made decisions at Darlington Hall defending the territorial framework of imperialism and hegemony.

The Remains of the Day as Berberich states is "a direct condemnation of British participation with fascism" (128) and the oppressive (paternalistic) ideology prevalent since the Victorian era. Paternalists support a dictatorial and hierarchical society; "there is no doubt that paternalists believed in their own rights… they did not believe in equal rights for all or in rights based on natural law" (Roberts 4). A paternalist also "believes that society can be best managed and social evils best mitigated by men of authority, property, and rank performing their respective duties toward those in their community who are bound to them by personal ties (Roberts 8). Similar to Lord Darlington and his allies, who look down at people and do not believe in democracy, paternalists intended to maintain social hierarchies. Stevens is summoned into the space where Lord Darlington and a few of his friends are having a conversation about politics with reference to the year 1935. Mr. Spencer asks Stevens a series of political questions, including those regarding England's debt to America, the euro zone's currency crisis, and the actions of the French prime minister in North Africa. Stevens replies, "I'm very sorry, sir, but I am unable to be of assistance on this matter," to which the other gentlemen in the room laugh (205). He supports undemocratic forms of government like oligarchy or fascist regimes than allowing the average person the chance to participate in politics in their country.

Ishiguro, who wrote a book set in the 1950s, alludes to concerns he has with his current political climate in general and with the exaltation of British imperial national identity in particular by drawing parallels between the 1980s and the historical and

chronological chronotopes. By simultaneously engaging the past and the present, it might be argued that Ishiguro uses a technique Bhabha refers to as a "double-timed" narrative of the country. In Renan's opinion, nation is a soul, a spiritual concept, which is in harmony with what Ishiguro accomplishes. This spiritual component, or soul, is made up of two things. One is a present-day deception; the other is a past-time lie. Ishiguro combines the chronotopes of the postmodern and the country house fiction from the 19th century to expose the artificial nature of the English national identity. By changing the setting of the genre, he imitates the country-house novel in a postmodern setting, helping to shatter the illusion that the English are the world's greatest nationality. The genre's imitation which was used to strengthen the English imperial national identity undermines the myth by making the great house, which represents great Englishness, its emptiness, portraying the landlord as a failure in both his personal and political life, and leaving the butler figure disappointed.

Through butler Stevens' characterization and narration, the double-timed nature of the nation draws comparisons between the chronotope of real historical events and the chronotope of the book. It also draws comparisons between the English nation as a whole and the English national identity as a construct. The fact that Stevens has mostly learned about his country and nation from narrative novels demonstrates how, like any other nation, the idea of the English nation is a composite of multiple narratives. Stevens learns that he knows very little about his country and that everything he knows has come from books when he decides to travel to the West. The idea of Britain's greatness has been ingrained in Stevens, like many other citizens, by many narratives. Because of this, he declares the English landscape to be the best one, despite the fact that he hasn't seen any other landscapes.

Even his experience of being "in the midst of greatness" (29) is fabricated with the aid of national narratives that are identical to those that create and reinforce the notion of a great nation. This contrast of the United States and the United Kingdom mirrors their post-war rivalry. Stevens also draws hurried and partial judgments about the countries and contrasts Mr. Farraday with Lord

Darlington. The personality features of the two employers are poles apart. The fact that Stevens was also purchased as a "part of the package" like a commodity (Ishiguro 255) suggests that Mr. Farraday wanted to purchase not only the estate with all of its parts but also everything it represents, which is why he casts doubt on the authenticity of the home and Stevens, who is a living testament to that authenticity.

Stevens compares the 'greatness' of England and Englishness to the formerly magnificent country estate Darlington Hall, 'honourable' Lord Darlington, and the dignity and profession of butlership, all of which crumble and demonstrate the hollowness of the English national identity. Following the sale of Darlington Hall to an American, a lot of changes take place: the staff is drastically reduced, the majority of the rooms are dust-sheeted, the banquet hall is rarely used, and the house is abandoned for the first time ever. The house is currently in a stage of decline rather than being in an outstanding shape. Although Stevens initially denied Lord Darlington's affiliation with Nazi leaders, he later said, "It is hardly my fault if his lordship's life and work have turned out to look, at best, a sad waste - and it is quite illogical that I should feel any regret or shame on my own account" (211). Stevens realizes that he needs to move past his disappointment and focus on the future. He says, "But perhaps one should not be looking back to the past so much," as a consolation for his wasted years. After all, I still have a lot of years of service I must provide ahead of me." Therefore, it's crucial to maintain one's attentiveness to the current moment in order to prevent self-satisfaction from setting in because of the accomplishment that one would have possibly had in the former times (147-48). Despite his reluctance, he now understands that looking forward is inevitable rather than fondly reliving the "good old days."

Instead of concluding at the 'grand' country house of Darlington Hall, the book ends near Weymouth Pier. As per the opinion of Su, transition from the estate to the pier "suggests an attempt on Ishiguro's side to relocate the English ethos and to question the estate's prominence as its representation" (568). In fact, this kind of conclusion acknowledges the necessity for "an

inevitability of a shift in, representative national places" (571). In comparison to the country home, a pier is less durable since it is placed at the fringe of a waterbody, thereby being a construction allowing the passage water underneath it. Therefore, as opposed to the country house's well-established and rooted sense of national identity, the "pier" conveys a weak, drifting and an unsettled idea of national identity without any roots. Parallel to the deteriorating country estate and its lord's tarnished honour, Stevens' firm belief in a robust and an unadulterated national identity of being English is shaken. The atmosphere of the country house and the efforts of the Thatcherite government to revive the glories of the Victorian era are compared, and both are shown to be futile. Stevens' beliefs and disillusionments expose the Thatcherite government's futile attempts to instill nationalist sentiments and make people aspire for the good old days.

During a political assembly in the Darlington Hall, an invitee says, "We're really so slow in this country to recognize when a thing's outmoded. Other great nations know full well that to meet the challenges of each new age means discarding old, sometimes well-loved methods. Not so here in Britain" (Ishiguro 207). This claim is similar to a small-scale request to stop clinging to the past in vain and to stop being nostalgic. Yet, on a larger scale these opinions are dismissive of the ancient stereotypical understanding of nation and national identity. Further, they ought to be discarded in order to harbor certain unsaid ideas. As an example, Lord Darlington has given his efforts to alleviate the suffering of the German people after the war by setting up meetings, making arrangements for the diplomats, and serving prime ministers. In spite of all these, he is accused of pacifying the Nazi, his reputation tarnished; as a result he sorrowfully passes away.

Given that "it harbours a whole range of patriotic sentiments in the public psyche," as Agyeman (336) puts it, the decision of the country-house novel on the part of Ishiguro is very significative. He subtly employs the standards of the country-house novel to depict how socially fabricated is the English national identity, and bringing back the "good old days" through political efforts is futile. Ishiguro chooses to apply the country-house novel

genre to debunk the persistent notion that 'Englishness' is the greatest nationality, in contrast to the country-house which an invented conventional implementation, the purpose of holding up England's image of imperialism is served. By making a historical comparison between current concerns about English national identity and the revival of native through efforts of the Prime Minister, he overturns the whole idea of "Englishness" into an empty signifier. The Thatcherite era saw a decline in nostalgia for the British Empire's glory, but people still have a tendency to yearn for simpler times because the Victorian era's height had passed along with the country estates. The construction of a hypertext becomes forms the crux of Ishiguro's investigation whether English national identity until now is legitimate by emulating the artistic elements of a country-house novel. In order to achieve this, he reworks a number of the genre's conventions: first, infraction of the conventional backdrop i.e 'a country house'. It hardly stands as an ideologically dismantled mansion. Moreover, the interesting fact is that the narrative has not ended there. Second, the traditional characters of the country-house novel have neither being hired nor receive a different treatment; for example, so far as inheriting the property is concerned, the mansion doesn't have any mistress or children for it; generalization of the servants rather than being treated as individuals. Third, the butler character, who is the narrator has typically been ignored or neglected in such books having placed particularly in the center of the story. Additionally, from the butler's perspective, the degeneration of the Great Britain understood from the perspective of the Darlington Hall's decline. Fourth, the strength of the English imperial power has tailed off both in the domestic sphere and abroad. To put it another way, the reputation of Britain is challenged. The statement Stevens that "there is no value at all in clinging to tradition as some do purely for its own sake" perfectly captures the essence of the book in terms of English nativism (Ishiguro 7). The paternalist worldview is undercut by the similarities amid debilitated forms of government (authoritarianism and totalitarianism), and Lord Darlington. So fasr as the making of the nationalist myths id concerened, there is an active participation on the part of Butler Stevens as a 'first-class'

butler plays the part of an English citizen as a pawn. In the opinion of Bhabha, the glorious mansion of Lord Darlington could be referred to as the epicenter for uniting people and cultures. As a result, the country-house novel serves as an academic object, and the elderly butler Stevens makes the narrative performance in the present. Since both are performative acts, both Englishness and the genres that support it, could be replicated.

Ishiguro challenges readers' perceptions of "Englishness" by reimagining the traditional country-house narrative. The novel is "a superb perversion of the fictional modes from which it at first seems to emerge," in the words of Salman Rushdie (244). Ishiguro challenges the tenets of the country-house fiction reinforcing English national identity by using a chronotope of the past in the present. It, therefore, leads to the fictions cultural embededness. With reference to Bhabha's dual narrative of the nation, Ishiguro writes a postmodern book and he simultaneously discusses the after-effects of World War I & II; furthermore, his own period of time in history. Ishiguro humorously undercuts the traditional goal of the country-house fiction of establishing the "imagined" imperial English nationality in his double-coded language. *The Remains of the Day* is a double-voiced postmodern fiction that entails a re-evaluation of the manner in which nation is discussed and thought of, since any alterations in the chronotope of the nation directly causes alterations in the chronotope of the fiction.

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The [Im]possibility of Theory: Critiquing *Pedro Paramo*

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The generic affiliation of 'Theory' with Deconstruction, as perceived by the academia, and literary criticism as based on 'theory' in a literature classroom in the University often ignores, and thereby, stands in contradiction to Derrida's other proposition that 'The law of Genre,' is "a law of purity, a law against miscegenation." (Frow 26) The application of a theory for interpretation of a literary work anticipates an absolutist and primordial state of a text and its meaning. As an alternative to such a critical practice this paper attempts to read Juan Rulfo, the Mexican novelist's *Pedro Paramo* (1955) as a complex narrative that destabilizes any possibility of reading the text from a singular theoretical perspective. Paradoxically, though when we question the possibility of 'theory' we are also engaging in a critical act that deconstructs itself, thereby, reinforcing theory and getting caught in its own aporia.

A collection of 70 "fragments" Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Paramo* is designed as a text that dismantles its own structure. Yet, paradoxically it exists within its frame of the novel. The strategic but liminal position, the aporia in which the characters and narrators exist marks the thin line that exists in the encounters between the real and the illusory, the spatial and the temporal, life and death, past and present. The discursive nature of the text makes it impossible to pin it down to a single meaning, even as it is impossible to make meaning without theorizing. I argue that *Pedro Paramo* dramatizes the complex readerly act of engaging in theory, and simultaneously disengaging itself from any such reductive perspective. Questioning the limits of theoretical paradigms it suggests the permeability of those limits, that the reader's fetish for

stable meanings is blinkered, and ironically absolutist and authoritative like its central character, Pedro Paramo.

The novel traces the rise of a *Cacique*, or a local Governor in Comala, a town in Mexico, and his death. A non-linear narrative, it moves in flashbacks and flash forwards, as Susan Sontag puts it: in "the Comala of the present and the Comala of the past." (vii) The two worlds are presented in two parts. Part one ends with the death of Juan Preciado, who has ventured out in search of his father, Pedro Paramo. The second part ends with the assassination of Pedro Paramo. Comala, thus, is a dead town, where the person who is undergoing the journey as well as his destination is dead. It is, as Alan Bell calls it "an ultimate blending of the man and land," and I would add, the text, Pedro Paramo being an eponymous character. The names also are suggestive: 'Pedro' (originating from the Latin word 'petra') means rocks or stones, and 'paramo' in Spanish refers to a piece of barren or waste land. 'Comala,' similarly, denotes the scorched situation of an earthenware pot used for cooking tortillas, symbolically referring to the scorched situation of the town.

The novel was originally titled *Los Murmullos*, or "The Murmurs." It is worth considering what stories these murmurings have to tell us. Each of the seventy fragments narrate an event, with vivid and memorable descriptions of people, places and incidents all contained within the eerie atmosphere of a ghost town—in a typically magic realist tradition. These images come forth as first person and third person perspectives, grumblings of the dead from under their graves, and sometimes as commentaries or conversations. It is 'real life' dramatized, of dead people when they were living —the reality of a world infested with violence, cruelty, incest, prostitution, religious hypocrisy, capitalist incursions, revenge and guilt, strangely dissonant voices of conflicts and contradictions confronting each other. What is at work is a complex interweaving of lived reality as here and now, and gone next, and the tricks that memory plays in narrating those. In such a fictional world, where content, form, art, technique and point of view interweave into a whole, no reading can be final, no meaning can be conclusive. Here, every event, every narrative, every

fragment is determined by a theory that fails its veracity, proves itself false in the next.

The novel begins with questioning 'home' as the place of origin. A short novella, it starts with epic proportions with the Odyssey of the search of a son for his father. The search is, however, initiated by the mother, who is now dead. The father happens to be the eponymous character, Pedro Paramo. Since meaning is invested in the text, Preciado's search for his father is by allusion a search for meaning. But again, since Pedro Paramo also happens to be the cacique, logically speaking, meaning is implied to be authoritative. The search for meaning is further complicated when Preciado deliberately creates ambiguity, first, by stating that the reason for his search was the promise made to his mother. Then, denying, "I never meant to keep my promise. But before I knew it my head began to swim with dreams and my imagination took flight." (3) Every attempt at arriving at meaning then is only imaginative, fanciful. And if at the end the reader thinks s/he has succeeded in collecting the fragments to unravel the mystery of Pedro Paramo, it is the conundrum of the man and the text that is finally asserted. For remove one fragment, and the entire text begins to collapse "like a pile of rocks" (124) that must be rearranged.

Meaning/s exist/s. But the issue is whether there is only one meaning, and one approach to it. The desire for a single and final meaning may be natural. But that cannot deny the possibility of other meanings. And mode of approaching them may not be limited to deconstruction, or the traditional new criticism. If the reader is important, so also is the author, his text and the context. Some prior knowledge, even esoteric knowledge becomes necessary for interpretation and appreciation. Preciado's imaginative pursuit must be nourished by his mother's memories as the repository of existing ideas without which his journey would be 'meaningless.' Therefore, memory must be nourished by imagination. Otherwise, there is the fear of 'arrival'—the end of the journey, and hence, the tale. This would entail the death of the author, as well as the reader. The former when there is no tale to tell, the latter in the absence of meaning.

Two things happen in the course of the novel: 1) The journey/ search for Pedro Paramo begins. The maternal injunction, "don't ask him for anything. Just what's ours…. Make him pay, son," (3) according to Patrick Dove, calls for restitution of meaning, "a demand for justice." (36) And, a demand for justice is "undeconstructible." (36) The originary myth delimits the plenitude of possible readings. Actually, the novel begins, not with the journey, but with Juan's arrival: "I came to Comala because I had been told that my father, a man named Pedro Paramo lived there." (3) Juan has arrived even before his journey begins. Hence, the wasteland of meanings. For meanings to arise, the journey must actually be undertaken. It was only Preciado's imagination that had led him on. He fails to find Pedro Paramo, and dies. Juan dies, and along with him the author and part-narrator too dies. Both, after all share the same first name, like K in Kafka's novels. 2) Susana takes over the narrative. Perspective changes. Juan becomes the listener/ reader. And the plot progresses. So, long as there is a perspective, there is a tale. So long as Juan exercises his authority there is the fear of losing the way. He, as the author/ity must die to become part of the narrative and subject to interpretation if the plot must progress. He gives up his old position, and must now allow for 'other' voices from the margins— the illegitimate, sinful ones. These voices will "little by little … beg[i]n to build a world around a hope centered on the man called Pedro Paramo." (3) The mutation of the author into the reader opens up possibilities of several interpretations. Carmen Boullosa sums up the novel as an ideal example of the art of storytelling by calling attention to its "innumerable interpretations." It has been said to

> represent, embody, allegorize and illuminate: the times of Porforio Diaz's dictatorship, the social context of the Revolution, patriarchal rancher culture and the repression of women, the poetic qualities of rural speech, Mexico's relationship with death, the lingering influence on Mexicans of Aztec cosmology, Mexican deruralization and the ghost towns it created, Mexican culture, Mexican history,

> Mexican modernity, universal myths and archetypes. All these interpretations are right, except those asserting that they alone are right.

We may identify interpretations based on the perspectives of Juan Preciado, Dolores, his mother, Dorotea, Susana, Pedro's last wife, Eduviges Dyada, Father Rentaria, the priest, Donis and his sister, other unnamed voices, and even third person narrative voices:

1) From Preciado's perspective, the novel depicts an individual's search for the self, a legitimate identity in a State where, it is insinuated that every citizen is a bastard child. Abundio, one of his bastard sons who kills Pedro Paramo declares: "We're Pedro Paramo's sons, all right, but, for all that, our mothers brought us into the world on straw mats. And the real joke of it is that he's the one carried us to be baptized" (7). Dove would point out that this return to the primal scene will "take shape as an aporetic encounter," (94) that will stimulate further search.

2) Dolores Preciado, Pedro's wife and Juan's mother, who Pedro had married so that he could clear his debts to her father; Susana, Pedro Paramo's only love, but someone who he forcefully takes to wife, Dorotea, the woman who the heavens had mistakenly given "a mother's heart but the womb of a whore" (60), the sterility of Comala, present the novel as a study on the oppression of women. One cannot avoid feminist considerations. Beardsell points out that in his quest for the father, Preciado re-encounters his mother, in Dolores, Eduviges, Damiana, Dorotea, and Donis' sister.

3) To a Marxist, Comala is "the town of [Preciado's] mother's memories," its "green plain tinged with the yellow of ripe corn," (4) is "like a piggy bank filled with memories." (58)—the story of a Capitalist order replacing an old feudal structure. When Porforio Diaz became President, he encouraged foreign investments to help the economic situation in Mexico. Investors were pleased with Mexico's cheap labour force. The Mexican Indian labourers worked under cruel conditions. Susana's father's lowering her into an abandoned mine is symbolic.

4) Susana's memories of her lover, Florencio, a dead soldier of the Peasant/ Mexican revolution, and Father Renteria's voice are

reminders of the muffled protest of Mexicans against the Cacique. Ernesto Franco calls *Pedro Paramo* "a page of history without any date or hero." (855). Pedro's accumulation of land as a rancher parallels the dictatorship of Porforio Diaz (1876-1911). The novel also refers to the Cristeros War (1926-29) when Father Renteria joins the revolution: "Years later Father Renteria would remember the night when his hard bed had kept him awake and driven him outside." (68)

5) These lines will echo in Marquez's opening of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice"—the line that would introduce to us the epic tale of several generations of Buendias to narrativise a turbulent Latin American history of failed revolutions. Both stories about a quasi-feudal social order that gave rise to ghost towns could be an engaging intertextual exercise. Both Pedro Paramo, a despot, and Colonel Aureliano Buendia a revolutionary are strong dominant, rural leaders. Both fail to sustain their towns. The inhabitants of Comala and Macondo share a common custom of the living appearing to converse with the dead.

6) Leading us to a discussion on the Mexican cultural preoccupation with death and eschatology. In a typical Mexican cultural discourse Juan is all the time in communication with his dead mother who guides him to Comala, where "life whirs by as quiet as a murmur [...] the pure murmuring of life..." (58) Ironically, this life-giving murmuring of the mother is transmuted into moaning and murmurings of dead souls in torment that takes the life of Preciado. Preciado confesses "Yes, Dorotea. The murmuring killed me." (58)

7) With this, the novel becomes a dissertation on Roman Catholic understanding of purgatory. Preciado is indeed a man in purgatory. He describes his experience after death in the house of Donis, from the grave: "I remember I got there by feeling my way along the walls as if I were walking with my hands. And the walls seemed to distill the voices, they seemed to be filtering through the cracks and crumbling mortar.... I began to sense that whispering

drawing nearer, circling around me, a constant buzzing… until finally I could hear the almost soundless words 'Pray for us.'" (58-59)

8) Comala is a town of sinners. The ultimate sin being incest. Donis and his unnamed sister-wife, or Susana's tale of her old father, bring us close to a Freudian understanding. Beardsell interprets: one son, Abundio kills his father, while another son Juan has intimate relations with the mother, the sister-wife of Donis.

9) The name Donis, in its allusion to Adonis anticipates myths of fertility and regeneration. Critics such as Nicolas Emilio Alvarez (1983) have drawn attention to the underlying mythical content of the novel. Beardsell suggests:

> If we connect Juan's journey to Comala with his encounter with death, we recognize that his experiences constitute a kind of metaphysical quest, such as those known throughout the world in myths…. In making a journey from his mother's bedside to his father's town—i. e. from his home back to his place of origin—Juan makes an archetypal journey. In particular it is consistent with the universal myth of Eternal Return in a place (usually a temple or a sacred city) at which heaven, earth and hell meet: a cosmic centre or *Axis Mundi*. In Mesoamerican mythology this Axis Mundi is fundamental.

10) The place of eternal return in this case is Comala. The story traces the formation of a cacique and his impact on a region during the turbulent times of the revolutions. Rulfo repeatedly informed interviewers that his earliest objective was to present a cacique. The author gives us historical and political reasons for the rise of the Cacique. Simultaneously, the author humanizes the ruthless tyrant as a loving son and grandson who must seek to avenge his father's murder, and presents the psycho-social reasons for his transformation. His family is seen to be forced to pay

irrational tithes to the Church. Pedro's revenge comes through an exploitation of the religious hypocrisies of people.

11) Ultimately, *Pedro Paramo* is a demonstration of the Mexican socio-political concept of Caciquismo disturbed by the incursions of the Europeans, the syncretism caused by the racial and cultural mix. The 'cacique' was a tribal chieftain of the Taino people. The term was translated as 'king' or 'prince' for the Spaniards. In a cultural reading of the novel Patrick Dove notes:

> The term *"cacique"* is derived from *kasiquan*, a Carib term which means 'to keep house.' *Caciquismo* renews or pretends to restore a tradition of filiation, personalism and familiarity which can easily appear to counter the threat posed by the process of modernization, and bureaucratization.... Akin to the sovereign in medieval Europe, the *cacique* could be said to possess two bodies... of capital and tradition. (98)

However, none of these readings can stand in isolation. Each story must be read against the other. Susanna, Dolores and other women wouldn't have been victims, had there been no caciques; the Cacique is but a byproduct of Capitalism brought in by the Europeans; and without his violation of land, women and property, would not have been the Civil war or the Cristeros revolution; no son, then would have gone out in search of a dead father; and so on and so forth, bringing us in circles back again to the same point where the search begins. "It was as if time had turned backwards." (55)

The text itself questions its structure and illustrates the arduous task of making meaning/s, of coming to conclusions. This is demonstrated symbolically through Susana, the only reason for Pedro's existence. Susana dies. The church bells toll and toll so that, what had at first appeared to be a requiem "little by little, the event turned into a fiesta. Comala was bursting with people, boisterous and noisy.... They were having a fair." (116) It is only authoritative figures like Pedro Paramo who would refuse to nourish this carnival

of polyphonic voices "I will cross my arms and Comala will die of hunger." (117) It is Pedro, the patriarch, who must disintegrate for the richness of meanings to emerge.

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The Mother and Her Adolescent Daughter in the Stories of Alice Munro

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Abstract: Mother-Daughter relationship is one of the most discussed aspects in the short stories of Alice Munro. Her inclination towards this has been studied as having started with her life's experience and her own relationship with her mother. Thus, we find a poignant touch of her personal life in such stories. This essay discusses the dialectics of an adolescent daughter and mother. The important factors that have deciding effect on this relationship at the crucial stage of daughter's life have also been discussed. Equally important are the factors that make a daughter write down her feelings through her growth.

Adolescence is stated as a transitional stage of physical psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood which is the age of majority. (WHO) Culturally adolescence is the preparation of children for the adult roles. It is a period of multiple transitions involving education, training and employability. Most importantly this stage is marked by the onset of puberty cognitively, as changes in the ability to think abstractly and multi-dimensionally. Major pubertal and biological changes and the sexual attitude of the society affect the behaviour of the adolescents. This is the time by which they have built up their personality and individuality.

The Britannica mentions that in the classical world, Aristotle recorded what now is known as adolescent development, that is, the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics in both males and females. An adolescent has to face challenges as per the expectations of the society. Besides, the adolescent has to prepare

according to the physical changes along with the psychological, social and moral terrain. Thus, this is an ambiguous stage between childhood and adulthood. The common belief is that of the adolescence disobedience and rebellion against the parents and a marked change in the behaviour. (Web)

Alice Munro as an adolescent experienced her first difficulties of life, in form of deprivation of maternal care and affection and attention; rather she had to be the mother which she could not tolerate for long and escaped to fulfil her own ambitions. Getting married to her fellow was also a means towards establishing her own identity. A gift of a type writer by James Munro was the first symbol of support towards her goal.

While trying to understand Munro, Catherine Sheldrik Ross, writes that she had decided to become a very famous writer when she was only nine. But the fact remained that such ambition was 'not encouraged in the reticent self-effacing Scotts-Irish community of Wingham, Ontario, where Alice grew up in the 1930s and 40s.(15) Adding to her bad luck and her troubles was the fact that when she was twelve years old, her mother developed Parkinson's disease . She suffered from a severe form of Parkinson's disease from 1943 until her death in 1959; according to her biographer Robert Thacker, "The Peace of Utrecht' was the first story where Munro wrote about this subject (150). It was 'an incurable, slowly debilitating illness with bizarre and evasive symptoms that are initially hard to diagnose.' (39)

The mother – daughter ambiguous relationship of the adolescent female characters of Munro mostly arise because of the role-reversal of the daughter who at this stage is planning her wishes to be fulfilled. She, however, has to become not only the caretaker of the mother but also the one responsible for the whole family.

> In family like ours it is the oldest daughter's job to stay home and look after people when they're in this situation, until they die. I, instead got a Scholarship and went to University. There is enormous guilt about doing that, but at the time you are so busy

> protecting yourself that you simply push it under, and then you suffer from it later on. (Ross 40)

Alice being the eldest daughter had to carry out all her mother's responsibilities when she was in school. As the male and female roles were clearly defined, the way she had depicted in "Boys and Girls" ... with men doing the outside works thought of as challenging and women confined to works inside the house. So, she had to take on her mother's role in the house. She started 'making meals, ironing, and bossing around her younger brother and sister though she was a good student and was doing well in her high school.

The desperate longing of an adolescent for avoiding the role reversal is apparent in the story "The Ottawa Valley" The girl is afraid of the future burden she will have to carry out if the mother becomes bed-ridden. Aunt described her own miserable example and also hinted at her mother's ill health.

> Your mother's had a little stroke...she might have another little one, and another, and another. Then some day she might have the big one. You'll have to learn to be the mother, then...well you are a big baby, if you can't stand to hear about Life.

The daughter at this stage is threatened to face more secrets than she could stand. Daughter became a rebel against role thrust upon the female as a caretaker becomes the prime cause of mother daughter ambiguity in Munro's stories; particularly when the girl has her own dreams to fulfill. "'So, are you not going to get sick at all?'I said, pushing further. I was very much relieved that she had decided against strokes, and that I would not have to be the mother, and wash and wipe and feed her lying in the bed, as Aunt Dodie had to do with her mother." (283)

The mother in "The Ottawa Valley" was coming up with the symptoms of Parkinson 's disease. "Her left forearm trembled. The hand trembled more than the arm. The thumb knocked ceaselessly against the palm. She could hide it in her fingers, and she could

hold the arm still by stiffening it against her body." (284) Again "my mother's voice had taken on an embarrassing tremor…" (285)

> 'Is your arm going to stop shaking?'I pursued recklessly, stubbornly. I demanded of her now, that she turn and promise me what I needed. But she did not do it. For the first time she held out altogether against me. She went on as if she had not heard, her familiar bulk ahead of me turning strange, indifferent. (284).

"The Ottawa Valley" is about the problems of a daughter more than it is about the problems of a person with futuristic views. Most of the story concerns the narrator's memory of a trip made with her mother and her sister to her mother's "old home in the Ottawa valley." (227) Ildikó de Papp Carrington argues that while the story might seem loosely linked (102) or jumbled (74) "the links are not loose at all, and the sequence, far from being jumbled, is deliberately calculated to jar the reader into experiencing the same. In "The Ottwa Valley" the retrospective narrator, forty-one or forty-two years old, the same age as her mother when her parkinsonism began." (191) The narrator pours out her emotional disturbances in the last paragraph of the story

> The problem, the only problem, is my mother. And she is the one of course that I am trying to get; it is to reach her that this whole journey has been undertaken. With what purpose? To mark her off, to describe, to illumine, to celebrate, to *get rid*, of her; and it did not work, for she looms too close, just as she always did. She is heavy as always, she weighs everything down, and yet she is indistinct, her edges melt and flow. Which means she has stuck to me as close as ever and refused to fall away, and I could go on, and on, applying what skills I have, using what tricks I know, and it would always be the same. (285)

The story "The Peace of Utrecht" depicts one such case where the role reversal of care –taking was the main cause of mother-daughter conflict. Munro began writing "The Peace of Utrecht," soon after her mother died in early 1959. It was first published in 1960 in *The Tamarack Review*. Eight years later, it reappeared in *Dance of the Happy Shades*. "The Peace of Utrecht" is set in the Canada of 1960 in the fictional Southwestern Ontario town of Jubilee, is the turning point story for Munro. She once said it was "the first story I absolutely had to write and wasn't writing to see if I could write that kind of story" (qtd. in Howells 1998: 14). Indeed, for Munro the story was "a breakthrough: confronting the fact of her mother freed her into autobiographical fiction (or 'personal who remained a fraught presence" (Edemariam, Web)

Helen the narrator, visits her home as a mother with her two children. She had left her hometown Jubilee in spite of the need of her mother and knowing the difficulties at home and did not even attend her mother's funeral on the excuse of a blizzard and the safety of her children. She returns home in spring several months after her mother's death. The past comes up in Helen's memory in form of the haunting house, the recollections of the aunts with mother's clothes, with the stories of her suffering and thus her invisible presence in the town. "…at every turn the sisters confront their doubled selves as adults and as the adolescents they were ten years earlier." (20) Howells interprets Munro in this story as "a Gothic plot of female imprisonment and betrayal; it deals with the uncanny as it hovers around the emblematic Gothic fear that what is dead and buried may not be dead at all but may come back to haunt the living." (20)

"The Peace of Utrecht" discusses the lived experience of Munro. Munro was the eldest of three children She had a sister five years younger to her and a younger brother. While Munro and her sister did look after their mother, they both eventually left home. The sisters in the story are their mother's primary caregivers. there is no mention of father or any male member of the family. Amelia De Falco rightly establishes, care - giving can have long-lasting adverse effects on caregivers, and Munro has explored this theme in other stories too. According to De Falco, "Throughout her early

work, in stories like 'The Peace of Utrecht' [1960], 'The Ottawa Valley' (1974), 'Winter Wind' (1974), 'Spelling' (1978), and 'A Queer Streak' (1986), one finds care giving roles, young women saddled with the responsibility to care for older family members" (2012: 380). This is the situation both Maddy and Helen were in for several years before Maddy's "ten-years' vigil" alone with the mother (1998: 195). Having to care for their mother seems to have made the sisters love her, and each other, less.

Alice speaks of her feelings in the interview to Ross "...this guilt of negligence, of not attending to her echoes in "The Peace of Utrecht." She could hear mother's desperate cry for help and this haunted her for many years.

> Then I paused ...I realized that I must have been waiting for my mother to call , from her couch in the dining –room, where she lay with blinds down in the summer heat,...I could not close the door behind me without hearing my mother's ruined voice call out to me, and feeling myself go heavy as I prepared to answer it.Calling *Who's there?*(198)

Her shouting, trembling voice, the cry for help gradually increased which they found difficult to attend to, they had to perform 'some of the trivial and unpleasant services endlessly required, or ...supply five minutes' (199) expediently cheerful conversation, ...with her demands increasing their caretaking became only a duty to be fulfilled devoid of any emotions, pity or affection. They felt trapped in the mother's sickly condition. They started planning to escape unpleasant situations 'we (199) These interruptions are described as mere parodies of normal life. Maddy had tricked her into a hospital for a check-up, but actually left her to stay where she would no longer have to care for the mother. When the mother tries to run away, she is caught and brought back to her room, where she is henceforth restrained to her bed.

Helen recalls her school days with mother's ill health as ' dim world of continuing disaster , of home' and describe her home as 'I want to ask her : is it possible that children growing up as we

did lose the ability to believe in - to be at home in-any ordinary and peaceful reality? Coral Ann Howells aptly compares the domestic world with battle as the titled story is. The Peace of Utrecht," published in Munro's first short story collection *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968), the title is suggestive of the domestic dissonance between the female members of a family with the disease affected mother being the centre of disharmony. The story is told in retrospect by the narrator Helen, who returns home to visit her older sister Maddy a few months after the death of their mother. There was no peace or happiness in the life of the adolescent sisters after their mothers' sickness. Their role was that of the keepers/attendant of the ever-increasing demands of the deteriorating mother. She was like a sickly child. "the most frightful parodies of love, in which she tried, through her creaking throat, to plead for kisses in coy pitiable childish tones" (270). The sisters perceive their mother's needs as indecent, because she has, due to her illness, lost all restraint: "the cry for help-undisguised, oh, shamefully undisguised and raw and supplicating – that sounded in her voice. They started considering it as urgency without any emotions 'as one of those household sounds which must be dealt with, so that the worse may not follow." (198) The daughters were fed up with her increasing demands, doing unpleasant services throughout the day 'grew cunning, unfailing in cold solicitude; ...took all emotion away from our dealings with her, as you might take away meat from a prisoner to weaken him till he died. (199) The sisters were now devoid of any feelings towards as Maddy says "Our Gothic Mother" I don't keep trying to make her *human* anymore. Helen even describes her gothic looks. Helen says 'our Gothic mother, with the cold appalling mask of the Shaking Palsy laid across her features, shuffling, weeping, devouring attention...eyes dead and burning, fixed inward on herself. (200). The Gothic atmosphere is hinted repeatedly in the story. Her first impression of her hometown introduces Jubilee as a self-absorbed place unwilling to deal with its darker sides: I drove up to the main street –a new service station, new stucco front on the Queen's Hotel– and turned into the quiet, decaying side streets where old maids live, and have birdbaths and blue delphiniums in their

gardens. The big brick houses that I knew, with their wooden verandas and gaping, dark-screened windows, seemed to me plausible but unreal. (Munro 1968: 266-267) Katrin Brendt in "The Ordinary Terrors of Survival: Alice Munro and the Canadian Gothic" discussing the gothic in Alice Munro explains Gothic as the awareness of the indeterminate, obscure, and subconscious spheres of life and is expression of the hidden, ambivalent meanings and expression of fears beyond logic and rational understanding, and reminds its readers that such anxieties may lurk beneath the surface of everyday, ordinary experience. Consequently, her texts have been labelled as "Southern Ontario Gothic." 'Gothic writing, relates to the darker side of human existence, encompassing insanity, fear, cruelty, violence and sexuality. Beverly Rasporich relates directly to Gothic notions of fear and the unknown when she explores the small-town settings of Alice Munro's stories (136). The disease, she feels is disgusting in being "erratic and leisure in its progressly. The daughters realized their bad fate, disease was a horror for them. But they could no more pity or be sympathetic towards mother as 'the demand on us was too great. Her theatricality humiliated us almost to death." (199) But her condition gradually deteriorated to that of a vegetable life. Her look has been described to a Gothic mother. (200) Her voice was not intelligible and inhuman. The desperation of the daughters for escaping increased. Their life was lost. Now they made a truce with the battle; Helen escaped and Maddy managed for ten years; but lost the peace in the battle. There was shimmering guilt, hatred, the talk of the town and for Maddy, a lonely life which was going to make her mad. Helen thought she needed a loving relationship (194) with the rural social bondages making it very difficult for them to proclaim their individuality.

> the picture of her face which I carried in my mind seemed too terrible, unreal. similarly the complex strain of living with her, the feelings of hysteria…no exorcising here, says Maddy…we're not going to depress each other. so we haven't. (191) and also shows her love of her school. as it seemed to me I

> could not acknowledge that we are not merely indifferent; at heart we reject each other ...(190)

Munro has also depicted the human potential for violence in "The Peace of Utrecht" The horrific situation shows a sick mother becoming such a trouble that the sisters become unsympathetic and cold towards such an extent that they become inhuman towards her. Helen escaped to establish her own life and Maddy after ten years of difficult life left her in hospital. There was humiliation, anger, impatience and disgust at this grotesque being, neither "intelligible" nor "quite human," that leads a "dim vegetable life." Time and again, however, the mother has brief periods of recovery in which her true self resurface. Maddy's impatience finally surfaced in her refusal to take her mother back home with her once she is in the hospital. Later they accepted that "the resources of love we had were not enough, the demand on us was too great; we were only children when the disease took hold of her" (270). The sisters suffered both physically and mentally while the mother was alive and also after her death. Being exhausted with caretaking they tried their way of escape and so had a terrible sense of guilt conscience. They also faced criticism for their action in Jubilee. They struggled hard to keep their mother as civilized, controlled, as tamed as possible. Yet the mother- daughter relationship takes a very ugly form. The duration and the difficulty of their increasing responsibility resulted in a hateful relationship. The obvious discrepancy between a rational approach and the lingering impact of disturbing impulses also seems to have inspired the title of the story. In a similar way, neither Helen's escape from Jubilee, nor Maddy's decision to put her mother in a hospital, gave the sisters the peace of mind they desired.

They are exasperated with the 'erratic' and 'leisurely' progress of the disease. Even if the mother becomes normal for a brief period, 'at the end of these periods of calm a kind of ravaging energy would come over her;...(200) she would behave in just the opposite way ;talking insistently, she would not be comprehensible, become more demanding , nerve-racking, more complaining ,creating an atmosphere of 'frenzy and frustration'. Daughters did

their best ten long years, sacrificing ten years of their youth trying to manage the sick mother with what they had understood her. Helen finds an old notebook in which she sees written, in her own handwriting, "The Peace of Utrecht, 1713, brought an end to the War of the Spanish Succession" (201). This reminded Helen has "a strong effect", triggering memories of high school and adolescence. The title is suggestive of the complex and disturbed situation in Europe of 1713. Helen and Maddy's emotional situation in Canada c.1960 is as *complex* as the political situation. Helen later says "that discouraging house" is all Maddy has left in Jubilee (195), and she also calls it "that house of stone." (199) Though Helen opens up with advice for Maddy."Don't be guilty Maddy…Take your life, Maddy…Go away, don't stay here" and Maddy also confesses in the end, "But why can't I, Helen? Why can't I?" (210)

As an introspection through writing, the narrator analyses the circumstances which were painful to both the sisters and under what circumstances their attitude of love, attachment and sympathy towards their mother and towards each other changed. Maddy is firm in her voice when she says "I'm not guilty;" … I couldn't go on … I wanted my life." Coral Ann Howells discuss this situation as

> …this is the time for breaking open of secrets when Maddy confesses the intolerable strain of looking after her mother and her longing for a life of her own, while Helen speaking out of her own guilt urges her sister to go away as she had done. but no peace is made. (23)

The once all-powerful mother remains omnipotent in her claims, which seem to know no bounds. The dual voices are the perspectives of the mature narrator, Helen and of the adolescent Helen. She tries to recall and judge every action of the past, the causes behind them and the consequence of such actions. Carrington demonstrates again and again that the process of understanding through language continues in Munro's work between published versions of her stories and we see the difficult

efforts on her part to control the uncontrollable. She maintains that "the most central and creative paradox of Munro's fiction is its repeated but consciously ambivalent attempt to control what is uncontrollable, to split in half to control a suddenly split world. These internal and external splits produce the 'intense … moments of experience' that pattern Munro's stories." (4-5)

Again we find the retrospective narrator and the daughter's retrospective feelings in "The Friend of my Youth." Munro dedicates the title story to the memory of her mother. This is one of the same stories which critics have described as with the autobiographical narrative. The story extends over a long period. In "Friend of My Youth" the narrator's recurrent dream brings back her deceased mother, but the long forgotten pre-Parkinson's disease mother, the mother who was not a burden:

> I recovered then what in waking life I had lost – my mother's liveliness of face and voice before her throat muscles stiffened and a woeful, impersonal mask fastened itself over her features. How could I have forgotten this, I would think in the dream – the casual humor she had, not ironic but merry, the lightness and impatience and confidence? (4)

The mother-daughter conflict also emerges in the form of tension between Ada and Del where Ada like many mothers desire to vicariously live out her own relinquished dreams via her daughter's education and escape, while at the same time expecting Del to be accepted in the social structure and so embrace motherhood like other women of the rural society of Jubilee. Del, however, is torn between the two: the fear of becoming like her independent mother and the desire to be loved and to conform to the social expectations of the community. Thus Del in her adolescence avoids the image of her mother and therefore develops a rigid tendency to develop her own will and way. Ada herself was an intelligent student, a strong personality who could carve out her own fate in the face of every hardships and criticisms. Del had the image of her mother as an all powerful person. But with her

growing knowledge of the world and mother's out of the world ways which brought her the criticisms of the society, made Del determined to be different from mother and be accepted in the society although she also cherished the same dreams and ambitions as of her mother. She grew critical of her. Del is unable to disengage from her mother's influence as their 'personalities', as Rich would argue, 'seem dangerously to blur and overlap' (236). Del has both bitterness and longing towards her mother's intrusion into her life. "Her concern about my life," she says, "which I needed and took for granted, I could not bear to have expressed." (223) In her journey to adulthood, Del struggles to define herself without suffering the same ostracism as her mother. There is ambivalence for both mother and daughter concerning freedom, education, sexuality and love. The grown-up narrator acknowledges her mother's hardship and understands her craving for knowledge. Ada as an adolescent had defied her father, walked to town, organized accommodation and returned to school. Del, in her maturity, salutes her audacity:

> Oh, if there could be a moment out of time, a moment when we could choose to be judged, naked as can be, beleaguered, triumphant, then that would have been the moment for her. Later on comes compromise and error, perhaps; there she is absurd and unassailable. (98)

She was helped in this endeavor by a 'community of women' (web) to facilitate Ada's independence. Grandma Seeley provided accommodation, a job and basic clothing; Miss Rush provided love, piano tuition and a positive sense of self; Fern provides friendship and fun. Ada becomes visible in the community through letters to the paper on issues important to women. Munro creates world where every woman understands the plight of other women and thus readily supplies the necessary support , creating a 'female community'. Similarly, in "Runaway" Sylvia created a whole support network for Carla. Del realizes her love of reading like that of her mother and also decides on her future.

> A time came when all the books in the library in the town Hall were not enough for me, Nothing we had come up against in our lives equaled in importance those examinations,..to say we studied does not half describe the training we put ourselves into;..it was not just high marks we wanted ,not just to win the scholarships and get into university; it was the highest possible marks: glory, glory, the top of the pinnacled A's, security at last.(227)

But both her mother and Del herself find their dreams about Del failing. Mother is disappointed and finds herself helpless. Still, she does not give up her search for a good future prospect to move of the small town life through the job prospects. Del realizes that she has been sabotaged by love, and it was "not likely I would get a scholarship which for years I and everybody else had been counting on, to carry me away from Jubilee." (272)

Del like her mother is enthralled and enchanted by the vast world of knowledge in the encyclopaedias. Her pleasure like her mother's. they are also one of the significant literary sources for Del. As James Carscallen puts it in his book The Other Country: Patterns in the Writing of Alice Munro, "Del finds the encyclopaedias a treasury of stories and pictures; and stories and pictures have their own kind of wisdom, if we can take them in the right way." (378) Del remarks that "I loved their sedate dark-green biding, the spidery, reticent-looking gold letters on their spines. They might open to show me a steel engraving of a battle, taking place on the moors, say, with a castle in the background, or in a harbour of Constantinople. (55) Addie's behaviour was taken after her mother who, though never forgave her mother for making her sell the Bibles to farmers, asks her daughter, many years later, to do the same with the famous encyclopaedias. Del's grandmother was called "a religious fanatic", and due to Addie's behaviour, she becomes something close to "an educational activist".

The third factor which I would bring to discuss the mother daughter relationship is the effect of patriarchal society. As theorised by Nancy Chodorow in *The Reproduction of Mothering*

motherhood is the upholder of existing values of patriarchal authority and female objectivization. The later ambivalent love/hate relationship of Del and Ada is contextualized with these patriarchal contextualizing influences and masculinity norms.

Ada herself did not confirm to the social values. She faced scrutiny, criticism and was ostracized for nonconformity. '...is your mother going on the road much these days?" She was criticized by Aunt Elspeth and Auntie Grace "...Not much time for ironing when she has to go out on the road."(72) So, Del tried to defend her mother

> I felt the weight of my mother's eccentricities, of something absurd and embarrassing about her- the aunts would just show me a little at a time-land on my coward's shoulders. I did want to repudiate her... at the same time I wanted to shield her. She would never have understood how she needed shielding...they wore dark cotton dresses with fresh, perfectly starched and ironed... (73)

Neither the aunts nor the daughter understood her struggle against fate, the economic downfall "The war was still on then. Farmers were making money at last..." (73) She tried hard to be self dependent and to support her family. She had moved to Jubilee leaving behind the father on the Flats Road to get herself and the children a prestigious life. She was laughed at by Aunt Elspeth and Auntie Grace "All by herself, stuck on the Jericho Road! Poor Ada! but the mud on her, we had to laugh!" (73)

Her struggle against fate and her efforts were ridiculed instead of being appreciated. The worst part is when her daughter also does not understand her and refuses the least support she was able to give her in selling the encyclopedia. It was a challenge to sell encyclopedias to the farmers who had dreams of having refrigerator after recovering from the financial crunch of 1930. Ada, however was trying to bank it as precious product for the children in which Del was to set an example for the worldwide knowledge gained through these books. The Flats Roads was a very lonely, aloof place.

Ada emerged as the all powerful mother. She carried out all the responsibilities, that of a father and mother for the children. She was driving for selling encyclopedias, purchasing favourites for the children and taking care of their happiness. For them she learnt driving a car, tolerated the bad roads, managed every hardship but did not get due recognition even by her daughter. Ada herself was a good student was awarded' Laocoon inkwell award for highest mark and general proficiency when she graduated from highschool." (Lives 103)

Adolescent mother daughter has been presented in Munro more as critical relation than one with love and attachment. However, this was narrated from the perspective of an older narrator with sympathy, understanding and deep sense of guilt, which reminds us of the remark of Suzanne Juhasz that writing is a process of healing the past. The narrator in "Baptizing" feels guilty of her past actions.

> But she was not well .at first she had been plagued by a whole series of uncommon ailments...she kept going to the doctor.... what was really happening was a failure of energy, a falling back, that nobody would have looked for she would still sometimes write a letter to the paper; she was trying to teach herself astronomy. But sometimes she would go and lie on her bed and call me to put a quilt over her. I would always do it carelessly...Then he would say, "Kiss Mother." I would drop one dry stingy kiss on her temple.... I preferred to be myself. (201)

Munro has also depicted the inquisitiveness and the curiosities of an adolescence particularly with the religious practices and beliefs. She observes 'my parents went to church seldom where their children were baptized. Whereas her father seemed to tolerate the system with 'an air of courtesy and forbearance, her mother, Del recalls her quest to find religion, various theological texts serve her as the means to achieve her goals. They are like guidelines, but they never cease to confuse her

with their theological points of view on life and faith of the religious person. Del Jordan argues about faith and religion with her mother and her younger brother Owen. Addie Jordan's opinion on that subject is unfortunately of no help for her daughter. Due to Del's grandmother, Addie lost her faith in her early years and started blaming religion for her unhappiness and the pain that she experienced in her childhood and adolescence The whole episode with the Bibles, as Addie claims, "cured me of religion for life" (LGW 64). Because of the mistakes made by her grandmother, "a religious fanatic" – as Addie calls her – Del suffers, because her mother, trying too hard not to repeat those errors, fell into the opposite, yet similarly destructive pattern of behaviour (LGW 63). She is an atheist, who could not help her daughter understand and show her the way through that confusion. She wishes Del would completely abandon this quest. Her actions do not produce desired results, because her teenage daughter is in need of some answer. God was made by man! Not the other way around!... Man at a lower and blood thirstier [sic] stage of his development than he is at now, we hope. Man made God in his own image. I've argued that with ministers. I'll argue it with anybody. (89)

Del's opinion of her mother gradually changed. She could not satisfy her curiosity about her mother's wisdom and she will eventually start to link with her creative imagination. She is one curious soul and she is eager to discover new spheres in her life at different stages of her development. Establishing one's beliefs is one of the steps in becoming a self-confident woman and a writer. She is curious of God, she believes in Him, yet she is in need of some kind of evidence for His existence. She contemplates His mystery. Could there be God not contained in the churches' net at all, not made manageable by any spells and crosses, God real, and really in the world, and alien and unacceptable as death? Could there be God amazing, indifferent, beyond faith? (LGW 115) Her inner inquisitiveness leads her to many congregations in Jubilee; she slowly realizes, however, that the answers are impossible to receive.

Thus, there was the mother-daughter conflict with regard to religion. Mother was too extrovert in keeping her differences with the society to herself. I was afraid that at any moment she might

jump up and challenge something. The hymns she ostentiously did not sing. ...of the social norm her mother 'never closed her eyes in the church and 'barely inclined her head. She would sit looking all around, cautious but unabashed, like an anthropologist taking note of the behavior of the primitive tribe. She listened to the sermon bolt upright, bright-eyed, skeptically chewing at her lipstick; ... (106)

The girl in her adolescence had understood her mother's rebel attitude and that she was being criticized for this in Jubilee. Del herself becomes determined to form a different identity of herself from her mother. She regularly went to church, and ensured that everyone had watched her

> At first, it was probably to bother my mother...and to make myself interesting ...I hoped that people would be intrigued and touched by my devoutness and persistence, knowing my mother's beliefs or non- beliefs, as they did.

By the time she was twelve years old her "reasons had changed or solidified. I wanted to settle the question of God." (106) Del had now developed a strong inclination towards the mysteries of religion. "God had always been a possibility for me; He was a necessity... but I wanted reassurance, proof that He actually was there. That was what I came to church for, but could not mention to anybody." (107) She started reading religious books, regularly visited church with the 'unspeakable hope' that God would display Himself...which she believed that she must 'rigidly contain this hope... (107) This adolescents' curiosity took her to different churches to understand the mysteries of religion. The question of whether God existed or not never came up in Church. I did think of taking it to another Church, to the Anglican Church. '

Del's struggle as an adolescent is both of rootedness and of independence. The desperate desire for individual identity, freedom from patriarchy, makes Del, like many other young people, ambiguously struggle to move herself away from her home community; the small Ontario town of Jubilee, both the mother

and the daughter realized, as Mary Wollstonecraft had remarked in *A Vindication* that "I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists. I wish to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings are only the objects of pity, and that kind of love which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt." (87)

Del as an adolescent is curious about the existence of God, she wanted and tried to understand the Anglican views on the suffering of Christ, but was disappointed when at a Good Friday service, the minister does not say much about Jesus's question on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" believing she could identify with someone who faced despair and defeated it (Lives 122). Later, after she has given up on reaching God through organized religion, she wonders, "Could there be a God not in the churches' not at all, not made manageable by any spells and crosses, God real, and really in the world, and alien and unacceptable as death? Could there be a God amazing, indifferent, beyond faith?" (128). Nora Forster Stovel has commented on how the twelve-year old "Del tours the churches of Jubilee in search of God, but she discovers social stratification instead" (2). Munro gives us a glimpse of the social and religious stratification. Del's is undermined by experience, questioning, and life's possibilities. After considering other possible churches, she is drawn to the small Anglican church by its theatrical rituals" She longs for more safety, more permanence, than her home life affords (111).

The character of Del evolves as a typical Munrovian woman who could consent to sexual venture against her mother's warnings, as an adventure. As an adolescent she wanted to try sex as Jerry Storey remarked, "wouldn't it be educational? I have never seen a real live naked woman." Both of them were intellectuals and competitors but could never love lustily. still wanted to experience and experiment with what they had read about sex.

Del grew critical of her mother who "would publicly campaign for birth control would never even think she needed to

talk to me, so firmly was she convinced that sex was something no woman – no intelligent woman- would ever submit to unless she had to." (222) But at the same time, she thought her mother decent and hated Jerry's mother's 'indecent practicality' I thought it quite offensive for a mother to mention intimacies a girl might be having with her own son." (222) However, Del fell in love at the most crucial period of her career. She was deep in love with Garnet though she found no match intellectually or emotionally but there was the terrible attraction and lust only. "I had to review, could not let go of, those great gifts...sex seemed to me all surrender – not the woman's to the man but the person's to the body, an act of pure faith, freedom in humility." (239) Despite her mother's warning of her future prospects she could not focus on her studies for fulfilling her dream of reading in a university. She confessed "Nothing that could be said by us would bring us together; words were our enemies.... this was the knowledge that is spoken of as "only sex" or "physical attraction".

With all the mother –daughter nuances the adolescents of Munro grow up to build their personalities and realize in retrospection the love, sacrifice of their mothers. Del does take after her mother, whether she wants it or not. She understands that she has the same inclination towards intellectual achievement like her mother and avoids the decorative behaviour of her contemporary girls. Sue Thomas points out, "Del thinks of her artistically and intellectually aspiring mother as romantic/sexual failure." (111) Del's mother who is herself ahead of her contemporaries, though dreams of a better life for Del, also wants her to be accepted in society. Del's mother shows a very different aspect of woman from either Madeleine or the aunts. The world of intellect, reason and the arts is her muse, and because she doesn't conform to any acceptable ideal of motherhood in a small town is a chronic embarrassment and a social humiliation to a conforming Del.

"I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists. I wish to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of

weakness, and that those beings are only the objects of pity, and that kind of love which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt."

Del wants to avoid her mother's fate and her attitudes, which embrace learning of any kind and deny sexual experience. Yet, at the end Del will eventually realize, as Martha Gimenez writes that conceiving motherhood as a taken-for-granted dimension of the so-called women's normal adult role has always been one of the key sources of women's oppression. (296)and therefore they find that education is the key to their freedom .Betty Friedan, writes for women in *The Feminine Mystique*

> The key to the trap is, of course, education. The feminine mystique has made higher education for women seem suspect, unnecessary and even dangerous. But I think that education, and only education, has saved, and can continue to save, American women from the greater dangers of the feminine mystique. (377)

The trust between mother and the daughter and right guidance through education for future life, thus plays the most crucial role in the mother daughter relationship.

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T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Guruprasad Mohanty's "Kalapurusha"

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Nibedita Patel

The role of translation and adaptation of western writing cannot be underestimated. The European poetry of the post-World War I & II were the ideal of almost all the poetry of the rest of the world. Critic Santosh Kumar Nayak in his study of post-independence political context and literature says, "the main source of modern poetry is Europe. Due to several struggle, revolution, war, industrial revolution, scientific inventions, analysis of different philosophical thoughts the seed of modern European thoughts have been germinated; a kind of revolution has started in the field of art, sculpture, and architecture as well as in the field of literature. In modern Indian literature we encounter this." After fifties, many poets realized this truth in their own soil and air. An interesting and unique example from Odia is Guru Prasad Mohanty's Sahitya Akademi award winning poetry collection *Samudra snana*, which opens with a long poem "Kalapurusha". In this paper I have tried to make close reading of Mohanty's Kalapurusha in relation to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Guru Prasad Mohanty's long poem "Kalapurusha" has justly been praised by critics and fellow-writers. It has exceedingly charming lyrical passages. More than that, it marked the beginning of a new development—the flowering of long poems in modern Odia poetry, which delineate the anguished destiny of modern man through a central symbol, myth, or archetype.

Mohanty was born in Nagabali, Cuttack district, Odisha, was a prominent Odia poet of the post-independence period. He was a member of the Orissa Education Service and retired from service as Principal, B J B College, Bhubaneswar. As a teacher of

English Literature, he was deeply influenced by the major trends in English poetry. Unlike most Odia writers the village does not form an important aspect of his poetry. He authored *Nutan Kavita* (1955), *Samudra Snana* (1970), *Ascharya Abhisara* (1988) and *Kavita Samagra* (1995). He received the Sahitya Akademi award (1973) for his *Samudra Snana*. He is regarded as the founder of modernism in Odia poetry, unconcerned with the Radhanath-Madhusudan tradition and the pseudo revolutionary zeal of the thirties which had its echo in so much of the early Sachi Rautray. He has written only sixty-eight poems during his life time. One also encounters numerous Eliotic images in his poems like "Gobar Ganesh", with a Prufrockian figure saying, 'No, I am not the hero of Dhupa' and intertextualities like those in "Alaka Sanyal," 'May be Sachibabu had seen you sometime; I do not know, Alaka Sanyal ....'.

Guruprasad Mohanty has completed writing "Kalapurusha" since 1957 and it took two years to complete the poem. Dr. Nityananda Satapathy quotes the editorial lines from the quarterly *Pragyan*, where "Kalapurusha" was first published, "In this edition we are publishing a long poem of the modern poet Sri Guruprasad Mohanty. Readers can find similarities of the poem from Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Such similarities are intended and at the same time unpremeditated. He has experimented to express similar sentiments, with certain emotional situations akin to those of Waste Land within the limits and power of Odia language" (*Sabuja ru Sampratika*). In an interview, Mohanty has stated that he kept T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* open on his table and wrote "Kalapurusha". But despite the similarities Odia scholars and critics have not called "Kalapurusha" a translation of *The Waste Land*, but a reflection of poetic consciousness.

Prof. Rowena Fowler in "'Η "Ερημη Χώρα: Seferis' Translation of "The Waste Land"" affirms a successful translation of *The Waste Land* by the Greek poet George Seferis'. Like Mohanty's work Seferis has expressed his emotional reaction to the poem and the influence it had on his work; as he says, "there is no virgin birth in art" and has tried "to test the resistance of his own language". Thus, to an extent, the similarity with *The Wasteland* is deliberate. "Kalapurusha" has also far too many local associations and deep

linkages with Odia culture, tradition, and values to be called a Cuttack edition of *The Wasteland*. Pure modernism is rare in Odia literature and of course in Guruprasad Mohanty's poetry.

And we must remember that Guru Prasad Mohanty received the Akademi award in 1973 for his original work in the Odia language. Aloka Patel in "Interrogating Fidelity in Translation: T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land in Odia" is of the opinion that, "Kalapurusha exemplifies an alternate model of translation that some might refer to as a "transcreation" but this idea of "transcreation" particularly for an Odia translation of *The Waste Land* does not sound convincing". Dr. Patel points out one of the many tasks of the translator, that is to bridge the cultural divide between two dissimilar cultures.

An important point in the case of Eliot is of naturalizing quotations and allusions, names and places, colloquialisms, and archaisms in another language. Considering the difficulties of cultural translation, Priyadarshi Patnaik argues in his essay "Kalapurusa of Guruprasad Mohanty and Eliot's The Waste Land", "translate The Waste Land into Odiya, and the effect is lost". Pattnaik is of the view that "a literary parallel has to be created born of its own culture, rooted in it, like a seed which is taken from its parent climate and which sprouts and grows in its new way in its new environment" like Kalapurusha.

Every poetic creation is influenced by other sensibilities, sometimes by other cultures. The same is perhaps true of Odia literature. Odisha –especially the sensibility of places like Cuttack and Puri that strongholds Odia literary sensibilities – was deeply affected by the loss of group-centric values, the emergence of individualistic values, the touch of modernism with all its sadness and agony, the realization that the world is changing, the hint of pop and hippy culture. Perhaps a poem like "Kalapurusha" was necessary to suggest the disjunction, the displacement and loss of a set of values, and the inability of giving birth to new ones.

"Kalapurusha", in relation to *The Waste Land*, is interestingly located and it creates the same spirit in a regional language. The texts come from radically different cultures, at different points of time. The former is inspired by the latter. Both

are creative works. But without Eliot's work Mohanty's work would not exist. There is an act of translation. But this is also an act of transformation. It was also heralded as a radically original poem in Odisha in the 1960s-1970s which brought in a new style, a new experimentation and sensibility into the Odia language. Nihilism, existential angst, loss of hope, innocence and culture were all epitomized, for its audience, in this poem. If we read "Kalapurusha" within its ambience of Cuttack with its mud, its canals, its smoke and fog, its incessant rains and its Kathajodi river it evokes a mood which perhaps *The Waste Land* evokes when we read it in its own context. The poem opens in a tone of lament conveyed through the painful imagery of the rains:

> ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ନିର୍ମମ,ଫୁଟାଇ ରଙ୍ଗଣୀ ଫୁଲ ଖତକୁଢ଼ୀ
> ମୁରଛରେ ଆହତ ଯେବେ ଥିଲା ସବୁ, ସବୁ ଥିଲା ଉତ୍ତେଜନା

> Barsa ritu nisthura nirmama, phutae rangani phula khatakudhi ...murcha re ahata jebe thila sabu, sabu thila utejana hina ("Kalapurusha", 54)

This echoes Eliot's line "April is the cruellest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land". From the infertile dead land, lilac is coming out. It is regeneration not in the spiritual sense, rather from dead land out of dead tumorous existence, which makes it quite sinister in quality. Western civilization as the protagonist pictures is a world vacillating between the comfortable narcosis of deadness and the frightening challenge of coming back to life. It is about the collapse of European civilization; it is the Waste Land.

In its uncontrollable form, in "Kalapurusha" rain is characterised as introducing indiscipline, bishrunkhala into a society that is already in disorder. In a place like Odisha, it is summer that is heartless, arid, and cruel. July brings early showers and cools us down. If in England Summer regenerates, then in most of India it is the season of rain that regenerates the earth. Our first impression is of the exhausted modern individual, who lacks the blithe energy to partake in the glorious rains. The feeling of elation

and rejuvenation normally associated with the rains are deliberately avoided and instead it cruelly brings back memories of the beautiful past, which is lost.

The anguish of the modern individual's degenerate living is suggested in his indifference to nature: a resistance and irritation to the spontaneity of rains that arrive without warning. Cuttack, one of the first urban settlements was also the first to acquire symptoms of cultural chaos associated with modernity. Perceived to be a version of 'hell' it is characteristic of the deep ambiguities of city life. In the movement of the individual, we perceive a deep sense of loss of something familiar and essential and its replacement with an alien culture.

In the poet's excessive stress on the city of Cuttack, the readership is expected to perceive the breakdown of the togetherness of the rural social structure and the price that a modern individual pays in extreme loneliness. It describes the 'weird' flock of English people, 'pastless' and 'futureless' who came as 'locusts' in search of fresh pastures to destroy and left behind a pathetic modern society, bankrupt of moral values and sense of tradition.

Kalapurusha expresses how physical attraction is higher than feelings of love. Everywhere the speaker is diseased with a deadly mental agony. So, night and moon are all pale and lifeless to him. The woman speaker is also lifeless and man is more in a zombie state. Everywhere there is a strange feeling of lifelessness:

> ଭୟ ଆଉ ପାପ ମିଶି ଏ ସମୟ ଅନ୍ତଃସତ୍ତ୍ୱା... ଜୀବନର ଭଗ୍ନାଂଶ କେବଳ
> ତେଣୁ ଏହି ସହରର ଗଳିରେ ଛିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରାଣହୀନ ଦେହ ଓ କାମନା।
> ତେଣୁ ଏହି ସହରର ବିବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦେହରେ ଶୀତ ଖଦଡ଼ ଓ ଭଲର ପୋଷାକ
> ଭିତରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଆସି ଛିଡ଼ା ହୁଏ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଅଭୀଷପ୍ତ ମଣିଷର ପାପ ଭୟର
> ପ୍ରେତାତ୍ମା

> Bhaya aau papa misi a samaya antasatwa... jibana ra bhagnansa kebala tenu ehi saharara galire chinna pranahina deha o kamana tenu ehi saharara bibarna

dehare seeta khadaada o ul ra posaka ... abhisapta
manisa ra papa aau bhaya ra pretatma
("Harekrushna Das" *Kabita Samagra*,31)

Mohanty has expressed man's sin consciousness and war frailty in the above lines. He has written "Alaka Sanyal" to show the infected life of a woman, who is also a victim of the diseased, disordered world:

ତା ଭିତରେ ତୁମେ ପୁଣି ପ୍ରେମ କର ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ହୁଅ
ସିନେମାର ହାଣ୍ଡବିଲ୍ ବି ଦେଖିଛି ମୁଁ ତୁମରି ହାତରେ
ପବନ ତୁମକୁ ଯେବେ ଆସ୍ତେ ନିଏ ବାଲିରୁ ସାଉଁଟି
ମୁଁ ତୁମର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖେ ମୋର ଢିଲା ଅମରାବତି ପାଇଜାମାରେ ...
ତୁମେ ବା ଆସିଛ ଫେରି ତାମ୍ରଲିପି ସ୍ତୁପ ତଳୁ
ଅନ୍ୟ କେଉଁ ପୃଥିବୀରୁ ଆଜିର ଏ ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ ଦିଗନ୍ତକୁ

Ta bhitare tume puni prema kara garbhabati hua
cinema ra handbill b dkhichi mu tumari hathare
pabana tumaku jebe aaste niea baliru sauti
mu tumara Swapna dekhe mora dhila amarabati
paejama re... tume ba aasicha pheri tamralipi stupa
talu anya keu pruthibi ru aajira a byartha diganta
ku (*Kabita Samagra*,19)

The poetic elements of "Kalapurusha" is very identical to his other poems like, "Nihata Godhuli", "Drusti ra Diganta" and "HareKrushna Das". In "Kalapurusha" only the sphere of life is bigger, so poet's experience, vision and quest will obviously be bigger. Mohanty has assimilated many themes and ideologies of Eliot still it does not demean Mohanty's uniqueness. His poem poignantly describes all that the Odia people had 'lost' in terms of its cultural values and social relations. Soon after the independence, we have started to live in a pseudo-social earth. Prasanna Kumar Swain in *Saahityara Deepti o Byaapti*, puts the facts that the village people of Odisha have started moving towards the tea-garden of Assam, cloth mills of Gujarat, Kolkata to be in city and to live. But

they have been turned into daily wagers, labourers, dadans and bethi even for the entire lifetime under the cruel clutches of situation. The sense of alienation has started from the third and fourth decade of twentieth century in the life of Indian society. The precarious scene could be noticed in lines:

ଏ ସହର ମୁଁହ ପରେ ଗୋଳି ଗୋଳି ପାଉଁଶ ଅଙ୍ଗାର
ରାତିର କୁହୁଡ଼ି ଚାଲେ ବାଟବାରି ଗଳି ଗଳି ସଡ଼କେ ସଡ଼କେ
ରାତିର ଅଫିମ ନିଶା ଜାକି ଜୁକି ଯେବେ ଘୋଟି ଆସେ
ସଙ୍କୁଚିତ ଡେଣା କରି ଯେବେ ଆସେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଆକାଶ
ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ଏତେ ଲୋକ ଏତେ ମାଂସ ଏତେ ସ୍ୱାଦୁ କଳା ଧଳା ସାନ ବଡ଼
ଏତେ ହାତ ଗୋଡ଼ର ସମଷ୍ଟି
ଇତିହାସ କାଗଜରୁ ଅବା କାର ଖିଆଲ୍ ଭିତରୁ
ଏମାନେ ଆସିଲେ କାହୁଁ ଝରଣାର ପାଣି ଖୋଜି
ଏତେ ଭୁତ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଗୋତ୍ରହୀନ, ଏ ଅଦ୍‌ଭୂତ ସଙ୍ଗପାଳ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ....
ଆତ୍ମା ଯେତେ ଏ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଯାଏ ଯାଏ ନଇକୂଳ ବୁଲି
ଏ ସବୁ ସତ ନା ମିଛ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଆଜି ଅବା କାଲି ? (୫୯)

A sahara muha pare goli goli paunsha angara
rati ra kuhudi chale batabari gali gali sadake sadake
ratira afim nisa jaki juki jebe ghoti aase
sankuchita dena kari jebe aase olhae aakasha
mu bhabili ete loka ete mansha ete swadu kala dhal
asana bada ete hatha goda ra samasti
etihasa kagajaru aba kar khiala bhitaru
emane aasile kahu jharana ra pani khoji
ete bhuta bhabisyata gotrahina, gatrahina a adbhuta
sangapala gosthi ... aatma jete a sandhya re jae jae
naekula buli a sabu sata na micha bartaman aaji aba
kali? (“Kalapurusha”, 56)

In the fourth part of “Kalapurusha”, again the trials filled life of the speaker bounds her to sell her body to the business man Bose Babu,

which shows the naked picture of society. Her father is an employee with low income, her brother is bedridden in hospital and her mother with a bundle of wants begs door to door. In such circumstances it is not unusual that Bose Babu's money attracts her body. The economic collapse in post-independence Odisha burnt all our age-old values, moral principles to ash. The drastic economic condition of that girl has made her obliged to be engaged in unhealthy practices. She was engaged in sex-work which is unethical and unsocial at the same time. She is the slave of the hard time. In such numerous instances of degradation and disaster of world values the speaker tries to look for a way to escape, but in vain. Guruprasad has given the naked sketch of the event which is really heart touching. The lines could be felt with intense care:

ଅରଣ୍ୟର ଅଜଗର ମୁଁ ରହେ ଅଥର୍ବ ସ୍ଥିର
ମୁଁ ଶହେ କଷଣ ଲକ୍ଷ ଦେହ ଆଉ ମନ ଓ ଆତ୍ମାର
ମୋ ଦେହର ଗନ୍ଧ ପୃଥିବୀ ପୁଷ୍ପବତୀ ଗଣିକାର
ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଭାନୁ ହୁଙ୍କାର ଓ ଇସିକର ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀର
ଗୋ ମାଂସର ଗନ୍ଧ ପୁଣି ମଦ ମତ୍ସ ନାରୀ ଗନ୍ଧ
ମୋ ଦେହରେ ପୃଥିବୀର ଯାଯାବର ଆଲୋକ ଅନ୍ଧାର
ଜେଲଖାନା ପାଚେରୀରେ ଆଉଜାଏ ପିଠି ମୋର ଚାପିରଖି
ରୁମାଲ ଆଖିରେ ମୁଁ କାନ୍ଦିଲି ଯେତେବେଳେ ପିତୃ ମାତୃ
ବନ୍ଧୁହାନି ଆୟୁ କ୍ଷୟ ବଂଶ କ୍ଷୟ ଦେଶବାସୀ
କ୍ଷୟ ପୁଣି ଧନଜନ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ କ୍ଷୟ ଧର୍ମ ପୁଣି
ଗୋବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ କ୍ଷୟ ମୁଁ କାଂଦିଲି ଯେତେବେଳେ ସମୟର ଶବ୍ଦ ବାରି
ଜରା ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ବ୍ୟାଧି ପୁଣି ଆଉ ଘାତକର ଭୟ (“Kalapurusha”୬୨)

Aranya ra ajagara mu rahe atharba sthira.
Mu sahe kasana lakhya deha aau mana o atmara
mo dehara gandha pruthbi puspabati ganikara
chandrabhanu hunkara o isikara labanyabatira
go mansha ra gandha puni mada masya nari gandha
mo dehare pruthibira jajabara aloka andhara.

> Jail khana pacherire aaujae pithi mora chapirakhi
> rumal aankhi re mu kandili jetebele pitru matru
> bandhuhani aayu khaya bansha khaya desabasi
> khaya puni dhanajana laxmi khaya dharma puni
> gobrahmana khaya mu kandili jetebele
> samayara sabda bari
> jara mrutyu byadhi aau ghatakara bhaya.
> ("Kalapurusha"62)

In translation by Santosh Kumar Nayak:

> Like a snake in the forest/ I remain motionless and still/ I endure a million tortures/ of body, mind and the soul./on, my body/ the stench of Puspabati, the harlot/ the love cries of/ Chandrabhanu and Labanyabati,/ The smell of beef, of wine and women/ on my body,/ all the world's / nomadic light and darkness/ leaning my back and darkness.
> Leaning my back against the wall of the prison,
> pressing the kerchief to the eyes I cried ... I cried,
> sensing the sound of time passing, old age, death,
> and disease and the fear of the assassin.

In the materialistic world, where spiritual values are endangered, man is searching for liberation. In such circumstance man is bound to believe on fate. Like Eliot's "horoscope", kalapurusa mentions seven generations old astrological book "Khadiratna". In Mohanty's earlier poems the speaker comes in first person or third person, but in this long poem "Kalapurusha" the speaker has multiple voices, figures, and forms. Likewise, woman speaker is not one but many; that may be Pratima Nayak, Minati or Meera. In poisonous modern civilization their bodies as well as hearts are sick, weak. In their back we can see the shadows of Engineer Das, Ghosh Babu, representing the greater fallen mass. The speaker then self-lightens in the voice of Rmu, who is comparable to Eliot's Prufrock. Rmu is disloyal to his wife. Rmu's wife is aware about this, still, she submits to him in a regular way. Her friend then reminds her of her

illegitimate son as Rmu is not the genetic father. In the other hand Rmu has deep faith in his wife's purity, chastity. The speaker then gets aware about life's miserable end through the image of Rmu's death and cremation rituals. Eliot's Waste Land is influenced from Dante's diseased, enslaved souls, which are neither willing nor unwilling, they do not have any opinion, very much in a living dead condition. Similarly, death of Rmu and the experience of death becomes the main tone in the third part of "Kalapurusa". In every line we find the tone of lonesomeness, desolation, forlornness, friendlessness, alienation, insatiate life.

Attached to it is the thirst of liberation throughout the poem. Akrura and Uddhaba have many times been mentioned as symbol of "moksha", liberation, emancipation. In the hollowness of modern metropolis, in guilt ridden pitiable life, people's helplessness, private lonesomeness and above all amidst war time soundless suffering Kalapurusha can't find any remarkable solution. Agreeing to Eliot and with faith to age old belief system Kalapurusha surrenders to spiritual consciousness. Here the speaker in Gurubabu's voice repeats, "ହେ ଅକ୍ରୂର, ହେ ଉଦ୍ଧବ ସଖା ମୋର, ପ୍ରାଣର ଦୋସର।" (he akrura he udhaba sakha mora, prana ra dosa ra).

Eliot's old man cries in the fire of suffering, "Burning burning burning burning/ O Lord Thou pluckest me out/ O Lord Thou pluckest/ burning". In the speaker's feelings the dark, death consciousness is always present. Even in Mohanty's poem "Gobara Ganesha" there is no image of extreme love rising, rather only despair filled deteriorated pale image, where the speaker engulfed in the poisonous time and circumstances has lost all hope and has become incompetent, ill before time.

Eliot's "A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many, I had not thought death had undone so many" reminds of Dantesque crowd of dead people, gathered to get into heaven or hell. Eliot's crowd is not fully dead but waiting to be dead, Londoners are survivors' mourners, they are not dead physically but dead existentially. "Steson that corpse you planted in last year in your garden, has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" here

corpse becomes a vegetation, not just that, it is beginning to sprout, to grow. The growth over here of deadness, the bloom here is a bloom of deadness. It is not really a regenerative bloom, it's a bloom of the continuation of deadness the continuation of despair, the continuation of annihilation. Every growth, every production over here is a production of waste, and the production in waste and hence is the Waste Land. After "Marie Marie hold on tight" the downward fall is something seen as the sexual fall, moral fall. Alaka Sanyal in Guru Prasad is only the sex-object, a part of the routine to which modern love has degraded.

Like Eliot's usage of local images of London Bridge, here Mohanty has tried to make a reference to "Ranihata Pola", though the later can never equalize the heat of the crowded and visionless motion of the later. Perhaps Howrah Bridge to an extent can equalize the heat of London Bridge. So, unlike the original, this one could not impact on the learned readers. That is why the publication of "Kalapurusha" has welcome many negative reviews against its ecological perspective. It is true that without Waste Land, Kalapurusha was impossible. Just like all great poets are indebted to their earlier poets e.g., Eliot to Dante, Radhanath to Ovid, here Guru Prasad Mohanty is indebted to Eliot. This is perhaps "tradition" as termed by Eliot, which crosses all geographical boundaries and enlarges human consciousness. So as a creative writing *The Waste Land* and "Kalapurusha" are two different but related points whose common theme makes them contemporary.

Eliot himself tells us in his own notes to *The Waste Land* that Tiresias, the seer in Greek mythology who undergoes several sex changes and is both man and woman on consecutive occasions, unites in himself all the other personages in the poem. Eliot tells us that Tiresias while "not indeed a 'character,' is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest" and that "all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias." Or to put it differently, Tiresias is historical man, unchanged since the beginning of time. It is, therefore, appropriate that the voice that speaks in the poem be in some recognizable sense the same unchanging voice that speaks for all unchanging Western

civilization, decayed past and decayed present. In the original the speaker is sometimes Marie, sometimes the hyacinth girl, sometimes Madame Sosostris, sometimes the neurotic woman, sometimes Stetson's friend and so on. They are all identified in course of their speeches. But what is apparent is that the persona of the poem, the unidentified "I", of "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" and of "Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song," does not speak in any way that bears the hallmark of a unique identity or particular tone. Again, there is the image of the myth of Philomel, who was brutally and whose body was brutally violated by the king Tereus and then her tongue was chopped off. The ancient myth becomes signifier of a violence on a female body and about the muted agency of the human being. Eliot had mentioned that Tiresias is a seeing eye in the poem. He is the one, he is the presence through which the entire activities of Waste Land are focalized. Whatever happens to Waste Land takes place through the focus of Tiresias. Tiresias in Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, and Ovid are notably unsympathetic toward the heroic protagonists to whom they bring invariably bad news. Unlike any of his pagan avatars, Eliot's Tiresias participates in the suffering he sees, and he has "foresuffered all" like Christ; but unlike Christ, Tiresias does not weep, he laughs or grins. “He who was living is now dead” could be a reference to the death of Christianity, death of Christ as a spiritual figure. The waterlessness is faithlessness. There is a direct reference to Christ, the spectral figure, the spiritual figure who is invisible, but at the same time who makes his presence felt “Who is the third who walks always beside you? When I count, there are only you and I together, but there is always another one walking beside you.” Mohanty’s speakers are not heroes in the traditional sense. Nor do they lay any claim to be anti-heroes. They can only be described as non-heroes, ordinary humans like us who have no complaint against either an absent God, unjust social order or other human beings. They share a common destiny. They bear the burden of life with amazing fortitude. They accept without complaint their very ordinariness and the awesome burden of living. Living without hope is indeed aa act of courage. The symbolic meaning of Kalapurusha could be ‘transcendental man’, he who transcends the

dictates of time or kala. In conversational Odia, kala also means death. Often people would say, his kala has come and the 'man' who brings this end is Kalapurusha. His poetic hero expresses that, "ଏଠାରେ ଅନ୍ଧାର ଉଠେ ଗିଳି ରେଖା ଆକାର ପ୍ରକାର/ସୀମିତ ମୋ ପୃଥିବୀର ଦିଗହଜେ , ହଜିଯାଏ ଉପର ଓ ତଳ/କ୍ଲାନ୍ତ ମୋର ଦେହ ଚାପି ମାଡ଼ିଆସେ ବାଲି ଓ ଅନ୍ଧାର" ("କାଳପୁରୁଷ" ୫୫) Ethare Andhaaara Uthe gili rekhaa aakaara prakaara/simita mo pruthibira diga haje, hajijaae upara o tala/klanta mora deha chapi maadiaase baalichara maadiaase baali o andhaara" ("Kalapurusha"55) i.e. Here the darkness rises and swells/ Limited is the direction of my earth, disappearing up and down/ I'm tired, my body is covered in sand and darkness. The post-world war eco-sphere and cultural ethos are more boredom, unfertile and full of darkness. There is a use of the 'mythical method'-- a wide use of religious myths and legends to appeal to a higher set of values which would give direction to the disoriented modern individual. This poem reinvestigates the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual traditions that an average individual had inherited. There is an attempt to locate the modern present in relation to the traditional past.

ଆଜି ତେଣୁ ଗତିହୀନ ଛୋଟ ଏକ୍ ବର୍ତମାନ ଧରି
ଗଳି ପରେ ଗଳି ଦେଉଁ କୁଢ କୁଢ ବାଲି ଡେଇଁ ଡେଇଁ
ମୁଁ ଆଜି ଚାଲିଛି ଖୋଜି ତାରା ଆଉ ଜହ୍ନରାତି ଚୁପ୍‌ଚୁପ୍ ପବନର କଥା
କୁଢ କୁଢ ଅଂଗାର ଓ ଅନ୍ଧାରର ସୁଡ଼ଙ୍ଗ ସେ ପାଖେ
ଆଇସ୍‌କ୍ରୀମ ଲେମନେଡ୍ ଝରଣାର ନିରୁକ୍ତ ମମତା ("କାଳପୁରୁଷ" ୫୫)

Aji tenu gatihina chota eka bartman dhari
gali pare gali deun kudha kudha bali daen daen
mu aaji chalichi khoji tara aau janharati chup chup
pabana ra katha kudha kudha angara o andharara
sudanga se pakhe ice-cream lemonade jharana ra
nirukta mamata
("Kalapurusha"55)

(Today, therefore holding on to a stagnant present, I am looking for stars and a moonlit night heaps and piles of coal and at the end of the dark tunnel the wicked affection of ice-cream and lemonade beckons.) The individual is represented as living a stagnant and partial, khandita life within the claustrophobic confines of a tunnel, looking for fulfilment. The loose sand on the sea beach does not retain marks of footsteps. It accentuates a feeling of losing sight of one's past. The individual is doomed to this life, losing the path that his ancestors had made for him.

The rootless modern people are described as a parasitic creeper, nirmuli, a plant with no interaction with the soil. The individual referred to in the first part of the poem is Srikrishna who resides in every modern helpless individual. Even powerful Krishna is bereft of his divinity, reduced to a mere human rendered helpless in front of time. The worthwhile warrior helplessly appeals to Akrura and Uddhava who abandon him on realising that ultimate destruction would now come to him, "he Akrura he udhaba, sakha mora prana ra dosara". The world in the dark-age, Kaliyug, has reached a point of destruction where even the difference between humanity and divinity has collapsed.

Modernity simultaneously creates a situation of 'freedom' not spiritual but the mundane absence of surveillance attracts people to the vicious world of immorality. While more people have access to this modern immoral space, the integrity of the family is threatened, the sacred institution of marriage becomes an instrument of convenience based on compromise and mutual manipulation of unfaithful partners. The poem makes a satirical comparison with Upendra Bhanja's "Labanyabati". Upendra Bhanja was an acclaimed Odia poet and "Labanyabati" is his most celebrated poem. In "Kalapurusha" the socialite ladies are frivolous, brashly vulgar, and offensively sexual unlike the sober traditional woman with her restrained sexuality. There is a changing imagery of the woman. A random mention of names of women with no individual significance, suggests that one can be substituted for another. It shows a homogeneous immorality and the futile attempt of all modern women to cover their ugly faces with powder, rouge, and lipstick. We encounter those women like Alakaa, Minati,

Ramu's wife and Pratimaa and Meeraa and some other doing prostitition for the sake of their existence and pleasure. While we encounter the struggle of the middle class for survival, we are also introduced to the heartlessness of the city,

> ସେତେବେଳେ ବୋଷ ବାବୁ ସହରର ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ
> କାର ଚଢି ଚାଲିଗଲେ ପଛଆଡ଼େ ରଖି ଦେଇ ଓ ଏକତାଳା ଘର
> ସେତେବେଳେ ଝରକାରେ ମୁଁ ରହିଲି ଖାଲି ଚାହିଁ
> ବାପା ଥିଲେ କଚେରୀରେ, ବୋଉ ଗଲା ଧାର ମାଗ
> ତିନିଦିନ ପରେ ରଜ ଭାଇ ଥିଲେ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ
> ଅରଣ୍ୟ ଅଜଗର ମୁଁ ରହେ ଅଥର୍ବ ସ୍ଥିର,
> ମୁଁ ଶହେ କକ୍ଷଣ ଲକ୍ଷ ଦେହ ଆଉ ମନ ଓ ଆତ୍ମାର (୬୨)
>
> It was Bose babu, the city's industrialist
> who rode his car and left our single storied building
> far behind... my father was in the court, my mother
> went to ask for a loan 'raja' was a few days away, my
> brother lay in the hospital as the forest python, I
> stood still, I withstood all, all that my body and soul
> inflicted on me. (Trans. S. K. Nayak)

While modernisation endangers cultural norms, distorts individual relationships, frustrates, and disorients the youth, creates pressures on middle class and its women, causes the breakdown of the traditional family system, the poet still nurses a hope to revive the lost values of the society. Though urbanisation was not widespread in Odisha and industrial development was seen in pockets, poverty was rampant and illiteracy high. What gave legitimacy to this discourse on a society that was only partially modernised after all, was the increasing belief among the readership that this representation of society was going to be realised. The readership primarily consisting of the educated middle class, who had come into the new cities in search of work, and found it difficult to cope with the demands of their new occupations and changed life styles, identified with the poem.

The city is pranahina, lifeless, murmusu, on the verge of death, mamatahina, affectionless and swapnahina, devoid of dreams. The lifeless sun rises on concrete buildings, the radio plays bizarre film songs that disrupts the religious serenity of the morning and overwhelms the sweet music of the birds. How can individuals attain salvation in a life, which is a continuous horse race, a tumultuous competition? Life is not in the selection of modern man. Rather death is very amusing and beautiful for them. But the Indian culture has that much of power to resist the suicidal tendency to come into our social thought.

Filled in incomprehensible pain Kalapurusha desires for liberation, with repeated reference to our sacred writings, mythology, Bhagbat and at the end submission to the values of Upanishad to get free from all sufferings. This we find even in Eliot's concluding lines, i.e., Datta, giving generosity, charity; Dayadhvam, kindness, compassion and Damyata the whole idea of compassion in a more existential sense. The whole idea of giving, charity, kindness, and compassion is put together that can only take towards peace which is mentioned in the end "shanti shanti shanti", as if in modern circumstances it is the only way of solution for the lost, wounded soul of human beings. Even while the poet laments the degenerate condition of modem life, there is a possibility to restart this journey - from darkness, from death. This can happen through the human will to 'act', to create life again. The poem "Kalapurusha" ends with the same note "mrutyumam/ asato ma/ tamaso ma/ mrutyumam ...mrutyumam...mrutyumam/ amrutam gamaya...".

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A Marxist Approach to Analyse Agonies of Agnes in Douglas Stuart's *Shuggie Bain*

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Abstract: This paper examines how Douglas Stuart's *Shuggie Bain* is a novel presenting agonies of the eponymous character Shuggie and in particular his mother Agnes Bain; at the same time, it also portrays the poor and miserable socio-economic status of Glasgow, Scotland. Social conditions and personal conditions have been shown in a parallel manner. Stuart has presented the 1980s economically degraded Glasgow society under Thatcherism. The economic condition of people has put impact on their social life and they have become addicted to alcohol and young generation are mostly affected by it. They are involved in anti-social activities. Young life is on the verge of destruction. The paper adopts Marx's theory which is based on the assumption that economic condition of a person decides the future and present of an individual. Here, the protagonist Agnes and her son Shuggie Bain are the victims of such a society. Their economic condition ultimately lands them in a miserable condition. A normal not so happy life of Agnes takes a lot of turn only because of her high aspiration and adverse economic condition of both the nations and in her personal life.

Keywords: Marxism, hegemony, ideology, economy, base, superstructure, culture, society.

Douglas Stuart is a name which appeared in the limelight of literary world all of a sudden in the year 2018 with the publication of his debut novel *Shuggie Bain.* It brought him immense glory when in 2020 he got the prestigious Booker prize for his heart-breaking story. It was the result of his ten years effort. He wrote this novel to

recollect his childhood days as mentioned by him in an interview with Colm Tobin. He terms it a love story, some others call it a *Bildungsroman,* and some others call it a gay novel. It is also reviewed as a novel of agonies of 1980s Scotland -riven by unemployment, industries like shipbuilding, mining and ironworking whose affect was growing alcoholism, infidelity and the daily struggle of poverty in a Thatcherite Scotland. Daily Telegraph also observed it as a transcendent portrait of alcoholism, poverty and desperate filial love. The Times of India calls it a novel which explores the theme of love, courage and addiction.

The novel opens with the struggle of the sixteen year old Shuggie Bain with poverty and taking care of his alcoholic mother Agnes who is abandoned by his half-brother Leek, half-sister Catherine and his father Big Shug. The 1980s Glasgowian economy is shown in a parallel way in the life of Agnes who is left alone with her three children by her philandering husband. She dreams of all fine, big, shiny things in life but her unfulfilled desires put her deep in the cycle of alcohol addiction. When everybody abandons her Shuggie, her son stays with her till her last breath. She is the person responsible for her own misery which will be explained by a Marxist approach to her life. It is ideology both individual and of the state which determines the fate and future.

All characters have their own ideology which governs their personal life. Like that a state has its own. Althusser is talking about the ideology which is circulated through particular structure in the society which he terms as 'ideological state apparatuses' (Nair 134). Hence, state imposes ideology through the threat of sanctioned violence in the form of police, law, and army. As a result, people accept cultural norms and habits because of the fear of state retaliation. It was the Thatcherite Govt. which made the condition of people very miserable.

> Thatcher didn't want honest workers anymore; her future was technology and nuclear power and private health. Industrial days were over, and the bones of the Clyde Shipworks and the Springburn Railworks lay about the city like rotten dinosaurs.

> Whole housing estates of young men who were promised the working trades of their fathers had no future now. Men were loosing their very masculinity. (43)

Under Thatcherism coal miners and other labourers, traders became forgotten as people who had exited for jobs elsewhere. After an irrational decision of the Govt. people started feeling homeless as if they do not belong to the state. The same has been shown in a parallel manner in Agnes's life. She may be taken as a symbol of suppressed society whose social backbone has weakened due to its economic condition. Soon she took the wrong decision of marrying Big Shug against the will of her mother she started feeling a seclusion, "Several times she left small piles of the children's clothes near them and then watched with bubbling jealousy as the cases up and moved to the other side of the room, still with nothing belonging to her or the children placed inside." (81)

In the novel Staurt has projected condition of others also in a realistic manner. Very limited job opportunities left for people. Young boys who aspired to take up their fathers' trade are now jobless and started plundering people and taking their lives.

> It's no Butlin's, but that sounds like the good auld days. That mine has been dying for years. There's hardly nae work there for naebody anymair. Every year we've got mair men sat at home, wanking in the daylight. (113)

Unemployment, bad social housing in isolated areas with limited transport and scarcity of standard services like health, transport and entertainment made the situation worse. Many children like Shuggie Bain lead a very miserable life due to poverty. Some earned bad reputation of being thief. Elders became alcoholic. Agnes is such an example. For many years in Glasgow the council-built housing estates at four points of the compass peripheries of the city boundary places like Castelmilk in the South, Easter house in East, Drumchapel in the west and Sighthill in the North were places that

develop a dubious reputation for unemployment and crime. In one episode Catherine is surrounded by a group of boys who were trying to molest her in Sight Hill area.

> The men standing around her were only boys, younger than her and probably younger than Leek. They had been smoking and waiting in the dark. With no peace at home they are waiting for someone to molest or for a chance to knife the night watchman. (62)

There was not only increase in crime rate but also quality of life of people was also deteriorating. Workers are commodified who in reality are full human beings, merely treated as products bought and sold on the market. This "commoditization" (Heyman 2) then extends across nature, consumption, culture, and so forth. Capitalists monopolize the productive resources and at the same time they require workers to turn those resources into products. Although they are provided with wage but the final product is more valuable than the wages and other inputs. In this novel there are instances where workers are working for twenty-five years and getting salary of three weeks. There is the reference of dead dog in Sighthill. It reminds the struggle of people who in autocrat rule are brutally, ruthlessly suppressed.

> Someone had been rat poisoning all the Sighthill strays; they had thought that kinder than watching them writhe in heat. (60)

In the Glasgow the housing scheme left the poor in a bad condition. So, house structure of rich people was the aspiration of poor. Agnes too wanted a house of her own, with her own front gate and garden. A house of her own which could restore her pride. Concept of such a house was like a happy little village and a real sort of place where everybody knows everybody else. But this dream was also not fulfilled till the end of her life. In the beginning when the novel opens, we find Shuggie living in a very small room

in Mr. Bakhsh's boarding house who turned the kitchenette into a bedroom.

> Shuggie supposed at one time the room must have been the living room of a fairly grand three-bedroom flat. He had seen into some of the other rooms in the house. The kitchenette Mrs Bakhsh had turned into a bedroom still had its original checkered linoleum floor, and the three other boxier rooms still kept their original threadbare carpets. (8)

Apart from this condition of the house Shuggie was living alone without any elder to take care of him. But it was normal for Mrs Bakhsh who cared for her rent. All these miserable conditions seemed very normal to people.

In Marxism social and cultural life of an individual is determined by the economic condition. Hence economy is the base which and the cultural aspect forms the superstructure. On the basis of this Base and Superstructure model miseries in the life of Agnes could be understood. The economic condition of 1980s Glasgow was under Michael Thatcher for which economic depression started. This situation brought with it agonies in the life of people. Agnes is born poor but for an optimistic father aspires for a rich life. She is also bestowed with a glamorous face who is often compared to actress Elizabeth Taylor and hopes for a rich life after marriage. Her dream is shattered with her first marriage to Brendan McGowan. Although he was responsible and hard working husband still Agnes wanted more and in search of a more better and luxurious life she left him and marries Big Shug.

She could not bring back her step. So, she suffered with Shug. When he left her alone in order to earn livelihood, she works in a fuel station at night. There she again gives her life a chance and develops friendship with a taxi driver named Eugene in the hope of a good life. She starts dreaming a luxurious life with the company of Eugene.

It was Eugene who showed her a luxurious life and dragged her again to alcoholism which she left for one year. He first took her to Grand Ole Opry. She felt it like a fancy premier.

> Agnes had never been to the Grand Ole Opry before… couples went for the country-music nights, with line dancing and gunslinging matches… The Opry's old Western sign lit up the street & shone off the wet tarmac. People jostled at the door to get in, and Agnes had the impression of being at a fancy premier. (240-41)

Her daydream with Eugene takes new form. She thought he is the one who could help her to remove emptiness in life. He could be a friend, a lover, a father. He could give her money and they could spend their holidays together; he could buy her messages in a big trolly from a big, branded supermarket.

In one episode Eugene took her to golfer's hotel which is not accessible when she was living in such poor condition. She was charmed by its dining room. When she entered it pride rose in her. It was temporary. When this dream shattered and she met with the realities of life and her own economic condition she became alcoholic and met her catastrophic end. Such became the dream of her daughter. Catherine follows her husband to South Africa for financial gain.

Aspiration to lead a life somebody else is leading is primarily responsible for personal agony. Again, to follow suit may land a person in another difficult situation. Such is the philosophy of Gramsci. He developed the concept of hegemony in the *Prison Writings*. The key idea of hegemony is man is not ruled by force but by ideas. It is the cultural, moral and ideological leadership of bourgeoisie over subaltern groups. It is based on the equilibrium between consent and coercion. The bourgeoisie was hegemonic because it protected some interests of the subaltern classes in order to suppress any sort of revolution. They will concern themselves with private matters and do not question the fundamental source of their present socio-economic condition. They believe and accept it

as natural. The term *hegemon* is used to identify the actor, group, class, or state that exercises hegemonic power or that is responsible for the dissemination of hegemonic ideas.

In the poor economic Scottish society, Agnes, although, was born poor but brought up by her ambitious father under the shade of an upper-class culture. It is the upper class who define quality and from quality taste, manner and aesthetics class emerges. Class is a subject to status and power and only they can define what is good or bad. The notion of class and culture was first implanted in the mind of Agnes since she was a child. Irrespective of her working-class background her father wanted her to look 'neat as a new pin' (74).

Once Lizzi, mother of Agnes was taken to Kelvingrove Hall, a grand place by her husband Wullie. The place was fully crowded. While Lizzie was feeling ashamed of in that place Wullie acted, "like he had the same right to be there as any doctor from the Byres Road" (189). From this statement it can be stated that Wullie is influenced by the hegemon of the upper class. Hegemony was a form of control exercised primarily through a society's *superstructure*, as opposed to its *base* or social relations of production of a predominately economic character. Instead of blaming the poor economic policy of the then Govt. he accepts it and thinks there is nothing wrong in imitating an upper-class life.

According to Pierre Bourdieu competition between classes is not always for material benefits. Sometimes it is directed towards acquiring symbolic capital and cultural capital. Symbolic capital is the accumulated prestige, honour and recognition based on one's own acquired knowledge or expertise. So sometimes it generates violence by those who possess it more against those who possess less.

Cultural capital is cultural knowledge which enables and empowers an individual to appreciate cultural practices. It is acquired from family or institution. It helps individual to set 'taste' and this taste sets the upper class above the lower class. It becomes a marker of social rank. Very important to mention here is cultural capital can be exchanged for economic gain.

In case of Agnes her aspiration of a rich house and a life style because of her acquired habitus; she considers herself superior to all. She had a good make-up sense, good choice of clothing which gave her an aristocratic look and women in her neighbourhood were jealous of her. But this unfulfilled aspiration ultimately left her in a state of alienation.

In the class struggle the rich always exploit the poor and the result of this exploitation is alienation. Due to this human relationship appears as a set of relationship between things which ends up when its utility gets over. Agnes is left alone and leads an alienated life because she had no financial power in her hand. She had to depend upon her two children from her first husband Leek and Catherine

Proust grasps a 'truth' about alienation of the individual in modern society where alienation is part of an objective social reality. Marx is talking about two kinds of alienation Political and Economic. In political alienation the state does not care about individual's existence. To Marx one should get rid of economic alienation to get rid of political alienation. If the state is out of this procedure, it will be termed as the state of being alienated. Due to this man becomes merely the existence of material human being. When Agnes's first husband could not fulfil her demand, he is left alone. When her children found that they cannot get any financial help from her rather she became a financial burden upon Leek and Catherine. Hence, Catherine leaves her alone and went to Africa with her husband for financial gain and does not return even on her death.

According to Erich Fromm, alienation is the result of capitalist society which disturbs the feeling of man and factors responsible for alienation are subject to the influence of social condition on human existence. In the view of Fromm self-alienation is absence of self awareness or a complete loss of it. He considers self-alienation pertaining to feeling. He writes in his book *Sane Society* that "In Marx's system alienation is called that condition of man where his own act becomes to him an alien power, standing over and against him, instead of being ruled by him." When the life of Agnes will be examined closely it is only, she and her decision

which determine her fate. An alienated man necessarily becomes alienated from society because the identity of self-alienation and the situation of the lack of or loss of self-awareness necessarily alienate him from society. She is viewed different from all in the society where she lives. She is hardly visited by women in the society.

This novel is a superb portrayal of economic condition of the society in relation to the miserable life of characters. Thatcher's economic policies affected the working class, who lost their jobs in heavy industry, and how they became victim of the brutality and inhumanity of capitalism. Agnes's and Shuggie's life journey shows social conditions determine their personal life style.

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Humour as a Technique of Racial Subversion in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

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Samikshya Das

For the stock critic, with that suburban insight of his, cannot understand that a serious man may be humorous, still less than a humorous man is always serious.
— Israel Zangwill, Preface, 6th ed. Of *The Bachelor's Club* (xii)

Humour through narratives can provide catharsis or relief to inter-racial tensions. They can serve resistance to everyday racism, both in literature and in real-life scenarios. Most of the time it has been used as a tool of reprimand, ridicule, reproach and disempowerment. In counter-spaces, humour does not propagate from the perpetrator's point of view, but is instead aimed at them, discouraging their offences. However, humour has also been used in an uplifting way. Its affirmative use has been done through works of literature that have a racial undertone. This is a relatively new method adopted by authors, such as Teju Cole and Salman Rushdie, who want to showcase the racism faced by coloured people all over, using it as a mode of subversion. Hence, such authors flip the coin on the other side, so that equity can be maintained.

Humour can empower and liberate a person from racial oppression. It is an effective foil against the latter. In such a way, many racial microaggressions can be managed and subsided. Microaggressions are indirect jabs of racism against the innocent and they arise from both personal and institutional levels. Without resistance, racism would grow unfettered.

Bowers defines humour as having effects such as (i) forming an ethnic glue (ii) a glorification of survival, and (iii) a catharsis of interracial and intercultural tensions (247). Bowers reads the racial prejudices against the Native Americans in the above lines, which can further be extended to the racial milieu in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. They can also be read as coping mechanisms that aim at making light of the rigidity of racialism. Humour also ameliorates the peruser's experience of reading and reacting to the shock of racism. Sometimes humour is ambivalent. Humour does not automatically necessitate laughter or applause. It can have a more subtle response. Hanif Kureishi was directly influenced by the comic nature of fiction such as *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis and early Evelyn Waugh more than any postcolonial and serious authors.

The novel does not have explicit political connotations, unlike many other postcolonial novels that have subversive tendencies. Nor is the political critique completely annulled. It mostly draws upon the bildungsroman genre, charting one Indian Muslim boy's heartfelt and comical story of weird circumstances, and hilarious characters and tropes.

Karim is an idiosyncratic storyteller, in the sense that his narration leaves a memorable impact on the readers. He is at once paradoxical. The opening lines of the novel designate him so:

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it. Anyway, why search the inner room when it's enough to say that I was looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action and sexual

> interest I could find, because things were so gloomy, so slow and heavy, in our family, I don't know why. Quite frankly, it was all getting me down and I was ready for anything. (3)

He is purposive and haphazard, cynical and hopeful, selfish and careful, all simultaneously. Although he is written as a self-absorbed teenager, there is a characteristic depth to him. The writing is ruthlessly honest, biting and sagacious. The comedy is not refined, but pungent.

Karim is a flamboyant character who does not adhere to the normal conventions of society. Karim is in a perpetual state of confusion and in-betweenness owing to his mixed heritage. He is not rageful but still contains the rebellion of teenage years. He is sharp and offers incisive comments on the various characters in the novel. Although the rhetoric may sometimes be vulgar, with slangs of sexual and perverse nature being used, such crassness is required to highlight the crudeness of hierarchical society.

Bakhtin's idea of "grotesque realism" in Rabelais employs degradation or "the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract" (19). This emphasises the mocking tone of the sentences, that is, how they demean the grandiose or grand narratives. The language evokes a response of hilarity. Karim is the embodiment of the Bakhtinian carnival, containing the edge, irritability and confined freedom of fragrant youth.

Karim's father spent the majority of his British life in the South London suburbs. The bourgeois influence of the suburbs fell on their family, causing them to be restrained in a culturally modern way. The setting is in the 1970s Anglosphere when the entertainment industry ran haywire. It is through these tumultuous times that Karim makes his way up.

One day, Karim's father came back home from work in a high and gay mood, which was very unlike him. His sudden and abrupt expression of love for his family through coercive hugs shocks his elder son Karim. It was because he was invited to the yoga Olympics for which he began preparing almost immediately. His mannerisms and physicality are vociferously Indian. He also has

a hairy chest and back adding to the thoroughness of his Indian race. In this novel, stereotypes are used as tools not to typecast a particular character, but to elevate them to a broad level of acceptance. Often, Kureishi introduces comic angles to those stereotypes that bring lightness to dense situations. So far, the theme, subject and plot are not too heavy to begin with. They only serve as anecdotes of the lived experience of Karim, who experiences the coming of age, from a frighty teen to a well-established adult.

Karim's promiscuity at every turn charges the atmosphere with raw and vibrant energy. His father had taught him that charm and flamboyant grace came first in this impressionable world.

He is widely licentious, and openly bisexual. Expletives and uncouth language operate freely and playfully that concern the culture of the London cosmopolis. Each part of London constitutes a peculiar group of personalities. The southern part contains the conservative bourgeoisie while the northern part consists of the pretentious elites being vacantly vocal about social issues and modern art. The latter were pretentious in the way that they seemed to care about the underprivileged but could not bring themselves to do anything about it. Britain itself was undergoing multiple transformations at the same time, and so were its cultural cohabitants. Like a transforming Britain, is the new and changing multi-ethnic Karim. We see the upcoming punk-rock scenes with debauchery, infidelity and loose morale at the core of the popular culture.

Allie, who is Karim's younger brother, likes fashion and it is assumed that he has a queer propensity. Thus, we can see how a brown man can also defy his tradition and accept his own selfhood. This showcases the multi-huedness of the Indian diaspora in the beginning stages.

Haroon himself being *Eastern* and *Oriental*, commodifies its essential, palatable ingredients and presents it to the white well-to-dos on a platter. He takes on the garb of a Guru or a figurative Buddha of sorts, and spouts out Chinese philosophy that appeases the minds of the fetishizers. Hence, Kureishi was deft enough in writing this aspect of complicated humour that makes the

oppressed the confident observer of racialism. The latter does not withdraw from its trauma, but instead partakes in this careful act of play that renders him an opponent of racial bias. This is because all the characters are highly unserious, and this narrative is a jovial one, which by demeaning the racial elements, downplays it into absurdity. "As well as lashing out at the restrictions and stupidities of English society in the 1970s, Kureishi's comedy is, at least potentially, an anarchical force of liberation" (Holmes 648).

Eva was "pumping out a plume of oriental aroma" when she was first introduced in the novel (9). Every character is imperfect and is on an irredeemable hedonistic journey. Such unmeasured pleasures are woven into every crevice of the story. Almost every conclusion in a sentence evokes a response of laughter owing to the suddenness of innuendos and witticisms.

Karim's fancy for Charlie Kay, Eva's son, evaded all his other pursuits. He not only lusted after him, but also emulated him and wanted his charming armour transferred to him.

Eva insists on educating the unrefined taste of Karim by telling him what books to read and what music to listen to. Karim cuts right through the pretensions around him and sees the raw truth that everybody conceals. He is a good observer and smart retorter. His fascination with Charlie Kay ends after he engages in sado-masochism with a dominatrix and defiles himself. It was then that Karim realised how empty and foolish his love interest was. The novel is precisely philistine in its conjectures and sexual occupations.

Kureishi efficiently uses Karim's wit to criticise racism and mainstream ideology. The use of the word "exotic" in the novel many times in the novel indicates the fetishization and palatable otherness that went on during the early era in Britain when coloured diaspora were just beginning to settle in (9, 13, 109).

Haroon, was considered zen-like because of his meditative preachiness about "oriental" philosophy. He had a calm demeanour, and because people flocked to him to resolve their internal issues, Karim called him "God" (86). Truly, he was the supreme figure of calmness and serenity when it came to offering wise advice to his white fans who wanted a philosophical solution to their troubles.

While the West was associated with materialism, the East came to be known for its rich heritage and ancient philosophy. Haroon was stimulated to spend his time in this activity because he was very much interested in the inner nature of human beings, the mind and consciousness. He bought Chinese books on philosophy and preached about his beliefs, only to end up committing infidelity with Eva. Such is the duplicity of the characters. No one is earnest and everybody seeks only their own pleasure. Haroon is called a "renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" (16). So, he is neither this nor that, occupying a middle space of the in-between, sandwiched between many cultures.

The following are racist remarks when Haroon entered Eva's first gathering where he was going to lecture:

> The man said in a loud whisper to his friend, 'Why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?'
> 'He's going to give us a demonstration of the mystic arts!'
> 'No, he came on a magic carpet.'
> 'Cyril Lord or Debenhams?' (12)

Karim answered back by physically attacking the man making those comments. The white folks homogenised the diverse eastern culture, and debarred the authenticity of any non-white majoritarian country. They frequently mixed up Japanese and Indian elements. To them, the east was all the same, and at the same time different from them. They had the imperial notion of clubbing together diverse and individual factors into the narrow bandwidth of acceptance.

Karim wanted a world of excitement and possibility, not the monotony and drudgery of reality. He wanted to leave the stasis of the suburbs and migrate into the vibrant world. There was no excitement in the suburbs, and the youth did not flock to those places where nothing happened. Karim wanted to be around smart people, he wanted multiple sexual partners at the same time, he wanted pop and rock music blasting the neighbourhoods' peace.

Haroon was appealing to his white audience's presumption about Indians and their heavy accents. He deliberately accentuated stereotypically Indian pronunciations while acting as a guru and tried to hide his accent from other people who were not his audience before to remain inconspicuous.

Unlike many unprivileged Indians who migrated to England due to lack of opportunity in their homeland, Haroon was quite privileged. Karim found the former to be the "swarms of Indian peasants who came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s" (25). When Haroon came to England, he had a mighty idea of it. He thought that everybody there was rich with no place for poverty. He faced the hard-hitting reality of racism first when he had tried to discuss Byron at a pub one night. He was looked down upon as a mere Indian who was describing the "poetry of a pervert and a madman" to them (25). His fate and money dwindled when he became an unimportant civil servant working for the government of England. Only because of his passion for Chinese philosophy did he become the Buddha of Chislehurst. He refused to take anything seriously, "as if life did not matter" (25). He was both disillusioned after many misfortunes and enlightened after his religious reads. He became carefree and relaxed as he grew older. He is characterised in an innocent and vulnerable way that made him more attractive to women who wanted to nurture him. Drawing a character sketch of the titular Buddha or Haroon is significant to understand the backbone of the narrative. Karim is his lineage, and whatever disobedience and non-conformity he has learnt, he has gathered from his father.

Anwar is Haroon's childhood friend who is also settled in London. When he asks Haroon to try for promotion, the latter replies stoically:

> 'The whites will never promote us,' Dad said. 'Not an Indian while there is a white man left on earth. You don't have to deal with them – they still think they have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together.'

> 'They don't promote you because you are lazy, Haroon. Barnacles are growing in your balls. You think of some China-thing and not the Queen!'
> 'To hell with the Queen! Look, Anwar, don't you ever feel you want to know yourself? That you are an enigma to yourself completely?' (27-28)

Here, the readers come to know that Haroon is as aware as he proposes. He is worldly wise too, and recognises the ill-treatment of coloured people at the hands of the white supremacists. Thus, he turns his attention to the internal after being beaten by external circumstances. He, like any other diasporic entity, is on a self-searching journey, but Kureishi's humour stretches it too far and makes him a spiritual guru.

Carl and Marianne are two of Eva's friends who are also punctual visitors to India. They are enamoured by its exoticness. They absolutely love the eastern flavour the country provides. In short, they fetishize the Indian aesthetic experience. They came to Eva's house to visit Haroon, who looked like a magician and could offer them the magical potency of Indianness that they so relished for. These are the remarks of the young and sharp narrator, Karim, who himself uses the term "exotic" while describing his father (31).

Jean and Ted are Haroon's racist in-laws, who are in bad terms with the Amir family, because of Haroon and his wife's intermarriage. Ted once disowned his own sister because she had married a Muslim. Ted and Jean call Haroon by his anglicised name "Harry", who in turn calls them "Gin and Tonic". This is a prime example of subversion by humour, in which the racialised attempt to withdraw the furore of racism by turning the tables by answering back in their own terms.

Karim calls Helen's father a "hairy back" as a retort to his racist outburst when he tried to be romantic with her (40). Karim's dehumanisation and reduction to the level of a dog as Helen's dog has sexual intercourse with his leg is repugnant. This is the ugliness of grotesque humour used by Kureishi who probably wanted the readers to sympathise with Karim's debasement. Sexual slangs are

poised with the decorum of evocative and concise language that create the effect of liberation from the ills and conforms of society.

Changez is the Indian prototype that Karim adopts to recreate on stage with Matthew Pyke. He handles the drama deftly. Changez is Jamila's husband who is also an imbecile and good-for-nothing, according to Anwar, his father-in-law. He serves the character of a typical gullible immigrant who has come to the big city to live a luxurious life. He is fat, pot-bellied and bald, and does not have an intellectual quotient is what the readers fathom. He is contrasted heavily with his wife, Jamila, who is a modern feminist with a vast knowledge of feminist critical theories. She was married forcefully to him as her father had emotionally blackmailed her to do so. After Anwar's accidental death at the hands of Changez, the odd couple decided to part. The irony is that they ended up living together in a place meant for communists and revolutionaries, with Changez having to care for Jamila's baby whose father is not him. These turns of interesting circumstances compel Karim to take up Changez's character. Pyke was particularly interested in the concept of the new and dumb immigrants whose hopes are dashed because they themselves are of a peculiar type. What Pyke thinks is hilarious, is the reality of many unfortunates.

During this short stint, Karim fell in love with his co-actress, Eleanor. Her past boyfriend, named Gene, had died by suicide after falling prey to racist attacks as he was black. Karim would have undergone the same trauma and depression had he not been strong mentally, and smart enough for a comeback. Both Gene and Karim must have had the same fate aligned for them as both were coloured people working in an exploitative entertainment industry. The merit of this story is that Kureishi played around with the lack of graveness that is normally associated with suicide. He created a strong lead that could stand the rigours of exploitation and thwart the system on its head.

Karim's induction to his calling in theatre came when Eva made him meet Shadwell, an unknowing racist, who truly believes that all Indians are a coagulation of the characters of Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*. He does not believe that he discriminates yet he chooses Karim to play the role of Mowgli and paints his face and

body in brown, that is, he 'brownwashes' him. He advises him to act more Indian by accentuating his Indian accent, although knowing that Karim has been born and brought up in the London suburbs. Karim's desperation for a job and belonging to the elite circles of North London gives way to him fulfilling the role. This role-playing landed him in the acquaintance of Matthew Pyke, who is perverse, has little morale and is opportunistic. When Karim can no longer bear the toxicity of his forbearance, he leaves his company and goes to settle in London after being offered an acting role in a soap opera. Thus, Karim's self-searching after a long exile comes to a momentary end.

This novel's subversion of racist issues lies at the forefront of a lack of seriousness. Nothing is taken too sensitively or literally by the characters. Everyone has their fair share of misery and everybody moves on from their past. Some achieve glory and some are forgotten. Yet no one remains unhappy, as the revolving theme of the narrative is hilarity. This humorous approach to a serious topic desensitises the readers of their preconceived notion or reaction of shock, despair and gloom to the sensitive theme of racism. Instead, it makes them aware of the incongruity, irrationality and demureness of it.

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BOOK REVIEW

Beyond Consumption: India's New Middle Class in the Neo-Liberal Times. Edited by Manish K Jha and Pushpendra. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. 290pp. ISBN 9781032250137. Rs. 995.

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The idea of the new middle class has been of mounting academic interest among the researchers since the inception of liberalisation in the 1990s. The various segments of this class, and its intersection with the issues of class, caste, financial possibilities, gender, religion and regional setting mark the 'newness' of this burgeoning section of the middle class. The free movement of international capital facilitated by the New Economic Policy of India in a globalised setting, accompanied by technological advancements has given impetus to the consumerist consciousness in lifestyle choices, anxieties and aspirations of the middle class. This growing trend of middle class and the attending issues find eloquent expression and representation in the literary narratives of the contemporary times by a host of young writers. The growing body of contemporary narratives in the post-millennium explore the diverse cultural, social, political, and financial potentials of this class in a metropolitan setting.

Into this oeuvre of new writing, *Beyond Consumption: India's New Middle Class in the Neo-Liberal Times* makes a new intervention and advances scholarship. The volume consists of 14 chapters under the rubric of four broad sections–Social Mobility

and the Making of New Middle Class; Middle Class, Urban Poor, and the Migrants: A Complex Interface; Middle Class in the Regional Landscape; and New Middle Class: Exploring Technology, Identity, and Spaces.

The preliminary1st chapter, "Contextualising India's new middle class: Intersectionalities and social mobility", serving as a general introduction, interrogates the politics of new middle class lifestyle through the change in consumption practices such as admission in English medium private schools, investment in housing, cars, and so on. The chapter provides an overview of the gallery of ideas presented by the various contributors in the individual chapters, thereby laying down the background of the work.

Part 1, consisting of 3 chapters, titled "**Social mobility and the making of new middle class,**" explores the various implications of the growth of the middle class in India and uncovers the complex politics of caste, religion and gender, with focus on how social identities and socio-economic expectations and experiences of this class are shaped by caste. Chapter 2, "Risk, trust, and social networks: A study among middle-class Nair families near Technopark, Kerala", foregrounds the blurring of economic heterogeneity and asymmetry mediated through the participation of the Technocrats with a case study from Kerala. The next chapter, "Muslim middle class in India: Size, diversity, and correlates", demonstrates the reasons impeding the social mobility and ascendance of the Muslim community to the NMCs through an in-depth statistical analysis of the demographic details. The 4th chapter, "Dalit desires, middle-classness, and the city of Surat", examines the challenges and problems faced by the Mahyavanshi Dalit community of Surat for their spatial and upward social mobility through the medium of education from English medium schools, adaptation to metropolitan consumerist lifestyle, marital and residential setup, food habits, and so on.

Part II, consisting of 3 chapters, titled, "Middle class, urban poor, and migrants: A complex interface" particularises the dynamics of power operational among the various segments of the new middle class. The 5th chapter, "The middle class and migrant:

Contention in the city", unveils the apathetic and insensitive attitude of the new middle class towards the city's poor and the migrant by rendering them invisible and unwanted, pollutants of the society in the face of an international crisis like the COVID 19 pandemic. In chapter 6, "In the pursuit of middle-classness: Exploring the aspirations and strategies of the urban poor in neoliberal Delhi" the urban poor's aspiration for upward social mobility to attain the capital positioning of the middle class in the society is projected. The various strategies that aid in such a transition like attainment of English medium education, developing computer skills are also talked about in this chapter. Politicizing the screams of the rape victim in Manjula Padmanabhan's play Lights Out is what constitutes the crux of the 7th chapter, "Politics of dark rooms and neurotic urbanity through Padmanabhan's *Lights Out*". It exhibits the city's exclusionary middle-class politics that feeds on ostracization of one class by another in the name of beautification and development of the metro space thereby reinforcing the us/them binary with the lower sections of the society.

Part III, consisting of 4 chapters, titled "Middle class in the regional landscape" talks about the diminutive growth towards social mobility and the internal dynamics that come into play due to the asymmetrical social order of the middle-class population in North-eastern India and Kashmir. Chapter 8, "The Kashmiri middle class and its everyday politics", exposes the complex infiltration of neoliberal consumerist practices of the Kashmiri new middle-class interweaved with everyday politics of communal tensions and gender rigidities. Chapter 9, "Of imported SUVs and buying 'The Last Supper' in Milan: 'New middle class' and its crisis of hegemony in India's Northeast" deals with the post-liberalisation socio-economic transformations, assertion of students' politics through various movements, the State's hegemonic control, the development of consciousness of the new entrants of this class and their heterogenic social composition with Assam as a case study. Memory, identity and domestic space problematize the idea of 'thresholdness' in Chapter 10 titled, "The 'Threshold People': Narrating middle–class lives in neoliberal Kolkata". Contrary to the

other chapters in this volume, the 11th chapter, "Doing good, being political: Middle class *bhadralok* narratives from neoliberal India" embodies the conflict between the left-wing notion of collective good for the society and the promotion of self-interests advocated by consumerism and individualism in neo-liberal times by highlighting an attitude of resistance towards consumerist practices.

Part IV, consisting of 3 chapters, titled "New middle class: Exploring technology, identity, and spaces" focuses on the gendered position of the women in a technologically advanced yet patriarchal setup. The 12thchapter, "'Cyborgs' or 'House Elves'? WhatsApp mothering in a Greater Mumbai suburb", sheds light on the reinforcement of the culturally sanctioned, ideologically governed, gender roles of women as a care-giver, nourisher and cultivator of good qualities, by monitoring the activities of children through WhatsApp. Chapter 13, "Work-from-home for Bangalore's new middle-class women: No Future 'workplace' for women?" moves beyond the mainstream discussions of the new middle-class women towards her gendered positioning in the intersections of digital labour, capital and patriarchy in the pre-covid work-from-home scenario where women are fraught with the conflicting roles of a mother, household care-giver and IT professional in the context of Bangalore. The last chapter, "'The One-Dimensional Man': Unravelling identity of a new Indian subject", explicates the disruptions within the class and the constant hegemonic State control of the BJP to introduce the perfect idle class subject.

Within the growing body of middle-class consumer culture writings in a post-liberal society, the book's strength lies in a holistic study of the complex politics of caste, gender and religion that shape the rising population through socio-economic changes. Examining the various employment patterns, labour processes and market economy, the volume situates the middle-class experiences under diverse discursive and consumerist practices. The various contributors bring in empirical data to make an interdisciplinary study of the class, ranging from survey-based case studies to ethnographic statistics. However, the volume under represents the populace from the semi-urban and township backdrops and simply

highlights a metro-bred class with white-collar jobs and English-medium education. Although the volume focuses on liberalisation as a catalytic agent towards transformation of the old middle-class, the various cultural and social transitions faced by each religious and regional community is not properly stressed upon. Furthermore, the experiences of the tribal communities from across the country and their aspirational movement towards social ascendancy to secure a middle-class positioning is not explored in this volume. The volume could be targeted as a scholarly deliberation towards students, researchers, faculty members and the general public who are interested in the sociology of globalisation in a post-millennium setting.