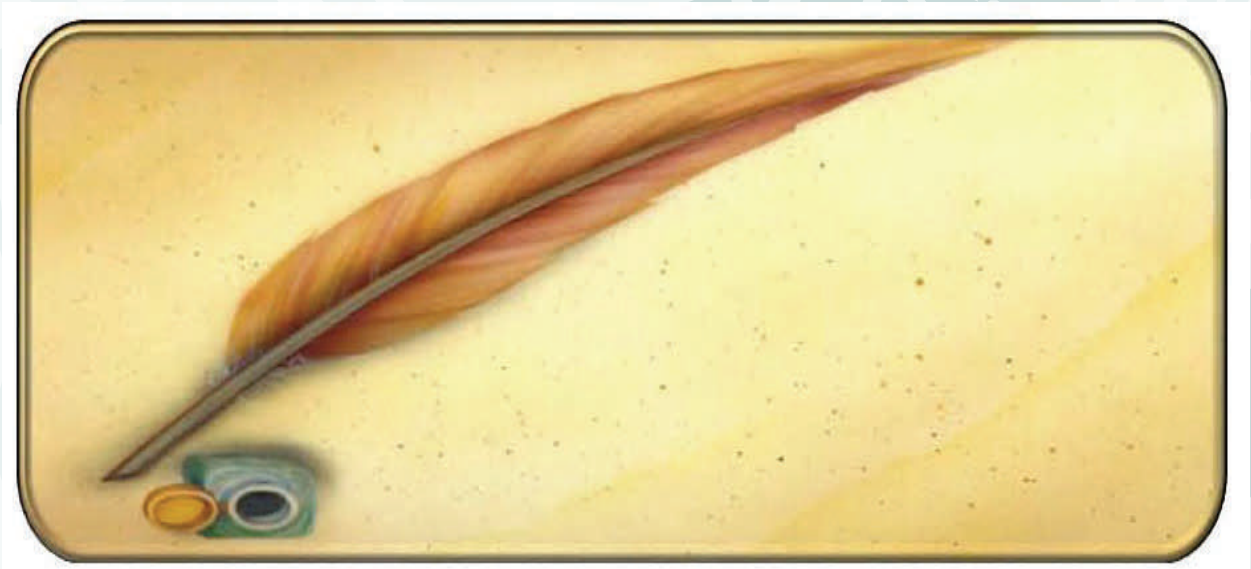

The Criterion

An International Journal in English

ISSN 0976-8165

http://www.the-criterion.com

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Vishwanath Bite

ISSN 0976-8165

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An International Journal in English

Vol. I. Issue III. December 2010

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http://www.the-criterion.com The Criterion ISSN-0976-8165

An Interview with Dr. Basavaraj Naikar
By Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Dr. Vishwanath Bite: Will you tell us something about yourself (place of birth, school and anything in between)?

Basavaraj Naikar: I was born in Naragund of the then Dharwad district in Karnataka on August 1, 1949. I was educated in the Practising School of Government Training College for Men, Dharwad from the first standard to the fourth standard, i.e. 1956 to 1960 under the care of my maternal grandmother and grandfather. Then I studied in the then Municipal High School at Naragund from the fifth standard up to Matric or SSLC from 1960 to 1966 under the care of my parents. During this period I lost my father in 1963, which came as a blow to the entire family and landed us in deep financial crisis. I was trained in classical Hindustani vocal music by Sri Dattubuwa Thakurdas at Naragund and passed three examinations in music conducted by Gandharva Mahavidyalaya of Pune. My father wanted me to be a professional musician, but my music teacher advised my father to continue my education first and then think of a musical career. But the unexpected death of my father upset all our future plans. Then we shifted our family to Dharwad, where I completed my Bachelor of Arts with English as my major subject and Sanskrit and Kannada as minor subjects at Karnataka Arts College in 1970 and Master of Arts with American Literature and Indian English Literature as my optional subjects.

Bite: What motivates you to write? And why did you choose the historical genre?

Naikar: I wish to be known as a creative writer as I am rather disillusioned with the world of criticism, which is ever growing stale and dated. I choose the genre of historical novel or drama because I feel that we Indians have very little historical consciousness as compared with our vast and variegated history. I wish to write about the historical celebrities of my area i.e. North Karnataka and get national and international recognition for them.

Bite: Which books did you find yourself reading whilst growing up and which are you currently reading?

Naikar: Right from the beginning of my childhood I was nourished on religious and spiritual literature. My maternal great-grandfather initiated me into the mellifluous religious poetry of Nijaguna Sivayogi during my primary school days. Then my father initiated me into the religious literature of Allamaprabhu and Basaveswara during my High School Days. During my College and University days I was reading philosophical books, although I was not formally trained in philosophy. Now also I divide my reading time between secular literature and religious/philosophical literature.

Bite: Which writers have influenced your writing?

Naikar: I admire writers like Kuvempu, Karanth, B. Puttaswamayya, S. L. Bhyrappa, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Swami Vivekananda, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Nirad Chaudhuri, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal among others. All these writers seem to have influenced me directly and indirectly. But it is for the critics to study this aspect of my creativity.

Bite: When did you begin your literary writings?

Naikar: I began my creative writing as early as 1970, when I was still an M.A. student. In fact I wrote my first story entitled "Fulfillment" at that time, but did not publish it until I was fifty years of age, simply because I could not receive any guidance or encouragement from any senior writer due to a variety of reasons.

Bite: How would you describe your stories and your writing?

Naikar: I believe that my stories are basically realistic but are inbuilt with philosophical and symbolic dimensions.

Bite: How do you see the Literary Scene in India? Is it progressing or retrogressing?

Naikar: Nowadays the writing scene is very encouraging and inspiring with so many publishers coming forward to publish the budding writers. There are also a number of small and big prizes and awards instituted for Indian English writers. It has been growing very fast quantitatively but rather slow qualitatively.

Bite: Are there any new authors that have grasped your interest?

Naikar: I consider Rohinton Mistry and Amitav Ghosh as very interesting writers from India. Of course I admire the *enfant terrible* of letters, Salman Rushdie whole-heartedly.

Bite: Did you learn anything from writing your books and what was it?

Naikar: By writing my books I realized the Baconian dictum that writing maketh an exact man. It helps me to make my ideas clear to me.

Bite: Where do you get information or ideas for your books?

Naikar: I keep on reading vastly both in Kannada and in English; not merely literature but history, religion and philosophy. The new ideas begin to germinate in my mind for a while until I decide to write about them.

Bite: What are the most important elements of good writing? According to you, what tools are a must-have for writers?

Naikar: A good command over the language and clarity of thought combined with poetic, symbolic and philosophical dimensions are the important elements of good writing according to me. Good writing should have a rich texture of cultural details and it should not be bald and colourless.

Bite: Shall we expect any more books from you in future?

Naikar: Definitely, yes. I do not know how many books I may write in future.

Bite: Tell us something about your translations

Naikar: I have translated both ways, from Kannada into English and vice versa. I have translated the plays of J. M. Synge, Tagore, Terence and Breckt, some French stories, *Beowulf* and *Epic of Gilgamesh* into Kannada. Right now I am busy translating Dante's *The Divine Comedy* into Kannada prose. Similarly I have translated some plays and epics from Kannada into English, like *Fall of Kalyana, Sangya: Balya*: *A Tale of Love and Betrayal, The Vacanas of Sarvajna* and *The Frolic Play of the Lord (Prabhulinga Lile)*. I believe that translation is of enormous importance in our multilingual country. If every Indian teacher of English had translated at least one regional classic into English during these sixty years of Independence, most of our rich literary heritage would have been available in English and reached the world. But our English teachers have been criminally wasting their time in parroting the Western critical theories without enriching the global literature with the local literature.

Bite: Many critics found that your translation of Kalburgi's *Fall of Kalyana* is culturally richer than Karnad's *Tale-Danda*, What do you think?

Naikar: I am happy that many critics have noticed this truth. I felt deeply disappointed by Karnad's *Tale Danda.* When Karnad showed the Kannada version of it to the famous scholar, Dr. M.M.Kalburgi, the latter did not like it and suggested to Karnad to change it, but Karnad did not wish to make any changes to the play. Dr. R.C. Hiremath, the great scholar of *Vacana* Literature also did not like Karnad's play. Those, who belong to Basava's religion, find Karnad's *Tale Danda* to project a partial, reductive and prejudiced vision of Basava's life and mission. He has totally ignored the mystic dimension of Basava's personality and concentrated only on the social aspect of his life and even takes an anti-Basava and pro-Brahmanical stand in it. His intention is to highlight only the negative side of Basava's life. That is why M.M.Kalburgi had to write his *Fall of Kalyana* as an answer and corrective to Karnad's unimpressive play. *Fall of Kalyana* is definitely richer than Karnad's *Tale Danda* as it highlights the central concepts of Basava's religion and philosophy and offers a comprehensive picture of his life.

Bite: How will you differentiate your historical novels from those of other Indian Writers?

Naikar: This question has to be answered by Indian English critics and not by me. But I can say that I am impressed and perhaps influenced by the writings of Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal. I would like to write as seriously as they have done.

Bite: What Challenges do you find whilst translating from Kannada to English?

Naikar: The main challenge in translating from my mother tongue, Kannada into English is that of transferring the culture specific values into an alien language and finding the equivalent terms for the Kannada technical terms. All the Indian scholars, who wish to translate from their regional languages into English, have to face this problem and solve it in an intelligent way.

Bite: Tell us something about your recent novel *The Queen of Kittur.*

Naikar: You may not believe me if I say that I have taken twenty one years to collect the relevant information, both written and oral; and to mould it into the structure of a historical novel. I started the venture in 1989 and wrote the first draft within a year, but there were several gaps in it to be filled in. The source material, which was available in print both in Kannada and in English, was rather scanty, fragmentary, unsystematic, i.e. anachronistic, exaggeratedly patriotic, sentimental and many times unreliable. I had to shift the chaff from the grain of truth, study the serious historical documents like the Persian documents (in translation), Government Gazetteers, authentic oral versions not available in print, and folk literature etc, and synchronize, systematize and present it sequentially or chronologically so that a convincing total picture of the rise and fall of Kittur kingdom may emerge. Dr. V.G. Marihal, one of the admirers of Rani Chennamma and the kingdom of Kittur, examined my manuscript in its formative sage and suggested many corrections, which I have incorporated into the novel. He was eager that I should publish the novel at the earliest. But I was not willing to publish it until and unless I was satisfied with it. I published it in 2009 only when I had cleared all my doubts and filled in all the gaps, but alas Dr. Marihal was no more to see it in print. I, therefore, dedicated the novel to him so that his soul may rest in peace and satisfaction in Heaven.

Bite: How will you judge the body of Contemporary Indian English Literature?

Naikar: I am happy to notice that the Indian English literature has been growing fast, as there has been a spurt in the publishing world with several awards and prizes being instituted by various firms to encourage the young and budding writers. The quantity of contemporary literature is quite impressive, although the quality is not up to the mark.

Bite: What message would you like to give to readers?

Naikar: I cannot give a message as I am not a messiah, but I would like to suggest to the Indian readers of Indian English literature not to be unduly influenced by the media hype extended to the diasporic writers, but to read and study the native Indian English writers and examine them from the truly Indian perspective without depending upon the white gods (western critics and their jargon) and develop an Indian idiom and critical tradition based on Indian sociology, psychology, philosophy, religion and aesthetics. The Western critics do not like our parroting their own jargon, but would appreciate our native concepts and ideologies if we apply them intelligently. The best way to overcome this intellectual slavery is to convert all the Departments of English in Indian Universities into those of Comparative Literature, so that we may study the eastern and western concepts comparatively and contrastively thereby developing a new synthesized outlook. We should not depend upon the Western appreciation for our survival and achievements.

Bite: Should we expect autobiography what are your plans about it?

Naikar: I have already started writing my autobiography, but it is rather slow. It may take one full year or so, as I have to ransack my mind meticulously for details.

Bite: What do you think of the publishing scene in India?

Naikar: I am happy to notice that several amateur publishers have been coming up and helping the young writers. But still the publishers are not free from their communal and regional prejudices. The so-called big publishers of India are very choosey, partial and amenable to political and other influences. They do not encourage the promising writers on an impersonal level. They need to be influenced through proper, but unmentionable channels, which is a sad affair. Most of the publishers exploit the authors by not paying them any royalty for their hard labour of years together or decades together. The Indian Government should make it mandatory for the publishers to print a minimum of thousand copies and pay the standard royalty of 25% to the authors failing which they should be punished with heavy fine and imprisonment.

Bite: What message would you like to give upcoming writers?

Naikar: I would like to advise the young Indian writers to study the Indian culture, religion, philosophy, sociology, aesthetics, regional and Sanskrit literature at least briefly(if possible deeply) before venturing into the writing career. They should study the techniques of classical and regional literatures and try to employ them in their writing rather than borrowing the western modes of writing. This is possible only if the Indian writers have a bilingual or multilingual knowledge. It is not possible for those who are educated only in English medium and therefore know nothing about Indian culture authentically.

Bite: What is the role of the Central Sahitya Akademi in popularizing the Indian English Literature?

Naikar: The central Sahitya Akademi has a great role to play in the literary realm of India. Unfortunately now it has remained only as a bureaucratic centre. But it should be converted into a permanent research centre, where all the publications in all the languages of India including Indian English should be reviewed, annotated and compiled into yearly volumes and later incorporated into literary histories once in every ten years. This should be an ongoing and permanent project. The *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature* should be updated once in every ten years and compulsorily sold to all the educational institutions in India. Instead of one literary award for the Indian English writer, it should institute five awards for five divisions of India like north, south, east, west and central part so that the budding Indian writers will be properly encouraged.

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Book Review

Title: Creative Writers on Indian English Novelists

Editors: Arjun Jadhav, Nandkumar Lawande and Prashant Mothe

Publisher: Jyotichandra Publication Pvt. Ltd, 2010.

Price: 550/-

270pp.

Reviewer:

Madhuri Bite

Official Reviewer,

The Criterion: An International Journal in English

ISSN: 0976-8165

The history of Indian English novel can be very much aligned to the advent and supreme reign of the British Raj upon India, resting for a good 200 years. Leaving out the ruthless colonization, Britishers did leave their share of wondrous virtues in the literary, architectural and political sides. However, the literary and artistic sides perhaps had overshadowed all the other routined existence, with Indian literature and English education never remaining the same again. English as a basic and fundamental language was very much introduced in the dozens, with the class and then the mass joining in to be amalgamated with the erudite and good-hearted British populace. It was also precisely during this time that the illustrious Indian litterateurs, in a zealous attempt to show their vengeance against such English oppression, had penned out series of English works of art, only to be accepted forever by the global literary scenario, in the years to come. With many regional geniuses joining hands in such an endeavour, the history of English novel in India, presents itself as a solemn enterprise, surpassing all other literary genres.

Indian English novel and its eventful historical journey had begun with a bang when Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and by the time V.S. Naipaul had earned the same, the Indian English novel owned a far flung reach. Now more than ever,

English novels in India are triggering off debates concerning colossal advances, plagiarisation and film rights.

Arjun Jadhav in his well researched article traces the pragmatic analysis of abuses in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable.* He also states the abusive use of vocabulary is deliberately used by Mulk Raj Anand because he wanted to highlight the social and cultural reality. Nandkumar Lawande's insightful article attempts to analyze the process of decolonization in the novels of Raja Rao. Ashok Chaskar makes an attempt to look at multiculturalism from sociological perspective and spotlights how the principles of multiculturalism are infringed or violated in the novel *Untouchable*. In his scholarly article Mustajeeb Khan explores the Indian Ethos in Shama Futehally's novels. A.K. Mudkanna examines a domineering husband in Kamala Markandaya's *A Silence of Desire*. A.R. Gaherwar analyses Indian themes in Indian Literature comparing two generations British-Indian novelists and the novelists of the date. Ajay Tengse illustrates in his scholarly article difficult lives in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*. K. Rajkumar's article endeavours to explore Shashi Tharoor's *City Girl*. Mridula Sharma studies comparatively representation of childhood through animal imagery in *Fire on the Mountain* and *The God of Small Things*. R.B. Chougule and T.M. Pawar in their article explore spiritual and sexual digression in Upmanyu Chatterjee's *Weight Loss.*

Arvind Nawale in his scholarly article examines existentialism in Arun Joshi's *The Last Labyrinth*. Chitra Sreedharan in her article studies R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* as a comedy in tragedy. Farhana Khan and Abdulla Ali Aljeelani in their article critically evaluate Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. Annie John and Deepak Nanaware in their article on *The Dark Holds No Terrors* explicate that every woman is endowed with spiritual strength and moral courage. D.N. Ganjewar and Rahul S. Shinde in their article evaluate a critical cram of Githa Hariharan's *The Ghost of Vasu Master*. In his insightful article Mallikarjun Karajgi traces the theme of search for identity in Shobha De's *Starry Nights*. Anar R. Salunke in her article discusses Anita Desai's women characters from psychoanalytical point of view. Kamalakar Jadhav in this article traces Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haweli* moves from tradition to modernity, tenseness to relaxations and suffocating atmosphere to freedom. Shashikant Shrangare makes an attempt to evaluate changing images of women in Indo-Anglian fiction. V.M. Rasure and D.S. Birajadar in their article examine Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* from feministic point of view.

D. N. More in his insightful article explores the plight of partitioned souls in Malgaonkar's *A Bend in Ganges*. Milind Mane's article deals with man-woman relationship in the select novels of Shashi Deshpande and Bharati Mukharjee from feminine point of view. S. M. Suryawanshi explores in his article diasporic characteristics in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. P.B. Bhange focuses on the depiction of women in Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*. Anuja Jadhav's article studies Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows* which is reflective of feminist aspirations. N.R. Totawad illustrates different critical perspectives in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa and particularly focuses on the partition of India. Suresh Deshmukh in this article attempts to focus on the subaltern voice in Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*. Prashant Mannikar explores the question of freedom, revolutionary identity and sexuality in Volga's *Sweccha*. Urmila Dharshive in her scholarly article traces alienation of male characters in Arun Joshi's Novels. Pathan Wajed Khan's article deals with discourse, colonial discourse and orientalism in the light of postcolonial studies.

Sachin Bhandare makes an attempt to illustrate style and theme of *One Night @the Call Center*. The article is concerned with the style and theme which Chetan Bhagat employs to create an aura engulfing the readers not to give up the novel. S. T. Haibatpure in his scholarly article discusses a question of partition in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi.* Farhana Khan and Rahaman Dange in their article evaluate Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* from feminist perspective. In their insightful article S. B. Barure and Syed Zahir Abbas study female characters in Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain.* Utkarsh B. Kittekar in his article illustrates the theme of marriage and sex in Raja Rao's *The Serpent and The Rope.* Minakshi Tilekar makes an attempt to spotlight the continuous oscillation between Oriental (Indian) and Occidental (American) culture reflected in Bharati Mukharjee's *Wife.* S. P. Mathpati's article is an attempt to examine the process of dislocation and relocation as a theme in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. In his article Rahul Dhaware studies *The Inheritance of Loss* from post-colonial perspective. Madhav Raul's article deals with Quit India Movement in Khushwant Singh's *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale.* Vishnu Patil in his article studies technophobia of selected science fictions.

Chandrasen Kare in his article explores feminine sensibility in Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*. In his insightful article Shrishialya Todkar examines Gogol's alienation and self discovery in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake.* Yogesh Malshette's article illustrates history and

myth in Salman Rushdie's *Midnights Children.* Madhavi Kulkarni in her scholarly article studies Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* from feminine point of view. Suneeta Nirmale's article deals with code-switching and code-mixing in selected Indian English novels. Her article demonstrates the close relationship between society and language as the core issue of sociolinguistics as presented in the fictional works under consideration. Sandip Chavan explores the age old traditions and superstitions in R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma.* Pritam Thakur studies in his insightful article Shashi Tharoor's *Riot* as a multilayered narrative which shades a light on culture and femina of India. S. D. Pawar and N. B. Pawar examine the voice of new woman in Shobha De's novel, *Socialite* Evenings and traces that the new woman who raises her voice against patriarchal society and violates the norms laid down by men for women. Prashant Mothe in his well researched article presents a brief survey of Indian English novelists from the debut novel in the canon, *Rajmohan's Wife (1864)* to present writers and notes that Indian writers have played a progressive part in reform of Indian society.

BOOK REVIEW

Title: *A Bird Alone*,
Author: Ketaki Dutta,
Publisher: Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2008.
148 pp.

Reviewer: Pinaki Roy
Assistant Professor of English,
Malda College, Rabindra Avenue,
Rathbari More,
District: Malda – 732 101

The ash-grey cover-jacket and the title of Ketaki Dutta's debut novel are self-revealing of the storyline. In spite of the usage of the singular vowel 'a' in the title, there are, in fact, two *transcenders* in the novel – Anita and Chandana: the former desperately trying to transcend the monotony and senilities of an advanced life, while the latter tries to carve a niche in the big unfriendly world, coming out of the protection of 'didu' – that is, Anita – who, as an activist, had recovered her in her infancy from a northern Indian hothouse. Both of these women, for whom the world appears in shades of (ash) grey – are 'birds' in the symbolic sense – they yearn to soar high above the uncaring and cruel society, and yet they discover their loneliness at the end of the novel. In spite of having children who are self-sufficient and well-settled in the worldly sense of the terms, a 'caretaker' whom she had rescued and has had kept at her own lodging, and a grandson born abroad and sent to India to study at Sikkim and thereafter Kolkata schools, Anita ends at the conclusion of the novel where she begins – gruesomely segregated and alienated. On the other hand, to wade off her lonesome feelings, Chandana had hopelessly fallen in love with the married Arunesh, who impregnates her and leaves the hapless girl in the lurch. In between, the long letter of Merlin Premdas, who expires miserably alone at an old-age-home in the twelfth chapter of the novel, offers an 'epistolary autobiography of Anita's friend who had had hankered after love and attention throughout her life. Everytime Anita refers to the longish letter, managing time out of her daily chores, her sense of her own alienated existence returns to haunt her.

Anita and Chandana seem to be two 'everywomen' – denizens of the Eliotian Wasteland of modern civilisation where the typist-girl does not care to notice that her 'lover' has left after uniting with her. One of them lives at Darjeeling, while the other teaches at a school in the state of Sikkim – a decision which initially infuriates her 'didu' – where she at first successfully fights against the amorous attentions of the lascivious co-teacher Khaitan, and thereafter gives herself in to the scheming Arunesh. The twelve chapters of the novel are dominated by letters – the letters of Premdas – to begin with – those written by Anita's foreign-settled daughter Nina to her mother, that written by Mayuri to Chandana in the third chapter, and so on. Datta uses lucid English to construct the novel in a manner, which, in spite of the predominantly epistolary character of the publication, is

sure to hold the attention of readers throughout. The septuagenarians and octogenarians, in particular, will be able to find in Datta's debut novel a realistic depiction of their own plights. The youngsters, on the other hand, may find a befitting warning about what the modern civilisation would do to them once they reached old age.

Finally, one cannot help recalling different publications and stylistic features of several authors after completing Datta's enticing novel. First of all, one of the central messages of self-revelatory *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel García Márquez comes to the mind for obvious reasons. Ernest Hemingway may have quoted the famous line – 'No man is an island' – from John Donne's "Meditation Number 17" (*Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, 1624) at the beginning of his *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), but Datta's novel does show precisely what Donne had negated: in modern world, every individual is compartmentalised within her/his own self. In her masterly though somewhat symbolic portrayal of the *Gorkhaland Unrest* of the 1980s, Ketaki Datta undoubtedly parallels Kiran Desai's depiction of the same in her *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). Virginia Woolf, referred to in the novel, seems to have crept in through the author's identifiable usage of the stream-of-consciousness technique. Readers are sure to be reminded of Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith of Woolf's 1925 *Mrs. Dalloway* as they flip between Anita's and Chandana's experiences. In *The Namesake* (2003), Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the debilitating influence of the West on the cultures and demeanours of the immigrants from southeastern Asia. It is as a precautionary measure against this that Nina sends her child, Duke, to India. The novel is perceptively of an epistolary character. May one recall, as predecessors, Gabriel-Joseph de La Vergne's *Letters of a Portuguese Nun* (1669), Aphra Behn's *Love letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1749), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Wilkie Collin's *The Moonstone* (1868), Katharine Taylor's *Address Unknown* (1938), Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple* (1982), and (the more recent) Meg Cabot's *The Boy Next Door* (2002). Datta has given a brilliant demonstration of her having mastered this special style of novel writing. Finally, the existentialist crises Anita and Chandana face at the conclusion of *A Bird Alone* are sure to remind us of the Norwegian metaphysician Peter Wessel Zapffe's *The Last Messiah* (1933) and Thomas Wartenberg's *Existentialism* (2008), in both of which such crises have been explored in details. Wartenberg refers to instances of literary existential crises too.

The Spiritual Sense of Alienation in Diasporic Life: Reading Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Sunetra Gupta and Jhumpa Lahiri

Dr. Amit Shankar Saha

Kolkata, India.

Exile, in its literal sense, is a physical condition but the sense of exile is not necessarily a manifestation of a dislocated existence. Even if there is a geographical displacement, the exilic condition in many cases is only superficially physical and fundamentally psychological and spiritual. The external exile either compounds or, occasionally, suppresses these internal conditions. The Indian diaspora in the West has experienced a physical displacement but in a globalized world migrants are not treated as aliens, moreover the newer migrants have migrated of their own will, and hence there is little cause for them to feel the sense of being in exile. The world as a global village facilitates the feeling of being at home in the cosmopolitan urban quarters of the world. It is in these situations that the external circumstances of displacement become of less importance and the internal circumstances, that is the psychological and spiritual condition of the mind, gain prominence. Despite being in a diaspora there is little consolation of any hope of escape into any pre-exilic state. It is, as Rushdie says in reference to diasporic writers, a haunting of the mind:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind.
>
> (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 10)

This mental condition can only be tackled by catering to the psychological and spiritual aspects of life – a self-fashioning of the mind and the spirit.

India is not merely a geographical space on the world map. It occupies a well-defined space both in history as well as in culture. Thus, the Indian migrants in the West look back not only at the spatial contour of the subcontinent but at its history, society, and culture too. This looking back is paradoxically aided by technological innovations that help keep intact one's link with the past – a past that reminds of one's roots. Films, music, magazines, the cyber communities, and all other media of communications continually keep refreshing the link. Hamid Naficy notes in the essay "Framing Exile: From Homeland to Homepage" that due to "the globalization of travel, media, and capital, exile appears to have become a postmodern condition" (Naficy 4). It is basically this postmodern condition that produces a gnawing feeling of being in exile for the Indian diasporic community despite having the advantages of easy telecommunication and speedy travel.

The trope of exile is a perennial presence in all religions. Its prototypical model can be found in the Jewish "exodus", the Muslim "hegira", and so on. Exile plays a pivotal role in both the two great Hindu epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. In fact the Hindu pantheon of Gods and Goddesses is replete with the concept of mobility symbolized by the deities' "vahans" or the animals on which they ride – the lion for Durga, the ox for Shiva, the peacock for Kartick, the mouse for Ganesh, the owl for Lakshmi, the swan for Saraswati, and others. The psyche of the Indian immigrant fed on the mythologies of movement and exile is preconditioned to succumb to the sense of estrangement, alienation, non-belonging, and dislocation at the slightest pretext. Hence, physical displacement is only a catalyst that generally aggravates a pre-existing psychological and spiritual sense of loneliness. But this generalization is not sweeping because sometimes it so happens that physical displacement

allays the cosmic sense of loneliness. It is because of this complex and apparently paradoxical nature of the exilic condition that it is equated with the postmodern condition.

Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine* traces the story of the eponymous heroine in her American odyssey. Jasmine, the Hindu widow, who leaves India for the US after her husband's death in a terrorist attack, is found to undergo a cross-cultural metamorphosis in her fractured life as an immigrant. The opening chapter of the novel starts with the words:

> Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears – his satellite dish to the stars – and foretold my widowhood and exile. I was only seven then, fast and venturesome, scabrous-armed from leaves and thorns. (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 3)

The astrologer goes on to allude to the story of Behula from Hindu mythology. Here Bharati Mukherjee is not just exoticizing the content of the novel through these allusions. She is defining the mental space of her seven-year-old protagonist. Jasmine's psyche is formed by the stories that her mother recited to her of "the holiest sages", the "third eye" they develop in the middle of their foreheads to peer "out into invisible worlds" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 5), and their likes. No doubt Jasmine's mind is spiritually inclined even though she challenges and revolts against customs and traditions.

Jasmine's decision to fulfill her husband's aspiration of going to America is guided by her spiritual beliefs as she acknowledges:

> I had not given even a day's survival in America a single thought. This was the place I had chosen to die, on the first day if possible. I would land, find Tampah, walking there if necessary, find the college grounds and check it against the brochure photo. Under the very tree where two Indian boys and two Chinese girls were pictured, smiling, I had dreamed of arranging the suit and twigs. The vision of lying serenely

> on a bed of fire under palm trees in my white sari had motivated all the weeks of sleepless half-starved passage [. . .] (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 120-21)

The village girl from Hasnapur survives in America. She does not immolate herself because after landing on the Gulf Coast of Florida she is raped, and in turn she murders her rapist. This defiles her mission and death is denied her: "Lord Yama, who had wanted me, and whom I'd flirted with on the long trip over, had now deserted me" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 120). The transformation of Jasmine from the archetype of Sati to that of Goddess Kali as she towers over the man who violated her chastity, with blood oozing out from her sliced tongue, is a dramatic and violent imagery of self-assertion. The critic Nagendra Kumar notes that Jasmine's "decision to kill herself first, is a decision of a woman who lives for her deceased husband but the woman who kills Half-Face is prompted by her will to live to continue her life" (Kumar 110). Jasmine's journey from Punjab, through Florida, New York, and Iowa, to California depicts the various stages of her exilic condition. But these exilic locations are also representation of the spiritual states of her mind. Jasmine assumes different mythological avatars in her various exilic states: "I have been reborn several times" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 126). She shuttles between identities: "Jyoti [was] the Sati-Goddess, Jasmine lives for the future" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 176). Jasmine emancipates herself from being an illegal immigrant into a self-assured American woman but her spiritual call comes from India: "I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine* 240).

The "old-world dutifulness" forms the spiritual make-up of Indian migrants to the West. In Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* the Bengali diasporic community in Boston religiously celebrate Durga puja and Saraswati puja. But for characters like Ashima such celebrations are less about religion and more about rejuvenation of the link with the old world – the home they have left behind. Ashima's life in exile is eased by the spiritual frenzy

brought about by religious festivities. On the other hand, Gogol and Sonia, who are born and brought up totally in the West, find their parents' spiritual leanings intensifying their exilic condition. Their self-fashioning as Westerners receive a jolt each time they encounter certain aspect of their ancestry either corporal or spiritual. Sometimes the second-generation migrants revolt against their ambivalent position. The Gangulis celebrate "with progressively increasing fanfare, the birth of Christ, an event the children look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati" (Lahiri, *Namesake* 64). But once Sonia, in one of her growing-up years, refused her Christmas gifts after taking a Hinduism class in college, "protesting that they weren't Christians" (Lahiri, *Namesake* 285).

In Lahiri's short story "This Blessed House", Twinkle fervently collects the Christian paraphernalia left behind by the previous occupier of the house that is newly procured by her husband Sanjeev. For Sanjeev, his wife's idea is outlandish. When Twinkle finds a "plaster Virgin Mary as tall as their waists, with a blue painted hood draped over her head in the manner of an Indian bride" (Lahiri, *Interpreter* 146) she decides to put it on the lawn to the shock of her husband:

> "Oh God, no. Twinkle, no."
>
> "But we must. It would be bad luck not to."
>
> "All neighbors will see. They'll think we're insane."
>
> "Why, for having a statue of the Virgin Mary on our lawn? Every other person in this neighborhood has a statue of Mary on the lawn. We'll fit right in."
>
> "We're not Christians."
>
> "So you keep reminding me." (Lahiri, *Interpreter* 146)

For Twinkle, her external exilic state suppresses her internal spiritual exile by giving her an alternative mode of belonging – to "fit right in." Twinkle's relic hunt in her newly possessed house provides her a mental connection with the past of the house to secure her sense of

belonging. Salman Rushdie says that "the broken pots of antiquity, from which the past can sometimes, but always provisionally, be reconstructed, are exciting to discover, even if they are pieces of the most quotidian objects" (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 12). Though in Twinkle's case the objects discovered are not exactly common and have no relation to her past, they still bring peace to her mind. Whereas, Sanjeev's psyche closes options for him, taking him to a spiritual isolation compounded by his external displacement. The psychological build up of each migrant is different and hence the varied responses to a similar situation.

It is often seen that the physical shift from one's place of origin to a new place of residence does little in itself to arouse the sense of being in exile. In Sunetra Gupta's novel *Memories of Rain* the protagonist Moni is the quintessential romantic who "had loved Heathcliff before she loved any man" (Gupta, *Memories* 177). She finds in Anthony a hero figure straight out of the novels of Jane Austen or Thomas Hardy. Anthony is to rescue her from India – "a bizarre and wonderful land" – to England – "this island, this demi-paradise" (Gupta, *Memories* 6). Incidentally, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, in Act 2 Scene 1 of William Shakerpeare's play, *King Richard the Second*, composed in the 1590s and dealing with the subject matter of the early 13th century, speaks in very similar words ("This other Eden, demi-paradise"). This echo of lines spoken more than 750 years before Moni, and before Sunetra Gupta, show that for many middle class Indians, England is a cultural and spiritual state rather than a mere physical space. England is a space in Moni's subconscious mind. Moni has, as Amit Chaudhuri alludes, "the vague, intense longings of the feminized, adolescent imagination" (Chaudhuri 583). So, when Moni arrives with her English husband to an England that is vastly different from the England of her English literature class, she is in for a rude shock. Moni's psyche is fashioned by a life of sensation and when encountered with the bleak reality of a fast paced modern day England her sensibilities are brutalized. It is the irreconcilability of the life of action with the life of sensation that compounds Moni's

exilic condition. Even the romantic consolation in sorrowful memories is denied her by the indifference shown to her by her husband, who is having an affair with another woman. Anthony is no Heathcliff and her dream of "wandering as a spirit with her beloved upon English moors" (Gupta, *Memories* 177) remains unfulfilled.

It was in the rains of 1978 Calcutta that Moni's brother had brought home his English friend Anthony. Anthony had been enamoured by Moni, the second year college student of English. Later he had recited from John Keats's "Ode on Melancholy" – "No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist wolf's bane, tight rooted . . ." (Gupta, *Memories* 17) – and then to Moni's utter embarrassment he had asked her to translate for him the Bengali song that she had been singing in the morning.

> Many years later, huddled in the deserted tin mine on the Cornish coast, she translated the same song for him, staring into the sheets of rain that ran by like frozen phantoms across the crumbling entrance, and he sat back against the moldy walls, paying only half heed to her eager, nervous translations, mesmerised instead by the duet of the storm and the sea, until, like the sudden spray it hit her that he was not listening, he was not listening at all [. . .] (Gupta, *Memories* 10)

Anthony is lost in his amorous musings of adulterous lovemaking with Anna and is blatantly indifferent towards Moni. It is the denial of even the "Beauty that must die", the "Joy [. . .] bidding adieu", and the "aching Pleasure" that bars Moni from entering Melancholy's "sovran shrine" (Keats 248). The psychological constraint of being deprived of the aesthetic response that one craves for in pain makes Moni's exile acute. So, when Moni decides to return to Calcutta a week before Durga puja, she reminisces how "every autumn she had watched the city burst into joy to welcome the Goddess Durga to her father's home" (Gupta, *Memories* 173) and realizes that "this year she will return with the Gods, a daughter come

home" (Gupta, *Memories* 174). Moni reverts to her native spirituality as a consolation for her condition.

Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* has the Indian migrant Dev disillusioned by an England represented by the London of the 1960s because his mind has the image of an England as depicted in English literature studied in schools and colleges. Dev's psychology aggravates his exilic condition because his aesthetic sense cannot identify with reality. But when he visits the countryside he finds:

> this was the England her poets had celebrated so well that he, a foreigner, found every little wildflower, every mood and aspect of it eerily familiar. It was something he was visiting for the first time in his life, yet he had known it all along – in his reading, in his daydreams – and now he found his dreams had been an exact, a detailed, a brilliant and mirrorlike reflection of reality. (Desai, *Blackbird* 170)

Dev decides to stay in England after making this mental identification that eases his exilic condition. In St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, Dev finds "little religious aura" (Desai, *Blackbird* 68) and "has an uneasy feeling that these are no temples of Christ, but temples dedicated to the British Empire" (Desai, *Blackbird* 68). It is in the countryside that he visits an "old, small and silent village church" (Desai, *Blackbird* 172) and on touching "the rounded pillars felt soft to his hand as do the stones in Hindu temples that have been touched by so many devout foreheads. The stone tiles were curved beneath his feet as are those of temples on which Hindu worshippers kneel and walk incessantly" (Desai, *Blackbird* 171). Dev wishes that "he had a stick of incense to burn, a handful of jasmine or marigold to offer, Hindu fashion, to the grace of Christianity" (Desai, *Blackbird* 172). It is the aesthetic and spiritual familiarity that suppresses the psychological sense of exile.

In Sunetra Gupta's novel *A Sin of Colour*, physical relocation from India to England becomes too easy a form of exile to produce any sort of detachment. Debendranath wants to

exile himself from his thoughts of forbidden love for his elder brother's wife Reba. Years later Debendranath's niece Niharika finds herself in a similar predicament when she commits the sin of loving a married man Daniel Faraday. Niharika also exiles herself though, unlike Debendranath, not away from the person of her love but rather with the person she loves. In both the cases their exiles are not mere physical dislocation but exile from society, exile from relationships, exile from a familiar world, exile from a former self, and an exile into anonymity. After twenty years when Debendranath comes back to Mandalay, the almost deserted house, Niharika summarizes his absence thus: "You were able to reinvent yourself entirely" (Gupta, *Sin* 134). This self-exile from one's identity, echoing the "agyatavasa" that the Pandavas suffered in *The Mahabharata*, transcends the concept of material displacement and takes exile to a metaphysical level. Exile becomes a panacea for the soul ailing from existential alienation. It is not only the contingency of the world but also, the contingency of one's very will that baffles. Debendranath and Niharika need to isolate themselves from the world of action because to act is to assert one's will. Hence, by faking death they somehow extricate themselves from the sin of their desires. The psychology behind their displacement becomes all the more important.

Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "A Temporary Matter" has Shoba and Shukumar in their diasporic life grieving for their stillborn child. They find solace by isolating themselves from friends and relations and starting to live life a little differently, fashioning themselves anew, and creating new identities for themselves. For them their exilic condition is superficially due to their diasporic status and is rather fundamentally psychological. At different levels this is precisely the case with most of the diasporic characters. Since by birth human beings are exiled from the womb; one's home, one's family, one's country, one's culture, and so on stand as metaphorical imagery of that natal refuge. This inherent mental condition either acts in conjunction with physical displacement or in opposition with it – either compounding the

exilic state or suppressing it. That is why exile is taken as a human condition – some are exiles from happiness, some are exiles from peace, some are exiles from love, and some from their Maker.

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Dramatising Democracy/Democratising Drama: A Cross Sectional Analysis.

Anita Singh
Professor
Department of English
BHU
Varanasi- 221005
Email:**anitasinghh@gmail.com**

> To all unprejudiced reflection it is clear that all art is from its origin essentially Of the nature of dialogue. All music calls to an ear not the musician's own, all Sculpture to an eye not the sculptor's, architecture in addition calls to the step as It walks in the building (Buber 1971: 25).

It goes without saying, therefore, that there is no imperative for artists or dramatic art to engage intentionally in democratic dialogue. From Buber's point of view, whether or not dialogue is intentionally created, art is a form of "utterance" to which the audience can and does respond .However, some artists and cultural organizations do choose to present their art deliberately as a basis for democratic dialogue. They use the power of art to involve audiences at a visceral and cognitive level in the examination of issues that matter. This may not be the case always.

To begin with I distinguish between drama and theatre. Drama started when theatre became non ritualistic , when it needed dialogue, while ancient ritual , traditional theatre was a kind of monologue, drama brought in dialogue. We need dialogue because we need the right to oppose, to insist on our own opinions. In democracy, to put it simply you have to stop your monologue, you have to listen to another part, and then the other has to listen to your words again. That is the beginning of democracy - government by discussion, in which groups of people having common interests make decisions that affect their lives through debate, consultation, and voting.

From the Greek period to the present times, drama has undoubtedly served as a vehicle to carry the democratic voice of the people. Therefore, I would prefer to look into a few plays from different ages and civilizations from a macro level to analyse how these major works of world drama, which are still regularly performed today, were performed and interpreted in their historical contexts and may have contributed to discussion of democratic ethos in their own time.

Lineage between Drama and Democracy in the Greek Period

The play festivals of Dionysus served as a device for defining Athenian civic identity which meant exploring and confirming but also questioning what it was to be a citizen of a democracy. The framework within which Athenian drama was performed was essentially a democratic framework. W.R.Connor in a paper 'City Dionysia and Athenian Democracy' (1990), writes that the performance of plays were probably held at the end of 5^{th} century after the overthrow of the tyranny of Pisistratus and the establishment of democracy under Cleisthenes. The Athenian vocabulary for 'law' changed in an interesting way in Cleisthenes' days. Cleisthenes himself may have been responsible for the change, Solon's laws were known as *Thesmoi*, and the word is related to the Greek verb meaning to put or place and refers to the process by which law is imposed by a law giver or other authority. Solon was good, wise man and was given power by the people, but he was still imposing laws on the people. *Nomos* by contrast refer to customs and traditions already present in the society rather than been imposed from high. Thus, by referring to statues as *nomai* rather than *Thesmoi* one gives law an entirely different meaning. No longer was law imposed on them by someone else. They made their own laws. Thus, Athenians were beginning to take charge of their own government.

Greek society experienced a change from tribal culture to political life, a change which brought a new economy, government, and way of thought. Drama was an integral part of this change and its development shows a progress from tribal ways of thought which were largely subconscious and mythological in pattern, to a new logical and conscious thinking. Drama was used for social criticism. As thinking became more conscious and logical, myths were secularized.

My interpretation of Athenian drama concentrates on its context and performance at Athenian festivals and sees both the festivals and the plays as products of Athenian democracy. I endorse the notion that plays questioned Athen's democratic values.

According to the regulations of the Athenian theatre every poet who competed at the city Dionysia had to exhibit three tragedies and a satiric drama, four plays being performed in succession in the course of the same day. Goldhill emphasizes the institutional details associated with the performance of drama at Athens. I quote to catalogue the points:

> the funding of the chorus or festival ;the *Choregia* as a specially democratic system ;the selection of judges and chorus and actors by democratic procedure ; the possibility of tribal seating and the certainty of seating according to political position in the democracy ; the procedure for getting tickets via inscription on *deme* roll; the dating of innovation of pre play ceremonies ; the assembly in the theatre to discuss the theatre and indeed the whole gamut of performers which are instituted by democracy , and function as sign and symptoms of democracy in action (2003:104-19).

When Thespis started drama, drama was a kind of a monologue, there was only one person, one actor. Aeschylus introduced a second actor and that was the beginning of dialogue on stage.

The emerging concept of '*democratia*' can be found in Aeschylus's *Supplices (*464) it offers us our first literary peep at the *democratia* in operation. Aeschylus based his *Supplices* on the legend of the Danaides. Danaus and Aegytus were brothers. Danaus had fifty daughters by different wives and Aegyptus fifty sons. Aegyptus sought Danuas's fifty daughters hand in marriage to his fifty sons. These according to Turanian system were brothers and sisters and so were not intermarriageable. The fifty daughters of Danaus fled from Egypt to Argos to escape the unlawful and incestuous wedlock. They claim protection of Argive king, Pelasgus. Pelasgus repeatedly states that he must have the approval of the people (*Loas* or *Demos*) before acting and the central question at hand – whether to accept the suppliant women into the city's protection. On a couple of occasions the chorus appeals to Pelasgus as if he had autocratic power, calling him the supreme ruler of the land and declaring that he is the polis and the people . But these are words of desperate outsider trying to persuade sympathetic listener to aid them. Pelasgus explains his actual position to them as follows: "if the polis, the community comes under pollution, let the people in common work out a cure. I myself will not make any promises

before consulting all the citizens concerning these matters" (Oates& O'Neill: 1938:37). Power lies with the people; Pelasgus plays the role of a public speaker and speaks passionately on behalf of the suppliants. He wins approval of the demos and they vote to accept the women:

> And I and all those citizens whose vote
>
> Stand thus decreed, will your protectors be
>
> Look not to find elsewhere more loyal guard (ibid: 40).

Supplices concerns the use of persuasion (*peithe*), a theme that is certainly democratic.

In *Antigone* Sophocles uses the legend of the family of Oedipus (Antigone's father) in order to explore social and political issues of his time. Attending the theatre was a civic and religious duty in Sophocles time. By setting his play in a time period 800 years before his own, he could explore social political issues without offending those currently in power. He uses the authoritarian rule of Creon and the strong willed Antigone to warn against the dangers of dictatorship and to highlight the status of women in Greek society. Through *Antigone*, Sophocles provides lessons on how a city should not be run.

In 429 BC, a great plague killed almost two thirds of the population of Athens, causing civil and moral unrest and testing the bounds of democracy. Warfare was also common at this time in Greece society, as the city states of Greece competed with each other for trade, commerce and artistic superiority. This unrest is reflected in the events portrayed in *Antigone*, beginning with the civil war that pits Antigone's brother against each other. Polyneices who invaded Thebes and seized the throne from his brother Eteocles, slew him in a mortal combat and in turn was slain .Creon became the king and forbade the burial of Polyneices, against the pleas of her sister Ismene and her fiancé Haemon, Antigone goes to her death holding to her defiance and buries Polyneices.

The myth of Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, is an extraordinary dramatic legacy, worthy of exploration both for Sophocles's consummate handling of the theatrical machine and for the political and social significance of Antigone's actions. Sophocles sets the stage of his drama through his portrayal of Creon, without whom Antigone would have no dramatic reason to exist. Creon's first task as king of Thebes is to prove himself

worthy of that title. He must demonstrate his respect for the city's men of power and his ability to listen to the gods. Yet Creon's opening words, though pleasing and rhetorically sound, represents a new battlefield in the country's civil war. In his first public decree he denies Polyneices a proper burial. To Antigone this is an intolerable act of violence, particularly if we consider that in ancient Greece funeral rites provided women with rare opportunity to participate in civil life. In burying her brothers body Antigone defies Creon's legitimacy and places herself in radical position to the king. The chorus of elders hesitates to enter in this conflict. They do not dare challenge the king's authority, Antigone does dare. She challenges Creon on grounds of moral principles, citing the will of the gods, who dictates that the dead must be buried, regardless of sins accumulated during life. Antigone's appeal to the bond of kindred transcends political allegiance and conforms to the unwritten sanctions of the gods. In other words, she frames her dedication to her kin as a religious imperative, as a kind of faith: and it is this faith which she carries and which carries her, to her end without ever compromising resolute commitments to the touted principles of state, culminates in the escalated development of tyrannical disposition and the resulting destruction of his own family. In the face of Antigone's defiance, his sons rational but grafting advice and the prophet Tiresias forbidding at, Creon spirals down the path of corruption, the weaker of the two wills, he slides dramatically from the temperate rhetoric of his political manifesto into the realm of savage invective.

Creon now Lear like has allowed his stubborn fury to distort his judgement, upset his family and most critically betray his former pledge to protect public interests. In both personal and civic spheres, his language has denigrated into the roar of a despot who rules with an iron fist: "thou canst never marry her, on this side of the grave" (ibid: 443), he threatens Haemon. He descends into megalomania , insisting that the "man the city places authority , his orders must be obeyed , large and small, right and wrong" and "is Thebes about to tell me how to rule ? He rails "the city is the king's – that's the law!" By then he has defeated his own proclamation, "show me the man who rules the state" and Haemon can only point, succinctly and incriminately, that "it's no city at all, owned by one man alone" (ibid: 443). Not surprisingly, the tragic and ironic punishment that the god's eventually mete out for him is the suicide of his own son and wife, both of whom

die cursing his name. It is also an inconceivable political act – a solitary woman violates the king's decree, both for the love of her brother and to claim her proper social role. And then, in an act of extreme protest, she commits suicide, initiating a chain of events that will add Creon's wife and son to the roll of the dead.

From Sophocles point of view, Antigone's suicide is not nihilistic or pathological act, but rather the only possible way to restore her dignity. The play then unveils, layer by layer, the ethical and ideological motivations for Antigone's revolt. These motivations are reflected not only in Antigone's own words but in the actions of other characters. Following her lead, Haemon, Ismene, Tiresias and the chorus itself openly oppose Creon's law. Spurred on by Antigone's example, their actions amount to a social awakening, a raising of consciousness that reflects the principle of Athenian democracy.

Aristophanes *Lysistrata (*411) is a play about democracy. The play revolves around the woman of Athens who finally tired of losing their sons on the battlefield and conspire to deny their husbands sexual favours until they make peace with Spartans although the play is light-hearted it was written out of the poets grief over the thousand Athenians who had recently lost their wives in the terrible defeat at Syracuse. The name Lysistrata means 'deliverer from war' loosely translated. When Aristophanes staged Lysistrata he wanted to make people laugh, he also wanted to deliver a message to theatre audiences of the fifth century Athenians that war between Athens and Sparta was an exercise in stupidity, a senseless waste of people and resources, a senseless waste of lives and money and energy.

At the beginning, the women form a mock assembly of people. Lysistrata in the role of demagogue, or charismatic unofficial leader, persuades the others to swear to a sexual boycott. The older women make war together, storming the state treasury on the Acropolis, the younger ones join them in defending it. The counter attackers are the chorus of old men. The councillor, a member of a special government board that at this time largely superseded the council of 500, enters to sort things out. He makes a resentful speech about the assembly that voted for the ill thought out Sicilian expedition, unable to cope with the women in scuffle and argument; he stomps off to tattle to his fellow board members. The voracious exchange of factional insults continues. Lysistrata works hard to

consolidate her own faction. Cinesias cannot reassure his wife as to his intention to make peace, because he regards it a decision to be made by the mass of male citizens. Fortunately, he is wrong. Meeting the Spartan herald, who is on a peace mission, he instructs him to fetch ambassadors and sets off to the council of 500 to get Athens counterparts. Under Lysistrata's guidance, the negotiations are successful and a celebratory banquet follows.

When the women of *Lysistrata* strike, it is not to be taken by the audience as the fear-inducing strike of equal against equal. It is the absurd strike of weak but necessary slave against the powerful master. Women in the play are organized and rational, and their rationality opposes the irrationality of the war. *Lysistrata* might also be the first case of a labour union being depicted in literature. Since women were treated, again in general, as simply reproductive and child-rearing machines, they can be considered workers, though workers involved not in production but in reproduction. They organize and strike against the people who exploit their labour and the product of their labour-the sons and daughters, sons who will grow up and then go to war to die. Women are all about creating order, controlling, at the end of the play they bring society back to a sustainable condition.

Modern play: The European context

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is a masterpiece conceived in the heat of battle of democratic transition in Europe. It was published in 1882. There were parliamentary elections in Norway that year.

At the beginning of the play, Dr. Stockmann uncovers a startling truth about the springs in the town: they have been poisoned by chemical waste running off of a nearby factory and have been making some visitors sick. He thinks that he will be received in the town as a hero for uncovering this problem before things got worse in the summer as the temperature heated up, but he was wrong. His brother, Peter, claims that Tom made the evidence up and exaggerated the problem to make him look bad:

Peter: You have an ingrained tendency to take your way, at all events, and that is almost equally inadmissible in a well ordered community. The individual ought undoubtedly to acquiesce in subordinating himself to the community (Ibsen: 21)

He argues that Tom is trying to ruin the town by taking away the springs which have boosted the town's economy significantly. Dr. Stockmann decides to take his findings to the local liberal newspaper to have them published, but Peter gets there soon after. Peter tells the paper that a new tax will be needed to pay to move the springs as Dr. Stockmann suggests. The paper removes their backing because they do not want to lose subscribers. Dr. Stockmann takes his message to the people, who regard him as an enemy for trying to destroy the greatest thing about their town. Soon, Dr. Stockmann and his family are "pilloried as the Enemy of the People" (ibid: 194). His house is vandalized, his children beat up at school, he and his daughter lose their jobs and he is evicted from his house, all done by people who were friends of theirs only days before. Dr. Stockmann is forced to make a decision, either retract his statements about the poison in the springs and save his family and reputation, or stand up against the crowd with the truth.

This play brings up some very interesting criticisms and questions about democracy. Dr. Stockmann finds himself holding an important truth about the danger of the springs and the precautions the town needs to take to safeguard themselves from disease. But "the majority" considers this information a risk and rejects it. There are many historical precedents for this play. Galileo was excommunicated from the church for saying the earth revolved around the sun. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated for his work with civil rights. Ibsen portrays Dr. Stockmann as a noble reformer who dares to fight rather than compromise his principles and claims that the "strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone" (ibid: 244).

In the play Ibsen clearly criticizes the "compact majority," who often act foolishly in refusing to accept the truth and in blindly following their elected leaders. Although *An Enemy of the People* is replete with sarcastic remarks about the "compact majority", Ibsen is not attacking the concept of democracy. Instead, he levels his criticism upon the unscrupulous leaders and their naïve followers. Because they have vested interests and secret agendas, the bureaucrats mislead and misguide the public in order to get what they want and to stay in power. Ibsen shows how such leaders make a mockery of democracy. Stockmann appropriately refers to them as social pestilence.

The Indian context

Theatre was always a form for the masses. We can say common masses. Bharata the writer of *Natyashastra*, one of the most famous treatises on theatre himself calls it *panchamveda*, a *Veda* for the common masses to communicate and inculcate some values. The mythological origin of theatre related in *Natyashastra* reveals how theatre from being restricted and reserved for certain classes and constrained to certain themes had to open up for the masses. The story goes: when the world was given over to sensual pleasures *Indra*, king of gods approached *Brahma* and asked him to create a form of diversion that could be seen as well as heard and that would be accessible to the four occupational groups (*varna*) - priests, warriors, tradesman, and peasants. Bharata and his 100 sons, along with the heavenly nymphs acted and danced in the first play called *'Samundramanthan',* however malevolent spirits disturbed the dramatic action. *Brahma* summoned *Vishvakarma* to build a theatre house. Evil spirits continued to plague the actors. At last *Brahma* summoned the demons and in a mood of reconciliation, he indicated that no class of individuals was excluded from seeing it, including the demons, and that it is meant to educate and entertain. So right from the start theatre was to be democratic space meant for all class, caste and creed.

The first text I will take up from the Indian context to see negotiations between drama and democracy is Habib Tanvir's *Charandas Chor*. It is on of the most famous and acclaimed performed text after emergency in 1975. The text recalls Indira Gandhi's regime which had imposed emergency on the people and had tried to snatch their democratic rights. This text is a kind of dramatic representation of the situation of that time. The formation and the success of this text largely depends upon the emergency incident. So here again we are seeing the role theatre in propagating democratic ethos and values.

Charandas's world is a topsy turvy world of carnivelsque reversal. Truthfulness , honesty, integrity professional efficiency are shown to belong to a thief while the policemen , the priest ,the government official (the *munim*) , the wealthy landlord and the queen are shown to be devoid of these values and virtues. The central character Charandas is a petty

village thief in the beginning of the play. He lives his life by duping and robbing people. But strangely he is also a man of extraordinary princilpes. He is kind hearted and cannot see a woman in distress. He is truthful man who keeps his word. In jest once he took certain vows before his guru who wanted him to give up stealing but instead Charandas takes four vows (i) he will never eat off a golden plate. (ii) Never mount an elephant and lead a procession (iii) won't ever marry a queen (iv) won't ever be the king. His guru makes him add one more vow that is (v) to give up telling lies. Amazingly he lives up to them and dies for them. He is a Robin Hood kind of a figure and has a strong sense of social justice and aids the poor against the rich. He robs sacks of rice hoarded by the village landlord to be distributed among all, the chorus hails him as: "Charandas is not a thief no way! There are so many rogues about, who do not look like thieves" (84).Charandas is further emboldened to steal the golden idol from the temple, and rob the royal coffers. The autocratic queen orders Charandas before her. Charandas refuses queen's orders to ride on a elephant, eat from the golden plate, become the king and ultimately to marry her- as he had vowed against it all – the queen is aghast at the audacity of Charandas, a petty thief to spurn the royal command and finally when she asks Charandas to: "never reveal what has passed between us to anyone, I will be ruined! Promise me this" (111). Charandas refuses even this as he had vowed always to tell the truth. He is ordered to be persecuted. The chorus applauds Charandas as:

> An ordinary thief, dear friend, who's now famous man,
>
> And how did he achieve this?
>
> By telling the truth (113).

In this land of the tyrant queen evil, hypocrisy, corruption, nepotism flourishes and there comes Charandas a common thief who having taken some vows is an upright and honest man. The political parallels of rampant corruption and the tyrannous queen are obvious.

The next play I would like to discuss is Sarveshvar Daya Saksena's *Bakri* (*Nanny Goat*, first performed in NSD in 1974). The play is a political satire. It is in six scenes, beginning with an interlude performed by a Nat and Natin. The play reveals how corrupt

politicians make a travesty of the democratic system. The *nautanki* style serves the authors purpose. Three aspiring politicians seize upon the idea of turning a poor village women's nanny goat into a cult object. They dupe the villagers into believing that the goat belonged to Mahatma Gandhi and should be enshrined and worshipped as the mother goddess. The villagers build an ashram for the goat and offer donations regularly in exchange for *darshan*. The politicians decide to run for office on a program for *bakrivad,* choosing the goat's udder (*than)* as their election symbol. Once they win the election, the three politicians sacrifice the goat for the victory feast. However, this corruption is resisted by a group of villagers led by a local youth, the zamindar's son, and the original owner of the goat, the old lady, arrive at the feast at the last moment and tie up the politicians shouting '*inqulab zindabad'*(long live the revolution').The play ends with the defeat of the spoilers of democracy and with the democratic order restored . It ends with a positive note – a solution to counter the enemies of democracy through resistance and refusal to be duped and through solidarity in checking the politicians.

The play presents a parody of the patriotic songs '*Jhanda uncha rahe hamare'*(let our flag stand high) as *danda uncha rahe hamar*e(let our sticks stand high). The dialogues are mostly in prose, registers continually shift between village dialect, standard prose, poetic language and song parody. The political parody cannot be overlooked. The similarity between the nanny goat of the congress party's symbol, the cow and the reference to Gandhi are so obvious that the satire can in no way be missed. The plays purpose is to reach out to the ordinary man (*Am Admi*) in villages and towns and to ultimately show that it is the awareness of the common man that can make the democracy sturdy and in a healthy state.

Theatre Groups

Drama is the most public literary form, at many points in history, the most immediately engaged in social change: Dublin's Abbey theatre, Roosevelt Federal Theatre Project and Market Theatre, in India the IPTA, the Jan Natya Manch, Third Theatre, Naya Theatre M.S. Swaminathan's 'Voicing Silence', Gendered theatre are among the many companies

that have played a major part in defining national identities at times of crisis and have been platforms for democratic voice and protest.

The students' federation movement in India expanded its activities beyond the students' movement and began calling itself IPTA after the nation wide Indian people's theatre association that had been active from 1943 till about 1958. It was founded by stalwarts like K.A.Abbas, Ali Sardar Jafri, Safdar Hashmi among many others. A socially, politically and culturally conscious group it attacked semi fascist forces in an otherwise democratic India, it gave voice to unions, peasants, youth and women movements.

'JANAM' which is a Sanskrit word for 'new birth', it is also the acronym for *Jan Natya Manch*, meaning 'People's Theatre Front'. Since its inception in 1973 by Safdar Hashmi it has performed plays always related to specific social or political issues. It was an apolitical theatre group that effectively expressed the emotions and concerns of India's working class and peasantry. JANAM had been punctuating landmark political events with new theatrical creations. In the political history of India 1975 emergency has been a blot, when Indira Gandhi declared Emergency arrested all her political opponents and refused to resign. JANAM got the idea to write a small skit, a street play called *Kursi, Kursi, Kursi* (*Chair, Chair, Chair*). It's about this elected king who is sitting on a chair when a new king is elected, he gets up from the chair but the chair rises with him and no matter how hard they try to separate the king from the chair, it is impossible. Some dialogues were built around this gag (Eugene: 1989:32-47). After Indira Gandhi's repressive regime and the Emergency debacle the *Janata* party came to power in India, although later they proved to be just as anti- worker and anti- peasant as the Indira Gandhi government. A particular industrialist, hired gangs of antisocial elements from the area and gave them arms and uniforms and made them guards. So when the workers went on a strike, the guards opened fire, killing six workers. It was on this episode that the play *Machine* was built. The short play began with five people dressed in black who enter through the circular space left open by the audience seated on the ground. Five actors represent - three workers, a guard and the owner. Together they form a machine in motion, making all kinds of hissing and peeping sounds. Then the narrator comes in and addresses the audience for a few minutes. When he is finished, the sound of the machine

becomes audible again. Suddenly the machine comes to a stop, the narrator says: "what has happened? The machine has stopped. This is first class crisis! Why has it stopped? Can someone tell me? One of the machine's components liberates himself and says: "I have stopped it. I could not tolerate it any longer" (ibid). He is a worker. He talks about how he feels exploited by the machine. He works for the machine, for the owner and is oppressed by the guard but gets nothing in return. After he returns to his place in the machine, the owner steps forward, and then the guard, the machine starts up again as arms and legs begin to rotate. The narrator starts to speak but is suddenly interrupted by an explosion in the machine. The components fall to the ground. The three workers get up and start making demands. They want a cycle stand and a canteen. They also explain that the owner has refused their simple demands and that the guard has threatened them. They decide to go on a strike and shout: "*inkalab jindabad*" which means "long live revolution"! This time the guard fires on them and kills the workers. As they lie on the floor the narrator pronounces a final speech: "no matter how many bullets you pump into us, the workers are not going to be defeated. They will rise again? On this cue the workers rise and surround the terrified owner and guard in slow motion. The narrator continues: "the workers have always advanced. No one can stop them". The end comes with the workers, the guard, the owner and the narrator forming a back to back circle, singing revolutionary song.

M.S. Swaminathan Foundations 'Voicing Silence' a gendered theatre's major concerns are: Gender, culture and social activism. Three strands of their work are:

i) Developing plays sharing women's issues from a feminist perspective.

ii) Organizing collective sharing of experiences or women's theatre festivals, bringing together cultural workers, theatre persons, social activists and NGO's.

iii) Working with different communities of women – supporting them to use theatre as a tool for self expression and empowerment.

V.Padma's (Mangai) play *Pacha Mannu* (New Earth) was produced and performed by 'Voicing Silence'on 22-30August, 1994, with ten participants – five men and five women. The workshop evolved through an exchange of personal experiences, discussions, research findings and a spirit of togetherness. What is shown in *Pancha*

Mannu is everyday reality with a subtle critique of the same. The play was later performed in the villages of Tamil Nadu, moving through village streets. Imagery was used in a significant way by using Simple props that visually concretized the deep and personal experience of gender socialization. The oil press scene evolved out of the traditional mode of extracting oil , in this scene the girl is moulded through a list of don'ts like 'do not walk straight' ; 'do not giggle' ; 'do not study too much'(Mangai:2002:215-230). The scene presents the parents as the nodal agency of socialization symbolized by the centre pole and a long rope from their hands is held by a man driving the girl bent like a bullock. However to make the play appealing it is interspersed with song, dances and dialogues in different tones. The play incorporated Frierian ideology and Augustus Boal's techniques .The flexibility of the play demanded that the actors improvise, interact and participate. It also drew the audience into discussion and the onus of decision making was rested on them.

In America the federal theatre project was a new 'Deal Project' to fund theatre and other artistic performance in the US during the Great Depression; it was one of the five federal projects sponsored by the Works Department administration (WPA). The FTA's primary goal was employment of out of work artists, writers and directors with the secondary aim of entertaining poor families and creating relevant art. NTP declared intention was mounting plays that were 'Free, Adult and uncensored'. 'Living Newspapers' is perhaps FTP's mot popular work. 'Living Newspapers' is perhaps FTP's most popular work. 'Living Newspapers' were plays written by teams of researchers turned playwrights. These men and women clipped articles from newspapers about current events , often hot button issues like farm policy, syphilis testing , housing inequity etc. these newspaper clippings were adapted into plays intended to inform the audiences , often with progressive or left wing themes. Many of the notable artists of the time participated in the FTP including Susan Glaspell, Arthur Miller, Orson Welles, Elia Kazan, and Elmer Rice among others.

Theatre Forms

Certain dramaturgical texts and theatre groups as we have seen have also served democracy. The practice of theatre (its different forms) had also served the purpose of democratic ethos especially the practice of folk theatre forms which was defined by Bakhtin as 'carnivalism' in his *Rabellais and his World*. These types of performances which include: *Commedia dell'arte, Noh, Tamasha, Bhavai, Nautanki*. These forms of popular theatre often raises and promotes dialogue on difficult and at times politically charged issues such as disrupts traditional power hierarchies.

Commedia dell'arte or 'comedy of profession', 'comedy of art' means unwritten or improvised dramas and implies rather to the manner of performance than to the subject matter of the play. This peculiar species flourished in Italy in the 16th and 17th century. For Bakhtin commedia was highly dialogic in its emphasis on slang and dialects and its numerous carnival and folk elements. Bakhtin thus notes that "in the commedia del'arte , the Italian dialects were knit together with the specific types of masks of the comedy, in this respect one might even call the dell'arte a comedy of dialects (Dialogic Imagination:82).

Indian folk forms which followed the classical drama had a strongly subversive content and context. The folk theatre forms did not believe in the purity of an art form (like the Sanskrit theatre). Hence it does not follow a rigid code of discipline but is often apt to mix up several moods. The result is a happy abandon, an exhilarating freedom of expression, an extraordinary aesthetic harmony.

Among the many folk forms found in India I will briefly explicate two such forms:

1) *Bhand Jashna* the primary popular theatre form among Muslims of rural Kashmir. *Bhand Jashna* means festival. The performance begins with a ritual invocation (*poozapath*) honouring Allah. This is followed by a farcical imitation of the solemnities performed by the clown (*mashkhara*). Costumes are a mix of contemporary local and semi historical dress. A performance may take place during the day or in the evening, to the accompaniment of the musicians.

The form emphasises farce and satire. Lively plays (*pather)* are improvised primarily in the Kashmiri language, with words and phrases from Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Persian freely added to suit the particular political and social situation. Actors mercilessly ridicule corrupt officials, money lenders and dowry system while making fun of everyone from the simplest peasant to the most powerful political leaders. Many of the plays have semi historical settings and concern popular folk heroes to avoid the accusation of slander, but their contemporary relevance is nonetheless clear.

2) *Tamasha* is *a* major form of rural theatre in the state of Maharastra. It is a rural theatre form that stress humour or extensively satirizes and pokes fun at contemporary society, often at the expense of politicians and businessmen, priests and prophets, clothing its barbs in the guise of historical or mythological stories. Evidence suggests that *Tamasha* developed in the 16th century as a bawdy entertainment both for the Mughal armies that occupied the Deccan plain and among insurgent Maratha forces determined to free their people from their oppressors.

The term *Tamasha* is a Persian word meaning 'fun' , 'play' , 'entertainment' and was probably introduced to the area by Urdu speaking soldiers of the Mughal armies. Some have suggested that the *Tamasha* developed out of the decaying remnants of two short forms of classical Sanskrit entertainment the *Prahasana* and the *Bhana.* The diverse elements found in the *Tamasha* performance indicated it eclectic borrowing. All *Tamasha* performance begins with a *Gan,* devotional song in praise of the deities, followed by *gaulan,* a dramatic segment in which Krishna and his clown attendant wittingly converse with milkmaid in their journey to the market. Songs and dances punctuate the raucous humour, following this is the *Vag,* a short dialogue play drawn from historical or mythological or local sources and with satirical incidents and broad slapstick humour.

Hence the folk techniques appear to provide the aptest instrument of communication, with its intense flexibility of form. These carnivelesque performances are quite democratically structured - the spectator becomes the spect/actor; audience participation on a universal scale has been the hall mark of such performances. It creates a democratic space.

Conclusion

Drama is a way of opposing. Nepotism, despotism, authoritarianism, corruption and other threats to democratic ethos and personal liberty are critiqued / lashed at and mirrored in the dialogue of drama. This paper has attempted to mark out how since the time of Aeschylus democracy has been developing drama and drama has been supporting democracy.

No portion of literature is connected by closer or more numerous ties with the present condition of society than the drama. Restrictive forces have always opposed theatre , Puritanism in England and the new colonies , clericalism in Spain , self perpetuating juntas , proletariat dictatorships , tyrannies of the right , the apostolic church , kings by divine rights at one time or the other all fought the theatre as unclean, untrustworthy , disobedient or demoralising. Max Beerbohn called actors impersonators, impersonating gods and demons and heroes. Solon, the law giver in Athens objected to impersonating because he regarded them as deception. Century's later church also had strong doubts. Both were on the right track for the wrong reasons. Impersonating in a theatre are simulations, no doubt of that. But we can hardly call it deception. Brilliantly encompassed by great performance, they have a shattering reality that transcends what we imagine of reality. Impersonation on stage, at their best can be devastating revelation of truth. Solon was wise, and he knew that the stage could be the enemy of decorum and unquestioning submission. The fine arts are reflective instruments for promoting the best interests of men. It is the duty of every good citizen to encourage their cultivation. Theatre is a powerful engine well adapted to the improvement of man, and that it only wants to make directing hand of an enlightened society to make it the pure source of civilisation and virtue.

We all know that drama appeals to man as an individual and as a social animal, It satisfies his need to think and feel privately and yet to be a part of a group. In our democratic society, which earnestly propagates the philosophy, that good life must be placed within the reach of all; there is an understandable urgency to make arts the joy of every man/woman.

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PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ABUSES IN 'COOLIE'

Dr. Arjun Jadhav,
Associate Professor,
Dept.of English,
Fergusson College, Pune-04

Prashant Mothe,
Assistant Professor,
Dept.of English,
Adarsh Senior College, Omerga.

Preliminaries

If abuses are treated as speech acts, the sociological novels of Mulk Raj Anand can be best understood. The novel *Coolie* by Mulk Raj Anand is replete with abusive expressions. The writer deliberately creates some characters who use offensive language and certain characters who become the recipients of the verbal abuses. There are definite social, psychological, cultural aspects that govern the choice of abusive language. The fictional characters manifest attitude, describe the world or change the things by way of abusive expressions. In the novel *Coolie*, we come across abusive use of language. The abuses that occur in the novel are dominated by the social stratification in Indian context. The Indian society as reflected in the novel is based on the class system. Therefore, in the novel *Coolie,* the abusive speech acts are related to the class discrimination.

Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Coolie* is of epic dimension for it takes the readers to different places of India where we come across people belonging to different age groups, castes and classes, occupations and professions and where we come across the variation in the use of the register. What is striking about this novel is an element of contrast showing the rich and the poor, rural and the urban, English people and the Indian people. Therefore, the novel *Coolie* is multicultural in nature offering the scope to construe the selected speech acts in terms of power and solidarity semantics. The speech acts which include terms of address, abuses, diminutives, endearment, honorific registers, etc are also worth studying beyond communicative aspects. The socio-cultural, strategic competence, and discourse competence are much more important than the linguistic and communicative competence. If the speech act theory is applied to the novel *Coolie*, one understands the linguistic utterances beyond the grammatical boundaries. The present article is an attempt to shed light on the abuses in the novel *Coolie* using the principles in pragmatics.

Pragmatic Analysis of Abuses

Since the novel *Coolie* is primarily based on the class-consciousness, it would be interesting as well as noteworthy to study, interpret and analyze the carefully selected speech acts. The importance of social relationships in determining address forms is, in fact the subject of independent research. It is interesting as well as surprising to note that abuses are used as a form of address. The use of abuses is common to all cultures. Gujri, Munoo's aunt in the novel *Coolie*, for example, flings abuses at him shouting at the top of her voice:

> *Munnoo ohe Munooa! Where have you died? Where have you gone, ominous orphan? (p.9)*

The utterance was uttered with a shrill, hoarse voice standing at the low hills of Kangra valley from where one could see the silver line of the river Beas surrounded by the mango-grove, ferns, weeds and bushes. Munoo had been grazing cattle on the banks of the Beas. The address terms she uses are partly diminutives and partly endearments; diminutives in the sense that they are used to express disapproval of Munoo; endearment for they are the deviations in the name itself. The illocutionary force of the utterance indicates that his aunt wanted Munoo to come home as early as possible because his uncle was leaving for Sham Nagar and he must go with him to earn his livelihood. Her intention behind the utterance also indicates that she wanted to get rid of Munoo by sending him to the town. She uses taboo words to describe Munoo. She calls him '*ominous orphan'* because Munoo's parents had already gone to the heavenly abode. Both his uncle and aunt wanted Munoo fend for himself. The perlocutionary effect of the utterance shows that he was terribly frightened to hear the voice of his aunt. Though he heard the shouting of his aunt calling him back from the valley, he did not reply. He simply turned from the shade of the tree where he sat hidden. Panic-stricken he wanted his aunt to disappear into the hut.

The above speech act is an example of code switching for the sentence structure is Hindi whereas the words used in the sentence construction are English. One of the

reasons for using the code-switching device is to convey anger and annoyance strongly. The expression *"Where have you died?"* is taken from the Hindi phrase *"kidar marr gaya"* and is used to express anger for the person who is wanted urgently but not available on time. Despite the repeated shouting calls of his aunt, Munoo would not respond on purpose. Therefore, the utterance involving code mixing is used to emphasize the exigency of the situation. In the Indian context people make use of two languages simultaneously which is known as bilingualism. S. V. Parasher (2001) says:

> *"When people of widely different cultural and linguistic background live together in a geographal region over a considerable length of time, sharing common, socio-economic and political activities of the communitiystable bi- or multi-lingual societies are created." (p.14)*

The swear words either in Hindi or English are extensively used by the characters ranging from children to grown ups. At times, they are used as diminutives whereas occasionally they are used as endearments. The study of the following example will illustrate the fact:

> *'Have you no manners, you savage, that you let your aunt shout herself hoarse and don't answer her?' (p.10)*

Jay Singh, son of the village landlord, is Munoo's rival for leadership of Bishambar and other village boys. He wants Munoo to go away from the village forever so that he would get a chance to lead the boys in the absence of the latter. The term of address he uses is *'you savage'*, which apparently is an abusive expression, but in reality, it is an endearment. The term is used by Jay Singh to show close proximity. However, there are a number of abusive words and phrases in the novel. Some people use abusive language in the name of some animals. Animals are powerful symbols of certain qualities- good or bad. We either admire or despise people using animal metaphors. Let us examine the following utterance of a young man:

> *'Look out, you son of a donkey?' (p.18)*

The above utterance cannot be understood unless it is put into the context. In pragmatics, the context determines the meaning of a linguistic expression. Here, the rider of a bicycle uses the utterance. As the donkey is looked upon as a stupid or brainless animal, Munoo is given the qualifications of a donkey. When he saw Munoo in his way walking carelessly disregarding the warning bell of the bicycle, he gets angry and reminds him to be cautious while walking.

The above expression is an indirect speech act and is intended to create a perlocutionary effect on the mind of the hearer. Here, in this case, Munoo is the hearer and he steps aside and barely escapes being knocked down into the gutter. The man, to save the boy from any injury, uses the abusive expression, *'son of a donkey'*. The implied meaning one gets from the phrase is the boy in the context is so silly like a donkey that he cannot understand the rules of traffic in a town or city.

The abuses are not only in the name of animals but they are also related to sexual characteristics. For instance, Munoo's uncle makes him aware of the impending danger of the bicycle to which Mulk Raj Anand calls two-wheeled steel horse. The abusive terms used by Munnoo's uncle in the following expression make this clear:

'Ohe, illegally begotten!' you will get killed! Idiot!' (P.18)

On seeing a two-wheeled steel horse coming towards Munoo at a terrific speed, his unkind uncle addresses Munoo as illegally begotten and calls him idiot to avert the accident. The illocutionary force of the utterance was so strong that boy was terrified. As a result, the boy became frightened and could not understand what to do in this situation. Had the toy-seller not dragged the boy to a safer place, the cyclist would have knocked him down. His uncle, unmindful of the boy's plight, continued his verbal abuses without stopping for a breath:

> *'Walk quickly, rascal! You will get killed before long if you don't look out.' (p.18)*

Daya Ram, uncle of Munoo, having said this utterance struck him on the face. Munoo began to cry. He was very disheartened because he thought that his uncle had a stony heart. Nevertheless, he had no option than to follow his uncle mutely. Thus, it becomes clear that Munoo is a mute sufferer. The term 'rascal' is used in the sense of an abuse as well as diminutive. It is an abuse because the utterance is uttered in a harsh tone, which makes the boy realize that he should be cautious while walking on the city road. Usually, the term 'rascal' is used in the sense of disapproval of somebody's way of doing the things. In this sense, it is a diminutive. Here, in this case Munoo's manner of walking is disapproved.

Munoo's journey into the new world is full of struggle, disappointment, trials and tribulations. He suffers not only at the hands of his own relatives but his masters who assign him different odd jobs also oppress him. For example, Munoo is ill treated by his uncle who wants to get rid of the boy. He considers the boy a burden in the family. Therefore, he expects the boy to do some work for his daily bread. He takes the boy to his master and asks him to pay respect by joining hands. His uncle says:

'Join your hands, pig, and say, "I fall at your feet" (p.23)

Munoo's uncle flings an abuse in the name of pig. The above speech act is directive in the sense that Munoo is ordered to do something. The boy is ordered to join hands as the mark of respect. In India, people give respect to the superiors or elderly people by joining their hands. Munoo is asked to do so by his uncle to get favour of Bibiji, the mistress of Babu Nathu Ram. Since Munooi is a teenager, he dutifully obeys his uncle and joins his hand to show that he respects the woman.

As soon as Munoo begins his work as the houseboy, he is profusely abused by the landlady:

> *'Eater of your masters! Strange servant you are that you fall asleep before the sun sets! What is the use of a boy like you in the house if you are going to do that every day? Wake up! Wake up! Brute! Wake up and serve the*

> *Babuji his dinner. Or at least you eat your food before you sleep, if sleep and die you must.' (p.25)*

Munoo is at the lower rung of the ladder of social hierarchy. In other words, he belongs to the category of servants. Bibiji and Munoo share master-servant relationship. The speaker enjoys the right of calling her servant 'brute'. The abusive expression, *'Eater of your masters'* is the literal translation of the Hindi expression, 'Namak haram!' which is used to show that the person in whose case the socially forbidden words are used is not trustworthy. Bibiji, the wife of Babu Nathu Ram let fly the abuses. At one point Bibiji says to Munoo:

> *'Yay, shameless, shameless, vulgar, stupid hill-boy! May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you die! What have you done! Why didn't you ask me where to go? May you fade away! We didn't know we were taking on an animal in our employ, an utter brute, a savage! What will the sahibs think who pass by our doors every morning and afternoon! The Babuji has his prestige to keep up with the sahibs. Hai! What a horrible, horrible he has made outside my house!'(p.8)*

Munoo did not know where he should go to relieve himself. There were houses all around. He hurriedly went to the wall outside the kitchen lest he could not control himself any longer. The landlady was seething with anger when she saw him releasing the stools. She could not bear the sight.

The above utterance of Bibiji indicates that she was extremely angry with the boy for relieving outside the kitchen. She calls him 'vulgar, stupid boy'. She also uses indirect speech act and calls him an animal. Here, the landlady regards Munoo an animal because he does not even know where to relieve himself. In another incident, Munoo is regarded as monkey. Chota Babu says:

> *'You paws, you monkey!' (p.33)*

The above expression apparently looks like an abusive expression but at the pragmatic level, it is an example of endearment. Munoo is addressed as monkey by Chota Babu. Here, it must be mentioned that Chota Babu and Munoo share friendly relations. Besides being a doctor, Chota Babu is also one of the members of the house where Munoo works. The Babu treats Munoo in a friendly manner. He allows Munoo to come into his room and listen to music. Munoo wants to listen to musical notes created by the singing machine. When he enters the room without dusting his feet and hands after throwing the rubbish outside of the house, Chota Babu utters the above speech act as an endearment. In the same speech event, we come across another term of endearment, this time in the name of some bird. Babu calls Munoo:

> *'Ohe, son of an owl,' have you dried your feet before entering the room?'(p.32)*

Here, the address term is in the name of a bird, which has derogatory connotative meaning in the Indian context. The bird named 'owl' is associated with a person with beady black eyes, whose appearance is ugly and who becomes a laughing stock. At this point, Munoo is addressed as the son of an owl for not cleaning and drying his feet before entering Chota Babu's room. However, in this case the address term is endearment.

On the contrary, Bibiji, the mistress of the house constantly nags Munoo for the latter is careless in doing the household duties. The ill treatment meted out to Munoo makes him disheartened and dejected. Bibiji at one point in the novel calls names and gives him a resounding slap on the face. Here, we are reminded of Bakha, the protagonist of the novel *Untouchable* who also receives the slap on his face. Both the characters Bakha and Munoo represent the lowest caste and the class of the Hindu social structure based on hierarchy respectively. Bibiji's speech act is worth studying here:

> *'Spoiler of our salt!' 'You have brought bad luck to our house! Beast! And I have tried hard to correct you.' (P.59)*

The address term *'Spoiler of our salt!'* is an abusive expression as well as a diminutive, it is an abuse because it is aimed at bringing humiliation to Munoo for not

doing the house work according to the wishes of Bibiji, it is a diminutive for it is aimed at bringing disgrace to Munoo. The phrase *"Spoiler of our salt"* is an example of code switching. The Hindi phrase of abuse 'namak haram' has been borrowed using English rephrasing. The Hindi abusive term is often used in India to indicate the person who is poor and who works at his master's place betraying his master.

Munoo is called a beast because he is poor and miserable. He is harassed due to his low class. Mulk Raj Anand deliberately makes his characters use abusive language and thus makes a new experiment in the use of language. He uses language as an action. The effective use of abusive language creates a perlocutionary effect on the hearer. Most of the abusive expressions are related to the animal imagery, the sexual activities, and the class distinction. Following are some of the speech acts where abusive language is used in the name of animals:

1. *'You impertinent little rogue! So you dare to ask me for accounts, eh, son of a swine! This is the reward I get for keeping you so long, and for finding you a job! Money, money, money you want all the time!' (uncle to Munoo) page-61*

2. 'Son of a bitch! How can I get you the clothes you want, and shoes, if you spend all the pay money which I am keeping for you?' (uncle to Munoo) page-60-61

3. *'Why, oh swine! Why don't you answer me?' (Babuji to Munoo)page-73*

4. '*Get on with your work, ohe inquisitive swine!' (The goat face to Munoo) page-115*

5. *'Son of a dog!' (Babuji to Munoo) page-73*

6. *'Get out of my way, swine!' (Ganpat to Munoo) page-125*

7. *'Get away you hill dog!'[striking him on the face] 'Go to your coolies, you dirty coolie.' (Ganpat to Prabha) page-125*

8. *'Shut up, demented swine, ignoble wretch!' (Ganpat hurled his last abuse at Prabha) page-126*

9. *'Stop howling, dog, and don't follow me. I tell you I have made up my mind. I am through with such scum as you. You are not my class. You belong to thee street, and there you shall go. I spit on you.' (Ganpat to Prabha) page-126*

10. *'Son of an ass! Heathen! (Pathan to Hari) page-236*

11. *'Stupid bullock' (Jimmie to Hari) page-199*

12. *'You lie swine! I went down myself yesterday and there was no water.' (Chimta Sahib to Hari) page-229*

13. '*Surka bacha! Why didn't you inform me before you moved out of those huts? (Chimta Sahib to the coolies) page-229*

In the above examples, the underlined words are animal abuses. It is noticed that these animals have bad connotations in Indian culture. The abuses are not only in the name of animals but they are also in the name of illegitimate sexual relations. The abusive speech acts showing the illicit relations are in plenty in this novel. Following are some of the examples:

14. *'Come out! Come out and face us, upstart hill-man! Come out, lover of your mother!'(page-126)*

15. *'Ohe, lover of your mother,' 'Ohe, illegally begotten, who asked you to lift the cask, you who have hardly emerged from your mother's womb? Run away, little rascal! I didn't see you go in to lift the weight or I should have stopped you. Do you want to have me sent to jail for murder? Get away, little wretch!' (The merchant to Munoo) page-144*

16. *'I know he is ill. Of course, he would be ill, with so much money on his conscience. But go and bring him, or we will come and drag him out, the illegally begotten!' (One of the creditors to Munoo) page-127*

17. *'Go, go, seducer of your sister, go and get him.' (a merchant to Munoo) page-127*

The abusive expression in the 14, *'lover of your mother'* is taken from the Hindi expression, 'Madar Chod' which means 'mother fucker' in English. The creditors to Prabha call him names because he has not been able to repay their debts. The Lallas have come to the doorsteps of Prabha Dayal to demand their money. On seeing the house locked, the creditors knock at the door and abuse him profusely.

Similarly, the directive speech act as stated in 17 indicates the nature of relationship between the addressee and the addresser. Here, the addresser, of the abusive expression, *'Go, go, seducer of your sister, go and get him'*, is a merchant who has come to the doorstep of the house of Prabha who has become bankrupt. The merchant asks Munoo to fetch his master who has been hiding in the house for fear of being beaten. The merchant addresses Munoo as the seducer of his sister. It is an example of code switching and is taken from the Hindi phrase, 'Behan Chod' that means the person has illicit sexual relationship with his sister. This type of abuse is very common among the working class of India. Probably, this is the reason why Mulk Raj Anand makes use of speech acts of code mixing and code switching involving abuses showing illicit relations between kith and kin.

Conclusion

It is remarkable that Mulk Raj Anand recreates reality by the use of authentic linguistic expressions taken from the ground realities existing at the time when the novel *Coolie* was being written. The use of abusive terms as well as diminutive expressions is worth studying from the point of view of pragmatics because the study of language as an action really helps the reader to arrive at an authentic interpretation. Abuses, in short, relate the speech to the attitude of the upper caste/class towards the lower caste/class and to the socio-cultural environment of both the caste/class. In fact, it works like a living character influencing the interactions of the characters in the novel.

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Existential Predicament in Arun Joshi's *The City and the River*

Dr. Arvind M. Nawale,
Head, Dept. of English,
Shivaji Mahavidhyalaya, Udgir, Dist: Latur

Among the Indian English writers who qualify as existentialist, Arun Joshi is the first and finest one. His novels are strongly influenced by the existential philosophy of Satre, Albert Camus' and Kierkegaard. His journey of fictional works from the *Foreigner* (1968) to *The City and the River* (1990) is characterised by themes of frustration, disintegration, rootlessness, a sense of alienation and existential predicament.

Before embarking upon an investigation of existential predicament in *The City and the River*, the fifth and the last novel of Joshi, let us first decide to what constitutes existential predicament or 'existentialism'. As a modern philosophic movement, 'existentialism' deals with man's disillusionment and despairs. It is originated in philosophical and literary writing of Satre and Camus'. Mr. M. H. Abrams, in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* defines it as:

> "a tendency to view each man as an isolated being who is cast ignominiously into an alien universe, to conceive the universe as possessing no inherent human truth, value or meaning and to represent man's life, as it moves from the nothingness which is both anguished and absurd" (1971:86).

As a philosophic idealism, 'existentialism', in due course of time developed into a powerful revolt against reason, rationality, positivism and the traditional ways in which early philosopher portrayed man. Man's autonomy, assertion of his subjective self, his flouting of reason and rationality, his denial of traditional values, institutions and philosophy, his exercise of will and freedom, and his experience of the absurdity and the

nothing-ness of life are some of the existential themes which are reflected in the writings of the exponents of existentialism.

The City and the River (1990), is a study of existential predicament of its prominent characters. The prominent characters in it carry with them a sense of alienation, loneliness and pessimism. The novel depicts the existential dilemma of its characters in hostile world but this predicament, however, has been replaced by the socio-political crisis of the city, which is a conglomerate of individuals and can be said to represent the whole humanity.

The novel is divided into eleven sections including a Prologue and an Epilogue. It depicts the struggle between the Grand Master and the Boatmen. The Grand Master, who rules the City by the river, is determined to become its unchallenged king. His intentions are reinforced by the existence of an old prophecy. The Grand master demands the allegiance from the Boatmen. Master Bhoma, (Bhumiputra) and other rebellions of the boatmen stubbornly insists on offering allegiance to the river alone and remains unshaken from their native sanguinity. The Boatmen's leader, Headman tells that they owe their allegiance "only to the river" (19). To them the river is "a symbol of the divine mother. Of God Himself" (22). They regard themselves as "children of the great river" (19). The grand master and the Boatmen represent the urge to dominate and the desire to assert one's identity respectively.

The city, depicted in the novel is itself rootless and alien to the natural atmosphere. This city abounds in "tall structures of steel and glass" (12) but is "falling apart before our eyes" (199) City's atmosphere is so unnatural that neither grass nor flower grow on the Seven Hills.

> In the city's newly laid parks and along its well-straightened avenues and on the Seven Hills, however, in spite of the chief horticulturist's strenuous efforts, and to the Grand Masters great regrets, neither grass nor flowers grow (136).

In this "city of wonders" (31), the palace lawns "leave much to be desired. All brown and yellow. No trees, no flowers. Not a patch of green" (31). In city, 'The road was wide and well-paved but it was treeless and without flowers" (31). The people, except boatmen, are generally "subdued and not [in] their normal self" (96). There is "nothing to change, no new idea to survive" (55) in the city. In it "nothing was moving in the right direction or, if anything was, it move at a snail's pace" (55) and hence everyone "was waiting for something to happen" (55). "Chaos is pilled upon chaos" (180) is the final impression of the city..

In such a setting, the characters feel their existence rootless, absurd and are in search for something meaningful. Life seems to them as merely "a strange sorry tale" (10) comprising "pointless episodes" (10).

The master of Rallies, a child of boatman, for example, is "an unhappy man" (71) and the real cause of his unhappiness is rootlessness.

> His misfortune lay in the fact that instead of teaching him how to row a boat his parents had wanted him to join the ranks of the brick- people. For fifteen years, they spent all their earning on him. The Master of Rallies was good at studies but after fifteen years when he completed them, like the Education Advisor, he too discovered that no one wanted his services. The boatmen did not have the money to hire him; the brick-people considered him an upstart (71).

He appears as "tired" (76), 'afraid of humiliation" (75) and at "no peace" (76). He says,

> I have no family, no wish to get rich. I do not wish to become famous; I have no friends to lose. Am I afraid of going to prison? In fact I (am, but why?). There is no one to mourn me, nor do I have commitments that would suffer (75).

It accounts his alienation and rootlessness.

The professor, a star watcher and a teacher of Master Bhoma, apart from his scholarship is weary and tired "I am tired of being careful … I am weary" (87). His

search for Bhumiputra "had turned into a search for some lost bit of himself" (159). His quest leads him to imprisonment at Gold Mines. He expresses in disgust:

> Forgive me; I have spent my life in sleep. My life has been a joke, even as the lives of brick- people are a joke ... I have squandered it on baubles" (163).

In extreme sorrow, he expresses "I am lost" (163).

Crushed by solitudes and weight of human misery, even Bhumiputra, a teacher of Mathematics and disciple of professor "felt very alone"(157). He was forced to roam in wilderness, after having the feeling of "wandering through a desert land" (176). Like Sindi Oberoi in *The foreigner,* Bhumiputra finds the meaning of his life not in escape but in action. He decides to fight with Grand Master. He excites the demoralized boatmen by reminding them that they are children of the sacred river and they should not sell their soul to a man however powerful he may be. But soon, "A sense of overwhelming futility filled him at such times, so much so that he saw no point in living" (174). Sometime, he feels "so old and lonely and useless" (150).

The case of the Grand Master is not very different. The minister for Trade frankly tells the Grand Master that he is "tired" (203) and that in his "weariness" (203) he lets "his dark thoughts assail" (203) him. The music "disturb" (203) him. He hears "within its notes the echoes of a mocking laugh" (203). According to M. Mani Meithei, "It is his inordinate desire to become a king that leads him from one chaotic step to another, alienating himself from his subjects" (1997:53). The delay in the prophecy's fulfillment and the growing anger of the people make the headstrong Grand Master impatient. He suffers from a crisis of trust and grows suspicious of his own advisers: "Who is there in the wider world that I can trust?" (57).

Dharma's father, a profiteer, suffers from a strange kind of disease. He feels like crying, yet cannot cry. He stands before mirror and raves. A hole appears in his image

reflected in the mirror and he begins to think, that "My insides are rotting. I too am vanishing (133). He is damned to suffer from the "Three Truths Syndrome, stasis of the soul. Atrophy of the brain and locomotor functions" (135). The stiffness of his joints is symptomatic of the hardening of his soul. His condition degenerates each day so much so that "his mind turned blank, [and] his will was reduced to zero" (134). His doctor tells him in good faith: "Exercise your soul" (134) as medical treatment will not cure him.

Dharma, a Police Officer, too, feels alienated. When The Grand trader offers him a silver chair to sit on, he finds it "surprisingly uncomfortable" (91) Dharma wonders how a Grand Trade is in league with powerful persons with whom he shares his profits. After knowing it, in his anguish, "For many weeks, he had been having trouble deciding whether he was living in a city that he used to know" (93).

Thus the prominent characters in the novel, suffer from existential predicament for different reasons. "They suffer from alienation, weariness, boredom, rootless ness, meaninglessness in their lives" (Sharma: 2003:84). In this relentless search "they withdraw from human ambience to natural environs of peace and tranquility but here too they find no response and equanimity. They are nowhere men in quest of a somewhere place" (Swain 1999:118). They are tormented by their hollow existence. Joshi is obsessively occupied with the individual's quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth that provide spiritual nourishment to the estranged self in a seemingly chaotic and meaningless world. Existential conflict in Joshi springs from the self's craving for the fulfillment of certain psycho-emotional needs, from the desire to overcome the horror of separateness, of powerlessness and of listlessness.

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Stereotypes in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Cristiana Cornea
The Faculty of Letters,
"Babes-Bolyai" University,
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Hanif Kureishi's novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, presents numerous discrepancies existing between the English and the Indian culture, emphasizing the fact that stereotypes such as race, nationality, religious orientation are capable of turning the world upside-down and of presenting a perfect image of the society in the 1970's.

The first stereotype that appears in the book is closely related to the condition of the character and tackles with the problems of identity and prejudice. The main character in the book, Karim, belongs to an Indian father and a working- class English mother, which means he actually belongs to two distinct cultures, but at the same time to none of them completely. Thus, the character will always have the feeling of being different, of being treated like "the other", this situation bringing about mixed feelings such as grief, frustration and sadness. To illustrate this, we should think of the moment when Karim wants to be employed and get the acting job that he desires, he has to play a role, get dressed, speak and act like an Indian, but also prove to Mr. Shadwell, the director, that he has Indian culture. Surprisingly, he encounters difficulties in accomplishing these tasks and, consequently, he fails the test. Mr. Shadwell reveals a compassionate and ironic attitude towards Karim and decides that this one should act Mowgli, the character in *The Jungle Book,* noticing that Karim resembles Mowgli both physically and psychologically. This description illustrates the fact that the problem of race and racism is one important stereotype that appears in the book. Being judged for the fact of not being white, Karim suffers the mockery and the hypocrisy of the director.

Another significant aspect illustrated by Kureishi is the fact that the condition of the immigrant in the London suburbs reveals numerous discrepancies that exist between the Indian and the English culture. Life in India and life in England are presented as two completely different ways of living. When the protagonist is in India, he has servants, leads a wealthy life, plays cricket in the afternoon (cricket being a British game) with the British that he has to let win. Here comes another stereotype connected with race. It seems that if you are an Indian man, you are inferior to the British people. Presumably, this situation occurred because the Indians were colonised by the British, and even after the gain of their independence, they still had a mentality that demanded to still stick to the British rules, respect them, be submitted to them (let them win a common cricket game). Obviously, the shifts in mentality are difficult to be made, and mankind needs centuries in order to change and progress. "In Britain the loss of the colonies brought about a feeling of nostalgia for the good old time, following that many British feared the end of the nation. Thus, a reaction occurred against the immigrants who had settled in Britain, and whose existence was perceived as a threat against the purity and high-class of the British culture."[1] Even if the Indian people, as a colony, have to submit to British rules, they lead, however, a harmonious and peaceful life. The protagonist assumes the fact that while at home, he was just like a king, had servants, led a luxurious life. As for the counter- picture of England, especially the old Haroon has great expectations when he leaves his country. He believes that London will make him rich, offer him an even more luxurious life and bring about happiness. Conversely, his wishes do not come true when he realizes that London suburbs have nothing to do with wealth, splendour and prosperity, they do not reflect the power and the greatness of the old powerful British colonizer empire. In fact, London suburbs abound in poverty, unhappiness,

[1] Zoe Maria Ghiță, Lucrare de doctorat, *Multi- Cultural Aspects in the British Novel of the 1980s*, The Faculty of Letters, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 52.

disease and present a gloomy atmosphere: "Dad had had an idyllic childhood, and as he told me of these adventures with Anwar I often wondered why he'd condemned his own son to a dreary suburb of London of which it was said that when people drowned they saw not their lives but their double-glazing flashing before them. It was only later, when he came to England, that Dad realized how complicated practical life could be. He'd never cooked before, never washed up, never cleaned his own shoes, or made a bed. Servants did that."[2] The above-mentioned fragment illustrates the fact that the difference between the country he left and the country that "adopted" him is enormous and it does not meet his expectations.

The stereotype of race is reflected especially by the discussion that Karim has with Changez. In front of his friend, Karim never considers himself to be black, and the fact that he is judged by the others as being black touches his pride. When he meets this real Indian, he reacts in a weird manner and continues to behave like an Englishman, denying somehow his half-origins. In fact, after having spent some time in London, Karim feels that he actually belongs to two cultures. He resembles Changez by his inner desire to continually progress, push his limits. If Changez represents the type of the speculative man, the travelogue that wants to become rich no matter where he is, Karim wants to get rid of the English suburbs and move in the centre of the city, get the acting job that he desires, effectively evolve. However, because of his roots, Karim feels like an outsider, never succeeds in surmounting the barrier of race and become effectively an Englishman because he still has Indian influences (accent, mentality and way of thinking, religious beliefs). "The world Kureishi depicts in his novel is a multicultural microcosm. […] The issue of racial differences, of passing or not passing is a very complex one, and requires a very attentive treatment. What is absolutely certain is the fact that "racial

[2] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, London, Faber and Faber, 1990, p. 23.

intolerance" does exist, especially in a multicultural society such as the English"[3] This extract emphasizes the fact that racism is a stereotype whose presence is obvious in the book, a stereotype that disposes of a perfect medium to expand.

Except the presence of the stereotypes of identity, prejudice, race and the condition of the immigrant, the problems of acceptance and tolerance are Kureishi's main issues in terms of the stereotypical construction of the book. Even if the character makes desperate efforts to be accepted by the others, he will never be fully integrated and he will never be a real Englishman. The society seems to punish each and every immigrant and always perceive him as "the other", as a different "self". When he wants to get the acting job that he desires, Karim finds out that he is searched only for the fact that he is half Indian, and his foreign nature could perhaps attract, in the director's opinion, more people to his theatrical performances, which would mean he could gain greater amounts of money. These scenes reveal the fact that the character will never be able to be fully accepted by the society that adopted him, as people are rather intolerant than friendly and they seem to be skeptic when they encounter people belonging to other cultures, outsiders. Paradoxically, these outsiders can sometimes be much better than the natives and help to the development of the society that adopted them. For instance, Karim is smart, courageous and self-determined to succeed, willing to learn and become an educated man. He is shocked when he studies in the English school from the suburbs and realizes how uneducated and ignorant young English children are: "Most of the kids I grew up with left school at sixteen, and they'd be in insurance now, or working as car-mechanics, or managers (radio and TV debt) in department stores. […] In the suburbs, education wasn't considered a particular advantage, and certainly couldn't be seen as worthwhile in itself. Getting onto business from a young age was more

[3] Zoe Maria Ghiță, Lucrare de doctorat, *Multi- Cultural Aspects in the British Novel of the 1980s*, The Faculty of Letters, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 162.

important. But now I was among people who wrote books as naturally as we played football. What infuriated me- what made me loathe both them and myself- was their confidence and knowledge. The easy talk of art, theatre, architecture, travel; the languages, the vocabulary, knowing the way round a whole culture- it was invaluable and irreplaceable capital."[4] This description of the English suburbs illustrates the conditions under which the character lived, the fact that he was judged by the society for not belonging to the English culture, even if, in fact, he was neither worse than the natives, nor much different of them. However, the years that Karim spent in this college made him finally become self- aware that education was essential in one's life. Only after the school years, did he realize how confident and informed you become if you are educated.

As for the stereotype of nationality, we could think of Karim's father, the Indian Haroon who tries to escape his condition and his etiquette of being an outsider and who becomes "the Buddha of suburbia". In his attempt to avoid one stereotype, Haroon receives another, that of being a person who has mystic powers and who attracts several people from the suburbs seeking for truth in his group. Haroon, the image of the English immigrant, is also a source of exotic fun, as the high society sees in him a sort of Buddha or guru meant to amuse them. It seems that the character accepts his role hoping to accede to the high society and escape from the suburbs. His coming in London could be explained by his desire to move in a country that he glorified, that he imagined as powerful and wealthy. However, he is disappointed when he notices the poverty, illiteracy and the mess that governs and he realizes that he has to work hard to gain money.

In order to better understand the stereotypical construction of the book, the reader must find out information about the political background and the popular culture of the age, as well as the dominance of the postcolonialist literature in Britain, these aspects showing the atmosphere

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 177.

that dominated England in the 70's. In a society in which Thatcherism encouraged greater independence of the individual from the state, insisting upon some aspects of the ethical appearance of the individual, including moral absolutism, popular culture represented by the sexual revolution, by the success of the progressive rock and by the drugs culture, Karim wants to find his own way and succeed in life, to get rid of the suburbs and that is why he always tries to act like an Englishman. During that time, the power of the working class was great. The Labour Party aimed at the transformation and development of the society by a quick improvement. "The historical process by means of which England defined and accorded a fixed meaning to the colonial identity is echoed in this novel; here, London and the periphery are a microcosm in which colonizer-colonised relations are re-enacted. Even if the British empire has collapsed, certain colonial attitudes, ways of defining identity and legitimizing narratives still prevail. It can be argued that most of the characters in *The Buddha of Suburbia* strive at having their personal narratives legitimized by London which acts as the metaphorical centre of authority."[5] Clearly, the above-mentioned fragment suggests that all the stereotypes that appear in the novel are caused by the desire of the characters to reestablish the connection that was made between colonisers and colonised and show that identity can be deconstructed due to the appearance of stereotypes that distort reality and make the individual look like a stranger, somebody he does not resemble at all. Thus, the historical and cultural representations of the identity aim at making the contemporary society understand that the individual has to submit in order to self- develop. As for the postcolonialist influences, Ato Quayson believes that "Like postmodernism and poststructuralism, postcolonialism designates critical practice that is highly eclectic and difficult to define."[6] In fact, it seems that even if the postcolonialist influence is not

[5] Adrian Radu, *Literature and Social Media*, British Cultural Studies MA Programme, The Faculty of Letters, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, p. 27.
[6] Ato Quayson, *Postcolonialism. Theory, Practice or Process?*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005, p. 1.

very easy to identify, the reader feels that the novel is to be cut into two parts that reveal the mentality of the colonizer and the mentality of the colonised.

Another stereotype that is gripping and is worth mentioning is the religious stereotype. While life in India is dominated by the Muslim faith, the patriarchal authority and the desire to discover the eastern tradition, life in England is a way of gaining greater independence and freedom. It is a land that the protagonists like, and that is why they want to get rid of the suburbs and get to know the real London, its centre, the beauty of the powerful empire. Curiously, from a geographical point of view, none of the characters in the book expresses his desire to see his origins again. However, from a psychological point of view, the characters would like to return internally to India. In contrast, London seems to be the place that offers numerous possibilities and that they would leave only for Florida or Las Vegas for gambling and their desire to find their luxurious lost paradise again. "It was certainly bizarre, Uncle Anwar behaving like a Muslim. I'd never known him believe in anything before, so it was an amazing novelty to find him literally staking his life on the principle of absolute patriarchal authority. Through her mother's staunch and indulgent love (plus the fibbing extravagances of her wonderful imagination), but mainly because of Anwar's indifference, Jamilla had got away with things some of her white counterparts wouldn't dream of.[…] Maybe there were similarities between what was happening to Dad, with his discovery of Eastern philosophy, and Anwar's last stand. Perhaps it was the immigrant condition living itself out through them." [7] This excerpt minutely describes the need of the middle-aged people to submit to their Muslim religion. Even if they live in London now, the characters still respect their religion and act accordingly. For instance, Anwar, who seems the most rigid and traditional character, forces his daughter Jamilla to marry Changez even if she does not love him. It seems that Anwar has much more to do with the Indian

[7] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, London, Faber and Faber, 1990, p. 64.

traits than with the English ones. He wants to be prosperous and is ready to do anything to achieve his goals. When he arrived in London, he opened a market, wanted to gain financial stability. He sticks to the Indian religion in such a way that he appeals to hunger strike in order to convince his daughter marry Changez. Obviously, this situation is humorous and paradoxical at the same time. Declaring himself a religious man, Anwar appeals to hunger strike (such a common excuse) in order to make himself be respected. In contrast to his way of being, Jamilla is much more addicted to the English way of living. She wants to be an educated woman, reads books, she wants to expand her knowledge. Conversely, Changez is the type of the Indian immigrant that does all sorts of business in order to become wealthy and he also has an extramarital relationship. All these characters reveal the fact that religious stereotypes manifest differently to each of them. While Karim, Haroon and Jamilla stick to a certain extent to their religion, do not eat pork, respect ceremonies, they rather prefer London for being a place that offers better possibilities for those who are young and want to have a successful career. As for Anwar, he sticks to Muslim rules and does not want to change his moral beliefs. Changez has extramarital relationships, Haroon becomes a "Buddha" meant to amuse those belonging to the high society, these situations bringing about the comic of the characters and offering a merry nuance to the book.

The acceptance of Karim's condition in between two cultures and the gain of success in life, as well as the gain of a well-shaped identity are constructed and deconstructed by the stereotypes already mentioned. Having to surmount all the difficulties that appear throughout the unfolding of the book, Karim must accept his condition of being different and create his own identity. "My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. Ia m often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two

old histories."[8] These first lines that appear in the novel reflect that the character is aware of the fact that he is different, 'a funny kind of Englishman', and he is ready to receive and assume the stereotypes that he encounters. The centre of Karim's life succeeds in moving from the outer world to the inner world by the end of the book, the character regaining the respect and the acceptance of the values that he rejected at first (in the episode in which Karim moves from America to London, he moves from the place that had always been his centre and gets a new life in London because of the play that made him famous all over the country). Karim remains the main victim of his origins as he has to live all his life in between the two cultures. However, he finds his way in life and shows that a powerful man can surmount stereotypes of all kinds almost completely.

Even the language used in the novel reveals the character's condition. The author uses many dialogues full of colloquialism, emphasizing the difference existing in the language of the suburbs (Karim, Haroon) and the language of the upper middle classes (Eleanor, Pyke- the strange theatre director). As a whole, the novel gives the impression of an oral discourse, the reader having the impression of realism. In terms of construction, the novel can be perceived as a Bildungsroman that follows Karim's development and the steps he takes into becoming an actor. "Having tried his hand at theatre writing, Kureishi became a novelist famous for the sparkling dialogue and believable characters, at ease when shifting from one culture to another, observing the diverse national cultural heritage, questioning inherent assumptions and satirizing them. […] *The Buddha of Suburbia*, his most popular novel, looks into teenage rebellion, the way children shock their parents, but also the way parents shock their children. Philip Tew says that Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a typical example of 'shifting cultural identities' as 'it evokes and reconfigures a Dickensian dialectic dislocation, identity and English Bildungsroman',

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 3.

deconstructing these elements very much in the manner of J.D. Salinger's seminal and laconic novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) toward which Kureishi's opening gestures."[9] Definitely, *The Buddha of Suburbia* belonging to Hanif Kureishi is a book that presents the stereotypes that are brought about when the individual is an immigrant, dealing with numerous issues: the condition of England, identity and loss of identity, moral beliefs, youth and popular culture, political background, immigration, race, religion, the suburbs.

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Multidimensional dialogues in Harold Pinter's Old Times

Dr. Dinesh Panwar,
Department of English,
Ajay Kumar Garg Engineering College,
GZB, India

Pinter's dramatic dialogue is based on both the colloquial and a neatly structured manipulation of the vernacular. In reviewing the Brimingham, Repertory Theatre's 1993 production of *Old Times*, Michael Billington stresses the important theatric impression inherent in, this quality of Pinter's language. It's a sign of the production's quality that, without violating Pinter's verbal rhythms, it fines (sic) new resonances in this haunting play. As Peter Hall has it, Pinter's "repeated patterns of speech create rhythms where the precise accenting of words is crucial", and in addition Pinter's pauses", often put form into nearly colloquial speech". F.J. Bernhard also stresses rhythmic stylization, and holds that any.

Single line of dialogue might be taken as realistic prose. But in the pattern of the play as a whole, the words have a consistent rhythmic construction and symbolic charge that lift them beyond conventional realism.

There is thus an ambiguous relationship between the naturalistic effect of Pinter's dialogue and other effect of stylization.

Old Times is no less distinguished by pauses and silences that invest the Pinterian dialogue with arrange ambiguous meaning. The play, underlining the subtle struggle for psychological power, steeped in an atmosphere which blends everyday reality with dream-images. The play also introduces an intruder, as do the earlier plays, which threatens the prevailing peaceful mode of life, and registers similar battle for territory – for possession of an individual. Besides, the play has a strong undercurrent of sexual overtones. In *Old Times* Pinter's dialogue creates the appropriate dramatic tone which is new and poetically compelling. The shifting perspective on the past, the inadequate grip characters have on truth and reality give rise to a threatening world in

which the desire for verification, the need for full knowledge and genuine communication is necessarily frustrated. Through the dialogue *Old Times* makes slow but sure move to divulge the malignant element usually hidden in human life – a common Pinter theme. In *Old Times* Pinter shows us that a play in its broadest definition is a personal, direct impression of life. Its value is greater or lesser in accordance with the intensity of the impressions of the individuals. The playwright knows that physical performance expresses inner conflicts and resolution. He uses a theatre language capable of carrying forward these sense impressions. There is the colloquially based verbal game people play in their social interchanges. The dialogue of the three characters raises the question whether the characters tell lies to one another. Can they make the audience aware that they are lying? The answers may emanate out of the accentuation and intonation – giving a clue either of assertion or of neutrality. The significant aspect of dramatic dialogue happens to be its latent heat or the various degrees of suggestiveness. From this standpoint it may be said that Pinter's play is a dramatic text which defines its own context through its dialogue.

Pinter communicates with actors in a direct way, being equipped with the inner theatrical logic. He as a dramatist does not involve the audience so much as he imposes a theatrical spectacle on it, and this he does primarily through the dialogue, upholding J.L. Styan's familiar observation, made in his 'Elements of Drama', that a play is its dialogue. The pattern of the dramatic dialogue pertains to the modern, knowing society shot through with psycho-sexual sophistication. The playwright has deftly exploited all visual clues, such as the devices of flash-back, mixing images, close-up, fading and quick scene-veer in order to intensify the absence of direct verbal route-map.Pinter subtly retreats the ingredients of the traditional comedy of manners through a theatrically viable lingual idiom in *Old Times*. This focuses on the love intrigues of sophisticated young high-ups who rely heavily on their verbal wit expressed in the comic style of popular entertainment. Pinter's play differs in the sense that as an Absurdist play it uses comedy to express ironic techniques and philosophical ideas representing Existentialism. In the Absurdist plays like Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, comic convention is employed in order to convey a profoundly serious view of human existence. As *Old Times* unfolds itself, it gradually becomes clear that what is stirred in the three characters is more than a simple

remembrance of things past, for the past is a forgotten and only retrieved in snatch to become an acute awareness of isolation in between the counter pointed trio of memory. As individuals they are alienated from one another in an inexpressible way. Communication fails in attaining any logical end, as Anna's dialogue underlines: "There are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place." (O.T., p. 27-28) These words bear an echo from 'The Dwarfs': "You're the sum of so many reflections. How many reflections? Whose reflections? Is that what you consist of? What scum does the tide leave? What happens to the scum? When does it happen? I've seen what happens. But I can't speak when I see it. I can only point a finger. I can't even do that. The scum is broken and sucked back. I don't see where it goes. I don't see when..... What have I seen, the scum or the essence? What about it?"[1] This is perhaps the most crucial question of the Existentialist human predicament. Anna's dialogue closely resembles the dialogue of Ellen in *Silence*: "Yes, I remember. But I'm never sure that what I remember is of today or of yesterday or of a long time ago. (Pause) And then often it is only half things I remember, half things, beginnings of things".[2]

The dialogue points to the unverifiability of the past which remains in frozen isolation in a somewhat no man's land, difficult of access. Dialogue given to Deeley again drives the point home: "Yes, she met in the Wayfarers Tavem..... She [Anna] took a fancy to me.... She was pretending to be you [Kate] at the time..... Wearing your underwear... We went to a party..... on the way to the party I took her into a Cafe.... She thought she was you..... May be she was you. May be it was you, having coffee with me". (O.T., p. 65) What Deeley suggests is not only that Anna put on Kate's underwear, and pretended to be Kate, he gets finally confused as to if she was Kate herself, not Anna. Thus unverifiable reigns supreme. *Old Times* through its placid dramatic language gives us a deep sense that life escapes – a sense that Virginia Woolf wanted to convey: "Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'..... life is a ..... Semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end."[3] *Old Times* is made as a picturesque tableau chiefly through its dialogue having multidimensional connotations.

In *Old Times* (p. 243-252) a conflict arises between Anna and Deeley as they in their different ways try to gain control over Kate, Deeley's wife. This control is at first sought through knowledge about the other. Anna and Deeley also both try to get the others to agree upon or believe their own version of the past, particularly their experiences with Kate. Deeley mostly wants to find the commonly agreed version of the past memories, whereas Anna treats memory as a means more for personal expression than as historical fact. The definition and establishment of memory within the dramatic triangle thus become an important conflict in the play. Thomas Postlewait argues that the characters in Pinter's plays are "locked into the past, unable to adapt to the present except in terms of the past". As Anna and Deeley engage in a struggle to possess Kate, they try to convince Kate and the other that their own relationship with her was, and is, important and close. In order to defeat the other combatant they must prevent him or her from controlling Kate. This act of convincing takes a range of different linguistic strategies. With regard to Pinter's plays in general Esslin notably stresses the aggressive and invading potential of the playwright's dialogue, and the role of comic speech inherent in this aggression:

> *The one who gets hold of the more elaborate or more accurate expression establishes dominance over his partner; the victim of aggression can be swamped by language which comes too thick and fast, or is too nonsensical to be comprehended: [...]*[4]

In Pinter's plays dialogue works through specially chosen words culled out, with an acute observation, from the mannerisms, repetitions and clichés of the English vernacular as spoken in real life. Between the three characters of *Old Times* words are exchanged as potent weapons of dominance and subservience. Pauses and silences are awfully meaningful in the literary sense. What resembles tape-recorded vocabulary is nevertheless, highly stylized. In *Old Times* Pinter shows his total capability in approximating human reality with that artistic attempt to capture the given moment and set it above the uncertainties which time brings all the way through its passage:

ANNA. Why don't you dry her yourself?

DEELEY. Would you recommend that?

ANNA. You'd do it properly.

DEELEY. In her bath towel?

ANNA. How out?

DEELEY. How out?

ANNA. How could you dry her out? Out of her bath towel?

DEELEY. I don't know.

ANNA. Well, dry her yourself, in her bath towel.

[Pause] (O.T., p. 50-51)

Old Times has a very satisfying shape, structure and an overall dramatic unity, all of which are of a very different kind from those of the conventional plays. The play is basically a series of conversation between three characters – Anna, Kate, Deeley – who form a clear love triangle. Their dialogue, woven mostly around the episode of the past, attempts to define the nature of the relationship which existed and gradually came to stay in between them. Their conversation in bits and piece leads to an awareness of the distance by which they have been alienated. Bryden, the reviewer of the first night of *Old Times*, comments pertinently on the dialogue by referring to "the value of each word and silence which exposes every layer of the text like the person of a three-dimensional chess-board".[5]

An audience with an ear for Pinter's dialogue recognizes the territory upon which *Old Times* stand. The complex rhythm of the dialogue strikes the note of a conflict for dominance and possession. The combat ground indeed is Kate; the two contenders to possess her are Anna, her one-time room-mate and only friend, and Deeley, her husband. The ammunition used in the skirmish is indeed dramatic dialogue. Language of innuendo and ambiguous menace abounds in the play. As in *The Homecoming*, the winner here will be the one who would ultimately impose his or her language upon the other in getting the upper hand.

In *The Homecoming* Ruth and Lenny exchange blows; in *Old Times* it is between Anna and Deeley that blow follows blow and parry follows parry in terms of the skilled game of lingual gambits and maneuvers. Whereas Deeley, Kate's husband, wields

crude power with Kate under his physical control, Anna has a patient finesse, the authority of money and culture, a cold determination. Kate's vague, smiling passivity appears to be on Anna's side. The dialogue of the play "participates in the new Pinter world of maximum compression and austere poetry first heard in *Landscape* and Silence."[6] For within the same triangular frame or remembrance of things past as of *Silence*, *Old Times* blends the sexual ambiguities of *The Collection* with the territorial was of dominance which underlines *The Homecoming*. All this is achieved by dint of the verbal designing and technique used with stunning mastery of economy of expression.

The dramatic action of *Old Times* takes place in a converted country farmhouse of Deeley and his wife Kate, who are awaiting the arrival from Sicily in Italy of Kate's old friend Anna whom Kate has not seen for the last twenty years. Her arrival subtly menaces the marriage of Kate as she tries calculatedly to recreate her very close friendship with Kate which Deeley has got into as an intruder by marrying Kate. Anna enters the secluded household of Deeley and Kate to struggle for a position of dominance, as does Ruth, coming from America, in *The Homecoming*. In the earlier One-Act *Landscape* this theme of struggle for dominance appears only tangentially but in *Old Times* it recurs with an insidious force superbly manifested through the masterly fashioned dialogue with verbal variations cut out for the individual characters:

DEELEY. Yes, I remember you quite clearly from The Wayfarers.

ANNA. The what?

DEELEY. The Wayfarers Tavem, just off the Brompton road.

ANNA. When was that?

DEELEY. Years ago.

ANNA. I don't think so.

DEELEY. Oh yes, it as you, no question. I never forget a face.

(O.T., p. 44-45)

The combat for territory between Deeley and Anna for the possession of Kate with all her individuality emerges gradually from their glib conversation and soon explodes into the uncomfortable, rather surrealist, memories of the past. *Old Times* upholds the usual male-female scuffle found in Pinter's world and endemic to human race

as well. Deeley, a successful, widely traveled film maker, uses masculine prowess and blunt coarseness to encounter Anna's indirect and sly attack. The dramatic dialogue in *Old Times* weaves the pattern of attack and defence in which all the three characters are locked.

The play *Old Times* deals with the element of time, space and the related concept of memory of the dim distant past. The play attempts to recapture the past, to co-relate eternal time with spatial time and to recreate the effect of the past on the present through memory lane. Its dialogue relates to the past of all the three characters, and is broken up by extended stories which in their turn relate again to the past with reference to space in time. It is aptly said, "the characters in *Old Times* enter a sort of time-machine".[7] Kate confronts her girl friend Anna from the hazy past, and thereupon hidden and shelved memories start spilling out once again though it is difficult to ascertain the truth.

A close examination of the dramatic dialogue reveals that there is a strong undercurrent of suggestion that Kate and Anna could well have been involved in a lesbian relationship. It is also suggested that there could have been a close touch between Anna and Deeley in the past. Gradually, as the play unfolds its net, Deeley the single man of the triangle is left with a sense of separation from both women. Their conversation shows that Pinter, being quite intent on mystification, withholds essential information. In this context, Benedict Nightingale's observation is quite relevant: "Most playwrights' reputations depend on what they reveal about their characters; one has felt that his [Pinter's] depends on what he [Pinter] does not reveal."[8]

Rhyme and Ritual Repetition is also an interesting feature of Pinter's language. In his dialogue we find a touch of rhymes. The category of rhymes and repetition covers quite general instances of such devices, and the significance of its comic effects may therefore pertain to other categories as well. It is still useful to separate overt rhyming and marked repetitions of words, phrases and sentences, in order to concentrate on such basic forms of comic technique. The general effect is ritualistic, and it is interesting to see how his works in *Old Times*, both within one character's utterances and though interaction. Since the conflict centers on which character's utterances take authority, the characters create ritualistic moods to support their need for authority and control. The contingent

comic rhythms in their speech focus the audience's attention on their strategies for control. However, although the comic rhythms are results of the repetitions and the linguistic rituals, the rhythm may still function to break the feeling of authority the character tries to create. In Old Times as in The Birthday Party and The Homecoming, Pinter does not come up with any information to set up the necessary background of the characters. What he points out is that the mind has chasms, and that human subconscious is more or less impervious. The dialogue magnifies the mysteries, and multiplies speculation. Through the dialogue between Anna, Deeley and Kate, the playwright's message that unfolds is that impressions and events come to us filtered through the unreliable senses of unreliable people, and consequently what is true for one is often untrue for another. When through a play such as Old Times our idea of certainty about the common events of the exterior reality gets tarnished and removed, the play, tries to draw our attention on the greater truths of the inner reality. Pinter's journey is into the interior of man, and until this point is not considered: he appears to be imperviously absurdistic in his plays.Pinter’s dialogues put the layers of meaning before the audience.

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THE INFLUENCE OF VEDIC THOUGHTS ON R.K.NARAYAN

Jothilakshmi.R [1] **Dr. G.Meenakshi Sundaram**[2]

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CSI COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

KETTI POST, THE NILIGIRIS - 643215

TAMILNADU, INDIA

R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand are the harbingers of a new age in Indian English fiction. Raja Raos' India is philosophical and Anands' social and Narayans' is essentially naturalistic. As M.K Naik writes, Narayan is primarily preoccupied with man's filling of the life-role entrusted to him by tradition and environment

"The impact of life, the material and substance of our thought are the same everywhere, in any state, traditionally India in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas the values remain the same in every village town or city" ,R.K Narayan.

R.K Narayan upholds the old traditional values of life prescribed by the ancient Indian culture and embodied in Indian epics 'Shastras' 'Puranas' Myths and Mythologies. He presents his concepts of traditionalism through the middle class life of Malgudi an imaginary small town in South India, which forms the background to all his novels. Narayan's novels show that success and happiness in life lie in the acceptance of the Shastras and the Vedic values. The main purpose of human life is suggested as a journey in quest of self-identify or emancipation from the miseries of life. The main purpose of life is to know the purpose of life (ie) who am I? Why am I here? Ones eternal duty is to known that I am a sprit soul- the real ego.

Indians epics, Upanishads and Puranas are the depositors of ancient values of life and moral codes of conduct. The profound knowledge of Vedas was uttered by Indian sages, seers and saints who were divinely inspired and blessed. They are commonly accepted even today to lead an organized and ideal life.

These epics and Puranas have been the sources of moral teachings to common man and of inspiration to the creative writers. Narayan through his novels he expresses that the values of life preached in our scriptures are still relevant to human life in the present context. The influence of Vedas becomes more pronounced in Narayan's frequent allusions to Myths, Mythologies, Puranas and epics in his novels in order to show the content and that conflict between good and evil. In the ancient times in which the evil forces are powerful they may be ultimately destroyed by themselves.

Vasu, the taxitermist in the novel, The Man-Eater of Malgudi is the symbol of evil. He is indeed a manifestation of the 'Asura' as described in the 16 th chapter of Bhagavad-Gita. He is ugly, ferocious in appearance, amoral by nature and devoid of the sense of gratitude and sympathy. He possesses super human strength and takes cruel pleasure in inflicting pain to others. The novelist has projected him as a Man-Eater. In his novel he says "The man eater is a man, not a tiger, a modern rakshasa" . This expresses the demonic qualities in man which leads to the destruction of the self. Vasu has an insatiable appetite for killing both dangerous and domestic creativity. This is against the Indian philosophy of Dharma.

God incarnates himself from time to time for the redemption of pious souls, for diffusing the light of religion for the suppression of evil through the destruction of evildoers and for infusing love and piety among the people through manifestation of his divine sports on the earth. Vasu plans to kill kumar, the temple elephant .But he is found dead the next morning from

concussion in a mysterious way. Vasu's mistress Rangi solves the mystery of his death. While trying to kill a mosquito settled on his forehead, he slapped it with all his might and killed himself. Vasu's fist was meant to batter thick panels of iron rod. He never hit anyone, in spite of any provocation, because he had to conserve all that might for his own destruction. Vasu is the modern counter part of demon Bhasmasura. Both of them are killed at last by the strange powers of their own hands for their unethical, immoral and anti-traditional conduct and character. R.K.Narayan seems to show here that even in the modern age there are Bhasmasuras like Vasu heading towards self-destruction for their evil deeds.

There are plenty of examples in Narayan's novels to show the religiosity of characters. The theory of 'Karma' and life after death are implied in Indian religion. According to Indian religion and philosophy Karma and fate play important roles in human life. The exponents of the theory of karma hold to the view that the present existence of an individual is the effect of the past and its future would be the effect of its present existence.

Raju in The Guide attempts several possible explanations for the movement of events in his life. What he says with a painful self-awareness shows his faith is pre-ordained fate "It's written on the brow of same that they shall not be left alone. I am such one…." , Rosie in The Guide believe in Karmic laws according to which everyone has to bear the consequence of his deeds. She thinks that she has led a religious life and she has not deliberately committed any sin. So she will not be punished in the other world. This should be her strong faith in the theory of 'karma'. When Raju in The Guide is arrested on charge of forgery, Rosie[Nalini] tells him "I felt all along, you were not doing right things. This is 'karma' what can we do?" Joy and sorrow, reward and punishment all the results of one's deeds done in the past. The 'karmas' of human beings influence, control and condition their lives. Every action good or bad has its reaction.

Narayan who believes in ancient religion and philosophy has an altogether different view of life and death. He says, ”Perhaps death may not be the end of everything as it seems personality may6 have other structures and other plans of existence, and the decay of the physical body through disease and senility may mean nothing more than change of vehicle”(B).

This shows clearly his faith in the immortality of the soul as well as in life after death. This concept is found us the Bhagavad-Gita in which Lord Krishna says that as after rejecting worn out clothes a man takes up new ones, like wise after rejecting worn out bodies the embodied one(soul) takes up new one.

Narayan’s faith in life after death is quite obvious in his novel The English Teacher in which Krishna succeeds in establishing spiritual contact with the spirit of his dead wife through occultism. Though she does not present herself physically, he feels her presence and talks to her. He comes to know from her the nature and meaning of life and death. In answer to one of his questions she says, “Ours is also a life of aspiration, striving and joy. A considerable portion of our state is taken up in meditation and our greatest ecstasy is feeling the divine light flooding”. Her spirit gives a detailed description of the spiritual world and shows how it differs from the material world. Susilas’ spirit tells Krishna, “When I think of you or you of me I am at your side”. Krishna is fully convinced of the existence of life after death in some form or the other.

In addition to this, Savithri’s fear of torture in the other world in the novel, The Dark Room and other philosophical musings of other characters on life in Narayan’s novels confirm their beliefs in life after death. The comments of Srinivas on the de-arrangements of Ravi’s mind in Mr. Sampath show his faith in a series of births. When the tiger (Raja) in A Tiger for Malgudi describes the sufferings of his imprisoned life in the cage of circus, the Master comments “you probably in the previous life enjoyed putting your fellow beings behind bars.

One has to face the reaction of every act, if not in the same life, at least in another life of series of lives. These can be no escape from it". This shows the masters' faith not only in present and previous lives but also in the 'karma' which affects the shapes of life in general. Thus the concept of Vedas are exhibited in its various forms pervades almost all of Narayan's novels.

Understanding the supreme goal of all Vedic teachings which ultimately promises eternal life which is without the four fold miseries, namely birth, death, old age and disease. R.K.Narayan tries to drive home this point to a sincere reader through his simple, lucid and genuine characterization. With the help of the most mundane incidents he is able to communicate the highest tenets of the ancient and alive Vedic teachings.

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Portrayal of Motherhood: A critique of Kamala Das' and Nissim Ezekiel's Select poetry

Dr. Naveen K Mehta
Faculty-Board of Studies
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India,
New Delhi (India)

Kamala Das, one of the vibrant voices in modern poetry in English, has successfully portrayed Mother's point of view in her one of the poems, entitled, "The Middle Age." It is a powerful intimate poem. The poem is a direct reference to the poetess. Although the poetess has not used the word 'I' but it clearly indicates the poetess. The mother in the poem feels that a mother feels that a mother is no longer young when her children grow up and behave as critics rather than friends. The Children do not attach any value to the mother' need of their love and intimacy yet the mother pines and longs for their love. But she does not get their love and weeps secretly at this loss. Here the mother has been described in her middle age when she feels a kind of isolation and separation from her children. As soon as the children become young, there was a drastic change in their attitude. In the "Middle Age", the mother wrote an invitation to her children. She signed their name as squirrel. But her children did not take it seriously.

"I wrote a letter invited my
Sons----to a tea party that
Was to take place on Saturday
Under the largest tree-I signed
My name as squirrel and
immediately posted it". (My Story)

Thus, it depicts the pitiful picture of a mother when she comes to her middle age and her children grow as adults. Her children are then not her friends but critics. They think that the only relation with them is to look after their daily needs. Even they avoid her teachings and commands. They only think her a female servant to support them in their mundane affairs. So when she is left alone, she touches their books and other objects

yet she loves them immensely and secretly. On the contrary, her children feel as grown up and are disgusted with the mother's unnatural and bizarre behaviour. They do not give any value to the activities of the love expressed by their love-lorn mother. They always reminded her that she was no more a young woman. It filled mother's heart with sadness and she shattered down completely. But the mother tries her best to settle the matter with her children. It is illustrated by the invitation, which she addressed to her sons. She signed her name as squirrel but her sons responded her sharply and bitterly. They again reminded her that she was no more a young woman and she should keep away herself from such childish things. So she must not live in a dream world. It is unfolded that the mother loved her sons very much even in adverse and unfavourable circumstances. She behaved like children as she did in their childhood. She weeps at the loss of her children's love.

Kamla Das beautifully described the comparison between childhood and manhood. "The pupae burst their cocoons and transforms into the adult form of glorious butterflies. In the same way the children come out of their childhood and change into adults. Manhood is glorious with its special traits. But it looks quite harsh to a mother as her children do not reflect warmth of love and attachment as before.

Nissim Ezekiel occupies a significant place in the post-independent poetry. His one of the Poems 'Night of the Scorpion' is set in a family situation. A scorpion has stung the poet's mother. To cure her, al sorts of treatment are tried, but she gets better only after twenty hours., almost naturally. The poet described the pains, agonies, and sufferings of the mother minutely. During the twenty hours the poet's mother suffered a lot but the poet's mother kept sublime and generous qualities of a mother. It is revealed when his mother became well again and she thanked God for sparing her children from the vicious bite of the scorpion.

"My mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children". (Night of the Scorpion)

In the poem, the poet tells us about the conditions in which the scorpion stung his mother. The poet imagines the story happening in sub-urban part of Bombay where during rainy season it pours incessantly. One such fateful day when it had been raining continuously for more than ten hours a scorpion came into the poet's house and getting his chance, stung the poet's mother. The scorpion attacked the poet's mother with his poisonous tail and soon vanished in the rain which knew no stopping. After the event, the poet became unaware about what to do next and local folk began to swarm in the house of the poet. They claimed the name of the God so that the influence of the Devil could be brought under control and an end. Here, Ezekiel seems to draw upon the Hindu view of Karma and its attendant consequences. The villagers desired that all the accumulated sins of her past life may be burned away in the suffering They also felt that the present suffering would mitigate her future suffering and enabled her to attain salvation. It was also likely that all her sins could be cancelled out. They desired that the poison may be purifying her of the sensual sins, jealousy, hatred and ambitions. The villagers sat surrounding the poet's mother. The number of the visitors increased every minute. All the time the mother had been twisting with pangs of pain. After her recovery, her first reaction was to thank God for sparing her children from Scorpion, reflected her gentle attitude as a typical Indian mother. The mother's care for her children is highlighted boldly by the poet.

Thus, so far, Indo-Anglian poetry has venerated and elevated the status of mother. It is successful in bringing out the essential of a mother. It does not only provide us problems, anxieties, sufferings, sorrows and happiness of the motherhood but also sublime characteristics of it.

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Girish Karnad's *Yayati* and *Bali: The Sacrifice*: A Study in Female Sexuality

Pratima Chaitanya
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Harishchandra PG College
Varanasi-India

Gender issues seem to be suffused in most of the plays of Girish Karnad. In his plays, Karnad very dexterously pictures the condition of a typical Indian female, ruled by the patriarchal order bounded by tradition, but whose spirit remains unbounded. Although the playwright is not an out and out feminist like Henrik Ibsen, the playwright of *The Doll's House*, but the problems of a female in a prejudiced, biased patriarchal society are referred to in most plays by the playwright. The issue of the gender-bias in society and the oppression of women by the patriarchal order happen to form an important part of Karnad's plays. At the same time, Karnad depicts women enthused with feminism, fighting the unjust norms of the patriarchal order. Also more often than not such a direct encounter with patriarchy leads the women to death or disaster. The present paper undertakes to study the treatment of female in two plays of Karnad based on myths, namely *Yayati* (1961) and *Bali: The Sacrifice* (1980; rendered into English in 2004).

Karnad has borrowed the myth of *Yayati* from the "Adiparva" of the *Mahabharata*. *Yayati* re-tells the age-old story of the king who in his longing for eternal youth does not hesitate to usurp the youth and vitality of his son. Karnad takes liberty with the myth and weaves complex dimensions into the plot borrowed from the *Mahabharata*. To the mythical story of Yayati he adds new characters and alters the story-line so as to deepen its connotative richness which gives it contemporary appeal. In Karnad's *Yayati*, king Yayati is married to Devyani, an "Aryan" princess and during the course of the play, develops an illicit relationship with Sharmishtha, an "Anarya", and openly expresses his desire to marry her. Puru, here figures as the son of another of the king's spouse, who again like Sharmishtha,

comes from the "Anarya" or the "rakshasa" clan. The two novel characters introduced by Karnad in the plot are, Puru's wife Chitralekha and the maid confidant, Swarnalata. Karnad invests new meaning and significance for contemporary life and reality by exploring the king's motivations. In the *Mahabharata*, Yayati understands the nature of desire itself and realizes that fulfillment neither diminishes nor eliminates desire. In the drama, Karnad makes Yayati confront the horrifying consequences of not being able to relinquish desire.

Bali: The Sacrifice was first brought out into Kannada in 1980 by the name of *Hittina Hunja,* but was not translated in English at that time. The source of the play is an ancient Kannada epic, *Yashodhara Charite*, which itself draws on several other sources. The play is one that has multiple ideological issues. Though based on an ancient Kannada epic, the story, characters and incidents are often overshadowed by overt ideological concerns as relevant today as they were many centuries ago. The play is a treatise on the viability of violence and non-violence in the present scenario. The plot of *Bali: The Sacrifice* comprises of four characters, the Queen, the King, the Queen-Mother and the Mahout. The Queen is a Jain and she marries a Hindu King. Out of love for his spouse, the King converts into Jainism but is unable to come to terms with the new faith. Jainism dictates non-violence and Hinduism believes in the practice of sacrifice or *bali*, which means violence. The Queen-Mother is a devout Hindu who believes in sacrifices. The King vacillates from one end to the other, from Hinduism to Jainism, from the Queen-Mother to his wife but is unable to come to terms with any faith. In the climactic event of the play, the Queen enchanted by the beautiful voice of a low caste ugly, Mahout, the Elephant-Keeper, mates with him. Soon after the incident comes to the knowledge of the King and the Queen-Mother. Being a Jain, the King cannot indulge into violence by killing the Mahout and avenging the wrong of desecrating the sanctity of marital bond. The question which haunts the King and the Queen-Mother is how to placate the gods and goddesses for this act of sin. Finally the Queen-Mother tells the King that to

placate for the sin committed, a sacrifice has to be made. The Queen does not want to indulge in this mock sacrifice but is forced to by the King. Since no real blood can be shed, a dough-cock is decided to be sacrificed, which suddenly comes alive. The sacrifice of the dough cock turns into the sacrifice of the Queen herself and she dies. The question posed is whether intended violence is as offensive as real violence—whether the thought of mock-sacrifice is equivalent to actual sacrifice?

In *Hittina-Hunja*, the Kannada version of *Bali*, as in the original myth, the Queen did not actually commit adultery but only intended to, while in Karnad's *Bali*, she actually does commit adultery.

(a) The Oppression of Women

In *Yayati*, the issue of gender is highlighted especially in the way Yayati treats women in the play. C.N. Ramachandran feels that in Karnad's plays choice and consequences of choice were dissociated and the one who suffered the most due to the choices of others was always a woman. In most plays of Karnad, "the worst sufferers are women . . . who are caught up in a whirlpool of Hindu patriarchy, and are sucked down helplessly." (Ramachandran 28)

Karnad, in order to present the situation of a newly-wed female (had she been in the original mythical story) adds the character of Chitralekha which throws more light on the gender-bias of society.

The desires of a woman are always curbed in a patriarchal order; here it makes little difference whether she belongs to a high class/ caste or a low class/ caste. Chitralekha in *Yayati* is an Aryan princess, the protagonist in *Bali: The Sacrifice* is a queen and Vishakha in *The Fire and the Rain* is a Brahmin; all these women belong to a higher social order but suffer at the hands of the unjust patriarchal order. The character of Chitralekha as has already been said is Karnad's creation. "Through her Karnad explores the futility of being born a princess who finds reality too much to bear and kills herself". (Raju 84)

Chitralekha suffers first at the hands of her husband, Puru, who does not think of his wife even once before acceding to the supreme sacrifice of giving up his youth and vitality to serve his father's idiosyncrasies which serves no purpose but to fill up the void in his own life. Chitralekha finds it hard to live up to the expectations of a royal Aryan woman or to put it in general terms, of an Indian wife who accepts all the decisions of her husband with a smile and never dares to question his authority. When the maid confidant Swarnlata informs Chitralekha that Puru has accepted his father's curse of old age, the latter has the courage to say—"Do you know I had greatly wronged the Aryan prince. I thought of him as a coward and cursed my fate for being his wife. But I am indeed very lucky Swarna!" (Karnad, *Yayati* 73)

But as soon as Puru confronts her and she sees her husband transformed from a youth full of vigour into a shriveled old man, all her idealism withers away and she cries out in terror and panic—"Don't come near me…go away from here…Don't touch me!" (75)

Yayati comes to picture and consoles Chitralekha and asks her to behave in a fashion befitting a royal princesss. Here the schism between the behaviour expected of a man and a woman in a traditional Indian society surfaces up. While Yayati flouts the rules of morality with ease, develops an illicit relationship with Sharmishtha and even has the cheek to tell his wife in her face that he would marry another woman, the newly married Chitralekha is expected to exhibit devotion and morality and remain a dutiful wife.

Chitralekha, unwilling to submit to the patriarchal order and with no hope of emancipation from the mesh, commits suicide. She feels her life is a waste and there is no point in going on with it. Her anguish is expressed in the following speech:

> Neither will you return Puru's youth nor will you accept me! . . . Of what use am I to your garland of victories? All of you have achieved your objectives. Who needs me now? You have your youth; Pururaj has his self-sacrifice, but what am I to do? (87)

She expresses the plight of women in Indian society who find themselves completely

out of place in a world ruled by men. Finally Chitralekha commits suicide, rather the society forces her to commit suicide like it had forced Padmini in *Hayavadana* to perform *sati*, Nittlai in *The Fire and the Rain* to be murdered and the Queen in *Bali: The Sacrifice* to sacrifice herself.

The death of Chitralekha makes Sharmishtha comment at the exploitative patriarchal set-up, which crushes and oppresses women and offers them not even an infinitesimal hope of emancipation. Sharmishtha accuses Yayati of Chitralekha's death—"This is the foundation of your future life: One woman [Chitralekha] has become a ghost; the second [Swarnalata] mad; and the third [Sharmishtha] a fallen woman." (88)

A very significant portion of the play is devoted to the study of the decisions of the patriarchal set-up that expects women to surrender to the will of the male decision makers without protest. This fact is further illustrated through another relationship enunciated in the play: the Swarnlata episode. Swarnalata was jilted by her husband who thought that she had a relationship with a Brahmin boy before their marriage. Swarnalata tried her best to prove her innocence to her husband but failed. His husband became miserable and Swarnalata who loved her husband very much, could not bear his condition. She decided to give him peace of mind by lying to her that indeed the Brahmin boy had violated her. This freed her husband of the dilemma and he went away never to return. The narrative reiterates the concept of chastity and virginity which holds a place of prominence in the Indian society. A woman whose virginity has been violated is looked down upon, but the men are never called to question. Sita in *The Ramayana* too had to take an ordeal to prove her innocence and Rani in *Naga-Mandala* was also expected to testify herself at the behest of her indulgent husband in front of the whole village. Swarnalata's narrative once again scrutinizes the patriarchal norms of the society that expects a woman to prove her innocence. She is never taken on her own worth.

(b) Condition of Women Unaltered by Caste/ Class/ Race

In both *Yayati* and *Bali*, it is very evident that social standing (caste/ class/ race) hardly seems to affect the condition of the woman. Chitralekha is an Aryan princess, born into a royal family and coming from a privileged clan, the Aryans. Despite her caste and class superiority, she has to undergo oppression and suppression at the hands of men. She finally commits suicide for she sees no other escape from the unjust patriarchal order, where she has to unduly repress her feelings and desires in the name of *pativrata* (dutiful and dedicated wife).

In the same play, there is another character Swarnalata, the maid confidant, who comes from a low class and who too like Chitralekha does not receive the love of her family and husband, because the latter believes her to be unchaste. A woman in Indian society in considered good only if she is chaste. Though Swarnalata is chaste, she cannot make her husband believe her and finally in order to free her husband from the dilemma, she falsely acquiesces to the lie.

Devyani and Sharmishtha, both come from royal family, but the former is an "Aryan" princess while the latter an "Asura" or an "Anarya" princess. Sharmishtha is made to serve Devyani, but Devyani's condition is no better; her husband seems more interested in Sharmishtha than her and finally she leaves her family out of a feeling of insult. Thus she too, like Shramishtha becomes deprived of the security of family and love.

In *Bali*, the Queen comes from a royal family. At the end of the play, her guilt of extra-marital indulgence is atoned through her death.

Thus, the woman in the Indian society, whether of high or low social standing is always looked down upon by virtue of being a woman and ill-treated by the domineering patriarchy. Whether a Queen or a maid, women are always relegated to the background forming a marginalized group in the patriarchal order.

(c) The New Woman

Chitralekha in *Yayati,* rebels against the unjust and gender-biased norms and strictures of the Indian patriarchal society. Though she finally ends up committing suicide, she becomes a vehicle to demand the rights of a woman, which are so easily crushed in the patriarchal order.

Chitralekha does not give in to Yayati's persuasion to accept her husband's old age nonchalantly, and stands unmoved and unconvinced. Then Yayati exercises his authority as a king and as a father-in-law and orders her to accept her decrepit husband. To this, Chitralekha who has by that time taken her stand as a rebel—a rebel against the patriarchal set up and the rituals which treat women not as subjects but as objects, replies with ferocity:

> You are the one who has taken my husband near the funeral pyre; not I. And on the top of it you have come to preach to me! Without understanding my grief you are giving me lectures! What have you done ? You have got an idiot as your son on whose shoulders you have transferred the burden of your sins and then you come to give me lectures on duties of a female as a woman and wife! (81)

Yayati asks Chitralekha to become a great woman and rise above petty considerations—"Be extraordinary Chitralekha, you should become extraordinary." (83) Female for the Eastern and for that matter to the Western world could not have any other façade than these two—she is either elevated to the level of goddess—the cult of perfect *Tulsis* and *Parvatis* of our recent tele-serials, sacrificing all for their children and husband or denigrated as whores— the immaculate vamps of our films, oozing out enormous negative energy. It seems that womanhood could have no other façade. The same is the case here. The selfish king wants a supreme sacrifice from a young newly married princess while he himself indulges in sensual pleasures, unabashed. In *Naga-Mandala* too, Rani was brought to the Village Council by her indulgent husband as a whore to whom punishment had to be meted out for her adultery. She is only accepted back as a goddess by the villagers. Indian society fails to accept woman as a human being with natural desires. She cannot win people's hearts

with love but only by performing miracles and being a goddess.

So is the case with Chitralekha who is expected to forgo all her desires, her needs—emotional and sexual, and become a *devi* of supreme sacrifice. But Chitalekha crosses the limits of all the so-called "morality" and hypocrisy and claims directly for her sexual rights. She says that since Yayati has taken her husband's youth, he should also take his place in her life. This would ensure that she would bear the child of the Bharata family. She declares that in choosing Puru, she "had chosen his youth…The qualities that I had chosen in him are not present in him any longer…instead, you possess those qualities now. . . ." (85)

Yayati is shocked and accuses Chitralekha for harbouring such "low" thoughts. Though he himself is not ashamed to delve in sensual pleasures with his consorts, he expects a young girl to become an epitome of resistance and penance. Unable to see any escape from the trap closing in around her, Chitralekha is desperate and finding no escape from the patriarchal order, she commits suicide rather than leading a life of oppression.

Karnad's female seems to have marked an apogee in *Bali*. For the first time the emboldened female desires seem to cut through the patriarchal order unabashed and unashamed. In *Bali*, femininity has become bold, assertive and blatantly selfish. The female here, voiced through the character of the Queen, has laid bare the inner recesses of her heart, and more importantly of her body, her need for flesh, her desire for sexual gratification for its own sake and not as conscious attempts to produce children, have come to the fore. The sexual ferocity and vibrancy of the audacious female is referred to in the play in this conversation:

> MAHOUT:…But I tell you. I have known a few women. They say there are six types of women…
> KING (gravely): And what about the seventh?
> MAHOUT (stumped): I only thought there were six.
> KING: No one's written about her. While she sinks her teeth into the man and drinks blood, plucks his entrails like strings, the man's head only laughs and sings. (Karnad, *Bali.* 232)

The Queen seems to testify Karnad's statement that "if womanhood finds fulfillment in love that happens to be outside marriage, why should that be considered wrong ? Radha's love for Krishna was such." (Mukherjee 43)

The Queen in *Bali*: *The Sacrifice* has close parallels with the woman protagonist in Terence Rattingan's *The Deep Blue Sea* (1952) where a wife of a judge belonging to a high class, determinedly breaks social rules by having a passionate affair with a bluff, down-at-heel RAF officer and by desperately attempting suicide.

While Rani in *Naga-Mandala* and Padmini in *Hayavadana* indulge in an extra-marital relationship, they do not express their desires openly. By supernatural aid, both these women are able to satiate their desires. But the Queen in *Bali* is unembarrassed, bold and resolute. She has the cheek to leave the King lying next to her and slip away from the palace, past the gardens, and make her way to a ruined temple to mate with an Elephant-keeper, a man from a low-class/ caste at the middle of the night and then confront her husband in the face and refuse to profess guilt and to atone for it through a propitiatory ritual. She describes her love-making to her husband as natural, spontaneous and "beautiful". She says; "I wanted to come back to you. I feel fuller. Richer. Warmer. But not ashamed. Because I didn't plan it. It happened. And it was beautiful." (Karnad, *Bali*. 235)

Bali: The Sacrifice is a treatise on the choice between non-violence and violence. The Queen takes the non-violent stand. She is a Jain and sacrifice is strictly prohibited in her religion. But her refusal to sacrifice the cock of dough stems not so much from her non-violence as from the fact that she did not consider sex with the Mahout as harmful or sinful. It is not so much a matter of sacrifice to her, she would have declined any rite or ritual for her act. As she says unyieldingly—"I'm sorry. If this rite is going to blot the moment out, that would be the real betrayal. I'll do anything else." (235)

C.N. Ramachandran makes the point more explicit in his article and says that—"The

batter-cock in the play is also a symbol of the queen's dark yearnings and sexual pleasures. Hence, she forbids him to sacrifice it." (33)

Although the Queen does make excuses for her extramarital sexual encounter and boldly tells the King about it, she is clever and crafty enough to manoeuvre and manipulate the patriarchal order and win the situation to her advantage. Till the time she could not conceive, she did not make any exquisite demands but as soon as she became sure of her pregnancy, and became aware that she was carrying the heir of the royal family in her womb, she used it as a tool to win her husband on her side to humiliate her mother-in-law. She intelligently asks him to remove the shed of animals, which was the Queen-Mother's property for the exercise of her devotional practices, from the palace precincts because she could not bear the thought of animals being taken for sacrifice—"You sleep through it. You've grown up with those sounds. I haven't. They often wake me up—keep me awake. But I've pretended I didn't mind." (Karnad, *Bali.* 212)

In *Bali*, it appears as though the woman has emboldened enough to openly express her desire. At the same time, she knows how to preserve her identity and breaks the centuries long patriarchal custom to convert into her husband's religion. Her power can be acknowledged from the fact that she makes her husband convert into her religion, thus thrashing the norms of patriarchy.

(d) The Mahout: A Symbol of Female Liberation

S. Subash Chandran asserts that in *Bali*, the non-violent saviour and the blood-thirsty goddess, representing the Apollonian and the Dionysian order respectively seem to have their earthly emissaries in the form of the Queen-Mother and the Mahout, whose mission is to continue waging war in human heart and mind. The Queen-Mother has an uncanny way of realizing the truth while the divine music of the Mahout can mesmerize its listeners. (299) By mating with the Mahout, the Queen feels herself liberated from the bondage of patriarchy

imposed by the Apollonian order. She, by communion with the Mahout, lets the Dionysian principle rule supreme which emancipates her from hackneyed patriarchal traditions.

In *Naga-Mandala,* the Naga liberates Rani from a world of sterility to that of liveliness and fecundity. The Mahout here emerges as the Queen's saviour. Burdened for fifteen years to bear a child for the royal throne, amidst the mock whispers and the giggling of the palace maids, the ridicule of the Queen-Mother and the desperation of her husband, the Queen has completely forgotten the creative aspect of her sexuality. It has only become coterminous with the birth of the child and the barren Queen's all endeavours were focused at childbirth. As she reveals in her talk with the king:

> QUEEN: Can you men even imagine what it feels like? To pretend you are unaware of their gaze as they scrutinize the roundness of your belly, the stain on your thigh! Line after line of carrion crows, watching, waiting, ready to caw at the palmful of blood that spurted. And spurt it did—every month—every bloody month. How I hated myself when that happened. (Karnad, *Bali.* 211)

But the Mahout comes as a saviour whose divine, inebriated voice enchants the Queen far-off from her palace to a ruined temple with "absent deity" and only the "feet surviving". The presiding deity here appears to be the Mahout—the representative of the Dionysian aspect of life who rejuvenates the Queen, fills her with warmth and gratifies her without any burden of conceiving. How the Queen desires for sex for the pure pleasure of it, is evinced in her following conversation with the King:

> QUEEN (*suddenly laughs, tousles her hair*): Yes, I can. For you. You could have taken another wife. You didn't.
> KING: Of course I didn't.
> QUEEN: Sometimes I wished you had.
> KING: You did.
> QUEEN: Yes, purely for bearing children. Then I could make love to you—for its own sake—to make love. You don't know how I have pined for that. And now I can look forward to it. (211)

The traditional Indian woman is burdened with the idea of bearing a child, more especially a son, for her family. A barren woman in an Indian society is looked down upon.

Women themselves have a deep-rooted notion to bear an heir for their family. But here emerges a modern woman, unfettered and free who wishes to make love merely for pleasure and for its own sake.

The women in the aforementioned plays of Karnad seem to be aware of their oppression and repression in the patriarchal order but also know that they cannot do much about it. Whenever they attempt to cross their defined limits, like did Chitralekha in *Yayati* and the Queen in *Bali,* they meet with disaster. It matters little which class they come from, the women of all social strata seem to suffer more or less equally. Chitralekha and the Queen from superior class/ race, and Swarnalata and Sharmishtha from the lower class/ caste/ race, undergo suffering. Stepping out of marital bonds or claiming their rights, whichever the case, the result is always a disaster—the death of the female initiators. The pessimistic message that the playwright seems to convey is that it is difficult to escape the oppression of patriarchal order; a revolutionary attempt more often than not ends in a disaster.

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Gender Discrimination in Mahesh Dattani's *Tara*

M. A. Sami Siddiqui

Assistant Professor,
Dept. of English,
JES College, Jalna**.**

Mahesh Dattani is a contemporary Indian playwright. His plays are significant from the point of view of form as well as content. He has received the Sahitya Academy award for his contribution to Indian Drama. R. K. Dhavan calls him 'a fresh arrival'(1) John Mc Rae calls him 'the voice of India now'(2) Tanu Pant refers to him as 'the face of Indian drama'(3) Bijay Kumar has included him in the list of postmodern Indian dramatists(4) These and many other such references clarify that Mahesh Dattani is a rare genius. He has achieved popularity among the common audience and critical acclaim from the literary circles.

Mahesh Dattani believes in crossing the borders. He has shown this by dealing with unconventional subjects in most of his dramas. He touches upon various issues of our society through his dramas. He touches upon various issues of our society through his dramas. In ***Final Solutions*** he deals with the issue of communalism. In ***On a Muggy Night in Mumbai***, he deals with the issue of homosexuality and, in ***Seven Steps around the Fire*** with the problems of *Hijras* and in ***Tara*** of course with gender discrimination.

Discrimination against girls is a reality in the developing countries like ours. We congratulate each other at the birth of a boy. To us, a son means insurance and *Papa kahte hain bada naam karega; beta hamara aisa kaam karega*. If it is a girl the reaction is very different. Women start crying and men feel cheated. To them, a daughter is just another expense. She is neglected and ill-treated to such an extent that she feels inferior. She prays to God *Agle janam mohe bitya na kijo, ab jo kiye ho data waisa na kijo*. She becomes a second rate citizen in the family itself. Cultural traditions and poverty are at the root of gender discrimination as Kofi Annan says:

> Short-changing girls is not only a matter of gender discrimination; it is bad economics and bad societal policy.(5)

In this short paper, I plan to discuss how gender discrimination is presented in Dattani's drama 'Tara'. The play has only two acts. I is the story of twins-Tara and Chandan. They share one body. They are separated by a surgery.

> The way we started in life. Two lives and one body in one comfortable womb. Till we were forced out.(6)

Right in the beginning of the play, Dattani talks about the gender-roles. Patel is the father. He represents the male domination. He wants Chandan to behave like a boy. He expects Chandan to join him in the office at least to get the feel of it.

> PATEL: I was just thinking-it may be a good idea for you to come to the office with me…
> CHANDAN: You can take Tara, She'll make a great business woman…
> PATEL: (Firmly) Chandan, I think I must insist that you come.(7)

Tara is an intelligent girl. She is fully aware of the situation. She knows her limitations both physical and social. Though we claim to be civilized and modern, we have not changed much. Still today, we want women to stay at home and raise children. Tara Sharply comments upon this and suggests the continuation of the status quo. Tara says:

> The men in the house were deciding on whether they were going to go hunting while the women looked after the cave.(8)

Patel and Bharati are the parents. It seems that Bharati the mother cares for Tara more. Patel, the father on the other hand likes Chandan more Tara longs for her father's love but she never gets it.

CHANDAN: …He's not what you make him out to be.
TARA: Your say that because he's nice to you.
CHANDAN: He's nice to you.
TARA: He talks to you more often.
CHANDAN: All right. He talks to me, but he's nice to you.
TARA: I tell you, he hates me![9]

Tara needs a kidney transplant. Bharati wants to donate her own kidney to Tara but Patel does not approve of it. In the course of the play we come to know that their maternal grandfather has left all his money to Chandan and not to Tara. When Chandan asks about it Patel replies:

It was his money. He could do what he wanted with it.[10]

Another evidence of extreme discrimination comes forward when Roopa informs us that when Patels didn't want daughters they drowned babies in milk. Gender-roles are given much importance. When Patel sees Chandan helping his mother with knitting; Patel feels that his wife is creating confusion. He has already decided that Chandan would study further and go abroad.

In the second act, Bharati decides to donate her kidney to Tara out of love as well as to make up for what Tara's father and God has not given Tara. When Bharati becomes ill Tara is unhappy. She refuses to go to college. Chandan is not ready to go to college without her. Patel wants Tara to study for her brother's sake.

TARA: Of course not. There's no point in my going to college if I have to drop out half-way through or stay away for days not knowing when no!
PATEL: I understand. (*Going to TARA*) But we have a problem here. Chandan refuses to join college without you.(11)

Tara wishes to die. She even dies. After her death Chandan comes to know that the separation of Tara and Chandan was complete. The doctor who operated them believes that the greatest challenge was to keep the girl alive. Patel tells Chandan that the twins had three legs. The third leg was fed by the girl's blood system. The chances

of the leg's survival were greater with the girl. But Bharati and her father decided to give the leg to the boy. It survived for two days only. There was a possibility of its survival with Tara forever.

With this revelation, we come to know that Bharati's love for Tara was a result of her guilt consciousness. Patel is not free either. He is not different from Bharati and her father. He does not care for Tara at any point of time. Thus, the play discusses the injustice done to women. Bharati's guilt consciousness has changed her. But Patel remains unchanged. Chandan considers himself responsible for Tara's tragedy. It was only that he was a male. So he snatched away the possibilities of a healthy life from Tara. The doctor is also one of the culprits. He sacrificed the nobility of his profession just for the corruption that he received from Tara's grandfather.

Tara is, no doubt, a victim of gender discrimination. Apart from it our attitude towards the handicaps is also responsible for her tragedy. Roopa is a girl of neighborhood. She is of Tara's age. Because of Tara's fatal leg, nobody be friends her. Bharati has to bribe Roopa with cosmetics and other things to make her a friend of Tara. Yet, Roopa has an inward dislike for the freaks. Towards the end of the play, there is a verbal war between Tara and Roopa. As a result, Roopa puts a poster in the area with a slogan "WE DON'T WANT FREAKS." She places it prominently against the wall. Hence, both Tara and Chandan are afraid. They are afraid of meeting new people. They are afraid that the people won't see beyond their crippled legs.

The family tensions also add to the difficulties of Tara. Thus Dattani starts with gender discrimination and reaches to the issues beyond it. From the point of view of feminism, this may be a diversion but as Amaranth Prasad says:

> Mahesh Dattani comes in (the) category of writers who champion the cause of true art-free from any theory, minerals in taste and flavour, appealing to all sections of society, never bound to any caste, class and creed. (12)

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Ayn Rand's Art of Characterization with special reference to *The Fountainhead*

Tanaji S. Kamble
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Shahajiraje Mahavidyalaya, Khatav.
M.S. (India)

Ayn Rand (1905-1982) is a nineteenth century Russia-born American novelist and Objectivist philosopher who contributed to the popular literature with her four novels- *We the Living* (1936), *Anthem* (1938), *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). Her eight works of non-fiction help the reader to understand her Objectivist ideas. The present paper undertakes to discuss characterization in Rand's widely popular novel *The Fountainhead* into three sections: first section contains theoretical discussion of characterization; second section discusses the major characters in Rand's *The Fountainhead* and in the last section the theoretical discussion of character and characterization will be applied to the major characters in the novel and concluding statements will be made.

I

Characters are human beings who appear in the fictional as well as dramatic works and constitute the literary world. In this connection, E.M. Forster's *Aspects of Novel* (1927) is of immense importance. He states that characters are human beings who people the fictional work. These human beings are word-masses whom the novelist gives name, sex, and gestures. He makes them to speak as well as to behave. And these word-masses are called characters.

E.M. Forster discusses three categories of characters. First, flat characters, also called *humours*, *types* and *caricature*, are one-dimensional and are constructed around single idea or quality and can be expressed in one sentence. Flat characters are advantageous in two ways. One, they are easily recognized whenever they appear in the literary work. Another, the reader easily remembers them because they undergo no change in most crucial and difficult circumstances. Hence, they are static characters who

remain the same in their attitude, belief from the beginning to the end of the literary work. Once introduced, they need no introduction or modification.

Second, round characters exhibit more than one idea or quality and are difficult to express in limited way. They seem to be close to human life as they undergo certain changes in the course of action and appear with certain changes in thought, ideals and behaviour. They are real to life because they are capable to surprise or convince the reader. Hence, they are called dynamic characters, and the last type, flat pretending to be round. If a round character fails to surprise or convince the reader, then it is called flat pretending to be round character.

The characters can be differentiated from characterization. Cockelreas and Logan, define characterization as "the artist's creation of imaginary persons who seem so credible that we accept them as real" (p-81). They state that characters move the plot and characterization conveys the theme. Further, they discuss three techniques often used to introduce characters by the novelists: First, *expository method* where the novelist directly discloses the character and his mind-set-up. Second, *dramatic method* where the novelist reveals nothing about personality of character and his mental make-up and the readers is expected to understand character, his personality and mental make-up through his action and deeds. Third, *subjective method*, where the novelist enters into the consciousness of characters and discloses the working of his mind and emotions. This theoretical discussion of character and characterization will help in the study of characters in *The Fountainhead*.

II

Howard Roark is a young, innovative, first-hander, self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-generated architect and is the hero of the novel. Rand described him as an ideal man, *the man as man should be* (*The Fountainhead*, p.97). He is Rand's mouthpiece who embodies principles of Objectivism. Frank Lloyd Wright has been accepted as a role model for Roark by almost all critics. Berliner (2007) examines their relationship and states that both share the field of architecture and views about modern architecture but differ at philosophical level. Frank Wright was a source of inspiration to Roark and was not a role model.

Roark is a principled architect who tries to maintain the standard and dignity of the profession of architecture. At the outset of the novel, he is expelled from the Stanton Institute of Technology as he disapproves the traditional, collectivist principles of the Dean of the institute. The Dean believes that the best designs in the field of architecture are already done and regards the prime duty of architect to repeat them respectfully. Roark disapproves Dean's views as he wants to become "an architect, not an archeologist" (*p*. 22). Roark expresses his distress for reproduction of the same. The Dean disagrees with Roark's individualistic ideas, expels him from the institution.

With original passion for architecture, expelled Roark prefers to work for Henry Cameron, once very reputed, popular architect but now ruined, who is professional guide of Roark. Roark's meeting with Cameron reveals his craze for the profession. He has decided to become an architect at ten because he loves the earth and does not like the shape of things on the earth and wants to change them.

Rand has portrayed Roark as an uncompromising architect. As a draftsman of Francon & Heyer Firm, Roark denies reproducing a structure like Dana Building built by Henry Cameron and expels him from the firm. Roark is an integrated architect whose professional career starts with the Heller House and its contract is already signed by John Erik Snyte who desires to build it in collaboration with Roark. Roark denies doing so as he does not believe in cooperation and he is fired. Further, Roark builds the Heller House which receives bitter criticism. Architectural Tribune surveys the best building erected in the country but is without reference to the Heller House. In addition, Ralstone Holcombe, John Erik Snyte, and other second- rate architects, denounce the house and distort its standard. Roark possesses exceptional ability and talent and believes in originality and creativity. Others believe in cooperation, collaboration and borrow their structures from the past sources. While pointing out the difference between all structures, Dominique writes that the Heller House stands for "the egotism of Mr. Heller and of Mr. Roark" and the house serves "as a mockery to all the structures of the city and men who build it" (p. 265-66).

Roark is Rand's mouthpiece who embodies egoism, rational self-interest, individualism. Toohey, exponent of collectivism, communism, and socialism,

realizes that Roark is not just a man but he is "force so explicitly personified in human body" (p.262). Toohey believes that greatness is rare, difficult, and exceptional that should be destroyed. The Stoddard Temple is the fatal conspiracy led by Toohey against Roark. Toohey writes in his column that the temple looks like a warehouse, brothel, and western saloon. He states that it is not a temple but an insolent mockery of all religions. As a result, Hopton Stoddard files suit against Roark who has to pay all the cost for the reconstruction of the temple. This ruins Roark economically but his spirit for the profession is strong within him.

As an architect and a man, Roark is self-centered and is oblivious about other's problems. In other words, he is egoist who inherits nothing from others. Roark considers his life as an end in himself and not meant to any further end. As an architect, he builds to satisfy his passion for the profession. Moreover, he is oblivious with the problems of Dominique, Gail Wynand and Steve Mallory.

Rand champions American individualism through Roark. He dynamites the Cortlandt Housing Project and is arrested and presented before the court as a criminal. In the court, he reminds all people that American society is built on the principle of individualism. The country is "based on a man's right to the pursuit of happiness" (p.683). America is the country of greatest achievement, prospect and freedom where man's private, personal, selfish motive is considered important. Peter Keating has destroyed Roark's private property in the form of design of the Cortlandt Housing Project. Roark's last speech before the court underlines the role and importance of an individual in the construction of any society.

In this way, Roark defeats all the exponents of collectivism. By the end of the novel, Rand has shown Roark and Dominique on the top of Wynand Building, the last skyscraper built by Roark, which symbolizes the victory of American individualism and defeat of collectivism.

Peter Keating is an architect who is a complete antithesis of Howard Roark. Rand describes him in her notes as *everything a man should not be* (p.696). As an architect, Peter is second- rate, dependent, parasite, mean who builds in order to achieve money and fame and always tries to exist in the eyes of society. Rand has presented him

as an emotional being without rational self- interest that leads him towards frustration in family as well as professional life.

Rand has portrayed Peter Keating as a victorious and glorious figure at the outset of novel. The novel opens with the celebration of Peter Keating's graduation at the Stanton Institute of Technology as the star student of the institute, but his architectural designs are made by Roark. On this occasion, Peter gives impression that he is not self-generated as his success is due to his competition with Salinger and is indecisive and less confident about his further education. Peter is inferior to Roark.

Peter's professional career shows that he lacks rational self-interest. Peter wanted to be an artist and was interested in drawing. But Mrs. Louisa Keating, his mother, forces him to study architecture as it is a respectable profession. After graduation, Peter desires to study further but he is forced to join Francon and Heyer firm where he achieves strong position at the cost of Tin Davis and Claude Stengel. Peter is willing to become partner of any Francon and kills Lucious Heyer. By using sneaky ways Peter consolidates his position in the firm but he can not consolidate his position in the profession of architecture. Peter loves Catherine but marries to Dominique because of his mother. Peter's married life ends when he receives fifty thousand dollars and Stoneridge contract, $ 250,000 from Gail in exchange of Dominique Francon. On account of lack of rational self- interest, he meets frustration in professional as well as family life.

Peter Keating is celebrated parasite who has borrowed all architectural designs from Roark. He exists in the eyes of society as a designer of Cosmo- Slotnick Building, Cortlandt Housing Projects which are originally designed by Roark. Unfortunately, his parasitic nature brings frustration in his life. He gives confession of his being Parasite: "Howard, I'm a Parasite. I've been a parasite all my life…" (p.575). Yet, he is not able to build Cortlandt Homes and expects Roark to design its structure and he will put on his name. Peter meets frustration in his professional, family on account of lack of rational self-interest, independence.

Ellsworth M. Toohey is the main villain of the novel whom Rand in her notes describes as *a man who never could be*. He embodies Rand's contempt for modern variants of Collectivism- Socialism, Communism, Nazism and Fascism. As an architectural critic, he tries to shape the society through his socialist, collectivist views.

Ellsworth Toohey is a staunch collectivist who denies the role of individual in a mass society and demands economic, artistic, intellectual subordination of an individual in the society. Toohey desires to open the field of architecture to common people. He denies the role of individual and states that nothing is created by an individual in architecture. He believes that any great building in the history of architecture is not the private invention of some genius but "… a condensation of the spirit of the people" (p.78). Toohey opens struggles-individualism verses collectivism- at the beginning of the novel and continues till the end of the novel.

As a socialist critic, Toohey tries to shape the society through collectivist ideas and wants to build a society in such a way that individual talent like Roark should not grow again. He believes:

> "Great men can't be ruled. We don't want any great men. Don't deny the conception of greatness. Destroy it from within. The great is the rare, the difficult, the exceptional"(p.635).

This is out of fear that the great people will not allow him to live. Hence, his aim in life is to destroy Howard Roark.

Enshrinement of mediocrity is a typical Toohian formula that he uses to destroy individual talent. Toohey is well aware that Roark is talented architect and Peter is a mediocre one. Yet, he tries to worship mediocrity of Peter Keating. According to Toohey, the Cosmo-Slotnik Building, built by Peter, is a most ingenuous, a brilliant and very unusual plan. He regards Peter Keating 'not just a common mason, but a thinker in stone' (p.229). This explicitly shows that Toohey is much concerned with enshrinement of mediocrity (Peter Keating) and destruction of originality, talent (Roark). The ultimate aim of Toohey is power:" I want power. I want my world of the future" (p.639). He is unable to attain power through constructive works.

Toohey tries to attain power though destructive works. He has successfully ruined Henry Cameron and Steve Mallory and is willing to destroy Roark, Dominique and Gail Wynand. He tries to destroy Roark through the Stoddard temple. Toohey sets in to destroy Dominique. Peter- Dominique marriage, he believes, is fifty percent destruction of Dominique and her complete destruction will be achieved through her marriage with Gail Wynand. He sees Dominique as dangerous and takes every opportunity to insult

her:" You've much worse than a bitch" (p.422). He successfully led a strike of the Banner employees against Wynand and destroys him within inside.

Toohey enslaves Peter Keating and is accountable for the tragedy of Peter as an architect and as a man. From the beginning of the novel, Toohey has glorified Peter Keating as a great architect that he never deserves. Actually Peter Keating lacks initiative, courage, independence, creativity. Yet, Toohey keeps on glorifying him. Toohey has ruled his soul and used him as shield against Roark that Peter never realizes. Again, Toohey is accountable for the failure Peter-Catherine relationship and poisons their life and deprives them of happiness. Catherine is his niece but to destroy Dominique, he destroys the life of his niece. Peter and Catherine could have been happy in their marriage but Toohey destroys their life.

Gail Wynand is Rand's secondary important character next to Roark whom she has described in her notes as *a man who could have been*. He is the hard and fast owner of the *Banner*, the vulgar newspaper of the country that he has owned through corruption, deception. He is morally a fallen person whose only aim in the life is power through money. He represents the capitalist class of America.

Gail is the owner of the New York *Banner* which was earlier Gazette that he owned deceptively. It has no chief aim and represents yellow journalism. It is away from the true function of journalism and is devoted to the secondary subjects. As a capitalist, Wynand is socially isolated figure. His past is deeply rooted in poverty but now he has achieved financial security. Wynand is a morally degraded person who has a long list of mistresses. Even, his childhood is marked by his evil activities. Gail had been a leader of a gang that was concerned with polities and corruption. He has ruined the life of many people. He has control over American politics as well as the Senators.

Gail Wynand is a morally fallen person who lacks integrity, moral finesse and self value. The Stoneridge contract explains the moral degradation of Wynand. Peter Keating desires to have the Stoneridge contract and wants Dominique to plead the case before Gail. Dominique is ready to sleep with Wynand so as to have the contract for Peter and Gail shows his consent. This contract changes the mode of Wynand's life and Dominique brings an end to his morally degraded life and gives new motives in life.

Moreover, Gail Wynand is the only character who understands the difference between Dominique and her statue: "Everything about you in that statue is theme of exaltation. But your own theme is suffering" (p.48) Gail realizes that she is ready to spend a night with Gail for Peter, not out of love for Peter but out of self-contempt and contempt for men. Wynand recognizes that Dominique does not want the Stoneridge but wants to sell herself for the lowest motive to the lowest person. Perhaps, for the first time in his life, Wynand tries to understand a woman of this kind. This is a kind of change the readers observe in Wynand. Further, Wynand marries Dominique because she is purest person he has ever seen.

Gail Wynand has learnt to love the purest person - Dominique Francon and is much devoted to her. Gail remains unmoved by Alvah Scarret's remarks- Dominique is a public figure as well as public property and a wildest person with a terrible reputation. Scarret questions her character and purity that annoys Gail. In order to protect her from the evil world, he exhorts the staff of *Banner* to write and publish nothing about her.

Gail passionately loves Dominique and has realized dangers awaiting her in the outer world. Gail wishes to build a house that could fortify Dominique. He hires Roark as an architect and desires to build house like a fortress. Gail wants his house to be 'a temple to Dominique Wynand' (p-520). This gives an impression that Gail is so passionately in love with Dominique that he is willing to worship her as goddess. This marriage continues for seven years which are marked by her social alienation and confinement which is the result of Gail's utmost care.

Gail-Dominique marriage results in Roark-Gail friendship that brings happiness in the life of Gail. He has been unhappy and disgusted throughout his life. Roark creates new spirit, motives and happiness that Gail expresses candidly: "These are the first happy years of my life. I met you because I wanted to build a monument to my happiness" (p. 544). This happiness is due to Dominique as his life partner and Roark as his friend. Gail has built nothing for his personal use due to unhappiness. Through his friendship with Roark, Gail realizes that a house is a statement on the life of man. And he decides to build a house for himself and Dominique. He has learnt to believe in greatness and considers Roark as a great person. Hence, he puts an enlarged photograph of Roark in his

office and prohibits Toohey to mention name of Roark in his column. This kind of change that Gail undergoes in his life is because of Roark.

Gail-Roark friendship constructs the life of Gail but the same is accountable for Gail's failure in his life and defeat before the strike led by Toohey. Though Rand has presented Gail Wynand as a powerful man, he is not powerful enough because his power lies in money and lacks self-power. He is under wrong impression that he is powerful and he controls people. Gail exists as a second hander in Roark's eyes because he desires to control other people. The strike led by Toohey shows how powerless Gail is and realizes his true power. He has to accept the conditions put forth by the strikers and accept the defeat. This defeat gives a Gail a realization that he is a second hander.

Dominique Francon is the heroine of the novel whom Rand describes in her notes as *the perfect priestess* for a man like Howard Roark. She represents many relations: daughter of Guy Francon; beloved of Roark and wife of Peter Keating and later on of Gail Wynand. Dominique Francon is the daughter of Guy Francon and their relationship is marked by the emotional detachment. His malpractices in the profession of architecture might have disturbed their relationship. She despises the position and possession of her father and tries to build her own identity in the novel. Hence, she is alone in the world to face all the difficulties and troubles.

Andrew Bernstein (2007) states that Dominique's character is an amalgam of idealism and pessimism. Dominique's praise of the Enright House is an attempt to offer due respect to Roark's greatness as an architect. This praise invites hostility of Ellsworth Toohey that puts her in danger. This idealism is replaced by pessimism. She has observed that her father, a second-rate architect, is accepted and Henry Cameron, the world's greatest builder is rejected. Peter Keating, a dishonest, is on fast track of success. Gail Wynand has achieved enormous commercial success. Toohey, vicious villain, has been accepted by masses as a saint. But a great inventor like Roark is scorned by the society. These observations develop pessimistic attitude in her that human society is corrupt that neither admires nor rewards greatness. Even, she has been not successful in her career because she believes that success needs corrupt methods of Peter and Mr. Francon

Dominique realizes that Roark is a great architect but soon she realizes that the society will not accept Roark as a great architect. She believes that great people like

Roark cannot exist in the world. So, she sets in to destroy him before the rest of the world destroys him. She wants to destroy Roark immediately so as to avoid the fate of Henry Cameron. Practically, she has started to destroy Roark. Hence, she has recommended Peter Keating as a good architect to Mr. Joel Sutton instead of Roark. Peter is able to build folksy, comfortable and safe building. She rejects Roark because his building will be appreciated after hundred years. Out of unhappiness, Dominique seeks self-humiliation, self- demolition and self- torture because the society cannot accept Roark, his greatness and individualism. She blocks his commissions and out of unhappiness she seeks her immolation at the hands of Roark.

Feminist critics are hostile to Rand for being dishonest, disloyal to her own sex in the sex scene in the novel. Rand believes that "sex is an expression of man's self-esteem, of his self-value" (Toffler, 1964) and yet, the sex scene doesn't have anything to do with woman's self-value. In this context, the expression of man's (male's) self-esteem, self-value is of much importance and the character of woman and her moral grace, strength has little or no meaning. Roark is not just expressing his self-esteem, self-value but is violating her aggressively. The feminist critics are hostile to Rand's sex scenes. Susan Brownmiller charges Rand as a traitor to her own sex. (1999, p. 65). Other Feminist critics like McElroy (1999) try to justify by saying that the 'rape scene' was consensual in the novel. In addition, Andrew Bernstein (2007, p.202) states that the "Rape scene" is highly confusing and misunderstood because Dominique is real aggressor throught the scene.

Dominique is attracted by Roark's moral integrity and despite of her marriage with Peter and Gail, she prefers to belong to Roark. Her love, worship, devotion is observable in the Stoddard temple construction where she is willing to give naked pose for the statue to be placed in the temple. Stoddard desires to build temple of human spirit and Roark observes such human spirit, in Dominique. Hence, he decides to place a naked statue of Dominique. The Stoddard temple is built and later on destroyed by the evil society. Her Stoddard testimony reveals her glorification of Roark and her strong hatred toward Toohey and his followers. She says that Roark has built a temple of Human spirit because he has seen man as strong, clean, wise, fearless and a heroic being. But Toohey fails to see greatness in man and regards this temple as a profound hatred of humanity.

She thinks of Roark as a man who is "casting pearls without getting even a pork shop in return"(p.356). This testimony openly expresses her indignation about the society that fails to realize importance of Roark who is not getting due respect in the society in which he lives.

Rand's *The Fountainhead* contains these five cardinal characters. Besides, there is long range of minor characters who participate in the construction of the novel and all these characters broadly fall into two groups. First, the believers in individualism, freedom and nobility of human beings- the man worshipers. Second, the believers in collectivism, altruism and the need to put the good of all over that of one - the man haters or parasites or second handers.

III

Application of theoretical framework to characters and characterization to above major characters raise various problems about Rand's characters. A close study of these five major characters shows their stagnant position till the end of the novel. As a creative architect, Roark stands independently in the field of architecture with disdain for cooperation and collaboration. Till the end of the novel, he maintains his individualism and no change in his behavior, principled life is found. Peter Keating remains a parasite, second-hander till end of the novel. Even, Toohey is strongly sticks to the principles of collectivism. These characters appear less as human beings of the real world. They never appear to be real human beings of flesh and blood and seem to be cut outs of cardboard. This is the flaw of Randian characters. This has happened in the novel because Rand is trying to present ideal man and ideal set-up. Rand (1969) writes in her essay entitled 'The Goal of My Writing' that the motive and purpose of my writing is *the projection of an ideal man* (p.162). So, she has created Roark as an ideal human being and others as non-ideal. This pre-formulation of Rand has reduced her characters to a stereotype and no scope is given to change. All these characters are two-dimensional-virtuous and vicious, good and bad, black and white. Dominique and Gail Wynand stand a little different from the rest of characters and show certain changes in the behavior.

Rand's seems to be making use of characterization since her characters are not real people but imaginatively created. The proof is her pre-formulation about her characters. She seems to be using *dramatic method* of characterization. Roark's denial of reproduction of Dana Building to Guy Francon and his unwillingness to build the Heller House with John Erik Snyte shows disdain for reproduction and hence, show prime interest in originality and creativity. Toohey's constant hostility to Roark, through various deeds like the Stoddard temple conspiracy, shows his collectivist nature. It could be argued that Rand's Russian background is responsible for having flows in her characters. She champions American individualism and capitalism and strongly hates Russian communism. The final victory of Roark in the novel is the symbolic victory of American individualism and capitalism and defeat of Toohey is the symbolic defeat of Russian communism. In order to attain this aim, Rand creates ideal and non-ideal characters which are stereotypical and two-dimensional in nature.

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Racism : A Colour Paradigm in Asif Currimbhoy's *Goa*

Yoosaph A.K.
Lecturer in English,
King Saud University,
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Asif Currimbhoy emerged as a notable Indian English playwright in the post-independence period. Faubian Bowers commented about him that he was "India's first authentic voice in the theatre". His modern plays were well known in India and abroad. The dramatic groups of American Universities, repertory companies and the off Broadway theatre had staged his plays. Politics and public affairs found abundant expression in his plays and according to Peter Nazareth, "Asif Currimbhoy interweaves the public event with the private to create exciting drama which asks moral questions about humanity in the cataclysmic period of de-colonisation".

Born as the son of an industrialist, Asif Currimbhoy 'was brought up in an environment of new ebullient ideas which in later life formed an integral part of his temperament'[3]. British Government had honoured his family with baronetcy for their remarkable achievement in the field of industry. His father was an intellectual and mother, a social worker and naturally this intellectual background might have creatively influenced his dramatic career. His acquaintance with English language helped him attain mastery in the language and his later education at Wisconsin University enhanced his adoration for Shakespeare. Therefore, his experience with various trends in drama in the USA would have helped him to shape himself as a "man of the theatre." In an interview to *Commentary* he talks about his basic education and its influence on his life. He reveals that his exposure to the pre-independence days and the colonial experience shaped his attitude to the colonial syndrome which was centred on English.

Currimbhoy's job in New India Assurance Company in Paris gave him the opportunity to get in touch with French culture also. Later, he joined the Burma Shell in India as an executive and his extensive travel throughout India enabled him to familiarise himself with different locales and people. It is also certain that his keen

observation of people and their life during this time enhanced his theatrical vitality.

Bayapa Reddy in his seminal work analysed his plays extensively, dividing them into political, religious and social categories. These plays were again classified in terms of the period in which they were written. Being a political play written in 1964, *Goa* belongs to the first period of his creative output. This play is a significant example of Currimbhoy's treatment of colour and race as an inevitable tool of analysing postcolonialism.

The playwright identifies the dichotomy between the concept of self and the other is dovetailed with the concept of racism in some instances. This hypothesis is furthered by the fact that science did not fully help in the shedding away of any of the earlier suppositions about inferior races that had existed in the pre-colonial times. In fact, race functioned not only as an indicator of people's skin colour but also their civilizational and cultural attributes. It is in this context Loomba observes that the European scientists' prejudice about their own racial identities prevented them from "radically questioning scientific theories of racial difference" (p.62). This must have resulted in racial discrimination because people who were treated as inferior had no access to scientific training during this time. By conquering and marginalising local knowledge systems, European colonialism imposed their biased knowledge systems on the colonised.

Colour is claimed as a major signifier for racial identity, and racial superiority is easily translated into class terms but certain sections of people were always identified on racial grounds as the working classes. Capitalism in fact continues to depend upon racial hierarchies and it also intensifies them to facilitate capitalist production and possession. Fanon's observation on this is quite significant in this sense:

> Western bourgeois' racial prejudice as regards the nigger and the Arab is a racism of contempt; it is a racism which minimizes what it hates . . . . The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is a racism of defence, based on fear. (1963: 131)

According to him, the minimization of the object of racist hatred is a sort of turn of

phrase of racial superiority but it is claimed to be based on fear rather than original authority or eligible power. By considering certain races contemptuously and highlighting the negative aspects of the tradition and customs of the Arabs and the Blacks, the Western capitalist interests played down the significance of the natives' lives in colonised countries. In short, it could be interpreted that the interests of capital and the archetypal marginalization of human beings based on colour have insidiously worked in the internal culture of colonization which has paved the way for the self/other dichotomy in various dimensions.

It is quite perceptible how the whites who claimed themselves as superior and powerful masters, owing to their distinctive colour of the skin, treated the so called coloured people. They therefore represent, according to Said, the oppressive class, rulers, religious authority, educators, aesthetically superior etc.

Goa deals with the violent liberation movement of 1969 against the long lasted occupation by the Portuguese, that transformed the entire identity of Goa. Citing *Goa* as the socio-realistic presentation of the world, the Meserves, who have commented extensively on Currimbhoy's plays, assert that he has presented a realistic picture of Goa's disintegration during the time of its liberation from Portuguese. They refer to the colonised Goa and its urge for freedom that could be achieved by violent struggle. This statement therefore is notable:

> There is, for example, the bitter anguish Currimbhoy feels for 'Goa', created by the union of Portuguese and Indian only to be destroyed by conflicts with that union. His socio-realistic plotting, however, expands into allegory in 'Goa', where rape the most violent personal abuse, symbolizes the final suffering and disintegration. (Preface to*The Hungry Ones, p.12-13)*)

Nonetheless, apart from the socio-realistic plotting, the play presents the theme of colour distinction which takes a significant place in discourses on postcolonialism. Senhora Miranda who belongs to the privileged class, represents the white Portuguese and in justification for her dislike of the coloured, she treats the dark skinned people derisively and says: "They make me feel dirty." (p. 37) Colour consciousness enhances

one's own contented self-confidence. Her attitude seems not only to be a condescending one that the whites harbour towards the native black-skinned people but also as something that gives vent to their egocentric nature. Being cognisant of her skin colour she is gives off the confidence that it would increase the possibilities of her privileged aristocratic status in Lisbon. She articulates her self-confidence with enthusiasm, "See how white my skin is?" (p. 26).

It is exemplified how the skin of the black colour is perceived by an aristocratic white in the colonial context. Miranda's derisive attitude to the dark-skinned and her consciousness about the skin colour seem to have given her more self-confidence creating a sense of inferiority in the colonised. Her scathing remarks would have accelerated the colonised's internalisation of the coloniser's notion about the colonised that they are inferior and underprivileged.

Miranda's colour consciousness extends even to her daughter and due to this perceivable disdain of the coloured she does not allow anyone to approach her dark coloured daughter. She knows that "Only I am fair, and she's dark" (p.37). Even the traditional maternal attitude is destabilized by colour difference, which in turn functions as a harsh irritant and reminder to Miranda of her daughter's inferiority as demonstrated in her statement thus: "They say it should give rise to love when it's cut out from your own flesh. But the colour is different. A constant reminder." (37) What does this remind her of? Is it of an Indian parentage for Rose, as it is not evident who her father is? Though Miranda is conscious of the value of maternal love, she underplays its relevance in the face of her latent obsession with skin colour. Her notion of skin colour seems to be deeply rooted and it encapsulates her colonial elitist attitude even to her daughter whose dark colour is a constant reminder to her of something that she does not reveal.

Power is vested with the whites, based upon the same preconception of colour, and the coloured are treated as unusual and alien in colonised societies. In Portuguese-colonised Goa, Krishna, the black native is looked upon as a stranger and alien by the Portuguese. There is the repeated representation of the popular colonial equation that white is neat and black dirty, as expressed by Senhora Miranda in her reference to Krishna thus: "He is a stranger here. I can make it out. He is not like the others. Dark,

yes, but not like the others." (p.43)

She looks upon dark Krishna as different from a white man and presents this viewpoint with the same confidence and firmness expressed earlier. Her judgement dwells upon the whites' prejudiced notion about the black with the perception that coloured skin is an original sin and is "congenital" that passes from generation to generation. Her observation justifies the Westerners' notion about the black as those who were born with blackness about them. Miranda asserts this notion of the whites about the biological presence of darkness in the black skinned people, for degrading them and achieving a relative upper hand in political affairs of the colonies as is seen below:

> SENHORA MIRANDA. … I always thought Rose's defect was congenital having been originally there, rather than by accident. …If something is inevitable, it becomes congenital rather than accidental… (p.64)

She feels that it is inevitable rather than fortuitous in the case of the colonised to be dark skinned. Moreover, it is depicted in the play how a double colonisation has taken place in the case of Rose. On the one hand her dark skin is a strong reason for her confinement at home and on the other, her life itself is being controlled by her mother, who is very much conscious of her superiority owing to her white skin. However, in the case of Krishna he tries to defend his black identity by arguing that the white is definitely hiding something black in his/her innate being. He compares the white-coloured people to albinos and tries to intelligently subvert the whites' notion about the 'coloured' in his statement thus, "You may have white skin, but so also have albinos. It doesn't prove a thing." (p.60)

In the meanwhile, Krishna's comparison of the white to that of albinos is presented as a paradigm of protest of the black-skinned against white discrimination. This protest against Miranda is not only for his own sake but for the sake of Rose also with the primary observation that the whites are not at all different from the blacks and that they have blackness inside them. Moreover, his metaphor has another connotation that like the albinos the 'whites' lack colour, which may mean that they lack the pigment that

they essentially require for their life suggesting not just the absence of pigment but the absence of the self itself. Essentially, it must be the consciousness of the "other" about the "self" that lacks in the necessary presence of the other. Thus he raises some questions about the identity of Senhora Miranda and people like her with a reminder of the inherent black in them: "You've got shades of black within you, Maria. See it right and you won't be conscious of it anymore."(p.61)

In this instance it is clear that Rose represents the internal dark side of Senhora Miranda whose unconscious black identity has come out with Rose's birth. Krishna has internalised his feeling of being black and is questioning the authenticity of subjecting the coloured to discrimination by the whites. Thus his protest is also an inversion of the logic of the whites, as a measure of resistance.

It is worth noting here that the names of the characters in the play suit this dichotomy and these names themselves represent their colour difference. While the name Krishna stands for the black, the names Alphonso and Senhora Miranda represent the Portugese whites. Thus the play tries to subvert the ideology of colour difference by inverting the hierarchy implicit in it. Moreover, by employing a name familiar to the Orient, the play is presenting a parallel of the entire ideology. Parallelism is also employed as a technique to examine the difference between the two concepts and highlights how 'black' is treated as hard while the 'white' always as its opposite in a colonial situation. As a testimony to this Senhora Miranda says: "You are not soft Krishna, you're hard. You don't have love Krishna, you have hate". (ibid)

Senhora Miranda talks about white as soft and loving, purely on the basis of their skin colour attributing hardness and hatred to the dark skinned with the same parameters. It seems to be a type of colonial strategy of the westerners to construct a commonly acceptable image about the Orient. However, eventually, through his exposure of Senhora Miranda's identity, Krishna exposes the real identity of the whites. He engages in a discourse in which Senhora Miranda also participates and he proves to her that she belongs to a category of the whites with black spots in them. Thus he comes out with the argument that the blacks are no longer destined to be inferior to the whites on the basis of colour. Miranda's internal colonisation of her dark skinned daughter is

reflected in the political colonisation of the enclave of Goa with her justification that the dark colour is congenital and therefore must be subservient to the white.

In short, Asif Currimbhoy reveals the dichotomy between the self and other in *Goa* by featuring colour difference as a parameter of the racist analysis in a postcolonial environment. It enumerates the significance of an existing paradigm of cultural and racial preconception about the postcolonial relationships among human beings. Even the family relationship is founded upon the dichotomy that distinguishes between upper and lower poles of society. In fact, as a postcolonial playwright in English, Asif Currimbhoy has carved out a niche for himself with the trendsetting presentation of a racial paradigm which is congenial to the analysis of a postcolonial dichotomy between self and the other in *Goa*.

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Stranger Things

Jamie Wilson
Seattle, Washington

Squirreled away on the second floor with the customer service girls, the collection guys, the loan processors, and other invisible employees, Paul wonders if the fluorescent lights ever stop burning. The lights—hidden behind frosted plastic panels that play hopscotch with gray ceiling tiles—are on when he arrives in the morning, when he leaves in the evening, even when he comes in early or stays late.

A computer printout unfolds across Paul's desk, and he forces his right index finger to march along one line of woolly, purplish text—date, account number, account code, name, figure—and then another. Soon, though, his eyes flick upwards. Actually, the lights don't so much *burn* as *glow*. Yes, glow. Albeit coolly.

Paul returns to the printout, the text that could almost pass for gibberish, especially now, an hour after lunch. His finger retreats, back to the beginning of a line. The funny thing—the really disturbing thing—is that he can't remember ever seeing a light switch. Not anywhere in the bank. There are other mysteries, too, like who makes a pot of coffee each morning, always there waiting, no matter the time? Gremlins, maybe. Maybe the bank has gremlins on the payroll. That, at least, would help explain the strangeness of this place, so unlike his old job at Housman's, where he had an office with a door and windows; where he knew who ordered office supplies, who cleaned the bathroom, who brought in donuts every Monday; where he himself turned out the lights at the end of each day.

“Heya, tiger!”

Paul jumps. It's Jed, looming in the doorway of Paul's cube, the sheen of his black suit particularly tacky beneath the fluorescent lights. He shakes a bag of chips and bellows, “Pauly wanna cracker?”

Paul struggles to form a reply, but Jed moves on too quickly. Paul hears Jed, now back in his own cube, repeating his taunt—Pauly wanna cracker?—and then chuckling to himself.

Well, what could Pauly—Paul—have said anyway? He detests all of the collection guys, meaty fellows who make disturbing phone calls, cracking their knuckles before picking up the phone. (Their cubes surround Paul's, and sometimes he finds himself cowering in his chair.) No, he does not like those guys, and most of all he dislikes Jed. Beefy and black-haired, Jed's the kind of guy who grimaces when he means to grin. He is also, evidently, the kind of guy who would steal something from a colleague's desk. He would. He *did*. A new box of paperclips. Off Paul's desk. Two weeks ago.

A whisper-thin, bluish figure flies past Paul's cubicle, pale hand waving. Eileen Biddle. She must be embroiled in a particularly urgent problem; otherwise, she would have stopped to say hello. Eileen is one of the old-timers, a thirty-year veteran of the bank and just about the nicest lady you could ever meet. Paul didn't tell Eileen about the paperclip incident, but he can imagine what she would have said. “It's not for us to judge.” Or perhaps, “Be patient. God's not finished with Jed yet.” Paul's not much of a churchgoer himself, but he appreciates Eileen's sensibility, her delicate blend of compassion and righteousness.

His wife, Chrissie, is another story. Paul told her about the paperclip incident the day it happened: how he’d retrieved two boxes of paperclips from the supply closet; how one went missing when he went to the bathroom; how, later, he noticed one unopened box of paperclips on

Jed's desk. “Why would he do that?” Paul asked Chrissie. “The supply closet's just down the hall. Did he think I wouldn't—”

Chrissie smirked. “Wouldn’t what?” Paul stared at her. Helpless. Hopeless. “Take it outside?” Chrissie continued. “Show him who’s boss? Give him what he’s got coming to him?”

She was baiting him, waiting for him to protest that it was just a box of paperclips.

When he didn’t respond, Chrissie shrugged. “Anyway, it’s not like they were really yours. They’re the bank’s, right?”

“It’s still wrong,” Paul retorted. “You don't just go into someone's office and take something off his desk.”

“So, he got up to get paperclips and saw an extra box on your desk. You weren't there, so he took one.” Chrissie yawned. “What’s the big deal? Stranger things have happened.”

Paul dropped it with Chrissie, but the stolen paperclips consumed him for days. There was nothing he could do about it. If he said something to Jed, that would be it. He'd only increase his chances of becoming the butt of jokes, the target of pranks, just like when his friends all grew faster, got bigger, went out for football while Paul switched to track. Look at pretty Pauly, they'd say, in his pretty little track suit. He protested at first, but things only grew worse. His friends stuffed catalogues from Napoleon's Menswear into his locker and hid ads for boy's clothing in his backpack. After that, he never argued, never defended himself, never told them track was just as hard, if not harder, than football, never told them how much the coach pushed him, never told them he didn't mind because it felt so good, running, running until his chest ached, running until his calves burned. Long distance. Alone. It was pure joy. Well, not exactly pure. Always there was the sliver of shame, the uselessness of being a track star in football country. Still, he’d loved

it. He looks up from the computer printout and stares at a gray cubicle wall. Why did he ever stop?

Paul shifts in his chair, slides his elbows onto his desk, and presses his palms against his temples, staring down at the printout. He should start getting up early in the mornings, running again. He really should.

“Hi, Paul.” Mary Lynn Talbot trills her fingernails on the plastic edge of his gray cubicle. “Could you spare just a sec?”

“Sure, sure,” Paul says, sitting up straight and marking a random line on the printout, as if afraid of losing his place.

Mary Lynn takes a seat in the one extra chair in his office and folds her large hands in her lap. Mary Lynn is not the least bit fat, but with her broad shoulders and brazen height—her knobby chin would graze his forehead if he ever dared to stand so close—she feels oppressive to him. Adding to Mary Lynn's magnitude are her bright red and purple suits; her flashy scarves and chunky gold jewelry; her dark, bluntly cut hair.

“As I'm sure you know,” Mary Lynn says, “your six-month review is coming up.” She pauses and smiles, her cheekbones jutting from her skin like fists. “Now, before we get there, I want to know what *you*,” she pauses, unclasping and reclasping her large hands, “think about how things are going here.”

Paul nods and starts to clasp his own hands, then stops and grabs his Cross pen instead, tapping it lightly on the desk.

“So tell me, Paul. Are you comfortable with things here, are you still getting your feet wet, where are you at?”

Paul nods again, trying not to get distracted by the bright yellow scarf draped across Mary Lynn's left shoulder like a penalty flag. “Well, I'm sure it's going to be awhile before I'm familiar with your entire operation, but I feel like I'm getting a handle on things,” Paul says and wants to kick himself. *Your* operation? Why did he say *your*? Mary Lynn opens her mouth, but Paul cuts in. “Every day, I'm learning more about our business. First Bank’s, that is. Our business here at First Bank.”

Mary Lynn stares at him for just a moment too long. “I see. Well, why don't you think about this some more, Paul. Let's do the review next week. I'll have Caroline contact you with a time.” Mary Lynn stands and peers down at Paul, his printout. “You know, Paul, I understand what it's like to start a new job in a new industry, to get thrown into the fire. You let me know if there's anything you have questions about, anything you'd like to go over. Okay, Paul?”

“That's awfully nice of you, Mary Lynn,” Paul says. “I certainly will.”

As she leaves, Paul notices he is no longer tapping the pen; he is clenching it like a dagger. Come on, he chides himself, what's the big deal? A six-month review sounds like standard operating procedure, right? Sure. Still, after Housman's, it's easy to get worked up, feel paranoid.

Nine years he'd been with that store. He'd started on the floor, selling men's clothing, and worked his way up, finally managing the customer service department at Housman's flagship store. Then a big national chain bought Housman's, and one thing they thought they could do without was quality customer service—which, in Paul's opinion, is not something you should skimp on. Of course, Chrissie wasn't too surprised when Paul came home with a box and a severance check. Housman's, she’d always told him, was a dinosaur—and we know what happened to the dinosaurs.

Two weeks later, Chrissie found a part-time job as a telemarketer, just to help out. A few weeks after that, Paul took this—the first job that was offered to him. Now his world is First Bank; his territory, the elite checking accounts. It's his job to fish through the archaic computer system and push mountains of printouts around, to monitor the existing elite accounts and search for First Bank customers who might be eligible for one. The carrot for customers is no-fee accounts with perks like complimentary designer checks, safety deposit boxes, and investment services; the catch is that customers must maintain minimum balances of five, ten and fifteen thousand dollars for their respective Bronze, Silver, and Gold Checking Accounts.

The job might sound prestigious, but Paul is not allowed to truly interact with the elite account holders. If a customer is not maintaining the required minimum balance, Paul must send a series of firm but polite form letters reminding the customer of the agreement that was signed, the penalties that might be incurred. If the customer doesn't respond, Paul must write a memo to Mary Lynn detailing the problem and the actions he has taken. After years of working for a department store and dealing with customers in the flesh, face-to-face, every single day, Paul has been distilled to a disembodied signature on the bank's ivory stationery, to anemic initials on memos to Mary Lynn.

Paul checks the clock. 2:55. Chrissie should be home by now, even if she did something after work. Paul fully expected Chrissie would quit her job when he started at First Bank, but she says she doesn't mind working a little and that they can use the money. The way he figures it, though, Chrissie spends all her earnings, and then some, on haircuts, manicures, tans, waxes, pedicures; on over-priced beauty products; on lunch dates and happy hours with girlfriends. Paul finds her pastimes, and her priorities, somewhat disturbing. Unbecoming, maybe, for a married woman. Four years now they've been married; two years they've lived in a neighborhood with

tricycles and basketball goals in the driveways. And still Paul is waiting for his wife to settle down.

He starts to reach for the phone, desperate to talk to someone. He can pass a whole day here and not engage in a real conversation. But as his fingers graze the cold gray receiver, the phone buzzes at him—an internal call.

"Hello?"

"Paul? Caroline. I'm calling to schedule your … performance review. Next Friday, three to four?"

Paul doesn't have to check; the planner he bought upon starting this job has stayed almost entirely blank.

"Paul?"

"Sorry, I, uh … yes, that would be fine."

As soon as he hangs up the phone, he picks it up again.

"Hey," Paul says when Chrissie finally answers. "I was just thinking about you, just calling to say hello."

"Oh. Hi."

"Did you have a good day at work?

"Sensational," she says, the word whistling through the slight gap between her two front teeth. He can picture her rolling her eyes. "So, what's new—not another crime against office products?"

"Ha ha. No, same old, same old. But I do have my six-month review next week."

"Geez, has it been six months already? When?"

"Huh?"

“The review. When is it scheduled for?”

“Next Friday. Three to four p.m.” As soon as he says it, he can hear how peculiar that time sounds.

“Late on a Friday afternoon? Isn't that when they fire people?”

“Huh. Well, I certainly didn't get that impression. It's just whatever time Mary Lynn's secretary found on her calendar.”

Chrissie doesn't respond. Paul wants to defend himself, but what Mary Lynn said was true—it has been difficult to start a new job in a new industry. Everything at the bank is encoded, every program, every policy swathed in a secret name or number, unintelligible to the outside world. And the people at the bank act in code, too, so much so that he doesn't know if Mary Lynn's stopping by was a friendly heads-up or a warning. Maybe it was her way of telling him she's noticed that he hasn't quite gotten the hang of things, that there have been oversights, errors.

“You there?” Chrissie barks.

“Yeah.”

“I should probably let you get back to work. I'm kind of busy myself.”

Paul hangs up, wondering why he even bothered. It’s just that in his mind, Chrissie plays tricks on him. When he thinks of his wife, or when he says “my wife” in conversation, he tends to picture someone different than his real wife, someone that looks like Chrissie, blonde and slightly round, but someone who acts more like the girl he dated for two years. The girlfriend Chrissie could be a spitfire at times—but, just as often, she'd turn sweet, soft. The real Chrissie has lost all subtlety. Threw a plate at him last month when he complained about the dirty dishes. Is the Queen of I Told You So. Knows best—about everything.

Time for a break. Paul stands and discovers that his left leg is asleep. He hadn't even noticed. He puts some extra weight on it as he shuffles out of his cube and enters the hallway, a narrow tunnel of gray walls just high enough to prevent normal people (that is, everyone except Mary Lynn and Jed) from looking over them. Walking past the collection guys, Paul tries to affect a normal stride and is relieved to get by without incident.

By the third turn, his leg is no longer tingling. He makes one final turn, heading toward the buzz and brightness of the large, open room that houses the customer service girls. Fifteen or so women of varying ages sit at their desks, headsets in place, fielding complaints from customers and answering questions from the tellers and loan officers downstairs, fingers click-clacking on computer keyboards as they look up numbers, credit accounts, adjust balances. Paul has to walk through this room to get anywhere—the break room, the bathroom, the back elevator. Like Paul, the girls are bodiless, yet they are not alone. They pass around plates of brownies or bowls of candy, roll their eyes at each other while on the phone, crack jokes in between calls.

As usual, Paul's eyes seek out a friendly face—Eileen. She's at her desk, her powder-blue cardigan in its eternal resting place around her shoulders. Unfortunately, she is on the phone. As he passes by her, Paul notices that she looks concerned or confused, her eyes squinting behind the enormous, square frames of her tortoiseshell glasses, yet her voice croons into the telephone, patient and kind.

Once, on his way out, Paul came up behind a few of the younger girls waiting for the elevator and heard them giggling about Eileen's blue eye shadow. Sure, with her polyester slacks and feathered brown hair, Eileen might look old-fashioned, but so what? Paul wished to confront the girls; instead, he’d darted down the stairs, ashamed. If the tables had been turned—if it had

been Eileen who had overheard someone making fun of Paul—she never would have stood for it. She would have said something like “God made us all different on purpose.” If especially affronted, Eileen would have then pulled her sweater closer around her and walked away.

Paul hits the bathroom and then walks back through the girls, heading for the break room. Several of the girls are now huddled in the middle of the room, discussing who knows what. Paul breezes by them, nodding his head, but he may as well be a ghost; he garners not one look, not a single hello. Eileen is still on the phone, but Penny-Anne waves and smiles at Paul, her silver bun bobbing. Yep, he's a real hit with the fifty-plus crowd.

In the break room, the light on the coffee maker burns red, and half a pot sits there, waiting. God only knows how old it is, but he'll drink it. He douses the coffee with off-brand sweetener and powdered creamer, then leans back against the counter for a moment. The walls of the break room are lined with posters from the bank's latest campaign: *You Come First at First.* Ah, yes, First Bank has it down—the pretense of the personal touch.

Eileen enters, pulling her glasses off and letting them rest, suspended by a cord, against her small chest. Closer to her throat, on a chain as delicate as a spider web, hangs a gold cross. The cross is the only jewelry she wears, and as far as he can tell, a wedding band has never graced her ring finger. She could be a widow, but there are no telltale signs, no framed pictures of grandkids on her desk.

“Why, hello, Paul! I see you're just where I'm at, looking for that little jolt to get you through 'til five.”

Stopping in front of the vending machine, Eileen giggles. “Every day I tell myself I'm going to get through without these. Every day.” She drops a few coins into the vending machine, punches in a number, and then collects her Sugar Babies. “And every day, right around 3:30,

here I am," she smiles, waving the shiny red and yellow bag. "Well, we all have our vices, don't we?"

"Yes ma'am," Paul agrees, trying to keep his voice even, normal. He's seen Eileen's afternoon routine before, and it always amuses him that she goes for the flashy Sugar Babies—and giggles about it like a naughty child.

"So, how's your day, Eileen?"

"Just fine, can't complain. Well, I could," she laughs her high, scratchy laugh, "but I'll choose not to. How 'bout you? How are things going?"

Paul takes a sip of his coffee, muddy swill made all the worse by acrid sweetener and the slight aftertaste of Styrofoam. "Not bad."

Eileen steps closer. "Are you all right, Paul?"

"Oh, you know, just one of those days."

"You poor thing. Well, we all have them, don't we?" Eileen reaches out and pats Paul on the shoulder. "You're doing jut fine here, you are," she says and then slides her glasses into place on her nose. "Now, me and my Babies had better get back to the phone before we get ourselves in trouble, but you hang in there, okay?"

After Eileen leaves, Paul stares into the coffee maker's knowing red eye and clears his throat twice. He then downs the rest of his coffee and tosses the cup into the trash.

As he walks back through the girls, he sees that Eileen is on the phone again. She smiles at him and taps a finger to her chin. Sometimes, when he's walking through this room, he thinks about junior high, when he was every girl's favorite crush, when he'd walk through the cafeteria, nodding and smiling at girls whose cheeks colored one by one. Mostly, though, he pretends the girls are his girls—that they work for him. At Housman's, the girls at the service desk dealt with

routine returns and exchanges, but they'd come to Paul with sensitive or complicated matters. “Mr. Jensen,” they would say, “sorry to bother you, but …” Paul would listen to the girls and then tell them how to handle a particular problem, or sometimes he’d take care of it himself. A slightly embarrassed but defiant mother might come into his office, sit in one of two guest chairs, and explain how she’d paid $26.99 for little Jimmy’s portraits—only to discover that his fly was undone in every last picture! She might then look Paul in the eye, appealing to his sensibility. “A photographer, a professional photographer, should have noticed that, don't you think? Your store can’t expect us to pay for portraits we can't use, can they?”

He'd liked that: Can your store do such and such, will your store do so-and-so? And he'd liked how the girls called him “Mr. Jensen”—none of this “Paul” business.

Back in his cube, Paul resurrects the computer printout from earlier. Mulvaney. Yes. The Mulvaneys should move up; the Mulvaneys should be rewarded for their prosperity, their success. The Mulvaneys should be promoted from a Silver to a Gold Checking Account. He must send them a letter. *Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Mulvaney* …

Paul comes to with a start; he has dozed off at his desk. He checks his watch: 4:42. It seems like the last time he looked it was around 4:20, 4:25 maybe. His cheeks burn with shame—how many people walked by?

He looks at his computer, at the printout on his desk, and then back at his computer. He starts typing, raggedly, continuing his letter to the Mulvaneys, but he has to stop and reread the letter from the beginning, then backtrack even further and consult the printout. When he finishes the letter he is surprised to see that it's well after five. He hurriedly straightens up his desk, then slips on his jacket and leaves. All of the girls' desks are empty, even Eileen's. She often stays

late, unlike the younger girls who shut down their computers at 4:59. Eileen must have had a meeting or something; she's very involved in her church.

Paul walks the six blocks to the parking garage, his pace matching the brisk wind. It's gray out, cloudy. And nearly 5:40. Chrissie will not be pleased, but at least he's on his way now. He takes the elevator up to five, where his white Corolla sits alone, as if abandoned. Paul unlocks the door, climbs in, starts the engine, and notices the fuel gauge is on E.

Spiraling down through the parking garage, he plays a game. Can he make it across the length of the parking garage, to the next ramp, without pressing the gas? To do so he must resist the urge to brake at the bottom of each ramp. It makes him feel a little reckless. When he finally moves out onto the street, he watches the gauge, hoping it will creep up. Nope, not the slightest budge.

He thinks he remembers a gas station on the fringe of downtown. But will it be open? He hesitates as he nears an entrance to the freeway. He could chance it, run on empty, but if the car dies on the way home and he has to call for help, Chrissie will go ballistic. The blocks tick by, and then he sees a round orange sign up ahead. The sign is lit, a relief.

Caught at a red light, he sighs. There's nothing worse than being stuck at a light when there are no other cars around. If he were a different sort of man, maybe he would just go, run the light. Instead, he waits, tapping the wheel as he looks around. No office buildings here. To his left, a few pieces of trash blow by a convenience store with bars on the windows. To his right, a warehouse stands in shambles and, further up the street, a dismal cinderblock building boasts a large neon sign: Lucky's Tavern. Yeah, sure. Real lucky.

He turns his attention back to the gas station, just a couple blocks away; he’s anxious to be done with it, to be on the freeway heading home. When the light turns green he takes off, no

longer worried about conserving gas. As he zips down the street he notices a woman coming out of Lucky's—wait—can't be. Paul slams on the brakes, looks over his shoulder, throws the car in reverse, and zigs backwards, bumping against the curb in front of Lucky's.

It is Eileen, looking odd.

He throws the car in park, leans across the seat, and unrolls the window. Eileen's large square glasses have disappeared, her blouse is loose from her slacks, and her brown hair is blowing every which way in the wind.

“Eileen!” he shouts, leaning across the seat. “Eileen!”

Eileen staggers slowly toward him, eyes squinting. Still several feet from his car, she hunches over, lips pursed.

“Eileen, are you all right?” Paul yells.

“I'm just out here getting some air!” she answers shrilly.

A stocky man with a beard emerges from Lucky's and slings an arm around Eileen. “Everything okay out here, old girl?”

Paul clutches at his seatbelt release, ready to spring free should he need to rescue Eileen. “Eileen, can I—”

Eileen waves her hand dismissively, but Paul doesn’t leave. She turns on him then, shouting, “Go home, Paul! Just go home!”

The man says something unintelligible, then raises his arm and swats Eileen on her backside. Eileen squeals and slaps the man on the chest, chastising him. But even Paul can see she is only pretending, teasing. He rips away from the curb.

Minutes later on the freeway, as big, messy drops of rain begin to splatter the windshield, Paul remembers having passed through an intersection—was the light green? He doesn't know, but he knows he was speeding. Still is. Shouldn't be.

Finally, coming off the freeway, he slows down, turning onto one street and then another and another and another, passing squat rambler after squat rambler, each colorless in the gray evening, the rain. And then up ahead is his house, no prettier, no uglier than the rest, nothing to mark it as his, as special, except for the doorway. Chrissie is forever forgetting to turn on the porch light. His house: The home of the darkened doorway.

As he pulls into the driveway, the car dies. He barely manages to get the rear end up on the driveway and out of the street.

Shit. Chrissie is really going to get on his ass about this. Paul sits in the car, the rain on the windshield all but erasing his house, wondering if it's even worthwhile to go inside. He's late already and the car's out of gas, which will mean a trip to the gas station later—no, not one trip but two: one in Chrissie's car to fill up the gas can and another to fill up his car. And of course Chrissie will insist on accompanying him, even though she hates to drive in the rain, because she doesn't like him to drive her car and because she'll want to be by his side, complaining all the way. They'll have to wait and do it after dinner, he guesses. Dinner—damn it. Why didn't he call to say he'd be late?

If only he could tell her, if only he could make her understand, about the bank and its codes; about Mary Lynn, half-Amazon, half-automaton; about Eileen, half-angel, half … well, he doesn’t even know. About the younger girls who don’t see him. About Jed and his taunts.

Jed. How easy it was for her to excuse him.

He won't go in. He'll back out of the driveway right now, take off somewhere, find a bar, stay out all night, call in sick tomorrow. That will show them all. Call in sick for the next ten days, maybe. Screw the performance review and its ominous Friday afternoon time slot. Maybe he'll stay away for so long that Mary Lynn will have to send him a series of firm but polite letters, reminding him of the agreement he signed, the penalties he will incur. It would be worth it. To not have to face Eileen. He cannot bear her acting the same, day in, day out, while only he knows the truth, her deception. *Church group, my ass. Bible study at Lucky's tonight, Eileen?* If he has to witness Eileen pulling that sweater of hers in closer and saying, “Well, we're all God's children. We're all equal in His eyes,” he will lose it.

In the dark, he grasps the cool hard metal of the starter key and then freezes as he remembers. The car is dead. He is stuck, and the longer he sits here in the driveway, the madder Chrissie will be. No explanation, no reason, no plea will soften her rage.

He unfastens his seat belt, grabs the keys, opens the door, and steps out. The rain hits him square. Suddenly the porch light blinks on; Chrissie must have heard his car. He tries to picture her, not the wife he prefers to imagine but his real wife, on the other side of the door, ready to tan his hide. He hears the deadbolt unlatch, and he drops to the ground, lettings his keys fly, assuming the starting position.

The front door cracks open like a gun, and he's off. Running. Through neighbors' yards, down the street to where he came from, around a corner, past one stop sign and then another, on and on. Long distance. Alone. Running in his suit and dress shoes like some kind of madman. Half-blind, soaked through, he pushes himself, his body burning in the rain.

There will be no euphemisms; Chrissie will lay it out: “You've lost your fucking mind.” She will berate him, she will interrogate him, but he will not be bothered. He will let it all wash over him.

Well, he will say to his wife, *stranger things have happened.* Yes, stranger things. She is a stranger. And everyone. Stranger.

Chance Encounter

Paulina Shur
Address: 10 Starboard Way,
Latham, NY 12110

As always during rush hour, passengers on the subway train were so crammed, there was hardly any room to move an elbow. The train's abrupt stops shoved them into each other, and in order to exit, they had to thrust their way through the crowd. Such a ride could result in torn buttons, broken eggs in women's bags, or, worse, torn stockings. Stockings were so expensive, hardly any woman could afford to throw them away. If they had a run, she could mend it, which required great dexterity and time. A hole was hopeless to fix. On top of it all, some men had free rein to touch women's private parts, especially their behinds. Women were either too embarrassed to say anything, or too practical to have any illusions about the outcome of their protests. The crowd was discontented or indifferent; the faces looked weary, fatigued.

A young woman around thirty years old was standing face to face--almost lip to lip--with a man around the same age. Feeling a little awkward by such closeness, they tried to avert their eyes from each other and suppress their smiles, but to no avail: something attracted them to one another. "It's a chemical reaction, that's all," sings Cyd Charisse in Cole Porter's *Silk Stockings*.

Suddenly, an older man standing behind the woman touched her leg.

"Take your dirty hand off me," the woman said angrily.

"Who wants to touch you, lady, just look at your ugly mug," the man retorted, his hand steadily moving up her leg.

The woman's face flushed. Seeing her frustration, the young man said threateningly: "Lady said take your dirty hands off her!"

"Are you her husband, or what?" asked the "abuser," a little startled.

"Yes, I'm her husband," responded the young man without any hesitation. "And you just wait till we get out; I'll give you a good beating."

He was strong and muscular; the "abuser," on the other hand, looked shabby and feeble; he reeked of alcohol which made it apparent he'd already had a very long "happy hour" with his boon companions. He reluctantly withdrew his hand. The woman smiled to her defender; he smiled back. They moved to the exit at the same time.

"I am Andrew Goncharov," he introduced himself when they were outside the train.

"I'm Tanya. Tanya Ustinova. Thank you for saving me."

"Not at all. What I'm thinking . . . We should get married first thing in the morning."

"Married?" she exclaimed, astounded by such non sequitur.

"Yes, married. Didn't we just tell this man that we were husband and wife? We have to stand behind our words, don't we?"

"I guess so," she said smiling.

"And since we're in love, it won't be a marriage of convenience, right?"

"Right," she said after a moment of hesitation.

"Well, then, let's marry first thing in the morning."

"Couldn't it be second thing in the morning?" she joked.

"Fortunately, not," he said smiling. "I'm leaving town tomorrow at 9 AM. For a six-month geological expedition. For my work."

"Well, since the judge's office opens at 10 AM, we'll have to wait six months," she said with relief. She still couldn't tell if the whole conversation was a joke.

"I guess so," Andrew said disappointedly. "I am afraid you'll forget all about me in six months; after all, we only met sixteen minutes ago . . . Unless . . . unless we write each other every day."

"I like it, she said. "It will give us a chance to get better acquainted with each other."

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed. "Don't you remember Lady Bracknell's opinion on the subject?" "I'm not in favor of long engagements . . . "

Tanya joined in: "They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage," they finished in unison, and laughed.

Suddenly they felt connected; they felt close to each other. Of course, nobody has ever lost out by quoting "*The Importance of Being Ernest*."

By talking and laughing, they reached her nine-story apartment building.

"What's your apartment number?" Andrew asked.

"Thirteen," Tanya answered.

"My lucky number," he said. "I'll write my first letter tonight, as soon as I've finished packing."

"I'll write my first letter tomorrow night," she responded. "I want to know about your hobbies, college, friends, favorite books, movies, poets . . . "

"I'll try. I want you to describe your feelings, emotions, thoughts, and, of course, your hobbies, college, friends, favorite books, movies, composers," he continued their game.

"I'll try," she smiled.

"Till October, then," he said. "A perfect month for our wedding. Weddings used to be in the fall, after the harvest. Our harvest will be plentiful: one hundred eighty letters from me to you, and one hundred eighty letters from you to me. Only wait for me."

“All right,” she said. “Till October. I’ll wait for you.”

They both knew they were paraphrasing a famous war poem, and he started to recite it, jokingly:

“Wait for me, and I'll return,
Only wait for me.
Through the winter, spring, and fall,
You must wait for me.
Even if you're weary to wait,
You should wait for me.
Even if all hope is lost,
Wait, please wait for me.”

He interrupted himself, kissed her, and walked away. It surprised her how much she liked his kiss. She stood still as if trying to retain its taste. She even touched her lips, which reminded her of the old Soviet comedy, *A Kiss From Mary Pickford*. A man who has no luck with the ladies is kissed by the famous Hollywood star, and he is so thrilled, he circles a spot on his cheek that Mary Pickford touched.

Tanya laughed and entered her apartment building. When she came in, the kitchen table was set for dinner; her father was cutting bread.

"You're a little late," he said smiling, and quickly turned the range off. When they sat at the table, she told him about her encounter. He listened attentively, then asked for this young fellow's name.

“Andrew,” he repeated nonchalantly. "Do you really think he'd write to you every day for six months and then marry you?"

"Yes, I do," she responded, surprised by his doubts.

Then they had their usual conversation: she told him about her day at work, and he told her about his day at home. Actually, he spent most of the day standing in lines for food. Only early in the morning could one buy dairy products like milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, or eggs, so

the dairy shop was his first stop. Lucky were those who had retired parents. After bringing these products home, he went to another store to buy potatoes and sauerkraut; then he stood in lines for meat, cheese, and bologna. Thank God bread wasn't in shortage. A loaf of rye bread was the last item he bought. At 4 PM, he started making supper.

Before moving to his daughter's apartment, Peter Ustinov lived in a village with his wife, Lucy. Both were school teachers. Tanya left the house for college right after high school--she was accepted to Leningrad University. There Tanya got married, got a divorce a year later, got a job, and got a Ph.D. in biology. She and her parents stayed in touch writing letters and visiting with each other. When Peter and Lucy retired, they enjoyed free time, reading, walking, and socializing with their neighbors. When Lucy suddenly died from a heart attack, Peter's life changed. Somehow, his free time expanded, while his interests shrank. A strange feeling started to creep up inside of him, and he knew the word for it: loneliness. He'd never imagined he'd have something in common with this old Professor from the Swedish movie *Wild Strawberries* that they'd seen on one of their visits to Tanya's.

Peter and Lucy couldn't make head or tail of it. The Professor was having dreams in which his dead wife blamed him for her own adultery and death and his son for all of his own mental and financial troubles. In one of the dreams, an unpleasant looking man informed the Professor that a jury found him guilty, and the verdict was capital punishment. Capital punishment? Death? To Lucy's and Peter's surprise, it was loneliness. Loneliness!? Of course, they knew, from reading newspapers and attending obligatory party meetings, that in a capitalist society man is a wolf to his fellow man. *Homo homini lupus*. They had an image of a pack of lonely wolves howling in their dens. What a depressing society must it be if loneliness seems worse than death. No wonder this Professor was so upset. Thank God in our society loneliness doesn't exist: a man is a friend,

comrade, and brother to his fellow man. One for all, and all for one. *Umus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno*.

All of these topics had been discussed at supper time. Tanya just said that she loved the movie and that tomorrow she was taking them to see another foreign movie, *The Road*, or *La Strada* in Italian. Peter and Lucy said enough was enough. "You go see this Fellini movie with your friends. We want to see a new Soviet comedy, *Bootleggers*. They laughed non-stop at the comic situations, the splendid acting of the three comedians, and their skillful use of the gags coming from the silent movies. It was a relief to watch *Bootleggers* after *Wild Strawberries*.

It was only after Lucy's death that Peter began to understand the anxiety of this Swedish Professor. It turned out that loneliness finds you no matter where you live, the Soviet Union or Sweden; that it stays with you forever and ever, becoming your friend, comrade, and brother; and that in a way, loneliness is like death: since nobody cares about your existence, you almost feel like a non-entity.

It was dead-silent in the morning when Peter awoke and didn't have anyone to say "hi" to. It was even worse at night, with not a single sound coming from outside. Nobody cared about how well or how tired he looked. Nobody brought him chicken noodle soup or hot tea with lemon when he had a cold. Nobody was interested in his subtle feelings about the colors of fall leaves, or his thoughts about a poem that wondered if any human being is capable of truly, deeply understanding the soul of another human being. Gradually, Peter stopped shaving, cleaning, cooking, or fixing things that broke; he stopped going out at night, for fear of slipping on the ice or having a stroke or heart attack on the street--nobody would even notice he didn't come home. He moved to one room where he slept, ate, read, and watched TV. Five months after her mother's death, Tanya came to visit him. She was horrified: her father looked ten years older.

“Dad, pack. You are moving in with me,” she said. He stared at her for a second, then ran to pack. He threw his belongings in a suitcase pell-mell as if he were afraid she might change her mind. She noticed.

“We have time,” she said. “We won’t leave until everything is taken care of.”

Tanya lived in a tiny one-bedroom apartment. It was only through the living room adjacent to the bedroom that the kitchenette, bathroom, and small entrance hall could be reached. Father wanted to sleep in the living room, but Tanya convinced him, employing a little white lie, that it would be much more convenient for her to have the living room as her bedroom and office: sometimes she worked late at night and needed to go to the kitchen to make tea, or she had friends come over and stay late.

After Peter settled into his room, he explored the neighborhood and soon became friends with some of the neighbors, particularly retirees. When the weather was good, they played chess, checkers, or card games in a small courtyard; he also took long walks along Leningrad’s streets, canals, palaces, and plazas with columns or cathedrals. In the winter, they got together at each other's apartments, or went to the movies that were cheaper during the daytime. Of course, almost every day’s routine included standing in lines for groceries. Sometimes they went their separate ways, and sometimes one would buy bread for everybody, another one tea and jam, and yet another one meat. That saved them time and, most importantly, eased the joint pain in their legs that worsened from standing in long lines in the cold. In late afternoons, Peter cooked, set the table, and ate supper with Tanya. He couldn’t wish for a better life.

"Call no man happy until the hour of his death, for who knows what pains the gods may yet have in store for him while he lives," said King Solon in the book of Greek myths Peter was reading. The idea was worth thinking about, but apparently this B.C. guy had no concept of life’s

relativity: loneliness versus companionship; cultural and economic bareness of a countryside versus the richness of a big city; a feeling that you are useful, that someone likes your company, that your life has meaning--all versus the feeling that you are a non-entity. In spite of Solon's wise observation, he, Peter Nikitin, could call himself a happy man.

When Tanya came home from work, she quickly looked through the mail on the small round table by the entrance, pleasantly anticipating Andrew's letter. However, the mail had no letter from him. Apparently, she thought lightly, Andrew had no time to write, what with packing, taking care of everything, and saying good-bye to his friends. She was slightly disappointed, not by the absence of a letter, but by the unfulfilled promise. For her, promises were not meant to be broken. Suddenly, she realized that she too hadn't written Andrew the promised letter. She felt embarrassed, and after dinner, sat down at her desk.

Nothing eventful had happened in the past two days, yet, her writing about small, almost imperceptible changes in nature; conversations with friends and colleagues; people she met; and a book she was reading reflected her humorous or thoughtful view on a day in life. She wrote two more letters on the following days, and then waited for Andrew's letters. There was none. Day after day, she came home from work, looked through the mail, and then went to the kitchen to eat. She wasn't hungry, but her father was waiting. How she wished now she had her own room where she could close the door, throw herself onto the bed, and think about her situation: here she was, in love with a stranger who forgot all about her. It was that simple, yet she found it incredulous. She would understand the change of heart after a month or even a week, but not after their very first encounter, during which Andrew talked about love and marriage. The least he could do, thought Tanya, was to write just one letter, saying that he didn't want to continue

their relationship. That would be civil, polite. But he didn't write that one letter. Tanya felt hurt, insulted, even humiliated by his neglect.

“Are there any letters for me?” she asked her father, impatiently looking through the mail one day.

"I put all your mail on this table, everything," he answered, slightly surprised.

She started coming home late, wandering around, mixing with crowds, noticing young couples hurrying somewhere, or men presenting little bouquets of snowdrops to their dates. Her heart was filled with bitterness and sadness for her own lost paradise.

Finally, she decided to learn the truth. She went to the telegraph, gave a girl at the front desk the name and address of Andrew’s geological expedition, and asked to connect her. In a few minutes, she was talking to Andrew’s office manager. Tanya asked him about Andrew, hoping to hear that Andrew got ill, or was far away, in the woods, where the mail couldn't come.

“Andrew? Oh, he is doing fine. The guys work in the field all day long; then at night, they return to the base, eat dinner, sit around the fire, and sing songs. Andrew plays the guitar. Should I tell him who called?”

“Oh, no, no, thank you,” she said, and hung up.

She came home, told her father she wasn’t hungry, and went to bed. Peter tiptoed to his room and stayed there for the whole evening. In the morning, Tanya drank two cups of strong coffee and went on a long walk. It was unusually cold and windy. Struggling with the wind helped her allay her pain and anger. She didn’t know how many hours she walked across bridges and along canals, wide or narrow streets, and plazas. When she came home, she found her father sitting at the kitchen table, apparently worried about her, and a piece of paper with her friends’ names: they had been calling all day long, concerned with her sudden disappearance. She was

hungry and ate everything her father cooked, to his delight. Then she called her friends and arranged to meet with them. She promised herself not to ever think of Andrew again.

On the surface, life "after Andrew" was the same as life "before Andrew." Usually, on weekends, Tanya and her friends went backpacking to the Karelian peninsula woods--beautiful, clean woods with hiking trails, hills and meadows, rivers, lakes, and streams; there they picked berries and mushrooms, canoed and fished, and walked, hiked, and swam. It used to be a Finnish territory that the Russians invaded in 1939 and annexed in 1940, under the pretext that Russia needed a buffer zone for Leningrad, which was only 32 kilometers from the Finnish border. After War World II it became a favorite destination for backpackers. Since nobody took good care of the woods, they were slowly deteriorating. The Russians joked that their government should return the peninsula to the Finns for about ten years, and then take it back, cleaned and restored.

There were also museum exhibitions and theatre performances; movies and concerts; gatherings at someone's apartment, with late night tea and heated discussions about every subject concerning Russian life; evenings of poetry reading in small cafes; walks in the city during the "white nights," when sunsets were so late and sunrises so early, the skies never got dark . . . Yet, nothing excited Tanya; she didn't even notice how the shy, soft colors of the spring turned to bright, luscious colors of the summer; everything seemed to be drab, dull, and even colorless.

Viewers of famous black-and-white movies, such as *Casablanca* or *Brief Encounter*, don't perceive them as colorless, because of the *chiaroscuro* effect: a gradation in hundreds of nuances of white, gray, and black; but if well-known color movies, like *The Red Balloon* or *Chicago*, were stripped of colors, then only three washed-out white, gray, and black colors would

remain. The movies would not only lose their aesthetic and cinematographic qualities, but also an idea, meaning, and concept.

Stripped of color, becoming washed-out black and gray, Tanya's world now signified the loss of joy, purpose, and meaning in her life.

Her friends felt that she was hiding something from them, and kept asking her what was wrong. Finally, she told them the whole story. They were shocked that she kept them in the dark for so long. They always shared with each other bad and good happenings, and helped each other in every way they could, not to mention listening, giving advice, and expressing compassion and empathy--just like in the movie *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears*. "Really, why have I kept it a secret from them?" Tanya wondered. Their reaction surprised her.

"You saw him once, for an hour, and you believed he was going to write you every day for six months, and then come back and marry you? You must be out of your mind!" (Alex)

"You think you are in love with a man? You are in love with a phantom! With a reflection in a pond! With an invention of love! You invented a romantic story, but your romantic character doesn't exist!" (Victor)

"Thank God this guy's got brains! He understood that you both were carried away. That's why he didn't start this crazy correspondence. Don't you realize he's done you a big favor?" (Natasha)

"I bet you don't even remember what he looks like, do you?" (Robert)

"Forget about him. Date some real guy, or just make love to someone. It helps." (Alice)

"You've had a brief street encounter. It's fun to flirt with a handsome guy for a few minutes. Your flirting lasted a little longer. No reason to take it so seriously." (Laura)

"Besides, he is the scum of the earth. Not to send you a single letter! He is not worth your little finger!" (Natasha)

"Well, I'm glad we all feel the same way. Now it's time to discuss an important issue -- our next vacation." (Sophie)

They usually took vacations in the fall, and fall was coming. They liked to take on a challenge, "test their mettle," as Shakespeare called it, and it was decided right there, at Tanya's place, to go to the Caucasian mountains. A few weeks later, carrying heavy tents and backpacks with food, water, sleeping bags, and ropes, they were climbing up snowy peaks, going down to summery valleys, and then climbing up again to different peaks. They were rewarded with breathtaking views, a sense of youth and strength in their bodies, and a feeling of comradeship that is always enhanced during such trips. It was so joyous, at the end of the day, to cook dinner on the fire, sit around it, and eat, talk, and sing.

They came back at the end of September. Tanya was glad to see her father; he looked at her inquisitively, as if asking: *are you ok*? She just smiled. She missed her work, too and got absorbed by it immediately. One morning, while eating breakfast, she heard on the radio that the rainy season was about to start: October has arrived. October! The word pierced through her heart. Six months have passed, she thought on the way to work and back, and nothing has changed, neither the intensity of her feelings nor her pain. And then she saw Andrew. She stopped and closed her eyes. *It's a mirage; I am getting ill*, she thought. When she opened her eyes, she saw Andrew coming toward her, smiling. Suddenly, rage surged through her. She remembered her sleepless nights, her waiting for his letters, her lonely walks, her anguish. She tried to pass him. He gently touched her arm.

"Tanya, have you forgotten me? I was afraid of that. It's me, Andrew. The one who provided you with exciting reading for one hundred and eighty days!"

Tanya stopped dead. She couldn't believe his mockery. "Get away from me!" she screamed. "I don't want to ever see you again!"

She quickly entered her apartment building and slammed the door. She ran upstairs as if she were afraid he'd follow her. He didn't. She stood by her apartment door, trying to catch her breath, then went outside. It was pouring rain; she didn't care: she was even glad the rain drops were mixing with her tears. When she approached her apartment building the next day, Andrew was there again.

"Why were you so upset yesterday? Have I hurt your feelings in my letters? If so, it was unintentional. I joke a lot."

The word "letters" stung her. "What letters?" She heard her voice suddenly becoming hoarse. "I didn't receive a single letter from you."

"It couldn't be. I wrote to you every day, as I promised. You only sent me three letters. I was absolutely thrilled, you write so well. But that was it. Just three letters in the first week. I continued writing without you ever responding."

"It's a lie. One letter could be lost, but one hundred eighty letters couldn't be! You've never written anything. Go away."

"Why would I lie? Why would I come here if I didn't want to see you?"

"I don't know. I am asking myself why you've bothered to come, after six months of silence, after having broken your promise."

"Listen, Tanya, what if we come back to this 'letters' topic later, and now just take up where we left off six months ago? Aren't we in love? Shouldn't we plan the wedding?"

“I hate you!” she screamed. “Leave me alone! I don't ever want to see you again. If you come back, I'll call the police!”

He went pale; his lips trembled. He looked at Tanya with despair and disbelief, then walked away. Tanya would always remember that look.

When she came home, she was shivering. Her father asked her if she felt ill. She told him about Andrew and went to bed. She could hardly breathe; she felt she was suffocating; she tried to convince herself that she hated Andrew, but deep inside she knew the truth.

She called her friends and asked them to come over. When tea was served, Tanya told them about Andrew. Her friends’ reaction shocked her.

“I don’t believe you! Are you out of your mind? He's come back! What else do you need?” (Sophie)

“He didn't forget you. He was thinking about you for six months after only meeting you once! He truly loves you!” (Alex)

“Thank your lucky stars, and don’t push your luck!” (Alice)

“But what about the letters?” (Tanya)

“Who cares about these damned letters, you fool! Run to him. Tell him you love him. Get married. Have a child. Have a family!” (Laura)

“And then hire a detective to find out all about these letters.” (Victor)

“How could you sit here and coldly talk about it? It’s obvious you love him! Shouldn’t you follow your feelings? Your heart?” (Sophie)

“No,” said Tanya firmly. “You don't understand what these letters meant to both of us. Some of you had been dating for years, and still couldn't decide if you should marry each other. Andrew and I didn’t date. Those letters were in lieu of our dating. They were our outings

together; going to the movies; discussing new books; meeting each other's friends; simply talking. Now it's all lost. He broke his promise, and he lied to me. If he'd just told me that he didn't write, because he was lazy, or he felt he couldn't express himself in the letters, I'd understand. But he didn't tell the truth. He is a liar!" She broke into uncontrollable sobbing.

"You are making the biggest mistake in your life," said Laura.

"An irrevocable mistake," added Robert.

"God is giving you a life-time chance. Many people don't even get one. You have. If you lose it, you'll lose it forever," said Natasha.

After that evening, the darkness of the season became Tanya. Instead of going out with her friends, she started going to the movies alone. She'd always sit in the last row. Nobody could see her face or her tears. She didn't mind watching awkwardly optimistic, practically devoid of conflict Soviet movies where the good was fighting with the best, and both wanted only one thing: to make life in the Soviet Union even better than it had been.

Tanya remembered reading somewhere that during the Great Depression unemployed Americans spent their days at the movies, and the more care-free these movies had been, the better distraction they provided. Impeccably dressed and groomed, ebullient Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers danced heavenly and sang enchantingly about the lightness of life: if you fall, all you have to do is "pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again"; happiness and bliss replace troubles and woes once you start dancing with your girl "cheek to cheek"; and when you are invited to a party, you could always find in your closet the best quality "top hat, white tie and tails." Tanya wished she could see these movies--they'd have provided a great distraction for her, too--but they haven't been shown to the Soviet audiences.

Soviet people have been taught that there, in America, life is gloomy, drab, and hopeless; the rich exploit the poor; the poor go on strikes or die from starvation. Light, charming, joyful American musicals--*Top Hat, Swing Time,* or *Shall We Dance,* amongst many--contradicted this image.

Soviet people have also been taught that everything made in the Soviet Union is the best in the world, including music, dance, and film. But who could compete with Michael Kidd's creation of an American dance idiom--a blend of ballet, acrobatics, folk, jazz, and modern dance--in *Guys and Dolls, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers,* or *The Band Wagon*; with Agnes de Mille's invention of folk-dance and frontier life idioms in *Oklahoma!*; or with Jerome Robbins' unforgettable street fight idioms in *West Side Story*? That's entertainment! Yes, one would readily forget trials and tribulations of life while watching Astaire's and Rogers's singing "You like potato and I like potahto" and then roller-skating; Julie Andrews's singing "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens" and then dancing with the children; or Gene Kelly's "singin' and dancing in the rain" and then hanging from the lamp post.

No, Soviet authorities couldn't allow their people to see these fireworks of talent coming from America.

While Tanya has been spending her free time at the movies, her friends were getting married, divorced, or remarried; some female friends found themselves as single mothers. They had a tough life: lack of money, sleep deprivation, and children's illnesses brought never-ending exhaustion and sometimes even depression. Tanya started to spend less time at the movies and more time helping her friends.

One morning, when she came into the kitchen to eat breakfast, she found no food on the table; nor was the radio turned on. She rushed to her father's bedroom only to find him dead. He

died peacefully in his sleep. After the funeral, Tanya's friends, neighbors, and some of her colleagues came to her place for a "remembering" meal: they ate supper and talked about her father. Laura stayed with Tanya overnight. The following nights, Tanya's other friends took turns staying with her, until she told them she was fine to stay by herself. It felt strange to be alone: she missed her father and his companionship. Now she didn't have a single relative in the world. Thank God her friends were like her extended family.

A week after the funeral, on Saturday morning, Tanya decided to sort through her father's belongings. She wanted to keep some of his letters and photographs. She also wanted to move back to the bedroom. While emptying his drawers, she discovered that one was locked. She searched for a key for a while and finally found it in her father's jacket. She couldn't imagine what he was hiding. Slightly intrigued, she opened the drawer. In it laid a few thick packs of unopened envelopes. She looked at the top one and gasped: it was a letter from Andrew. At that instant, she knew what the rest of the packs contained. She sat down on the floor, remaining motionless, almost frozen at the sheer horror of what lay before her.

At last, she opened the first letter. It was the letter Andrew wrote on the evening they met. He described how he fell in love with her during the subway ride and how he was looking forward to reading hers and writing his own letters. He wrote the second letter on the train and the third one upon arrival at the base. His humorous responses to her three letters made her laugh; in all others, he talked about his work, college, friends, hobbies, and the movies and poets he loved; many letters were his reflections on or observations about people, nature, and different events. She read them all day and all night, and then the following day.

She was deeply absorbed by Andrew's world and captivated by his personality shining through the letters; yet she couldn't help thinking that none of the letters was opened by her

father, and the question of why he had been hiding these unopened letters was painfully going through her mind. Finally, she read the last letter, which was the most joyful of all: Andrew was coming back, hoping that Tanya had been waiting for him. “Wait for me, and I’ll return,” he reminded her of their conversation. Underneath the letter lay a note from her father. The note was short. Father apologized for hiding the letters, but explained he had no choice. The apartment was too small for three people. Suppose Tanya and Andrew exchanged their two apartments for a bigger one. Still, who could give Peter a guarantee that they would want him to stay? After all, Andrew is a stranger to him; why should he care about the old man? Two’s company, three’s a crowd. Consequently, there could be a possibility that he, Peter, would have to move back to his house in the countryside. The notion of it scared him to death. He’d already survived loneliness; he wouldn’t be able to go through it again. Now that he was dead, Tanya knew that Andrew had written to her; now she could marry him.

Tanya read his note a few times, trying to take in its essence. While living with her, talking to her, looking in her eye, her father was quietly stealing a letter a day; for one hundred and eighty days, he had watched her agony, tears, and misery; for almost three more years after Andrew’s return, he had witnessed her despair and depression, her joyless life. *No good deed goes unpunished*; Tanya recalled bitterly this French proverb, thinking that her father was able to do that only because she moved him into her apartment. If only he’d asked her what would happen to him after her marriage, she’d have answered him truthfully, without any hesitation, that he would have always lived with them no matter what. She wouldn't dream of leaving him alone; she still remembered what he looked like when she visited him five months after her mother's death. But her father hadn’t asked her. With no shame or second thought, he cruelly and cold-heartedly destroyed her chance for happiness. Suddenly, she was choked with hatred toward

him. She violently threw into the trash all of his belongings, including his letters and photographs, and left the empty room. Then she found Andrew's home address, and the next day, after work, waited for him by the entrance to his apartment building. She saw him from far away and went toward him. He walked slowly, listlessly, with his chin down. When he saw her, he stopped, stupefied. She told him what had happened. He responded that he was married and had a son, Nick; that he got married out of loneliness and despair; and that he still loved her. He smiled and left; he went home to his wife and his son.

Tanya cried all night; in the morning she called in sick, and stayed home. She could hardly talk when some of her colleagues called her to inquire if she needed anything. About an hour after her usual return from work, the door bell rang. She opened the door and saw Andrew stand there, with a suitcase. The night before, he told his wife, Anna, that he was leaving her. He told her he loved another woman. He apologized. Anna was dumbfounded at first. Then she said she didn't care for his ridiculous story; she didn't even care for his love.

"Nick needs a father!" she said. "I don't want to be a single mother, I won't survive! If you move out, you'll never see your son again. Never! He shouldn't be around a madman!"

Anna thought that the threat would stop him; it didn't. Andrew couldn't lose the one chance life was giving him: to live with a woman he loved.

And that's how Andrew and Tanya started their life together. It wasn't an easy life. Andrew missed his son terribly; he felt guilty at deceiving Anna into marrying him; his colleagues and even close friends were shocked by his decision to leave his family. Tanya felt for Andrew, as if she were Hamlet's flute: her heart bled for him when he was sad; when he was joyful, she rejoiced with him. Yet, in spite of their pains and regrets, they cherished every moment spent together. They felt they wasted so much time having lived without each other,

they rarely invited friends over or accepted their friends' invitations. Tanya sensed that Andrew's pain would lessen if they had a child, but she couldn't get pregnant. Her friends comforted her saying she shouldn't think about it, and it would come; *it takes time, be patient; don't stress out about it, stress may hinder it from happening*.

Seven months into their life together, one early morning, Andrew complained about chest pain. Tanya called the ambulance. By the time it came, Andrew was dead. He had died from a heart attack.

Anna didn't come to the funeral. Those who did parted right after it. Tanya didn't invite anybody over: it was too painful for her to have yet another "remembering" meal so soon after the first one. She wanted to be alone anyway.

Since Andrew's death, she had one agonizing, tormenting thought: was it her fault? *Maybe his heart attack was hereditary, or the result of plaque in his arteries; then if I weren't heartless, foolish, and stubborn, Andrew and I could've had a life together--a short but happy life. We could've had a child, our own child. We could've lived without any guilt, pain, or sadness. But maybe his heart simply couldn't bear so much pain: he loved me, but couldn't be with me; he lived with me, but couldn't see his son; he also felt remorse for Anna. I am guilty. I am guilty if his death was imminent, and I am guilty if his death was caused by too much heartache.*

Her agony was added to by a terrible sense of loneliness which brought recollections of two European movies she'd seen on one of her parents' visits.

In Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, old Professor Isak Borg revisits the places of his childhood and youth and recalls his past through day-dreams and nightmares. Again and again he is forced to watch the most disturbing, tormenting moments of his life-- his fiancée's

announcement that she is going to marry his brother, or his wife's adultery that she blames on his heartlessness and indifference. In one of his dreams, Isak is told that he received punishment for his sins.

"And what is it?" he asks.

"Loneliness," is the answer.

"Loneliness," repeats Isak as if an axe had already fallen on his head.

Many Russians thought the movie was a masterpiece, but they were amused by Isak's punishment.

"Give me this punishment any time!"

"Sure we don't have loneliness! We're always squished in the crowd running to the stores at the end of each month, hoping to buy a bath towel, tea kettle, or pair of boots!"

"Packed like sardines in a grocery store, just to buy a little fruit for your child!"

"The whole life spent standing in lines for groceries!"

"No privacy anywhere, your whole life is on display!"

"Surrounded by neighbors gossiping about what you eat--what you buy--how you live--"

"By women fighting with each other in the kitchen--"

"By wives fighting with their drunken husbands--"

"Sharing one toilet with six other families, and always standing in line for it--"

"Standing in another line to use a range in the kitchen--"

"Not having a bathtub or even a shower--"

"Wasting half of your Saturday going to a communal bathhouse and standing in yet another line to wash yourself and your children amongst hundreds of naked strangers--"

"Instead you could live in your own apartment, just with your family--"

"With no line for the bathroom--"

"Taking a lonely shower every day--"

"A lonely cook in your own kitchen, using all four ranges--and an oven!"

"Oh God, please punish me with loneliness, too!"

Yet, even though Isak didn't have to stand in lines or share his apartment with six other families, he still needed love and companionship. That's why so gratifying was the end of his journey: he found in himself the ability to better understand his past that shed light on his present and tried to change his relationship with his son, daughter-in-law, and housekeeper. In turn, they let him know that they loved him and cared for him. It seemed that Isak was forgiven for his sins and that he wouldn't have dreams about loneliness anymore.

Not so in Fellini's *La Strada*, where ruthless Zampano, a circus' chain breaker, leaves his ill, child-like partner Gelsomina alone in the middle of nowhere, because he doesn't want to take care of her. A few years pass by, and one day, Zampano runs into a young woman who sings a melody Gelsomina used to play on the trumpet. He learns that Gelsomina had been found on the beach, lived at this woman's house for a short time, and died. Suddenly, a sense of loss and loneliness overpowers Zampano. He realizes that Gelsomina was the only person in the world who cared about him. He gets drunk and wanders to the beach. He looks at the sea, skies, then around: he is alone in the world. He throws himself on the sand, almost burying his head and hands, and sobs; the sound of waves in the dark only adds to his sense of loneliness. He'll be alone forever and ever.

Now Tanya felt that she too was being punished for her cruelty and insensibility, and the punishment was a guilty conscience and loneliness. She wanted to be forgiven, like Isak Borg,

but there wasn't anyone to forgive her. She threw herself to the bed, buried her head in the pillow, and sobbed.

She developed insomnia. Sleeping pills helped her fall asleep, but shortly after she would wake up, screaming, panting, or crying. In her sleep, she always had dreams: her father hiding Andrew's letters; Andrew stretching his hands toward her and pleading for her to listen to him; Andrew falling dead by the entrance to her apartment building; the man from *Wild Strawberries* announcing her verdict: guilty.

She often fell asleep at her desk at work, waking tired and confused. Her colleagues felt bad for her, and it was decided amongst them, with the approval of their boss, that they would do her job until the time when she was able to work. Tanya was very grateful to them and tried to work, but she couldn't concentrate. She also started feeling nauseous in the mornings, and attributed the nausea to the sleeping pills. She stopped taking them, but it didn't help. Only when she got cramps in her legs, did she suddenly come to life, as if she were Sleeping Beauty kissed by the Prince. She called her friends and described her symptoms. *Go to the doctor*, they told her. The doctor confirmed that she was pregnant.

After so many days of grief, it was unusual for Tanya to feel that something good had happened to her, and it occurred to her that maybe her pregnancy was a sign of forgiveness; maybe she, too, was forgiven, like Professor Borg. Then she realized that Nick, Andrew's son, would be her child's half-brother, and the next day after work, she walked over to Anna's. *It used to be Andrew's*, she thought sadly. Anna opened the door. Since she'd never seen Tanya before, she smiled and waited for Tanya to introduce herself. When Tanya did, Anna was startled, and her face became tense and hostile.

"I need to talk to you," Tanya said in such an urgent and pleading tone that Anna let her in. She picked up Nick and sat down, holding him in her lap, as if seeking his protection and support. Tanya told Anna the whole story, from meeting Andrew on the subway train to her pregnancy.

"Why are you telling me all of this? What do you want from me?" Anna asked with animosity. Afraid of being interrupted, Tanya spoke in short, abrupt sentences.

"I want our children to grow up together. I want my child to have a brother. I don't have any relatives. Your Nick would be my child's only relative. It's good for Nick, too, to have a brother or sister. We could help each other with the children. It's too much of a responsibility for one person to raise a child. If we are together, our lives could resemble something normal. There would be four of us in this world. We could be like a family."

When she finished, she looked at Anna. Anna's face was thoughtful. A minute passed by, which seemed like an eternity to Tanya. Then Anna said softly, "All right. Let us help each other. Let's raise our children together. Let them have each other. I don't have any relatives either. I am so lonely. Would you like a cup of tea?"

That night, for the first time since Andrew's death, Tanya had a long, deep sleep. And in that sleep, she didn't see any dreams.

TOWARD THE LIGHT

Phil Richardson

7010 Cornell Rd.

Athens, Ohio 45701

richardc@ohiou.edu

Thomas's wife stood with him at the entrance to the crumbling lighthouse, but she would not go in. "I don't think you should climb up there, Thomas," she said. "What do you think you'll find?"

Thomas ignored her and opened the heavy wooden door, which moaned on its rusty hinges like a lost soul. It was dark inside and he entered with some trepidation and looked upward.

The spiral stairs, like a giant corkscrew, led to an opening of bright sky he very much wanted to reach. Thomas was sure that he could view sights not visible from the ground.

After a few minutes of climbing, however, the round-and-roundness of the stairs caused him to stumble and fall, so he sat, waiting for the vertigo to leave. Then he resumed his climb and finally reached a landing where a large wooden chair awaited. Next to it was a small table on which rested an open book, as if placed there by the last reader. He sat down in the chair and picked up the book, but the letters made no sense; they were like so many ants crawling around on the pages after being disturbed by some unwitting soul.

He put down the useless book and resumed his climb. Now that the vertigo had left, he made better progress. Once he glanced up and thought he had not climbed very high. Should he

not have been at the top already? His legs felt heavy, and every step was an effort; he wished he had spent more time in the chair. His wife often told him he was too impatient, wanting everything from life, but not willing to wait.

When he reached the next landing, there was a small brass bed where a woman who looked to be of middle age reclined. She wore her hair in pigtails and her pink dress was of a design you might find on a much younger and thinner woman. The dress was short and he could see her plump legs where varicose veins made patterns that shifted and turned each time she moved. The odor of vinegar hung in the air as though the area had been scrubbed.

"What took you so long?" Her lips pushed out sounds as though she were blowing bubbles. "I heard your footsteps on the stairs hours ago. I've been waiting for you." She gestured for him to sit on the bed beside her.

"But...but, I only started up the stairs a few minutes ago."

"Perhaps, but then why is your hair so gray now? Why are you bent over like an old man? Do you think you will reach the top in your lifetime?"

He touched his hair and felt the brittle texture of aging, so he knew she was right.

"Since you have so many questions," Thomas said, "maybe I could ask you some. Why are you dressed in such an outfit? Do you think you can seduce me? That would be ridiculous."

She smiled, stood up on the bed, turned, moved her hips in a seductive manner, and said, "I have lured many men in my lifetime, but I do not wish to interrupt your journey. Go now. Climb the stairs. See what your future holds."

Shaking his head, he grasped the splintered railing and pulled himself upward. Each stair step seemed like a mountain, yet the view of the blue sky seemed no closer. He stopped to wipe sweat from his eyes and almost screamed because his sweat was the color of blood.

He lurched upwards, convinced he had to escape these endless stairs and reach the light beckoning him. Now he was approaching another landing, and he feared what he might find.

The landing was, unaccountably, dark and he could barely see a shadowy figure standing there clutching a book.

"Thomas Mindrel?" the figure seemed to be checking something in his book. "Are you Thomas Mindrel?"

"Yes I am, but how do you know my name?"

"No matter. Would you like a drink to invigorate you for your climb?" He offered a flask made of silver and ruby-colored glass, which radiated a faint pulsing light.

"Thank you," Thomas said, because his mouth was very dry. He swallowed some of the liquid, which pulsed like something alive as it ran down his throat.

"I must get on with my climb," Thomas said. "My wife is waiting for me."

"Very well. You may go."

"Perhaps I'll see you on my way back down," Thomas said.

"It's doubtful. Yes, doubtful."

Thomas, feeling somewhat rested, quickened his pace. Now it seemed the bright sky above could almost be touched.

His legs ached and they seemed on the verge of cramping so he would not be able to proceed. More and more, he used his arms to pull himself up the railing, but he knew he could not climb much longer.

"Why am I doing this? What will I see when I arrive at the top? Is there so much more to be viewed from a height?"

The final landing before the top of the tower was empty. No tables or chairs and no inhabitant. On the floor, written in chalk, were the words "Caring is better than aspiring."

He paused to ponder the inscription and, after an arduous ten steps, he arrived at the top of the tower. Oh! How spectacular! Dolphins cavorted between the waves and seagulls circled in an airborne ballet. Leaning over the railing he looked below for his wife, but could not see her. As he leaned further, the rusty railing snapped and he fell toward the water below. Somehow he felt no pain when he plunged into the black coldness of the sea, and as he descended deeper and deeper, his dolphin self came forward and he rolled over and over. The bubbles of water caressed his skin, and his fins and his tail thrust against the black water as he headed upward; once more toward the light.

An Excerpt from the Novel Dreamland

Rosalind Williamson

Houston, Texas

You know, humans are a narcissistic species, and I am no exception. Actually, I'm so self absorbed – so full of myself – that I've written now this entire book on the subject. Myself, I mean. I have pages and pages deliberating on myself, my response to various things and various subjects and various people. I've covered the most mundane of topics not because I want you to care about their altruistic beauty, but because I want to know about your reaction. To me. To what happened to me.

It all started rather at once. It was on a Thursday, which I believed was set up by T.H,E.M. (Thailand's Hellish, Emo Military) to make leeway for Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy references. I'd just gotten back from my best friend, Irma's, house, which is a miracle in and of itself because she and I lived what seemed to be a perpetual sleepover. I went over to her house and stayed during the summer for nights on end, right until she looked like she was going to ask what I'd like to do. In my experience, the Asking of Preferred Activities only led to the deterioration of a friendship.

After returning from Irma's house, I grunted "Hello" to my mother, a 5'2" redhead with the self-assuredness of a pinball and the intelligence of a Bratz doll, and stepfather, a 5'2" fashion designer/model, who I strongly believe to be gay and closeted, and I retreated to my room. It was spacious, with off-white walls draped with paintings by local artists, including some by my stepsister, who was actually quite good. The most prominent was by her – I'm actually not sure what it was, except that it included pink sharks and musical notes. It didn't go with the

rest of the room, which was set off by dark browns and navy blues. I grabbed a book from my desk – I don't remember what it was, although I think it was scary – In the Penal Colony, The Crucible, or perhaps The Wasteland – and set off to the living room to read for the day. It was a nice, open room, with dark olive walls. The only real deterrence was the huge television in the front, though I admit I occasionally indulged in an episode of The X-Files or an old movie.

I spent the day reading whatever it was (though thinking back, I'm inclined to believe it was The Crucible). Mom called me down to dinner at six sharp as she usually did, and though I cannot promise to always remember or transcribe accurate dialogue, our dinner conversation probably went something like this:

> STAN: Barbara insulted my hair today. I was seriously offended –
> I mean, who does she think she is? My hair is perfectly done every
> day, and it's simply a farce to imply otherwise.
> MOM: Of course, honey. Your hair is nothing but flawless.
> ME: Yeah. You spend an awful lot of time and hair products on it.
> MOM: Well, he shouldn't use toothpaste, should he?
> STAN: Think of how that would affect my luscious locks!
> MOM: How is Irma doing, sweetheart?
> ME: Well, Mom.
> MOM: Well what?
> ME: She's doing well, Mom.
> MOM: Oh, well, tell her I said hello next time you see her.
> ME: I will, Mom.

And then my ten years of being preconditioned to eat in three minutes from the school cafeteria paid off, and I zoned out for the next half hour or so. We usually watched a movie, but I remember Mom waggling her eyes at Stan and myself nearly retching. I think they probably had a fashion show or some nonsense, although Mom was most likely hoping for sex. I keep trying to convince her that he's a homosexual, but it's amazing how far my mother is willing to delude herself when the circumstances dictate. That's her for you.

I went up to the living room again and, grabbing my sleeping bag, fell asleep on the couch to an episode of Voyager.

When I woke up, someone was tugging at my leg. I sat up and rubbed the sleep out of my eyes, and the body – the person, who I now identified as male – froze.

As I had just woken up, I wasn't quite within my sensibilities yet, and was taking everything rather as a joke. "If you're trying to abduct me, that's probably not the best way to go about it," I commented, turning on a lamp and taking a sip of the Orange Fanta that I'd left half-empty on our coffee table. It was flat. "Oh, ew."

My captor, who had since released my leg, wiped his hands on his pants (they looked expensive) and smiled at me. "You're quite right," he agreed, his British accent becoming pronounced and his smile becoming amicable. He inched towards me – and coming to my senses, I began screaming.

Upon losing the consequential shuffle and failing to awaken my mother and Stan, who both could have slept through fourteen drunken elephants' rendition of Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance," I was dragged out of the front door into a black car. I was seated between a burly MIB and a lanky "Milf," as most of my school called her. She'd been pregnant four times at seventeen, but somehow remained respected among a large portion of my school.

One of the great things about Killhurtz High School was the utter lack of bullying and/or discrimination. I read a lot of stories and saw a TV show or two (Irma made me suffer through all of Glee) about kids getting picked on, thrown in dumpsters, not spoken to or worse due to sexuality or grades or whatever, but I'd never seen anyone put down for that kind of thing here at Killhurtz. Sure, everyone got teased – people called me a know-it-all, or Jamie, who's the Drama Club's poster boy, a Drama Queen, but nobody was hit hard enough to where they needed to go

to Ms. Finnegan's office and have a good cry, and certainly no one was hurt because they were black or gay or smart. The thing I think made the biggest difference was that there was no definite hierarchy – no one had been appointed Cool or Uncool, and since all our parents were Doctors and Lawyers and Engineers and Vogue, Being Smart and Wanting to Succeed were great, admirable things.

It occurred to me that I didn't know the Milf's name. The word bint came to mind. I'd been reading too much Harry Potter fanfiction.

"Hi, uh – "

"Lindsey," she replied, drawling and drawing one of her curls out as she cocked her head. I resisted the temptation to snort.

I shook her hand, because I'm a handshaker. "Elizabeth Livingston," I said. "You know where they're taking us?"

"No," she said, rubbing her nails back and forth on the seat in a hypnotic gesture. The MIB snapped at her with his fingers, and she knocked it off, face remaining blank.

"Where are you taking us?" I asked the MIB, but he remained impassive. I looked him over, and saw that his nametag read "STEVE". I tried a different approach. "Where are you taking us…Steve?"

No response. "Crap."

Milf nodded, and her head rolled around on its base. "Totally."

The driver of the car, whose nametag read "PHIL", looked back at us and said with a sincere smile, "We're heading to a government-built planned community/island. It's in the Pacific – and in the middle of nowhere. You will not be found. You will not come anywhere

close to being found. You will be there with people from all over the world who are between the ages of ten and twenty-three."

"Are you driving us all the way there?" asked Milf.

"Don't be daft, Nancy," I said. "Cars can't drive on water."

"Maybe he'll, you know… drive the boat. Or plane." Milf rolled her eyes back into her head and in front again.

"It's a boat," Phil said. "Way more genre–appropriate."

"Good thing I just read The Crucible, I said. Or, you know, Oliver Twist or The Call of the Wild or whatever.

"Yeah," Phil agreed.

"What's a crucible?" Milf asked. I ignored her.

I think that, reflecting now, this was an important point for me. I'd of course not given up hope that I could return to Irma and Mom and Stan (though the possibility was growing dimmer and dimmer), but I was starting to accept my present situation, and perhaps even plot its timely demise.

Steve, next to me, began to snore. I inched closer to him and:

I…

II….

III….

Punched him in the nuts!

Steve winced and doubled over, and I punched him again, pressing the lock on the door open and sliding out. Unlike in the movies, the action left me damaged slightly – street burn on my knees and hands. I scampered off into the bushes and ran as quietly as I could while I saw

Phil searching for me. I managed to find my way to a DQ without getting caught, and as I entered I scoped it out.

Two blonde chicks – seventeen? – making out in front of a boy I assumed to be their classmate. An old man feeding an Oreo Blizzard to a paralyzed toddler. A woman who looked around forty talking to a man across from her. A young man, maybe twenty-three, in a beanie, writing in a notebook and puffing on a cigarette.

Perfect.

I walked over to the Beanie Boy and snatched it from his head, pulling it over mine and sitting down across from him. “Hi,” I said, “can I have one of your smokes?”

“Go away and give me back my hat,” he said.

I stuck a tongue out at him. “That’s rude, sir.”

“Look,” he said. “I don’t know you. I’m pretty sure you’re harmless, but frankly, this is starting to creep me out. So listen closely: GO. AWAY.” He thought for a second. “And give me back my hat.”

“No,” I said. “Please listen, dude. I’m on the run from some incompetent men who want to take me to a government facility in the middle of the ocean. I need to look as unmeish as possible.”

“You know what,” he said, “I’ll humor you. But when I leave, you’d better also be scramming.”

“Right,” I said.

“You’re on the run?” he asked, to pass time, I guess. “Where are you from?”

“Uh, Citrus, Texas,” I said.

"Well, you haven't succeeded very well," he told me. "You're in Melon." He took a drag on his cigarette and the smoke made me cough.

"Crap," I said. "Well, there's a whole suburb to search through. Dairy Queen is surely the last place they'll suspect. What are you writing?" I grabbed his notebook and looked at the page.

August 9

4:56 a.m.

Mundanity rules my life. I'm in the Dairy Queen currently, watching Edgar Thomas and his two girlfriends. I'm in such deep a funk, I doubt I could sport any kind of arousal, though the girls are hot. The door's open, now, and a female has entered. She can't be more than fifteen, but she carries herself well. I wish I could carry myself well. I wish

"Mundanity isn't a word," I said. "And frankly, this really sucks."

"It's my journal, you stupid bimbo," he hissed.

"I'm a bimbo who carries herself well," I said. "A fourteen-year-old bimbo, fyi."

He stood up and slid his beanie off my head. "Go bother someone else."

I pouted, but complied, once again searching for victims and then deciding perhaps to visit a different location. I took the back streets (Melon is a trashy neighborhood), and came upon a little supermarket, where I peeked inside.

No! There were Phil and Steve now, discussing something with the clerk. I tried to escape, but Steve spotted me and without a head start, he's a lot faster. I was thrown into the car again, this time handcuffed to the seat.

Milf waved. I groaned.

A Rite of Questions

Francis Raven
2125 14th St. NW #332
Washington DC 20009

It's hard to know which religion bows before
unnaturally blue and yellow flowers. Their deistic haircuts,
conundrum headdresses, offer few clues
and yet his white button up shirt
could have appeared
in a folk dance
I might have once seen. This is America of course, as
globalization nevertheless entails that we remain
in one country
at a time. The back of the procession
moves to the front
and the front stays put.
This appears to be a battle formation
in a boulevard's bitter island,
monument which is hidden
by a carefully turning oak. That's a description
of the time of year. However, the descriptions
their jackets make on their shirts
sound like mourning, but it's too public to be a funeral.
Nevertheless, their outfits remain the same;
however, their hand-cobbled shoes
kick waterbottles, technologically.
So they only wear this garb during ceremonies
and that's not really an answer
as to why their expressions appear more patriotic
than religious, save for the cameras.

Damascus Gate

Jacob Newberry
Florida, U.S.A.

No one asks
how long I've been waiting

or if I've been listening since dawn
for the noon bells from calvary

or if I kneel toward zion
when the rain begins

and the gutters fill with trash
flowing past me like an oil slick

burning on a river
no one calls from the street

like jeremiah crying out:
bring forth the bones

of the kings of judah
but I see everything

saturdays are quiet
though I sit by the gate

hearing songs of gomorrah
while a man calls

from the street:
you are an arab

step back from there
before they shoot you

while another man calls
from the street:

you are a jew
they will not shoot you here

oh sabbath city

your offerings are burning

there is no homeland
since the gates of the city

turned to gallows
there are only soldiers

who call from the ramparts:
stay where you are

oh jeremiah
see jerusalem is falling

and no one says:
there is a place for you

and no one says:
go through damascus gate

and no one says:
there will be no more

songs of gomorrah

No Soup For You

Jennifer Donnell

California, U.S.A

I finally told you what I think about
when we make love.
I knew it would be bigger than your shoulders,
which won't hold me up,
if the sky falls down tomorrow.

I'm on an earthquake fault wearing a sheer lace nightie.
There's an alien invasion and
I'm forced ((TO)) mate with green skinned men.
I'm stopping a nuclear war,
baby, don't I need relief?

When you swim into me,
am I imagining a tidal wave because I fear it,
or because I want to dive
where you can't follow.
Why am I looking so sad,

And, *why are you talking so much?*
You're hovering above me debating ownership.
You insist that by allowing you to slide my panties off,
I belong to you. I never signed a release form,
but I see how it works-
I liked your touch ten years ago, so you get my forever.

I'm working on a farm run by burly cartoon hunks,
they teach me how to milk a cow.
Go ahead, show me.
Bring your best love making to the table,
your reverse pyramid triangle tantra.
Confuse me variables like, sixty-nine times pi.

Then, when you're done giving it your all,
let me crawl into the earthy crevice
of my fault line,
and rest there while you
shake my body over and over,
in the same way,
for ever and ever.

Electric in the Sun

Michael Lee Johnson

Itasca, Illinois.

I'm electric in the spring sun
nomad in the summer dust
my lantern burns
without fuel,
I lie in the deep grass
with microphones tossed
over my ears-
and feel like I'm on a high-
psychedelic
blue-green grass
pink sunglasses in my left hand,
teeth pearly white ivory tusks,
muscle tee shirt, with brown sash
from shoulder to hip,
crazy beads around my neck
yellow-orange shaped like
candy corn-
life is but a blitz,
I'm electric in the sun,
and there is no cell phone
by my side.

Space and Time

Ron Koppelberger

4192 Acorn Ave.
Bunnell, Fl. 32110
Ph: 386-4379118
U.S.A.

Temples of glass and obsidian day-dream,

By doorways akin to the sticks

And the wild danger of beasts in space and time,

By the will of mars and the

Gloss of an azure sea in breaths

Of dust and and stone mounts in

Eternal constructions of elder assent, the

Second we fly unto the stars and

Machineries of evolution, a day to believe the futures

Grasp and the eye of fate.

Floating

Salil Mirashi

Maharashtra, India

We float
In this darkness
Of glittering stars
Holding hands
Ringa ringa
Round and round
Slow luminary motion
In the void

Our words
Echo in our ears
Soaking the space
In their moist
We hold on tighter
And sounds of assurance
Foster our orbit

We sop up the darkness
Within our eyelids
The hold of warmth
Keeps us wedged
To the being
Of the other

We hold on tight
As we let peace
Seep within our body
We lose our nous
We need to sleep

Creation 101

Sarah Joy Freese

Colorado, U.S.A

A world begins to form.

There is no big bang,

only the quiet existentialism growing deep within me

A light,

and then a dark,

a sun and stars,

and then the moon,

man and then beast.

The snake will come later.

I am a desert,

waiting to capture the unsuspecting.

Sand blinds my path before me and after

And as quickly as it has started, it has finished.

The sun is shining.

A prince leaves his home.

The world outside the smog turns orange.

A locket opens.

The future

Shelly Bhoil
Sao Paulo,
Brazil

The future is an old rag
worn by some hope
in its naked lessness.

I refuse to freeze in synopsis.
I must drink some sun and outgrow
the habit of your dumping ground.
It is a matter of preparing, now.
The future's shoulders are burdened with expectations.

In the muttering of the temple bell's tong tong
I hear the deception with idols.
To re-register a little later
would be a lessness of hope.
The past was enough futuristic
to rob the futured present of itself.

It is a matter of preparing, now.

Pānchālī

Sunil P. Narayan

8705 SW Lava Ct.

Beaverton, OR

97007, U.S.A.

Pulled into my husbands' court by my uncombed hair
Thrown onto the floor where hundreds of feet touch their thick, red silk
The flowing carpet rises and falls like the mist of my garden
I know you are immovable in your rage Shákuni

Your ego knows no limits, it is like a snake stalking a mouse
Quietly without remorse in its meager heart

All eyes watch me cry in anguish as you pull my sari
To end of this room it flows like the Gaṅgā
Shining with its thin, gold-laden fabric
And crippled by your greedy fingers

Dignified beauty you tossed with your dice
Human emotions you sacrificed with your heart
Bring your eyes to mine to see one word: regret
Ha! You are the nectar's enemy: regret!

If you took me then Kṛṣṇa will smite you right now!
His chakra a knife for your spineless body

All my fears that followed me at night with my friends
Nibbling on their black pearls while I watched the roses rise
They are you…a shadow that rapes the moon
I cannot give you my body for it belongs to Keśava!

My life will one day be returned to his home
To live as a cowherd while churning milk for his hungry lips
The boyish smile and curly hair that barely touches his shoulders
His eyes so wide yet shaped like the waning moon

Little specks in the corner of both eyes are galaxies unknown to us
So far away other people exist for whom Kṛṣṇa is their king

If I am his then he is my king too
Shákuni, you are the drunken ego, a corrupted seed for humanity!
My body is a vase holding the virtues of Sūrya

He touched my spirit to give me a bite of his own

Disrobing me in front of my husbands and all the Āryas of their kingdom
is a sacrilege!
I cry to you to stop this great injustice!
Can't you see I have sunken into a sea of distress!?
No, you are busy drowning my voice with your wicked laughter
Brahmā gave you a boon that protects your life from any physical or divine harm
Yet, has he no shame when seeing this monstrous deed?

Ma! You are Sarvāsuravināśā, come to my rescue!
Show your terrifying face to this savage
Make him cower under your crippling stare, ma!
Turn his limbs into brittle sticks so he will stop treating my honor like a toy