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GNOSIS | An International Refereed Journal of English Language and Literature

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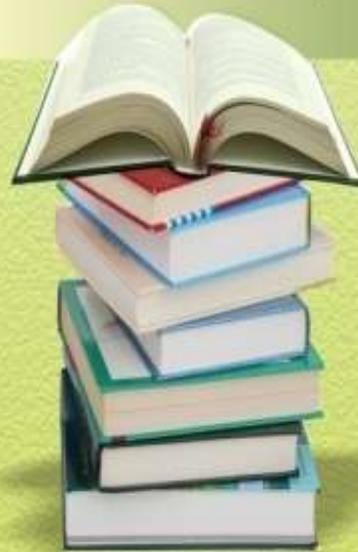
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Editorial

The January 2022 issue of GNOSIS had a very warm response from the readers in India and abroad that articles have been flowing in quick succession to fill the folder of this issue even before the deadline of 30 November 2021. The thumping reception of the journal shows the depth of multicultural issues in literature to which critics and readers are attracted. As a journal committed to quality research and writing, we are aware of the need to delink quality from publication cost. Hence, our decision is to charge no publication fee from the scholars whose papers will be published in the issues of GNOSIS. At the same time since GNOSIS is a self-financed venture, cooperation and support in the form of subscriptions are solicited from the readers and admirers of English Literature and Language from all over the world.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Academicians and well-wishers of GNOSIS who recommended GNOSIS for publication. There are twelve research/critical articles, four poems and one fiction in this issue. Before concluding, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our esteemed members of the Board of Advisors and Review Editors for their selfless and tiresome efforts in assessing the articles very sincerely and giving their valuable remarks to bring out this issue in such a grand manner. I am also grateful to the revered contributors who have made this issue of the Journal a beautiful reality. Wishing all the readers a mental feast. Happy Reading!

Dr. Saikat Banerjee

Editor

Space Narration: Spatializing narratives in Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower*

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Abstract: This paper strives to study space narration in Adiga's novel theoretically, contextually and textually. It analyzes the text with theoretical constructs by applying concepts of space narrative such as geospatial, cultural and various space narrative techniques involved in narration. Adiga executes his character, plot and situations in this novel through such narrative spaces by lending them realistic frames. These narrative spaces occupy distinctive features and operate on various levels by lending momentum and integrity to the narration. Adiga's engagement with narrative space through urban landscapes, locations, and sites, enshrines individual, community, social, and cultural spaces within private and public spaces in Mumbai. The narration unfolds the private and public discourses on problems arising out of politics, corruption, human rights, real estate and the plight of common people. These narratives lend wider dimensions to space. This paper further argues, how materialistic concerns lead to deprivation and isolation. Adiga's narrative space accommodates a Mumbai of the rich and of the poor, a city of dreams and fulfilment. It depicts its material wealth, its criminality and apathy. Lukas's reflective theory and Bakhtin's polyphonic discourse theory, have been employed for critical analysis of the text. The nestled stories of the inner world, have been intricately related to the outer world, unfolding the space within the space.

Keywords: Space narrative, Geo-spatial, Culture space, Community, Nestled stories.

Aravind Adiga in his novel "Last Man in Tower" uses space as a technique of his narration with wider scope and implication. Adiga's narrative space accommodates a paradoxical Mumbai with binary opposites: plenty and scarcity, a city of aborted dreams and fulfilment. It is a city of hope, despair, greed and violence. Adiga raises questions of individual integrity against mafia nexus in his narrative framework. Its narrative space depicts material wealth, crimes and indifference. The predominance of violence over human freedom, in a sprawling urban space, its landscapes, contours and spaces in motion have been artistically woven into the space narration. The complex and contradictory landscapes of the social and cultural life of the city, have been presented with realistic rendition. Adiga is a master teller of stories, his main narrative is nestled with many narratives ensconcing critique of a debased socio-cultural and political order. His tone grows harsh and satirical. Adiga offers cultural criticism on the one hand and the radical criticism of a class-driven society. The ecosystem of the metropolis called Mumbai is neither

defined by its integrity nor homogeneity, but glaring contradictions haunt it. The narratives of Mumbai in Bollywood films resonate with its deceptive and illusive character. Adiga's challenge is greater as a writer and narrator for his narratives in "Last Man in Tower" depict the post-modernist Mumbai.

Aravind Adiga employs the concepts of multiple narrative spaces; such as geographical space, space within a space, and outer and inner space of rooms by giving details of walls, kitchen, wardrobes etc. And he further relates these to the lives of the people occupying those spaces. What begins as space description goes into the narrative to create a larger picture of life in the novel. Individual spaces within the novel give the readers accounts of private spaces and stories of the individual occupants adding variety and richness to the main narrative. Many lives, many narratives weave the main narrative to reflect on the material, cultural and social life of the people. Common spaces of secretary's meeting hall, frequently get mentioned extending private space to public space. Hence, there is collusion between individual and common spaces. The dreams, desires and aspirations meet and collide against the collective space. This collusion is apparent in Master ji's decision to stand against the majority of members willing to sell the tower. Adiga uses space narration on multiple levels as stated earlier for narrative purposes, which could be termed as concrete space, abstract space, space in motion, space as filler and ideational space. These trajectories explore the various dimensions of space narration. These have been employed to synchronize space with time which adds dimensions to space narration. Space in motion can be put under two sub-categories concrete space through movement and retrogressive space through movement between past and present. Concrete space shifts through movement, shifting the scene from a particular geographical location or sub-spaces within the total space for example movements through vehicles from Vakola to Bandra, Kurla and so on so forth. The retrogressive space has been created of concrete geographical locations and spans of life running between past and present. The abstract spaces in the text have been synchronized with time through memories, mini-narratives, ideas and reflections. At times, these have been harnessed to fill the voids in the narrative. Ideational space also refers to this category as the container of ideas, thoughts and authorial voices. The authorial voices in Adiga's this novel, are interspersed with the voices of the common people which are not only reactions to an incident or situation but a referendum on the larger reality of the society. At times, his ideas run into society, polity and philosophy. Adiga uses all these spaces artistically to weave them into the main narrative space of "Last Man in Tower".

Space narration could be traced back to nineteenth-century historical novelists who presented authentic narration through depictions of spaces and places. Tom Bragg argues that such depictions led to a flexible form of fiction which catered to the "historical visions of authors and changing aesthetic taste of the reader". Bragg focuses on Scott, William Harrison and Bulwer Lytton, identifying links between historical novels and space depictions. (Tom Bragg, *Space and Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, 2016).

Charles Dickens in “A Tale of Two Cities” employed space and place narrative to interrogate historical inquiry, to raise discussion. Adiga in “The White Tiger” and “Last Man in Tower” employs the Dickensian spread and breadth of space narration in a political and regional context. Adiga takes the reader to wider implications of space narratology, where locale, place and space assume metaphorical significance. The multi-layered narration, which lends variety and richness to the narrative also leads to complexity of form and narration. A brief critical analysis of narrative space theory can explain the intricacies and dynamics of space narration in Arvind Adiga’s “Last Man in Tower”.

Marie Laura Rayan, Kenneth Foote and Azaryahu explore the points of contact between geography and narratology. They further argue how space plays its role in narration, “especially its capacity for layering and textualization at varying scales and its role as a universal or particular feature of plot.”. (Marie Laura Rayan & others, 2016, 245). Herman (1999), Nunning (20013) and Birk and Chest (2013) argue that narratology has gone a paradigm shift towards cultural explorations and beyond involving discursive phenomena. Laura Bieger and Mauro –Scholder held that material culture, material objects and geographical locations used in the stories lead us closer to the context. To quote them:

Considering the interstices of space, place, and narrative and surface here asks us to rethink the ways in which basic cultural practices such as the telling, retelling and revising of stories lend themselves to producing the very contexts in which we observe and study them. (Laura Bieger, 2016, pp 6-7).

Gabriel Zoran (1984) talks about spatial aspects of reconstituted world in the fiction. He also elaborates on construction of reality in Adiga’s “Last Man in Tower” represents the various narrative space concepts, and his text redeems these theoretical constructs in space narration. The tower (A) of Vishram Society, Vakola, Santa Cruz (East), Mumbai holds the narrative lens showing variety of pictures. My paper attempts to deconstruct the spatial narration by analyzing the existing theoretical constructs arguing further how spatial narration creates multiple narratives within the main narrative enlarging upon the social, cultural, political and economic matrixes of a given space. It further argues, how concrete spaces run into abstract, ideational and notional spaces weaving the contextualized narratives. It also examines the narratives in terms of their spatial representations through cognitive spaces, existential and cultural absurdities. “Last Man in Tower” shows individual consciousness as part of a larger system which is socio-political, politico- economic and psycho-spatial: governing and controlling the individuals. It connects different scenes, locales, sights, impressions and objects and views into a meaningful narrative preceptive which in turn, are deeply embedded within the larger social structure of urban middle-classed Mumbai. Here, Adiga seems to negotiate the subaltern issues with the political and materialistic hegemony for a welfare state. Through Master ji he weaves a narrative of defiance against a system that thrives on the nexus of politics, money and violence.

The novel is set in the city of Bombay (Mumbai), where the destiny of the struggling masses, is determined by big businessmen and real estate barons and the builder mafia. A city that never sleeps and weaves stories of riches from rags in its sleeve, where progress is measured in terms of skyscrapers and material wealth. The protagonist of this novel, Yogesh A. Murthy (known as Masterji), is a retired school teacher, now living alone after the death of his wife Purnima. His idealism and unfamiliarity with the materialistic world leave him annoyed, alienated and finally mysteriously dead. Adiga's narration spatializes his narratives including the pace of sprawling urban space met with the price of progress and fear of loss. Here big players prey on small players and common men to push them off the centre to margin.

In "Last Man in Tower" Adiga's engagement with geospatial space and its relation to narrative spaces, involves locales, streets, and houses with locational details. He provides a map of the Vishram society and its adjoining areas in Mumbai which serves as a preface to the places, he chooses readers to take on. These geographical details give readers an insight into the life of this dynamic city. Through each slide of space, he shows us the gruesome aspect of the face of the financial and glamorous capital of India. Mumbai is a city of dreams but the occupants of Vishram Society lured by such dreams end up with nightmares. Arvind Adiga spatializes the narrative with specific details to authenticate his narration. The descriptive details of the society paint the visuals of locales as stated in these words of Adiga:

A banyan tree has grown through the compound wall next to the booth. Painted umber like the wall, and speckled with dirt, the stem of the tree bulges from the masonry like a camouflaged leopard; it lends an air of solidity and reliability to Ram Khare's booth that it perhaps doesn't deserve. The compound wall, which is set behind a gutter, has two dusty signs hanging from it. (Adiga, 2012, p 6)

Geographical spaces occupy a prominent place in the novel in a literal as well as metaphorical sense. These vignettes provide a glimpse into the social and cultural life of the people occupying these spaces. The narrative space of Mumbai is divided into sub-spaces: Santa Cruz (East), Vakola, Kurla, Bandra and Andheri, Vishram Society and specifications of rooms, kitchens and balconies. Sub-spaces are also referred to space within a space or interior space These details give a graphic picture of the place, sites relating to characters. The space setting is urban Mumbai with middle class people. Space as a form and spirit with its vignettes, finds a vivid description through narration.

To quote Adiga: "With his blue book in his hand he walked past the old buildings of Marine Lines, some of the oldest in the city –past porticos never penetrated by the sun, and lit up at all times of day by yellow electric eaves broken by saplings, and placental mounds of sewage and dark earth piled up on wet roads. Along the side of Marine Lines train station, he walked towards Church gate". (Adiga, 2012, p 46).

Adiga spatializes these locales through descriptive notes which refer to places representing aesthetic experiences. His description of Bombay aesthetically spatializes his narrative locating the nuances in spirit and form.

What is Bombay? From the thirteenth floor, a window answers: banyan, maidan, stone, tile, tower, dome, sea, hawk, *amaltas* in bloom, smog, on the horizon, gothic phantasmagoria (Victoria Terminus and the Municipal Building) emerging from the smog. (Adiga, 2012, p51)

Adiga attempts to represent the locales, objects and settings through geographical surroundings to create a literary text. Brosseau rightly points out the mechanism of recreation of literary space:

Thinking about representations of space in generic terms is an attempt to relate the geography in the text (places, settings, landscapes) to the geography surrounding it, so to speak. This approach formulates a series of questions about the constraints of the creation of a text and their implications for its reception, suggesting that generic conventions are also relevant to both ends of the literary process... Reading spatiality in terms of genre is therefore a form initiation to step outside the apparent stability and closure of the written text. (Brosseau, p20)

Adiga beautifully transforms these crude geographical locales into poetic images for storytelling. Space within the space, interior space and space in motion add to the totality of space like Dickens's novels where contained spaces serve as a tool of narration coupled with imagination and perception. These sub-spaces and interiors have been simulated in the narration through descriptive details and memories of characters. Secretary's office in the Vishram Society, its furniture, sitting arrangement, floors and layouts evoke a picture of interior space which goes well with the narrative. The claustrophobic setting of the rooms of Yogesh Murthy, Georgina Rego also provides a peep into their complex life. The spaces in motion come to readers through the car windows of Mr. Shah and Shanmugham as they move through offices, restaurants and sites that provide moving portraits of places in the city of Bombay. Adiga's space narration helps readers in chronicling these snapshots into larger images of urban Mumbai. Adiga's space narration in "Last Man in Tower" is loaded with locales, vignettes, snapshots and geospatial descriptions which unfold the complexities of the social, cultural and economic life of the people in the city like that of Dickens' portrayal of Victorian urban cities.

Socio-economic and cultural spaces in "Last Man in Tower" occupy the central narrative of Adiga which is evocative, exhilarating, grotesque and compelling with rich details. Like his earlier novel "The White Tiger" this novel also portrays the changing patterns of socio-economic and cultural life of a new and emerging India. "Last Man in Tower" in its theatrical space of narration depicts urbanized Mumbai, its sprawling demography and changing economy and subsequent repercussions on the people. In its organic narrative structure, it discusses the fate of Vishram Society's occupants, their trials and trauma in

the face of a lucrative offer of turning the society flats into modern apartments with modern amenities by a real estate business man called Mr. Shah. In his offer one sees the dream to be packaged and sold as he explains it to them:

In most redevelopment projects, as you know, the residents are offered a share in the new building. In the case of Shanghai, however, the new place will be super-luxury. A mix of Rajput and Gothic styles, with a modern touch. There will be a garden at the front, with a fountain. Art Deco style. Each place will cost two crores or upwards. The current residents certainly have the option of purchasing in Shanghai, but they will be better served by moving elsewhere. (Adiga, 2012, p112)

Adiga reveals the darker reality behind this luring dream, the temptation of residents, their conflicts, fear and greed and above on board the vicious circle of builder mafia. The narrative which captured the low ebbs of social, economic and cultural activities of residents suddenly soar into a world of hopes, dreams, and ambition dismantling the very structure of the Society. The restlessness of the residents of Vishram Society has been artistically pitched against a nefarious game plan of Shah, where concrete space collapses into abstract space driven by social and economic impulses. These accounts are shocking, sometimes heartbreaking with extraordinary stories of the residents. One can read an existential note of distressed human conditions into these individual stories. Some residents fall into a trap while some show their relentlessness but Yogesh Murthy, Masterji out rightly reject the unholy offer of Mr. Shah. To him, these builders are ‘dirty people. Master ji’s this remark serves as a sequel to Shah’s confessional statement in Book Two, chapter titled “Mr. Shah Explains His Proposal” (pp83-89), where he explains to Rosie his journey beginning as a petty contractor, then ‘slum redeveloper’, and finally a builder and real estate baron. To quote him: “If I had to kiss this politician’s arse, I did it; if I had to give that one bag of money for his elections, so be it. I climbed. Like a lizard, I went up walls that were not mine to go up. I bought a home in Malabar Hill. I taught myself to build in style, Rosie.”. (Adiga, 2012, p87).

Shah’s confession is a sarcastic commentary on the political and social world of a city which assigns greater importance to individualistic aspirations than human hearts. Shah’s grinding poverty of the past is reconciliation with his criminal present. He moves between past and present where retrogressive space provides justification for the chaotic present. It also provides an insight into an incapacious political culture, which shelters corruption, spurning the greedy middle class and brutal estate realtors. Shah’s game plan to woo the residents of Vishram Society unravels the deep-seated malaise in the real estate business. Master ji’s conviction not to compromise with the terms of Shah even in the face of a hostile world including his son. The novel takes a dramatic turn with the entry of Shanmugam, an employee of Shah. He occupies a significant space in the narrative as Shah’s tool for the implementation of his plans. He tries to meet this end through a series of tricks, threats, and fear which finally culminate in the mysterious death of

Masterji. Cultural productions of space serve as metaphors for characters, places and social life of the people. Events, narration, and places of past reconstituted through memories are spatial narratives of cultural description. Wladimir Fischer –Nebmaier rightly describes: “In the cultural description, such spatial terms traditionally have cultural value connotations, of course: for example, higher and lower value, rank and prestige that are closely connected to ideas of class, gender, or other identity markers”. (Wladimir Fischer, 1915, p18). “Last Man in Tower” is replete with such retrogressive spatial narratives reconstituted through memories of Masterji, Shah and other characters in Vishram Society. In their respective social and cultural spheres, they conflate the present with the past or vice-versa. To Wladimir Fischer “Narrated and publicized memory is a fine example of cultural techniques to lay claim to a city....” (Wladimir, 1915, p19-20).

Adiga also represents cultural spaces through religious places, common meeting places, restaurants, and public offices. Besides, these traditional culture space descriptions, he depicts modern components of culture such as media and cyber shops. Mater Ji acknowledges the power of media and earnestly tries to voice his concerns against builder mafia Dom by contacting Noronha, his old student working with Times. These cultural spaces represented by characters and places are significant to space narration not only as cultural symbols but as economic activities too. Adiga provides a glimpse into the lives of people, their needs, their dreams, their whims, failures and frustrations, weaving a pattern of the social and cultural world. Amidst the trials and troubles of Vishram Society in the face of Shah’s proposal, Adiga enacts the general drama of life. His space narration is jammed with characters living, and dead neatly drawn in the cultural space with lenses focusing on memories, the unconscious mind and dreams. However, these are not without a purpose but focus on the cultural dimensions of social life. These spaces focus on coexistence, negotiations and exchanges between different cultural forms. “Last Man in Tower” beautifully chronicles these intercultural spaces, integrating them with cognitive space.

These snapshots vary in tone and texture painting the real world. He makes the readers hear the pangs, cries and anxieties of such characters put in the narration. Adiga paints the cultural ghetto by putting different shades of life scattered around shops and markets in Mumbai which evoke spatial feelings of modern Mumbai.

Curved green stems bearing yellow bananas were suspended from the ceilings of the grocery shops: glitzy, plastic satchels of instant Chinese noodles and malt powder twinkled beside the bananas like nouveau-riche cousins. Two catholic priests, head to toe in white cassocks, stood at the counter of a grocery shop store, learning about the Reliance company’s prepaid mobile plans from the owner. (Adiga, p73)

Adiga interlocks the city, and its stories in his narration by interplaying the concepts of narration, space and everyday life of people in Mumbai. Thus, through collective socio-cultural projection, he enriches his narrative with a comprehensive worldview. Does Adiga's worldview paint an idealistic society? The answer is, no he doesn't intend to create such narratives, but he sticks to realistic modes of narration. However, the conflicts between the ideal and the real have been brought well within the ambit of his narration. The spatial narratives in Adiga, give vent to these glaring conflicts bordering on radical philosophy rather than idealism. These elements could be discerned from the text, context and tonality of the dialogues.

Adiga employs the concepts of space narrative theory in a broader perspective by highlighting the paradoxical elements with irony, wit and humour. The debate that hinges around individual freedom vs. collective decision in the wake of Mr Shah's offer to Vishram Society, has been carried interestingly and dramatically in the narratology. It also raises the existential questions of humanism, pity, suffering, alienation and finally death. These questions are embedded into the main narrative, to show the dichotomy between the material world and the private world. The novel addresses several issues the stakes in individual and community decisions, the strength of the individual's conviction, wider and long-term consequences of curtailing individual rights, legitimacy of collective risk and rationality of the decision-making process.

The spatial dimensions of narration extend from concrete locations to the domain of ideas, faith, conviction and freedom. Within this narrative framework, Adiga artistically combines the conflicts, greed, and ambition of middle classed people in urban Bombay. Shah's hidden agenda can't be perceived by everyone. However, most of the occupants are swept away by Shah's grand plans for luxury apartments, which will make each of them rich. In this process gradually those who opposed the offer one by one gave way to the majority. Yogesh Murthy, Masterji stands with his temerity and dexterity against this decision. Shah is a dangerous man and he takes all occupants in his loop except Masterji. Those who respected Masterji earlier turned into enemies and conspirators. Beneath this shining dream, Adiga makes a sharp observation of Mumbai, a city of struggle, dream, money, crime and soaring real estate. He sees these aspects as results of rapid urbanization, migration, opportunities and challenges. The gap between demand and supply, and changes in the demography created the constraints of space. As a result of it, high-rise apartments laced with modern amenities became a necessity luring the middle-class people for affordable homes, Real estate business became a handy sport for making capital out of needs and dreams. Thus, weaving the narratives of from rags to riches for real estate players.

Adiga's multi-layered narrative contains many stories which are dark and melancholic but strikingly appealing in their respective spaces. Masterji's social isolation and alienation could be seen in the larger

perspective of humanism and materialism. The majority of the decision to go by Shah's offer is driven by fear, greed and external factors. On the contrary, Masterji's decision not to succumb to the pressures of resident members including his own son could be perceived as individualistic, internalized and driven by his free will and conviction. The internal space of Masterji contradicts and conflates the outer space, showing the dichotomy between what he upholds as a principle and rejects as anathema. Thus, he becomes an object, destined for destruction, effectively accursed as well as consecrated in a world governed by power, pelf and crime.

Adiga presents two narrative perspectives within a single narrative space for an implied reader. Masterji's decision is seen sceptically by his admirers and fellow residents. This shows Shah's strategic plan to isolate Masterji. Ramesh Ajwani, a real estate broker and a resident of Tower A try to convince Masterji with a rosy picture of Shah's plan but Masterji perceives an indirect threat in his words. His threat perception unravels the dirty tricks of the builder mafia and fear which proves to be his own story later. Masterji's question to Ajwani conflates Shanmugham's approach to the 'kingdom of earth' and 'instruments of torture': "And what was the redevelopment you were telling me about? Ajwani ...where the old couple refused to take the offer, and then one day...did they fall down the stairs? Or were they pushed or old people should take care. It is a dangerous world Terrorism, Mafia, Criminals in charge." (Adiga, 2012, p224).

Within this frame of narration, Adiga brings into discussion the vicious circle of real estate mafias, their style of functioning and criminality. Masterji's alienation shows the triumph of greed over contentment, evil over good and coercive persuasion over individual freedom. This situation aggravates when Gaurav, his son questions the very propriety of his decision:

Don't you see what's behind this nothing? You. You think you are a great man because you're fighting this Shah. Another Galileo or Gandhi. You are not thinking of your own grandson. (Adiga, 2012 p297)

Masterji's sense of self-dignity and freedom is underrated and rejected by these people as his growing symptoms of senility. Broken in his heart, alienated but undefeated Masterji takes his ideological battle with a strong sense of defiance till his last breath. On being asked by Ms. Meenakshi "...what is happening here, and he said at once: 'It's a story!'" (Adiga, 2012, p312). In the same context as her advice for telling the story to media, his reactions expressed in these words paint a picture of a visibly shaken and alienated man: "Everyone wants something from me, he thought. Shah wants to steal my home, and she wants to take my story". (Adiga, 2012, p312). Opinions, reactions, observations and sarcasm have been neatly strung into words and dialogues within the narrative space by Adiga to show a point of view. Though he is very categorical, clear and logical in airing his opinion on Shah's issue but unfortunately there is no

subscriber to it. Ideologically he wins the battle but practically he loses it, paying the price of life. Stories run between these two ends, forming patterns and forms of narration.

Masterji's mysterious death is a dramatic turn in the story raising moral, legal and medical questions. Adiga spatializes this narrative to satirize our political, legal and administrative machineries. Chapters titled "Mumbai Sun" Suicide in Santa Cruz (East)? And Epilogue titled "Murder or Suicide" unravel the lapses on the part of investigating agencies.

The newspaper reports at prima facie present it as a case of suicide assigning the cause of death

"...the deceased had slipped into a state of extreme depression following the death of his wife almost exactly a year ago. Residents of the neighbourhood say that he had been progressively losing his mind under the pressure of diabetes and old age, withdrawing into his room talking to himself, engaging in anti-social behaviour and fighting with his entire Society over a proposed offer of redevelopment, which he alone opposed." (Adiga, 2012 p395).

Different theories are floated about Masterji's mysterious death; murder, suicide, the foul motive of the builder, motive of neighbours. Investigating officers with a bundle of confusing statements, evidence arrives at no conclusive remarks:

So, Masterji became the prime suspect in his own murder. Many people, both in Vishram and in the neighbourhood at large, gave evidence that the teacher had been growing senile...and his diabetes made him depressed. In the end, the Inspector decided, since he didn't like unsolved mysteries, that it must have been suicide. (Adiga, 2012, p400)

Narrated spaces in this context are urban in nature which provide an insight into the narration depicting the horrific nature of investigating agency. Adiga doesn't remain stratified with scratching the surface but probes into deeper malaise that cripple the Indian investing agencies and legal system. His satire is against the mockery of investing agency often working under pressure of money and politics. However, it emerges from public notions joining the authorial voice.

Masterji's life, struggle and tragic end occupy the central place in this narrative. He contests outer space with inner resources. His undying spirit of questioning the things which his conscience and conviction don't allow him to accept. He doesn't like defeat; therefore, he fights and, in this process, he courts death, Like Hemingway's protagonist, Santiago in "The Old Man and the Sea" Masterji also defies defeat. Santiago's these words sum up his spirit of defiance: "But man is not made for defeat' he said." A man can be destroyed but not defeated (Hemingway, 2004, p71)."

Santiago loses to the shark but Masterji loses to Shah who eats away the fruits of old Masterji. Both Shah and the shark is the symbol of evil who prey on a good man and their cherished prizes. Adiga reinforces

this philosophical idea through the character of Masterji. Everybody's life is a road to himself and he has every right to exercise his freedom and will.

For one's conviction, one has to carry one's cross. Masterji carries his cross for his conviction. "Literary space", Lotman argues, "represents an author's model of the world, expressed in the language of spatial representation" (Lotman, 1994, p33).

The spatial narration of "Last Man in Tower" represents a character, spaces and multiple narratives through ideological and dialogic representations. Masterji represents Adiga's model of an old-school principled man who knows no compromise with his principles. In a world governed by corruption, dishonesty, money and greed, Masterji has been described as 'nothing', out of place sinking into his own alienated world sustained by principles and morality. These words adequately describe the crusade of Masterji against the real estate mafia:

It's the principle. A man must stand up for his rights in this world" (Adiga, p412). Such words and dialogues reflecting on character, incident and ideas give dimension and depth to the central narrative. This could be better understood with Lukas's 'reflection theory' which Wilfred Guerin & others explain in "A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature":

"...he (Lukas) stressed literature's reflection, conscious or unconscious, of social reality surrounding it-not just a flood of realistic detail but a reflection of the essence of the society. (Wilfred L. Guerin, 2007, p282)

It is this holistic approach of Arvind Adiga that not only reflects the consciousness of individuals and society but also represents multiple voices in the narration. Adiga like Dostoevsky allows his characters free speech and he never tampers these voices with his own voice. Here, he is closer to Bakhtin's theory of dialogic narration. and polyphonic voices. Wilfred Guerin and others rightly argue Bakhtin's this approach to the study of novel:

Instead of subordinating the voices of all characters to an overriding authorial voice, a writer such as Dostoevsky creates a polyphonic discourse in which author's voice is only one among many, and characters are allowed free speech. (Guerin, 2007, p363)

A close look at Adiga's space narration yields alternative views. These views emerge from characters, scenes and situations. The polyphonic voices that emerge in the wake of Shah's offer to the residents of Vishram Society and subsequent developments bear true testimony to it. Similarly, divergent opinions on the mysterious death of Masterji evoke conflicting views forming 'polyphonic discourse'. These voices lend authenticity to the narration.

These two instances serve as two major spaces within the main narrative around which the story develops, creating the breadth of an urbanized society. Through these two focalized spaces Adiga creates a consciousness of characters through which the story gets transmitted. The verbal narration can be located inside and outside the world of characters, which could be identified as homogenous as well as heterogeneous patterns. Conflicting voices heard at the beginning against Shah's dream project gradually settled down to a point of agreement except for Masterji. As this homogenous pattern in the narrative is achieved the narrative is pushed forward to a theatrical space with perceptive changes. The story changes, characters change and their attitudes and behaviour change. Masterji who was held in high esteem by all residents of the society suddenly turned into a villain. Adiga shows, how materialistic concerns, greed and selfishness can be instrumental in changing our perception. Adiga dramatically echoes this change in perception.

The vilification of Masterji is a strategic move of the builder nexus intended to malign his image in the eyes of society members. Adiga has artistically pitched it against the individualism and conviction of Masterji in the narrative, to reflect on the larger reality of urbanization, and its compelling impact on humanism, civic amenities and human rights. Interestingly, the narrative of the builder mafia has been artistically orchestrated within the main narrative space to show the cult of violence, anarchy and debased culture of a sprawling urban space in the pace of urbanization. The story of Masterji tells the saddest tales of life of a man, who has been alienated and dehumanized by the evil forces of the society. Who are they? They are human predators of real estate, to whom words like humanism, honesty, self-dignity and righteousness carry no meaning. Aravind Adiga's narrative technique weaves these piecemeal accounts in cinematic frames which doesn't only dramatize but lends authenticity to the narratorial voice. At times, the stray incidents seem to be disjointed, but seen in the perspective of the main narrative these appear integrated and organic like different slides of a film reflecting and supplementing each other. It is this technique that gives spatial dimensions to his narratives. Spaces within the space explore the diverse and multilayered narratives for which Adiga is well known.

Spatial narration with its multiple dimensions and applications as discussed in this paper, lend authenticity to the text, context and narratives in "Last Man in Tower." Adiga's space narration reconstitutes concrete and abstract spaces through characters, dialogues and literary form. In Adiga's this novel. spatial narratives become vehicles of thoughts, ideology and divergent perspectives aesthetically curated from Social, cultural, economic and political spaces. Socio-cultural perspectives in Adiga's spatial narration extend to the formation of discourses on multiple problems in contemporary society. The retrogressive space has been critically discussed underlying the paces and persons between past and present, raising the question of modernity, progress and affluence. Adiga seems to question material

conditions of post-modernity on which justifications could be sought. In these complex and contradictory socio-cultural landscapes, the spatialization of narratives assumes many trajectories. The discourse that emerges in this novel drags the central narrative to the domains of sociology, anthropology, polity, and cultural studies. These areas could be the subject of further research. Adiga's social commentary has a satirical edge too. Theoretical constructs of space narration have been employed for content, narrative and form analysis by negotiating geographical space with social and cultural themes. Adiga powerfully captures the tussle between the growing needs of people and the rise of the real estate business in the urban space. Far from reportage, his spatial narratives thrive with authentic accounts of people, their histories and consciousness in the urban space. Adiga provides humanistic insights into his narratives within his space narration. His dialogic form lends meaning to conflictual, individual and social situations within the narrative. Polyphonic voices find spatial representation through places, persons and collective consciousness. The city of Mumbai with its geographical traditional landscapes, modern landscapes, socio-economic, and cultural details, has been presented with all its symmetries and paradoxes realistically in the space of narration of "Last Man in Tower".

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Bharatmuni's Natyasastra: A contemporary pertinence

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Abstract:

Na Tajjgyanam, na tacchilpam na sa vidya, na sa kala
Na tatkarm, na yogaasau natyeasmindrishyate .(Bharat 1.116)

NS prescribes from stagecraft to theatrical equipment, from a variety of characters to all the elements of action to be performed by them, from germination of rasa to its subsequent effect on audiences, from plot to dramatical devices, from lessons in enactment to proper responses of spectators on it, from varieties of drama to varieties of heroes, heroines, villains and even spectators. It wouldn't be any exaggeration if it is said that there is nothing in the external world related to drama that has not been pondered upon by Bharat. NS has won accolades from naive to foreign scholars alike. It is in this perspective that Sanskrit scholarship regards NS as an additional Veda as it is a compendium of performing arts, drama, music, dance, sculptor and fine arts. Bharatmuni, it is believed by a major sect of scholars completed his work just at the age of 48 whereas Aristotle finished Poetics when he was an octogenarian. In the present paper, I tend to unravel some of the most distinguished beauties of NS and its significance in practical criticism even in current studies related to literature in general and drama in particular. The paper extends a beforehand caution that the content of the paper is entirely dependent on writer's understanding of NS and western poetics and also on his individual view that is inclined towards foregrounding some of the potential critical intakes from the NS and applying it in the study of literature. For a comprehensive understanding of NS and Bharat, the writer has divided this monograph into several sections from telling about the authorship to the origin of the text and from structure of NS to its relevance for understanding the whole paraphernalia of drama, from its subsequent interpretation to its contextual analysis with Western principles of criticism till date, from the biggest contribution of NS, the theory of *rasa* to kinds of drama everything is thrown light upon. This paper is not a follow up of any previous study done on NS but it is an offspring of writer's vestal propensity to make NS emulate with its fragile, scanty, inadequate and limited western counterpart.

Key Words: Natya, drama, criticism, criticism, rasa, plot, theatre, dharma etc.

V S Naipaul once groaned about the lack of sympathy and interest among Indians for History and roots in his phenomenal book *An Area Of Darkness* (67). While he may be ascribing this critical lacuna among Indians for History, it may be equally ascribed to another general tendency that ancient classical writers, sages and critics were not very much particularly interested in their own personal whereabouts; such as their birth, parenthood, time and locale. As it was with Kalidas, Valmiki, Vyas, Bana, Kaultiya and so it was with Bharatmuni too. Identification of Bharatmuni is complex, in a way vague, and it has been furthermore complicated by the text of NS itself and by subsequent commentators of this great treatise. There are multiple opinions on the actual identification of Bharatmuni. First among them is that Bharat is a caste/community to which NS has been an official documentary of their performing art. It has been documented and modified by several Bharats one after another for hundreds of years (Sharma, 1). **Among the four most known Bharats; Mandhta's grandson Bharat, Dashrath's son Bharat, Dushyant's son Bharat and Jadbharat, none of them could be identified as Bharatmuni.** Natyasastra's Bharatmuni has been mentioned just once in all Puranas and that mention appears in Matasyapurana. The treatise says that Bharata was the one who popularized the Natyaveda, created by Brahm, on the earth. He is also said to have collected all the material of earlier acharyas (ancient teachers) like Tumburu, Narada and Nandi and gave the Natyashastra a complete coherence by making additions, alterations and adaptations according to the requirements of time and space.

Within NS there are two contradictory statements regarding Bharat. In the beginning, Bharat is considered to be an individual who is blessed by Brahma and asked to tell his pupil in detail about *Natya/drama*. But in **the 36th chapter** "Bharatnaam" is used for introducer, dramatist, characters and all related to the performance of drama. This simply implies that all those who contribute in the performance of drama are called Bharats. Several modern critics of NS also consider it as a product of a long tradition of Bharats. For instance P V Kane has observed in the introductory note of *Sahityadarpan*, "The available text of NS is a finished product of a series of competent performers and scholars who have imbibed from the ancient time all urban and rural behavioural patterns of human life and its manifestations in the society and with their squeezed experiences they have embellished NS" (7-8). Baldev Upadhyay too stamps on such views and posits that the "present NS is not of either anyone specific time or of one specific person" (17). Even Dr Manmohan Ghosh and R V Jagirdar also corroborates such assumptions.

On the other hand, several views are there which establish Bharatmuni as the sole proprietor of NS. Kalidas has offered his obeisance to Bharat as a proponent of NS and as an esteemed scholar of drama. His *Malvikagnimitram* is a thorough embodiment of the entire dramatic principles of NS. Bhavbhuti, Abhinavbharti, Bana, Dhananjay, Damodargupta etc all have held Bharat as the only individual proponent of NS. To view NS as a collaborative venture seems not to hold any substantial evidence and it is almost

impossible to think that a number of scholars over a long period of time could engage on a single work that is meticulous and almost incorrigible and impeccable. Supplementary and commentaries can be added to the original text in order to embellish with more logic and practical application. Same happened with NS too.

Like every other monumental achievement of Indian intelligentsia as *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharata*, *The Ashtadhyayi*, *The Gita*, *The Vedas*, the NS too defies all claims of pinpointing the text to any certain period. Assumptions are there that take a very long duration in the History of India to ascribe a probable time to the origin of NS. Hundreds of years have been taken by several scholars in order to ascertain its definite period of time and if all the efforts couldn't reach a unanimous conclusion, nor all they have gone futile. All scholars who have spent their time and critical competence in the investigation of its time may be classified into two groups. One who ascribes NS to Bharat, an individual one and the second who ascribes it to several Bharats, a caste/community. A. B. Keith in his *The Sanskrit Drama* asserts that NS might have appeared a little later than *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* which were produced around 300BC and little earlier than Kalidas who was probably a court poet of Chandragupta II, (12). Paul Regnaud after a critical study of the rhetoric and the metrics of the work concludes that the NS might go back to 100BC (Ghosh, 59). P V Kane and Manmohan Upadhyaya consider that the NS is not after 300 AD. Manmohan Ghosh goes with the observation that, "It may therefore be concluded that the work was written in 500BC. As the NS mentions the *Shakyashra-manaj*, it can't be assigned to date much prior to the Mahaparinirvan of Buddha (62)." He further mentions that Arthshashtra has been mentioned thrice in NS, though it is ascribed to Brahaspati and not to Kautilya. Similarly, *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayayn is later than NS because the descriptions of erotic posture seem to be older than that of *Kamasutra* whose upper limit of time was the fifth century BC. Dozens of other critics have mulled on this issue and have wavered between 500BC to 400AD. But the majority of them delimit this time span from 300 BC to 200AD.

Structural pattern of NS:

The NS was written almost two millenniums ago and it had not lost its significance of applicability to any of the dramatic devices and performance of our country even in this postmodern hue. Stagecraft in India even if it is a folk performance in some forlorn area does share some of its properties with what has been described in NS. The sharing may be purely coincidental but it is there as the sage Bharat has not left any prospective component of drama in his NS. With its encyclopaedic range, it has touched upon all possible subjects connected with the stage. Unlike Aristotle's *Poetics*, NS does elaborate from stage to costumes, from acting to watching, from characters to dramatic devices, from Music and songs to put construction and everything in almost 6000 couplets/shlokas with intermittent prose commentaries into thirty-six

chapters that contain other valuable data on the history of ancient Indian culture, discussions on the following topics:

1. Origin of drama and its incarnation on earth from Heaven where it is supposed to amuse deities.
2. Construction of a playhouse, a stage, a tiring room and auditorium etc along with rituals that have to be done at the time of construction.
3. Preparations and requisites for well-finished dramatic performances.
4. Elucidations of choreography like dance, gestures and movements of different parts of the body, hand, neck, eyes, hands, legs and body in some conventional postures.
5. Costumes and make-up.
6. Classification of plays and analysis of their structure.
7. Poetic aspects of plays and meters and figures of speech used in them.
8. Theory of music and meters of songs, chanting, elocution, instruments, tunes and its measures for several modes of plays.
9. Roles and characters in plays, their classification, descriptions and training of actors, member of theatrical tropes and qualifications of ideal stage manager.
10. Criticism of dramatic performances along with the unique concept of *rasa*, the biggest contribution from India to World Aesthetics. (Ghosh, 28)

Varied Interpretation of NS:

A cursory glance has to be given to the series of commentators who have attempted an explication to the complex text of NS. Although there were several commentaries on NS by Rahul, Bhattantra, Bhattnayak, Harsha, Lollata, Shankuk, Narayandev, yet Abhinavgupta stands apart from all of them because of his chronological, systematic and comprehensive study of all previous critics on NS. It is his commentary on NS that has been retrived thoroughly that we have come to know about the long tradition of critical explication of NS. The earliest commentator of the *Natyashastra* is Lolata who gives the theory of the *aropevada* (attribution). Lolata has been said to subscribe to *uttara- mimansa* of Vedantic philosophy which considers the world as *mithya* (unreal). Shankuka happens to be the second commentator of Bharata. Some scholars consider him to be the supporter of *prachya-nyaya* (old system of logic) due to his employment of *citraturaganyaya* (picture- horse-logic) while others hold that he was a supporter of *bauddha-nyaya* (bauddha- logic) in as much as the *chitra-nyaya* (picture-logic). Be that as it may this much is certain that he subscribed to the concept of *nyaya* (logic). The third commentator of Bharat is Acharya Bhattnayak who gave the theory of *bhuktivada* (theory of taste) based on *sadharanikarana* (generalization). The next renowned exegete of Bharata is Abhinavagupta of roughly later half of the 10th and first half of the 11th C.E. His concept of *rasa* has a profoundly philosophical

basis. His concept of atmaprakasha (self-consciousness) is the expansion of Shaiva philosophy in which Paramashiva is equated with atma (soul) equipped with prakasha (light).

There are post-Abhinava acaryas also who have dealt with rasa in their celebrated works. Among them the most important is Mammat whose treatise Kavyaprakasha has attracted a host of learned annotators. The next post- Abhinava acarya is Bhanudatta who broadly supporting Bharat claims our attention by his unambiguous enunciation of rasa (aesthetic sentiment) in his Rasa-tarangini. Another post-Abhinava acarya is Vishwanath, widely known for his famous definition of poetry: “vakyam rasatmakam kavyam”, defines rasa ((aesthetic sentiment) in his Sahityadarapana. The last distinguished name in the history of rasa deliberation is Panditaraja Jagannath of the 17th century C.E. whose celebrated treatise Rasagangadhar exercises the minds of readers today by its complicated erudite style.

Chapters and content of NS:

There are 36 chapters with 6000 shlokas and intermittent epigrammatic prose expressions. It is better to learn the contents of these 36 chapters in utmost brief before we delve deeper into some of the major concepts. **Chapter one** describes the origin of NS and drama and its descendance from heaven along with the constitution of theatres by Vishwakarma and the first use of drama. The concept of anukarana (imitation) of life for a dramatic presentation. There are three kinds of theatre buildings and their ritual consecration is done by the sponsor, a rich person or a king. Chapter two is all about stage decorations and its partition for several purposes related to dramaturgy and preparation for presentation. Chapter three offers methods of rituals and prayers before the commencement of drama viz. *Rangdwait prayer, stage prayer, invocation of deities, decorating pyres, Kumbhbedhan etc.* Chapter four gives a detailed description of dance and its several movements. Chapter six and seven lays down the entire process of *rasanaspattih*, its definitions and its categories. Chapter eleven, twelve and thirteen deal with certain types of asides, declarations (aakashiki), movements of men and women characters and their sitting and standing positions. **Chapter fourteen to twenty-eight** tell us about several kinds of acting, meters and alamkaras and language. There are four types of native language, and seven types of other languages being used by characters of different classes in the drama. Chapter twenty elaborates on the ten kinds of dramas/ dashrupakas from one-act plays to ten-act plays. **Four kinds of abhinayas** (acting/expression)— angika abhinaya (bodily expression) to depict emotions/feelings of a character being played by the actor, vacika abhinaya (linguistic expression) to express emotions/feelings, tone, diction, the pitch of a particular character, aharya abhinaya (costumes of the characters and stage decoration) to enhance expression, sattvika abhinaya (voluntary changes expressed by the presence of tears, the mark of horrification, change of facial colour, trembling of lips, enhancing of nostrils) to

express the deepest emotions of a character. It is the highest kind of acting; two kinds of dharmis (theatrical representations)—lokadharmi (artistic representation of the ordinary world or the real life) and natyadharmi (artistic representation of the imaginary worlds like svarga (heavens), patala (underworld); four kinds of vrittis (modes of productions/style)—bharati (dominance of spoken contents/verbal) kaishiki (dominance of dance and music/graceful) sattvati (dominance of elevated and heroic feelings/grand) and arabhati (dominance of violent and conflicting actions/energetic) and the four pravrittis—avanti, dakshinatya, panchali and magadhi (the tastes of audiences in various parts of India); four kinds of atodyas (musical instruments used on the stage); ganam or dhruvas (songs sung in the course of dramatic action at five junctures— praveshiki (song sung before the entry of a character), naishkramiki (song sung to sooth emotions of the audience after a very moving or shocking scene), akshepiki (song sung to create an intervention) and antara (song sung in between episodes to entertain the audience); and finally ranga (theatre house). Of the ten kinds of plays, as described in NS, **Nataka, Prakarana, Samavakra and Ihamrga may include all the styles in their presentation, while Dima, Vyayoga, Prahasana, Utsristikanka, Bhana and Vithi** use only some of this. Chapter twenty nine to thirty-six is more about music, song and dance with the story, in the last chapter, NS' descending on earth and the transition of Bharat's in Shudras and its significance of it is described in great detail.

NS' theory of Imitation and the Objective of Drama:

Duhkhartanam shramartanam shokartanam tapswinaam,

Vishranti jananam kale Natymetad bhavishyati.

Dharmyam Yashashymayushyam hitam buddhi vivardhanam

Lokopdeshjananam natyametad bhavishyati. (Tiwari, 29)

In NS, Bharatmuni explicitly asserts that “a mimicry of the exploits of Gods, the Asuras, kings as well as of householders in this world is called the drama” (I, 120). Such a definition bear semblance with that of Aristotle's Poetics wherein he considers that base of all drama is *mimesis* and with that of Cicero when he says “drama is a copy of life, a mirror of customs, a reflection of truth. But Poetics and other Western principles fail to enumerate how drama or poetry is an imitation of life, NS lays down very elaborate rules as to how drama is to make mimicry of the exploits of men and their divine or semi-divine counterparts. It is due to the rules of representation that an ancient drama has been called by later theorists a poem to be seen. By this distinction all narrative form of literature is separated by drama wherein spectacle is given preeminence. Anukarana/imitation is done not only in respect of human and godly actions but also that time and place of their world too. Ancient Indian playwrights have never attempted any restriction of time on the action of the drama and also have not restricted its reproduction on the stage. Only individual acts included incidents that could take place in course of a single day, and

nothing could be put in there to interrupt the routine duties, such as saying prayers or taking meals. The lapse of time between two acts that might be a month or year (but never more than a year), is to be told by an introductory scene, preceding the second one. Similarly, places are also not restricted and characters may roam in any number of places but within the boundary of *Bharatvarsha*.

With such conditions drama in India is supposed to execute several duties for the *sahridayas*/spectators and by doing so drama dispels its intended purpose of keeping society in order. The NS emphasizes that the drama “teaches duty to those who have no sense of duty, love to those who are eager for its fulfilment, it chastises those who are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self-restraint in those who are disciplined, gives courage to cowards, energy to heroic persons, enlightens men of poor intellect and gives wisdom to those who are learned” (Ghosh, 34). One must be on his guard while receiving meaning of such a framework, all these conditions may not take place in one drama but it is all-inclusive and draws a contour of all prospective themes of drama to be attempted by a variety of dramatists of all ages. The love of spectacle is inherent in all normal people and this being so, everyone will enjoy a play whatever be its theme, unless it is to contain anything which is antisocial in the characters.

NS also exemplifies that in order to cater to the tastes of a variety of audiences; drama should be of varying range and must address the concept of manysidedness. NS suggests, “Young people are pleased to see love, the learned a reference to some doctrine religious or spiritual, the seekers are pleased with wealth and topics of money and the passionless the topics of liberation. Heroic persons are pleased with the theme of odious, personal combats and battles and the old people in Puranic legends and tales of virtue. And common women, children and uncultured persons are always delighted with the comic sentiments and remarkable costumes with make-ups” (25, 59-61).

Theory of *Rasa*/Emotions:

Bharatmuni suggests, “Vibhavanubhava-vyabhichari-samyogad rasa nispatih” which simply means *rasa* is accomplished as a result of harmonious conjunction of *Vibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Vyabhicharibhava*. Here *vibhava* stands for an objective condition producing an emotion and is of two kinds: 1. *Alamban* and 2. *Uddipana*. *Alamban* is person or persons who ignite some emotions and *Uddipana* means circumstances or surrounding that help in ignition of emotions. *Anubhava* means bodily expressions by which the emotion is expressed. Arch glances or beautiful smile of ladies are *anubhava*. *Vyabhichari* means a series of diverse emotions that feed the dominant emotions. Like love’s *vyabhichari bhavas* are shyness, looking and glances, attracting with many ideas etc. Bharatmuni is of the view that men and women have some *sthayi* (permanent) and *vyabhichari* (complimentary) *bhavas*. They have as many as forty one psychological states (*bhavas*) like love (*Shringar*), joy (*haas*), anger (*raudra*), sorrow (*karun*),

energy (veer), terror (fear), disgust (vibhatsa), astonishment (wonder), discouragement, envy, intoxication, weariness, anxiety, indolence etc. only the first eight have a durable effect on the human personality and constitute the bases of sentiments (rasa) while the remaining thirty-three have only a complementary effect on it, and it is by strengthening the effects of the durable psychological states that they play their part in the evocation of sentiments. Each of the eight durable psychological states (sthayi bhava): **amorous, ludicrous, pathetic, heroic, passionate, fearful, nauseating and the wondrous.** Later, critics and scholars added the peaceful and the devotional and the filial. These sthayi bhavas, to listen to Edgerton, act as a stimulus in evoking in the spectator a verisimilitude of such a psychological state, which is then called a sentiment (277). There are thirty-three vyabhicharibhavas out of which some of them are listed below:

1. 'nirveda' or discouragement indicated by tears, sighs, pensiveness, etc
2. 'glani' or internal weakness by weak voice, lusterless eyes, sleeplessness, gait
3. 'shanka' or apprehension by unsteady looks, hesitating movements
4. 'asuya' or jealousy by decrying others' merits
5. 'mada' or intoxication by laughing, singing, sneezing, hiccough
6. 'srama' or exhaustion by heavy breaths, twisting of limbs
7. 'alasya' or sloth by moroseness, sleeplessness, disinterest in work
8. 'dianya' depression by dullness, absentmindedness, negligence of cleanliness
9. 'chinta' or anxiety by deep breathing, meditation, sighing, agony 'moha' or distraction by reeling sensations and staggering looks 'smrti' or remembrance by knitting of eyebrows, nodding of head 'dhrti' or composure by general indifference to grief or passion etc. 'vridness' of a or bashfulness by dullness of eyes, scratching of nails 'chupalata' or inconstancy by harsh words. rebuke, vapulation 'harsha or joy by brightness of looks, horripilation
10. 'avega' or agitation by distress in limbs, tightening of clothes
11. 'jadata' or stupor by loss of movement and energy, blank gazes 'garva or pride by irresponsiveness, haughty manners. Sarcastic smiles 'vishada or dismay by deep breathing, loss of energy
12. 'autsukya' or eagerness by sighs, drowsiness, thinking 'nirada' or sleep by obvious gestures
13. 'apasamara' or catalepsy by throbbing, tremor, perspiration
14. 'supta' or dreaming by obvious ensuants 'vibodha' or wakefulness by yawning 'amarsha' or anger by evident gestures
15. 'avahittaha, or dissimulation by break in speech, feigned patience
16. 'ugrata or vehemence by acrimony, scolding, threatening

17. 'mati or rationality by coolness of behaviour, ascertaining meaning 'vyadhi' or sickness by evident symptoms
18. 'unmada or insanity by evident behaviour 'marana or death by evident symptoms 'trasa or terror by evident symptoms 'vitarka' or reasoning by evident symptoms

It is that process of purgation which even Aristotle also exhorted in his theory of Catharsis. Such purgation takes place through the process of sadharnikaran. Lets us understand it through an example of amorous state. There is change in heartbeat, rosiness in all surrounding, eagerness and a lot of anticipation when a man/woman is about to meet for their first outing together. Now all such things are called vibhavas or determinants. Vyabhichari bhavas are complementary psychological states which contribute in the attainment of permanent/durable states. For example, in case of the amorous state which arises from the union of lovers following complimentary states will take place: excitement, rising temperature, leaping heartbeat, detached from the surrounding world, panting, nervousness etc. These disappear after strengthening the durable psychological states and hence they are called complementary states.

The view of Rasa, asserts S N Dasgupta, expressed by Abhinavgupta has been accepted in later times as the almost unchallengeable gospel truth and as the last analysis of the aesthetic phenomenon propagated through literature (Seturaman, 196).

Let's understand how rasa is attained or produced. According to the ancient theorists each of us is fitted with a built-in structure of 'sthayi bhavas' or basic mental states which are the modified forms of basic drives or instincts as a result of centuries of evolutionary process of humanization and social living. These sthayibhavas (permanent emotions)', which are chiefly eight in number, are heightened to a relishable state called 'rasadasha' by the poet so that we have one rasa or emotion corresponding to each of them. It is the sthayi bhava which is the basis of rasa. Vibhava, anubhava and vyabhicharibhava awaken this innate emotion bringing it into a relishable flavour called rasa. This flavour or state remains subjective unless it is delineated by the poet in kavya where he objectifies his experience. S K De, defining this state, holds:

It is practically admitted on all hands, on semi-psychological considerations of poetry, that the rasa is a state of relish in the reader, of the principal sentiment in the composition, a subjective condition of his mind, which is brought about when the principal or permanent mood (sthayibhava) is brought into a relishable condition through the three elements vibhava, anubhava and vyabhicharibhava exhibited in the drama (97).

Drama; Its kind and structure:

Of all ten kinds of plays, the Nataka and the Prakarana being more complex than the rest, belong to the **major types**. A comprehensive knowledge of the nature and construction of these two kinds aids in understanding the remaining eight kinds of plays that are called **minor types**.

Nataka is the first of two major types of play. Its subject matter must be a well-known story with a hero of celebrated and exalted nature. It describes the character of a person descending from a royal seer, the divine protection for him, and for his many superhuman powers and exploits. All this must be presented in acts, not more than ten and not less than five at any cost. Each of act consists of a series of more or less loosely connected scenes. Indian plays are mostly comedy in nature because death, defeat or escape from the action of the hero is strictly restricted. There are introductory scenes in order to give information which can't be represented on the stage. The action of the play has to include incidents which could take place in course of a single day. If there are more incidents those could be introduced through introductory scenes or Pravesakas where minor characters only can take place. An act should not include representation of events relating to feasts of excessive anger, favour and gifts, pronouncing curses, running away, marriage, battle, loss of the kingdom, natural calamities etc. (XX, 21). Plot of the Nataka is twofold: the principal (adhikarika) and the incidental (prasangika). The exertion of the hero for the object to be attained is to be represented through the following five stages; beginning, effort, the possibility of attainment, the certainty of attainment and attainment of the result.

Prakarna is only second to Nataka in significance. It resembles to Nataka in all aspects except that it takes a rather less elevated range. Its plot is to be original and drawn from real life and the most appropriate theme is love. the hero may be a Brahmin, a merchant, an officer or a leader of an army. Female characters in this play are a depraved woman of good family. A lot of focus is on the refined manners of courtesans and for this it comes closer to comedy of manners. Shudrak's Merchaktika is an absolute example of such prakarna.

Eight Minor plays are *Samavakra, Ihamrga, Dima, Vyayoga, Utsristikanka, Prahasna, Bhana and Vithi*. Samavakra is a three act play on some mythological theme. It has to be performed in eighteen Nadikas that is equal to seven hours and twelve minutes. Ihamrga is a play of four acts on some divine theme like implication of divine males over some divine females and thus it is full of intrigues, deception and tussle in love affairs. Dima is a play of four acts only on a well-known and exalted plot totally devoid of comic and erotic subjects. Sixteen characters from all three worlds attempt to seek a solace after some natural calamity like an earthquake, flood, or fall of meteors. Vyayoga is a play of one act that deals with personal combat, challenge and angry exchange of arguments. Bhasa's Madhyama-vyayoga is a solitary

old specimen of this kind. Utsrstikanka or Anka is a one-act play with a well-known plot, and it includes only human characters. It should abound in the pathetic sentiments and is to treat women's lamentations and despondent utterances when battle and violent fighting had ceased. Bhasa's *Urubhanga* seems to be its solitary specimen. Prahasna is a farce or a play in which the comic sentiments predominate in one act. Bhana is again a one-act play with a single character who speaks after repeating words of persons who remain invisible throughout the play. The play in monologue relates to one's own or another's adventure. Vithi, the last of the minor plays is also a one-act short play with one or two characters.

NS elaborates on the art of characterization also in Indian plays. If a plot is the outer lines of a painting characterization is the colours to be filled in it. Characters in plays have been broadly divided into three types in accordance with their human qualities as superior, middling and inferior (NS XXXIV, 2-3). These three kinds are further divided into three kinds of males and correspondingly three kinds of women. A more practical classification according to their relative importance in the drama is also taken up. Naturally, first comes the hero and heroine and then their entourage have also fair share in the discussion to be followed. Apart from it, NS discusses diction, meter, figures of speech, time for enactment, kinds of theatre and everything that is a requisite for dramatic performances (Deshpande, 337).

To find an equally comprehensive document on drama or on any genre of literature is a daunting task almost to the extent of impossibility. Bharat's NS is like a lighthouse constantly disseminating ideas on almost all possible aspects of drama. Its significance in the study of drama is unquestionable worldwide and nowhere else in the world has any single critic dared to accommodate such a vast range in his/her study of drama. It is true indeed what we say about peerless achievements, *na bhuto na bhavishyati*.

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Romantic Qualities in Keats' Poetry

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Abstract: John Keats is in many ways the main romantic of all romantic poets. Romantic poetry targets the whole expression of the person as compared to classical poetry, which objectives at the expression of social experience. Different romantic poets have some political or social comments in their poetry. But the poetry of Keats is not a vehicle of any augury or any message. It is poetry for its sake. It has no moral, no political, or social importance. It is therefore the purest poetry. The romantic quality in literature has been described by Peter as 'the addition of strangeness of beauty. In not anything else is Keats as romantic as in his frank pursuit of beauty. Beauty is Deity, Beauty for him is synonymous with truth. A thing of beauty is for him a joy forever: Beauty is his faith. In this pursuit of beauty, completely forgets himself and the world around him. Romantic poetry defines not the world of reality but the world of dreams. The romantic poet searches for an escape from the hard realities of life in a world of romance and beauty. Keats is the main romantic of all the poets in the sense that he is the most escapist of them all. His "Ode to a Nightingale" is marked by an evaluation between the bird's happiness and the poet's unhappiness. Sensuousness is the supreme characteristic of Romantic poets. Keats is pre-eminently a poet of sensuousness.

Keywords: Augury, Escape, Escapist, Sensuousness, pre-eminently.

John Keats is the last yet most excellent romantic poet in English Literature if we critically examine his poems. It's because he's not a social poet. Social poetry offers the social and political issues of society. Due to the genre of his poetry being romantic so John Keats doesn't write about social problems. He doesn't touch them and holds on himself down from them. He believes that it isn't essential to clarify what's passing in the world so far as the factual purpose of poetry is related. In discrepancy John Keats, numerous great poets show social problems in their poems. They illustrate asinities in humans and also satirize society by using pessimistic words. Some poets talk about politics, while others comment on people's geste but John Keats has no relation with politics nor does he lay a hand on the morals of the civilization in his poems as he's purely romantic. Every lyric of John Keats describes problems of his own. His poetry is proposing. It's neither for the sake of censuring nor to inform the people of any society. He gives neither any information nor does propose to his compendiums. His poetry lacks morality. His words aren't truculent. He does poetry for the sake of poetry most effectively. Thus, John Keats is considered the purest

poet in the history of English Literature. Pure poetry is an essential element of romantic poetry. However, John Keats as a romantic poet feels that his ideal to do poetry only for poetry is one of the introductory factors which makes him a romantic poet if we distinctly estimate. Performance is the most important part of romantic poetry. It's available inside the poetry of John Keats and makes him a stylish romantic poet.

English Romanticism Prof. Cazamian says, "attains the final stage of its progress in Keats."(E. Legouis and L. Cazamian) Keats grew to be a poet in the atmosphere of romanticism dominated by Wordsworth and Coleridge. He felt their great influence and remarked in the vehemence of enthusiasm, Great spirits now on earth are tarrying. The traditions of the great romantic poets were carried forward by Keats in his poetry and they reached their climaxing point in his art. All the rates that characterized the romantic movement in poetry during the nineteenth century planted a befitting place in his poetry. Let us now dissect the romantic rates of Keats' poetry. Compare the figure for Autumn:

"And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep,
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider press, with a patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozing's hours by hours." (Bloom) (*The Ode to Autumn*)

Or that of Saturn in Hyperion:

"Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay never less, listless, dead,
Unscattered and his realm fewer eyes were closed." (Barnard)

Keats is sensuous through and through. But his sympathies broadened and his mind progressed. In his mature poems, there is an awakening intellect and a spiritual passion. But it was not the bare idolization of simple sensations that characterized his station in the external world. His senses were converted and their acuteness came so creative as to make the fairness of the real world still lovelier. As a critic remarks Keats' mind is mainly sensuous by direct action, but it also works by reflex action, passing from sensuousness into sentiment. Easily, some of his factories are simply extremely sensuous. Keats' portraits were told and inspired by the Hellenic way of life, but in execution and system, he was a romantic. The themes of his poems were taken from classical stories, but their treatment was romantic. Endymion, Lamia, Hyperion are classical in the story, but their treatment is romantic. Only the Eve of St. Agnes, Isabella, and La Belle Dame Sans Merci is romantic in subject matter and romantic in execution.

Romantic Element in Keats' Poetry

Keats is essentially romantic. His poetry is the meeting ground of old Hellenism and romanticism. Hellenism is Greek influence and by romantic poems, we mean poems of love and adventure, frequently

colored with the religious spirit of medieval days, firstly written in romantic dialect. The romantic poet conjures up the haunting suggestion of man might fail. The romantic poet makes use of several biases in his poetry to give it an air of romantic beauty. He introduces various descriptions of beauty, the storm, moonlight, flowers, etc. He defines imaginative analogies and conceits, sensuous images, and unanticipated circumstances. Keats as a romantic poet is stylish in his two poems *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*. For example:

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long.
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A fairy's song
She found me roots of relish sweet
And honey wild and manna dew,
And sure, in language strange she said
I love thee true." (Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*)

In these lines from *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, we find Keats's love of romanticism. If the romantic sense of the oneness of nature found its loftiest exponent in P.B. Shelley the romantic sensibility to outward appearance reached its climax in Keats. For him, life is a series of sensations, felt with keen acuteness. Records of sight, touch, and smell crowd every line of his work as not planted in any other romantic poet. His ideal was unresistant contemplation rather than active internal exertion. No romantic poet has worshipped beauty as much as Keats has done. He made beauty his ideal:

"Beauty is truth, truth is beauty, that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know." (Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*)

Like numerous romantic poets, Keats is a master of crisp phraseology and pen-portrait. Keats nearly confederated to these imaginative expressions and maybe more characteristics of Keats and peculiar to him are the short pictorial vivid portraits which may be called his masterpieces of the word-painting in which with many words, he connectives fully to furnish a portrait which it's frequently of vast size.

His poems *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* are romantic both in generality as well as prosecution. All the romantic rudiments viz., daring spirit, enduring love, fastness unto death, sprits of nobility and chivalry, bold adventures, weird and strange effects and places, mysterious casts of fairylands are to be planted in the plenitude in those poems. Some of the Odes, like the *Ode to the Nightingale* and *Ode to the Grecian Urn* have traces of love. For example:

"And magic casements
Opening on the foam of perilous seas
In fairylands forlorn." (Keats, Ode on a Grecian Urn)

As a Poet, Keats' love for beauty

Romantic Poets had a love for beauty and it was their charge in life to produce the beauty of all forms and kinds in their poetry. In this respect, Keats was the topmost visionary for his beauty was erected on the foundation of beauty. Every line in his poetry carries its noble freight of beauty. For Keats, the poet of beauty, "A thing of beauty is a joy ever. "He, latterly on, identifies beauty with verity, and in Hyperion he declares:

"For it's the eternal law,
That first in beauty should be first in might." (Barnard)

It was Keats' charge in life to love and produce beauty. It's no small thing for Keats says, Matthew Arnold, to have so favoured principle of beauty as to perceive the necessary relation of beauty with verity, and of both, with joy"(Arnold). Keats himself took pride in being the poet of beauty. However, "he wrote, "I've left no immortal work behind me nothing to make my musketeers proud of my memory; but I've loved the principle of beauty in all effects, "If I should die."

As a Poet, Keats' Love for Nature

All romantic poets had a love for nature and Keats was as great a poet of nature as Wordsworth or Shelley. He loved nature for her own sake without changing any mystical meaning like Wordsworth in the object of nature. He was tremulous with joy at the presence of nature's fairness and charm. There wasn't a mood on earth, he didn't love, not a season that didn't cheer and inspire him. For him, the poetry of earth was in no way dead. He was in his glory in the fields. The humming of the freak, the sight of the flower, the shimmer of the sun sounded to make his nature fluctuate. He has left before awful descriptions of the knockouts of nature in all his odes, sleep and poetry, and Endymion. Hudson says, "Keats loved nature just for its sake hand and for glory and fairness, which he everyplace plant in it. There was nothing mystical in this love and nature was no way freight for him, as for Wordsworth and Shelley with spiritual communication and meanings." (Hudson)

Keats loved and interpreted nature more for her own sake and lower for the sake of sympathy which the mortal soul come read into her with its working and aspirations. Keats' soul has access to the external world of nature through all the senses viz., eyes, cognizance, nose, touch, etc. While Milton was blessed

with a fine observance Wordsworth with a clear vision. Keats sees beauty in all aspects of nature both as a conserver and destroyer. The main study enunciated by the poet in the Ode is the supremacy of art over nature. Art gives a lasting personification to everything. The numbers sculpted on the Charnel are as beautiful and fresh moment as they were on the day when they lived.

"Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
The song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, canst thou kiss.
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou have not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she is fair!" (Keats, Ode on a Grecian Urn)

For Keats beauty of art was nothing different than the beauty of nature. The trees are always in full of bloom; they cannot exfoliate off their leaves. The spring shall always continue. The piper shall always go on the pipeline. The lover shall go on enjoying the love of his cherished. He'll always have a burning forehead and a parching tongue.

Keats uses the power of imagination in his poetry

Romantic Poets have been endowed with imaginative faculty and in Keats, the power of imagination was always at its height. The trees are always in full of bloom; they cannot exfoliate off their leaves. The spring shall always continue. The piper shall always go on the piping. The lover shall go on enjoying the love of his cherished. He'll always have a burning forehead and a parching tongue.

"Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever planting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead and a parching tongue." (Keats, Ode on a Grecian Urn)

Through his imagination, he could recreate for his delight the old-world medieval love, the world of medieval love, the world of Elizabethan love, and the varied love of beauty, love, chivalry, and adventure. To him, poetry was a world of the imagination only, the realm of enchantment where only those who

might dwell who saw fancies and portrait fancies-a land of luscious languor, where magic filled the air and life passed like a dream, measured only by the fineness and the intensity of its delight.

Keats uses strange notes of weird sadness in his poetry

Romanticism was nature in the soil of melancholy and weird sadness. In Keats' poetry, the note of melancholy and sadness is struck in a hundred places. We hear it not only in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode to Melancholy*, also in poems dealing directly with nature. The poet strikes this sad note of despair in lines: -

"Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow." (Fogle)

The Indian Maid's lament in *Endymion* is particularly representative of this haunting note of sadness in Keats' romantic poetry.

Keats uses Love for fine phrases in his poetry

Romantic Poets are pleased with fine expressions and pictorial descriptions. Keats loved fine expressions, and a perfect expression delighted him with a sense of intoxication. His poetry abounds, in beautiful expressions and expressions in which to quote Robert Bridges, "all the far-reaching coffers of language are concentrated on one point."(Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*) About the felicity of Keats' expressions Matthew Arnold comment, "Shakespeare a work it isn't imitative indeed of Shakespeare, but Shakespeare in that rounded felicity and perfection of expression of which Shakespeare is the great master."(Bridges) And akin to the imaginative expression is the poet's masterpieces in the world- oil, so exquisitely beautiful and romantic in their colouring. How brightly the poets paint the magic casement in *The Eve of St. Agnes* and how fine is his oil of *Lamia*: -

"She was the gordian shape of dazzling hue
Vermilion spatted, golden, green, and blue
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard
Eyelike a peacock, and all crimson barred." (Arnold)

Medievalism in John Keats' Poetry

An important point about Keats' medievalism is its stress on passion rather than on action and thrilling adventure. Keats was a great lover of the Middle Periods. Keats, who was primarily a poet of pure imagination without important contact with reality, was naturally fascinated by the charm of the Middle Periods. Keats pays his homage to the Middle Periods in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *The Eve of St. Mark*, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and *Isabella*. In *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* Keats not only reproduces the

medieval pomp and chivalry. The reference to the attractive grotto, "honey wild and manna dew", dream-vision of the configurations of lords, tycoons, and soldiers verbose over the whole lyric the mood of admiration and wonder that's associated with the medieval mind. The love and cultural glory of the medieval world are skewered in *The Eve of St. Agnes*. The medieval atmosphere pervades the entire lyric and is created by the wealth of suggestive traces; the old legend-'and Madeline asleep in the stage of legends old'-Superstition, the medieval atmosphere is suggested wit Beauty is the religion of John Keats. He can search for it in catcalls, in the timber, in shadows, in art, in flowers indeed in the Greek tradition. He's a sensuous lover of beauty. His poetry directly hits the senses of his compendiums. According to him, beauty is eternal and it always affects all five senses. Indeed, the increases his poetry with sensuous beauty in worries, mourning, pains, and bummers. "Hyperion" for the case, is a sad and caliginous lyric yet Keats cannot stop himself from mentioning beauty when he says "A thing of beauty is a joy ever." Therefore, in these two poems, we have the stylish of medievalism. In *The Eve of St. Mark*, we have the medieval beauty and spiritual symbolism of church ritual; in *The Eve of St. Agnes* that external wealth of colour and picturesqueness that Scott found so fascinating in the Middle Periods.

John Keats' poetry is an illustration of forthcoming romantic pens writers. He ignored classicism and preferred romanticism. Keats is known as the romantic poet in English literature. Beauty is the religion of John Keats. He can search for it in catcalls, in the timber, in shadows, in art, in flowers indeed in the Greek tradition. He's a sensuous lover of beauty. His poetry directly hits the senses of his readers. According to him, beauty is eternal and it always affects all five senses. Indeed, in worries, mourning, pains, and bummers, he increases his poetry with sensuous beauty. "Hyperion" for the case, is a sad and caliginous lyric yet Keats cannot stop himself from mentioning beauty when he says "A thing of beauty is a joy ever". Keats touched on nearly all the aspects of romantic poetry, love of nature, love of beauty, supernaturalism, love of history, and the gleam of emotion. Romantic poetry presents not the world of reality, but the world of dreams. Keats is the most romantic of all poets in the sense that he's the most escapist of them all. Keats seeks an escape from history. His imagination is caught by the ancient Greeks as well as the glory and splendour of the Middle Periods. *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, and *Lamia* are all classical themes, through romance in style. *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, *Isabella*, and *The Eve of St. Agnes* are medieval in origin. Therefore, Keats finds an escape into the history of the rough realities of the present. Keats' lyrical style is romantic. Keats is one of the great sonneteers in the English language and his Odes, with their musical inflow in long stanzas, stand as unique samples of romantic poetry. Keats was a true romantic-not a romantic in the stereotyped sense of dealing with the conceits of life.

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Reading Comprehension Strategies: In Second Language Learning

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Abstract: In reaction to global apprehension over poor comprehension skills among teenager learners, Instructor of these students is encouraged to integrate reading comprehension instruction into their classrooms. To raise the feasibility that reading comprehension strategies are incorporated in schools, for giving purpose it is expected to instructors, teachers, and tutors in every field require extensive practice using strategies to facilitate their area of expertise. To develop a better understanding of what strategies are looked at as useful in different content areas, the investigation of preferred reading content by students is analyzed by the researchers in diverse perspective. The Methodology used a kind survey of a certain age group within set of questions, which is based on comprehension strategies. After survey the data is analyzed into statistical form, and these statistical tables are showing the assessment of student's performance in different dimensions. At the time of analysis, the researchers identify common preferences among participants in India. The above study has suggested some strategies while analysis of content reading methods.

Key Words: Comprehension Methods, Instruction, theory, practice, and policy.

Introduction

The aim of current research has been the detailed assessment of reading and comprehension skills of technical English Communication in the classroom. 'Strong reading comprehension skills are critical to students' success in twenty-first-century classrooms (Ness, 2009; Programme for International Students Assessment, 2009). Kissau and Hiller discussed in 2013 that it is international problem for adolescent learners. According to them, it is a diversified crisis that occurred universally. Especially in India, where the people are using English as a second language, the example can be visible in any state. A. Pandey (2019, Language in India), highlight "India is a multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious nation with a tremendous variety of tribes, culture, geographies, languages, classes, customs, practices and elevations with the knowledge, exposure and needs widely differing in individual circumstances". Above reasons can define every class should require a kind of universal language; "English" is one of that language which would fulfil the need of the learners. The development of reading comprehension in Technical Communication, as it exists now, has been contributing to the development of Communication Skills of the students. It also assesses the gap (s), if any, that exists between the expectations and needs of the students and the actual delivery of the course. The various findings have been presented in the form of tables and their possible interpretations have been given in the form of results or inferences.

According to national and international tests of literacy, such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP]), the assessed students across the countries are unable to do relatively easy literacy task such as relevant information to determine the main idea of the text or make simple reference. The latest PISA report 21st century readers: developing literacy skills in digital words takes a different and equally important perspective, which is to focus on the skills angles. As per researcher's observation, the adolescents take it as skills due to technological backwardness. It is also navigating new worlds of information.

The Complexity of reading comprehension:

The reading comprehension is the most complex behaviors in which we are engage. These comprehension skills are important for the entire subject, sometimes students are unable to decide that it may only useful for literature subject. "A typical college student is unable to deeply comprehend what he or she reads. Most students have few if any intellectual tools that would enable them to read deeply, and then apply what they have read' (Elder and Paul 2004, p.1)

Research Methodology

A survey design was applied to understand the student's perception of different dimensions of the Technical Communication course and access the feasibility and utility of the course in light of student requirements and expectations. A self-made semi-structured questionnaire was distributed among 300 students from different institutes affiliated with Gautam Buddha Technical University Uttar Pradesh. Out of which 210 filled questionnaires were received with a return rate of 70%. These questionnaires were used for further analysis by applying descriptive statistics. The questionnaire the study consisted of Ethical and demographic forms to get personal information and approval of the students.

Finding of the Research:

The collected data was analyzed by the researcher and presented in the form of statistical figures. The different finding has shown in further tables.

SPSS Analysis:

The data collected from the questionnaires were submitted to SPSS for plotting the graphs and tables. SPSS is commercially distributed software usually employed for data management and statistical analysis in social sciences and humanities. Introduced in 1968, it helped revolutionize research practices in the social sciences, enabling researchers to conduct complex statistical analyses on their own. Presently, SPSS is a comparably easy-to-handle statistics program providing commonly used procedures.

Comparison between students’ expectations from the Technical Communication course and the actual improvement in their skills

The data presented in the following tables gives us an idea of the expectations of students regarding the four core skills of the English language, i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and the actual gain from the technical communication course

Table-1: Students’ Expectations

		Number of students	Percent
Reading	No	187	89.0
	Yes	23	11.0
	Total	210	100.0
Writing	No	158	75.2
	Yes	52	24.8
	Total	210	100.0
Listening	No	165	78.6
	Yes	45	21.4
	Total	210	100.0
Speaking	No	40	19.0
	Yes	170	81.0
	Total	210	100.0

		Number of Students	Percent
Reading	no	179	85.2
	yes	31	14.8
	Total	210	100.0
Writing	no	132	62.9
	yes	78	37.1
	Total	210	100.0
Listening	no	134	63.8
	yes	76	36.2
	Total	210	100.0
Speaking	no	77	36.7
	yes	133	63.3
	Total	210	100.0

Table-2: Actual Improvement

As is evident from the above tables, in response to the question regarding the need for the four core English skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, 11% of students say yes to reading, 24.8% say yes to writing, 21.4% to listening, and 81% to speaking while 89% of students say, that they do not require improving their reading, 75% say no to writing, 78.6% to listening, and 19% to speaking. This indicates that the majority of the students believe that they need to improve their speaking skills (81%). As a result,

it can be inferred that more emphasis should be given to improving their speaking skills. To the question as to which of their English skills have improved the most by the Technical Communication course 14.8% of students say yes to reading, 37.1% to Writing, 36.7% to Listening, and 63.3% to Speaking. Consequently, on the same question, 85.2% say no to Reading, 62.9 to Writing, 63.8 to Listening, and only 36.7 to Speaking. Thus it shows that the course, in its present form, has improved all their skills as per their expectations except their speaking skills. The course has given the maximum emphasis on speaking skills and as a result, the improvement is the most in this area, however, there still exists a gap between the expectations (81%) and the actual delivery (63.3) and it needs to be properly filled.

Effect of Schooling on the need and improvement in Language Ability of the Students

Of all the factors one’s training and schooling impact language abilities the most. Someone coming from a convent school and a big city has better access and exposure to the English language and accordingly his needs are different from the needs of someone who comes from a village and a traditional school. Further, it may not be justified to make any kind of sweeping generalization. The following tables make a detailed analysis of the findings based on data collected across the various colleges of Gautam Buddha Technical University.

Table-3: The need for Reading Ability

			Reading		
			No	Yes	Total
Area to which students have completed their intermediate	Rural Area	Number of students	25	1	26
		% within Rural area	96.2%	3.8%	100.0%
	Urban Area	Number of students	162	22	184
		% within UA	88.0%	12.0%	100.0%
Total		Number of students	187	23	210
		% within Area	89.0%	11.0%	100.0%

Table -4: Improvement in Reading Ability

			Reading		
			No	Yes	Total
Area to which students have completed their intermediate	Rural Area	Number of Students	22	4	26
		% within Rural Area	84.6%	15.4%	100.0%
	Urban	Number of	157	27	184

	Area	Students			
		% within Urban Area	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%
Total		Number of Students	179	31	210
		% within Area	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%

The above tables project the expectations of the students, from both rural and urban areas, regarding need and improvement in their reading ability. Out of 26 students who have done their intermediate from the rural area, 96.2% reported they do not need to improve their reading ability through technical communication courses. Similarly, out of 184 students who have completed their intermediate from urban area 162 reported that they do not need to improve their reading ability through this course. It is evident from table-3 that there is a high percentage of students (89%), in the sample; who do not demand improvement in reading ability. Thus there is no statistically significant difference in the need for improving reading ability through technical communication courses between students from rural and urban areas. So far as improvement of the reading ability is concerned, 15.4% out of 26 rural students say yes to it while 14.7% out of 184 urban students concede that they have improved their reading abilities through technical communication courses. There is no significant difference between urban and rural students regarding their improvement of reading skills. The data received may be an indicator of students' indifference to or ignorance of the significance of reading skills in both areas. As such the course in its present form seems to be able to satisfy students' needs but needs to emphasize more on reading skills to develop students' creative faculty, writing style, and critical thinking.

Conclusion-

Most undergraduate students desire to improve their abilities in English speaking, listening, and writing, but they neglect the importance of reading. The teaching materials of the technical communication course are practical and have raised students' ability in professional communication, chiefly, in the area of speaking and writing, but not so significantly in reading and listening and, to a moderate level, of writing skills. This lapse can be bridged by delivering listening and reading lessons separately by expert instructors. It also requires the instructors of technical communication courses to improve their teaching methods. A student-centered approach should be adopted in technical communication teaching and mutual Communication between teachers and students should be emphasized in class to raise students' oral ability in technical communication

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Exploring the Gendered Discourse: A Select Study of Dalit Autobiographies

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Abstract: Dalit literature is also called minority literature. It is a form of resistance to social and cultural categories. Dalit literature is essentially a human and social record about people who have been oppressed economically and socially in India for thousands of years. It is a relatively new branch of Indian literature that represents a growth tendency inside the Indian literary world. The primary goal of Dalit autobiographies is really to document the Dalits' collective pain and humiliation. In terms of expression and aim, Dalit autobiographies are distinct from other varieties. They depict the devaluation of Dalits and serve as 'intellectual propaganda' to raise political and socioeconomic awareness. Dalit autobiographers are worried about the Dalits' precarious situation. Indian women writers have also created a stable spot in the realm of literary works since they have authored with a female viewpoint and had not emulated the founded as well as reductive decorum of written form.

Keywords: Dalits, Autobiography, Gender, Suffering, Caste

'Dalit' is a term that refers to a developing identity and community. To identify as a Dalit, which means 'ground down,' 'broken to bits,' or 'crushed', is to transform a negative descriptor into a confrontational personality and become a certain type of political object. The 'Varna system', the Hindu caste order which allows for much too much inequality, is the subject of Dalit literature. The Dalit literary revolution in India is motivated by the Dalit activist, leader, and politician Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideas and worldview. Before this was featured in indigenous syllabi, Dalit literature debuted in the syllabi of several literary courses in the United States, with adaptations into Japanese, French, German, and other languages. It has gained international appreciation. (Langare 2013)

Discussing the Indian context's major issues of gender, class, and caste in addition to documenting a woman's journey toward self-discovery and self-affirmation, this article provides insight into Indian society as a whole. Those who identify as Dalit women are ranked at the bottom of the social caste scale. Their misery is compounded by the fact that they face discrimination on three levels: first, because they are women; second, because

they are members of the Dalit group; and third, because they are females within the Dalit community. Dalit women were sometimes subjected to physical and verbal abuse by their fathers and forced to serve their husbands' sexual and domestic desires. Forced and often sexually harassed, they were concurrently dishonoured in the public sphere. As far as caste and gender are concerned, Dalit women occupy the very bottom rungs of the ladder. It is rare for Dalit women to have a voice, yet their stories provide a look into the oppression they have suffered.

Dalit life writing is a new area in which an author, as a representative, conveys the multidimensional nature of oppression through literary means such as memoirs, autobiography, diaries, testimonies, and other forms of expression, and elucidates exigent circumstances indicating a dire need for individual rights for the socially disadvantaged segment of Indian culture (Mishra 2021: 389-392). Compared to poetry and fiction, an autobiography is a form that Indians rarely engage in.

Dalit literature is among India's most important literary genres. Dalit literature provides a voice to the people. Dalit comes from the Sanskrit term 'Dalita,' which means crushed, smashed to pieces, and repressed. The term Dalit relates to a socioeconomically and educationally deprived group of people or society. The upper castes rule and marginalise the Dalit community. Dalits were considered slaves during the Vedic period. According to the Rig-Veda, all humans are derived from God. The Brahmanas were his lips, the Kshatriyas were his arms, the Vaishyas were his thighs, as well as the Shudras were his feet, according to the Rig-Veda. The caste system is given room by observation and beliefs. As part of the social reformation period, Dalit literature emerged. Dalit literature is largely created to give Dalits a platform, and Dalit writing arose in the wake of the protests mainly to support the cause. As a result, it has developed its own aesthetics, which includes newer styles, subjects, forms, and techniques. During the twentieth century, in the post-colonial and post-modern eras, the world witnessed a revolutionary movement that sought a system based on equality for all people. (Emmadi and Bohra 2021: 5-11)

In comparison to fiction and poetry, autobiography is a form that Indians seldom use. It raises questions about gender, class, caste inside the Indian environment. It provides a baseline image of Indian culture in addition to documenting a woman's development of individual identity and declaration of individuality (Dapke and Karad 2017). Dalit autobiographies are time capsules of anguish that have become part of the community's

cultural and social heritage. The self has become a symbol for all Dalits who have been oppressed and repressed due to their Dalit origin. Dalit autobiographies are referred to as 'social epiphanies' by G. N. Devy. These autobiographies fashion a self, more than they locate that self within such a larger cultural and social environment. 'Dalit memoirs are literary expressions of social protest tactics,' says Guy Poitevin. Whether these memoirs are life tales or testimonies, one thing is certain: the subject/narrator alternates between both the personal 'I' as well as the communal 'we'. This genre of autobiography is used by Dalit authors as a 'counter memory of Hinduism' as well as the class structure within which they endured and courageously endured, as Michael Foucault puts it. In principle, Dalit autobiography is a genuine endeavour to recall and write from the vantage point of settled existence, the former life with detached or seeing as far as the vision allows. They explore both the history and the current, as well as the future. Dalit females' autobiographies cope with a threefold threat of tyranny from twin patriarchies: (a) discrete patriarchy in their own caste, and (b) overlaying patriarchal of the high-class people and impoverishment.

Thus, Dalit autobiographies depict the numerous circumstances that mercilessly hindered their life, and they sought to rebuild a new society where equality, brotherhood, as well as freedom would reign supreme, suiting human spirit and dignity, with simmering discontent (Randhawa 2019: 18). Dalit autobiography is written as follows of a reminiscence of the author's past. In other terms, it aids Dalit readers in igniting their desire for change. Dalit authors believe that the most significant feature in their autobiography is indeed the sincerity of experience. (Revathi and Bindu 2019)

Dalit autobiographies are regarded as a new kind of Dalit discourse. The current idea aims to understand, assess, and critique identity, caste, gender issues, as well as provide a comprehensive discourse and perspective on Dalit individual stories. The research has undoubtedly added to our comprehension of the Dalit society's suffering and grief.

The origins of Dalit writing may be directly traced to a profound and age-old yearning for justice, motivated by grief and outrage over the denial of Dalits' personal, political, and social dignity. As contemporary Indian literature has mostly ignored the Dalit point of view as well as goals, this collection of writing has the weight of a people who have long been refused the right to free expression and mobility. Autobiographies written by Dalits offer a rich tapestry of national awareness and culture. To untangle the multifaceted intricacies of discriminations and exploitations, they continue to examine the dialectic polarities of

unprivileged-privileged, poor-rich, lower-caste-upper-caste, and female-male. (Langare 2013)

Urmila Pawar's 'The Weave of my life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs'

Urmila Pawar is a well-known Dalit feminist and writer. She is a literary figure in Marathi literature, best known for her short tale compositions. She was born in the Ratnagiri District's Adgaon village in the month of May 1945. (Dapke and Karad 2017) Her memoir 'Aaydan' ('The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir') was published in Marathi and afterward written in English by Dr. Maya Pandit, and Urmilatai became a global figure. Pawar bit her traumatic event, involving inter-communal and personal social battles and endurance, in this brave and sensitive book. In the context of India, it raises concerns of gender, caste, class. Urmila Pawar consistently portrays Dalit women in her innovative works. Many more of her short fiction is about the grief, suffering, and difficulty that Dalit women face in their daily lives, as well as how they overcome these challenges. For decades, Dalit male authors had remained unconcerned about these challenges. As a result, there were objections from Dalit men when Urmila began writing about the predicament of Dalit women. Pawar had detailed extremely minor instances of tyranny and abuse of girls and women. Occasionally, the embarrassment was so severe that the viewer's sensibilities got irritated. She had spoken about her young adult sex trafficking experience as well as her classmates. Her biography reflects this narrative as well as incidences of sex trafficking. (Emmadi and Bohra 2021: 5-11)

'The Weave of My Life,' written in a factual fictional style, is marked by an honest, candid, and strong expression of a Dalit female's experience, and may readily be linked to the narratives of Afro-American women. Maya Pandit's English translation managed to bring forth the cultural flavour of the Marathi origin. Urmila Pawar states in the final pages of her Memoir,

'Life has taught me many things, showed me so much. It has also lashed me till bled, I don't know how much longer I am going to live, nor do I know in what form life is going to confront me let it come in any form; I am ready to face it stoically. This is what my life has taught me. This is my life and that is me.' (Pawar 2009: 78)

The narrative chronicles the author's long journey from the Konkan to Mumbai, bringing to culmination the battle of successive generations for Dalit modernism, which had received

little attention in the past. She wrote candidly about the 'public' and 'private' sides of her life, such as infatuation with Harish Chandra as a teenager as well as married him over family objections, the new couple and their children relocating to Mumbai, of her many enduring relationships with women, as well as her career. Even most of her supporters were offended by her openness about marital and familial issues, as well as the devastating blows, she received from life. Urmila, a long-time activist in the Dalit and female's movement, provided a scathing assessment of feminists and Dalit ideology.

This autobiography, like some other Dalit autobiographies, depicts patterns of victimisation imposed on Dalits, but it is a complicated storyline of a gendered ordinary person who originally sees the world through the lens of her caste identity, but later transcends the caste individuality from a feminist viewpoint. It accurately reflects the Mahar community's transformation from agrarian and rural roots in the Konkan region to a population with a more 'modern' mentality who have migrated to urbanised locations like Mumbai. As a result of the post-Nehruvian rationale of progress, development, and modernity, the bloodlines of suffering in the past are reflected in a variety of ways in the present, considering the hegemonic and exploitative ideologies of gender, caste, patriarchy, and class. The voyage illustrates this. This journey introduces the spectator to a society in which various caste identities have been fused into a greater identity of 'human'.

Urmila Pawar also points out that women are accountable for their houses, as well as for caring for children and the elderly. As workers and wives, they must deal with the double bound of exploitation. Urmila depicts the difficult lives of these ladies in both her spouse's home and her youth:

‘The day began very early for women at four O'clock in the morning . . . (they) had to fetch water from the well for everybody in the house to bathe in, drink . . . then they cleaned the pots and plates for the whole house. They breakfasted with the menfolk and went with them to work in the fields. They planted paddy till their backs broke . . . they returned home just half an hour earlier than their men. They lit the stove under an earthen pot which they had filled up in the morning to keep the hot bath ready for their men . . . they began preparations for the evening meals . . . the men arrived, bathed, and sat smoking leisurely in the verandah, some of them drinking liquor. Women would again go to the well to fetch water, wash the muddled clothes . . . light the lamps and serve food to the men first. . . . After the children went to sleep, they sat down and massaged the heads and feet of their husbands

with oil. By the time they lay down in bed, their backs would be bent like a bow . . . This was not an isolated picture . . . In addition, the woman had to behave as if she were a deaf and dumb creature.’ (Pawar 2009: 246-247)

‘It has the potential to interrogate elite Brahmnical institutions and foster new insights and theories for its introduction in the classroom as a historical narrative of experience to build a complex relational understanding of social location, experience, and history,’ wrote Sharmila Rege in the epilogue to ‘The Weave of My Life’, emphasising the importance of this testimony (Pawar 2009). Consequently, this job allows us to see contestations and tensions that structured the change from a vocabulary of duties to a vocabulary of rights in educational institutions, housing societies, government offices, and the realm of social activity, among other settings. When taken as a whole, this work has become a potent tool for protesting foes both within and without institution (Randhawa 2019: 18).

In their life, the custom was inextricably related to the material components of their existence. Because they had less money, they had less access to resources that would ultimately affect their worldview. For the same reason, her community's everyday fight for existence included asking for food from higher castes during festivities, eating leftovers, or even gorging on the carcasses of dead animals. The story begins with the description of a community in which several Dalit women begin their day by going to the city in terms of selling wood and purchasing salt and fish for their journey back to their village. This group of ladies would carry enormous loads on their heads, including stacks of wood, grass stack, ripening mangoes, and other produce. (Rege 2013) They might leave their children all alone famished at home early that morning.

The plight of Dalit women in Ratnagiri highlights the village's patriarchal system, exposing caste as well as gender-based divisions of labour, and creating horrific memories for the females of her society. Pawar's autobiography is an educated and honest story in which she combines recollections of her youth, classmates, town, numerous close relatives, and her husband's family. She weaves the story together by relating all the events that transpired in her lifetime and her society. This exposes Dalits' daily hardships and the methods used by ruling castes to subjugate them. The story of ‘The Weave of My Life’ reverts and forth with the hamlet and the city. Caste discrimination, Hunger, poverty, and interpersonal abuse are among the author's life observations. These traumatic events are juxtaposed with pictures of Dalit culture and tradition, in which disease is fenced off by superstition and children's

appetite is stifled with storytelling. (Sen 2019: 38-51) Pawar deals with anguish and being on the fringes by sharing her emotions in a truly remarkable story.

Education always has been a distant goal for Dalits, and so as a result, this is one of the major subjects of Dalit writing. Untouchables' access to public institutions was hampered by the upper castes/Brahmins. The caste-driven culture advocated keeping the status quo by relegating Dalits to the role of servants and lowly labourers. In the author's village, things were similar. The Mahar community's children had very few opportunities to attend school. The upper castes had established schools in their homes, but the Mahar youngsters were not allowed to attend. Furthermore, anywhere the Mahar caste's kids had restricted access to schools, their schoolteachers degraded them to preserve social isolation. The writer had a strong desire to learn and was encouraged by her family to do so. She stressed that she could stand up for her neighbourhood because of the encouragement she received from her family. Pawar had lofty ambitions, and despite the challenges she encountered in life, her desire to learn never waned. Even after her marriage, she was able to continue her higher studies. Although her spouse disliked the notion of her continuing her degree, he preferred that she focus on her family. This reflects her husband's mindset and attitude. She, on the other hand, paid no notice and proceeded on with her life. In fact, it was because of her degree that she was able to join elite feminist organisations and obtain a position in government.

She as well as her husband went to Mumbai to flee the caste discrimination in their village. However, caste-based prejudice continued to exist in the city. She recalls how tough it was to find a place to stay in the town. They faced indecent treatment and prejudice from the upper caste. Pawar wished to do something that will help girls in her town, so she openly gave public lectures and activities to pique people's interests. Urmila Pawar realised the need for Dalit male and female workers together for society's liberation because of her engagement.

Omprakash Valmiki's 'Joothan'

Om Prakash Valmiki was an Indian Dalit poet and writer who lived from 30 June 1950 to 17 November 2013. His autobiography, 'Joothan', is widely regarded as a landmark in Dalit literature. He was born in the Uttar Pradesh village of Barla, in the Muzaffarnagar district. He lived in Dehradun after retiring from the Government Ordinance Factory, where he died on November 17, 2013, of symptoms related to stomach cancer.

He was abused and tortured everywhere he went as a Dalit child. He was lucky enough to be raised in a family that adored and looked after him. He was able to confront the risks of being a Dalit because of the family's love and encouragement. Valmiki was aware of the significance of academics from an early age, and as a result, he always was a strong student. He became an awakened human being because of his writing and reading. Notwithstanding his father's protests, Valmiki wedded to Chanda and his father accepted her as his daughter-in-law. In the governmental colony, he was not given a home. They had to fight a lot at the beginning of their marriage. But he quickly adjusted, and Valmiki and Chanda began a blissful married life. (Suman 2015)

'Joothan: A Dalit's Life' is reported to be a multi-value book with numerous voices. The text adds to Dalit heritage, and its storytelling provides a soothing touch to oppressors. In the very first line, it condemns the location and people of Valmiki's caste. The Indian representative democracy has provided a platform for Dalits to learn how to express themselves. On the opposite, he presents the harsh realities vividly and emphasises that India has failed to keep its promise made in the Independent India constitution. 'Joothan' sarcastically questions the constitution's promissory note by elevating the Dalit voice, which wants a position in the current society for their people. (Revathi and Bindu 2019)

The title 'Joothan' refers to the day-to-day lives of people from lower castes. Since the actions and settings portrayed are unfamiliar to the audience, a specialised vocabulary for Dalit texts is recommended. The word 'Joothan' comes from the Hindi language. It literally means 'leftover'. Joothan refers to the food that is left over after consumption. Here, the leftover food serves as prey for a society that Valmiki is a member of. One could imagine the consequences behind the title just by looking at it.

The Hindi word 'Joothan' cannot be translated into English as 'leftover.' This has no negative connotation as leftover food implies that it could be enjoyed again. However, the word 'Joothan' was typically used to refer to the food that was left on one's plate after eating. While Ambedkar and Gandhi used it frequently, it is no more in English vocabulary. 'Scrap' is a word that comes close to describing 'Joothan'. The title envelops or summarises the writers' society's scarcity, discomfort, and pain. Valmiki's 'Joothan: A Dalit's Life' depicts how his community gathers, prepares, and eats Joothan in detail. The name 'Joothan' has several historical connotations. He quotes Ambedkar and Gandhi in his text, who exhorted outcasts to not absorb the remnants of the upper classes.

However, one autobiography with such a Dalit protagonist is 'Joothan: A Dalit's Life.' Valmiki's autobiography is told in this book. The perspectives depicted in 'Joothan' are not discovered in some other work of literature, particularly that which depicts his home, 'Barla', his birth in the Chuhra community, his find it difficult for education, tangible and mental harassment, and his transformation into a speaking topic, logger of the exploitation and oppression he survived, not just as a person but his victimised society. These items never were mentioned in the Hindi literary archives.

'Joothan: A Dalit's Life' is about Valmiki's bitter experiences as a Dalit in culture, particularly in school and Inter College. The protagonist's hamlet, like every other, is divided into various sections or sections of various castes, including Jhinwar, Taga, Chamars, Muslim Tagis, who encircled his Basti (slum). Taga's residence was next door to Valmiki's. The Chuhra's house as well as the other castes were separated by a village lake near Basti. Ladies, underage females, elderly ladies, men, and children were spotted having shits on the edges of ponds, unconcerned about displaying their private areas in public. On either hand, nude children, dogs, pigs, and constant battles are all part of everyday life. People spend more time talking about the squabbles that have occurred in the village. They appear to be having a round table forum to talk about anything. The lower caste's way of life is depicted in detail. (Revathi and Bindu 2019)

Valmiki highlighted the prejudice they would have to encounter at school several times in his book 'Joothan'. He declares:

'During the examinations we could not drink water from the glass when thirsty. To drink water, we had to cup our hands. The peon would pour water from way high up, lest our hands touch the glass.' (Valmiki 2003: 16)

In the independent state of India in the 1950s, Om Prakash Valmiki narrates his life as an outcast or Dalit. Food scraps left on a table that are going for the trash or animals are referred to as 'Joothan'. For decades, India's undesirables have been compelled to acknowledge and consume joothan, a name that symbolises the suffering, shame, and destitution of a society forced to dwell at the end of the social pyramid. Dalits continued to experience prejudice, economic hardship, assault, and ridicule even after untouchability was banned in 1949.

All through the story, Valmiki describes his agony as isolation because of the continuous practice of female oppression. He composes,

‘I was kept out of extracurricular activities. On such occasions, I stood on the margins like a spectator. During the annual functions of the school, when rehearsals were on for the play, I too wished for a role. But I always had to stand outside the door. The so-called descendants of the gods cannot understand the anguish of standing outside the door.’ (Valmiki 2003: 16)

Valmiki portrays the terrible reality of his boyhood in the village of Barla in Uttar Pradesh in ‘Joothan’. He talks about how he was mistreated at school as he was unreachable. He composes,

‘I had to sit away from the others in the class, and that too on the floor. The mat ran out before door.... sometimes they would beat me without any reason.’ (Valmiki 2003: 2)

While he was in Class VI, it was another incident. The headmaster asked him to clean the classes as well as the playground. He claims,

‘The playground was way larger than my small physique could handle and in cleaning it, my back began to ache. My face was covered with dust. Dust had gone inside my mouth. The other children in my class were studying and I was sweeping. Headmaster was sitting in his room and watching me. I was not even allowed to get a drink of water.’ (Valmiki 2003: 5)

Baby Kamble's ‘The Prisons We Broke’

‘Jina Amucha,’ Baby Kamble’s Marathi autobiography, was serialised in *Stree*, a Marathi magazine, in 1984. As a result of this autobiography, we get a better knowledge of the contradiction between tradition and modernity, as well as of the wicked activities of the Dalit community. Her statement reveals that the traditional Mahars saw Christianity in the West as a source of ritual contamination. An upper-caste body was treated as sacred because of the Mahars' ideological externalisation. A Mahar's acceptance of this purity-pollution worldview causes him to keep his body folded out of dread of polluting the sacred body of the upper caste. This was an attempt by Ambedkar to strengthen modernity and reason's grip on Hinduism by culturally delinking Dalits from Hinduism through conversion, according to Kamble's account. In this autobiography, it is also mentioned that the upper caste dwellings in Phaltan were built in a fashion that would keep the filthy

Mahars at a good distance. The houses of the upper caste were built with higher platforms in order to provide a secluded interior for their ladies and an exterior to keep the Dalits out. When a Dalit woman visits a business owned by someone of a higher caste to buy some provisions, the following account shows how deeply caste customs have permeated the lives of Dalit women.

‘Standing in the courtyard, keeping a distance from the shopkeeper, she would pull her pallav over her face and then using the most reverential and polite terms of address, she would beg him with utmost humility to sell her the things she wanted. Appasab, could you please give this despicable Mahar woman some shikakai for one paisa and half a shell of dry coconut with black skin?’ The shopkeeper's children would be trickling out into the courtyard for their morning ablutions. He would give the innocent children lessons in social behaviour. ‘Chabu, hey you, can't you see the dirty Mahar woman standing there? Now don't you touch her. Keep your distance. Immediately our Mahar woman, gathering her rags around her tightly so as not to pollute the child, would say, Take care little master! Please give a distance. Don't come too close. You might touch me and get polluted.’ The shopkeeper would come out and, from a distance throw the things into her pallav, which she had spread out in order to receive them.’ (Kamble 2008: 14)

In this poem, Baby Kamble bemoans the Dalits’ tendency to minimise their own contributions. Force may have been used to subjugate Dalits, but their intellectual training ensured their eventual capitulation. As a result of their limited exposure to other cultures' norms and practices, Dalit women are more prone to accept the ideology of submission. Mahar's autobiography is full of rituals and ceremonies. After her conversion, Baby Kamble sees these practices as fundamentally Hindu and a medium of the oppression of Dalits in both body and spirit:

‘Hindu philosophy had discarded us as dirt and thrown us into their garbage pits, on the outskirts of the village. We lived in the filthiest conditions possible. Yet Hindu rites and rituals were dearest to our hearts. For our poor, helpless women, the haldikumkum in their tiny boxes was more important than over a mine full of jewels.’ (Kamble 2008: 18)

According to her conversation with a journalist, her father and husband have been subjected to abuse and violence by males in the past. For the sake of her own well-being, she depicts what it is like to be a ‘sasus,’ or mother-in-law, in her own words. Women in male-

dominated societies are subjected to appalling conditions, and the author's condemnation is evident.

‘Husbands, flogging their wives as if they were beasts, would do so until the sticks broke with the effort. The heads of these women would break open, their backbones would be crushed and some would collapse unconscious. But there was nobody to care for them. They had no food to eat, no proper clothing to cover their bodies; their hair would remain uncombed and tangled, dry from lack of oil. The woman led the most miserable existence.’ (Kamble 2008: 98)

Their cups were full, so they fled back to their parents' house in a sly manner. There was no way out of the cruel ropes fate had entangled them in. This led to her being beaten by both her mother and brother. According to Baby Kamble, the everyday humiliation Dalits face from the upper castes is the primary cause of domestic violence among the Dalits. Men's concealed rage and dissatisfaction over being oppressed by powerful people around them are shown in their assertion of their masculinity towards their female counterparts:

“Their male ego gave them some sense of identity. 'I am a man, I am superior to women. I am somebody. If the whole village tortures us, we will torture our women.’” (Kamble 2008: 156-157)

Nonetheless, she has a strong sense of feminism. Because she is inspired by Dr. Ambedkar's revolutionary spirit, she is not one to take insults easily. Her clashes with upper-caste females at school indicate her desire for more humanitarian treatment.

Bama's 'Sangati'

‘Oppression, ruled and still being ruled by patriarchy, government, caste, and religion, Dalit women are forced to break all the strictures of the society in order to live.’ (Bama 2005)

Bama's 'Sangati' tells a distinctive Dalit feminist story. In India, it focuses mostly on the women's liberation movement. The Dalit struggle and the women's movement in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, can be seen as the genesis of feminism in the 1960s. Before all of this, there were, of course, numerous struggles against male domination, privilege systems, and social inequity. Bama, an advocate of Dalit feminism, has found Karukku to be the ideal vehicle for exploring the plight of Dalit women. Their narrative contains an autobiographical element, but it tells the story of an entire community, rather than a specific

person. In ‘Sangati’, there are many strong Dalit women who have been freed from the constraints of authority. Dalits' living conditions were horrible because they could not go to temples or schools for their education. Discrimination based on one's ethnicity is a form of racism.

‘Sangati’ works to eliminate the gender bias that Dalit women experience from an early age. Because they are viewed as less valuable, babies born to females are treated with less respect and less tender loving care. With so many things going on in her life, this little girl who serves as the book's narrator often becomes reflective. As she matures into a young woman, she becomes more vocal about the injustices that girls and women in her town face and demands that something be done about them. Within the first ten years of a child's life, heinous patriarchal disparities are instilled in her. This goal can be achieved through the use of gender games. At the age of twelve, Bama discovers the gender roles that boys and girls have to play, roles that are reinforced by the games they are forced to play as children. While boys engage in kabaddi and marbles, girls like pretending to cook, get married, and take care of other household duties.

Bama depicts the physical abuse that Dalit women endure at the hands of their fathers, siblings, and spouses in a realistic manner, including lynching, whipping, and canning. She focuses on the mental pressures and stresses they put on themselves. Women's submissive status as a girl, lady, and breadwinner is skillfully woven into Bama's story. Women in the Dalit community found all of these places too claustrophobic for their liking. Bama tells the story of Thaiyi's and Mariamma's marital discord in an attempt to stereotypically depict the Dalit dilemma. Their husbands beat and mistreated them on a daily basis. A tough day in the field had just ended for both the husband and wife, but the man decided to spend some time at the Chavadi before heading back home for supper. Upon their return to the house, they cleaned and washed all of the kitchen equipment, gathered water and firewood, go to shops to purchased rice for cooking, and any other necessary supplies. They then fed their husbands and children, ate what was leftover, and retired to bed.

‘Even they lay down their bodies wracked with pain, they are not allowed to sleep, whether she dies or survived, she had to give pleasure and enjoyment to her husband.’ (Bama 2005)

Bama writes in a language that is foreign to the upper caste of society as a whole. The so-called ‘chaste’ Tamil that has been made unavailable to her people is discarded in favour of the oral folk language that is well-known in her community. Unlike other Tamil writers

who have dealt with Dalit life in Tamil like Sivakami and Vidivelli, Bama has used the Dalit language in all of her writings, particularly in ‘Sangati.’ Even as she expresses her sadness, ‘Sangati’ also shows that Dalit women have the strength to persevere in the midst of their hardships. Towards the book's conclusion, the Dalit women take pride in their newly discovered self-worth and inner strength. In this novel, the narrator finally breaks free of the shackles of her past. She is self-sufficient in her career and personal life. Because of this, Bama has come to know that it is up to the Dalit women to take matters into their own hands and fight for their life. For the enhancement of the lives of the Dalit women, she makes a plea for equality in the workplace as well as the right to education, among other things. The three stages depicted by Bama—as a young girl, a woman, and an elderly lady—represented the many life stages of Dalit women. Widows and tali, the holy thread worn as a chain at marriage, are not as necessary as they are in other societies in rural Dalit households, as Dalit women are the primary breadwinners. It is possible for them to re-marry. In spite of caste and gender injustice, the Dalit woman is a force to be reckoned with.

Discussion

Women of the Dalit community face particular challenges because of the oppressions they face as members of the ‘Dalit’ and ‘women’ communities. In India, Dalits are the ‘depressed classes,’ while women are ‘the second sex.’ (Ambedkar 1946; Beauvoir 1988). These women are subjected, devalued, and marginalised in the face of their double oppression. As a result, numerous researchers, including Gopal Guru (1995), Sharmila Rege (2006), and Chhaya Datar (1999), have pointed out the necessity of establishing a Dalit Feminist Standpoint. Only in writing could Dalit women's ‘lived experience’ and viewpoints come to life. We can see this commonality in the lives of the authors of ‘Sangati’ (Bama Faustina), ‘The Weave of my life: A Dalit Woman’s Memoirs’ (Urmila Pawar), and ‘The Prisons We Broke’ (Baby Kamble) by analysing their respective works.

‘Double vision’ is an epistemic advantage gained by straddling both sides of a contradicting social division. Their new outlook on life was formed by this experience. These stories might be referred to as ‘social epiphanies’ that inspired Dalit women to follow Black women writers’ ethics, particularly ‘politicising of their memory,’ or ‘remembering that serves to illuminate and transform the present.’ (Hooks 1990: 147) As a result of the political dedication of their translators, Dalit women writers' stories have gained notoriety

because they were all written in the regional languages of their own communities. 'Outsiders' who are unfamiliar with Indian Marathi culture can easily get a sense of what life is like for 'Dalit women' through Maya Pandit's translations of Baby Kamble's *Jina Aamcha* (1985) and Urmila Pawar's 'Aaydan' (2003), both of which were originally written in Marathi.

Bama's second work, 'Sangati,' was released in Tamil in 1994, and its English translation by Lakshmi Holmstrom conveys the core of the original text without sensationalising its subject matter. This has resulted in marginalised elements of regional language and culture being thrust into the spotlight of global culture in an effort to form connections with other civilisations that share comparable cultural factors. They could understand how privileged classes and patriarchy employ notions about women's place in society to restrict their access to social resources and institutions, hence limiting their power to control where they live. Dalit women writers had a similar 'double vision.'

Patricia Hill Collins invented the phrase 'outsider-within' (1986). Because of their uniqueness, the 'Outsider-within' status holder inhabits a unique place; they become distinct individuals, 'the other', 'marginalized'.

The experiencer's perspective is shaped by it, creating a distinct perspective. While recounting her upbringing in a small Kentucky town, black feminist writer Bell Hooks captures the 'outsider within' condition, noting that 'living as we did on the edge – we developed a specific way of seeing reality. In both directions, we were able to get a full picture of what was going on.' (Hooks 1984: vii) They are aware of patterns or social constructions that may not be apparent to sociological insiders because of their unique perspectives. Consequently, the selected stories reflect some common elements. There are some topics that have been kept quiet for a long time that Om Prakash Valmiki has taken great pride in bringing to light in 'Joothan.' Somewhere or something bothers him even though the times have changed, he believes. By nature, Dalits are accustomed to an 'intimidate syndrome,' yet Valmiki is able to emerge from his cocoon and speak up for his community in the real caste world through his autobiography. Valmiki's passion for literature writing gave him the courage to speak out against injustice and discrimination. It is time to face the truth that Dalits are no longer treated as subhumans. The Dalit literary investigation has helped the Dalits rise in society today.

The autobiographies of Dalit men and women are vastly different. Women in the Dalit community are more open about the oppression they endure, both within and outside of their communities, than males are in their autobiographies. It is evident from the stories of Dalit women like Bama, Urmila Pawar, Babytai Kamble, Viramma, Shantabai Kale, and others, that they must resist multiple traditions to proclaim their individual identities. As a result of their ancestry in the so-called lower caste communities, Dalit men often have to cope with various sorts of caste and class discrimination and suffering in their stories.

In regard to portraying Dalit experiences, autobiographies play a significant role. They not only reproduce Dalit writers' feelings and ideas but also provide them with the ability to review their lives and take courage. Greater awareness of the interplay of caste and gender in Indian society emerges from Dalit feminist autobiography. Dalits have been oppressed, degraded, and abused by the Hindu caste system for centuries. Dalit females suffer the triple weight of gender, caste, class, whereas Dalit men endure at the hand of higher castes. These women have worked hard to establish their position in the literary community through autobiographical writing. Dalit females' autobiographies can be understood as 'collective consciousness of a group', emphasising the communitarian concept of 'we', with which they remain to identify. They urge to comprehend the socially disadvantaged situation of Dalit women, in addition to expressing their grief and sorrow. Both authors' vocabulary and writing styles do not encourage compassion; rather, they tend to jump past injustice. Their efforts should be commended for disrupting the standard writing style and reinventing life writing. As a result, autobiographical writing has provided Dalit females with a platform through that they can register and plead for fresh hopes and objectives. These two autobiographies must be viewed from a pan-Indian viewpoint. They reflect society's hard realities and, as a result, must not be dismissed as merely a collection of works deficient in aesthetic and pure entertainment; instead, they must be revered for allowing society to transcend its flaws.

For generations, patriarchal as well as upper caste norms have produced a sense of estrangement and isolation among Dalit women of society. The research investigates how a Dalit woman is oppressed in the Indian caste system's typical patriarchal attitude. She continuously recalls her mother as well as her efforts to weave the baskets when she alludes to her Autobiography writing. Urmila saw her writing to forget about her lost son's agony, therefore there was no connection between her writings and analysis other than to forget about the terrible incident and engage her in write-ups. In Urmila Pawar's 'Aaydan,' she is

described. As a result, the tangle of recollections provides a thorough account of her arduous voyage from Konkan to Mumbai. She has spoken about the contradictory circumstances in her life as a Dalit lady.

Om Prakash Valmiki has through a lot during his life. He has a lot of unpleasant personal experiences. 'Times have changed, but there was something that continues to irritate me,' he said. (Valmiki 2003: 134) 'Joothan' is a book that expresses the Dalits' desire for their proper place in society. 'Today, caste remains a dominant element in social life. Everything is fine if people are unaware that you will be a Dalit. Anything changes the minute they learn your caste.' he says. 'Why is my caste my only identity?' he wonders. (Valmiki 2003: 134) 'Joothan', according to Valmiki, is a declaration for the growth of civilization and human awareness. The book confronts its viewers with a variety of concerns of their own nature and urges them to participate in common human liberation movements.

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The Shift in Narration: Centralization of Draupadi's Perspective in Chitra Banerjee Devakurni's *The Palace of Illusion*

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Abstract: A narration reveals the set of varied experiences comprising people with their different perspectives and roles but with a certain storyline. The other novels that revolve around the epic Mahabharata have mostly been focused on the distinction between vice and virtuous; there is no space for the honest thoughts residing in the in-between grey zone. Chitra Banerjee is an Indian-American author, her novel *The Palace of Illusion*, reveals Draupadi's honest thoughts, perspectives and experiences, by locating her in the centre, unlike the other texts.

This abstract focuses on the events that imply that Draupadi has never been a much-admired princess brought up on flowers, but she is just like any other ordinary woman with burning desires, which can be unreal for others in a patriarchal society. She questions everything happening around her as blind acceptance imposed by society has always intimidated her and she never tries to hide it, which is very well emerged in this novel. This abstract further elaborates that the Mahabharata has never been just the story of Pandavas, Kauravas or Krishna, nor has been just the story of Draupadi's disrobing by Kauravas, this is a story of mutual wrangling, jealousy and vengeance of many people but the writer has succeeded in clearing the voice of Draupadi voice amongst the stereotypically dominated voices of others.

Keywords: Epic, Patriarchy, Vengeance, Stereotypes, Perspectives.

Chitra Banerjee Devakurni's *The Palace of Illusion* is a novel about a royal queen who offered her entire life to master love, anger, and desires. It deals with the multifaceted realities and provides us with a space to conceptualize our individualistic responses or judgments for them. Her novel is the amalgamation of varied narratives but has not been constructed for showcasing the victory of virtue over vices, and doesn't deal with the moral instructions of society. Draupadi is the most acclaimed mythological character, whose disrobing by the Kauravas has been considered as the root cause of the great war of Mahabharata. But Devakurni's characterization of Draupadi is entirely different. Just like any other woman of her age, Draupadi has been a demanding woman with desires, judgments and perspectives of her own. She has never been a princess only but has much more to her personality, which gets reflected by the depth of her psyche, social relations and cultural positioning. Her response to gender discrimination has never been

passive, and she actively rejects being submissive and polite for getting accepted by society. Gender discrimination is the unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual based on gender.

Evidently, she knows that her life has overburdened with the important role of sequencing the order of actions and to be a root cause of war, which will remain in history persistently. She knows that destiny is leading her to a point from where everything will start making sense and the puzzle of life will go to resolve on its own. She has been interested in a point that a significant future is waiting ahead for her instead of what it will be. Hence, she enjoys the power of the prophecy. It has given her a reason to be felt important, and she is using it to fulfill her relationship gaps with her father and the world. So, she demands a powerful name like her brother and states that “But Daughter of Drupad? Granted, he hadn’t been expecting me, but couldn’t my father have come up with something a little less egoistic? Something more suited to a girl who was supposed to change history?” (5)

Devakurni’s Draupadi is rebellious, devoid of love and acceptance, and has forced to live life in an unconventional setup. Others have been treating her as a puppet in a drama since she is born whose strings are in the hands of everyone else but have no control of her own. King Drupad is a better king but never an idealized father. In a similar manner, Dhri loves his sister, but never supports her desires and choices. She will never forgive her father as aptly described by the writer, “In his harsh and obsessive way, he was generous, maybe even indulgent. But I couldn’t forgive him that initial rejection” (6). Draupadi is a high-born princess, even that does not have liberated her from the coarser social, cultural and religious confines. She wants to live utmost instead of just breathing. Panchaali retaliated on every level but has never succeeded. She demands her right to education by going against everyone, as Devakurni writes in her book:

Dhri, too, sometimes wondered if I wasn’t learning the wrong things, ideas that would only confuse me as I took up a woman’s life with its prescribed, restrictive laws. But I hungered to know about the amazing, mysterious world that extended past what I could imagine the world of the senses and of that which lay beyond them. And so I refused to give up the lessons, no matter who disapproved. (23)

She has felt unwelcomed in her birth home at Kampilya, and in Hastinapur after her marriage. So it has been necessary to have a palace of her own because power only lives in authoritative command entirely. Already she has been sharing the love of their husbands and family with other wives, as she mentions:

I didn't win all my battles. My husbands took other wives: Hidimba, Kali, Devika, Balandhara, Chitrangada, Ulupi, Karunamati. How naïve I'd been to think I could have prevented it! Sometimes there were political reasons, but mostly it was male desire. (151)

Draupadi can't share a dream of her own house, too. She has to create dominance first if she dreams about shaping the future of others. She states that "Krishna's palace in Dwarka was sandstone, the arches like the ocean waves that bordered it. It sounded lovely, but I knew mine would have to be different. It would have to be uniquely mine." (113) Hence, the constructed palace is an asset of pride for her and she orders the illusionist that, "This creation of yours that's going to be the envy of every king in Bharat- we'll call it the Palace of Illusions." (146)

Desires are comparable to clouds, sometimes result in a rain of joy and happiness, or struck your life with a heavy pour of tears and discontentment. One another time, it is like a melting candle, burning everything that touches it. Draupadi is a young woman with desires and has been dreaming about her future life partner, her own palace and charming romantic life. She has said that "I could smell the fragrance of the amaranths woven into it. It was beautiful, but it only made me dissatisfied. What use was all this dressing-up when there was no one to admire me." (36) She is a moth that has been burning by the bright flames of desires repeatedly but never has controlled herself. For a moment, a delusional idea has directed her toward a misconception that instead of rigid cultural rules, she is getting a fortune to pick her own husband. Soon, she realizes that it is deception and svayamvara has been organized to further enhance the power of her father's kingdom.

The rasping challenge has been organized for electing a sturdy king for the alliance, and not for an honorable son-in-law. Drupad is a power hungry king and always obsessed with a refinement of his kingly authority. She even questions her father's decision, "Why would our father, who delighted in control, allow me so much freedom" (55)? Not for the first time, she has thought his father's priority is always power. But the evidence of her father's unloved behavior for the family always has hurt like a fresh wound. She has said that:

Why won't you ever admit the truth?" I spoke bitterly. "We're nothing but pawns for king Drupad to sacrifice when it's most to his advantage. At least I'm just going to be married off. You—he's willing to push you to your death just so he can have the revenge. (58)

Despair results from the inability to gain that person about whom one desires about. Orthodoxy has been always the predominant factor causing such anguish, existing staunchly in our cultural norms. Society always has allowed laughing to gain an education, allowed to attend brothels, but girls are banned

from the things that even they deserve. Cultural hegemony is always there in different setups, like in the family by father or husbands. Draupadi may not speak precisely or efficiently and has been restricted from desired education. Also, she has been silent about the person she likes, “Though I would never confess this to Dhri (I sensed his unspoken jealousy), for me Arjuna was the most exciting part of the story” (19).

Beauty is innate; no one can allow you to be beautiful, and every human born with a unique charm. It could be a weapon to gain power in a circumstance, and nobody can snatch it from a person. Draupadi disliked the goal of her svayamvara, but knows that she has to deal with it. She flaunts her beauty as a magic web over her proposed husbands, as she said, “When I stepped into the wedding hall, there was complete, immediate silence. As though I were a sword that had severed, simultaneously, each vocal cord. Behind my veil, I smiled grimly. Savour this moment of power, I told myself. It may be your only one.” (91)

Initially, she marries to Arjuna only but later forced to marry other brothers also in a view of fact that Kunti has ordered it. Her father and brother oppose it, because what society will think about her and it is socially unacceptable. Even Arjuna doesn't speak against this unethical marriage arrangement because of his cultural responsibility toward her mother. No one speaks for her, and she has confined within the limits of being an asset only. A culture that berates woman on having sexual relationships with more than a one is supporting this marital setup. There is no command of her over own life; she is just the puppet in the hands of destiny. She remarks that:

Though Dhai Ma tried to console me by saying that finally, I had the freedom men had had for centuries, my situation differed from that of a man with several wives. Unlike him, I had no choice as to whom I slept with, and when. Like a communal drinking cup, I would be passed from hand to hand whether or not I wanted it. Nor was I particularly delighted by the virginity boon, which seemed designed more for my husband's benefit than mine. (120)

Man has always prioritized moral and religious beliefs over the need of actions according to a situation. If a man's moral and religious beliefs have been resulting in so cruel molestation for his own wife, then having wisdom is not fruitful. Yudhishtira has been the most idealistic in Draupadi's husbands, so he has the most crucial responsibility towards Draupadi's well-being. He has been most worshipped for his insight and he has an ability to distinguish wrong from right; he handles her awful insult in front of the entire clan. There is no advantage of Arjuna being a warrior, and neither of Bheema's strength, if they cannot defend the dignity of their wife. The Pandavas are more responsible for causing Draupadi's disrobing because their lives have been truly associated with the life of Draupadi. Yudhishtira could be more alert while involving the Kauravas in a gamble game. They shouldn't be concerned about what

society will think about them. She was all alone; trying to defend herself, clearly depicted by the writer as she wrote, “I’m a queen. Daughter of Drupad, sister of Dhrishtadyumna, Mistress of the greatest palace on earth. I can’t be gambled away like a bag of coins or summoned to court like a dancing girl” (190). She has always prioritized her husbands over any moral or religious belief. A woman always has much more patience and sensibility than a man, but our social structure and cultural patterns have created spaces for their dominance. She realizes this and states:

But now I saw that though they loved me- as much perhaps as any man can love- there were other things they loved more. Their notions of honour, of loyalty toward each other, of reputation, were more important to them than my suffering. They would avenge me later, yes, but only when they felt the circumstances would bring them heroic fame. A woman doesn’t think that way. I would have thrown myself forward to save them if it had been in my power that day. (195)

Archetypes are the continuous repetitions of concealed patterns, which predominantly affect the actions of a person or the ability to decide in a social and cultural setup. These patterns have sustained as scattered images, symbols, motifs, replications of judgments from the past or the conventional response toward a situation. The concept of archetypes was first developed by and broadly used by a psychologist, Carl Jung. He discovered certain broad similarities among myths from all over the world. In particular, he noticed that all the texts having “hero” had similar elements, and all those cultural heroes had peculiar features in common. He tried to theorize this concept as a common thread shared by all human beings interconnected by the “collective unconscious,” that is a set of strongly felt presumptions and preferences about situations. Similarly, he insists that there is a “universal grammar” carved in human minds from the birth which could be the underlying all human languages. So archetypes are the most significant component of the basic structure that makes a story interesting to others.

There has been ample of female archetypes in mythological texts and in history. Draupadi has been accredited as the archetype of a virtuous woman, very loyal to her husband and enormously patient. Draupadi is the most beautiful, brave and controversial heroine among all mythological female characters and she has carved her name forever in the stone of history. Carl Jung has said that “All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes” (153). Banerjee has tried to shatter the frameworks with which society has been categorizing women from the start of the time. She is questioning the core of our cultural and religious codes that mark the distinction between being sinful or promiscuous. Mythological or historical texts entirely focus on forking entirety of existence in between white and black zone. Devakurni’s novel is emphasizing on the grey area, where nothing is wrong or right only. There have been

many things beyond judgments. The writer has placed the entire journey of Draupadi in front of readers and provided the space to experience Mahabharata through her eyes. The journey is the passage of experiences, rather than the start or its termination only.

Jung has given the concept of a collective unconscious to define the universal collection of inherited patterns by a generation from their ancestral lineage. It is an innate psychological space embracing archetypes and refining our personality. It differs from the personal unconscious, which arises from the encounters of the individual. According to him, the collective unconscious contains archetypes, or universal primordial images and ideas. The Collins dictionary defines the concept of the collective unconscious as the basic ideas and images that all people are believed to share because they have inherited them. The division of social or cultural roles and responsibilities of individuals based on gender has derived indirectly from the interpretations of archetypes. Jung has given four predominant forms of archetypes, which are Persona, the shadow, Anima or Animus and the self. In *The Palace of illusions*, some bits of Jungian archetypes have been reflected by the character of Draupadi.

According to Jung, the animus represents the masculine aspect in women, which one can see in the attitude and characteristic features of Draupadi. Generally, masculinity has been entitled to comprise certain specific notions, like having an outspoken attitude, being strong-headed in harsh situations or having great will power and passion. We can witness these traits in Draupadi and she herself thinks when she gets a dull reply from Dhri on the matter of svayamvara, “Sometimes I told him that the gods must have got mixed up when they pushed us out from the fire. He should have been the girl, and I the boy.” (55)

Her hidden intense love for Karana is a mirroring of the shadow archetype. It reflects the darkest side of an individual’s psyche. She has been married to Pandavas, but still, she has been dreaming about Karana all the time. It is against the social and cultural setup, but her heart urges for the presence of Karana. She tries to suppress it in her unconscious mind so that no other person can be able to find it. Her loyalty is directed toward family and her brother, but paradoxical thought has been intimidating her mind. Draupadi states that “Through the long nights, out of love for Dhri, I tried harder than ever before to bar Karna from my mind. But can a sieve block the wind.” (88)

In reality, every person has been wearing different masks to deal with different people. Every action has been confined by an outline which gets regularized by ego. A person’s ego builds a persona according to social demands. Persona is the most common type of Jungian archetype to get analyzed. Draupadi has seen as a mother, wife, daughter, mother-in-law, a friend and in many other roles. Throughout her life, she has worn multiple masks to maintain her relationships:

The princess who longed for acceptance, the guilty girl whose heart wouldn't listen, the wife who balanced her fivefold role precariously, the rebellious daughter-in-law, the queen who ruled in the most magical of palaces, the distracted mother, the beloved companion of Krishna, who refused to learn the lessons he offered, the woman obsessed with a vengeance- none of them were the true Panchaali. If not, who was I? (229)

According to Jung, the ego is the centre of consciousness, but individualization is the centre of personality. This individualization is the reflection of self. Draupadi also perceived the discernment of her true self when she can do nothing about it. Therefore, individualization does not imply that it is a free logic of action, shuffling in a space which is virtually empty; neither does it mean just 'subjectivity' but an attitude which ignores to witness that beneath the surface of life is a highly self-efficient and densely interlocked institutional society. In her novel, she states that:

I consider my life. What was it that made me joyful? What made me experience peace for, I guess, that's the happiness Krishna means, not the wild up-and-down of the wheel of passion. I'd ridden all these years, delighted one moment, distraught the next. Certainly, none of the men or women I'd been close to had given me that type of joy- nor I them, if I were to admit the truth. (352)

Devakurni's novel has rejected John Locke's idea of tabula rasa or the notion that the human mind is a blank slate from the birth and everything is thought to be written on solely by experience. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, tabula rasa refers toward the situation in which the mind is in its hypothetical primary blank or empty state before receiving outside impressions.

Conclusively, the novel traces the princess Panchaali's life, beginning with her birth in fire and following her spirited balancing act as a woman with five husbands who have been cheated out of their father's kingdom. Panchaali is swept into their quest to reclaim their birthright, remaining at their side through years of exile and a terrible civil war involving all the important kings of India. Meanwhile, we never lose sight of her strategic duels with her mother-in-law, her complicated friendship with the enigmatic Krishna, or her secret attraction to the mysterious man who is her husband's most dangerous enemy. Panchaali is a fiery female redefining for us, a world of warriors, gods, and the ever-manipulating hands of fate.

It is the collection of Raindrops that always results in the disastrous hazard like the flood, and not only by a single droplet. Likewise, Mahabharata is not the battle of Draupadi's revenge only; it has been the victory of many other figures. This Great War is a conclusive deed of prophecy concerning Draupadi's

fate, but also the fruition of Shikhandi and Dhri's vow of revenge. Therefore, losing irreplaceable "Palace of Illusion" is notably significant in comparison with an act of her disrobing, which conjunctively resulted in a tragic outburst and she has pledged for the end of Kauravas clan. She has vowed, "I lifted my long hair for all to see. My voice was calm now because I knew that everything I said would come to pass. "I will not comb it, I said, until the day I bathe it in Kaurava blood" (194). She never has been honoured as a wife, but granted the status of a queen with an empty crown. Such had been the life of Draupadi—the ever-shining jewel of an intricately woven saga of hatred and love. She has been through everything like misconceptions, misinterpretations, insults and humiliations, to a vast extent, all her life. However noble a man can be to a certain extent, there always are certain limitations to his understanding of women. He can never understand how to cross that borderline and how much courage they need hard for that. This novel is a journey which tells us how important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes.

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Transforming Feminism: A Study of Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*

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Abstract: Eco-feminism portrays developments and ways of thinking which link feminism with ecology. This development digs for the destruction of social injustice. At present, ecofeminism theorist analyses the interconnection of racism, social inequalities, and harassment of nature as well as women. In general women and nature are worshipped as God. But when they get disturbed, both cause destruction instead of protection. Eco-feminist has extended their analyses about the connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women as a dualistic structure. The main theme of this paper is castigated about the textual concept of eco-feminism in Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*. Manju Kapur is one of the most renowned women writers of the contemporary era in India. In this story, she narrates about the struggle made by women for getting their independence and also their search for strength to break down the shackles which were created against them by the male-dominated society and also she discloses how women are being exploited in many situations throughout their life in her novel.

Keywords: Destruction Eco-feminism, Exploitation, Eradication, Manju Kapur.

Ecofeminism describes movements and philosophies which link feminism with ecology. This movement delves for the eradication of social injustice. At present, ecofeminism theorist analyses the interconnection of racism, social inequalities, and harassment of nature as well as women. In general women and nature are worshipped as God. But when they get disturbed, both cause destruction instead of protection. Ecofeminist has extended their analyses about the connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women as a dualistic structure. The main theme of this paper is castigated about the textual concept of ecofeminism in Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*. Manju Kapur is one of the most renowned women writers of the contemporary era in India. In this story, she narrates about the struggle made by women for getting their independence and also their search for strength to break down the shackles which were created against them by the male-dominated society and also she discloses how women are being exploited in any situation throughout their life in her novel.

Ecofeminism came into existence during the year the 1970s. It insists on the need of protection for women and nature for the welfare of contemporary society. In this paper, the researcher likes to scrutinize the fact of women's relationship with environmental issues through the protagonist Astha of Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*. It reveals the struggle faced by Astha, the protagonist amidst all challenges put by the patriarchal society. She was under suppression from her maternal as well as a paternal house; she seeks

liberation from men, especially from her husband. When she fails to get appreciation and liberation she put aside to give importance to her family members rather she was addicted to her blind desire which was not tolerated by her family. Similarly, the Earth is a habitat for living organisms. She is considered as a sacred mother and tolerates the disaster done by men towards it. But when it starts to revert back man could not tolerate its agony. Queer's Ecofeminism focuses on a wide area of gender issues regarding man and woman relationships, lesbians, trans-genders, and its connection towards the environment. In the essay *Toward a Queer Ecofeminism*, Greta Gaard says,

The goal of this essay is to demonstrate that to be truly inclusive, any theory of ecofeminism must take into consideration the findings of queer theory. Similarly, queer theory must consider the findings of ecofeminism. To this end, the essay examines various intersections between ecofeminism and queer theory, thereby demonstrating that a democratic, ecological society envisioned as the goal of ecofeminism will, of necessity, be a society that values sexual diversity and the erotic. (Gaard)

Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* depicts the conflict between a sensitive, keen-eyed, poetic, imaginative wife Astha and the rational, successful businessman and a practical husband, Helmand. She has no boundaries for her love for Helmand. But when she found that her husband shifted her attention towards his business from her she begins to long for his love. This made her be frustrated. She hates this violence-filled atmosphere. Because of that Astha suffers from emotional alienation. She fed up her life with Helmand and could not tolerate the violence which causes the death of Aijaz. Her ability to adjust to society makes her feel aloof. Astha's assimilation of nature takes her back to her husband. Manju Kapur has handled this lesbian story skillfully without giving the sense of bitterness at any cost. The theme of reconciliation in this story reflects the modern current scenario in many ways. She characterizes the emergence of new women in the modern world effectively in *A Married Woman*.

Astha, the protagonist seems to be a single child of her employing parents at Delhi. Her father shows much attention to her bright future and tries to educate her utmost as he can. On the other hand, her mother thinks to settle her off in a well-reputed family. Her mother says, when you are married, our responsibilities will be over. Do you know the *shastras* say, 'if parents die without getting their daughter married, they will be condemned to perpetual rebirth? (Kapur). Astha felt bad when she came to know that her mother suspect her when she turns teenager her age. After completion of her post-graduation, she is locked in a marital bond with Helmand, a foreign returned MBA graduate. This couple was blessed with two children Anuradha and Himanshu namely as a token of love. Astha is employed as a teacher in a school and also she has a talent as a painter. Hemant resigns his bank job and begins a business on his own. As both of them were busy with their schedule they have little time to share their daily routine with

each other. Astha was asked to lead a theatre group headed by Aijaz a lecturer as well as a social activist. When Aijaz knows about her talent she encourages her to prepare a script for their enactment about Babri Masjid. Astha seriously works on it which irritates Hemant. She came to know about the theatre group that was assassinated in a bomb blast. Aijaz too died in that accident. Hemant felt bad to see Astha constantly mourning the death of Aijaz.

After the death of Aijaz, her interest turns towards Manch activities. She wants to prove her talent as a painter and begins to paint for Manch. Her involvement makes her forget to look after the familial duties and also her husband and children. Though Hemant is busy with his business, he never forgets to spend time with his family. Astha went to Ayodhya along with the Manch group for social activities where she met Pipeelika khan, wife of late Aijaz. She enjoys the company of Piper and she found her as her soul mate. Their emotional attachment takes them to the next level, as they become lesbians.

Astha does not want to concern about her maternal and paternal house. Both of her families insist she is dependent, and do not allow her to lead an independent life. When Astha's father dies, her mother sells all their property and hand over the money to Hemant, believing he can double the amount which makes Astha worried because her mother is too not ready to trust her as an equipped person to do all sorts of works. Astha's paintings acclaim her reputation which makes her paint constantly without considering her frequent headaches.

But she does not even get encouragement from the side of her husband as she expects from him. Astha finds herself comfortable with the presence of Piper. She only gives importance to her desire rather than her family. She got trapped in their lesbian relationship. As a result, she was ready to devote her life to Peeplika. Hemant arranging a family tour for avoiding the bitterness circulating among his family. Somehow his effort to reunite their relationship was getting stronger than before. After their return from abroad tour Astha was informed by Peeplika about her plan to do her Ph.D. abroad at this point their relationship came to an end. Astha went back to her heavy-heartedly. She does not get encouragement for her earnings through paintings. So she stops her artwork and stops craving for her individuality, begins to live for the sake of her family. It is well described by Manju Kapur in the novel,

Mechanically she changed, brushed her teeth, put cream on, got into her side of the bed, pulled the sheet up, and turning to the very edge lay absolutely still. The motion of any kind was painful to her. Her mind, heart, and body felt numb... it continued like this for days. She felt stretched thin, thin across the globe. (Kapur)

Astha never finds happiness in her life. Her love with Hemant becomes futile due to his lack of interest in her. Similarly, man destroys nature, it tolerates everything but when it blasts out and shows its anger on them it devastates everything around it. The strength of womanhood fills her mind and body and gives her a sense of pride when she knows the responsibility of her towards her family. When Peeplika left her alone to look after her studies, she turns to be a new person and start a new life with her family.

The paper tries to sum up by saying that the relationship to land and women is unique especially for women. As problems of women and nature differ from place to place and time to time, eco-feminism becomes a common tool to express the reality of nature and women. Eco-feminism emerges as a bold theological expression to challenge all forms of oppression. It is only a movement but also a welfare organization that struggles to get equal rights between men and women.

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Food As A ‘Lifeboat’ During The Pandemic: Analysis Of Private Kitchenscape And Culture

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Abstract: The domestic space of home plays an important role in establishing cultural norms and practices. Kitchenscape is an integral aspect of this phenomenon. In contemporary times due to the pandemic, the kitchenscape has become an important space for individuals to connect with their culture which was otherwise not possible because of the looming threat of the disease outside. This ‘lifeboat’ of cooking in the kitchen has also altered a lot of stereotypical ideologies that prevailed with respect to the private kitchenscape. The private kitchenscape was always about women creating food and was presented as a very isolated space dominated by women. But due to the pandemic, one can see that through the kitchenscape people were trying to build a sense of community and emulate culture by cooking together. In this manner, the family unit was trying to create the culture that they used to breathe outside before the pandemic and create a culture where they feel a sense of familiarity and comfort. This paper will explore the question of how the kitchenscape has transformed as a space during the pandemic and how it acts as a medium to connect individuals with their society and culture through foodways.

Keywords. Kitchenscape, spatiality, pandemic, cooking, culture, food, foodways.

An epidemic is like the caste system in India, how much ever you try to get rid of it, it comes back but with different intensity. The current wave of the epidemic, Corona or Covid-19 is looming on the mental and physical health of people all over the world. This epidemic has altered the understanding of ‘normal’ and engaged people in conversations with self. The understanding of society and culture has undergone transformation. We are cultural beings and we live in society. Interaction with the society and culture is a crucial part of every individual’s identity. Culture also cannot exist without human beings. Raymond Williams in his work, “Keywords” points out that culture originally meant cultivation of something. 18th century onwards, culture meant cultivation of something particularly associated with spiritual and moral growth of humanity. The meaning of culture has evolved over time. Culture is a spiritual, intellectual and aesthetic development. It is also a way of life which includes works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity (Williams 1976: 90). Hence, culture forms an important aspect of identity of individuals.

As Covid-19 continues to spread across the world, it has altered and transformed the understanding of culture. The pandemic has had a huge impact on the lives of individuals, both mentally and physically but it has impacted the manner in which culture functions and has enhanced the importance of culture in the lives of human beings. Covid-19 has generated threats and stress in the human psyche as human

beings are forced to be disconnected from their immediate culture and cross-cultural connections. It has altered many cultural factors like the models and understanding of physical privacy, idea of optimism, altruism and the structure of social network and how it functions. Culture in that sense, is not only limited to the physical proximity and visible practices but has moved beyond any kind of imagined boundary. Human beings understanding of culture beings with the everyday connections and spaces.

Everyday spaces and interactions play a significant role in our cultural identity. Everyday life is a social canvas through which one can analyze embodiment of identity through cultural practices. Everyday life as expressed by De Certeau is what presses us, oppresses us and holds us intimately, from the inside for the sake of the outside (Paterson 2006:1). Everyday food consumption spaces are constructed with memory culture that reminds individuals of their belongingness to a cultural realm. Foodscapes in the Indian cultural context is diverse and fraught with multitude of meanings. Everyday food culture acts as a political, social and religious statement of individual's beliefs and acts as a barrier between cultures. Food is not apolitical and food spaces are not innocent choices individuals make on a daily basis. Foodscapes have an active and evolving relationship with culture and embodied identity in the changing narrative of Covid-19. Everyday food consumption practices and everyday private and public spaces contributes to embody individuals within a cultural realm. There is a direct relationship between identity and culture which can be analyzed through the context of everyday food consumption and spaces where this food is consumed.

Home is an important constructed environment that internally operates and controls the external societal ideologies through everyday practices. Every space within the physical structure of home translates cultural ideology and enacts power dynamics through practices and relationships within the home space. Private kitchenscape is one such built-in environment that is an important private space within the home space that translates the larger cultural ideology by means of cooking, creation and consumption. Rooms are eating contexts through the act of consumption (Sobal J & Wansink 2007: 127). Kitchenscape forms one such room that represents foodscape that operates as eating place that shapes lived culture through availability, visibility, utensils, receptacles, proximity and food access. This in turn shapes individual's identity through intake of food prepared within this space.

1. "Food and Cultural studies" by Ashley Bob has played a crucial role in molding my understanding of how food plays a role in shaping and altering the perception about culture. He explains the relationship between food, culture and identity. He begins the conversations around the manner in which culture acts as base for individuals to interact and embody cultural understanding through food. Food through commensality, not only satiates hunger but also empowers individuals to be a part of the larger culture. He especially writes about food writing. He elaborates that food writing represents the altered understanding of culture and presents the politics of culture through various kinds of gastronomical

literature. He talks about the ‘grammar of food’ and the manner in which in all societies, their eating habits and rituals are governed by consumption, preparation and presentation of food in certain spaces.

2. “Curried Culture: Indian Food in the Age of Globalization” by Krishnendu Ray elaborates on the idea of the construction of ‘national’ cuisine. He claims that this idea of a ‘national cuisine’ rests on forgetting or suppression of the foreignness of its food and foodways. Within the setup of the neo-liberal capitalist market, cultures serve to cater to the larger aspect of demand and supply. The rise of fusion food and continental cuisine symbolically reflects constant search for ‘newness’ and continuous creation of cultural identity to cater to the capitalist market. In the Indian context, one can see a rise in the presence of food trucks, street food joints and cafes which represent this sort of market. He asserts that manner in which these food spaces are designed and marketed also contribute to the understanding of a global culture. The ingestion of food in these street food spaces is also about digestion of national culture that we sub-consciously represent. In that sense, there is no concept of Indian food or Indian cuisine. Food is a shared human heritage and cultural inheritance. The rise in the concept of fusion food and the fact that such cuisines constitute and break national boundaries is the fact of catering to the capitalist market and the need of visibility. The presentation of food, visibility of the nation or culture in the global market plays an important role in making individuals part of the global world.

3. “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste” (1979) by Pierre Bourdieu is chapter from Bourdieu’s book *Distinctions* where he elaborates on the idea of taste and culture. He writes about cultural capital in society and how tastes play an important role in building the status quo in society. One aspect of his essay that is drawn into this study is the explanation and reference to the idea of food habits in culture and how food habits and tastes are acquired and not established by birth.

4. ‘The Culinary Triangle’ (1966) by Claude Lévi-Strauss. This piece of work written by Claude Levi-Strauss where he begins by comparing vowels and consonant structures to the culinary experience of human beings. He analyses the usage of two principal modes used by societies for their rituals and daily activities- raw, cooked and roasted. Raw and cooked signify nature and culture, where cooked is the cultural transformation of raw, whereas rotted is a natural transformation. He further provides examples of communities like Wyandot Indians and French societies to elucidate the difference between raw and cooked .i.e. nature and culture. Boiling and cooking any food item requires cultural means like receptacles and other utensils to signify difference in culture. The means and method of cooking contribute to defining culture of a society. Hence, cooking in any society is the language that translates structures of that society.

5. ‘Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption’ (1966) by Roland Barthes which elaborates on the idea of ‘Psychosociology’ is the study of problems common to psychology and sociology. This critical essay by Roland Barthes is an important work that explores the idea of food

consumption in the contemporary French and American and French societies. Barthes uses the example of sugar and wine, two abundant substances in America that are not just products but act as institutions in the society. He further discusses the role of advertisements in the propagation of food marketing where food acts as function permits individuals' to partake in the national past and present. Barthes raises crucial questions regarding functions of food in society where food acts as a symbol to bring cultural memory to life, facilitate transaction of business, and for leisure. He raises an important point that food is not just a collection of products that can be used for nutritional analysis but it is a 'system of communication' and a 'body of images'. According to Barthes' analysis, human beings communicate through food and in that sense, food acts as a protocol in the form of business transactions and nutrition to nurture a healthy body.

6. "Geocriticism: Real to fictional spaces" (2007) by Bertrand Westphal is an extension of the understanding of spatiality provided by Robert Tally Jr. which extends the critique to understand 'spatiotemporality' and reading spaces. This book enables the study to develop on the idea of Geopolitics and Geocriticism by looking at spaces in the contemporary times.

7. "For Space" (2005) by Dooreen Massey locates the understanding of spaces the meaning of spaces and places, mapping spaces within culture and looking at the politics of spatiality. This book provides a holistic understanding of meaning and significance of spaces within any culture.

8. "Food in Society" (2001) by Peter Atkins and Ian Bowler provides the basic understanding of food in society with respect to economy, culture and geography. The book unfolds various aspects of food in society like the idea of consumption, political economy of food and ecology of food consumption. This book enhances the understanding of the study by contributing to the significance of food within a cultural setup. It looks at cooking and consumption not just as material part of life but as a moral, political and cultural phenomenon.

9. "Everyone Eats" (2005) by E.N. Anderson develops an understanding of food and culture through basic analysis of significance of environment of eating, food and religion, and food as social marker. This book builds on the idea of embodied identity and food with the cultural context.

10. "Culture" (2016) by one of the most formidable critics of English studies, Terry Eagleton, provides a wholistic perspective of culture. He looks at the meaning and significance of culture in the contemporary context. He talks about multifaceted nature of culture. In doing so, he provides his perspective about concepts like diversity, plurality, hybridity and inclusivity. This work by Terry Eagleton is important as he critiques the contemporary idea of culture and does not just talk about binaries like 'high' and 'low' culture.

11. "Food in Popular Culture" (2008) by Fabio Parasecoli. This book provides a good critique of popular culture and how food is a crucial part of consumption in popular culture. Through this book, the

study analyses the act of eating in popular culture and food choices but also develop a better understanding of production, presentation, consumption and marketing of food in popular culture.

12. “Culture and Society” by Raymond Williams is a crucial book which helps build critical understanding about culture. Though he explores the notion of culture in Britain but we can see the similar phenomenon at work in India presently. This book is an essential reading which has led me to investigate the idea of culture in the present times.

13. The study draws reference from recent theories as well, namely, Food and Culture: A Reader Third Edition (2013). The Food and Culture reader is an important resource as it provides multiple dimensions to food and culture studies. It not only provides the foundations of food studies like the essays by Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, Claude Lévi-Strauss but also gives an insight into the idea of embodiment and consumption. It enlightens the researcher about the idea of consumption, food industry and various other cultural aspects but also prompts us to question the concept of overeating, the significance of raw and cooked food for any culture and broadens the horizon of critical evaluation by looking at food in a multi-faceted manner.

14. Geographies of Consumption (2005) by Juliana Mansvelt is one of the very crucial theories used in this study. Juliana Mansvelt reflects on space and geography of consumption and its influence on identity, history of culture, spaces, commercial culture and moralities. This book elaborates on the significance of consumption in the contemporary scenario and how it builds on to the existing culture through various phenomenon. This book is relevant to the study of foodscape as consumption is a crucial concept from the perspective of identity and culture. Consumption not only constitutes material consumption of food and other items but also values, practices and beliefs through physical consumption.

15. “Everyday life and Cultural Theory” (2002) by Ben Highmore is one of the primary text to analyze and understand the relevance of everyday life. It provides an investigation and scrutiny of everyday life and enables readers to understand culture. It not only provides an understanding of the significance of everyday life in the contemporary scenario but the book also provides a historical introduction to theories of everyday life. This book is relevant to this study as the context of the study is everyday food spaces and this text provides an entry point in understanding everyday life and aids the study to develop an understanding of food spaces.

16. “Culture and Everyday Life “ (2005) by David Inglis is an interesting work written in the field of sociology. It provides an extended understanding of Ben Highmore’s theory of everyday life but looks at it from the perspective of culture and nature, modern culture and everyday life, globalization and everyday life culture. These specific aspects of this books add meaning to the understanding of food spaces and embodied identity within the context of everyday food spaces.

17. “Illness as a Metaphor” by Susan Sontag is a book which has been extremely useful in this research paper. This book is about how illness can become a metaphor to understand cultural and individual identity. It enables us to explore the idea of illness and stigma associated with it.

The epidemic has adverse effects on human sensibility. There is fear and stigma attached with the disease which is traumatizing people all over the world. In Stendhal’s *Armanace*, the hero’s mother refuses to say the word, ‘tuberculosis’, for the fear that pronouncing that word will hasten the course of her son’s malady (Sontag 1978:6). In the similar manner, the utterance of the word, ‘Corona’ appears like a life threat and a cause for anxiety in people. Ever since human beings first attempted to resist, explain, or to incorporate the effects of nature on their rituals, sickness has had a social dimension and has been a part of the history and consciousness of the society. In this situation, where illness is a metaphor for anxiety and fear, cooking comes as a life savior and in the doomsday of what appears to be looming because of the pandemic, cooking in the kitchen in particular appears like the Noah’s arch on which people desire to sit and save themselves and their sanity.

The normative structure of society has collapsed; hence, the meaning of social interaction and culture have also altered. Human beings thrive in a cultural setting. Human beings crave for human connect, conversations with people and exchange of goods and ideas. Food and cooking are a cultural phenomenon that allow individuals to connect with culture in this situation. Food is an essential aspect of everyday life and in this situation of the pandemic, food has become an aspect of engagement with culture and restoring sanity and mental health of people.

The domestic space of home plays an important role in establishing cultural norms and practices. Home is not just a concrete architectural design with rooms in it but represents a microcosm of the societal constructs and stereotypes. Homes are sites where meanings are constructed; they may be sites of fear, relaxation and work, security and insecurity for different inhabitants (Mansvelt 2005: 69). Kitchenscape is an integral aspect of this phenomenon. Kitchenscape is a built-in environment which resonates with the culture of a society at large. Kitchenscape is the built-in environment which signifies food consumption and creation. Kitchenscape not only includes the consumable food products but also includes the variety of physical features associated with perceived affordance of food consumption like size of the space, various utensils, furniture placement and the ambient condition. These aspects of kitchenscape also reflects culture.

In the contemporary times of the pandemic, kitchenscape is an important setting for the individuals to connect with their culture which is otherwise not possible because of the looming threat of the disease outside. Spaces like the kitchen represent identity, memories and desires. It provides affiliation to individuals about their sense of belongingness to a community, and alignment with their own culture. With the lockdown during the pandemic in India and abroad, one can see a surge in

people's interest in cooking. All over social media, one can observe people trying to connect with their food recipes, products and skills associated with cooking. As people cannot venture outside and be a part of their cultural 'habitus', the time spent cooking in kitchenscape provides a cathartic experience of creating that cultural habitus with the space of home. People are using various social media platforms to connect with others and share their recipes, their expertise at cutting vegetables, using fancy utensils and food presentation.



This 'lifeboat' of cooking in the kitchen has also altered a lot of stereotypical ideologies that prevailed with respect to the private kitchenscape. The private kitchenscape was always about women creating food and was presented as a very isolated space dominated by women. But due to the pandemic, one can see that through the kitchenscape people are trying to build a sense of community and emulating culture by cooking together. In this manner, the family unit is trying to create the culture that they used to breathe outside before the pandemic and creating a culture where they feel a sense of familiarity and comfort.

One of the most important aspects of kitchenscape is the entire act of cooking. As Claude Lévi-Strauss states in his essay that cooking is a cultural phenomenon and the transformation of the raw (Strauss 2005:41). This transformation of raw into cooked by-product through the act of cooking represents the nature/culture binary. When one cooks the raw vegetables and spices using the cultural apparatus of receptacles and use fire, to cook a food item, it becomes a cultural product and a conscious engagement with culture. Cooking in the space of the home appears to be a window to connect, interact and maintain the relationship with the culture at large during the pandemic.

Though the act of cooking is essential, the spatiality matters as well. Human experience is that of constant navigation of not only physical spaces but also ideological and cultural unraveling of various discourses.

Places and spaces are not just physical setups but they uncover ideology of various cultures and societies. Geographers such as Massey, Harvey and Edward Soja have argued that spaces should not be viewed as universal, absolute and neutral containers in which objects are placed and events occur. Instead, spaces can be understood as socially constructed and that which gives meaning to human endeavors and actions. (Mansvelt 2005:56). Primitively, spaces were considered as mere concrete orientations of architectural design. But with evolved understanding of culture, the geographical notion of space in human understanding has also altered. Spaces represent identity, cultural practices, social behavior, memories and desires. They provide affiliation to individuals about their social belongingness and alignment with one's own culture.

'Home is where the heart is'. This 19th century proverb, resonates with individuals of all generations. People have created songs about it and whenever one thinks about their family and loved ones, this proverb is mentioned and remembered. As elaborated in chapter 2, everyday life through everyday spaces create 'life-worlds'. This concept by Edmund Husserl equips individuals to situate themselves and develop expectations from themselves as a part of culture and the larger ideology of the societal norms. The domestic space of home plays an important role in establishing cultural norms and practices. Every room in a house, through everyday practices represents the fabric of what the family is made of. Spaces act as representations of embodied identity and cultural values. Consumption and purchase of food in home space is an important site to construe socio-economic and cultural phenomenon that thrives in the society. Through the practice of home-making, the construction of physical and psychological space contributes to defining identity through foodways inside domestic realm of home. The constructed environment in that space determines food preferences and consumption.

The kitchenscape is the space through which tastes are constructed. Kitchenscape is the built environment that contextualizes food intake and consumption. It is the food landscape that influences food intake through availability, diversity, visibility and taste (Sobal J & Wansink

B 2006: 127). Kitchenscape reflects cultural practices not only through cooking but also through culturally created objects like utensils, receptacles, food products and people who dominate that space. In most societies throughout history, connections have been drawn between women and domestic realm of food preparation in the kitchen. Women's position in society has been conditioned by the societal constructs and restrictions placed by the patriarchal society. Men in the domestic realm assume the role of decision makers and are held responsible for making decisions on the quality, quantity and taste of food prepared in the kitchen space. The responsibility of creating that food is designated to women. This can be seen as a way to exercise power through the kitchenscape and maintain patriarchal order. As Toril Moi states,

oppression of women is both a material reality, originating in material condition, and a psychological phenomenon, a function of the way women and men perceive one another and themselves. (Moi 1986: 3)

The idea of the feminine act and gender constructs are created and cooked in the space of kitchen to save the interest and domination of male supremacy. But in contrast to the primitive understanding of kitchenscape, it is not only a metaphor for evaluating gender dynamics but it is a metonym for understanding cultural practices of a given society. In the contemporary society and the situation of the pandemic in 2020, one can observe that the kitchenscape is not only dominated by the women but men and other members of the family desire to partake responsibility in the kitchen. Hence, kitchenscape during the pandemic has not only become an important everyday site to connect with cultural practices but also breaking various gendered notions of associated with this space. “Representation is a central issue within cultural studies and all representation must have politics.” (Fiske 2004:1268)

Cultural studies rest its claims on the politics of representation. It interrogates, investigates and critically looks at the politics of culture, nation and identities. It has constructed itself as a field and has an open relationship with inter-disciplinarity. Culture is something which is lived and commonplace as constantly reiterated by Raymond Williams. It is under constant flux. It can be understood through cultural objects, events and experiences of the world. Cultural studies enable individuals to evaluate various aspects of culture.

Culture forms the basis of any society's smooth functioning. Culture creates individual experience and enables individuals to locate themselves within the world they live in, by way of everyday practices, values, beliefs and systems that exist. Everyday life plays an important role in reinforcing culture through everyday practices, routine and habits. Individuals are the crucial carriers of culture and hence, cultural theories enable the study to investigate the reason behind the significance of everyday food spaces and its relationship with embodied identity within a cultural paradigm. Theories of popular culture play a crucial role in analyzing cultural phenomenon of this study. Popular culture is a rapidly growing cultural phenomenon that is concerned with consumption, production and distribution of ideologies and material good within a market driven society (Parasecoli 2008: 5). Popular culture in India is concerned with identity, aspirations, exchange, coordination, separation, structures and practices that serve endless relations such as ethnicity, rituals, everyday life, norms, meanings and beliefs. It is not something that is permanent but it is contingent and evolving to build a cultural identity. The contemporary Indian society dwells in contingency and dissent. It is constantly evolving due to influence of multicultural and multilingualism. These two aspects have become extremely crucial in re-defining Indian cultural makeup. As we are living in a multicultural world, the consumption of food has also become a global experience than a local one. Food studies evaluates the role of food in every aspect of culture and society.

Food is pervasive and pertinent for human existence. Human beings like to eat, eating not only satiates hunger but it satisfies the soul, makes one feel happy and contented. The act of consumption of food is the most crucial aspect of human existence as human beings are the only creatures on earth that cook. Cooking is symbolic of culture and existence of humanity. The act of eating, creation and consumption of food fuels the body not only through diet that one consumes but also fuels it through food habits, customs, beliefs and practices associated with it. Hence, nutrition only plays a small part in nourishing the body but habits of consumption contributes to the entire experience of the body. Food and consumption of food are not apolitical acts. It enables individuals to feel connected to their community, understand its culture and politics.

Food has been under the lens of cultural theorists for a long time. Food studies is an inter disciplinary field and inherently opens up avenues for critique from every field as one cannot discard it from human identity. It examines the relationships between food and every aspect of human existence that contributes to creation and sustenance of culture. It moves beyond the idea of material consumption of food and attempts to analyze food as a cultural phenomenon. Food studies accounts for food and eating habits within a culture.

Around 1990s researchers began using the term 'food studies' to classify works related with food and culture. Slowly, scholarly work began taking shape to study the relationship between food and historical, social, cultural, biological and economic factors within a society. Food became a focal point for analyzing culture soon after that. Though in India, researchers are slowly moving beyond understanding food from the lens of caste, class and domesticity. Many researchers in the contemporary times have started looking at food from the lens of everyday and commonplace to understand culture.

Foodscape studies is also an important branch of food studies that not only gives prime importance to the food that is consumed but the space in which particular food items are consumed. Spaces can be perceived as continuous, cognitive and physical mapping of individuals existence within the broader social space. The cartography of gastronomy within a culture enables individuals to question culture through values, beliefs and practices within that space. The concept of foodscape refers to the food environment which involves the individual and the consumption of food. The suffix -scape refers to the relationship of food with spatiality. Arjun Appadurai (1996) in his work states that individuals are surrounded by five scapes, namely, financescape, ideoscapes, technoscapes, mediascapes and ethnocapes (Mikkelsen 2011:). It is within this context that the individuals locate themselves through food and consumption.

Foodscape as a concept has been explored by architects and sociologists like Pauline Adema Gilroy, James Warren Belasco who have analyzed specific spaces within consumerist culture but there are no

other specific theories in the field of English studies or Cultural studies that elucidate on the idea of foodscapes. Hence, the present study analyses the significance of foodscape by developing an understanding of spatiality and significance of everyday spaces in developing a food culture. Foodscape in that sense, highlights the relationship between foodways, culture and embodied identity. Foodscape studies analysis this phenomenon by looking at the significance of food within various physical and cognitive spaces.

Home is an important constructed environment that internally operates and controls the external societal ideologies through everyday practices. Home space in popular culture creates economy for the market driven society through consumption practices and enacts the role of upholding power politics and identity construction through the space of household. Juliana Mansvelt in the book *Geographies of Consumption* quotes Perkins and Thorns (1999), "The place where we live is one of the key locales which shape our sense of place and enables us to develop our sense of who we are." (Mansvelt 2005:69) Every space within the physical structure of home translates cultural ideology and enacts power dynamics through practices and relationships within the home space. Private kitchenscape is one such built-in environment that is an important private space within the home space that translates the larger cultural ideology by means of cooking, creation and consumption. Rooms are eating contexts through the act of consumption (Sobal J & Wansink 2007: 127). Kitchenscape forms one such room that represents foodscape that operates as eating place that shapes lived culture through availability, visibility, utensils, receptacles, proximity and food access. This in turn shapes individual's identity through intake of food prepared within this space. Kitchenscape though historically considered a women-centric space can now be seen as a space of changing narratives within the context of contemporary modernity in South Indian space. Kitchenscape can be seen as a space where it is no longer a domain for women to cook and create but a shared space which can provide empowerment, reflection and creation of individual's identity within a cultural paradigm than caging them into their gendered identity. Kitchenscape in that sense, questions the stereotypical notion of gender-based identity politics within the contemporary setup and analyses individual's identity value as a part of culture.

Consumption has always been an intrinsic part of any civilization. Consumption determines choices and preference of an individual. The idea of consumption occupies central place in everyday life of individuals. Consumption has regained its place in cultural theory and the freedom to consume has come to be equated with freedom itself (McRobbie 1994: 31). Consumption holds prime importance in understanding the location of individuals within culture. Every culture has a particular way of cooking any food item for consumption. Even if an individual is aspiring to make a Italian dish in the Indian context, it will have a flavour of the Indian culture and particularly the cultural context of the person creating that

dish. Hence, cooking in a society is a language in which it unconsciously translates its structures- or else redesigns itself, still unconsciously to reveal its contradictions

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The Real Definition of Life

Ujjal Mandal

Life is a little shining star
That you can't define so far,
Life is a mirror lucid and clear
If broken, you can't feel her!

Like a dream life is fairy
Seeing it, oh, so scary!
Life is an extreme pain unhurt
As if it looks like an invisible art.

Life is darkness of the night
And the burning light of the sight,
Oh, life is a little shining star
That you can't define so far!

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