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EDITORIAL

One of the key developments in late twentieth century American literature was the rise to prominence of literature written by and about ethnic minorities apart from theoretical texts, which throw fresh light on the perspectives from which these literatures should be read. With the intention of highlighting the varied aspects of American literature, the Department of English and the Research Centre for Comparative Studies, Mercy College, organized an International Seminar on AMERICAN LITERATURE—TRENDS AND PROSPECTS in which two reputed American academicians, Dr. Lars Erik Larson and Dr. Molly Hiro, Associate Professors of English, University of Portland, Oregon, U. S. A., Fulbright-Nehru Scholars at the University of Mysore during Fall 2014, were keynote speakers. This special issue of our Peer Reviewed journal PURSUITS contains the papers of scholars and academicians who presented their papers at the Seminar. The scholarly papers in this issue focus on the different ways in which American texts are read in the postmodern scenario. I strongly hope that these articles would be of immense help to students and Research scholars thereby motivating them to take up fresh areas of American literature for research purpose.

I am grateful to the paper presenters, readers, and our contributors for their continued support and encouragement which, I am sure, would go a long way in establishing our Research Journal PURSUITS as a valuable source of knowledge.

Dr. W. S. Kottiswari

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES IN TONI MORRISON'S THE BLUEST EYE

Ms. M. Gayathiri and Dr. S. Martin Mathivannan

One of the most critically acclaimed living writers, Toni Morrison has been a major architect in creating a literary language for Afro-Americans. Her use of shifting perspective, fragmentary narrative, and a narrative voice extremely close to the consciousness of her characters reveal the influence of writers like Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner: two writers that Morrison, not coincidentally, studied extensively while being a college student. All of her works show the influence of African-American folklore, songs, and women's gossip. In her attempts to map these oral art forms into literary modes of representation, Morrison has created a body of work informed by a distinctly black sensibility while drawing a reading audience from across racial boundaries.

Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* radiates with varieties of theme, symbols, and characterization which contribute to the formation of the novel. The novel further shows the way white beauty can easily be degrading to young black girls and women. Additionally, *The Bluest Eye* depicts how family life and childhood can have a great effect on a person's life. *The Bluest Eye* is Morrison's first novel published in 1970. In the novel, Morrison challenges Western standards of beauty and demonstrates that the concept of beauty is socially constructed. Morrison also recognizes that if whiteness is used as a standard of beauty or anything else, then the value of blackness is diminished and this novel works to subvert that tendency. While demonstrating pride in being black, the writer does not simply portray positive image of blackness, instead, she focuses on the damage that the black women characters suffer through the construction of femininity in a radicalized society (Moses 37).

The individual who does not belong to a community is generally lost. The individual who leaves and has internalized the village or community is much more likely to survive. Also, a whole community – everyone – is needed to raise a child; one parent or two parents are inadequate to the task. The lack of roots and the disconnection from the community and the past cause individuals to become alienated; often her characters struggle unsuccessfully to identify, let alone fulfill an essential self. *The Bluest Eye* tells the story of an eleven year old black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who wants to have blue eyes, because she sees herself, and is regarded by most of the characters in the novel, as ugly. The theme of beauty plays a great part in the development of the characters and the novel. Throughout the novel, the reader views Pecola the protagonist, worshiping the beautiful white icons of the 1940's. Pecola also goes as far as drinking three quarts of milk just so she can use the cup with Shirley Temple's picture on it. Pecola's mother, Pauline also seems to worship the white icons. Pauline visits the movies due to loneliness and buys into the fantasy world she views in movies. She even wears her hair like the white actress, Jean Harlow.

By the end of the story, like the title of the novel *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola comes to believe that she actually has blue eyes and her delusion shows how white society can affect a young black girl. The theme of sex is also portrayed greatly in the novel. Most of the major male characters of this novel have a sexual desire for young girls, including Cholly Breedlove, Mr.Henry, and Soaphead Church. The girls in the novel are victims. The young girls of the book do not experience their youth as any other young girl would. They are raped and sexually violated.

Toni Morrison uses the psychological ramifications of the physical, emotional, and spiritual desolation produced by slavery to mould her characters' senses of self through direct experience with slavery and white oppression. The inability of male and female characters to form a sense of identity in her novels *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* is tied to the cultural trauma they experience which makes it impossible to shape a sense of self. The most prominent negative impact of slavery Morrison focuses on in *Beloved* is the way in which former slaves are haunted, even in freedom, by the dehumanization they endure. Due to their repressed social status, Morrison's characters are only able to experience relationships if they are granted the privilege to do so by those who hold power over them. As time progresses beyond legalized slavery, the now 'free' African-Americans have to achieve a societal standard of whiteness in order to gain acceptance.

Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, exposes the results of white presence in society on African-Americans and how this presence imposes difficulty on the individual to form an identity. Morrison uses this reality to structure these two novels and the bonds between the characters, their society, and themselves. Through the allowance or denial of relationships, Morrison demonstrates in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, how slavery, the deliberate dehumanization of African slaves, and the presence of whiteness in society alter her characters' ability to form their own sense of self-identity. The alienation which the slaves experience gets transferred to future generations by disabling any hope of forming relationships after attaining freedom and creates psychological obstacles.

In both fiction and poetry in western culture, outward beauty has often been an indication of inner beauty. Pecola believes that if her eyes were blue, "she would be pretty, virtuous, and loved: friends would play with her at recess, teachers would smile at Pecola the same way they smile at Maureen Peel, and even her parents might stop fighting because they would not want to do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (Cormier-Hamilton 115). Pecola's internalization of the "white" standard of beauty is implicit in her desire to attain *The Bluest Eyes*. For Pecola, the bluest eye represents a passage into the world of happiness and beauty from which she remains alienated.

Blue eyes symbolize the cultural beauty of America and white society. Pecola believes that having blue eyes will change the way others view her. She thinks that having blue eyes will also change the way she views the world, giving her a carefree world of a white child: "It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights—if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different" (52).

The colour blue can also be viewed as a color of sadness. Even though Pecola strived to have blue eyes, the reader could see her as having the saddest of eyes than anyone in the novel. The use of the symbol of seasons is used to show that the events happening in the novel do not correspond to events that are viewed in the actual season. Spring is seen as a time of rebirth, but in Pecola's case, her own father rapes her in a drunken state and insanity. In addition, Claudia associates spring as being whipped for the first time with a switch, rather than a strap. In the summer, the presence of gleeful children is not seen, instead, an isolated, insane Pecola with an imaginary friend whom she believes is jealous of her. In autumn, the season of harvesting, unfortunately, Pecolas baby dies.

In the novel, family life brightens the personalities of the characters. Soaphead Church's family background and past can be seen as a reason for his sexual interest in young girls. His strict father also adds to his obsession with cleanliness. Cholly Breedlove was abandoned by his father, leaving him knowing

how to nurture and care for his own family. He also raped his own daughter, adding to the family's downfall. Therefore, Pecola's tough family life leaves her not knowing how to react to the realities of American beauty.

The names of the characters are strange and ironic. The family name Breedlove is ironic due to there being little sign of love amongst the family members. In addition, the action of the characters makes it easier to get to know them. Claudia displays her faithfulness to Pecola by punching her in the face for teasing her. Frieda shows the same qualities by hitting Woodrow Cain, defending Pecola. Miss Maries displays lack for societal expectations of female puerilities by laughing and cursing loudly. Cholly displays his disgust for women and family by hitting his wife, attempting to burn down their house, and raping his own daughter. Pauline's frustration from family transfers to the upkeep of the Fisher home, distracting her from her own home.

Many characters in *The Bluest Eye* are involved in a quest—Pecola for love and an identity, Cholly for his father, Claudia for meaning, Soaphead Church for a place. Identity, the ability to find/express loves, the parent-child relationship, friendship, a white standard of beauty, a belief in "romantic love," child abuse, and racism are other major themes. Image clusters in this novel include nature, the seasons, eyes, white dolls, and splitting.

The views of society at that time of slaves as a sub-human group denies them basic human desires and makes it impossible for them to create a stable sense of personal identity. They are forced to identify with their social and ethnic group, but by doing so their sense of self is lost. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison shows how the cultural trauma of a cohesive group can lead to the inability for individuals in the group for form identities. Even Morrison herself learned lessons as a result of composing *The Bluest Eye*. She states:

In 1962 when I began this story, and in 1965 when it began to be a book, the answers were not as obvious to me as they quickly became and are now. The assertion of racial beauty was not a reaction to the self-mocking, humorous critique of cultural/racial foibles common in all groups, but against the damaging internalization of assumptions of immutable inferiority originating in an outside gaze. I focused, therefore, on how something as grotesque as the demonization of an entire root could take root inside the most delicate member of society: a child; the most vulnerable member: a female. In trying to dramatize the devastation that even casual racial contempt can cause, I chose a unique situation, not a representative one. (Morrison xi)

Morrison aptly displays how social identities are formed and replicated in a person's life. By analyzing Pecola, the protagonist, while rather extreme in many cases, show the extent to which occurrence of rejection can be heavily formative. Furthermore, the story of Pecola creates an excellent framework for understanding how difficult the fight for a positive social identity and self esteem was. Perhaps the most intriguing facet of Pecola's search for identity is the enormous scope and power of unhindered racism. White racism had caused members of Pecola's own in group to hate each other. In conclusion, the social identities in place in *The Bluest Eye* provide excellent examples of how social identities are created and then replicated. Furthermore, the novel renders evidences as to how difficult social and group identities are to break. Morrison's writings are truly an exemplary display of the difficulties involved in obtaining a positive social identity.

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THE THEME OF FRIENDSHIP IN MEG WAITE CLAYTON'S THE WEDNESDAY SISTERS

Ms. N. Illakkia and Dr. Sumathy K. Swamy

Each Friend represents a world in us, A world possibly not born until they arrive And it is only by this meeting that a New world is born. (Alan Nin)

Friendship is like the sun because it gives light to life. Friendship is an unbreakable bond of love and affection. Friends can change hell to heaven and can bring light to remove darkness, obstacle and desolation. They help to lead a happy and cheerful life. The one who gets the full support and encouragement from his/her friends can achieve great success in their lives.

Meg Waite Clayton, an American novelist, was born on 1 January 1959 in Washington. She took her bachelor degree in history and psychology at the University of Michigan. After moving to a Maryland she started her writing career. Her essays and stories have appeared in Runner's world, Writer's Digest and Numerous magazines. She is the author of four novels such as *The Language of Light* (2003), *The Wednesday Sisters* (2007), *The Four Mr. Brand Wells* (2011) and *The Wednesday Daughters* (2013). She won the Bellwether prize for her fiction *The Language of Light*. Her novel *The Wednesday Sisters* seems to be a bestselling popular book in club choice. Her works emphasize the secret of dreams and the power of friendship.

In the novel, *The Wednesday Sisters*, Meg Waite Clayton deals about the unbreakable bond of women friendship and their dreams. Here she exhorts every woman to come out of her hesitation, darkness, desolation and sympathetic nature. She emphasizes every woman's need to enrich her dreams, personal values and friendship.

The Wednesday Sisters has for its theme, the friendship of five young women—Frankie O Mara, Ally Tantry, Kath Montgomery, Linda Monson and Brett Tyle who first met at Palo Alto Park. They are all relocated from their native places because of their husband's jobs. Their conversation centers on raising the children, Miss America Pageant and race of the moon. As their wavelength matches, they become best friends soon and they began to meet every Wednesday morning. When they discover that they all share a passion for writing, they form a writing group and help one another improve their writing.

One day in September, they planned to watch the Miss America pageant in Brett's house where they got to know that Linda was a Jewish woman and Ally had married a black. Though they were shocked to realize this, they were not ready to break their friendship. Friendship, for them, was not just skin deep. Neither could racial or religious prejudices affect the warmth they shared.

The following week, the friends had some misunderstandings, so Linda and Ally did not come to the park. Frankie wished to see her friends united as they were before. So she planned to conduct a party to sort out issues. She believed that it could possibly give them a chance to communicate and resolve their misunderstandings. Frankie's plan worked out well and all the friends were united again. The Wednesday sisters are so bonded that they cannot spend their lives without talking to one another. This shows their intensity of friendship.

Linda was the one to encourage her friends to write. When she felt that her friends were shy to publish their works, she made her friends overcome their fear; she takes them to the funeral park and asks them to get into the coffin one by one. After climbing back out of that soft beige velvet, they felt as if they were reborn into the world. After that, they started publishing their works. Their love for books made them open up and they realized that their perceived difference is minor when compared to their shared experience.

Whenever Frankie felt shy to write, she used to look at the photo which was taken in the funeral parlor and it gave her the confident and positive approach which made her work to become popular. One Wednesday, the friends were worried to see that Ally had not arrived at the park. They make a visit to her home where they found that Ally was suffering from the threat of a miscarriage. Together, they helped her get over this fear. Ally was married to an Indian Hindu, against her parents' will, but her mother-in-law took great care of her. When she was in hospital, she desired to see her friends because she missed them badly. She gave birth to the child, but her baby was kept in an incubator because of some respiratory problem. Luckily, it was cured and the friends were happy once again together.

Kath was depressed when she found that her husband had an affair with another woman. The friends were there for her and helped her like her own sisters. When she had a financial crisis, the Wednesday sisters were there to help her. This made Kath refuse the opportunity to work abroad because she needed their friendship more than the job. It shows their unbreakable bond of friendship.

When Frankie's first book became a failure, her friends consoled her and they taught her to overcome the failure. At last her works reached the readers. Brett usually wore gloves to hide her burned hands because her brother accidently poured some acid in her hand while he was experimenting with something in his childhood. Her brother had a dream of becoming a scientist but her father didn't allow him to study science, so he failed. So she wanted to fulfill her brother's dream. She wrote the book and dedicated it to her brother.

When Brett attended the concert for her book "The Mrs. American," she was in a situation to talk about her success and her experience of publication. She said that the Wednesday sisters were the reason behind her success. She narrated the whole happenings and introduced them to the audience.

Her friends were the constant support when Linda was hospitalized and they took care of Linda's children. The children never felt alienated and missed motherly affection because Linda's friends showered motherly care on the children. Even the friends looked after Ally too when she came back home after the delivery. Family does not mean only father, mother and children. Even these women proved to be more than family to one another. After Linda's return from hospital, she felt very sad because she had undergone a surgery. Her friends wanted to make Linda happy and normal. To make her laugh, the friends shaved off their hair. This shows the readiness in them to do anything for friendship.

Family is the bondage of emotion and feelings. The women in this novel are married, but still they stand up for genuine friendship transcending their comfort zones. They developed a deep intimate sustainable relationship. They not only nurtured their friendship, but also developed a strong desire and passion for their love for books. Before that, they did not recognize their own individuality. They all stood for one another even in hard times. They proved to be good friends but more than friendship, they developed a familial bondage.

In this novel, Meg Waite Clayton inspires the readers to discover and celebrate the fantastic spirit of friendship. This novel proves that every individual can achieve great success with their friends' true support and encouragement.

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IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN HISTORICAL APPROPRIATIONS: A STUDY OF E. L. DOCTROW'S *RAGTIME* AND MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *IN THE SKIN OF A LION*

Ms. Lakshmi A. K. and Dr. W. S. Kottiswari, University of Calicut

The history of human civilization is closely intertwined with that of human immigration – first in Africa, then across Asia and Europe and finally to the Americas. The process of relocation to a foreign nation usually for permanent residence is referred to as "immigration" at the point of arrival and as "emigration" at the point of departure. Since this paper concerns itself with the socio-cultural interplay among the settlers at the state of arrival, the host nation or the destination society, it employs the term "immigrant" to denote the person thus relocated. Besides, the theoretical premise of the paper being interdisciplinary in character, a brief outline of the key terms would be appropriate at the moment.

The role of immigrants in the economic prosperity of developed nations like the U.S., U.K., and Canada is undeniable. Ami Bera, the American physician turned politician, observes:

Our nation is built upon a history of immigration, dating back to our first pioneers, the Pilgrims. For more than three centuries, we have welcomed generations of immigrants to our melting pot of hyphenated America: British-Americans; Italian-Americans; Irish-Americans; Jewish-Americans; Mexican-Americans; Chinese-Americans; Indian-Americans. The list goes on.(75)

Dr. Khalid Koser, the immigration expert, further illustrates this when he notes that many of the American entrepreneurs like Andrew Carnegie, Adolphus Busch, Samuel Goldwyn, and Helena Robenstein had immigrant origins; while the major economic concerns like Kodak, NBC, Google, Intel, Hotmail, Sun Microsoft, Yahoo and Ebay "were all started or co-founded by (im)migrants" (10).

Apart from having entrepreneurial skills, the immigrants, with their flexibility, ambition and readiness to take risks, contribute to the overall economic growth of the host nation by providing a constant supply of both high skilled and non skilled labour. As most of them immigrate in their youth, they constitute an active, energetic, innovative and taxpaying workforce that assist in maintaining the current levels of pension and welfare handed out to the retired and ageing native population. The immigrants also help to enrich the destination society with their cultural diversity.

At the same time, it would be naïve to imagine that the process of immigration is one without challenges. Throughout the history of mankind, immigration has prompted global events such as wars of expansion, invasion and colonization, revolutions, the rise and fall of empires, political transformations, dispossession, discrimination and persecution. At the labour market, the immigrant's eagerness to obtain jobs at any cost reduces the wages and increases the unemployment rates among the natives who compete with them. They pressurize the host nation to provide them with housing and educational facilities as they come in large numbers. At the political level, illegal immigrants pose serious threats to the security of the host nation and increase the number of criminals. Finally, at the cultural level, they pose adjustment problems with the natives.

It is evident from the forgone discussion that immigration is at once a problem and an opportunity to the receiving states. The positive impact of immigration could very easily slip into negative results if the immigrants are not properly integrated into the mainstream society of the host nation. A much contested

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term in the academic circles, "integration" of immigrants may be defined as a dynamic, two-way process in which the immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure vibrant and cohesive communities. The Global Commission on International Migration identifies it as "a long-term and multi-dimensional process, requiring a commitment on the part of both migrants and non-migrant members of society to respect and adapt to each other...." (qtd. in Koser 25). Ideally, such a process should aim at the immigrants' achieving the same socio-economic and cultural status as the native-born.

Michael Samers in his book *Migration* observes that, the concept of integration, over the years, has come to denote three different ideas. Initially, the immigrants were expected to somehow fit into an imagined and idealized set of dominant practices and values of the citizen majority; later, without losing their ethnic culture, the immigrants were to join the liberal political culture of the host nation; while more recently, the "coming together" of both migrants and citizens is emphasized, by which, they adopt the cultural practices of each other (277-8). It goes without saying that at the third stage of cultural equality, we can assume that the immigrant has finally arrived, being well-integrated into the host society.

In connection with immigrant integration, sociologists put forward two major theories: Melting Pot and Salad Bowl. The metaphor of "Melting Pot" was popularized by a play of the same name, written by the Anglo-Jewish author Israel Zangwill and opened in Washington in 1908. The term generally characterized the U. S. policy of the late-nineteenth century towards the immigrants, by which the latter was expected to give up their distinct cultural identities and melt into a final product of uniform consistency and flavor: a "bright new alloy" (Watson 4), which was an idealized conception of "Americanness." The major criticism levied against the Melting Pot theory is that it produces a society based on the dominant culture rather than fusing into a completely new entity. By contrast, the "Salad Bowl" characterized the immigrant policies of the post 1960s whereby the immigrants were expected to retain their respective cultural identities and yet contribute to the distinctive character of the host society by means of their unique blending, as the ingredients of a salad bowl.

Since this paper analyses the experience of immigrant integration during the first half of the twentieth century in both America and Canada, it examines the Melting Pot theory of integration, which perceived the immigrants as "others" appropriating the native space. Samers notes that such "othering of migrants tends to have class, racial, ethnic and xenophobic currents within it" (278), so that the "darker-skinned" immigrants were commonly viewed by the western governments as threats to the "cultural homogeneity" of their liberal democracies.

Historical Appropriations

Appropriation as a process is viewed as a sub-genre of the concept of "intertextuality", a term associated with Julia Kristeva and that of "hypertextuality", associated with Gerard Genette. Julie Sanders defines appropriation in literature as "a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain", which "may or may not involve a generic shift", with the result that "the appropriated text or texts occur in a far less straightforward context" than that of an adaptation (26). The sustenance of any appropriation demands that the appropriated text belongs to a "shared community of knowledge" (Sanders 45) that has cross-cultural, even cross-historical readerships, such as classics, myths, history, folktale, Shakespearean plays, arts and science.

When the authorized history is thus appropriated, it results in "historical appropriations" that strive to highlight the gaps, absences and silences within the canonical texts of history. Examples of historical

appropriations in the modern/postmodern era include Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953), E. L. Doctrow's *Ragtime* (1975), Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987) and Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000). For the purpose of my study, I have chosen two postmodern novels that employ historical appropriation, namely, *Ragtime* and *In the Skin of a Lion*. From these novels, I have selected two characters each, representing an integrated immigrant and a resistant immigrant. A comparative analysis of all the four characters is intended to provide a larger picture of the problems, benefits and attitudes involved in immigrant integration during the first half of the 20th century.

E. L. Doctrow's Ragtime

Often regarded as a textbook example of postmodern historical appropriation or, in Linda Hutcheon's words, "historiographic metafiction", Doctrow's *Ragtime* appropriates the American immigrant history of 1900-1917, the era marked by the outbreak of the First World War and the greatest immigration tide to the U S. Through a carefully constructed amalgamation of historical and fictive characters, Doctrow ironically explores the socio-political climate of an America where both the Negro and the immigrant remained "invisible".

The novel tells the story of three paralleled families—an upper class Anglo-American family comprising Father, Mother, Grandfather, Mother's Younger Brother and the Little Boy; a socialist European immigrant family of Tateh, Mameh and the Little Girl; and an African-American family consisting of Coalhouse Walker Jr., his girlfriend Sarah and their baby son. The characters of the first two families are unnamed, they thus representing the average sentiments of the white upper class and those of the obscure immigrant. Skillfully woven into this narrative is a wide spectrum of historical figures including J P Morgan, Harry Houdini, Evelyn Nesbit, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Emma Goldman, Henry Ford, Stanford White, and Booker T. Washington.

Tateh is introduced as a Jewish immigrant from Latvia, who arrives in America along with his wife and daughter, in a ship "packed to the railings with immigrants" (Doctrow 18). His family occupies a single room in the dingy tenement at the Lower East side of New York. When poverty forces his wife to compromise her honour, Tateh drives her from home and lives in the street as a silhouette artist, fervently guarding his little daughter. A man of stern morals, he constantly worries over his daughter so that at thirtytwo he looks like a mad old man with white hair. Like any other poor immigrant, he faces problems such as poverty, insecurity, disillusionment, poor working and housing conditions, under-employment, low income, lack of social connections and inability to communicate in the foreign language.

Soon, Tateh and the Little Girl leave New York, reach the mill town of Lawrence in Massachusetts, where he gets a low-skilled job in one of the mills. When the mill workers' strike breaks out, Tateh is only too happy to die, of cold or of hunger. Severely beaten up by the police, he reaches Philadelphia, where he decides to change the course of his living. He decides not to go back to the mills as he hates machines. He understands that the winning of the strike will not change the deplorable life situations of the workers—winning the strike means "a few more pennies in wages" (101); not ownership of the mills. This prompts him to "conceive of his life as separate from the fate of working class" (101), and signs a contract with the Franklin Novelty Company to create "movie books".

In time, Tateh climbs up the social ladder, joins the movie business, dyes his hair and beard black, invents a title and calls himself "Baron Ashkenazy," dresses his daughter beautifully wanting "to drive from her memory every tenement stench and filthy immigrant street" (193). By the end of the novel, we

find him a successful businessman, married to Mother and occupying a palatial house in California. Tateh is now well-integrated and assimilated into the American world of entrepreneurs.

However, the plot of *Ragtime* is not carried forward by the integrated immigrant Tateh, but by the resistant African-American Coalhouse Walker Jr. Himself a professional pianist and admirer of the "great Scott Joplin", Walker is one of the many blacks who struggle hard to win economic and social equality with the whites. Already a member of the Melting Pot, he had achieved material prosperity and cultural parity with the whites; but not racial equality. Despite being well-mannered, educated, dignified, gentlemanly, courteous and respectful, he is perceived as "disturbingly resolute", "self-important" and affected, in short, a Negro who doesn't know his place. All his positive attributes would be appropriate for a white; but in a coloured man those very qualities are incongruous, for the black is expected to be awkward, embarrassed and self-conscious before the whites (Doctrow 118-123). Here Doctrow exposes the inherent racism within the American Melting Pot.

Walker's faith in the American dream of racial equality is thoroughly shaken by his encounter with the white firemen of the Emerald Isle Company, a bunch of hooligans who totally damage his Model T Ford car. Walker demands restoration of his automobile and vainly pursues a long legal crusade to establish his civil rights. All his pleas to sue the firemen and to secure justice for himself turn futile and the only legal advice he gets is to forget the whole matter. He realizes with a shock that he is yet another victim of the racial intolerance that cuts across the American society and which remains insuperable even to a successful artist like him. Further, his fiancée Sarah's martyrdom in her efforts to win him justice becomes Walker's last straw and it forces him to give up all hopes of a decent marriage and a peaceful existence. Thus, having exhausted all legal and peaceful means of redress, he resorts to violence and takes law in his own hands.

With the help of a band of young Negroes, who call themselves "Coalhouse" and mimick his manners, he threatens the city with arson unless the authorities surrender the Fire Chief to his justice and make him restore his car. After setting fire to two fire stations and killing eight firemen, the Coalhouse band seizes J P Morgan's library in New York, along with its priceless antique collection and reiterates his demands. In the final battle, after securing justice and safe passage for his followers, Walker dies a martyr to his cause.

Michael Ondaatje's In the Skin of a Lion

Published in 1987, *In the Skin of a Lion* appropriates Canadian immigration history of 1917-1938 as well as the part played by the immigrants in the construction of Toronto during that period. Like Doctrow, Ondaatje mixes historical figures such as Ambrose Small the millionaire and Rowland Harris the Commissioner of Public Works with fictional characters like Patrick Lewis, Nicholas Temelcoff, Clara, Alice Gull, Hana and Caravaggio. The novel celebrates the marginalized, the excentric immigrant labourer who actually built the palatial monuments of the city and yet remained unacknowledged by the authorized history.

It is a common practice among host societies to relegate dangerous and low-paying jobs to the immigrant "daredevils." One such daredevil is Nicholas Temelcoff the undocumented immigrant to Canada, who works as an "aerial labourer" at the Bridge (Prince Edward Bloor Street Viaduct that was inaugurated in 1918). Back home in the Macedonian village of Oschima, he listened to many tall tales describing Canada as an ideal land to grow rich in. The Balkan War and the American dream were the push and pull

factors of his immigration in 1914. On reaching Canada, Temelcoff initially worked on low-paid jobs in Macedonian bakeries and learnt to speak English as he knew he would be lost without language.

He then goes to Toronto to work at the Bloor Street Viaduct, where he is suspended, by rope and pulleys, thirty feet down, so that he hangs under the spine of the bridge. His job is to assemble the steel towards the next pier of the bridge under construction, while hanging in air above the Don River. The job is so arduous and life-threatening that within ten minutes, "every bone feels broken" and "his spine aching where the harness pulls him short" (Ondaatje 40). Also, "his predecessor had been killed", in an accident, "cut, the upper half of his body found an hour later, still hanging in the halter" (41). Yet, his job is labeled as "time-saving" so that Temelcoff earns one dollar an hour while the other bridge-workers receive forty cents.

Here, Jodi Lundgren observes that Ondaatje constructs an "alternate economy" by valorizing Temelcoff's labour, which takes place within exploitative social relations. Temelcoff himself "appears to triumph over his own exploitation" (Lundgren 24) and leaves bridge-work after saving money enough for opening a bakery. Thus, like Tateh, he becomes an entrepreneur—the proprietor of the prosperous establishment called the Geranium Bakery, a successful baker whose breads, rolls, cakes and pastries reach multitudes in Toronto and a Canadian citizen with wife and children.

Patrick Lewis, comparable to Coalhouse Walker, is an internal immigrant from the village of Bellrock to the city of Toronto, "a space of linguistic and cultural diversity" (Lowry 3). In 1924, after working at various jobs for a year in Toronto, he becomes a searcher for the millionaire Ambrose Small who disappeared under mysterious circumstances in 1919. Later, he chooses to live among immigrants like the Macedonians and the Finns and works with them to build the tunnel below the Lake Ontario to the palatial water-filtration plant: "As a member of the 'landless proletariat', Patrick joins an 'immigrant proletariat' in filling the ranks of the 'lower level of unskilled workers' in Toronto" (qtd. in Lundgren 17). Ondaatje employs Patrick to celebrate the hardships of tunnel-workers and tannery-labourers just as he does with Temelcoff.

Patrick, being an idealist, is easily influenced by his lover Alice Gull's Marxist ideology that he sets fire to the Muskoka Hotel following her untimely death in a street explosion. From 1933 to 1938 he is imprisoned on charges of willful destruction of property. On getting released, he breaks through the intake tunnel leading to the waterworks, attempting to dynamite the water-filtration plant and confronts Rowland Harris with his story. By rejecting the power to destroy, Patrick carries out "Alice's brand of political activism without again endangering lives" (Gamlin 75). Hence Patrick is successful in his revolution even without destroying the waterworks.

Conclusion

Tateh and Temelcoff were white-skinned Europeans recently immigrated to the American continent. Though they had to struggle with initial problems like under-employment, low-income and inability to communicate in the foreign language, they finally climbed the social ladder to become middle-class entrepreneurs thus validating the American dream of success. On the other hand, Coalhouse Walker and Patrick Lewis were already citizens, whose predecessors had immigrated some centuries ago. Having been born and brought up in the host nations, they had a greater faith in the ideals of equality and justice and as a result were thoroughly disillusioned to find that the society still treated them as "others"—racially and economically. Their plight reveals that integration is not the responsibility of the immigrants alone; but a two-way process which demands the co-operation of both the native and the new settler.

In conclusion, it may be said that, when a society thrives upon immigrant labour, it also has the duty to provide the immigrants with a status and living conditions equal to those of the natives. In societies like America and Canada, where the entire population comprises immigrants, the state should not discriminate against sections of people, but treat them equally, emphasizing diversity and multiculturalism.

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CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONTESTING VOICES OF AMERICA: POPULAR CULTURE IN "POETRY SLAM"

Ms. Lalitha Joseph

Until the learned approve / My art will not be fruitful. (Abhijnanashakuntalam)

Meanings emerge from the interaction between the text, medium, and the reader. When modern narrative techniques fail to bring out meanings from those recesses where words cannot penetrate, sounds and rhythms dig out a wide array of multiple layers of import. Ballad has emerged from man's basic instincts to share and get recognition from the society. The contemporary literary scene in America revives the germs of oral literature through the performance poetry named "Poetry Slam." American cultural critic Julia Novak, in *Live Poetry*, distinguishes between oral and written renderings:

Orality and literacy are frequently conceived of as two forms of cultural expression that stand in stark opposition to each other [W]ritten poem is a stable tangible and timeless artifact that exists independently of situational context. Performance is envisaged as unstable by contrast, a transient process that depends on its occurrence and disappearance in time. (18)

Poets visualize and contemplate the whole scenario in their mind before translating it into words. In performance poetry, emotions can be conveyed directly and the auditors do immediate feedback. In America, a popular form of oral performance is Slam poetry. This poetry-recital contest evaluates the performance and the content. The slam poets compete for scores given by judges, and chosen from the listeners. This may be cognized as folk-culture, as it is outside the formal university circles, delivered in pubs and coffee-houses, and the participant-poets are mostly from the marginalized factions. Yet, these highly popular presentations have turned into a fully grown movement.

Marc Smith, a construction worker, pioneered this movement. Begun in 1980, it underwent many transitions in accordance with the changing social scenario. As poetry slam flourished beyond boundaries, a nonprofit organization, formerly headed by Marc Smith, "Poetry Slam Incorporated" has come up with standardized rules for the competition. The poems must be presented only by the poets who composed them. They employ humour, satire, parody, fury, and dramatics, and the passion and the excitement should be aroused in three minutes. The New York poet Patricia Smith engages her audience by imposing and persuasive delivery. The poems that move the audience with its confessional content and delivery score high in the slam. Rhymes, refrains, and metre are vital to these poems. The poets vary their technique according to theme. Repetitions and refrains become effective devices in slam, while intertextual improvisations and innovations and repartees or reply-poems contribute into the synergy and thrill of these net-work /serial recitals.

"Poetry Slam" is deeply rooted in the hybrid American culture, and brings to its arena a wide array of social issues. Race, gender, politics, and economics influence the poems of this movement. As a popular medium, it has to address the sinister social issues. The slam circles have removed the constraints

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imposed on the marginalized of the American community. It addresses the concerns of racial difference and identity, gender bias, and working class aesthetics of the culturally marginalized people of America. The melange of diverse cultures, coupled with a strange amalgam of poetic devices drawn from different parts of the world, make this movement powerful and offbeat. Poetry slams have become experimental grounds to blend different genres of poetry. The active critical interface among the poet, poem, and the audience make these tournaments lively. The increasing popularity of slam suggests the acceptability of different mediums of expression, the nonconformist attitudes it highlights, and its competitive method where the audience can express their opinions without fearing the academic standards. Being a slam poet is not an easy task; the poet is accountable to the audience can demand explanations, and the slam poet has to make comprehensible his/her opinions regarding the theme he/she presents. The poet has to answer all possible questions that may crop up in the mind of the audience. Defying the norms set by academics, slam poetry accepts poets and poems which in normal course can never see light. This acceptance makes these contests informal and unorthodox.

The poetry slam originated as a reaction against the touch stones imposed by the academicians in the creation and publication of a poem. It has helped to bridge the huge chasm that has separated the poet and the reader. The success of the performance poetry has now become a much discussed topic in the academic circles. In future, slam poetry may find a definite place in the curriculum of the universities, or it may fall into those hands against which it stood against and raised voice, for commercial interests have taken over these sessions. Poetry slam has been featured in movies like *Love Jones, Fighting Words*, and Slam poets have been introduced in MTV series. Apart from gaining popularity by exploiting the mass media, it has also invited many allegations. For instance, black culture is portrayed in slam circles as a commodity which could be easily marketed to a white audience. Brigit M. Bauridl, a culture-critic, comments: "Consciously employed as a means of black cultural expression, contemporary black performance poetry turns into a subversive signification on a presumably white invention and a perpetuation of knowledge about the black experience and tradition" (720).

Poetry slam is a movement which began in opposition to the institutionalized standards imposed by academicians in the production and publication of poetry. The resistance to the prevailing culture and emphasis on heterogeneity has made this movement popular with the audience. Popular verse has always existed in the fringes. It is alienated both from the academic circles and literary criticism. "Performances of popular poetry are not mere reflections of American popular culture, they are themselves sites of cultural contestation that help articulate and generate the very culture they claim to represent" (Somers 56). The growing media popularity and the poet's bid for high scores have homogenized the theme and style of the poems now presented at poetry slams. Career prospects are the main concerns of most of the new poets, and a sort of artificiality has set in.

The growth of poetry slam suggests that the influence it exerts on the popular American culture cannot be easily brushed away. By providing the voice to the mute and by placing stress on cultural exchanges, it acts as a counter discourse, resisting the dominant academic models of representation. In order to appreciate the spoken word, one has to go beyond the traditional literary rubrics and celebrate the

diverse cultures that make up the country named America. Poetry slam cannot be undermined as a mere literary exhibition; slam poets interact with the audience, and generate new thoughts and ideas, which can change even the social equations in a nation.

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WOUNDS OF BODY, SOUL, AND HISTORY IN TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED*

Ms. Mohana E.

Toni Morrison has shared the trauma that Margaret Garner, an African-American slave, underwent in her real life during 1856, in Kentucky, through her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Beloved* (1987). As a bold novelist, she explores violence through rape, seduction, and tyranny, especially in the name of slavery; and infanticide, passion, and alienation in the name of protection. She urges her readers to become aware of the physical and psychological damage sustained by the African American people for years together. The novel has been dedicated to the estimated number of "sixty million and more" blacks and more who died in slavery, and the following lines from the novel's epigraph read,

Beloved You are my sister You are my daughter; you are me I have found you again; you have come back to me You are my beloved You are mine You are mine. (214)

Beloved is a neo-slave narrative bearing witness to "the interior life of people who didn't write [their history],' ... fill[ing] in the blanks that the slave narrative left". It is about "the recovery of lost experience" (Bell 167). As the classic historical novel, *Beloved* is an emphasis on the everyday life lived by the common people and not incorporated into history books. In normal situation, black people's lives did not appear in the newspaper except when they become heroes, as in the Garner infanticide case. Saidiya Hartman remarks: "The slave was recognized as a reasoning subject, who possessed intent and rationality solely in the context of criminal liability; ironically the slave's will was acknowledged only as it was prohibited or punished" (82).

The characters who figure in the novel – Sethe, Paul D, Baby Suggs, Stamp Paid, and Ella – have been mortally humiliated in countless ways, about which the reader comes to know from different angles. Wounds crystallize into a tight verbal net across the scenes of slavery, from which the reader cannot escape without empathy. Wounds are everywhere in the novel, which is painful heritage of the whole black community, and which cannot be forgotten by the African Americans.

The novel portrays the slave community in Kentucky in 1873 immediately after the American Civil War. Sethe, the protagonist of the novel, is brought up by her slave parents at Sweet Home in Kentucky, which is an idyllic plantation. Theplantation is run by Garner and his wife Lillian, a childless couple who are unusually humane masters. After Mr. Garner's death, Mrs. Garner hands over the Sweet Home to a schoolmaster. In the gruesome incidents that follow, Sethe's mother is butchered along other slaves, and Nan becomes a surrogate mother to Sethe. Nan teaches her the native dialect. When she turns eighteen, Sethe marries Halle, and begets three children, Haword, Bulgar, and Denver.

Morrison goes on to portray portrays the trauma and haunting memories of the protagonist, who tries to escape the plantation. The violence that Sethe and other slaves are subjected to in the plantation, and also at her own house at Ohio, with her daughter, Denver, is immense. The house was a way station,

which was historically used as a treasured salvation for ex-slaves and also as a postal centre. Sethe recounts her experience two white boys physically harassing and abusing her thus: "Those boys came in there and took my milk, that's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it... they used cowhide on me and they took my milk they beat me and I was pregnant. And they took my milk" (17). The frequent use of the phrase, "they took my milk," describes the intensity of the violence. The physical scars upon her back attest to the terrible violence inflicted on the blacks in the name of slavery. This heinous act also points to the terrible workings of of patriarchy.

Seth murders her fourth infant daughter Beloved with handsaw since wants to protect her from the horrors of patriarchy and slavery. Seth recollects about her dead daughter: "A prettier thing God never made. White and purple with a tender tail and a hard head" (201). According to Seth, by murdering her child, she was, in effect, was giving life to her soul. She believes that no "gang of whites would invade her daughter's private parts, soil her daughter's things" (251). She tries to kill another daughter, Denver, but she is saved by Stamp Paid. But when her conscience starts to haunt her for killing Beloved, she asks, "Do you forgive me? Will you stay? You are safe here now" (170). Seth also declares that she had not killed the child, she would have died anyway, and that was something she could not bear to happen to her. She says that she has been living with her daughter's ghost for years.

When Denver turns eighteen, she comes to the house where she had lived once with her brothers Buglar, Howard, and her infant sister Beloved. Her words expose the pathetic condition inside the house: "I can't live here where to go or what to do, but I can't live here. Nobody speaks, comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either (14).

Later in the novel, Paul D. and other prisoners are chained for eighty-six days and are threatened with suffocation under a mud slide. After escaping by diving behind their cell's restraining bars, they are released by an indigenous American at a Cherokee Camp, where they are fed mush. He is sold for \$900, only to be replaced by two young slaves. He cannot be shocked easily, but he is horrified by the violence of Sethe. He recognizes that Sethe "is a friend of his mind" (273).

When the murdered infant baby, Beloved, returns to flesh, the pain of trauma is chased from the mind of Sethe. It is narrated in the lines, "Now I can, I can sleep like the drowned, have mercy. She came back to me, my daughter, she is mine" (204). When Paul D. joins Sethe's family, she recollects all of her past, whatever she underwent in the Sweet Home.

Beloved is not a slave but undergoes the same pain t her mother bore, needs a companion. When Beloved comes back in the form of human being, Denver likes her ghostly sister saying that "she is mine, Beloved. She is mine" (125). 124 Bluestone house had been a matriarchal house till Paul D's arrival. Denver disgusts Paul D's presence and his sense of superiority. After Beloved disappears, Sethe realizes that, beyond the pain, there is life with Paul D. He tells her, "Me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow" (273). The following lines give voice to millions of Africans who were killed during Middle Passage: "I come out of blue water after the bottoms of my feet swim away from me I come up I need to find a place to be the air is heavy I am not dead I am not …" (250).

Later, Baby Suggs is seen preaching at a clandestine sermon. There, she asks the congregation to love themselves. The sermon is like a hybrid practice, mixing Christianity with African spirituality. It depicts how a whole community has come out of the horror which has plagued them for ages. The oft-

repeated phrase, "It was not a story to pass on" (324), points to the fact that the African American community's complex relations with the scandal of servitude has two meanings. One is sharing the story with future generation, and the other is about moving on and forgetting the whole painful history. At the end of the novel, Sethe attacks Bodwin, who is considered a good white man and an able schoolmaster, with an ice pick. The act shows how slavery has permanently scarred the black psyche. A changed Sethe enigmatically asserts to her daughter Denver:

... nothing ever dies. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place the picture of it stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. (36)

As critic Caroline Rody remarks, *Beloved*, "evidently a politically engaging novel, is also a novel of extraordinary psychological reach" (86).

Untold misery and slavery are recorded through the voices of three women, Sethe, Denver, and Beloved. The voices should be listened to together, as a mutual possession of the mother, the living daughter, and the dead one. As the narrative exclaims, "What a roaring!" (181).

The novel is a recounting of violations of black women on plantation, a literal milking, dehumanizing treatmet, denial of motherhood, and disruptions in the mother-daughter relationship. By depicting infanticide as an act of mercy, and by giving historically grounding for her story, Morrison links the history of slavery and violence.

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W. S. MERWIN'S RHETORIC ON SPECIES EGALITARIANISM

Mr. S. G. Mohanraj

In the era of environmental degradation, it becomes essential for literature to discuss the current issues with due regard. In earlier period, nature was relegated only as a backdrop and it is a negative notion of nature. According to Stan Rowe, the ecological argument is that all organisms are made from Earth's skin of air, water, soil and sediments, where they have been conceived, where they grow, reproduce, and have evolved from the beginning of time. The natural world is complex, and one could not understand all their trait since it is beyond human comprehension, but one has to acknowledge its inherent rights. Man has completely severed his connections with nature, which has made him forget the concept of oneness that everything is for everyone. To address these issues, deep ecology movement was started by Arne Naess in 1972. According to Naess, the distinctive aspect of the deep ecology movement is its recognition of the inherent value of all other living beings, and of the inherent worth of diversity of all kinds.

The first deep ecology principle, Alan Drengson notes, is that the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes. This point of view has been well substantiated by W. S. Merwin in many of his poems. "Living at a time when the earth's support systems are under stress, poetry cannot afford to provide tranquility and aesthetic pleasure alone" (Sumathy 42). Adhering to this idea, Merwin's poems mainly address issues like environmental degradation, exploitation of resources, extinction of species, animal rights, urbanization, inappropriate technological advancement, wastefulness of war, and so on. His commitment to the natural world challenges the prevailing human-nature relationship, and also calls for necessary changes that are required to preserve the future of the planet. This has made Merwin a typical ecopoet with his postmodern thoughts. He has been the Poet Laureate of the U.S., and has won many prizes including the Pulitzer Prize.

All animals have equal right of existence in this planet with their own characteristics. As John Muir states, "although alligators, snakes etc. naturally repel us, they are not mysterious evils. They dwell happily in these flowery wilds, are part of God's family, unfallen, undepraved, and cared for" (Bryson 81). Right to existence of these creatures should be independent of their economic value, but the saddest part is that most of the times significance is given only based on its economic value and its usefulness to man. Primarily, nature was at prime position in the planet with its more sustainable ecosystems. In these ecosystems, every organism flourished and had equal opportunity for their existence with their intrinsic worth.

Merwin has celebrated this intrinsic worth of organisms in a number of poems, regardless of their size. "A Flea's Carrying Words" is a typical example. A flea becomes the subject matter of this poem, which is unlikely when compared with normal poetry. Merwin brings out the innocence of the flea with the statement that, whatever disease is carried by a flea is not made by it, and it is ignorant about the source of disease. Merwin questions how a flea can be accused for carrying diseases, when it is the nature of the flea:

I don't even know who made them I don't know who'll use them I don't use them myself I just do what's in front of me as I'm supposed to (6-10).

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Even though nobody likes it, the flea is not bothered about it, and it is happy that at least the diseases are in need of their help for their survival. Finally, the poet ends up with the lines portraying their importance and their equivalence in this world: "something needs me / everything needs me / I need myself / and the fire is my father" (17-20).

"The Black Jewel" is yet another poem, which is a clear evidence for the biocentric mind that would call the insect cricket "the black jewel." "The Black Jewel" figures as one among the many creature-celebration poems in the Merwin repertoire. This nocturnal creature stays active through the night; it runs, leaps, and flies: "In its back the moon / crosses the night" (2). As the insect starts chirping, the poet feels that "there is only one cricket," and that "it has only the one sound" (3, 4). The poet muses that he had grown up hearing the sound of the cricket: "before I could talk / I heard the cricket" (6). This insect seems to live on forever. Other creatures are born hearing them, and die hearing them. The sound pervades and so "the death of the cricket / is still the cricket" (12). There are culture-specific beliefs associated with this insect. In Barbados, people believe that this insect brings money, and hence do not drive them out.

"Unknown Bird" comes up with the fact that even an unknown bird has its right to voice out. "Dry days", "dusty leaves," and "the air that is dry" provide an unusual setting for the bird song (4, 5). The bird is unknown, and its song is unfamiliar yet sweet. The song fills the valley, but there are no reply calls. The notes drown in their own echo. The bird should be a migratory bird because the poet says that, "it is not native here / that may be the one / thing we are sure of" (21-23). Birds are known to migrate in groups but this one is "perhaps alone". It sings in the hope of being heard by another "of its own unlikely origin" (14). It raises a question whether the bird is the last among a species going extinct, because the song of this bird is a plaintive lone call of a bird, and it

> keeps on calling for no one who is here hoping to be heard by another of its own unlikely origin (26-30)

The call of the unknown bird resembles that of the oriole. Even the oriole was "last heard / years ago in another / existence there" (42). It is not only the unknown bird, even the well-known ones like the oriole are not heard anymore. Man does not seem to care: "hardly anyone / seems to have noticed it / so far but who now / would have been listening". Man is instead, ". . . filling the days / with a sound of our own" (45-47). He is indifferent and callous; whether it is the oriole or the unknown bird, it makes no difference to him. Hence, the poet cautions: "tell no one it is here" (51), lest this too will be harmed. Merwin, being a deep ecologist, hints at the destructive practices of the society and the dominant power of man, when he says, "we / who are filling the days / with a sound of our own" (55). There is a tone of resignation about man's selfishness in Merwin's voice.

"Bear" is yet another creature-celebration poem of Merwin. It portrays the greatness of polar bear, and Merwin places the polar bear in its native land, the Arctic Circle. The poet epitomizes the creature in such a way so as to suggest that it is the bear that adds virtue to the landscape. By referring to Stella Maris– the star of the sea, Virgin Mary herself, and by saying, "He points beyond your constancy" (5), Merwin adds a divine touch to his portrayal of the bear. Merwin begins the poem stating that polar bear represents "the world's whiteness" (22). The bear in this polar region moves all over the blank plain,

and the whole of Arctic Circle is filled with his footprints, and the rest of the world lies under his feet. The world's longitude always joins "under his shifting feet" (37). The concluding lines of the poem seem to recreate the beginnings of the world. The lines speak of the world, "before separation, sound and silence . . . before all dawn and division" (42-43), and insist that even then the creature was there with all its whiteness and solitude. Merwin contrasts the whiteness of the bear to the black colour of the wild geese. As the poem progresses, the bear becomes a symbol of silence, solitude and alienation: He lives in solitude than "all charactery of shadows" (53). He is the only hill on the pure sea of the North Pole.

The poet portrays the North Pole eloquently in this poem, with phrases like: "blank plain of silence without end," "plateaus of solitude," "unvisited forests," and "hulls sunk in virgin hush" (10-14). As Merwin states later, it is, "that place / That the maps make white for that they have not found it" (25-26). The natives of the land carry on with their lives; they cultivate, harvest, fish, and rear animals. "... variety and houses, coupling and colors" (45) mark their life-style. In contrast, the bear slouches in its ancient and single state. This creature is the primordial inhabitant of the land "Beyond maps, before maps" (53). He had been there before geographical markings were made and distances were measured.

With a sense of awe, the poet describes its physical features: the bear's ice-fringed broad paws, shaggy but warm legs, the pointed contours of his fierce head, high shoulders, long sloping neck and his alert ears (compared to white-crusted watch-towers). But he emphasizes its loneliness. The poem is obscure, but Merwin seems to state that it is the polar bear that adds significance to the landscape. The original pure state of the region as portrayed by Merwin is to be contrasted with its present deplorable state, plundered like any other.

The power of poetry in expressing the idea of ecological views is envisioned in these poems. As Michael P. Nelson remarks, "By recognizing the intrinsic worth of other living beings, one recognizes the solidarity of all life forms." This thought has been clearly demonstrated by Merwin in these poems. In an interview, he clearly gives out this point of view while discussing about the role of man in the natural world: "We are neither superior nor inferior, we are a part of it. It is not different from us. So when we treat it with contempt and we exploit it, we are despising ourselves" (qtd. in Bryson 102). He insists that it is the equality of species and the necessity for mutual co-existence that is a part and parcel of a climax ecosystem. This basic concept has its own significance, paving way for the welfare of nature as well as human beings, who are an integral part of it. Each element in the universe has its own value in terms of its uniqueness, individuality, and usefulness and hence, it is merely unfair to compare one element with the other with regard to its size, shape, or use. It is high time for man to realize that "creatures with less economic value also are a part of biotic community" (Sumathy 18). Therefore, one must think beyond the conventional anthropocentric point of view, and respect the intrinsic value of beings, and help to maintain the richness of elements within an ecosystem. "One can't serve God by misusing or destroying His work" (Satterfield and Slovic 182) and only the equality of all elements would ensure a safer world than the present one.

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AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MAN - NATURE RELATIONSHIP IN RUSSELL HOBAN'S *TURTLE DIARY*

Ms. T. Monika Sivaprakasam

In recent years, ecology has become one of the central discourses in the world. Ecological issues are especially important in the social and natural sciences. By addressing urgent ecological problems and developing practical and visionary solutions for them, human beings are taking up social and political responsibility for the same. From the perspective of cultural history, the functions, concepts, and paradigms of the relationship between nature and society can be found in literature and other forms of art. This raises a question as to how this relation bears on social reality, and how this perspective, in general, can be successfully applied to our understanding of ecology.

Literature has been responding to the world issues through the ages. Enormous contributions have been made by literary writers in representing the world, analyzing its various changes and projecting perspectives in various forms in order to entertain and enlighten the global masses. The literary writers have addressed these issues through their works, though common population was aware of the hazards in the ecosystem to some extent. Certain parameters were already addressed in ancient literature; for instance, the opposition between human needs and the respect for the environment or the treatment of possible changes within nature, whose effects cannot easily be foreseen. Since then, these questions have undergone important historical changes, while at the same time remaining closely connected to their respective cultural and national contexts.

Today, ecology is defined as the way in which plants, animals, and people are related to each other and their environment. The two components of nature – organisms and their environment – are not only complex and dynamic, but also interdependent and mutually reactive. Ecology, relatively a new science, deals with the various principles which govern such relationships between organisms and environment. In this relationship, they are so much interdependent on each other that, any disturbance in one disturbs the other. Concern for ecology is one of the most discussed issues today. It is the concern of every country to replenish those diminishing factors of ecology which threatens human beings the most, as in Russell Hoban's *Turtle Diary*.

The term "ecology" is rooted in the Greek word *oikos*. In pre-Socratic thought, this term is defined as "the whole house," that is, the unity of nature and the sciences. Ecology is the scientific analysis and study of interactions among organisms and their environment, such as the interactions organisms have with each other and with their abiotic environment. Ecology is an interdisciplinary field that includes biology and earth science. The word "ecology" (*Ökologie*) was coined in 1866 by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). Ancient Greek philosophers such as Hippocrates and Aristotle had laid the foundations of ecology in their studies on natural history. Ecocriticism, a recent development, has come to mean not only the application of ecology and ecological principles to the study of literature, but also the theoretical approach to the inter-relational web of natural, cultural, and supernatural phenomena. It also explores constructions of environment in literary texts and theoretical discourse.

The concern for ecology came to be the centre of discussions only towards the end of the last century, when it actually became a threat for human lives and a global concern. There was the realization

that, neglect in this regard will lead to the doom of the mankind. Ecology is not merely synonymous with environment, environmentalism, natural history, or environmental science. It is closely related to evolutionary biology and genetics. An understanding of how biodiversity affects ecological function is an important focus area in ecological studies.

The main focus of Russell Hoban's *Turtle Diary*, published in 1975, is on lives of quiet desperation and loneliness, in particular, the lives of two persons, Neaera H. and William G. Their lives intersect for a while, because they share a compulsion to release the loggerhead turtles in London Zoo into the wild. Neaera is a popular children's book author who has run out of ideas. William works at a bookshop after a divorce strips him of his family, his home, and his career in advertising.

A survey says that the longest and most spectacular animal migrations are made by young loggerhead turtles. They travel for long period of years along migratory routes that span entire oceans. Young loggerheads in the North Atlantic cover more than 9,000 miles to their mating grounds before returning to the North American coast. The hundreds of eggs the female lays each time, however, are just barely enough to ensure the race against wild dogs and predatory birds on the beaches, sharks in the water. Turtles are one of the most threatened groups of animals in the world, with ten percent of species critically endangered and many other species in decline. Freshwater turtles are threatened as a result of human activities such as degradation of habitat, road mortality, over-harvest for the food and pet trade, and disturbance of reproductive activity. Animals play a key role in nutrient cycling, retention, and transportation, because they eat, grow, and excrete wastes. During eating, turtles take up particular nutrients by consuming plants, aquatic bugs, and mollusks among other things, then they store some of these elements as structure (i.e. muscle, shell) for growth, while releasing other nutrients back into the ecosystem in a different form, which is usable by other biotic forms.

William is seen reflecting on the wording of a panel at the zoo: "Two of the turtles at the aquarium are green turtles, a large one and a small one. The sign said: "The Green Turtle, Chelonia mydas, is the source of turtle soup..." (22). A later passage records Naera's thoughts:

The zoo is a prison for animals who have been sentenced without trial and I feel guilty because I do nothing about it. But there it was, I wanted to see an oyster-catcher and I was no better than the people who'd caged a water-beetle. On the other hand perhaps some of the birds and animals don't feel the zoo to be a prison. Maybe they've been corrupted by it. (23)

Hoban discusses here the caged animals, and through these lines, he urges the readers to have a concern for animals. Habitat destruction, pollution, and overconsumption are causing species to decline at a rate never before seen in history. This loss of species is eroding the diversity of life on earth, and the novel sends out a warning that a loss of diversity can make human life vulnerable.

Sea turtles, especially green sea turtles, are one of the very few animals to eat sea grass. Like normal lawn grass, sea grass needs to be constantly cut short to be healthy and help it grow across the sea floor rather than just getting longer grass blades. Sea turtles and manatees act as grazing animals that cut the grass short and help maintain the health of the sea grass beds. Over the past decades, there has been a decline in sea grass beds. This decline may be linked to the lower numbers of sea turtles. Sea grass beds are important because they provide breeding and developmental grounds for many species of fish, shellfish, and crustaceans. Without sea grass beds, many marine species humans harvest would be lost, as would the lower levels of the food chain. The reactions could result in many more marine species being lost and eventually impacting humans. So, if sea turtles go extinct, there would be a serious decline in sea grass beds and a decline in the other entire species which dependent upon the grass beds for survival. All parts of an ecosystem are important, so if one is lost, the rest will eventually be affected. Sea turtles are a vital part of two ecosystems the beach/dune system and marine ecosystem. If sea turtles become extinct, both these ecosystems would be affected as a direct result. Since humans make use of both ecosystems, there then would be a direct effect that would negatively impact humans.

In the novel, the turtles bring William and Neaera together only briefly. For both of them, their fascination of the turtles lies in their ability to keep swimming towards their destiny without ever needing to question their purpose. William thinks: "Could I be a turtle? Could I through an act of ecstasy swim unafraid and never lost, finding, finding? ... A turtle doesn't have to decide every morning whether to keep on bothering, it just carries on. Maybe that's why man kills everything: envy" (61). And Neaera is heard musing: "I'm always afraid of being lost, the secret navigational art of turtles seems a sacred thing to me. My generation was somewhat between things, neither free nor much supported by whatever held us in" (62). Both are capable of setting the turtles free but not of letting their emotional guard down for more than a moment or two, as the following remark by Naera reveals:

Sometimes I think that the biggest difference between men and women is that more men need to seek out some terrible luring thing in existence and hurl themselves upon it like Ahab with the White Whale...William G. has found some monster and...What? Almost I think he's swallowed it. It's alive and eating inside him...There, I'm worrying about him. I've breached my privacy badly. There's not enough of me for that, I have no self to spare ... (74)

William and Neaera encounter each other, and hatch a plan to release the turtles into the wild. In the process, they discover the uncanny similarities of their anxieties, turns of thought, lives, and tastes. William G. realizes, "Coming up on the escalator with my hair flying I felt as if I was coming out of a darker place and into the light, then I laughed because that's what I was actually doing" (190). Through the novel, Russell Hoban makes the reader aware that nature and man are correlative. To conserve these valuable creatures, human beings should try to understand turtle ecology. People have to recognize turtles along with other aquatic animals, which are critical components of freshwater ecosystems, and our rivers and lakes will not be the same without them. A plant or animal becomes extinct when the last living individual of its species dies, causing it to vanish from the earth forever. If there is ever a time when the last green turtle on earth dies, then never again will this magnificent creature grace our world.

Species have been going extinct for millions of years; it is a natural part of the evolutionary process. For example, most of the species that existed during the time of dinosaurs have perished. Many probably went extinct because of sudden geological or climatic changes — possibly because of a large volcanic eruption or because of a giant meteor hitting the earth. Today, however, species are going extinct because of abrupt changes brought about by humans. Keeping this in mind every human being should involve himself in saving the ecosystem.

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TRACING THE ELEMENT OF ARTISTRY IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S THE SCARLET LETTER

Dr. T. Muraleeswari

Nathaniel Hawthorne's genius found its finest expression in *The Scarlet Letter*, his first and greatest novel. The novel opens on June 1642, in the Puritan town of Boston, where a crowd gathers to witness the punishment of Hester Prynne, a young woman found guilty of adultery. She is required to wear a scarlet "A" on her dress; the letter being a symbol of adultery and shame. Furthermore, she must stand on the scaffold for three hours, exposed to public humiliation. As Hester approaches the scaffold, many women in the crowd are angered by her beauty and quiet dignity. Even when she is demanded and cajoled to name the father of her child, Hester refuses.

As Hester looks out over the crowd, she notices a small, misshapen man, and recognizes him as her long-lost husband, who has been presumed lost at sea. When the husband sees Hester's shame, he asks a man in the crowd about her, and is told the story of his wife's adultery. He angrily exclaims that, the child's father, the partner in the adulterous act, should also be punished, and vows to find the man. He chooses a new name–Roger Chillingworth–to aid himself in his plan.

Reverend John Wilson and the minister of her church, Arthur Dimmesdale, question Hester, but she refuses to name her lover. After she returns to her prison cell, the jailer brings in Roger Chillingworth, a physician, to calm Hester and her child, with his roots and herbs. Dismissing the jailer, Chillingworth first treats Pearl. He and Hester have an open conversation regarding their marriage and the fact that they were both in the wrong. Her lover, however, is another matter, and he demands to know who it is, and Hester refuses to divulge any information. He accepts this, and states that he will find out anyway, and also forces her to never reveal the fact that he is her husband. If she ever does so, he warns her, he will destroy the child's father. Hester agrees to Chillingworth's terms, even though she suspects she will regret it.

Following her release from prison, Hester settles in a cottage at the edge of town, and earns a meagre living with her needlework. She lives a quiet, sombre life with her daughter Pearl. She is troubled by her daughter's unusual fascination by the scarlet letter"A". As she grows older, Pearl becomes more and more capricious and unruly. Her conduct starts rumours, and not surprisingly the church members suggest Pearl be taken away from Hester. Hester, on hearing the rumours that she may lose Pearl, goes to speak to Governor Bellingham. With him are Reverends Wilson and Dimmesdale. When Wilson questions Pearl about her catechism, she refuses to answer, despite knowing the correct response, thus jeopardizing her guardianship. Hester appeals to Reverend Dimmesdale in desperation, and the minister persuades the governor to let Pearl remain in Hester's care.

Because Reverend Dimmesdale's health has begun to fail, the townspeople are happy to have Chillingworth, a newly arrived physician, take up lodgings with their beloved minister. Being in such close contact with Dimmesdale, Chillingworth begins to suspect that the minister's illness is the result of some unconfessed guilt. He applies psychological pressure on the minister, because he suspects Dimmesdale to be Pearl's father. One evening, pulling the sleeping Dimmesdale's vestment aside, Chillingworth sees a symbol that represent shame on the sleeping minister's pale chest.

Tormented by his guilty conscience, Dimmesdale goes to the square, where Hester was punished years earlier. Climbing the scaffold, he sees Hester and Pearl, and calls to them to join him. He admits his guilt to them, but cannot find the courage to do so publicly. Suddenly, Dimmesdale sees a meteor forming what appears to be a gigantic "A" in the sky. Simultaneously, Pearl points toward the shadowy figure of Roger Chillingworth. Hester, shocked by Dimmesdale's deterioration, decides to obtain a release from her vow of silence to her husband. In her discussion with Chillingworth, she tells him his obsession with revenge must be stopped in order to save his own soul.

Several days later, Hester meets Dimmesdale in the forest, where she removes the scarlet letter from her dress, and reveals the truth about her husband and his desire for revenge. In this conversation, she convinces Dimmesdale to leave Boston in secret on a ship to Europe, where they can start life anew. Pearl, however, refuses to acknowledge either of them, until Hester replaces her symbol of shame on her dress. Returning to town, Dimmesdale loses faith in their plan. He has become a changed man, and knows that he is dying. Meanwhile, Hester is informed by the captain of the ship on which she has arranged passage that Roger Chillingworth will also be a passenger.

On Election Day, Dimmesdale gives what is declared to be one of his most inspired sermons. But as the procession leaves the church, Dimmesdale stumbles, and almost falls. Seeing Hester and Pearl in the crowd watching the parade, he climbs upon the scaffold, and confesses his sin, dying in Hester's arms. Later, most witnesses swear that they saw a stigma in the form of a scarlet "A" upon his chest, although some deny this statement. Chillingworth, losing his will for revenge, dies shortly thereafter, and leaves Pearl a great deal of money. It is hinted that Pearl uses this money to travel to Europe, and possibly gets married.

Several years later, Hester returns to her cottage, resumes wearing the scarlet letter, and offers solace to women in similar position. When she dies, she is buried near the grave of Dimmesdale, and they share a simple slate tombstone with a scarlet "A".

Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the most prolific symbolists in American literature, and a study of his symbols is necessary to understanding his novels. Generally speaking, a symbol is used to stand for something else. In literature, a symbol is most often a concrete object used to represent an idea more abstract and broader in scope and meaning—often a moral, religious or philosophical concept or value. Symbols can range from the most obvious substitution of one thing for another, to creations as massive, complex, and perplexing as Melville's white whale in *Moby Dick*. An allegory is a story where characters, objects, and events have a hidden meaning, and are used to present some universal lesson. Hawthorne has a perfect atmosphere for the symbols in *The Scarlet Letter*, because the Puritans saw the world through allegory. For them, simple patterns, like the meteor streaking through the sky, became religious or moral interpretations for human events. Objects, such as the scaffold, were ritualistic symbols for such concepts as sin and penitence.

Whereas the Puritans translated such rituals into moral and repressive exercises, Hawthorne turns their interpretations around in *The Scarlet Letter*. The Puritan community sees Hester as a fallen woman; Dimmesdale as a saint; and would have seen the disguised Chillingworth as a victim—a husband betrayed. Instead, Hawthorne ultimately presents Hester as a woman who represents a sensitive human being with a heart and emotions; Dimmesdale as a minister who is not very saint-like in private but, instead, morally weak and unable to confess his hidden sin; and Chillingworth as a husband who is the worst possible offender of humanity and single-mindedly pursuing an evil goal.

However, Hawthorne's portrayal of these characters is accepted by the Puritan mentality. At the end of the novel, even after watching and hearing Dimmesdale's confession, many members of the Puritan community still deny what they saw. Thus, using his characters as symbols, Hawthorne discloses the grim underside of hypocrisy that lurks beneath the public piety.

Some of Hawthorne's symbols change their meaning, depending on the context, and some are static. Examples of static symbols are Reverend Mr. Wilson, who represents the Church, or Governor Bellingham, who represents the State. But many of Hawthorne's symbols change, particularly, his characters, depending on their treatment by the community and their reactions to their sins. His characters, the scarlet "A," light and darkness, colour imagery, and the settings of forest and village serve symbolic purposes.

Besides the characters, the most obvious symbol is the scarlet letter itself, which has various meanings depending on its context. It is a sign of adultery, penance, and penitence. It brings about Hester's suffering and loneliness and also provides her rejuvenation. In the novel, it first appears as an actual material object in The Custom House preface. Then it becomes an elaborately gold-embroidered "A" over Hester's heart, and is magnified in the armour breast-plate at Governor Bellingham's mansion. Here, Hester is hidden by the gigantic, magnified symbol just as her life and feelings are hidden behind the sign of her sin. Still later, the letter is an immense red "A" in the sky, a green "A" of eel grass arranged by Pearl, the "A" on Hester's dress decorated by Pearl with prickly burrs, an "A" on Dimmesdale's chest, seen by some spectators at the Election Day procession, and, finally, represented by the epitaph on the tombstone Hester and Dimmesdale share: "On a field, sable, the letter A, gules" (gules being the heraldic term for "red").

In all these examples, the meaning of the symbol depends on the context and, sometimes, the interpreter. For instance, in the second scaffold scene, the community takes the scarlet "A" in the sky as a sign that the dying Governor Winthrop has become an angel. Dimmesdale, however, sees it as a sign of his own secret sin. The community initially sees the letter on Hester's bosom as a mark of just punishment and a symbol to deter others from sin. Hester is a Fallen Woman with a symbol of her guilt. Later, when she becomes a frequent visitor in homes of pain and sorrow, the letter is seen to represent "Able" or "Angel." It has rejuvenated Hester, and changed her meaning in the eyes of the community.

Light and darkness, sunshine and shadows, noon and midnight, are all manifestations of the same images. Likewise, colours such as red, gray, and black play a role in the symbolic nature of the background and scenery. But, similar to the characters, the context determines what role the light or colours play. *The Scarlet Letter*'s first chapter ends with an admonition to "relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow" with "some sweet moral blossom" (34). These opposites are found throughout the novel, and often set the tone, and define which side of good and evil envelop the characters. Darkness is always associated with Chillingworth; it is also part of the description of the jail in Chapter 1, the scene of sin and punishment. The Puritans in that scene wear gray hats, and the darkness of the jail is relieved by the sunshine outside. When Hester comes into the sunshine from the darkness, she must squint at the light of day, and her iniquity is placed for all to see. Noon is the time of Dimmesdale's confession, and daylight is the symbol of exposure. Night time, however, is the symbol of concealment, and Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold at midnight, concealing his confession from the community. In the end, even the grave of Dimmesdale and Hester is in darkness. "So sombre is it, and relieved only by one ever-glowing point of light gloomier than the shadow . . ." (232). The light, of course, is the scarlet letter, shining out of the darkness of the Puritanic gloom.

Colours play a similar role to light and darkness. One of the predominant colours is red, seen in the roses, the letter, Pearl's clothing, the "scarlet woman," Chillingworth's eyes, and the streak of the meteor. At night, and always with the physician, the letter is associated with darkness and evil; on other associations, it is a part of nature, passion, lawlessness, and imagination. The context seems to determine its meaning. Black and gray are colours associated with the Puritans, gloom, death, sin, and the narrow path of righteousness through the forest of sin. Three chapters that contain a multitude of colour images are Chapters 5, 11, and 12.

Hawthorne's plot builds a geometrical pattern. If one imagines the location of the Puritan settlement, it is near a sea-shore. It is surrounded by a forest, where "The Black Man" is supposed to live. The village itself forms a circle, and the forest is at the outer ring of this circle, and it surrounds the settlement. The prison house is not very far from the scaffold. At the farther extreme from the prison is the graveyard, so the church and the scaffold are in the centre of the village.

The Scarlet Letter is significant for Hawthorne's complete command over detail and subject, which reveals itself in the architectonics or the symmetry of the plot and the symbolism.

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EDIBLE FUN / CARTOONISED COMMODITIES: TOWARD A CRITICAL THEORY OF ENDORSEMENT

Mr. Najeeb P. M.

Cartoons and cartoon characters are directly affiliated with market ideology and its aggressive logic. Buying, and more buying is the catchword of consumer market in the capitalist and quasicapitalist societies of the post-industrial world. Pleasure is what one is taught to desire as the ultimate object of blind consumerism. It demands complete surrender from the subjects in lieu of the pleasure offered by the market. What is meant by market here is not the conventional space where commodities or services are transacted. Rather, market is perceived as a conceptual space, an all pervasive system of power and dominance. It prescribes to the consumer the 'whats' 'hows' and 'whens' of individual and social existence. In the *market-scape*, the otherwise indefinable and complex human self is reduced and restricted to the status of tiny bricks in a building block-unit which offers unpredictable possibilities and unlimited choices. In this precise sense, the ideology of market and consumer culture has designated itself with more apolitical assignments like perpetuating a social sphere which ensures the existence and dominance of the very market.

The paper attempts to problematize the role of cartoon and animated characters in the circulation and confirmation of the foundational tenets of market ideology among its juvenile subscribers. The politics of fun and entertainment need to be brought into deeper theoretical intervention. The paper examines how the TV commercials featuring cartoon trade-characters define the socio-cultural selves of the children. The semiotics of these animated ambassadors of consumerism, the dynamics of human versus the animated and the aesthetics of products designed for children should also be discussed. The article focuses on children for two reasons: first, the aura of "innocence" attributed on them by the "experienced" adults and the "exclusiveness" of kid's commodities and wares available in the market.

Cartoon and comic heroes are no more the cheerleaders of 'harmless' juvenile aesthetics. They have been assigned with new responsibilities of selling consumer goods and promoting consumerism. The very figures which amuse the kid on TV screen join him in the market. They advocate and endorse brands and commodities. From school bags to kid's furniture, a child's world is filled with his cartoon comrades. Thus, cartoon bridges the processes of consumption and entertainment. For the kid, consumption turns out to be another form of amusement. Consumption wears the attributes of a ritualistic performance which the consumer/kid exercises with all the mandatory ingredients; namely the unconscious involvement of the participant, incorporation of the underlying rules of the ritual and voluntary disposal of the perfomatory self. Through advertisements and other strategies of product promotion, market disseminates itself to many layers. Apart from the fundamental function of dispensing products and goods, market reinvents itself in many unprecedented and unpredictable roles. It seeps in to almost all the spaces of the individual and family and manipulates the process of decision making. Individual choices and preferences are subtly manipulated through the covert mediation of the market. This "scheming" involvement of the market in the procedure of choice and preference is more blatant in the case of the kids' commodities. Though kids don't have the direct authority over choices and preferences, they are endowed with what the marketers hail as "the pester power." Parents are either helpless or directionless when pestered with such kids claim the adulthood which the parent is forced to disown: "Cartoons and comedies frequently invert "normal" relationships and show the adult as incompetent, unable to understand, and the children as superior in insight and ability. Alternatively "inverted" adults are constructed more sympathetically and are treated as honorary children" (197).

It is in this particular context of the kid's certainty in a cartoon based advertisement that we discuss the influence of such ads on the social and cognitive disposition of the child. For the kid, a product ceases to be a mere means of satisfying a material need. He is not pleased with any school bag. He prefers a particular brand with the image of the cartoon endorser on it. It is not the bag that he carries on his back, rather a bagful of images, meanings and attributes circulated through the advertisements with the endorsement of the cartoon character. It gives a new "meaning" to his social existence and such advertisements considerably influence his cognitive behaviour. Caught at the age of toddler in the web of fabricated "meanings", the child is easily tempted to more false beliefs.

Here, the consumption of a commodity becomes the consumption of "meaning." As Jean Baudrillard puts it, "we consume the product through the product itself, but we consume its meaning through advertising" (197). To translate it into broad Marxian terminologies, "exchange value" has triumphed over "use value". In the consumer societies of the twentieth century, as Baudrillard explains in various theoretical works, exchange value (a purely symbolic form) has become more real, more objective, than use value (a material phenomenon). Objects are conceived, designed and produced for the purpose of making profit by marketing them, rather than for the reasons of their practical utility; *ie* the "use value". Vast resources are devoted to manipulating the consciousness of consumers, and stimulating in them desires which will be met only by the acquisition and accumulation of commodities. Debord explains this idea:

Exchange value could arise only as an agent of use value, but its victory by means of its own weapons created the conditions for its autonomous domination. Mobilizing all human use and establishing a monopoly over its satisfaction, exchange value has ended up by directing use. The process of exchange became identified with all possible use and reduced use to the mercy of exchange. Exchange value is the condottiere of use value who ends up waging the war for himself. (3.2 - 4)

What the child consumes is the value attributed to the commodity. He engages himself in the process of consumption, since; the market, through his favourite cartoon characters has inseminated in him a desire for a particular object. The kids in turn become what Slavoj Zizek calls "the subjects of desire". He observes how desire is manifested in modern consumerist societies:

At the immediate level of addressing individuals, capitalism, of course, interpellates them as consumers, as subjects of desire, soliciting in them ever new perverse and excessive desires (for which it offers products to satisfy them), furthermore, it obviously also manipulates the "desire to desire," celebrating the very desire to desire ever new objects and modes of pleasure. (61)

Through advertisements and aggressive mediations, market imposes on the kid a phantasmagoria of symbols and images – an illusive wonderland to which the kid is easily tempted. The influence of illusion on the cognitive performance of the kid is much stronger than the non-symbolic "reality." This illusive world again instructs him how to desire.

What actually attracts the kid to this wonderland of fairies and cartoon heroes? A glance on grandma narrations would help us understand how the kid easily associates himself with this fantasy world. Man is known to have a unique instinct to internalize fairytales and stories. This instinct is more apparent in children. Children listen and live in a world of stories, fairies and superheroes. It is on this instinct that the advertisers and marketers capitalize.

Before TV and cartoon channels took the stage, the story telling exercise was performed by grandmas and grownups. The kid was apparently self content in his imaginary wonderland. But the scene changed when TV offered him a different world. The imagined and the fancied world of the kid was sabotaged and replaced with a more "unrealistic" yet seemingly "real" space; a sort of illusive sphere which exists neither in imagination nor in actuality. It offered the kids packaged entertainments and introduced fictitious characters speaking their language and behaving like them. Together they created a fairy land of fun, and interaction. In short, grandma's narrative world was taken over by the more perfomatory world of television and cartoon entertainment. It is to this fantasy world that advertisers and marketers invaded with their persuasive strategies. They brought those fictitious heroes to the world of the kid to "reality."

The "fairyscape" of the grandma days gets replaced by *marketscape*. The child no longer needs to hang around the imaginary world. Instead the imaginary world is at his easy disposal, ready to be occupied. Thus advertisement and other forms of product promotion using cartoon trade characters bridge the kid with the market. And the market ensures that the kid is not 'left alone'. Market seeps into his life and metamorphoses in to a fairy land.

How the kid comes to have absolute confidence in an animated object seems to be the most pertinent question to be tackled. The trust, which the kid shows on the cartoon endorser, does not originate from mere fascination of the former for the latter. Rather it emanates from a dormant fear buried deep back in the mind of the children; *i.e.* the fear of noncompliance with the hyper masculine market power. The kid and the cartoon character, the endorsed and the endorser, both are caught in the same vortex of market ideology. The worthiness of the endorser has already been endorsed by the market; the meta-endorser. The kid is getting subordinated to the larger and invisible power of market economy. The sightless and often non-sense admiration which the kid shows on the cartoon endorser is the microcosmic manifestation of the still larger forms of awe and respect to the absolute power; *ie* the subordination of the subject to the benevolent dictator. In other words, the cartoon endorser is just a puppet in the great marionette show called market economy. Market is a place for ultimate entertainment, a brothel house where the kid can purchase pleasure, and the cartoon endorser is a mere pimp.

Cartoon's existence as innocent "funscape" is objectionable and its social role is highly susceptible to consumerist and capitalist ideology. What is passed as mere fun and pleasure is no more that funny and amusing, especially when cartoon characters are infamous for their invasive nature.

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TRAUMATIC NEUROSIS: POST-NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR EFFECT IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S HALF OF A YELLOW SUN

Ms. Neena P.

Trauma, as a field of study, dates back to the early decades of the twentieth century, the time when Sigmund Freud developed his theory of psychoanalysis. It was Freud who changed the meaning of the term "trauma" from indicating physical injury to psychological injury. The word "trauma" comes from the ancient Greek, meaning "wound." In the mid-1990s, trauma theory had a revival; theorists like Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Dori Laub, and Shoshana Felman focused their theories on the psychological effect of the Holocaust, especially, in the traumatic late-twentieth century. The Holocaust was a traumatic experience for a whole generation of survivors, and it touched a lot of people's living in drastic ways.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*; the novel is basically about the Nigerian-Biafra war of the 1960s, when the southern region of Biafra fought unsuccessfully to secede. The novel takes place in Nigeria during the Nigeria-Biafra war. Nigeria Biafra war, like other wars, destroyed the hopes and aspirations as well as the resources of the people. Among the consequences of the war, the impact on the mental health of the civilian population was the most significant. *Half of a Yellow Sun* illuminates the postindependence disorder and horrors of civil war on Nigeria. The novel analyzes the traumatic experiences and events witnessed by its three narrators. Each of the narrators of the story, Olanna, Richard, and Ugwu lived through traumatic experiences which are directly linked, and caused, by the events leading up to and during the Nigeria-Biafra war. Each trauma is personal, and must be treated as such. The paper analyzes the traumatic neurosis experienced by different characters employing theories of trauma developed by Cathy Caruth.

Olanna is a character who seems to be most affected by the trauma of war. Her struggle is the one which is described in the most detail in the novel. Olanna suffers from PSTD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). In the case of PSTD, the root of the problem is related to the fact that the traumatic event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but always belatedly, in its "repeated possession of the one who experiences it" (Caruth, "Trauma" 4).

In the novel, Olanna does not seem to register the traumatic experience fully at the time. She seems to be merely viewing the scenes without emotional participation. After Olanna sees the bodies of her family members, she "[feels] a watery queasiness in her bowls before the numbness spread over her and stopped at her feet" (147). She does not yet realize what has happened, as shows her reaction to Mohammed dragging her away from the compound: "But she could not leave without Arize. Arize was due anytime. Arize needed to be close to doctor" (147). She has not yet come to terms with the fact that Arize has been killed.

It seems, therefore, that there exists an "inherent latency" within the experience itself. This is a term that Caruth uses, and which she derives from Freud's use of the term, "latency." This term indicates the period after the trauma during which the effects of the experience are not discernible. Caruth adds that what is especially striking is the fact that the experience is not exactly forgotten, but rather that there is an inherent latency within the event itself; it is simply not fully experienced as it occurs. Olanna returns home after witnessing the dead bodies of her uncle, aunt, and Arize, but she does not consider the death of her family members. It is only when she arrives at her own home that the physical blow of trauma sets

in, and the numbness she felt before paralyses her leg: "Her legs were fine when she climbed down from the train. But at the front door of Odenigbo's house, they failed. So did her bladder" (156). The traumatic experience which she witnessed in her uncle's house has paralyzed her, both physically and mentally. She also suffers from what is called in the novel "Dark Swoops," which seems to be panic attack: "A thick blanket descended from above and pressed itself over her face, firmly, while she struggled to breathe" (156).

Another disorder Olanna suffers is the repeated intrusion of the past into the present, in the form of flashback and panic attacks. One instance of flashback is at a rally, when an image in the present triggers the memory of past: "Odenigbo raised his arms as he spoke, and Olanna thought how awkwardly twisted Aunt Ifeka's arm had looked as she lay on the ground, her blood had pooled so thick that it looked like glue, not red but close to black" (163). It is clear that this is not an instance of willingly recalling a moment of the past. The image intrudes into Olanna's present. According to Caruth, "The flashback provides a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or the very continuity of conscious thought" (Caruth, *Recapturing* 152). It is clear from the extract that, the memory interrupts Olanna's train of thought; it impedes her from being entirely present in the moment. She then tries to regain control and return to the present: "Olanna shook her head, to shake away the thoughts, and took Baby from Ugwu's neck and hugged her close" (163). Furthermore, Caruth notes that "being possessed by an event that cannot be integrated into a person's knowledge of the past often produces a deep uncertainty as to its very truth" ("Recapturing" 36). Olanna experiences this feeling of uncertainty: "And she wondered if she was mistaken, if she had perhaps imagined the bodies lying in the dust" (193).

Ugwu's trauma roots from his conscription into the army, which forces him to fight in the combat. Thus, he becomes a victim of violence. Later in the novel, he becomes a perpetrator of violence by rapping an innocent girl. When Ugwu is recovering from his wounds in Nsukka, he is haunted by his memories of the war and of the bar girl: "He could not remember her features, but the look in her eyes stayed with him, as did the tense dryness between her legs, the way he had done what he had not wanted to do" (397). This clearly shows that memory is both absent and present at the same time.

However, afterwards, when he is far away from the immediate danger of the battle field in the camp, the memories came rushing back in: "But back at the camp his memory became clear; he remembered the man who placed both hands on his blow-open belly as though to hold his intestines in" (365). The same mechanism seems to be put into action at the bar, when Ugwu rapes the girl. He seems to be emotionally absent from the scene: "He did not look at her face, or the man pinning her down, or at anything at all as he moved quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release" (365).

Richard's trauma is of a different sort than that of Olanna's. He witnesses how a custom officer called Nnameka gets shot, simply because he is Igbo. After this the soldiers killed dozens more of Igbo people at the airport. Richard spent a few minutes talking to this man before he was killed, and witnessing his violent death from so close-by shocks Richard to his core. The traumatic event experienced by Richard is present as if a film plays before his eyes, he cannot act, he is frozen: "One of the soldiers walked up close and shot him and then aimed at the bottles of liquor lined up behind and shot those. The room smelt of whisky and Campari and gin" (153). Richard is deeply shocked by this, and his body seems to protest against the experience: "He almost missed his flight because, as the other passenger walked shakily to the plane, he stood aside, vomiting" (153). The way in which Richard experiences the traumatic effect is

discussed in the following quote: "He had often wished that he would lose his mind, or that his memory would suppress itself, but instead everything took a terrible transparence and he had only to close his eyes to see the freshly dead bodies on the floor of the airport and to recall the pitch of the scream. His mind remained lucid" (165).

Unlike Ugwu and Olanna, Richard does not suffer from sudden and unwilled intrusion of the past. But what frightens him the most is exactly the absence of these traumatic memories. Richard attempts to articulate his trauma in his writing, but he feels he cannot. "The echo of unreality weighed each word down; he clearly remembered what had happened at that airport, but to write about it he would have to reimagine it, and he was not sure if he could" (168). Richard simply has not registered the moment completely, or assimilated the memory into the narrative of the past. Richard is aware that he has the memory, but he cannot access it actively. In the course of the novel, Richard's girlfriend Kainene is reported missing. Her disappearance is a trauma, which he probably will never fully recover from, as the last quote from him in the novel shows: "He knew he would never see Kainene again and that his life would always be like a candlelit room; he would see things only in shadow, only in half glimpse" (430).

Another representation of trauma in Adichie's novel is the use of myths and fairy tales as intertexts. Most of the characters in the novel who are Igbos believed in witchcraft, bad omens, and spirits. Ugwu and Odenigbo's mother stand by this belief. On the other hand, characters like Olanna, Odenigbo, and Richard, who grew up outside of small village, consider these beliefs merely as myths. There are many instances in the novel that demonstrate the above point. But, in the course of the novel, one finds Olanna falling back on the old belief and traditions, as she consults a "dibia" (medicine man), buys a goat for oracle, throws a copy of Kainene's photo in River Niger, and walks around Kainene's house in Orlu three times, in order to find her missing sister Kainene. This shows how tradition becomes important again in someone's life after a traumatic experience.

The experiences of the characters have both personal as well as social relevance. On a personal level, the narration of the experiences gives the characters an immense sense of relief. For a long time, the three characters – Olanna, Ugwu, and Richard—had been experiencing the pangs of the trauma. By giving vent to what they had experienced during the course of the war, they experienced great relief. It was a "letting go" of the emotions that desired outward manifestations. But more importantly, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is relevant for its societal relevance. As long as there are wars, these experiences will continue forever. The message seems to be that, as long as these experiences recur in society, more Olannas, Ugwus, and Richards will be created.

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DREAMING THE IMPOSSIBLE: A CRITICAL READING OF THE ELEMENT OF FANTASY IN MITCH ALBOM'S FOR ONE MORE DAY

Dr. Nila N.

People's relation to the world is lived through many systems such as religion, family, law, moral codes, education, culture, community rules, and so on. This happens at the unconscious level. Literature also deals with unconscious material. This is justified by psychoanalytical theory. Alienation, metamorphosis, doubling, and transformation of the subject are expressions of the unconscious desire and not accounted for as reflections or manifestations of the supernatural. Rose Mary Jackson remarks, "The fantastic is a literature which attempts to create a space for a discourse other than a conscious one and it is this which leads problematization of language, of the word, in its utterance of desire" (Jackson 62). Helene Cixous describes the uncanny as a rehearsal of an encounter with death. This is pure absence. Death is a factor that cannot be portrayed directly. In literature it is materialized as a ghost.

For One More Day proves to be a highly sentimental novel, and narrates the story of a day in the death of Chick Benetto, who is an ex-pro baseball player, ex-husband, and ex-father. The catalyst of a journey into his troubled past is the spirit of his dead mother, whom he meets in a near-death experience he faces after a car accident. The narrative of that journey explores the theme of relationships between parents and children, loyalty, care, respect, trust, admiration, and human fallibility.

The novel has an anonymous narrator describing the story of Chick Benetto, an elderly man, who encounters a fantasy world wherein his doubts are cleared, his longing for motherly love fulfilled, his pains soothed, and his desires fulfilled. The story seems to be told by Chick, in his own voice and from Chick's own perspective, though in the end, it turns out that Chick's daughter is narrating the life of Chick.

Chick attempted suicide because of the arrival of a photograph of his daughter's wedding in the mail. For some reason, he was not invited by his daughter. Chick describes the photograph as a representation of innumerable personal failings and disappointments. He feels humiliated, lost, and unwanted. He decides to kill himself, and then drives on one last journey to the small California town where he grew up. At one juncture point, he rolls his car in an attempt to avoid collision with a transport truck, but survives. He wonders why God saved him, and walks into town, climbs the same water tower he had climbed as a child, and jumps off in another attempt to kill himself. But he survives the fall. Chick walks into town. He does no disbelieve what is happening. He is desperately hopeful that what he is seeing is somehow real. He arrives at his childhood home, and finds that his mother there. He sits down to the breakfast she prepares, still disbelieving but grateful for "one more day" with his mother, Posey. Everything looks unbelievably normal. Posey is bright, caring, loving, and chatty as she always was. She is busy with friends and is slightly dictatorial about his behavior as she always was. Chick finds it a mystery that he was indeed spending a day with his mother who had died eight years ago.

Posey runs a door-to-door beautician service. She takes him round, and these visits are intertwined with his recollections of his past. There are desperate attempts to engage his father in an affectionate, open relationship. These attempts are focused on baseball, which Chick's father wants him to play

professionally. But Chick's mother wanted him to succeed at school. There are descriptions of the tense relationship between his parents. The narration also describes how his mother threw his father out of the family home. In spite of everything, Chick continued, even into adulthood, to pursue his father's dreams.

Chick's experiences with his mother are interrupted by strange, insistent shouts from a male voice, which nobody hears but him. As the narrative progresses, Chick's experiences with Posey become so different, and his memories of his father become more intense. As this goes on, the shouts become more frequent. Everything comes to a surprising end when Posey takes Chick to visit his father's other wife. Chick is brought back to the world of the living from his world of limbo by a young ambulance attendant, who is the source of the voice heard throughout the novel. Chick has been having a near death experience. This makes him learn some significant truths about the relationships between parents and children and specific truths about the relationship between his parents and him.

The novel concludes with an epilogue, which gives evidence to prove that Chick's story is true. It also depicts that Chick died about five years after his near-death experience, and that the narrator is Chick's long-estranged daughter, Maria, whose narration is an embodiment of one of the novel's key themes. The idea is that with love and compassion, care and concern, any distant relationship between parent and child can be healthy.

Fantasy throws back on to the dominant culture a constant reminder of some "other." In *For One More Day*, there are five elements of psychoanalytic theory which are seen in the novel; namely, undifferentiation or entropy, re-placement of presence, subvert cultural stability, transgression, and divided consciousness. Freud sees undifferentiation or entropy as the most radical form of the pleasure principal. If it is a longing for *nirvana*, where all tensions are reduced. The desire for undifferentiation is termed entropic pull. Mitchel Albom makes explicit this attraction towards an entropic state in the novel. The protagonist has been put through so many failures in life that he decides to end his life. In the process of ending his life, he reaches a state of limbo. The story has mixed sequences, disordered arrangement of events in Charly Benetto's life, and also heterogeneous disunity. He is known as Chick Benetto in the novel.

In the first few chapters, Chick goes to his ancestral home. He finds his mother, who had died eight years ago. He hugs her and feels her very real. Chick's fantasy breaks semantic structures in real life. He gradually overcomes his disbelief, and starts to talk with his mother. The narrator's voice remarks: "I don't expect you to go with me here. It's crazy, I know. You don't see dead people. You don't get visits" (24).

The replacement of presence is another element of fantasy that is evident in the novel. Chick is replaced in another world; a world of limbo. There, he meets his mother who died eight years ago. He is in his ancestral home. Albom remarks: "The house was musty, and there was a faint, sweet smell of carpet cleaner, as if someone (the caretaker we paid?) had recently shampooed it. I stepped past the hallway closet and the banister we used to slide down as kids. I entered the kitchen, with its old tile floor and its cherrywood cabinets" (37). The passage clearly reveals that Chick has been absolutely

replaced psychologically in his ancestral home. He calls every corner and object as he sees them. Fantasy plays a major role in replacement of the soul in another world which the soul badly desires to be back.

There is subvert cultural stability, with the understanding of the ego as a cultural construction. The individual in normal condition tries to conform with "I," which he tries to conform with his or her identity. The "I" watches, judges, measures, and condemns the self, as it tries to meet the demands of its social other. Fantasy, in *For One More Day*, dramatizes this conflict, the self torn between an original and ideal ego which frustrates Chick's natural desire. The psychoanalytical reading also shows the tension between the laws of human society and the resistance of the unconscious mind to these laws. The social order is constructed by discrete units of meaning, a network of signifiers, and it is opposed to the imaginary, which is without signifiers. The symbolic meaning is dissolved and deformed as subversive activity. The ego of being a father and wanting to decide things for his child is shattered in Chick's real life.

Transgression is the thrust of the modern fantastic points to the rejection of limits imposed upon the human. It is moving towards an imaginary zero condition, without time or space, a condition of entropy, and the fantastic produces an "other" region. Maurice Blanchot remarks, "Transgression belongs neither today nor to night ... no before, no during, no afterwards." (Jackson 56). It is a space within, separated from life as well as death. It is a space where there is no separation. There is no chronology but a timelessness where eternity lies inside. There is no division of one event moving on to another. It has a series of circular motivations. Freud calls the transgressive thrust the polymorphous disorder, "the quiescence of inorganic world" (Jackson 75). Movement and stillness, life and death, subject and object, mind and matter become one. The impossibilities upon which fantastic narratives are structured could be related to a drive towards realization of contradictory elements merging together in the desire for undifferentiation.

Chronological time is cut through; past, present, and future lose historical sequence. Notions of time are dissolved; years, months, days, hours, and minutes appear arbitrary. Mitch Albom remarks:

Something melted inside of me, as if her face gave off heat. It went down my back. It went to my ankles. And then something broke, I almost heard the snap, the barrier between belief and disbelief.

I gave in.

Off the planet. (42)

Albom not only uses transgression but also takes the reader into character's life who is dreaming the impossible. Chick is in utter disbelief.

Fantastic character deformation suggests a radical refusal of the structures, the "syntax" of cultural order. They break the boundaries separating self from other, leaving structures dissolved, or ruptured, through a radical open-endedness of being. "Desire" blurs the conceptual boundaries. A desire for "something else," something other than the real, has annihilating effects upon realistic fictional structures. It is a desire for the impossible and unsatisfaction turns into a permanent object.

Fantasy plays a major role in connecting the mind to unfulfilled desires. In *For One More Day*, Albom tries to emphasize how hidden desires take form trough the imaginary world. Mitchell David "Mitch" Albom, an American best-selling author, journalist, screenwriter, dramatist, radio and television broadcaster, and musician has made an attempt to create the unbelievable by bringing back a dead mom to give psychological support to a son. But the ghostly relationship that develops leaves the reader to wonder how much of this could be true. Albom develops this uncertainty on purpose. In the end, it is left to the reader to decide because ultimately, the *reality* of the plot is not the point of the story.

The *love* between a mother and her son is the true story here. Pauline "Posey" Benetto, Charley's mother, like any mother, has her secrets, which are not revealed until much later. She is loving, caring, and would do anything for her children, despite their disinterest or unwillingness to appreciate her. She is proof that a mother's love never dies. Figurative language is embedded in this narrative fiction book. There are vignettes throughout *For One More Day* titled "Times My Mother Stood Up for Me" and "Times I Did Not Stand Up for My Mother." Each emphasizes the relationship and communication between Chick/Charley, his mother Pauline/Posey, and how the narrative structure arouses sadness, anger, sympathy, suspicion, happiness, in a positive or negative way. The novel dwells on an inseparable mother-son bond that drives home the reality of longing for parental love in the modern world.

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NOSTALGIC REMINISCENCE IN ALICE WALKER'S "POEM AT THIRTY-NINE"

Ms. Nithya K. and Dr. S. Lavanya

Confessional poetry, or "Confessionalism," is a style of poetry that emerged in the United States during the 1950s. It has been described as poetry of "the personal," focusing on extreme moments of individual experience and personal trauma such as mental illness and suicide, often set in relation to broader social themes. Private experiences and feelings about death, trauma, depression, and relationships are addressed in this type of poetry, often in an autobiographical manner. Alice Walker's "Poem at Thirty Nine" is a confessional poem. The frequent use of "I" makes the poem very personal, and the nostalgic experience makes it clear that the poet is recalling her childhood spent with her father. The psychological trauma, which the poet had undergone, has been depicted in this poem.

Alice Malsenior Walker is an American author, poet, feminist, and civil rights activist born on 9 February 1944. She wrote the universally acclaimed novel *The Color Purple*, for which she won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983. She has experimented with different styles of writing. Each of her story, poem, novel, and essay is different from the rest of the work and, yet, her work seems continuous and contingent. The themes of forgiveness and reconciliation are prominent in Walker's writing.

"Poem at Thirty-Nine" revolves around the theme of a daughter's relationship with her father. It is written in free verse, adding a sense of recollection, as it emulates the flow of thinking. The poem is split into two parts. The first part is about her melancholy longing for her father's presence. The second part is about Walker's pleasure at her similarity to her father and at her belief that he would be proud of her.

Psychological trauma is depicted in this poem. At the time the poem was written, the poet was divorced, and was thirty nine. She had a daughter, who was six at that time. The first line of the poem is "How I miss my father" (1). This shows that the poet's father is no longer in this world. The poet is possibly thinking about the absence of a father figure in her life.

Alice Walker portrays her father as being "so tired," but she does not mention the reason. One wonders if he was worried about feeding another mouth, or if he was ill. The poet describes how her father taught her the practical aspects of dealing with money. Walker thinks of her father "writing deposit slips and checks" and remembers that he cared about her financial well being. Though he was a poor farmer, he was good at math. The line, "learned to see bits of paper as a way to escape," refers to her traumatic injury (11). At the age of eight, she was accidently shot in the eye by her brothers. Others shunned her because of her scar; so, she started writing poems to get rid of the people who treated her badly. Her flair for writing began due to this forced isolation.

Alice Walker remembers that her father had taught her to be honest, and would not punish her if she confessed her mistakes, although some of her confessions made him upset. Her father loved her unconditionally, but she did not live up to his expectations. Because of her creative nature, she was always reclusive. Walker acknowledges that the courage to speak the truth was instilled in her by her father. She always dared to speak truth like Gandhiji, who maintained that confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away the dirt, and leaves the surface cleaner than before.

The second part of the poem is shown by the repetition of the line "How I miss my father" (29). In the first line, it is expressed as a sign of regret, while in line twenty-nine, it is expressed as a proud exclamation, with Walker remembering all good things about her father. The line "He cooked like a person dancing" (16) highlights his energy and enthusiasm for doing a nontraditional male role, as Walker's mother supplemented the family income by working as a maid, eleven hours a day. Walker describes her father's style of cooking as "dancing in a yoga meditation" (22). Dance suggests movement, while meditation is to do with stillness. This shows the dual nature of her father. Although he is busily moving, his mind is at peace. She also describes how her father was generous enough not only to share good food but everything that was worthy of sharing.

"Now I look and cook just like him" (32) shows how she is proud to have her father's traits, and compares herself with him with a fond sense of nostalgia. The phrase, "my brain light" (41), not only refers to the physical trait and genetic factors but also that her poetic genius comes from her father. She believes that her father did not interfere in her interests, "seasoning none of my life the same way twice" (44). The act of seasoning is the addition of herbs or spices to add flavor; similarly, Walker has experimented with different styles of writing during her career. The line, "happy to feed whoever strays my way" (51) refers to her activism and charity. This points to her generous nature, and it may be surmised that her father had taught her to be so.

In the last stanza, Walker feels her father would have been proud of who she has become, "cooking, writing, chopping wood" (56). This phrase covers the work done by different genders. The last line, "staring into the fire" (62) shows that she is reflective and is able to think about after life and eternity.

Walker's message is that remembrance can take place at any form. Life becomes meaningful when a person tries to make another person happy. Alice Walker's achievement as a literary artist in spite of her eye injury was to make her father feel proud of his daughter. She feels sad that her father is no more alive to rejoice at her achievement. Later, she consoles herself thinking that her "brain light" (43) is her father, who would live in her thoughts and memories until eternity.

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THE NEW AMERICAN DREAM: JOSEPH O'NEILL'S *NETHERLAND* AS A TAKE ON DETERRITORIALIZATION

Ms. Parvathy G.

For all the hype over the celebrated "American Dream," there has been the realization that it is an age where the dream has lost at least a little bit of gloss. 9/11 has been a defining moment in many aspects; for many, it has been a spectacle, albeit one which changed the perceptions on the proportions of life. Post 9/11 U.S. has seen different and difficult times, and it is on this exact moment that Joseph O'Neill situates his work; a work on foreignness and aloofness, but still a working on the quintessential American dream and America itself.

The novel traces the story of two immigrants-one, a Dutch, and the other, a Trinidadian, with south Asian roots. Hans van den Broek, the oil future analyst, estranged from his wife, finds solace in his weekend sessions of cricket, where he meets Chuck Ramkissoon, the occasional umpire and a businessman, who has quite an extraordinary dream of building a cricket stadium in America. It is indeed odd that, out of all possible subjects on the U.S., Joseph O' Neill chose to write about cricket, a sport which is seemingly irrelevant in a place where baseball is the favourite game. But cricket, apparently, is not only a forgotten sport for the immigrants; as Salman Rushdie once pointed out, "the migrant is not simply transformed by his act [of migration], he transforms the new world" (Zamarano Llena 22). Cricket, in the novel, is a symbolized agency to transform the New World for its immigrants, and thus be a part of its national saga. Chuck is adamant on reintroducing and restoring the glory that cricket is said to have had on the American soil.

The sport is presented as a sign of loneliness, even for a white, as Chuck proclaims, "You want a taste how it feels to be a black man in this country? Put on the white clothes of a cricketer. Put on white to feel black" (2). But it is also promotes an imagined community, it is a game that gives a feeling of solidarity in an American city, for Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, West Indians, and many more immigrants. It is the game of life, as suggested by the British expression, "it's not cricket." But the game and its players, nowadays, are reduced to nothing more than a joke in the present U.S., the novel seems to say. The Trinidadian would affirm that cricket is the first modern sport in America. Even Benjamin Franklin was a cricketer. It was widely played in the 1770s but, later, started to lose its charm. Thus, Chuck Ramkissoon's dream of building a cricket stadium is indeed an "American Dream" in its literal sense. It at once tries to recapture a long-ago past and also a future more hopeful. Cricket is a "past American tradition with which the new migrant identifies and which he can update, adopt, and adapt to the present circumstances of American cultural diversity" (Zamarano Llena 13).

Cricket, unlike baseball, is an earthy game, where the players have to adapt to the conditions of the terrain. The nature and speed of the play, the spin of the ball, the movements of the batsmen, all change from day to day and from ground to ground. Besides the grass, humidity and cloud cover also affect what happens to a cricket ball. In short, as the novel claims, cricket is a "sport in nature" (11). It is indeed noteworthy how cricket lost its past charm when it could not adapt to the present sociological context, where it was situated. History will tell us that, cricket, which was earlier introduced by working class immigrants into the country, later got confined to the "gentlemen" circles of elite, as a status symbol. The vacuum thus set in the popular sphere resulted in transference of the place that cricket enjoyed in the popularity charts to baseball. The immigrant's fate is something similar to that—he needs to adapt to the

norms, and play within the context of his adopted country, or else he will be lost. Cricket goes back to its egalitarian ethos in the novel; Hans is invited to the cricket club, where he has a chance encounter with a taxi driver named Umar. When he reaches the stadium, he realizes that he is the sole white player among them and probably the richest of them too. Most of them seem to have emerged from comparatively modest circumstances compared to his. The sense of unity that prevails among the being the connoisseurs of one particular sport, and perhaps more importantly, the connoisseurs of one sport which cannot find much takers in the popular circles, does give a remembrance of what cricket used to be in earlier days. It is with this exact remembrance that Chuck tries to build a new vision of cricket, which incidentally is also metaphor for the U.S. in total.

U.S., post 9/11, saw some radical play of stark binary oppositions. While the economy of the country still seemed to maintain an apparent openness, the doorways of the people's minds suggested a narrowing down. Certain sections were branded as the "other," which had an equal and similar reactionary response from the opposite side too. A call for purism and exclusivity infested the minds on both sides. Chuck's motto, "think fantastic" (7), and his observations on cricket's possibilities to overcome the narrow definitions of contemporary social reality become important in this context. Chuck clarifies that the mission of reintroducing the game is not an agenda to strike out baseball from the current cultural context, as a sweet revenge for what had happened to the former. He says that cricket is thoroughly compatible with baseball. Henry Chadwick, the first person to write about baseball rules, was a "cricket nut" too. He played both, and "didn't see them as a fork in the road" (16). Chuck goes on to say, America "is a mess, and it is going to get worse" (16). But he declares that, just as cricket serves as a hope for a bond between India and Pakistan, it could prove worthwhile in the western context too.

Hans van den Broek, on the other hand, is a multifold immigrant. His Dutch identity is constantly at odds with his life in England. He is married to an English woman and has settled in the country. He experiences extra pressure when his life directs him for a transatlantic venture towards the U.S. and that too at the time of 9/11. His wife cannot cope with the confusion, and returns to her homeland with their son. But Hans tries his luck with this new environment, which seems all the more difficult to adapt. His name is difficult to pronounce, and features different spellings in different legal documents, and so Hans is unable to get a driving license. His mobility is restricted in world's one of the biggest metropolitan cities where he can actually cross Atlantic on a whim. He does that twice every month to visit his family. He tries hard to synchronize with the eccentricities of an anarchic time post-disaster, and that is when he falls for the charm that Chuck exudes. This Trinidadian of modest background strives on his various enterprises which do have some serious mystery attached to it; he maintains a kosher sushi restaurant and is into gambling. His belief in cricket is a grandiose one, and that prompts a deep appreciation towards him in Hans. The field he has leased in Brooklyn is to be called "Bald Eagle Field," bald eagle being the national bird of the U.S. Hans does make several visits to this field. He had grown skeptic when he saw the frozen ground for the first time, but when he made a visit again, he is invited by the green grass, much to his surprise. Chuck did make his dream come true. But O'Neill makes the reader see the ground once more in the novel, and by that time, Chuck is dead, and the grass turns brown. Chuck's body is found in a suburban canal, and his plans end abruptly. The very man who taught Hans lessons in internalizing lessons of American collective identity is no more.

Hans, for his nostalgic associations of cricket with his adolescence and his homeland, is seen in the beginning as someone who would be unwilling to change the way he plays the game in the U.S. so as to

adapt to the current circumstances. While the West Indian players could modify their batting, Hans stubbornly adhered to his old ways, even when "it meant the end of making runs" (5). But through his associations with Chuck, Hans could take a step to being "naturalized." "He could hit the ball in the air like an American cricketer" (13), and he acknowledges that Chuck had prompted it. But when Hans is able to get into a point of saturation, Chuck is seen dead and cold, and so are his plans.

Chuck Ramkissoon, in the beginning, is eager to be grounded in America. He wanted to transform America as he thought it to be. His adherence to cricket had multifold manifestations. His conviction and encouragement stemmed from the historical fact of a much appreciated position that cricket enjoyed. But as much as of a grand mission of recapturing what was already there, Chuck's venture was also an attempt to make something extra – in his case, money. It cannot be denied that Chuck was motivated by material benefits, for he knew money matters. Hans comes to know Chuck's seedy version when, behind the mask of lending a car, he used Hans as a white chauffeur. Chuck's innate optimism proved as a lifeline for Hans, but the fact remains that his glittering dream is a little complicated; eloquent in vision, but not so in manifestation.

Chuck envisioned everything in terms of the U.S. His dream was big in proportions, but he made it only so big so as to be enclosed within the boundaries of the nation state. His idea was to blend into the U.S soil, but Hans is such a commute, whose idea of belonging is not in accordance with demarcations. He claims to have attained a sense of naturalization through cricket, but the sense of community he attains is different. His sense of nostalgia of his homeland, which he maintains in the form of cricket, is relocated to a transatlantic locality, where his old national allegiances get translated into a sense of solidarity beyond the borders of one particular nation. Cricket helps to situate Hans among people from different nations, and form ties with them. He is deterritorialized, but not as a process whereby his roots are severed, but where his playground widens. Hans's revisit of New York and cricket field through Google Earth could be paralleled with the journey that he himself went through in the U.S. He could, in his touchpad, "go as low as possible" so as to see the brown palettes of the burned grass, but at the same time, with a "single brush," he has the option "to go anywhere" where "there is no sign of nations," where "USA as such is nowhere to be seen" (18). Hans found the local in the foreign, and realized a global brotherhood, while Chuck used it for his own success.

The author has tries to create a sense of being in America in the twenty-first century, especially after 9/11. Each individual, both native and migrant, has an important part in forming the narrative of a particular country. Joseph O' Neil is trying to relate, not define, the plight of the transnational migrant—he who adds an extra layer to both national nostalgia and international brotherhood to the space, where these unique relationships are played. America is a place where both a charming, mysterious Trinidadian and a well to do Dutch could meet and influence each other, and explore the many versions and aspects of the American Dream.

The work is titled *Netherland*, for, historically, the novel claims, the Dutch were the "first tribe" (6) to reach New York apart from Native Indians. But what Hans feels towards the city is not simply the curiosity of a history buff visiting a museum. Hans might well have found a real Netherland in the U. S. through cricket, albeit a Netherland which consists of Trinidadians, Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, and many more, and by speaking about the "Netherland," he is indeed talking about the U. S.

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CULTURAL RESISTANCE THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: A STUDY ON THE CHILDREN'S WORKS BY JOSEPH BRUCHAC

Ms. Parvathy U.

Culture forms an important part of every society and its members. Different cultural groups think, feel, and act differently. These differences often create problems, conflicts, and misunderstandings among various cultural groups. Europeans have always regarded their culture as superior to other cultures. They have employed this self-proclaimed cultural superiority to dominate other cultural groups in society. The indigenous people of America can be considered the most vulnerable preys of colonization. The colonial powers have exploited and marginalized Native Americans on the basis of their culture and race. The Europeans, who invaded their lands, employed various discursive agencies to propagate wrong information and stereotypes of the natives and their culture. Their covert political aim was to make the natives feel inferior about their own culture and life styles, and to adapt to European ways, and accept the colonial rule as a benign, civilizing act. The colonizers were, to a great extent, successful in alienating Native Americans from their rich cultural heritage and making them adapt to the western culture.

Contemporary native writers try to reclaim their culture, recover its rightful place, and deconstruct the misconceptions created by the Europeans. They try to make their people realize the rich heritage of their culture and the meaninglessness in adapting western life styles. Having been aware of the power of literature to influence people, they have chosen literature as a weapon against the invaders and their marginalization. Most of the younger generation natives are more attracted towards, and assimilated to western life style and values. Hence, contemporary native writers try to generate a young generation, who are aware of their rich cultural heritage, and who are capable of creating a bright future for their community.

Culture is acquired by an individual right from his childhood. The values and beliefs acquired by a child form the most important factor, which determines his/her future thoughts and beliefs. In most societies, cultural values and beliefs are passed onto the next generation through the medium of stories. "The stories we tell our children, the narratives we give them to make sense of cultural experience, constitute a kind of mapping, maps of meaning that enable our children to make sense of the world. They contribute to children's sense of identity, an identity that is simultaneously personal and social" (Marriot 9). Children can only develop through their experience of the social and physical world, and in so far as stories form part of that world, they must surely play some part in the process of acculturation. In this sense, children's literature can play an important role in making children realize the values, beliefs, and rituals of their groups and its significance.

The paper tries to find out how far Native American writer Joseph Bruchac has successfully used the medium of children's literature to propagate the values and culture of natives to the younger generation and resist the cultural marginalization faced by their community.

Joseph Bruchac is a contemporary Native American writer and story teller, with a particular focus on Northeastern Native American and Anglo-American lives and folklore. Joseph Bruchac has published about 120 books for both adults and children, and bagged numerous awards, including Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas. His works include poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and short stories. His prodigious literary output is dedicated to honouring nature, and relating the history and

conserving the legends and myths of North American Native people. The common themes in his works include the past and present of Native American people, the sacredness of the natural world, and humanity's ruptured relations with untamed animals. *Keeper n' Me, Ragged Company* (2008) and *Code Talker-Navajo Marines in World War II* (2005) are among his most notable literary works.

Joseph Bruchac's contribution to the field of native children's literature is praiseworthy. He has published about 100 works for younger children and young adults, which try to inculcate in them the rich cultural heritage of native communities. Most of his works are devoted to acquainting young children with the Native American culture, by recounting for them the tales and legends of different Indian tribes. Bruchac employs children's works as a way of resisting the dominant white society, which constantly tries to assimilate Native Americans, especially young generation into the European white society. Bruchac tries to make the young generation aware of the difficulties and traumas faced by their communities under the colonial rule and European cultural domination, and the need to preserve their indigenous identity, culture, and environment. His works for children include anthologies of traditional stories, short stories, picture books and fiction and non-fiction.

Bruchac has a great interest in stories and storytelling, which reminds the readers of the oral tradition that once prevailed among native communities. His stories try to teach the children native beliefs and concepts about universe. "The Origin of Death" is a story which deals with the origin of the concept of death and the inevitability of death in human beings. Most of his stories provide a moral lesson. "The Bear Boy" is one such interesting story, which teaches the need for care and love. It is the story of a young native boy, who leaves his home, and lives with a bear and its cubs in the forest, as his father does not care for him. The father, at last, realizes his mistake, and takes the boy back to the village.

In the past, stories helped the elders to transmit their cultural values, beliefs, and concepts about universe to the next generation. With the arrival of colonizers, the native languages slowly died, and along with it, the traditional stories as well. The next generation, trained only in English language, hence grew without hearing these stories and realizing their rich cultural heritage. Bruchac has collected and published anthologies of traditional stories in simple English, to cater to the present generation of alienated natives.

The Native Americans have always had an intimate relation with the flora and fauna. They always give great importance to the nature and animals around them. They never try to destroy the nature or animals like the industrialized, western people. Their relation with environment forms the important themes in these anthologies. *Native American Animal Stories* (1992), *Native Plant Stories* (1995), *Keepers of the Earth (1988), Keepers of the Night,* and *Keepers of the Life* (1997) are important collections of traditional stories. Bruchac's important traditional story collections include *Flying With the Eagle, Racing the Great Bear: Stories From Native North America* (1997), which includes sixteen rich, thought-provoking Native American tales associated with rites of passage from a variety of tribal nations. Stories from these anthologies are included in the native school syllabi to provide a strong cultural basis for children from their younger ages.

Another important group of his works includes picture books. Stories were mostly Native American myths were published with illustration, to make reading an interesting process for the young children, and to make them understand the beliefs and values of their community in a simple and interesting way. His important picture books include *Buffalo Song*, *The Great Ball Game* and *The First Strawberries*. *Buffalo Song* (2007) deals with the extinction of buffalo herds in America after the invasion of white

people. The Buffalo is considered the sacred animal of Native Americans. The book is enriched with beautiful illustrations and deals around a calf which is left alone as the whole herd is killed by hunters and the protagonist who tries to save the vanishing buffalo herds in the U.S. during 1870s and 1880s.

Joseph Bruchac has also written non-fiction works for children, which mainly deals with the history of Native Indians, the negative impacts of colonization, torture and discrimination faced by natives because of their race and culture. *Trail of Tears* (1999) is one such work about an unhappy events of their past. "Trail of Tears" is the name given to the forced relocation of Native Americans from the Southeastern parts of the United States, following the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Native Americans suffered exposure, disease, and starvation enroute their reservations, and many of them died during this journey. This book is written in a simple manner with graphics, and it is used as a social science reader for native children. *Native American Games and Stories* (2000) is another work which introduces to young native children the games and activities which entertained natives in the past. *Seasons of the Circle* (2002) is a beautifully illustrated celebration of a Native American year. This brief text with illustrations introduces activities of various Native American people corresponding to each month of the year.

Most of the author's fictional work for children and young adults deals with the life of Native American societies; how colonization physically and mentally affected the children, and the cultural and racial marginalization and discrimination they face in their everyday lives. *Eagle Song* (1999) deals with the life of a nine-year old Danny Bigtree, whose family has moved to a new city from the Mohawak reservation. The novel deals with the homesickness and daily teasing from new classmates faced by Danny, and how he finds solution to his problems. Bruchac's fictional works are also based on Native American legends, tales, and myths. He has also tried to recreate native life in America long before the arrival of Europeans.

Joseph Bruchac, through his children's works, tries to provide a clear picture of Native American history, the exploitation and discrimination which they have continuously faced from the times of colonization to the more recent times. He successfully inculcates the rich heritage and cultural values of Native Americans to the younger children in an interesting way to make them proud of their Native American descent, to accept the native culture and values, and thus promote native cultural renaissance.

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JOHN STEINBECK'S THE GRAPES OF WRATH: A CHRONICLE OF DEPRESSION AND SURVIVAL

Ms. M. K. Praseeda

Twentieth-century America is considered a progressive era with its economic prosperity which prompted Americans to have more and more material aspirations. They believed that they obtained absolute security from their wealth and technological power. But there came a blow of realization in the form of war and Economic Depression. Even nature played its part with draughts, dust-storms, and floods. These economic and natural disasters created a sense of insecurity among Americans. The Nobel Laureate, John Steinbeck, one of America's seminal writers, belongs to this age and he tries to trace the journey of the people in his novels. His life witnessed the century that saw American's move from rural land to industrialized cities. He used his fiction to delve deep into the lives of society's most downtrodden citizens. His novels portray the slow transformation of man from victim to victor which in turn gives him a sense of fulfilment in life.

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* deals primarily with the life of working class, with their society and the industrial problem from the point of view of a labourer. It deals with the particular issues affecting the migrant people in California. It depicts man's ancient search for the Promised Land and examines the fight for life and the instinct of the living organism for survival and the aspirations of the people who must redefine their life. Steinbeck provides a detailed and sympathetic account of Joads in order to bring his reader understand the plight of all the people who have lost their farms and migrated to California. This migration or Journey forms the central part of the novel's structure.

By the mid-1930s, the drought had crippled countless farm families, and America had fallen into the Great Depression. Unable to pay their mortgages or invest in the kinds of industrial equipment now necessitated by commercial competition, many Dust Bowl farmers were forced to leave their land. Without any real employment prospects, thousands of families nonetheless travelled to California in hopes of finding new means of survival. But the farm country of California quickly became overcrowded with the migrant workers. Jobs and food were scarce, and the migrants faced prejudice and hostility from the Californians. Many of the residents of these camps starved to death, unable to find work. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck not only describes the plight of migrant workers during the Depression but also offers a pointed criticism of the policies that had caused that plight.

As a novel of social protest, *The Grapes of Wrath* has two vital qualities: struggle and survival. The novel is a detailed exposure of dreadful vital conditions of the century. Walter Stein has commented, "*The Grapes of Wrath* was primarily a novel, but more than Steinbeck's other works, it was informed by hard reality in which Steinbeck had immersed himself. Drawing upon the technique used by Herman Melville a century before Steinbeck punctuated his tale with . . . factual; accounts, which supply a splendid account to California's migrant crisis" (202).

Released from an Oklahoma state prison after serving four years for a manslaughter conviction, Tom Joad makes his way back to his family's farm in Oklahoma. He meets Jim Casy, a former preacher who has given up his calling out of a belief that all life is holy—even the parts that are typically thought to be sinful—and that sacredness consists simply in endeavoring to be an equal among the people. Jim accompanies Tom to his home, only to find it and all the surrounding farms deserted. Muley Graves, an old

neighbour, wanders by and tells the men that everyone has been "tractored" off the land. Most families, he says, including his own, have headed to California to look for work. The next morning, Tom and Jim set out for Tom's Uncle John's, where Muley assures them they will find the Joad clan. Upon arrival, Tom finds Ma and Pa Joad packing up the family's few possessions. Having seen handbills advertising fruit-picking jobs in California, they envision the trip to California as their only hope of getting their lives back on track.

The journey to California in a rickety, used truck is long and arduous. Grampa Joad, a feisty old man, who complains bitterly that he does not want to leave his land, dies on the road shortly after the family's departure. Dilapidated cars and trucks, loaded down with scrappy possessions, clog Highway 66. It seems the entire country is in flight to the Promised Land of California. The Joads meet Ivy and Sairy Wilson, a couple plagued with car trouble, and invite them to travel with the family. Sairy Wilson is sick and, near the California border, becomes unable to continue the journey.

As the Joads near California, they hear ominous rumors of a depleted job market. One migrant tells Pa that 20,000 people show up for every 800 jobs and that his own children have starved to death. Although the Joads press on, their first days in California prove tragic, as Granma Joad dies. The remaining family members move from one squalid camp to the next, looking in vain for work, struggling to find food, and trying desperately to hold their family together. Noah, the oldest of the Joad children, soon abandons the family, as does Connie, a young dreamer who is married to Tom's pregnant sister, Rose of Sharon. "Two days the families were in flight, but on the third the land was too huge for them and they settle into a new technique of living; the highway became their home and the movement their medium of expression. Little by little they settled into the new life" (190).

The Joads meet with much hostility in California. The camps are overcrowded and full of starving migrants, who are often nasty to each other. The locals are fearful and angry at the flood of newcomers, whom they derisively label "Okies." Work is almost impossible to find or pays such a meagre amount that a family's full day's work cannot buy a decent meal. Fearing an uprising, the large landowners do everything in their power to keep the migrants poor and dependent. While staying in a ramshackle camp known as a "Hooverville," Tom and several men get into a heated argument with a deputy sheriff over whether workers should organize into a union. When the argument turns violent, Jim Casy knocks the sheriff unconscious and is arrested. Police officers arrive and announce their intention to burn the Hooverville to the ground.

A government-run camp proves much more hospitable to the Joads, and the family soon finds many friends and a bit of work. However, one day, while working at a pipe-laying job, Tom learns that the police are planning to stage a riot in the camp, which will allow them to shut down the facilities. By alerting and organizing the men in the camp, Tom helps to defuse the danger. Still, as pleasant as life in the government camp is, the Joads cannot survive without steady work, and they have to move on. They find employment picking fruit, but soon learn that they are earning a decent wage only because they have been hired to break a workers' strike. Tom runs into Jim Casy who, after being released from jail, has begun organizing workers; in the process, Casy has made many enemies among the landowners. When the police hunt him down and kill him in Tom's presence, Tom retaliates and kills a police officer.

Tom goes into hiding, while the family moves into a boxcar on a cotton farm. One day, Ruthie, the youngest Joad daughter, reveals to a girl in the camp that her brother has killed two men and is hiding

nearby. Fearing for his safety, Ma Joad finds Tom and sends him away. Tom heads off to fulfill Jim's task of organizing the migrant workers. The end of the cotton season means the end of work, and word sweeps across the land that there are no jobs to be had for three months. Rains set in and flood the land. Rose of Sharon gives birth to a stillborn child, and Ma, desperate to get her family to safety from the floods, leads them to a dry barn not far away. Here, they find a young boy kneeling over his father, who is slowly starving to death. He has not eaten for days, giving whatever food he had to his son. Realizing that Rose of Sharon is now producing milk, Ma sends the others outside, so that her daughter can nurse the dying man.

The vision of Steinbeck is universal as he sketches the longing of every man. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a brief survey of the journey of the Joads. It delineates the state of powerless tenant farmers who struggle for a new life and new self. They get ready to face a new development with hope and determination as their instruments. Steinbeck is a true representative of his time. His novels, especially, *The Grapes of Wrath*, narrate the events of the Great Depression and the human sufferings of the time.

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TRANS'INSPIRING' AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATION OF AGGRESSION: POSTMODERN TERRAIN

Ms. Radhika B.

Joseph Heller and Thomas Pynchon belong to the new group of American writers whose work can be regarded as exemplifying violence from varied perspectives. One of the useful ways of approaching Heller and Pynchon critically is to look upon their works as manifestations of the post modernist trend in post war American fiction. The American writers of the 1950s were known as "The Silent Generation" because they expressed in their work a silent agreement with the official, political, moral and social attitudes of the state. *Catch-22*, published in 1961, revels in the aesthetic of the absurd. The appearance of *Catch-22* and *Gravity's Rainbow* heralds the emergence of a new literature of protest and social criticism. In *Gravity's Rainbow* Pynchon explores the conceptual models of twentieth century physics in an attempt to find an escape from the entropic doom he is afraid of and freely adapts ideas from physics to create his metaphors. Using physicists theories of consciousness created reality, Pynchon explores the question of whether one can distinguish between what is "out there" and what is "in our heads" (4).

On close scrutiny one could perceive that both Catch -22 and Gravity's Rainbow resort to violence and aggression at the thematic level. Both novels are written in the backdrop of the Second World War. In Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon depicts characters like Myrtle the Miraculous, a wonder woman who hates people but adores perfectly functioning robots and machines. Marcel, the mechanical chess player is an ideal male and a robot tactician. The adult Slothrop is only a "glozing neuter" who finds himself neither as a man of feeling nor as a machine who is destined to run down oblivious of the purpose or meaning of anything that has happened to him. Pynchon, indicts the inexplicability and inexorability of aggression in the acts of scientists like Pointsman, who dominate and humiliate men. The capitalistic urge, the multinational corporation and models of America drifting toward centralized wealth and power, all fall prey to Pynchon's sharp criticism. Gravity's Rainbow also deals with appetites gone out of control in war and in a psychological warfare unit functioning in London. Slothrop's father sold out his baby boy, Tyrone, not out of malice but out of a concern for future that was greater than his love for his child. In return for the money to send him through college he gave his son Tyrone to a stimulus-response experimenter Jamf, who measured his reactions by the swiftness of his infant erections. It is impolex-G, a polymer that conditioned infant Tyrone's erections. Through these descriptions Pynchon casts a cynical eye on our time and the historical forces that shaped it as a moralist and he makes a precise distinctions between ideals of love and justice and the realities he experience.

Turning to *Catch-22*, it is self-evident that it is much more than another war novel. The men in *Catch-22* are trapped in their own little circular, absurd world, from which, it seems, there is little chance of escape. The novel demonstrates that the single vital quest of the modern age is for the discovery of some way to affirm life against the forces of negation without violating what is human.*Catch-22* finds laughter and the purely symbolic gesture necessary as the only means of handling all these negative forces. The search for identity which has been so popular in the novels written prior to the 1960s is muted in the post war novels. *Gravity's Rainbow* presents Ilse, Franz Pokler's daughter making annual visits to Zwolfkinder amusement park to meet her father. Similarly in Heller's *Catch-22* the company records show that Doc Daneeka is dead and even while he stands yelling that he lives, he is removed from the pay records. His wife collects his insurance, grows rich and receives a sympathetic notification. The grotesque surface of *Catch-22* masks a serious purpose. Heller's Yossarian becomes a politician in a larger sense, as a culture hero for the bold new decade of the American 1960s. *Catch-22* serves as a talisman to the

new culture and it is better known as an underground novel, sharply in contrast to the other novels of the fifties. The surface action of *Catch-22* is constituted by characters and themes drawn from World War Two. Even with regard to the subject matter, Heller's portrayal of World War Two, that is in 1961, when hardly anyone was writing realistic fiction about World War Two:

Both Heller and Pynchon try to portray characters who are socially neglected and oppressed. To Pokler, his daughter becomes a mere illusion. The heartbroken Pokler wanders around the Dora concentration camp searching for his wife and daughter finds only a dying woman to whom he gives his wedding ring :"If she lived, the ring would be good for a few meals ,or a blanket ,or a night indoors or a ride home." (*Gravity* 433)

The postwar world of Heller and Pynchon is one of Decadence. Both allow themselves no escape from the vision of decadence. Another aggressive stance that these novelists have adopted is in their presentation of reality. The novelist takes something not aesthetic and endows it with shape, form and congruity. This view of multiple reality is influenced by Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum Physics. In Pynchon's V the multiple identities of Fausto, the multiple V's and in his *Gravity's Rainbow*, the many roles of Captain Blicero – all these suggest that truth is not unambiguous, but multiple. It is not merely elusive, but as quantum Physics tells us, it is certain.

If "modern" means pertaining to the present, then "post modern" means pertaining to the future. The prefix "post" functions as a type of intensifier to mean "new" or "improved". The two perspectives are complementary and partial. The Apollonian view, rangy and abstract, discerns only historical conjunctions. The Dionysian feeling, sensuous through nearly purblind, touches only the disjunctive moment. Thus, postmodernism by invoking two divinities at once engages a double view and it can neither be considered as a synonym for the contemporary as it does not describe an international cultural phenomenon because it is primarily European and American. They often claim "transworld identity" between characters in their projected worlds and real-world historical figures. Thomas Pynchon's zone in *Gravity's Rainbow* combines elements of all these postmodernist zones. "In the Zone", the title of the third and longest section of his novel, refers to occupied Germany in the anarchic weeks and months immediately following the collapse of the Third Reich. Heller's zone in *Catch-22* is the military from which individuals like Yossarian have no possible way of escape. The sway of the mysterious Catch-22 is felt everywhere and quiet often proves to be deadly. Postmodernist fiction at its mimetic holds the mirror up to everyday life in advanced industrial societies where reality is pervaded by the "miniature escape fantasies" of television and movies. Pynchon uses this strategy of suspension throughout Gravity's Rainbow, often turning to cinema for his metaphorical vehicles. Cinematic discourse pervades the style and imagery of Gravity's Rainbow from beginning to end.

Heller is optimistic about a world free from war and for him this world, a Utopia, no matter how far out of reach, is a meaningful ideal for which man may strive. The plot of the novel is unfurled in the background of the Second World war and an interesting example of Cultural dynamism .It is a world in which the human situation is coextensive with total war. The military world on Pianosa in *Catch-22* stands as a metaphor for life within any organization. Men in different walks of life find themselves in a similar kind of world. The sense of absurdity is not created solely due to a neurotic's reaction to his surroundings but in actual fact it is the aftermath of many conflicting interests. In *Catch-22*, Heller is redefining World War Two as a method of revising our ideas of what passes for reality. While observing the operations of the Army, one gets the impression that is a gigantic ship of fools, an absurdist enterprise

made operational only by its vaguely assumed importance of mission. The novel pooh-poohs army bureaucracy, army logic and army inefficiency. Heller's virtuosity with language creates a flamboyant, verbally artistic picture: "Pain?" Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife pounced upon the word victoriously. Pain is a useful symptom. Pain is a warning to us of bodily dangers." Oh, He was really being charitable to us when He gave us pain! Why couldn't He have used a door bell instead to notify us, or one of his celestial choirs?" (184). The essence of Heller's Catch-22 and Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-5 or The Children's Crusade is that, though the three novels are ostensibly about the Second World War, a war that will end only when no one is alive to fight it. Heller's extension of modern fictional techniques cannot be overlooked. "The method to use Heller's own label, is de ja vu — a term meaning "already seen," that suggests something of the delusive experience, hallucinatory quality, and disjunctive expression of reality in Catch-22" (Mellard 30). There was only one catch, and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. The most important view of Catch-22 emerges towards the close of the novel. The nightmare scenes of the novel which convey its tragic sense culminate in the cosmic nightmare of Chapter 39, "The Eternal City." The once glorious Rome is now dilapidated. The majestic monuments are shattered, and the streets contain surrealistic nightmares. The people seem to be the "husks and shards of humanity." The interpenetration between literary form and the movements of history is made obvious in the commercial success of Heller's labyrinthine novel.

Gravity's Rainbow is set in England, France and occupied Germany of 1944-45. It is thick with references and flashbacks to World War Two and the Weimer days. Pynchon advocated the forcible dislocation of self, which reflects the use of fragmentation and alienation as defenses against painful confrontation. Set at the end of World War Two, *Gravity's Rainbow* exposes the bureaucracies that have used the war to extend tier power over science, religion, and all the forms of life and culture that are bound up in them. The bizarre beginning of the novel betokens Pynchon's aggressive method. It begins in *in medias res*: "Screaming comes across the sky. It has happened before, but there is something to compare it now. It is too late. The Evacuation still proceeds, but it's all theatre. There are no lights inside the cars. No lights anywhere...But coming down in total blackout, without one glint of light, only great invincible crashing" (*Gravity* 3).

This provocatively rich matter-of-fact references arouses curiosity in reader Where and When is this Evacuation taking place? What screams across the sky? In the midst of dreams on the next page Pirate Prentice awakens from his nightmare of Evacuation to the real morning of wartime London. The reader's re-education or de-conditioning starts from this reversal. *Gravity's Rainbow*'s plot is a conspiracy superbly treated by Pynchon. The conspiracy represented by "Them" or "The Firm" is cosmic, and its reach is virtually unlimited. In the novel, Pointsman arranges for Slothrop to undergo an experiment to test the White American's reaction to Blacks. Slothrop drifts into a memory of the Roseland Ballroom in Roxbury, where he drops his harmonica down the toilet. he escapes by following his harp down the toilet into an underground world –the world of the Preterites. They are America's downtrodden, associated with waste and the repressed. The landscape of Gravity's rainbow is global. However characters from Africa, South America, Japan, Central Asia, Russia and Europe are a plenty mostly governed by the Calvinist impulses.

Gravity's Rainbow is the story of the degeneration of the Western World. Slothrop's Orphic quest loses cause and effect. He finds himself projected as graffiti on the wall, "Rocketman was here," and scratches another legend, a mandala image of the rocket as seen from below. His concluding vision of the

rainbow entering into the sexual union with the earth is an affirmation of his bridging the present with the future" (14). Slothrop sees a very thick rainbow here, a stout rainbow cock driven out of pubic clouds into Earth, green wet volleyed earth, and his chest fills and he stands crying, not a thing in his head, just feeling natural" (*Gravity* 626). This picture of the rainbow having a union with the earth is a sign of regeneration which is quite antithetical to the rocket's annihilating penetrations. The ultimate source so rampant paranoia in the novel are death and the fear of death. But Pynchon handles death in a curious way. The word "death" and the machinery of death are pervasive in *Gravity's Rainbow*. The novel's final suggestion is about universal death. The trajectory of the rocket – which at the end of the novel is both a womb and a coffin – exactly enacts this stark ironic ambiguity. The rocket becomes a womb since it contains the living figure of Gottfried and it becomes a coffin because it embodies death and perversion of all life giving love and sexuality and he also forms an analogy between history and geography in the case of Malta. He depicts the exploitation of minorities like the Hereros. If one reads parabolically two episodes from the final chapter entitled "The Counterforce," that would throw light on the overall relationship of writer, text, and reader. The first is a fantastic tale known as "The Story of Byron the Bulb," in which a light bulb named Byron, threatens the oppressive Phoebus light bulb cartel, and attempts to kill him.

The protagonists of Catch-22 and Gravity's Rainbow are engaged in fruitless searches for a way out; they are protean figures who after prolonged struggles, eventually disappear from the narrative. Pynchon makes ample references to rocketry, the laws of thermodynamics, entropy and polymer chemistry in his novel. Imipolex G, the newly invented chemical is a sexual stimulant. Even though Heller does not mention directly any features of technology, the fact that his novel is about an air force squadron engaged in bombing missions, points to the truth that modern science and technology is very much involved in its operations. Both novels are placed in the context of Second World War. While Catch-22 is a microcosm of the allied forces during the war, the plot of Gravity's Rainbow is centered around the V-2 rockets aimed against London and other cities of Europe. The evil sway of an all-pervading "They" or "Them" can be seen in both the novels. Perhaps the most aggressive aspect of both the novels is its involutes time structure. Heller's use of déjà vu as a structural principle and Gravity Rainbow's beginning in medias res with the description of falling rocket and massive evacuation. In the final analysis all that is traditional about Catch-22 and Gravity's Rainbow is their protest. Their technical innovations represent a radical departure from the fictional formulas of the past. Use of parody, the way language reinforces the absurdity it describe and a structure that transgress logical order, all constitute break-through that are violently inspiring and new to the American novel.

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TELL THIS SILENCE: JANICE MIRIKITANI ON THE SILENCE WHICH SURROUNDS THE EXPERIENCES OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

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One of the central themes in Janice Mirikitani's collection of poems titled, *We, the Dangerous* (1995), is the involuntary internment of people of Japanese descent in the United States during World War II. Mirikitani examines the feelings of helplessness and anger associated with the internment. It also explores the sense of desperation among Asian Americans who are still perceived as foreigners and visitors to the United States, even when they are American citizens who consider America their home.

Both "Breaking Silence" and "Prisons of Silence" are significant as they delve into the silences surrounding internment. These poems attempt to account for the multiple silences surrounding Japanese American experiences in the concentration camps. In the dedication to "Breaking Silence", which was written for her mother, Mirikitani writes, "After forty years of silence about the experience of Japanese Americans in World War II concentration camps, my mother testified before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Japanese American Civilians in 1981" (56). In the body of the poem, Mirikitani includes her mother's testimony and her own modifications to that testimony. She says, "We were made to believe our faces / betrayed us. / Our bodies were loud / with yellow screaming flesh / needing to be silenced / behind barbed wire" (57). And later, mother acknowledges her fault in keeping her lips "pinned by nails" (57). She realizes that her rage was so far "coffined". But now she feels the necessity to exhume her past and "to claim this time. . . ." For her: "words are better than tears, / so I spill them. / I kill this, / the silence . . . / There are miracles that happen / she said, / and everything is made visible. . . . / Our language is beautiful" (58–59).

The poem suggests that Asian Americans can reclaim their language and their selves only by shedding the silence. According to her, the pain of internment can be confronted and alleviated only by engaging in a discourse about it. Breaking silence is likened to making history of Mirikitani's mother's experience in internment. The effort is make visible her story both to herself and to outsiders. As Traise Yamamoto suggests, the silence and repression of her mother is a symbol of the silence and repression of Japanese Americans. "[T]he mother's testimony bears witness to and reverses the internment's erasure and silencing of the 'yellow screaming flesh'" (233). Thus, it is the process of making the past visible, of speaking out the truth. And it is speech that renders the language "beautiful," and empowers Mirikitani and her mother, as well as others who share their racial identity.

In the following poem, "Prisons of Silence," Mirikitani is concerned again with breaking silences. She writes, "The strongest prisons are built / with walls of silence" (60-61). The imprisonment Japanese Americans were forced to endure during World War II is likened to a cultural silencing. Their presence in the United States was erased from the national discourse. Constrained behind barbed wires, they were unable to speak for themselves. In the poem, silences are related to abandonment and betrayal by one's own government: "Jap! / Filthy Jap! / Who lives within me? / Abandoned homes, confiscated land, / loyalty oaths, barbed wire prisons / in a strange wasteland. / Go home, Jap! / Where is home? / A country of betrayal. / No one speaks to us. / We would not speak to each other. / We were accused" (61-72). Silence becomes the prevailing condition not only because others refuse to acknowledge Japanese Americans but also because they are unable to speak to one another. The accusations, the shame, and the confusion of internment render the imprisoned speechless and the resultant silences fragment their communities and families.

It is not just the silence or the attitude of the dominant group that make their situations worse. Japanese Americans often resort to silence, as a means of protection and survival and this intensifies the problem. In this way, silence may represent contentment and a measure of safety. But this feeling cannot be the same every time. There is a time when the rage buried beneath the surface threatens to destroy the Japanese American and the life she has rebuilt. As the narrator says: "I have kept myself contained / within these walls shaped to my body / and buried my rage. / I rebuilt my life / like a wall, unquestioning. / obeyed their laws . . . their laws'' (63-68). What threatens to destroy the illusion of safety is the narrator's revelation that the silences in which she must live are imposed by others. It is an enforced silence by the dominant group of the United States who assert "their" laws upon her subjectivity and race. Also, the silences represent the prejudices of the U.S. government in its illegal imprisonment of Japanese Americans: "All persons of Japanese ancestry / filthy jap. / Both alien and non-alien / japs are enemy aliens. / To be incarcerated / for their own good / A military necessity / The army to handle only the japs. / Where is home? / A country of betrayal'' (63-72). She fears the threat of silence and raises several questions. She tries to explore what is unspoken in the dominant discourse. She also inquires in these poems as to what is masked by euphemisms and the language of racist hysteria.

Lastly, as mentioned above, silence is prison itself; the internment embodies and enacts the greatest silence of all. It is through the breaking of such silences that one becomes free: "We give testimony. / Our noise is dangerous. . . . / We soar / from these walls of silence" (61-65). So breaking silence is likened to breaking free from the imprisonment Japanese Americans were subjected to during World War II. To free oneself, according to Mirikitani, one must break silence. It is through language and discourse that one can know what has actually happened and move towards a new life. It is through speech that one locates freedom and subjectivity.

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DEPICTION OF SELF-IDENTITY, RACISM, AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN WILLIAM APESS'S A SON OF THE FOREST

Dr. Rani Jeba Shanthi

If an honest white man could look in to our private affairs and know what wrongs we have suffered, it would change his complexion to a hue redder than the Indians. (William Apess)

A Son of the Forest (1829) by William Apess is the first autobiography written by an American Indian. It is a self narrative in which the author talks about different stages in his life. Every stage brought him awareness about Native Americans, and how the Native Americans were treated by the whites. He was born near Colerain, Massachusetts. His father, who was of white ancestry and a Pequot, was a shoe maker. His mother is described as White, Negro, and Pequot. Apess narrates how he was sent away to live with his alcoholic grandparents because his parents were separated. Then, he grew up with a white couple in the neighbourhood. His identity kept changing. He had been separated from his native community, abused, and removed from his family. He was placed in a different land. A difficult childhood, adventurous wanderings, and finally his conversion to Christianity are the three distinct stages in his life. Later, he was contracted as an indentured servant to a series of white families. As an adult, he tasted racism when he started to attend Methodist meetings. His Baptist employers disapproved of racial intermingling. He was forbidden to attend the meetings because people from the lower class were there.

In the early nineteenth century, the whites frequently referred to the Indians as "sons of the forest." This phrase gave Apess the title for the book. He was born in 1798 in a tent in a forest near Colerain. He was "born again" in a tent in the forest at the site of a Methodist camp meeting. This seems to have shaped his different identities. Marginalization and hardship burdened his life. All the experiences made him a polemicist and a tactician. He helped the Mashpees achieve their demands. Apess was charismatic; the community gathered around him; and he was adopted in to their community. He was given wood rights, promised a home with fishing and farming.

"The Indian Declaration of Independence," written by Apess, addressed the Governor of Massachusetts thus: "We, as a tribe will rule ourselves, and have the right to do so; for all men are born free and equal, says the constitution of the country" (95). It was found that the Native Americans were encouraged by William to put forth their demands. The conditions were that no white should take wood or cut hay in Mashpee. Many whites in Massachusetts responded to this with hysteria. William gained another identity as an outside protester for misleading a group of Native Americans. He had mastered contemporary politics. The Mashpees had an impressive victory because of William's polemical and tactical skills.

This autobiography reflects two types of biographical writings: literary autobiography, where the content and style show the path to salvation, and slave narrative, which creates awareness and social consciousness. In the literary autobiography, he writes about his altercation with the whites, and his forced adoption of their system. He began to know the white man's God, and started to impersonate the writing style of the oppressors. Though what he wrote was contributing to another culture it kept his own cultural identity integral. Between 1804 and 1813, he was shifted to three different families. He had to assume different identities. When he was fifteen, he joined the army. In 1818, he was baptized by the Methodists, and took to preaching as a vocation. Once his profession changed, he acquired a different identity. Apess gained a Chrtistian identity. He understood that Christianity and racial discrimination were

completely irreconcilable, and this became one of the central themes of his writings. Apess and other Indians turned Christianity into a faith that affirms and nurtures their Indian identity.

William narrates his experience of taking various jobs in New York and Canada. Then, he settled in Connecticut, where he preached. In Massachusetts, he went to Mashpee, the only surviving Native American town. There, he was involved in the struggle against the overseers assigned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The community sent the "The Indian Declaration of Independence" to the Governor. The Native Americans were denied the self evident "rights guaranteed to all men" by the "Declaration of Independence." They were condemned as heathens, and treated in an un-Christian manner. The Native Americans had an uncertain racial identity. Apess's parents identified themselves as Pequot. He returned home to claim his place in the Pequot community. Gaining identity, the son claimed the forest as the place of his birth. Apess says that the forest also appeared to reclaim him as its son, and he found a sense of belonging there.

Apess's marginal position sharpened his sensitivity towards social injustice, and so he fought against the dominant society. He bitterly denounces racism and lists unemployment, legal dependency, improper education, and corrupt agents as the essence of the Indian problem. Inter marriage with Indians were objected by the Whites. Apess writes about two such issues in his works. His words reveal the depth of hurt that instilled in him the desire to fight for his rights as a human being:

I was alone in the world, fatherless, motherless, and helpless....and none to speak for the poor little Indian boy. Had my skin been white, with the same abilities and the same percentage, there could not have been found a place good enough for me. But such is the case with depraved nature that their judgment for fancy only sets upon the eye, skin, nose, lips, cheeks, chin or teeth and sometimes the forehead and hair; without any further examination, the mind is made up and the price set. (*On Our Own* 112)

Apess was baptized in the year 1818. He was taught by his Aunt Sally, a religious woman in Connecticut. He understood that God had created him in his own image, and that he had the divine grace of God to consider him and his people equal to the whites: "I felt convinced that Christ died for all mankind—that age, sect, color, country, or situation made no difference. I felt an assurance that I was included in the plan of redemption with all my brethren" (*On Our Own* 115).

He had to reinforce his identity as an Indian, and that was made possible when he became an evangelical Christian. He created awareness among his people of how they were and how they should be. He influenced the people to press forward their demand for equality. Social awareness was created by Apess by making known about the two evils present among them, one is poverty and the other is white hostility. He was arrested but nothing could silence William. He demanded the legislature to abolish overseership, to incorporate the town, and revoke all laws which were responsible for the ill treatment of the Mashpees. William Apess was intrepid and persuasive in fighting for the Native Americans.

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THE RED BIRD SINGS OF THUNDER: AN INTROSPECTIVE JOURNEY THROUGH ZITKALA – SA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES

Ms. Razeena P. R.

Autobiography occupies an astonishingly large proportion of the slender shelf of the American classics. The most famous expressions of American autobiographies in the nineteenth century, such as the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), and *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), grew out of the hybridization of confession and memoir, self-revelation and self-celebration. Before the advent of autobiography in the United States, confession and memoir were seen as contrastive, even diametrically opposed, modes of life writing. The impulse to strip the psyche bare and ask ultimate questions of the self led in one direction. The desire to represent the self in full attire, socially and historically, and to ask of it an account of its contribution to the making of the world, steered life history on quite a different course.

These conflicting attitudes toward self and society emerge in the confession and the memoir forms the classics of American autobiography. Those marginalized by race and sex seem to rely more on internal standards of self-evaluation and to picture themselves as pitted against hostile forces intent on robbing them of their carefully nurtured sense of inner worth . The African American Frederick Douglass and the American Indian Zitkala-Sa cast themselves in the Rousseauesque mould of autobiography, demonstrating strong affinities with the idea that, true individuality is forged in an inevitable struggle with the conformism and oppressiveness of a corrupt society. Douglass dictates the resurrection of his manhood and his selfrespect in his hand to hand battle with a Southern slave-breaker, the symbol of all that was tyrannical in the antebellum American social order. In her autobiographical essay, "Why I Am a Pagan" (1902), Zitkala-Sa takes a bold stand in publicly resisting the orthodox religion of most white Americans and even her own mother, a converted Sioux. Zitkala-Sa pities the Christianized Indians because they have lost their God, their sense of oneness with nature, and in a cultural sense, themselves, in the process of accepting white spiritual norms. What links Douglass and Zitkala-Sa to the confessional tradition is not an apologetic view of the self but rather a sense of spiritual obligation to chart the self's quest for fulfilment in accordance with its God-given mission. In this instance, their mission seems to be to resist the white America's denial of coloured America's identity. Zitkala-Sa's life-writing violates traditional patterns of autobiography, because it does not put forth a model of triumph and integration, nor does it emphasize the importance of language in the overall process of self-authentication. Therefore, one cannot expect her writing to legitimate the very institutions (the English language, writing, culture, and civilization) which have suppressed her.

The autobiographical essays of Zitkala-Sa, published in the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1900 to 1902, also deserve consideration as an example of cross-breeding of confession and memoir in classic American autobiographies. Clearly, the Sioux writer assumed the role of spokesperson for the alienated lot on whom the imposition of civilization amounts to the destruction of the integrity of their traditional culture. Yet, the moment Zitkala-Sa chose to write about herself in English, she could not help but identify herself to some extent with the assimilated Indian. Part of the confessional aspect of her story is her acknowledgement of her pursuit and attainment of some of the most treasured symbols of success imaginable to her white fellow-students in college. On the one hand, she chose to publish her autobiography in *The Atlantic*, synonymous with literary respectability among turn of the century white Americans. On the other hand, she used her forum in *The Atlantic*, to speak against the very culture that gave her the means to satisfy

what she calls her youthful ambition for writing. Thus, the means of thinking about and writing autobiography became, for the mature Zitkala-Sa, both a blessing and a curse. When she returned to her Sioux mother dwelling on the prairie, she found little solace and even less direction as to how to live as a culturally displaced and socially marginalized person in the twentieth century. Zitkala-Sa writes about a way of life that has survived rapid change. She interprets identity, geography, and everyday reality in response to such changes in the form of textual, cultural, and psychological work which explicitly works against the universalizing tendencies of dominant ideologies and which white writers do not undertake in their texts. Of her literary works, Zitkala-Sa's "Why I Am a Pagan" perhaps best explains her religious beliefs. It was first published in *The Atlantic* in December of 1902, a time in which society was accustomed to and expectant of Native American essays about conformations to Christianity. Coupled with a chapter, "The Big Red Apples," from *Impressions of an Indian Childhood*, the essay makes a case against traditional Christianity. The two works express the indignities suffered by the Native Americans at the hands of Christians.

Zitkala-Sa was ardently against the oppression of Native Americans, though she saw it as an intimate part of the language of the whites whom she addresses as "pale-faces" Zitkala-Sa cleverly alludes to the biblical story of Adam and Eve's fall as a metaphor for the seduction of the Native Americans by whites in "The Big Red Apples." Eve was seduced by the snake because of her ambition for knowledge. Zitkala-Sa creates a parallel to her own childhood experience with the "pale-faces" from the East. They came to her reservation looking for Indian children to recruit to their school. The man from the East seductively promises her that nice red apples are for those who pick them. So, against her mother's wishes, Zitkala-Sa ate from the forbidden tree, and headed east.

Zitkala-Sa's masterful use of language and her grasp of Western allusions add to the effectiveness of her writing. Like many other minority writers, she learned about the culture oppressing her, and developed writing techniques, so that her voice could be heard and understood by the dominant culture. Had Zitkala-Sa used allusions familiar only to Native American stories and her native language, she would have not reached her target audience of whites. Zitkala-Sa's "The Big Red Apples" causes white readers to re-think traditional Christian conquests, by suggesting that Indians were corrupted by the dominant culture. "Why I Am a Pagan" further challenges a reverent and religious Christian to see the beauty of Indian beliefs, their love of nature, appreciation of the wonder for the universe, and acceptance of all (even the "pale-face") as part of God's creation. The image of a God-fearing, accepting, and loving being is in sharp contrast to the image of a savage warrior.

In "Why I am a Pagan," Zitkala-Sa worships a God that created beauty in the world and a religion that embraces everyone. Zitkala-Sa contrasts this with the Christianity which her cousin followed. It taught her the folly of native beliefs. She argues that God did not call the white man to destroy the beautiful Native American culture, steal their homelands, pen them up on reservations or beat Indian children for speaking in their mother tongue. She deeply resented the mistreatment, of the Indians. Yet, Zitkala-Sa aimed at bridging the gap between the dominant white and Native American cultures. She did not let herself be seduced into believing that her Native American traditions were folly or sin. As a person of mixed blood, her life could be looked upon as an example of the beauty and accomplishments that can be made when two cultures live in harmony. She realized that to hate differences was to hate life and she chose to be a lover of life.

For Zitkala-Sa, her captivity forecast the ultimate dispersal and demoralization of her family and her people. As a Native-American version of the American Eve, tempted by whites with "big,red apples," she was lured to tragic knowledge in white schools. Zitkala-Sa also tells the story of Americanization, for which there seem to be few models. In several important aspects, the Sioux writer is both converted and unconverted by her long encounter with white culture. She compares herself to a tender tree, uprooted from her mother, nature, and God. But, somehow, she preserved within her a dream of a vent for a long suppressed consciousness. Zitkala-Sa asserts that after a long period of struggle and frustration, she has embarked upon a new way of solving the problem of her inner self. She does not state in her Atlantic Essays what that solution was, or whether she has been able to effect it fully. If the writing of her autobiography was the solution, then the question remains whether the four essays she published in *The Atlantic* were sufficient. Zitkala-Sa resolves her conflict by maintaining the cultural integrity of her native heritage and by affirming the presence of traditional Dakotah power as it circulates through the mother and her child to perpetuate life, tradition, and tribal community. In that world of tribal voice, Zitkala-Sa's personal experience is clarified and understood, as she struggles against separation and isolation to achieve a tribal sense of harmony and balance. Just as the traditional "prose cycles" proposed to entertain as well as to integrate Indian children into the tribe, these essays create community as they recover and protect.

Her Atlantic Essays are loosely knit together into an open-ended narrative that deliberately seems to leave many questions unanswered. From total identification with her Native American mother, Zitkala-Sa was remade into an exemplar of successful Indian assumptions in the white world. But her essays describe a mature woman emerging from the other end of this process of Americanization and seeking an alternative to it. She knows that she cannot return fully to the people of her childhood, for they themselves have undergone a certain degree of Americanization in her absence, a process that, ironically, accentuates her sense of loss and alienation. Yet, in explaining why she became a pagan, an unbeliever, despite the religious indoctrination she received from the whites and the pressure from her own people to confirm to their recently adopted Christian faith, Zitkala-Sa presents herself as a symbol of native tradition in the face of change. In order to be true to her Native American heritage, she must resist the changes demanded by the Euro-American ideology of uniformity. She must insist on her right to re-form herself, in accordance with her intuitive spiritual promptings, and resist external societal directives. Her deliberately incomplete record of her lonely efforts to reclaim and re-form herself forecasts the challenge that will be faced by twentiethcentury Americans; that is all Americans who want to go against the accepted norms of identity as prescribed by white America. This will be in opposition to their country's demand for the so called "welladjusted individual." Having been taught the bitter lessons of Americanization (that autobiographers before her had to reckon with), Zitkala-Sa tries to suggest a path beyond the dead end of being made acceptable in America. Her story speaks eloquently to the first priority of an American autobiography, which is not just to show the making of an American but the making of oneself which is what America must mean. Never pretending to speak for herself, Zitkala-Sa's literary voice represents the voices of her tribal heritage, as well as her people's historical experiences with extinction and assimilation. Likewise, her autobiographical essays can be interpreted as new narratives of the ancient, trickster-transformer stories. In her use of the ironic voice, the writer herself plays the trickster, challenging her Eastern literary audiences' ideological foundations.

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RECLAIMING THE LOST HISTORY AND LOST VOICE: A STUDY OF LESLIE MARMON SILKO'S GARDENS IN THE DUNES

Ms. Reshmi S.

History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now. (Walter Benjamin)

Native American fiction has become a landmark in the literary history of United States. It works at the dual levels of popular recognition and aesthetic innovation while keeping alive the tradition and values of the community it represents. Native American authors like James Welch, N. Scott Momaday, and Leslie Marmon Silko search for a place beyond the western concepts of theory and literary canon. They have brought back to the tribes pride in their own culture by narrating their stories and re-establishing the racial and cultural identities.

Literature is the face of a culture and reflects its contemporary state. Tribal literature and tribal realities are closely connected and, therefore, Native American literature must be interpreted as part of the tribe's fight for sovereignty at both national and intellectual levels. This literature, although stereotypically considered to be the youngest one in the United States, is, as a matter of fact, the oldest on the continent. It has its own story to tell as it has developed under particular circumstances separate from that of any other minority literature present in North America. The influence of postmodernism in all spheres of life, including literature, is noteworthy. In the context of American Indian voices, it shifts attention to local narratives and re-evaluation of history. Postmodern theory claims to liberate the suppressed voices of Native Americans.

Captive narratives have influenced the Native American writers, and they challenge the colonial discourses. They oppose the fictitious accounts of the dominant European culture, and reveal its suppressed violent histories. *Gardens in the Dunes* is a postcolonial novel, as it deals with the effects of colonization of America by the Spanish and the British. Silko focuses on gardens in the nineteenth century, and explores its related religious, racial, and gender aspects using the framework of postcolonial studies. The young protagonist, Indigo, an Indian girl, spends half her life in the captivity of the whites. Although she is plagued with poverty and tragic loss, she tells the story of native person in a changing world.

The creative vision of Silko has been shaped by the land and the oral and written storytelling performances of her life at Laguna Pueblo. Laguna has always been one of the most adaptive Pueblo tribal communities in the Southwest, and many of the stories involving this tradition preserve the complex strategies of resistance and assimilation. Silko initially planned to focus her novel on two women: Indigo and Sister Salt and their gardens with absolutely no politics involved. Her belated recognition of the political nature of gardening underscores the relevance of domestic activities as a means for cultural preservation and strategies of resistance. Throughout *Gardens in the Dunes*, gardening reflects social values and the complex ways by which humans relate to and conceive the natural world. This is likely to have profound repercussions for oppressed people for, as Terre Ryan argues, "Silko's gardens demonstrate that imperialism begins in our own backyards" (115).

Gardening deals with the basic beliefs about the relationship between humans and the earth. For instance, Grandma Fleet honours indigenous values by recognizing the old gardens as a source of food, shelter, and identity, and she passes this respect to her grandchildren. By contrast, many of the white

characters in the novel adopt a more domineering and colonialist approach to the natural world. Edward develops a profitable orchid business, and Susan recreates her garden each year for her aesthetic pleasure.

Along with gardening, mothering serves as one other trope of Silko's novel, and acts as a critical corollary to the ways in which domestic activities encode political positions. By drawing explicit parallels between the act of gardening and that of mothering, the author suggests the politicized nature of caretaking, and indicates that treatment of earth reflects attitudes about maternity and female power. Both gardening and mothering involve creation, cultivation, and propagation of life. These acts unite Native American cultures' perception about the earth.

Through emphasis on cultivation and preservation, the forms of gardening and mothering practiced by the Sand Lizard people can be interpreted as critical modes of domestic resistance against both cultural and physical genocide. This approach is also connected to the process of storytelling, which Donelle N. Dreese terms as "mythical reterritorialization" (129). It is a form of postcolonial resistance by American Indian writers, involving the retelling and relocating of the mythical stories and histories in their own voices, in their own terms, and in their own places. The stories about gardening and mothering encode cultural identity and empower individuals to embrace the earth as a nurturing force rather than a resource to be exploited and abused for capitalistic profit and personal gain. Indigo draws upon the natural world as a signifier of cultural narratives. By implanting her own stories in the world around her, she succeeds in gardening the earth with new narratives that nurture her Sand Lizard heritage. In this way, the interrelated activities of gardening, mothering, and storytelling combine to achieve a powerful means of confrontation against oppression and cultural erasure.

Silko's depiction of Indigo's relationship with Mama and Grandma Fleet reflects the importance of maternal figures in Laguna Pueblo life. Women are at the centre of this matrilineal culture, which strongly values the role mothers play in passing down cultural knowledge to future generations. In Laguna Pueblo tradition, mother's identity is the key to one's own identity. Mama and Grandma Fleet demonstrate the primary role of women as guardians of collective and personal identity. In this matrilineal culture, as the novel claims, "Sand Lizard mothers gave birth to Sand Lizard babies no matter which man they lay with; the Sand Lizard mother's body changed everything to Sand Lizard inside her" (204). The ability of the female body to create children that are entirely Sand Lizard illustrates the power of mothers to both determine and preserve cultural identity.

The literature of Afro-American novelists also emphasizes the role of the mother as the major force behind the daughters and enables them to define them, assert identity and not to be consumed by man. The significance of mythical and surrogate mothers heavily inhabit Silko's text. Although Indigo is orphaned she has many maternal figures such as Grandma Fleet, Sister Salt and Hattie. The earth also functions as a maternal figure by connecting her to cultural identity. The fictional Sand Lizard people regard story as a principal means of education and as a fundamental component of child rearing. Indigo and Sister Salt possess strong knowledge of their culture's stories but Hattie lacks the self-definition and community orientation provided by meaningful social narratives. The difference between Indigo and Hattie may also be understood by how they interact with the most fundamental maternal figure in the text, namely, earth. While Indigo experiences the earth as a series of coded stories that validate her Sand Lizard heritage, Hattie yearns for a connection and only finds meaningful attachment in her exile from the United States.

The stories promise a better life for the young girls with a sense of belonging and powerful healing effect. Grandma Fleet's stories illustrate the importance of respecting nature and establishing mutually beneficial relationships with the environment. She tells them of people who made the mistake of killing the snakes of the desert springs, causing the water to disappear. Many of her stories are intimately connected to the land, describing the cycles of nature and the return of deceased Sand Lizard people. These tales present the world as an integrated universe where the presence of humans is inextricable from the processes of nature. As a result, Indigo learns to recognize rain as a manifestation of her ancestors, and she understands that the old gardens are a place of sanctuary.

Despite the power of story to maintain cultural memory and unity, the way of life of the Sand Lizard people is severely endangered by the threat posed by whites to Native American children. In addition to enduring extreme poverty and abuse, Grandma Fleet and Mama are constantly in danger of having Sister Salt and Indigo taken away from them. As a site of assimilation and the destruction of Sand Lizard culture, the Sherman Institute is strongly associated with death and silence. Indigo escapes from the school because of the strong identification with her culture. She recalls: "Sand Lizard people were not afraid of capture because they were so quick. Grandma Fleet taught the girls to wait and watch for the right moment to run" (71).

The abduction of Indian children devastates familial relationships, causing intense personal trauma and threatens cultural continuity. Without children to carry on the traditions and values of the ancestors, and without mothers to provide the future generation with a sense of identity and belonging, the Sand Lizard people are in danger of extinction. From this vantage point, mothering not only fulfils deep emotional needs for intimacy and love but also functions as a political act that ensures the survival of the people. Indigo's escape enacts a pre-existing cultural narrative for she is part of a larger historical legacy of survival and resistance. The natural world also gives her the courage to continue by providing vivid reminders of her family. In her solitude, she reflects, "Somewhere Sister Salt and Mama looked up at the same sky. She was not so far away from home: some of the same birds lived here" (73).

Separated from her native home, Indigo depends on the natural world to connect with her past and cultural history. As a traveller, she comes to appreciate aspects of nature and understands that these can be transplanted across geographic spaces. Although Indigo is the ostensible orphan in *Gardens in the Dunes*, Hattie exhibits the uncertainty and disorientation of an abandoned child. Unlike Indigo, she lacks a mother who nurtures her with stories and teaches her to value the natural world. Without narratives that reflect her identity, Hattie becomes alienated from other people and the earth. She functions like an empty vessel to be filled with the beliefs and ambitions of others. Silko writes: "It was the Indian girl who stirred Hattie's maternal instincts and caused her to change her mind; now she wanted to conceive a child; that was quite clear" (294).

However, despite the emergence of Hattie's maternal sensibility she remains constrained by dominant patriarchy and is unable to confront its oppressive hold. She becomes an inadequate mother who fails to challenge injustice in a constructive way. When confronted with conflict, Hattie responds with silence and hesitation. Hattie fails as a surrogate mother for Indigo but she emerges as a strong maternal figure.

Indigo's nurturing qualities are first evidenced in the old gardens where she narrates stories to birds and animals just as Grandma Fleet and Mama comforted her with tales of the old gardens and ancestors. Hattie's attempt to mimic Indigo's behaviour reflects her own loss and confusion. Without Indigo's presence

to focus and guide her actions, Hattie simply does not know how to act, and therefore she resorts to imitating Indigo. Hattie's decision to move away from her parental home represents a nominal departure from her stifling upbringing. Following the assault, Indigo and Sister Salt care for Hattie, enacting a complete inversion of mother and child roles; Hattie becomes the daughter who is dependent on the younger women for food, shelter, and a sense of self. Just as Hattie's attacker will never be found, the people who perpetuate violence against the Sand Lizard people and other indigenous groups will never be indicted.

Silko portrays Edward as a scholar and collector, who travels around the world in search of natural specimens of various sorts. From the jungles of South America, he illegally gathers rare orchids, which lavishly decorated the riverbanks and his obsession with the flower results in its extinction. Having chosen the role of traveller and discoverer he imposes dominance and ownership of native lands and people. His hunting of specimens resembles Arizonan's hunting of the native people and both results in extinction of their objects. This link becomes clearer in Edward's encounter with Indigo. He continues to search for ethnological reports on the desert Indians and intrigues with the notion that Indigo may be the last remnant of a tribe, left untouched by the anthropologists. He views Indigo as one of his rare specimens.

The stark contrast between Hattie's and Indigo's responses to oppression provides key insight into the nature of meaningful resistance. Hattie boldly destroys Needles, but she does nothing to change the patriarchy and systemic sexism that has caused much unhappiness to her. Her failure is best demonstrated by her departure to England; she cannot constructively confront oppression in the United States. Although she finds comfort and stability among the stones of the old gardens, there is no suggestion that Hattie will ever experience motherhood or interact with a substantial community of her own. By contrast, Indigo thrives in the old gardens, accompanied by Sister Salt and the little grandfather. She successfully grows Laura's gladiolus plants and discovers that they are edible as well as beautiful. Thus, she not only transplants the flowers into her native ground but also finds a new, beneficial value for them.

However, Indigo continues the tradition of storytelling by relating tales of her travels through Europe to Sister Salt. These stories demonstrate Indigo's comfort with new narratives and experiences that enhance and expand Sand Lizard culture, much like the transplanted gladiolas. Her flourishing life in the old gardens demonstrates the critical necessity of forms of resistance based in domestic activities. Hattie's violent conflagration does little to combat forms of oppression, whereas Indigo's quiet perseverance and commitment to the basic necessities of life prove to be the most resistant actions of all.

Like *Ceremony*, Silko continues to explore the motif of departure and return in *Gardens in the Dunes*. After surviving encounter through the complicated process of resistance and assimilation, Indigo returns carrying new life for the people: in the form of her story; in the form of newly born child to Salt; in the form of new alliance between the sisters of the Sand Lizard people and the Laguna sisters Vedana and Mayatha; and in the form of new seeds. All these new forms become by the end of the novel a part of the long story of the people.

Ultimately, using the genre of fiction and the language of the colonizer Leslie Marmon Silko acts as the preserver of aboriginal tradition. She has successfully served the ideological objective: to rewrite the history, the contaminated white history. Further she tries to overcome the injustices of the past, diffuse the damage done and salvage the pride of Native American culture.

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EDUCATION AS STRENGTH AND SOLACE: AN ANALYSIS OF MAYA ANGELOU'S *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS*

Ms. Resmi R.

African-American literature is the literature written by, about, and specifically for African-Americans. Among the themes and issues explored in African-American literature are the role of African-Americans within the larger American society, African-American culture, racism, slavery, and equality. Maya Angelou, born Marguerite Annie Johnson, was an African American author, poet, dancer, actress, and singer. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, and several books of poetry, and was credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over fifty years. Her autobiographies are: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* (1986), *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002) and *Mom & Me & Mom* (2013). Angelou's use of fiction writing techniques such as dialogue, characterization, and development of theme, setting, plot, and language has often resulted in the placement of her books into the genre of autobiography by critiquing, changing, and expanding the genre. Academician Mary Jane Lupton argues that all of Angelou's autobiographies conform to the genre's standard structure: "They are written by a single author, they are chronological, and they contain elements of character, technique, and theme" (32).

Hailed as one of the greatest voices of contemporary African-American literature, Angelou is best known for *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the first of seven volumes of autobiography, which covers the years from the early 1930s to the 1970s. The novel chronicles Angelou's life up to the age of sixteen, providing a child's perspective on the perplexing and repressive adult world. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* has generated considerable critical and popular interest. The main reason for this is the depiction of Angelou's triumph over formidable social obstacles and her struggle to achieve a sense of identity and self-acceptance. The novel can be viewed as a *bildungsroman* narrative. It is the story of a young girl's personal growth, development and enrichment. Angelou's rebellious spirit and zest for a challenge are revealed in an interview where she explained that, at first, she turned down the opportunity to write her autobiography, but was unable to resist when she was told that "to write an autobiography as literature is the most difficult thing anyone could do" (Tate 6).

Angelou tells her life story from the age of three, when her divorced parents sent her and her brother Bailey to live with their paternal grandmother Anne Henderson, fondly called as Momma, and crippled uncle Willie in Stamps, Arkansas. The book goes on to record the events of her life till her sixteenth year, when she is reunited with her mother in San Francisco. Eventually, she gives birth to her son. Thus, her story begins with a semi-orphanhood and ends with motherhood. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and love for literature can help a person overcome the struggles of racism and trauma of rape. The younger version of Angelou, and the novel's protagonist, Marguerite alias Maya symbolises every Black girl growing up in America. The novel focuses on the correlation that exists between language, speech and identity. Angelou's description of her "salvation" through learning is both compelling and moving. She has clearly presented the might of education and literacy in her first autobiographical fiction, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970). It can very well be considered as homage to the power of words.

Angelou has described William Shakespeare as a strong influence on her life and works, especially his identification with the marginalised people. Lupton compares Angelou's informal education with the education of other Black writers of the twentieth century who did not earn official degrees and depended upon the "direct instruction of African American cultural forms" (Lupton 16). Fairy tales have always been a fascination for Maya. The prologue to the novel presents a young Maya standing in front of the Black Episcopal Church in a confused state where she is unable to finish the lines from the poem. The unfinished lines, "What you looking for? I didn't come to stay . . ." (1), actually capture two of the most significant issues of her childhood and young adulthood, that is feeling ugly and awkward and the lack of attachment to one place. May a imagines that though people judge her by her dark looks, they will be surprised one day when her true self emerges. At that time, she hopes that she will emerge as if in a fairy-tale as a beautiful, blonde white girl. She says that growing up as a black girl in the South was worse than putting a razor to one's throat. When the black girl feels alienated from her own black community, her sense of displacement is "an unnecessary insult" (4). Geographic movement and temporary residence become formative aspects of Maya's growing identity. Shuttled between temporary homes and transient allegiances, Maya necessarily developed a stoic flexibility that becomes not only her "shield," but more importantly, her characteristic means of dealing with the world. If there was one stable element in Maya's youth, it was her dependence on books.

Reading is an ongoing theme through out Maya's childhood. During her years in Stamps, she becomes greatly involved in the habit of reading various world famous authors. She says that though she enjoyed and respected Poe, Kipling, Butler, Thackeray and Henley, she saved her young and loyal passion for Dunbar, Hughes, and James Weldon Jhonson etc. Angelou's quest for learning and literacy parallels "the central myth of black culture in America" (82), as Hagen points out in his *Heart of a Woman, Mind of a Writer*, and *Soul of a Poet: A Critical Analysis of the Writings of Maya Angelou* that freedom and literacy are connected. Shakespeare, whose "Sonnet 29" speaks to Maya's own social and emotional alienation, becomes her "first white love" (13). Later, she and her brother Bailey even plan to memorize a scene from *Merchant of Venice*. But they eventually drop the plan as they both realize that Anne Henderson, their momma, would question about Shakespeare's white identity and instead, they choose "The Creation" by James Weldon Jhonson.

Books and library become an ardent solace for Maya, especially after the traumatic rape. She is brutally raped by her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. The public library becomes a quiet refuge from the chaos of her personal life. "I took out my first library card in St. Louis" (64), she notes. And it is the public library she attempts to reach after her rape. Later, when running away from her father, she hides in a library. Indeed, whenever her life is in crisis, Maya characteristically escapes into the world of books. As artefacts creating complete and meaningful universes, novels and their heroes become the means by which Maya apprehends and judges her bewildering world. Thus, Louise, her first girlfriend, reminds Maya of Jane Eyre. Maya finds novels and their characters complete and meaningful, so she uses them to make sense of her bewildering world. She is so consummately involved in her fantasy world of books that even while being raped, she "was sure that any minute my mother or Bailey or the Green Hornet would bust in the door and save me" (78). Power of words is a central theme to African–American autobiography. Maya fears that her lie at Mr. Freeman's trial caused his death. Maya chooses to be silent because she fears the potential and fatal power of words; but throughout the second half of the book, she acknowledges that imagination can harness the power of words to great ends.

Mrs. Bertha Flowers, whom Maya calls "the aristocrat of Stamps" (93), is the one who introduces her to the magical world of books. Maya's rediscovery of voice after the rape is facilitated by Mrs. Flowers, who introduces her to the classic literature and poetry. She is appealing to Maya because she was like the: ". . . women in English novels who walked the moors . . . with their loyal dogs racing at a respectful distance" (95).Curiously, it is this imaginative association with the colonial world that makes Mrs. Flowers the one who makes Maya "proud to be Negro, just be being herself" (95). She plans to keep Maya under her wings like a mother bird and prod her out of her silence. She invites Maya to her house and gives her some books and tells her to read them aloud. Later, Maya is delighted to find that Mrs. Flowers has made cookies especially for her. Maya slowly regains her lost voice under Mrs. Flowers' love, care and affection. She begins to feel secure. By helping Maya gain self-confidence, Mrs. Flowers contributes to the young girl's affirmation of her identity. Maya says, "I was liked, and what a difference it made. I was respected . . . for just being Marguerite Johnson She had made tea cookies for *me* and read to *me* from her favorite book" (101). It is Mrs. Flowers who lays the ground work for Maya to learn the positive power of words."[B]ear in mind," Mrs. Flowers tells Maya, "language is man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone that separates him from the lower animals. .

. . Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with the shades of deeper meaning" (98). Mrs. Flowers' speech and her reading from Dickens make Maya appreciate poetry.

Maya is influenced by writers introduced to her by Mrs. Flowers, which include Edgar Allan Poe and William Shakespeare. There seems to be a connection between Maya's rape and Shakespeare's "The Rape of Lucrece," which Maya memorises and recites when she regains her speech. Maya finds comfort in the poem's portrayal of suffering. In the course of the narrative, Maya keeps constantly quoting and referring to the books that she had studied during her childhood. Angelou was powerfully affected by slave narratives, spirituals, poetry, and other autobiographies. She read through *The Bible* twice as a young child, and memorised many passages from it. African-American spirituality, as represented by Angelou's grandmother, has influenced all of Angelou's writings. She was also influenced by the activities of the church community and the sermons and the scriptures. The portrayal of the character of Maya as influenced by spiritual works, narratives of slaves and poetry denotes the significance of literacy for the Blacks. Critic Lyman B. Hagen says that African-American as a "community of song, laughter and courage" (52) has helped them to thrive amidst racial segregation and oppression. The inference from this is that most characters in the narrative relied on various forms of literature not only as a source of entertainment, but also as a source of empowerment.

Maya takes up education as strength and solace to come up in life. It is literacy and words that give her the confidence to create her identity. Maya notes that the black families in Stamps consider the eighthgrade graduation a great event: "Some adults were excited too, but to be certain the whole young population had come down with graduation epidemic" (169). A big realisation happens again in Maya's life when she attends the graduation ceremony in her school. The white speaker, Mr. Edward Donleavy, gives a speech about the improvements in the local schools. His speech becomes a slap on the black community's face. Maya feels that he has blemished the joy of the graduation day by insinuating that black children only achieved greatness through sports, not through academics. The black community's excitement over the graduation comes from the fact that they have had to fight very hard to receive even a modicum of education. Black activists of earlier generations had fought to build schools for black children. Before emancipation, educational opportunities for African-Americans were rare, especially in the South. After emancipation, black Americans faced hostility from their former masters and were kept away from education. In Stamps, the graduating eighth-grade and high-school classes surmount the pressures of poverty and racism to earn their diplomas. Maya realizes the power of words for the second time, at the end of the graduation scene. Having been insulted by Mr. Donleavy, the black audience lifts its morale with the inspiration of Henry Reed, the black speaker, by singing James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" (182), a song known popularly as the Negro National Anthem. Maya listens to the words for the first time, and takes pride in her black community.

Later, when Maya moves to San Francisco, where she attends a non-segregated school. Her education becomes more varied with the addition of drama and dance to her studies. San Francisco represents an entirely different world. She slowly starts to develop a kind of love and respect for herself. She becomes the first black street-car conductor. *The Well of Loneliness*, a classic work of 1920s' lesbian fiction by Radclyffe Hall, becomes Maya's first introduction to lesbianism in her journey to adulthood. She experiences an important intellectual growth when she spends her life in a junkyard, at a particular point of time in her life. Against all odds, she completes graduation. This shows her will power and the strength of education.

Maya, who is Angelou herself, takes up education as a weapon and comfort to fight against the double oppression she had to face, as a woman and as a black. Education ends her quest for identity; it fills her life with immense confidence, self-respect and the will to face the world as it is. Power of words is realised by her at various junctures of her life. Books and library act as a sort of solace and refuge which help her to regain her voice. The very strength instilled by education makes her stronger than ever and results in the emergence of a Maya who eventually makes her voice heard.

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FLIGHT BEHAVIOR AS CLI-FI: A CONCOURSE FOR GREEN HUMANITIES AND SCI-FI

Ms. Rosmi Lukose and Ms. Neethu Tessa Baby

"Where are the novels, the plays, the poems, the songs, the libretti, of this massive contemporary anxiety?" asked Robert Macfarlane in his 2005 *Guardian* article, highlighting the dearth of creative, cultural response to climate change. The question still resonates in the present climate change discourses as we are in need of an imaginative repertoire by which the causes and consequences of climate change can be sensed, debated, and communicated. Bill McKibben, author of the premonitory classic, *The End of Nature* (1989), has written of how individuals would not act against climate change, altering their habits of consumption, and lobbying policy-makers, until they felt "fear in their guts." Literature has a role to play in inducing this gut feeling, for one of its special abilities is that of allowing us to entertain hypothetical situations – alternative lives, futures, or landscapes, as though they were real. It has a unique capacity to help us connect present action with future consequence.

Climate fiction, abbreviated as cli-fi, engages with the issues of climate change. Many critics consider cli-fi as a new genre, as a response to anthropogenic climate change. Cli-fi locates the issues of climate change in contemporary culture and literature. It is worthwhile to review the prevailing attitudes and beliefs towards climate change. Most of us are accustomed to thinking about climate change as future sea level rise, melting glaciers, and extreme weather. However, more and more people have started realizing that climate change has real and pertinent effects on ourselves, our families, and our communities in the present day. Within the span of a few years, people have begun to shift from seeing climate change as an abstract possibility to seeing it as the present reality. Some of us are already experiencing the effects of climate change–unusual changes in weather patterns, erratic seasons, and a greater occurrence of menacing hurricanes–but yet do not understand how they fit into the stories of our own lives.

The question, then, is how can the intangible and invisible climate change be addressed, which may not affect our lives immediately, but may do so in the near future. Often, science and scientific data put people off and fail to reach the masses. Climatologists, so far, have not succeeded in illustrating this problem in a manner that could be easily grasped by the general population and translated into everyday life. This widening knowledge gap between everyday preoccupations of life and the abstract future of a climatically changed world emphasizes the role of literary narratives and films in reaching out to people.

Contemporary fiction portrays the rebirth of environmental disaster literature, cautionary tales, and speculative fiction/"what-if" scenarios born of the apprehensions and concerns of the increasingly alarming news regarding global warming, and its climatic impacts. Climate Fiction, or Cli-fi, as coined by Dan Bloom (2007), deals with such climate change themes from a variety of perspectives, either creating future scenarios of an entirely transformed Earth, or dramatizing present day situations in an exhilarating way as a warning. The term simply describes all works of fiction in which a changing (or radically changed) climate serves as a central plot point.

Cli- fi emerged as a response to the anthropogenic climate change that may bring our world and biosphere as we know it into total annihilation. Scientists publish their alarming findings, activists come up with their ideas and innovations, and writers device new fictional forms and subgenres to represent/ confront such pertinent issues. Gregory Norminton, in his introduction to an anthology on the subject, *Beacons: Stories for Our Not-So-Distant Future* (2013), states, "Global warming is a predicament,

not a story. Narrative only comes in our response to that predicament." Dan Bloom claims that he is trying to wake up a sleeping world and to the fact that climate change is real and poses a grave threat to the existence of the human species. Bloom argues that fiction is uniquely positioned to help change ingrained attitudes about disturbing climate issues, because it works on an emotional level.

Such a discursive dimension of climate change has been acknowledged in the cultural sphere, and has inspired a variety of works ranging from film to photography and literature. Literary works tend to elaborate on those effects of climate change that are difficult to quantify and project stories about how the individuals' lives are challenged and changed when their environments are transformed. As Johns-Putra has pointed out, "the dramatic and emotional contours of climate change have to do with the future, not the past or present, for, although climate change maybe happening now, it is what this changing climate will result in its predicted impacts that are of concern" (749). She alludes to science fiction and explains that ecocritics, who want to engage in climate change, might find original and interesting approaches in fiction.

Science fiction specializes in constructions of other-worlds, or what Darko Suvin has called "novums," and such worlds are often depicted as being caused by or subjected to extreme environmental change. He defines science fiction as "a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (1.3-5). According to Johns-Putra and Trexler, genre fiction tends to engage in divergent climate change issues, and are able to explore the complex scientific, political, and cultural aspects of climate change.

The increasing awareness on issues like biochemical pollution, acid rain, ozone depletion, and greenhouse effect in the last three decades of the twentieth century has paved the way for the development of environmental narratives either as dystopias or as utopias. Climate change started gaining prominence as a complex cultural phenomenon either directly or indirectly employing science fiction techniques. Many novels move beyond the realm of climate change as a setting and explore the relationship between climate change and humanity in social and psychological terms as something filtered through our inner and outer lives. Thus, climate change narratives call for authorial innovation, demanding plotlines and characterisations that participate in the global, networked, and controversial nature of climate change.

The first novel to engage in what we now call climate change is Arthur Herzog's *Heat* (1977), a plausibly imagined future history dominated by global warming. Other milestone novels are Gearge Turner's *The Sea and Summer* (1987), which focused on far and near futures besieged by rising sea levels, and the fantasy, *The Elementals* (1993), by Morgan Llywelyn and Norman Spinrad's *Greenhouse Summer* (1999). The growing "green" concerns of the past four decades have had a discernible influence on literature beyond science fiction.

Cli-fi narratives weave together various traditional literary genres, from nature writing, to utopian and science fictions. These genres continue to examine the relationships between/about nature and humankind, as well as reflect unique contemporary concerns not only about our global future, but also about the role that writers and artists, as opposed to scientists and policy-makers, play in response to dire ecological challenges. As a broad category, one could list under cli-fi, the narratives that deal with such climate change themes from a variety of perspectives, either creating future scenarios of an entirely transformed Earth, or dramatizing present day situations in an incredible way to serve as a warning.

Maggie Gee's *The Ice People*, Nathaniel Rich's *Odds against Tomorrow*, Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior*, Saci Lloyd's *Carbon Diaries 2015*, and Margaret Atwood's *Mara and Dann* are some examples. Finely constructed, intricate narratives help us broaden our understanding, and explore imagined futures, encouraging us to think about the kind of world we want to live in.

There are critics such as Robert Macfarlane, who insist that cli-fi should not be apocalyptic, because such a scenario would not prove true to the current science. However this would make cli-fi's status as a subgenre of science fiction problematic. Macfarlane argues that cli-fi needs to employ a literary style which is attentive to change, which practises a vigilance of attention, and a precision of utterance. In this sense, Cli-fi's power to inspire change lies in its immediacy; often, these books do not take place in the hard-to-imagine distant future, but rather in the immediate future. Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* (2012) fulfils many of these aspects.

According to Kingsolver, Cli-fi has the potential to initiate conversations about personal and community responses to climate change. The assumption is that emotional cli-fi narratives will move people to action far more effectively than a string of scientific data projections. Academician Judith Curry claims that fiction is an untapped way of doing this; a way of smuggling some serious topics into the consciousness of readers who may not be following the science.

As Kingsolver explains, the novel *Flight Behavior* is, at its core, about climate change. The novel is an exploration of climate change, along with media exploitation and political opportunism that lie at the root of what may be our most urgent modern dilemma. Set in Appalachia, the narrative traces the unforeseen impact of global concerns on the ordinary citizens of a rural community. As environmental, economic, and political issues converge, the residents of Feathertown, Tennesse, are forced to come to terms with their changing place in the larger world.

Climate change is the leitmotif of the novel. It is the driving force behind all that happens, and it is heralded by the flaming forest Dellarobia rushes through. Dellarobia Turnbow, the central character who sets things in motion, is ready for a change of any kind. A mother of two young children, trapped in claustrophobic rural poverty, Dellarobia had long ago repressed all her ambitions. Her husband, Cub, whom she married as a pregnant teenager, is a kind but passive man, who cedes all decisions to his domineering parents. Though Dellarobia submits to the mind-numbing duties of her life. The whole of her marriage has been bedeviled by fantasies of illicit affairs.

Set in rural Appalachia, in the fictional Feathertown, Tennessee, the novel opens with Dellarobia Turnbow, on the run from her stifling life – charging up the mountain above her husband's family farm. On finding her way up the hill, she finds that the landscape is not quite right, for "something dark loomed from a branch over the trail" (18). She casts around for alternatives to describe it–a hornet's nest, a swarm of bees, or an armadillo in a tree, "scaly all over and pointed at the lower end, as if it had gone oozy and might drip," and sees that they are all over the hills, "dangling like giant bunches of grapes from every tree she could see" (17). When she darts beneath it, she "shivered and ran her fingers through her hair afterward," but when she sees the valley below her, she finds "the full stand of that forest was thickly loaded with these bristly things," with branches that "seemed to writhe" (18). Then the sun comes out and "trees turned to fire, a burning bush," while "brightness of a new intensity moved up the valley in a rippling wave, like the disturbed surface of a lake. Every bough glowed with an orange blaze" (19). Dellarobia finds herself at a loss for words. Initially, she conceives of the hill of flame in religious terms, but finds this does

not adequately explain "a mighty blaze rising from ordinary forest, she had no name for that. No words to put on a tablet as Moses had when he marched down his mountain" (35). Later, the reader finds out that these are clumps on Monarch butterflies on their migration, which has been disrupted by a warming world, and they have settled in the wrong place. These opening descriptions seem to be a metaphor for what is happening around: one knows that something is not quite right, and one has had 352 consecutive months of above global average temperatures, but still does not have the language or ability to conceive of the enormity of what is happening.

However, when the spectacular and freakish eruption of nature summons Dr. Ovid Byron, who arrives at the farm intent on investigation and, later, when scientists set up camp in her backyard, Dellaboria begins to learn about the changing climate, and realises that it is science, not religion, that holds answers. By explaining the science to her, a layperson, Kingsolver, also explains it to her readers.

Dellarobia and her son, Preston, are enthralled by the exotic entomologist and his work. But others in the community, including farmers who have lost crops to the weather's extremes, are less receptive to his talk of global climate change and its repercussions for natural systems and human affairs. Everyone in the neighbourhood and beyond, from religious fundamentalists to environmentalists, and the rating-conscious media, brings a point of view and a penchant for shaping the evidence to suit an agenda. The ordeal quickly grows beyond the boundaries of family, community, and nation, carving its lasting effects on Dellarobia, forcing her to examine everything she has ever trusted as truth.

The region's almost biblical rainstorms have the local people invoking Noah. Rivers overflow their banks, trees are uprooted, and slabs of mud slide down mountains. Then comes the miraculous arrival of a colony of migrating monarch butterflies; its flight plan evolved over centuries. They are thrown off by the chaotic weather patterns of a warming Earth. Kingsolver embeds Dellarobia in a small town that is conservative, evangelical, emotionally stifling, in the midst of a near apocalyptic rainy season. In fact, all the seasons are askew; winter is too warm and freak cold snaps appear when they should not.

The God-fearing, moral-majority community of Feathertown cannot avoid being affected by the disrupted seasons, and refers to the current endless rainfall as "water torture" (113). But their thought-patterns are entrenched: while weather is God's department, climate change is something people "knew to be wary of" (221). Slowly, along with her serious five-year-old son, Preston, Dellarobia learns that the unexpected and aberrant arrival of the butterflies is a signpost on the road to environmental hell. Its presence is an epiphenomenon of climate change. "How could this be true, she thought, if no one was talking about it? Important people made such a big deal over infinitely smaller losses," she asks. When she asks Ovid, "Is there some part of this I can actually see?" his reply devastates her: "Your children's adulthood?" That nearly floored her of course …. How dare he belt her with that one?" (387).

Through interactions between Dellarobia and the lead scientist, Ovid Byron, Kingsolver also presents the role of the media in communicating science. Dellarobia asks Byron why the media will not speak to him, when he can clearly articulate that evidence shows "a continental ecosystem [is] breaking down" (354). A fellow scientist explains that the media would prefer to speak to Dellarobia, because she does not know anything, and a scientist would "mess with their story" (354). In a beautiful display of the workings of contemporary media, however, Byron loses his rag with a reporter who doubts the science of climate change. Their altercation is filmed on a camera phone by Dellarobia's friend, who uploads it on YouTube, and it goes viral.

It is Kingsolver who intertwines the larger story of what is happening to the world with the life of Dellarobia and her fellow townspeople. The arrival of the butterflies is of enormous consequence to Dellarobia's town. Some want to exploit it for sightseeing, while some want to sell the woods to pay off a looming debt. As the media exploit their unsophisticated subjects, Dellarobia notices that "nobody was asking why the butterflies were here; the big news was just that they were" (354). And she begins to wonder why everyone is talking right past one another, hearing only what they want to hear.

Increasingly, the reader realizes that it is not just scientists, but ordinary people, who can educate themselves on climate change. When Dellarobia presents him with a scheme to save the butterflies by shipping them to a warmer place, Ovid recoils. "That is a concern of conscience," he tells her. "Not of biology. Science doesn't tell us what we should do. It only tells us what *is*. "But Ovid is not always so clinically detached. He wonders, as he explains to Dellarobia about diminishing coral reefs and dying insects, "What was the use of saving a world that has no soul left in it" (367). Kingsolver makes it obvious that Dellarobia is also a kind of ecologist, concerned with the way she and the other members of her community adjust or do not adjust to their unusual circumstance.

Kingsolver addresses the concerns of climate change with a woman's eye or, more specifically, a mother's, when she writes. Dellarobia felt an entirely new form of panic as she watched her son love nature so expectantly, wondering if he might be racing toward a future like some complicated sand castle that was crumbling under the tide. She didn't know how scientists bore such knowledge.

The precarious paradise of the mountainside, Dellarobia realizes, will be lost to her son and daughter. But there is no Tree of Knowledge involved. On the contrary, temptation is the comfort of ignorance. This comes in the form of the omnipresent feel good news story, borne by a door-stepping TV journalist hell-bent on presenting the monarchs as a "miracle," rather than a symptom of environmental imbalance. When Ovid Byron loses his scientific cool on camera, and the encounter goes triumphantly viral, Kingsolver's evocation of TV's contempt for its audiences also includes the observation that scientists are too hamstrung by their own objectivity to transmit their message effectively. As Ovid comments with bitterness: "As long as we won't commit to knowing everything, the presumption is we know nothing" (345).

Dellarobia's journey from caterpillar to butterfly reaches a painful culmination in her clear-eyed refusal to lie to Preston about what the future holds for him, both in a collapsing family unit and in the wider world. The narrative says, "Her powerful inclination was to make up a better-days-ahead story. Nobody ever thought kids wanted the truth. And right on from there it went: the never-ending story" (384).

Towards the close of the novel, Dellarobia finds a lamb in the snow, born unseasonably early. The only way to revive it is to swing it around by the hind legs, to kick-start the lungs, and decongest the airways. With Cub's help, she saves its life. But the manoeuvre is traumatic for them both. Only a shocking, harrowing solution–a paradigm shift of radical proportions–will offer any future to the newborn, the novel seems to say.

Kingsolver's masterly evocation of an age stumbling wilfully blind towards the abyss is an elegy not just for the endangered monarch butterfly, but for the ambitious, flawed species that conjured the mass extinction of which its loss is a part. Kingsolver evokes the claustrophobic world of rural Tennessee with equal grace and tolerance. It is a world Dellarobia begins to escape when she goes to work as a lab

assistant for Ovid. The interaction between her and the more urban graduate students working with Ovid is as entertaining as it is evocative of how different their worlds are. At one point, Dellarobia resorts to telling one of the students, who is amazed that she owns a sewing machine and is capable of actually using it, that it's not "… like an atom smasher or anything" (256).

Kingsolver allows Dellarobia to transcend the limits of her environment. The author has indeed created an effective climate change novel in *Flight Behaviour* by using the character of a poor, smart, but uneducated woman named Dellarobia in rural America to convey information about its ramifications.

The sci-fi approaches climate change by resorting to narratives of dystopic futures. In contrast to sci-fi which puts imaginative attention on a post-collapse world, cli-fi such as Flight *Behavior* represents the enduring problems of a family or community living out the consequences of neo-liberalism and a globalised industrial culture. Kingsolver immerses us in the tragedy as it unfolds in real-time. *Flight Behavior* offers a sort of double duty as a work of a novelist as a public intellectual and as a narrative that forces us to consider the role of scholars and academics as they interact with the public about large social issues.

Flight Behavior personifies the often reductionist and misleading climate change debate that occurs in the U.S. over the radio and among talking heads on TV. Ironically, in Kingsolver's imagined world, she captures the all-too-real world of climate change as it intersects with the lives and jobs of typical people, people bound to the land, people bound to their faith, people bound to pasts they regret, but cannot change or escape.

The novel presents a convergence of the scientific and the lay, when Kingsolver invites the reader to witness the intersections of scholars with people without much formal learning, of different races and cultures, of believers and non-believers, of privilege and poverty. It clearly serves as a concourse for science and everyday living. *Flight Behavior* provides innovative narrative means to engage with the spatial dimension of climate change, and illustrate how global warming challenges attachments to place and question forms of belonging and inhabitation. Climate change fiction thus gives insight into the ethical and socio political ramifications of this unparalleled environmental crisis, comments on constellations that impede action on climate change, and explores how risk materializes and affects society. It thus serves as a cultural political attempt and literary innovation to scientific ways of communicating climate change.

Embodying a deep ecological vision, Barbara Kingsolver has addressed the perils of global climate change by conceptualizing and crafting *Flight Behavior* as a Cli-fi narrative. In her interview with Bryan Walsh for Time Magazine, Barbara Kingsolver observes that "the only responsibility artists have is to understand the power of our craft and use it carefully. It's something like owning firearms. Pay attention to where it's aimed. Make sure you're using it carefully and well. Fiction has enormous power ... So I try to use that power as well as I can" (74). That Kingsolver's cli-fi narrative stems from her personal experiences of climate change makes it all the more significant. Thus it becomes a confluence of literary genius, environmental awareness and responsible citizenship. Everyday living and science meet, merge, and evolve in *Flight Behavior*, thus reaffirming that the challenges of a globalized world call for a renewed vision in several domains–scientific, ecological, and cultural. *Flight Behavior* succeeds in locating climate change in literature and culture. It fulfils Kingsolver's stated purpose of creatively mediating between scientists and non scientists, the rural and the urban, the progressive and conservative. As a forerunner in the emerging genre of climate fiction, it serves as a concourse for science and green humanities.

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WRITING (FOR) SURVIVAL: NATIVE WOMEN RECONSTRUCTING THEORY

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Theory has become an integral part of human thought. The twentieth century has seen the birth of so many "-isms" that it may, perhaps, be rightly called as the Golden Age of Literary Theory. Today, we have a plethora of theories from Modernism and Post-Modernism to Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, together with the complexity created by the plurality of differing voices (at times complementary and at other times contradictory) from "within" one theoretical school like Feminism. Since theory is not homogeneous and is contingent on context, then there comes about a niggling suspicion that theory can only purport to discuss part problems, and hence provide only partial solutions. There can be no Universal Theory.

Theory has always been the exclusive privilege of a few, and those who have not been included, have vociferously demanded the right to articulate their own lives. There are writers who belong to the Third and Fourth Worlds who refuse to be defined by existing theoretical paradigms created solely by Euro-Americans. These writers are perfectly capable of self-definition and are appropriating the "authority" to theorize in a completely different way. The paper intends to discuss the different ways in which indigenous women of the Fourth World have re-constructed existing feminist theory to articulate their lives.

Until very recently, mainstream feminism had largely been dominated by thoughts from 'white' European and American feminist schools. This has received severe backlash from Third World women especially Afro-American, Latin American, Middle East, and Asian feminists who claim a different set of paradigms to theorize their 'different' experiences. So Feminism cannot claim to have brought all women under one common umbrella of Universal Sisterhood. There can only be Feminisms, a multi-faceted, polyvocal theoretical endeavour, which has garnered a movement against a hegemonic patriarchal society from women belonging to every class and creed. Feminism from 1990s has further expanded, owing to the contributions of indigenous women of the Fourth World whose lives have not informed feminist theory, method, or policy concerns, and whose presence white feminists continue to ignore. This raises certain ontological questions like what does it mean to theorize, what does theory purport to do, what are the tools used to theorize, and who has the authority to do so.

Indigenous women theorize their lives not from abstract ideas but from the collective knowledge derived from the lived experiences of their community. This theorizing situates their subjectivity within their community which helps to empower them. The two tools of resistance – the word and the sword – are used with finesse by the native women to theorize their lives. Writing about contemporary native life that include violence, poverty and annihilation of tribal sovereignty, these women present the predicament of native survival in modern America. They rely on a set of paradigms, tools, world views, or epistemology different from White Feminists, as methods of interpretation. The movement initiated by these women of colour, to question and deconstruct existing methodology, is one of the most progressive movements of the new millennium. So indigenous feminist theory integrates the intellectual traditions that native women have constructed within their community for understanding their lives, and also to make some meaning of the world they live in. This constitutes a theory of survival and proves beyond doubt that every person has the authority to theorize.

An indigenous feminist theory explores certain strategies for survival employed by native women like identifying and naming the enemy, appropriating the enemy's language, using the metaphor of cartography to trace their roots, and explicating the importance of matrilineality as a desired way of life. For the purpose of this discussion I will focus on how survival of native communities have depended on all these strategies which assume a female centrality through the autobiography, *The Woman Who Watches Over The World: A Native Memoir* by Linda Hogan, a native woman of the Chickasaw Nation.

Identifying and Naming the Enemy

Indigenous people initially have felt the need to identify the external and internal forces that have created the social conditions that oppress them. The enemy without are the problems of colonization, with the native community either in reservations or restricted to certain parts of the United States. So, the first enemy "named" is assimilation and acculturation resulting in loss of tribal heritage, displacement, and dispossession from the land of their birth, all of which are the direct consequences of colonialism and racial prejudice. What has been lost as a consequence is a different knowledge system. Linda Hogan states, "There was an intelligence. There were other ways of knowing which included rituals and ceremonies. We had great knowledge of plants, minerals, and medicines. American Indians who'd survived tens of thousands of years witnessed the great destruction of our knowledge system, which included knowledge of ecosystems" (28).

The enemy within is self doubt, lack of confidence due to poverty, alcoholism, and depression. Hogan confesses that like her grandfather who had taken to drink after he lost everything, she too had some extremely traumatic years fighting alcoholism which threatened to consume her life. Her friend describes drinking as "the lost years" and many had gone through such difficult times. For Hogan it was not a weakness but a way for erasing memory. "It was an escape from the pain of an American history" (54). Until the enemy is identified or recognised, healing and empowerment cannot take place. Naming the enemy is a strategy employed by native women as the first tentative step towards self-realisation and self-fulfilment.

Appropriating the Enemy's Language

Language plays an important role in the long term survival of any community. It becomes all the more relevant among people whose language, native culture, way of life, and even their country itself have been politically and culturally appropriated by invasion, conquest, or colonization. Today indigenous languages all over the world are dying out (some are already irrevocably lost) with the death of the last few speakers, foregrounding the link between people and language. People today in most indigenous tribes know only the colonizer's language. In Native America, the Indian Nations speak and write in English, the enemy's language. Indigenous women demonstrate that appropriating the English language is necessary to articulate an alternative methodology for representing their reality, to sing their songs, and to narrate their stories. English then becomes a rhetorical site of power to recreate, reinvent, and regenerate themselves correcting the stereotypical depictions of the uncivilized Savage and the Squaw of colonial history. Speaking out against the centuries-old injustice makes visible the indigenous women who are victimized because of their colour which marks them as different. Hogan asks, "A spoken story is larger than one unheard, unsaid. In nearly all creation accounts, words or songs are how the world was created, the animals sung into existence. Why should it be different for human lives?" (21). Words are the defining shape of a human being. Words create an intimacy not only with others but also with the self. The trauma of colonization and threats of violence had for a time effectively silenced them, but now they realise that to speak empowers them and the written word affirms and celebrates their survival.

Metaphorising Cartography

Indigenous women use the metaphor of cartography as a means for mapping their ongoing journey towards survival. The geography of places and trails taken by their ancestors has been meticulously recorded in indigenous women's writing. Mapping/telling the way also enables them to find a way towards home. It takes them to the very core of their beginning on this earth, and in that sense writing the way is like a homecoming. Hogan says, "As an Indian woman, I have always wondered why others want to enter our lives, to know the private landscape inside a human spirit, the map existing inside tribal thoughts and traditional knowledge. It is a search, I think, for a sense of meaning and relationship" (14). Sometimes oral stories too take the form of maps for the younger generations. The autobiography is a story of survival. Hogan tells, "I sat down to write about pain and wrote, instead, about healing, history, and survival" (16).

Matrilineality as a Way of Life

Most writings by indigenous women begin with a journey backwards in time to the world of their grandmothers. This journey, however, is not merely a wistful looking back, but the means for gathering the collective voice of the elders to map out a resistance that may be useful for other people. The past holds the wisdom and the knowledge of their tribal history and their present reality. Indigenous women's ethos of responsibility makes them look for guidance from their grandmothers on how to live their lives, and it is the future generations which motivate their activity. Linda Hogan remembers her childhood with her Chickasaw grandparents. Her grandmother cooked Chickasaw *pashofa* for the children who used to play near their waterhole. Hogan says, "This world was my foundation. I know it more solidly as I age. It became my life, my identity as a woman" (21). Theirs is a legacy of survival against violence and oppression. Today, the native women write because their grandmothers had no 'authority' to do so. Writing to their grandmothers and great- grandmothers is a way of healing and also a form of activism because this shows that traditional ways are being renewed. By tracing their lineage from a matrilineal line, indigenous feminists are deconstructing patriarchal social structures that subordinated women to men. Indigenous feminist theory looks at what it means to be a woman and the nature of womanhood through native lens.

According to Hertha D. Sweet Wong, autobiography, when deployed by Native mixed-blood women writers, is "a conscious strategy to understand what over two-hundred years of colonial rule has disassembled and, by so doing, to resist the official tragic narrative of Indian loss and disappearance" (173). Indigenous women's writing provides a composite knowledge of individual and collective histories and cultural practices of the Indian peoples exemplifying strategies of survival. They theorize the racialized and sexualized dynamics of their lives fashioning an indigenous feminist discourse. Native women who reconstruct theory informed by their world views become agents of change in their community.

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"CONGREGATION FOR PROPAGATING FALSEHOOD": A CANVAS ON THE NEWS MEDIA BASED ON JOHN DOS PASSOS'S U. S. A. TRILOGY

Mr. Sanil T. Sunny

The term "propaganda" is originally derived from an administrative body of the Catholic Church created in 1622 called the "Congregation for Propagating the Faith." Propaganda is a deliberate attempt to shape perceptions or manipulate cognitions to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist. It is believed that information must be truthful and the most important quality of news is that it be useable and reliable. The news media can investigate concentrated sources of power, particularly governmental power, and can provide coherent frameworks of interpretation to help citizens comprehend a complex world. It demands a deliberate process of reporting, writing, and editing, which pauses at every step to examine rigorously whether the story is in danger of making a wrong turn. But the news media, by nature, is reactive and practical rather than philosophical and introspective. It very often provides misinformation, disinformation, or self-interpreted information, and presents an issue primarily meant to persuade rather than inform, and thus acts as a company for propagating lies among the reading public.

The U.S.A. Trilogy by John Dos Passos is heavily influenced by his own experience with the Great War and taken together, the three novels – The 42^{nd} Parallel, Nineteen Nineteen, and The Big Money - cover the entire war experience: before the war, during the war, and after the war. Manipulation of the reading public is one of the major themes dealt in the trilogy, which is considered a land mark in the American literature. U. S. A. narrates the merger of mainstream journalism on the one hand, and corporate and state power on the other, showing how the merger is not only related but mutually constitutive. The story of J. W. Moorehouse implies that when war breaks out, there are people who wait to take advantage of the fluctuating economy and the quickly spreading poverty. This is the reason for their support and favourable talking of the war. Dos Passos's description of the rise of professional public relations around World War I starkly reveals the extent to which reading public were manipulated. Propaganda has much in common with public information campaigns by governments and again the emphasis is more political. Propagandists share techniques with advertising and public relations which can shape the perception of an organization, person, or brand. Moorehouse is one such propagandist, who stands for the government without any regression, so that he betrays all ideals, and fattens the armament industry's profits, and makes the world for powerful American bankers with loans in Europe. He involves in the war as a traitor, and helps to propagate lies in America. His story depicts how the individual political agents determined the behaviour and delimited the choices of American news media and readers in the early twentieth century.

U.S.A. provides numerous instances in which inconvenient truths are suppressed by vested economic interests. In *The Big Money*, when journalist Mary French is assigned to report on striking steel workers, her editor plainly tells her what kind of information he wants. French fails to grasp the editor's unsubtle suggestion that she depicts them as immigrants, communists and criminals and reports. Predictably, her editor refuses to run the story: "Well, young lady,' he said without looking up, 'You've written a first-rate propaganda piece for the Nation or some other parlour pink sheet in New York, but what the devil do you think we can do with it? This is Pittsburgh'" (119).

The editor's refusal pointedly illustrates the nature of the news spread by the media. The nineteenth-century press failed in an effort to be fair and objective, and never tried to be balanced. Newspapers were subsidized by political parties or governments directly or indirectly. The publishers, editors, and reporters understood their job to be political cheerleading and mobilizing, not political reporting. The public remained unreceptive to the information that might disrupt its political convictions, because it was never presented with such information in the first place.

Elsewhere in U. S. A., the government directly censors newspapers due to the insistence of war powers. In *Nineteen Nineteen*, war volunteer Eveline Hutchins begins spending time with Jerry Burnham, an increasingly dissolute war correspondent working for "The United States" in Paris. Burnham admits to Eveline how badly the free press is serving the American public:

He'd drink a lot of cognac and soda and pour out his feelings, how his work disgusted him, how a correspondent couldn't get to see anything anymore, how he had three or four censorships on his neck all the time and had to send out prepared stuff that was all a pack of dirty lies every word of it, how a man lost his self-respect doing things like that year after year, how a newspaperman had been little better than a skunk before the war, but that now there wasn't anything low enough you could call him. (187)

This extract does more than simply remind readers that governmental pressure and corporate profit motives impede the clear-eyed empirical integrity of the news. Dos Passos's description of the rise of professional public relations around World War I starkly reveals how "inconvenient" truths were suppressed by vested economic interests. Freedom of the press at that time meant freedom for a writer to speak his opinion as he wished, even in criticism of the government, but it did not mean the freedom to report. The public remained unreceptive to truthful information at the time of the Great War. Governmental pressure and corporate profit motives impeded the clear-eyed empirical integrity of the news.

Journalism generally holds a theory that news items should be objective, giving the reader an accurate background and analysis of the subject at hand. Journalists have a social obligation that can actually override their employers' immediate interests at times and this allegiance to citizens is the meaning of what we have come to call journalistic independence. But it is a fact that, there is change in the tone of today's news media. It has become noticeably subjective and judgemental, and more coverage is focussed on what people are saying rather than reporting it.

Historically, partisan journalism has been an important form of journalism, which dominated the nineteenth century. Today, paid news has emerged another crucial issue in the field of journalism. All these show that regardless any changes, media very often tend to be subjective for economic advantages. To reconnect people with news and through the news to the larger world, the news media must re-establish the allegiance to citizens that the news industry has mistakenly helped to subvert. It should change people's understanding through persuasion rather than deception and confusion. It should come out of the shells made up of lies and misinformation to lead the world around to knowledge and wisdom.

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DEFAMILIARISING THE ORDINARY: A GLIMPSE THROUGH THE POETRY AND POETICS OF FRANK O'HARA

Dr. Sanil Raj Johnson

The New York School of Poetry was an innovative group of poets living and writing in and around New York City in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Their poetry was experimental, philosophical, staunchly anti-establishment and anti-academic though their works were dissimilar in style. But they share specific affinities: geographical setting, cosmopolitanism of spirit, the influence of action painting, French Surrealism and European avant-gardism. Donald Allen's anthology *The New American Poetry* (1960) first categorized them as a group of emerging writers and it included the poets John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara. Allen found these writers as "urban, sophisticated and concerned with the moment" (Macgowan 23). *An Anthology of New York Poets* (1970), edited by Ronald Padgett and David Simpson, acknowledged them as leading voices in American poetic scenario. Other than the poets mentioned above, the School's contributors included Kenneth Koch, James Schulyer and Ted Berrigan.

Originally, the New York School began at Harvard where Koch, O'Hara and Ashbery met as students. This group started writing in the 1950s and is closely associated with the contemporary movement in painting – the Abstract Expressionism. The School's name is the outcome of an aesthetic sensibility and writing style even though all these poets happened to live in New York City for some time in their lives, especially during their formative years. Their poetry is bombarded with facts, events and objects of everyday life and its special characteristic is that often the boundary between art and life attains a blurred appearance. The topic of their poetic discourses varies from what normally is considered as material for art to what people experienced in day to day existence. They also appropriated various aspects of French Symbolism and Surrealism, particularly the surrealistic juxtapositions that combined whimsical observation of normal human behaviour and speech.

The free shapes of their poems partially derive from their proximity with the techniques of Jackson Pollocks, Willem de Kooning, and Larry Rivers. O' Hara and Ashbery worked for "Art News" and their contributions on aesthetic relatedness between poetry and visual arts are noteworthy. These poets in general showed an absurdist reality expressed in marked cryptic statements. Often, both the groups collaborated on projects and shared common views on art, politics and philosophy. The poets possessed anti traditionalist and experimental views and they strove for artistic change by declaring poetry as a process and a mere product. New York poets, strictly speaking, "wrote in language that was illogical and often meaningless, O'Hara's particular tone was surrealist, Ashbery's was philosophical, and Koch was comic" (Gooch 224).

Francis Russell O'Hara was one of the first-generation New York School poets who immersed himself in art of all kinds throughout his life. He was familiar with most of the contemporary New York School painters and their style and he also internalized the aesthetics of Abstract Expressionism. He was at odds with most of the poetry that was being written in America during the 1950s. Being a prolific poet, his practice was analogous to the Beats for their subjectivity and spontaneity but avoided their revolutionary fervour and prophetic assumptions. He was critical of outright confessionalism and he complained that Lowell's "confessional manner" let him get away with things that were plainly bad. He was wary of the programmatic approach of the Black Mountain group of poets. Of Charles Olson, the pioneer among this group, O'Hara remarked: "I don't think that he is willing to be as delicate as his sensibility may be

emotionally and he's extremely conscious ... of saying the utterance."(Gray 615) He was less generous towards Robert Creeley and Denise Levertov since they paired down their diction and could not transform their experiences into subject of poetry. He believed that "all these poets had too palpable a design on the reader and at some point, no matter how circuitous the route, they began to spin off beyond the hard material surfaces and processes of their purported subject." (Gray 615) His objective in writing was to reveal the absolute entity and not to teach, advertise, see or even to communicate it.

O'Hara aimed at defamiliarizing the ordinary through his writings, even what he experienced on the "sheer ugliness in America" (Gray 615). It was his firm belief that artists ought to be attentive and one among the artists whom he adored was his friend Larry Rivers who inculcated such quality in him. The great writers who constituted his literary mentors include Walt Whitman with whom O'Hara shared a multiple nature of identity and William Carlos Williams whose commitment to seeing and mobility greatly inspired him. He considered Ezra Pound as father of modern English poetry. O'Hara's earlier writings were dominated by his exploration of Dadaism and Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism and vernacular speech. All these contributed to the production of fine experimental poetry. In addition to that, poems also resulted out of his great inner urge for friendship, the powerful environment he enjoyed being a part of New York poets and his communion with friends in his city life.

O'Hara's works are peculiar for their immediacy and are often composed in a moment of instinct which the poet himself describes as "simply unmade telephone calls". (qtd. in Gooch 150) Among his poems, the most popular are "The Day Lady Died" (1964), "In Memory of my Feelings" (1958) and *Lunch Poems* – so titled at Lawrence Ferlinghetti's suggestion as O'Hara composed them during the lunch break. Major concerns that hurt him were death and unhappy love and they were instrumental in provoking O'Hara to incredible poetic excellence. His poems on the death of James Dean brought popular culture into poetry.

James Dean actor made in USA eager to be everything stopped short Do we know what excellence is? it's

excellence is? it's all in this world not to be executed. (*Collected Poems* 12-21)

Similarly, his poem on the collapse of Lana Turner is a fine example of the poetic presentation of contemporary events in journalistic language. The poem begins in a sensational manner similar to a newspaper headline followed by a description of weather conditions. The poet also manages to convey the problem of heavy traffic on his way to some appointment and suddenly the headline captures his attention:

Lana Turner has collapsed! I was trotting along and suddenly it started raining and snowing

and you said it was hailing but hailing hits you on the head hard so it was really snowing and raining and I was in such a hurry to meet you but the traffic was acting exactly like the sky and suddenly I see a headline LANA TURNER HAS COLLAPSED! (*Collected Poems* 14-23)

Then the poet, in an indirect manner, tries to comprehend the reasons behind such a disaster and he remarks that he has exhibited shocking behaviour and immediately winds up the poem with a plea.

there is no snow in Hollywood there is no rain in California I have been to lot of parties and acted perfectly disgraceful but I never actually collapsed Oh Lana Turner we love you get up. (*Collected Poems* 25-30)

O'Hara elevated the ordinary prose of everyday life – the diary entries, bread-and-butter letters, memos, obituaries and the like into excellent lyric poetry. *Lunch Poems* (1964) comprises of certain poems he has created during the lunch break at the Modern Museum of Art, Manhattan, which would otherwise have ended up as neglected verses. He developed a colloquial elastic rhythm in tune with the rhythms of his routine city life. He was an arduous admirer of occasional poetry – the notion that ideas could be occasioned by environment. The subject matter of such poetry can be anything: a friend's wedding, a national holiday, a favourite composer's birthday, a friend's dare, etc. One morning, O'Hara was having breakfast with his friends, and the friends started kidding him regarding his unquenchable poetic inspiration. The immediate consequence was a poem and Schuyler remarks: "The cigarette smoke began jetting from Frank's nostrils and he went into the next room and wrote 'Sleeping on the Wing' in a great clatter of keys."(James Schuyler, quoted in Frank O'Hara, Collected Poems536) This is one of O'Hara's most admired poems and it cannot be discarded as a mere breakfast toast. It begins with the plight of the whole humanity caught in their inescapable fate. Even then, they look forward to know whether there exists any outlet to evade such doom:

Perhaps it is to avoid some great sadness as in a Restoration tragedy the hero cries "Sleep! O for a long sound sleep and so forget it!" that one flies, soaring above the shoreless city, veering upward from the pavement as a pigeon does when a car honks or a door slams, the door of dreams, life perpetuated in parti-colored loves and beautiful lies all in different languages. (*Collected Poems* 33-40)

In a picturesque manner, the poet conveys the feelings of sadness and people's desperate attempts to evade it. Sleep is just a means of escape from the tortures of life and like birds they fly away to see whether there is any way out. The poem concludes with a vaulting image:

Curiosity, the passionate hand of desire. Dead or sleeping? Is there speed enough? And, swooping you relinquish all that you have made your own, the kingdom of your self sailing, for you must awake and breathe your warmth in this beloved image whether it's dead or merely disappearing, as space is disappearing and your singularity. (*Collected Poems* 23-30)

Thus, it seems that there occurred not a mere breakfast, but something very productive which is far above the concept of a friends' get together.

O'Hara's poem "Mayakovsky" is a clear depiction of the crisis that he encounters in his everyday life. He undergoes a sort of catastrophe and longs for a healing "kiss" of the Russian poet so that he can confidently walk on the streets:

My heart's aflutter! I am standing in the bath tub crying. Mother, mother who am I? If he will just come back once and kiss me on the face his coarse hair brush my temple, it's throbbing!

Then I can put on my clothes

I guess, and walk the streets. (Collected Poems 11-20)

The poet is quite optimistic about his innate potential and his original self, but it was just a means of his charm to alter his self-assurance into witty self-deprecation:

... I'll stare down at my wounded beauty which at best is only a talent for poetry. (*Collected Poems* 21-24)

The following verses reveal his high opinion for the poet Mayakovsky even though his words appear to be ironical. "I embraced a cloud, / but when I soared/ it rained" (*Collected Poems* 21-23).

"Memorial Day 1950" is noted for its profuse energy with its overuse of exclamations, prophetic renderings, inconsistencies, and incongruous parallelisms such as "trees and frying pans," "lovely as chewing gum or flowers" etc. O'Hara's use of "loved and lost!" It re-echoes Alfred Tennyson's "In Memoriam" – "tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." His words, "Our responsibilities did not begin / in dreams, though they began in bed. Love is first of all / a lesson in utility," seems to be a warning to all those who lead a life of fantasies and he is reminded of Delmore Schwartz's story, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," where the narrator goes to a movie, sees his parents on the screen and shouts: "Don't do it! Nothing good will come of it, only remorse, hatred, scandal, and two children whose characters are monstrous" (*Collected Poems* 26 -27).

The poem projects various paradoxes and contradictions and quite often the solutions seem out of context and it raises several questions. How can destructivity be considered creative? Such questions can be probed from a futuristic point of view where the emphasis is on modern things especially technology and machines. In the Futurists' idealization of war, the image of airplanes becomes "perfect mobiles" in an ironical manner and the flow in the sewage seems to be a song for the poet. The poet does not glorify war here but establishes the fact that all artists appropriate the weapons of war for their own sustenance. The relevance of poetry is under question here as it is the most complimentary of activities and how it could substitute a machine. The poem is a quest to answer a similar query and it establishes the elevated mission of poetry as it can transform wreckage and rubbish into aesthetic products.

"Personal Poem" is an experiment in articulating the poet's likes and dislikes. The poem begins with the poet's "charms" and the poem itself possesses a sort of good luck charm. He is proud to announce that he has "only two charms in my pocket" and he continues "... but now I'm happy for a time and interested" (*Collected Poems* 35). As the poem progresses the poet straightaway expresses his intention to "walk through the luminous humidity" to witness the developments in the modern era. He is a little bit disturbed as the construction has closed the sidewalk and he conveys his dissatisfaction with the authorities who are indifferent to the construction workers:

I walk through the luminous humidity passing the House of Seagram with its wet and its loungers and the construction to the left that closed the sidewalk if I ever get to be a construction worker I'd like to have a silver hat please ... (*Collected Poems* 1-7)

The poem comprises the names of different persons and places and all are some way or the other associated with New York: Le Roi Jones, Miles Davis, Henry James, Herman Melville, Donald Allen, Lionel Trilling, the Seagram Building, Moriarty's Birdland, etc. A casual reader may find the poem a live commentary of a city stroller, but the information given showers much on the contemporary America with its deliberations and shortcomings:

a lady asks us for a nickel for a terrible disease but we don't give her one we don't like terrible diseases, then we go eat some fish and some ale it's cool but crowded ... (*Collected Poems* 13-17)

The lady here begs for a nickel but the speaker is unwilling to extend his support as he has only contempt and hatred towards the terrible disease she is affected with. The poet manages to highlight man's inhumanity towards fellow human beings through his biting verses.

The last part of the poem is important for its use of antithesis. The preference for Melville over Henry James was tense with wider symbolic implication in post war America. Partisan Review, in the 1940s organized a symposium where the participants were asked to choose between Walt Whitman and Henry James, "an either/or choice between two sensibilities: the raw versus the cooked or, in the terms proposed by Partisan Review's editor Philip Rahv, the red skin versus the paleface." (Lehman 189).

O'Hara's preference was Melville to James and it was "a vote for the rough opposed to the smooth, for the rebellious outsiders in the poetry wars rather than the academic elite, and would have been read as such by his readers." (Lehman 189) The poem ends in an ironical manner as the poet wonders whether anyone will take notice of him when he shakes hands with LeRoi Jones. It is a severe blow to those people who consider themselves quite self-important and their presence is inevitable for the whole humanity to survive:

I wonder if one person out of the 8,000,000 is thinking of me as I shake hands with Le Roi and buy a strap for my wristwatch and go back to work happy at the thought possibly so. (*Collected Poems* 13-16)

The casual side of O'Hara's rejection of didacticism is symptomatic of his relentless pursuit of happiness. "Happy" mentioned in the last stanza does not represent happiness in the strict sense, it is an expression of the possibility of a fragile happiness or better yet the unextinguished possibility of happiness. Happiness seems to be evading and securing it is only a speculation. It is a matter of luck and attaining it serves as an amulet to prolong the passion.

"The Day Lady Died" is a classic example of a poem chronicling its own coming into existence. The poet is indebted to the populist and elitist elements for its poetic charm:

> I walk up the muggy street beginning to sun and have a hamburger and a malted and buy an ugly NEW WORLD WRITING to see what the poets in Ghana are doing these days. (*Collected Poems* 1-4)

The poem is eclectic and heterodox as it draws allusions from different sources. There is a reference to the June 1959 issue of New World Writing that features the voices of Ghana. The issue mentioned here is the fifteenth and final issue of the eight year old magazine, published in Mentor paperback by New American Library. O'Hara might have bought this paper in order to have a clear opinion of Boris Pasternak's story and a briefing of the French poet Henri Michaux about his experiences with mescaline – a drug made from cactus plant, and not to pay attention to the voices of Africa. The poet calls the issue "ugly" as the cover happened to be a graphic designer's nightmare. The poem is noted for its use of exoticism: "what the poets / in Ghana are doing these days" is a prime instance of it. In addition to that, O'Hara focuses on exoticism from a whole way of life - Cigarettes from France and New Orleans, liqueur from Italy, and poets and painters from all over the world. This poem was an instant hit, though it evoked mixed responses from critics who wondered whether a poem in the form of an elegy can have the title "The Day Lady Died" since it does not mention anything about the deceased until four lines from the end. They also had their own doubts whether the poem was a sincere expression of grief. Even then, the poem is still regarded as a modern elegy not only because it is moving but also because it pays glorious tribute to a great singer who departed at the age of forty four and it occurs as an interruption which is shocking and disturbing.

Critic Marjorie Perloff is of the view that "Ashbery and O'Hara, like Allen Ginsberg ... have an influence that transcends schools and geographical boundaries" (196); these three poets who "have taken the contemporary lyric down parallel courses that never quite meet." (Perloff xiii) O'Hara managed to

build up his critical reputation throughout his life and he has greatly influenced many- especially the younger American poets. He was identified quite early by them and was immensely influenced by the freedom that he experienced in his writings. O'Hara's poems emphasize spontaneity, wit, variety, and openness to the rich density of lived experience. He often deliberately maintains a distance with political and social themes. The associations in the earlier poems seem to be illogical and surrealist, whereas the later poems work more to stress process and peripheral arrangement which is characteristic of abstract expressionism. His poetic themes are wide and varied which range from elements of high and popular culture, that is from avant-garde French poets to advertising billboards and interestingly, they occur side by side.

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LOVE AND RELATIONSHIP VERSUS INDEPENDENCE IN ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD

Dr. R. Santhakumari

Zora Neale Hurston, an American folklorist and writer associated with the Harlem Renaissance, celebrated African American culture of the rural South. Hurston's most famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was published in 1937, long after the hay day of Harlem Renaissance. It was set in central and southern Florida in the early twentieth century. Though it was rejected in the beginning, today it is regarded as a seminal work in both African-American Women's literature.

The novelist presents the protagonist Janie Crawford as a symbolic archetype of female subjectivity. The novel deals with Janie's aspirations and desire to liberate herself from the restrictions inflicted by the patriarchal society, which is the main cause for the struggles in her life. She suffers because she is both female and black. The novelist depicts the male attitude towards woman and relationship between husband and wife. Men and women occupy very different roles. Women are not only considered the weaker sex but are fundamentally defined by their relationship to men. They are traditionally confined by men to positions of passivity, pleading, domesticity, and are treated as objects of desire. Men impose these standards on women by silencing their voices, limiting their actions with notions of propriety, and insulting their appearance and sexuality. When women show any traditional male characteristics such as ambition, intelligence, and authority, they are stigmatized as too masculine and, hence, unattractive. Women in Hurston's novels struggle against oppression, to create, and sustain identities.

Hurston, though belonging to a period much earlier to the Black Feminist movement, exhibits her role as a protest writer by deconstructing the politics of gender. The protagonist of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Janie, attained freedom after her failure in first two marriages. The ultimate goal of Janie is an idealized romantic love. She battles against the common view of love as unimportant and frivolous, as compared to respectability and material security. She searches for unconditional true and fulfilling love. She experiences different kinds of love throughout her life. As a result of her quest for this love, she gains her own independence and personal freedom, which makes her a true heroine in the novel. With Nanny, her caring grandmother, she felt protected. This protective love serves as the driving force behind Nanny's plot to arrange Janie's marriage to Logan Killicks. With him, she has attained a similarly protective love, but this love does not satisfy her need for the love that she desired. Because Janie strives for her own independence, others tend to judge her. She is criticized because she is daring enough to achieve her own autonomy. Throughout the novel, Janie searches for the love that she has always desired, the kind of love that is represented by the marriage between a bee and a blossom on the pear tree that stood in Nanny's backyard. Only after feeling other kinds of love does Janie finally gain the love like that between the bee and the blossom.

Janie experiences many types of love throughout her life With Logan, Janie has attained a similarly protective love, much like that provided by Nanny. Logan represents security for Janie, as he owns a sixty-acre potato farm. For Janie, however, this protective love does not satisfy her need for the love that she has always desired. He considers her as a labourer rather than as a lover. He treats her as "livestock on his farm" (Hemenway 97). He orders Janie to work in fields, abusing her verbally, "accusing her of her mama, her grandmamma and her feelings, and she couldn't do a thing about any of it" (200). Joe Starks provides Janie with an escape from the protective and unsatisfying love of Logan. Joe is a man with lofty

goals and charisma. Janie feels for the first time in her life that she may be able to find true love with this man, who wants her to be treated like a lady, rather than as a subservient farmer's wife. After being married just a short time, however, Janie realizes that she is once again lacking the love that she has longed for. The love that Janie experiences with Joe is a possessive love. Joe views Janie as his possession, his trophy wife. He expects Janie to follow his orders, just as the townspeople abide by the laws he creates as mayor. Joe forbids Janie to interact with the porch sitters or to play checkers on the porch of the crossroads store. Janie feels trapped by Joe's love, but she remains with him until his death.

Following Joe's death, Janie meets the man who represents the true love of her life, Tea Cake Woods. He arrives in Eatonville as a fun-loving man, and falls for Janie's beauty and charm. Although Janie fears that she is too old for Tea Cake, she cannot help but fall in love with this man. Janie leaves behind everything that she has ever known to embark on a new life with Tea Cake. After moving to the Everglades with Tea Cake, she embraces this new life as well as her new friends. Finally, Janie has found the love like that between the bee and its blossom. She declares that Tea Cake could be a "bee to a blossom – a pear tree blossom in the spring" (181).

In her search for love, and in the losses that she suffers, Janie gains independence. Janie's independence begins slowly in the novel. She holds a spark of independence when she gains the courage to leave her loveless marriage with Logan, and runs away with Joe Starks. Her independence grows, however, throughout her marriage to Joe. Though Joe treats Janie as his possession rather than his wife, Janie gains an inner strength. Her strength builds, and one day, she stands up for herself to Joe in the presence of the porch sitters. This act is Janie's first outward sign of her inner strength. Her strength and independence grow as Joe becomes weaker. Although he banishes Janie from his room, she visits him anyway. As Joe lies dying, Janie reveals to him that he is not the man that she ran off with years ago. She tells Joe that he has never been able to accept her for the person that she really is. Ironically, Janie finds strength in Joe's death. Finally, she is free of the man who confined her in a loveless marriage. Janie exhibits her freedom after Joe's death by removing the kerchief from her head to let her long braids drape freely down her back.

Throughout Janie's quest for love and the independence that she gains in her journey, she endures the harsh judgment of others. The porch sitters in the novel serve to judge Janie. As the novel opens, they sit and comment about Janie's return and her present lifeless appearance. The theme of judgment continues in Janie's life with Joe. He judges Janie, rather than accepting her for what, and who she is. He stifles her independence, because he fears that another man may take her away from him. Even Mrs. Turner, the bigoted restaurant owner, judges Janie. She questions Janie's choice of Tea Cake as a husband, because he is "too black" (154). Because Janie endures the harsh judgments of others, she is able to gain independence and strength.

Janie's quest for love leads her along different paths. She gains strength from the protective love of Nanny and Logan as well as the possessive love of Joe. Janie finds her desired love with Tea Cake; with him, "her soul crawled out from its hiding place" (192). The relationship with Tea Cake helped her shape her self-knowledge, but in his death that becomes free to discover security in herself and the courage to speak in her black woman's voice. Claiming her joys and pains of her experiences as components of her identity, Janie comes to the end of the journey, which had begun under a blossoming pear tree, for more than twenty years before. Throughout her life, she also gains an independence and strength from these relationships as well as by enduring the judgments made by others. As a result of her lifelong encounters,

Janie gains autonomy and learns the value of true love. Elizabeth Meese opines that Hurston presents Tea Cake, Janie's third husband, in a completely different frame of light from Logan and Jody. Marriage to Tea Cake, in contrast to marriages to Logan and Jody, is anti-bourgeois as it helps Janie to get empowered in numerous ways. To Meese, Tea Cake paves the way for her to construct a language of liberation through the discourse of emotion. Janie tells Pheobe, "with Tea Cake, new thoughts had to be taught and new words said" (6).

After all the struggles Janie goes through, she finally finds who she is. After she finds her true love, she finds her identity, because this brings her closer to herself. At the end of the novel, Janie reaches the state of accomplished solitude, which identifies the progress she has made in personal development and the denial she faces in the social sphere.

Hurston created the character of Janie during a time when African-American female heroines were uncommon in literature. In 1937, when the novel was originally published, females found fewer opportunities than they do today. Hurston chose to portray Janie as a strong, independent woman, unlike most African-American females of the early-nineteenth century. Perhaps Hurston characterized Janie as capable and courageous to empower her readers and to show them that opportunities do exist for all women; they just have to embrace them.

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THE CONFLICT OF THE URBAN AND RUSTIC CULTURES: A STUDY OF JOHN UPDIKE'S *MY FATHER'S TEARS*

Mr. Shanavas Pattupara

Every civilization is shaped by its unique cultural and geographical way it is constituted. The interaction between the rustic and urban people, and the integration and separation among these two locales, is what keeps a society on the move. American society since the settlement has been undergoing various evolutionary phases which witnessed conflicts, separation, and integration of the cultures. The warring forces within the society in its values, economy, and profession form the formidable part of contemporary American studies. One of the causes of the deep divide that took place during Civil War was indeed this centre versus periphery question of urban and the rustic.

Knowing Your Place is a collection of ten essays by academics in anthropology and modern languages. Its purpose is to begin to redress a scholarly imbalance resulting from the unwillingness of academics to recognize the significance of rurality in shaping human identity. The editors, Barbara Ching and Gerald Creed, argue in the introduction that, there is a "culturally valuable rusticity" that must be identified and explored by scholars because of its great shaping power in human behaviour and experience (4). To Ching and Creed, the separation of rurality from rusticity represents the power of urban cultural hegemony in the modern world. Our values, behaviours, and habits of mind are urban-based and urban-shaped; consequently, even those of us who are "rural" are often just urban people in non-urban places. They are especially critical of academics for ignoring the salience of place in shaping human identity and for perpetuating urban cultural hegemony.

The suggestions of these writers in the collection entitled "Recognizing Rusticity" lend new dimensions to the dabate. Here, Ching and Creed limn out some characteristics of the representation and reception of rustic identities, arguing that, in spite of academia's heightened interest in marginalized voices, rustic figures remain on the periphery (6). The rural/urban distinction underlies many of the power relations that shape the experience of the people newly in every culture. Not surprisingly, then, many cultural activities operate to keep people in their places, even in the face of global demographic and economic dislocations such as rural to urban migration and industrialization. Consequently, the rural-urban distinction signifies far more powerfully the physical appearances suggest. Inhabitants of the areas from town and country seem nearly indistinguishable but nevertheless elaborate a difference through extensive cultural discourse. It is interesting to see how the identities of the narrator and Deb, his lover are shaped by the rustic and urban background in John Updike's short story, "My Father's Tears."

John Hoyer Updike (1932-2009) was a prolific American novelist, poet, short story writer, art critic, and literary critic. Updike was well recognized for his careful craftsmanship and his unique prose style. He populated his fiction with characters, who experience personal troubles, and are forced to respond to problems relating to religion, family obligations, and marital infidelity. His fiction is distinguished by its attention to the concerns, passions, and suffering of average Americans about which he himself once remarked thus: "My subject is the American Protestant small town middle class. I like middles, it is in middles that extremes clash, where ambiguity restlessly rules. Something quite intricate and fierce occurs in homes, and it seems to me without doubt worthwhile to examine what it is" (Greiner 50). His work has attracted a significant amount of critical attention and praise, and he is widely considered to be one of the great American writers of his time. Updike's highly distinctive prose style features a rich, unusual, sometimes

arcane vocabulary, as conveyed through the eyes of "a wry, intelligent authorial voice" (Greiner 76) that extravagantly describes the physical world, while remaining squarely in the realist tradition. He has described his style as an attempt to give the mundane its beautiful due.

Updike is considered one of the greatest American fiction writers of his generation. He was widely praised as America's "last true man of letters," with an immense and far-reaching influence on many writers (Charlse 31). The excellence of his prose style is acknowledged even by critics sceptical of other aspects of Updike's work. Eulogizing Updike in January 2009, the British novelist Ian Mc Ewan wrote that Updike's "literary schemes and pretty conceits touched at points on the Shakespearean," and that Updike's death marked "the end of the golden age of the American novel in the 20th century's second half." Mc Ewan concluded that the Rabbit series is Updike's "masterpiece and will surely be his monument," and describing it, concluded "Updike is a master of effortless motion–between third and first person, from the metaphorical density of literary prose to the demotic, from specific detail to wide generalization, from the actual to the numinous, from the scary to the comic." The novelist Philip Roth, considered one of Updike's chief literary rivals and wrote that "John Updike is our time's greatest man of letters, as brilliant a literary critic and essayist as he was a novelist and short story writer. He is and always will be no less a national treasure than his 19th century precursor, Nathaniel Hawthorne" (Lehmann 11).

As mentioned earlier, the conflict between urban and rustic cultures shapes the relationship between the members of a society, whether hegemonic or not. John Updike's short stories present this conflict in a subtle yet assertive way. The story titled, "My Father's Tears" in the collection of short stories with the same name, tells the tale of a young man brought up in the rural set up in Alton in Pennsylvania, who meets this dichotomy head on. The story begins with narration of the way he is seen off by the parents in the Alton and his departure to Philadelphia :

I saw my father cry only once. It was at the Alton train station, back when the trains still ran. I was on my way to Philadelphia – an hour's ride ending at the 30th Street terminal – to catch, at the Market Street station, the train that would return me to Boston and college. I was eager to go, for already my home and my parents had become somewhat unreal to me, and Harvard. (327)

In Phildelphia, he embraces all the pleasures that the urban culture offers to him, leading a liberal and unorthodox life with his girl friend Deb. In the initial years after their marriage, they spend their time with their parents. Deb's father was an eminent Unitarian minister, who preached in a gray neo-Gothic edifice built for eternity near the Washington University campus. Each June, he moved his family from the roomy brick parsonage on Lindell Boulevard to an abandoned Vermont farmhouse he had bought in the thirties for five-hundred dollars. They experienced a rustic life since they had to live without modern facilities like electricity. Their house was on a curving dirt road. The passage reads:

The lone bathroom was a long room, its plaster walls and wooden floor both bare, that was haunted by a small but intense rainbow, which moved around the walls as the sun in the course of the day glinted at a changing angle off the bevelled edge of the mirror on the medicine cabinet. When we troubled to heat up enough water on the kerosene stove for a daylight bath, the prismatically generated rainbow kept the bather company; it quivered and bobbed when footsteps or a breath of wind made the house tremble. (333)

He and the girl friend experience conflict when they confront rustic life back in Alston in Pennsylvania. This is the occasion when both characters become conscious of the disparities and dichotomies in values and culture. He says, "Pennsylvania had its different tensions for Deb and me" (342). Their very arrival in Alston itself proves to be a mess, when they disembark at a wrong station with their parents waiting in Alston. But he, anyway, wonders how his parents managed to find out the disembarking station in that place without telephone. Back in Alston, the narrator becomes conscious of the unsophisticated facilities and ways in his village. He says, "I could not protect her from their primitive ways" (343). He attributes the behaviour of Deb's mother also with the rustic background. He tries to console Deb, but she would not relent. The mother and his lover keep themselves aloof from each other. He realises that she can never come to terms with mother's attitude, since it pertains to one's cultural upbringing and values. He says, "Amazed, I realized that she wasn't tuned as finely as I to the waves of my mother's anger. She wasn't built from birth to receive them" (346). His mother is worried that their first kid was not baptised, where as Deb does not find it necessary. The conflict of cultures becomes quite evident on a Sunday, when they discuss their plans for day.

She begins to weed the patch of pansies his mother has planted near the back porch and she stands uncomprehending when he informs her that nobody works on Sundays since everybody wants to go to Church. She finds it incredulously silly.

"How silly," Deb said. "My father all summer does his walls and things on

Sundays." "He's a different denomination."

"Jim, I can't believe this. I really can't." "Sh-

h-h. She's inside, banging dishes around."

"Well, let her. They're her dishes."

"And we have to get ready for church."

"I didn't bring church clothes."

"Just put on shoes and the dress you wore down on the train."

"Shit I will. I'd look ridiculous. I'd rather stay here and weed. Your grandparents will be staying, won't they?"

"My grandmother. My grandfather goes. He reads the Bible every day on the sofa, haven't you noticed?"

"I didn't know there were places like this left in

America." "Well—"

My answer was going to be lame, she saw with those sterling blue eyes, so she interrupted. "I

see now where you get your nonsense from, being so rude to Daddy. (345-46)

She digs the root of his rudeness towards her father in this rustic background, which evidently stands in conflict with his. It is, however, to be noted that his is a hybrid culture having been brought up Pennsylvania, and studied in colleges in the urban city in Philadelphia. One conspicuous example is when he poignantly recollects his father's cry. Later, at the school reunion, he tells his friend that his father had died without giving any trouble the way his father in law did. To some extent, it is this difference in perception, caused on account of the cultural difference that brought tensions in their marital life and the final break up. He had once sneaked a few nude snaps of Deb, and she has objected to it. Now, on the verge of crumbling relationship, she contends that her body is her property, and he has not right to photograph her, whereas he tries to justify it by quoting the words of Emerson, "we boil at different degrees," that he has found from the book in the personal collections of her father.

The awareness of both the narrator and his wife Deb of the fact that they are incompatible acts as a cornerstone of all the conflicts. The words reverberate the notion that mutual reconciliation between the urban and rustic spatial disparity is seemingly impossible, since rustic and urban backgrounds do leave out certain indelible traits in the characters and it defines their subjectivity. It is the consciousness of one's spatial background that determines the mood of the narration itself. To conclude, Updike's story faithfully sheds light on the psychological underpinnings of the conflict between urban and rustic culture.

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CROSS-DRESSING AND CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S THE LAST REPORT ON THE MIRACLES AT LITTLE NO HORSE

Ms. Sheena John

Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe/Ojibwe) is considered one among the five prominent writers of Native American Renaissance, along with N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, James Welch, and Simon Ortiz. She entered the mainstream of American literature in 1984 with the publication of *Love Medicine*, a novel that went on to win the National Books Critics Circle Award the same year. Edrich has had a long, prolific, and fruitful career ever since, publishing thirteen novels, three collections of poetry, children's books, and two works of nonfiction.

Erdrich's novels set in and around the fictional reservation at Little No Horse, offer interplay of tribal and Euro-American perspectives, spanning a five-hundred year history of colonialism, appropriation, and dispossession. As the daughter of a German-American father and French-Ojibwe mother, Erdrich comes to represent two distinct cultural backgrounds. Instead of embracing any particular cultural lineage, Erdrich positions herself as a writer who is able to talk "two languages." Regarding Erdrich's balancing of Ojibwe and Eurocentric perspectives in her work, critic Catherine Rainwater argues that the author is, in fact, attempting to force the reader to renegotiate the terms of contact between dominant and marginal cultures. *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (2001) plays with the reader's expectations through constant switching of perspectives and trickster-like handling of Native American spirituality and Catholic belief system, as well as Eurocentric gender specificities and Native two-spirits or berdache tradition.

The novel explores religious and gender themes from two divergent cultural perspectives, thereby providing the reader with dual cultural orientation. Set on a fictional reservation and offering a panoramic description of Native life, *Last Report* is steeped in Catholic lore. Through the figure of Agnes/Father Damien, and her foray into the territories of alternate gender identification and reservation life, Erdrich offers multicultural perspectives that erase cultural boundaries.

The first section of the novel, "The Transfiguration of Agnes," unfolds in the pattern of an epistolary novel, with Agnes, a cross-dressing woman, writing in the present, reporting on the miracles purportedly performed by a nun named Sr. Leopolda, at the reservation of Little No Horse. The ironic subversion of the obvious biblical overtones of the section title becomes clear in Agnes's letters to the Pope, in which she relates how she came to take the place of Father Damien Modeste, a missionary assigned to Little No Horse reservation, but who got drowned in the Red River flood. Agnes De Witt, a white Catholic woman, had been a nun-Sister Cecilia-at a convent near Fargo in Minnesota. She had fallen in love with the spirit of Chopin, playing the convent's piano day and night, until she felt that she had betrayed her vows. She had left the convent, and ended up in Brendt Vogel's barn with bound breasts and shorn hair. Brendt, who later married her, describes Agnes as "a woman created of impossibility" (28). A brief period of marital bliss had come to an end when a bank robber wounded Agnes, and killed Brendt. A strange turn of events had brought her to the flooded river, where she donned the garb of a drowned priest, and appropriated his identity. Disguised as Father Damien, she had set out for the Indian territories of the Far North, with a new zeal "to win souls." In her letter to the Pope, she writes, "I now believe, in that river, I drowned in spirit, but revived" (41).

Agnes/Father Damien's record of his experiences at Little No Horse covers the long, tumultuous history of Native American oppression since encounter with Europeans: famine, loss of land, internal rivalries, government deception, and near genocide through epidemics. The reader is drawn into the story of the unpredictable Agnes, who becomes a major narrator, along with the general narrator, who follows her journey as a priest.

By positioning Agnes as a woman who assumes the role of a man, Erdrich allows for multiple perspectives, and this helps the readers to shift their own perspectives. Agnes realizes the freedom cross-dressing allows her, which also allows her "to see" things differently. As a nun, she was not allowed to celebrate mass, give absolution, or baptize. In the section titled "Deadly Conversions," Agnes learns that, as a man, she is "free to pursue all questions with frankness and ease" (62). She practises walking like a man, learns to control her voice, and corrects her mannerisms. She even makes a list of reminders, "Some Rules to Assist in My Transformation," which points to societal expectations and gender role stereotypes. In her refusal to conform, Agnes becomes a subversive mimic, rejecting both colonial and gender binary oppositions, and embracing a more hybrid, syncretic vision. She becomes a true artist, who embraces what Virginia Woolf describes as androgynous vision, and resolves "to make Father Damien her creation" (77).

While challenging the gender dichotomies of Euro-American culture through the white woman's cross-dressing, Erdrich also initiates the reader into Native American notions of sexuality. Paula Gunn Allen, Native American writer and analyst, observes that Europeans, with their "Christian notions of proper sexual behavior" were shocked at what they called "promiscuity" and "deviant sexual behavior" practised by the tribal communities. In *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, Allen explains that North American tribal communities have enjoyed a long history of hybrid gender tradition, including male and female homosexuality, and transgender, commonly known by the terms, "two-spirits" or "berdache." Thus, the section "Deadly Conversions" discusses the operation of power through gender roles from a Euro-American perspective, and the respect that would have been accorded to women like Agnes in Native culture.

The typical Euro-American perspective to the major issues discussed in the novel is provided through a white nun on the reservation, Sister Hildegarde, who is scandalized by what appears to her as uncivilized behaviour and practices, especially tribal medicine. She urges Father Damien to baptize the tribal people, taking advantage of the fact that they are weakened by the sweating fever. She has only contempt for the likes of Nanapush and Fleur, who have managed to survive, and who still cling on to "superstition." In full earnestness, Agnes/Father Damien tries to reach out to the souls that need her assistance. However, it is Agnes/Father Damien's changing attitude to the whole scenario that allows for a cross-coded narrative. Instead of being biased against the Natives, Agnes/Father Damien comes to see herself as being sent "to accept and to absorb" (74). Erdrich's protagonist, even at this stage, seems closer to Ojibwe perspective than to a Catholic one. Agnes/Father Damien's growing identification with tribal spirituality and sexuality becomes evident in her later discussions with Father Jude, an emissary from the Pope, who has come to study the former's reports on the miracles performed by Sister Lepolda. While commenting on the scandalizing confessions of nuns, Father Damien says he would prefer to call them "profound exchanges of human love." Father Damien's following remarks show clear affinities with Native world view rather than Judeo-Christian cosmic vision: "We are created of the earth. The Ojibwe word for the human vagina is derived from the word for earth. A profound connection. Don't you think?" (134).

"Deadly Conversions" also contains references to how tribal life has been profoundly affected by land loss and dislocation. Agnes/Father Damien reflects on the aftermath of the pillaging of tribal land through the allotment system. Agnes/Father Damien's views, along with that of the general narrator's, counter the colonial ideology voiced by Sister Hildegarde. The latter's comments clearly reflect the acquisitive mindset of the whites, which is opposed to native understanding of land ownership. While Sister Hildegarde is heard remarking, "They'll all lose the land, of course, being unused to the owning of land. Incredibly, it makes no sense to them. They avow . . . that the earth is only a loan" (72), the general narrator gives a more realistic appraisal of federal government's land policy, especially the General Allotment Act or Dawes Act (1887). Agnes/Father Damien's views also come closer to Native world view, when she begins to see it as her duty to protect tribal land from aggressive lumber companies.

Agnes/Father Damien's gradual "conversion," in spite of her initial allegiance to America's "Manifest Destiny," is achieved through her association with the Native trickster figure, Nanapush. Immediately after Nanapush meets Father Damien, he begins the "slow work of influencing the priest" (87). Nanapush relates a trickster story, "Nanabozho Converts the Wolves," to Father Damien-an ironic dig at the conversion of Native population by the missionaries. In the story, Nanapush tricks the wolves into eating poisoned meat, and sells their fur for money. He tricks the wolves with the promise that "If anyone eats of this, long will he live" (84). The animals are duped into eating the poisoned fat, and the story concludes with the following note: "That's the way Nanabozho gave religious instructions to the wolves. After he saved their souls, he skinned them all and the foxes too, and as he walked to the French traders carrying their skins, he laughed and laughed. Truly, he said, I have *converted* them - to money" (85, emphasis added).

Gradually, Agnes/Father Damien is seen questioning traditional Catholic beliefs. Her prayers begin to incorporate Ojibwe language and world view; for instance, she substitutes the spirits of the four directions for the Christian Trinity. Significantly, "four" is the number of completion in Ojibwe mythology, and the passage reads: "She began to address the trinity as four and to include the spirit of each direction - those who sat at the four corners of the earth. Whenever she prayed, she made of herself a temporary center of those directions" (182). While she continues to pray for Nanapush to be converted, Agnes/Father Damien also prays for her own "enlightenment," in case that were "a mistake" (182). It is through love and bonding with the community that Agnes/Father Damien finally resolves her inner struggle. She gets closer to Nanapush's family, especially after the birth of Fleur. The narrative says, through this connection, Agnes became "fully human" and "a connected being" (184); further evidence that Agnes/Father Damien has steadily been drawn to native community life as against western individualism(182)

However, the real test of Agnes/Father Damien's spiritual and professional integrity begins with the arrival of Father Gregory Wekkle. In spite of Agnes's attraction towards Gregory, ultimately, it is his commitment to priesthood that makes Father Damien send him away. After Father Gregory leaves, Agnes falls into depression. In her delirious sleep, she is said to "wander mightily through heaven and earth ... exploring worlds inhabited by both Ojibwe and Catholic" (211). Eventually, it is Native medicine that heals Agnes/Father Damien. Nanapush sets up a sweat lodge for her, and even though Agnes/Father Damien knows that she is acting against Church doctrine by participating in Native medicinal ways, she realizes that she is coming to a new awareness, and learning to "love not only the people but also the very thingness of the world" (215-16). Also, as against Christian hierarchical view of life, which sees heavenly grace extending only to angels and human beings and not to "lesser" forms of life, Agnes/Father Damien finds the native idea of a spirit pervading both animate and inanimate life comforting. She confesses to Nanapush that although she was supposed to spiritually sustain the Anishinaabe, she was being drawn

more and more towards Native American view of life that sees everything in nature as interconnected and infused with life. Years later, Father Damien's diary entry reads:

Consider the word spirit, manidoo, ... and all the forms in which it resides. That which we consider vermin, insects, the lowest form of life, are maanidooens, little spirits, and in their designation it is possible at once to see the penetration of the great philosophy that so unites the smallest to the largest, for the great, kind intelligence, the Gozhe Manito, shares its name with the humblest creatures. (315)

However, it is Agnes/Father Damien's sermon to the snakes that shows her true spiritual transformation. Seeing Father Damien playing music to the snakes in the church, the natives are convinced that the snake has become his spiritual guardian. The incident is a pointer to a new spiritual awareness Agnes/Father Damien gains that transcends the dictates of institutionalized religion. It also takes Agnes/Father Damien by surprise that Nanapush is not shocked to learn the truth about her sexuality because the latter is able to accept her gender variance and situate her within Anishinaabe two-spirits tradition. Agnes/Father Damien comes to realize that her mission "to save souls" has been a mistake, but things are beyond her control. She is now driven not only by missionary zeal but by "the fundamental dictates of a great love" (239). Agnes/Father Damien's acculturation is complete with her own confession in the last moments of her life: "Thank God, I met your visionary, strange servant Nanapush" (349). Agnes/Father Damien faces death with a laugh befitting the comic universe of the Ojibwe, as she is helped across the threshold of eternity by "a bigger, work-toughened hand," which is obviously Nanapush's (350).

The novel traces Agnes/Father Damien's transformation and transcendence-from a Church representative driven by missionary zeal to a priest whose world view is seriously altered by Ojibwe vision. It appears that, towards the end, Agnes/Father Damien has received the answers to the questions that have vexed her ever since she began hiding her female self behind her masculine persona. It is after she begins to open herself up to the Ojibwe community that Agnes/Father Damien's berdache identity begins to draw strength from its hybridity. Through Agnes/Father Damien's dual gender and spiritual orientations, Erdrich rejects simplistic binary oppositions that the colonizer had created to justify colonization as well as their assumption of racial superiority. Agnes/Father Damien, through the constant negotiating of the boundaries between colonizer and colonized, masculine and feminine, Catholicism and Anishinaabe spiritual traditions, debunks the western notion of a coherent, stable identity. Rather, manifesting traces of colonial ambivalence, Agnes/Father Damien's identity evolves through the ever-shifting complexities of colonial relations that allows for the coexistence of differences. In Agnes/Father Damien, Erdrich presents a picture of the colonizer that deviates from the norm, for she comes to represent the inherent dilemma of the colonizer. Critic Dee Horne, commenting on the gender and racist politics in the novel, opines that "Erdrich has addressed complex colonial and gender relations and the attendant racism and sexism, and illustrated one, among many, ways to respond to colonialism" (291).

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ARCHETYPES AND INDIVIDUATION: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH TO SAUL BELLOW'S *HERZOG*

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Archetypes are primordial images that reside in our collective unconscious. They play an indelible role in the development of the individual self. The process of individuation helps in the identification and recognition of the archetypes that dominate an individual's life at various stages in the journey towards the self. Saul Bellow's novel *Herzog* elucidates the story of Moses E. Herzog, a forty-seven year old man, who emerges from his second marriage, and undergoes a crisis but eventually comes out of it to realize his self through the process of individuation. He has two children: Marco, from his first marriage and Junie, from the second marriage, live with their mothers. His career as an academician is at stake due to the ramifications of the divorce with his second wife Madeleine, whom he still loves. But his relationship with her ended in humiliation. Prior to the divorce, Madeleine persuaded Herzog to move her and their daughter Junie to Chicago. With his help she made sure that their best friends, Valentine and Phoebe, could move along with them as well, securing a solid job for Valentine. The plans were part of a subterfuge as Madeleine and Valentine were carrying on an affair behind Herzog's back. After arriving in Chicago, Madeleine throws Herzog out and makes arrangements to terminate their relationship further and also to relegate him to an asylum. Herzog is in a relationship with Ramona, a vivacious woman, but finds himself evading her.

Herzog spends much of his time mentally writing letters – he never sends them – to friends, family members, and famous figures, who are both dead and alive. At the outset of the novel, he expresses his wish to see Ramona, his current love, but at the same time flees from her. He then goes to New York to regain custody of his daughter Junie. He hears about the mistreatment of his daughter by Valentine from the babysitter. He plans to kill Madeleine and Valentine with a pistol. But when he sees Valentine taking care of the child, his plan goes awry. The next day after taking his daughter for an outing, he meets with an accident and ends up being charged with possession of a loaded weapon. His brother Will picks him up and helps him get back on his feet. His brother tries to convince him to check himself into an institution. Ramona joins him at his house in Ludeyville and he begins making plans to fix up the house. In the end Herzog comes to terms with his life and says that he does not have to write letters anymore. Thus, the process of individuation, with regard to Herzog, culminates on a positive note.

This paper attempts to identify the prominent archetypes from a Jungian perspective. The protagonist, Moses Herzog, through his life experiences, exemplifies the process of individuation and the attainment of selfhood. Carl Gustav Jung's *Analytical Psychology* serves as a guide in this regard. Archetypes are ancient or archaic images that spring from the collective unconscious. The potential for innumerable number of archetypes exists within each individual and when a personal experience corresponds to the latent primordial image, the archetype becomes activated. In *Herzog*, we perceive frequently occurring archetypes like Persona, Anima, Animus, Shadow and Self. The major characters are representations of various archetypes ranging in order of maturity. As C. G. Jung puts it: "To have a healthy, integrated personality, every system must be permitted to reach the fullest degree of differentiation, development and expression. The process by which this is achieved is called the Individuation process" (qtd. in *Theories of Personality* 106). It is the process by which one realizes one's self.

Moses Herzog, the protagonist, inadvertently represents the Shadow, Persona and Anima. After his marriage to Madeleine he becomes the Persona type who poses before society wearing a "mask."

Leading a normal life, his aim is to emerge as a respectful academician in the eyes of society. The need for his projection as a respectable person becomes prominent at this stage. He tries to strike a synergy between the demands of society and who he really is.

After the separation from Madeleine, Herzog's Shadow, or the darker side, is revealed. When he is stamped as a neurotic, he constantly tries to free himself from this label. This is one aspect that helps him in his knowledge of Self through individuation. Shadow is the archetype of darkness and repression, representing the qualities that we do not wish to acknowledge but attempt to hide from ourselves and others. Coming to terms with darkness within ourselves is to achieve the realization of the Shadow. This, Herzog accomplishes towards the end.

Herzog's tenderness and love for his daughter Junie brings out the Anima part that is inherent in him. This archetype is the projection of the feminine aspect in man and it remains extremely resistant to consciousness. To triumph over the projection of Anima, one must overcome intellectual barriers, delve into the deep recesses of one's unconscious and realize one's feminine side of personality. When Herzog's thoughts are pervaded with his love for Junie, his personality accomplishes the mastery of Anima.

Madeleine is the explicit example of the Animus, the masculine side of women. The Animus is symbolic of thinking and reasoning and influences the thoughts of women. However, it does not "belong" to her. It originates in the collective unconscious of Madeleine when she is made to think and act against Herzog. Her stringent attitude in terms of her divorce with Herzog, triggers her Animus. She becomes steadfast and strong and eradicates all the past feelings of love she had for him from her mind.

Valentine Gersbach can be regarded as the Shadow of Herzog. He is the projection of the animal side of humans. When he deliberately and remorselessly "snatches" Madeleine from Herzog and becomes her lover, his character becomes villainous. He betrays Herzog by becoming his wife's lover. This act wounds and enrages Herzog and renders him helpless and powerless. Yet another archetype, the archetype of Self, becomes prominent and visible just before the culmination of his self-discovery, his life's goal that he constantly strives for. He struggles relentlessly to achieve this. He is a middle-aged man who stands at that particular point where it is conducive to receive the knowledge of the Self and thereby give shape to the Self archetype.

Coming to terms with and adapting well to the archetypes, is one major test Herzog gets through along his journey to the accomplishment of Individuation. His personality tends to develop in the direction of a stable unity. This development is the unfolding of the original undifferentiated wholeness with which he was born and the ultimate goal of this unfolding is the realization of his selfhood. His personality first gets differentiated through the workings of the archetypes from the collective unconscious and then develops fully. Herzog finally becomes an integrated personality as a result of the experience of the fullest degree of maturation of various stages of development, which in turn is termed as the culmination of the process of Individuation. This can be discerned through Herzog's words:"At this time he had no messages for anyone. Nothing .Not a single word"(348).The very fact that he has no more letters to write establishes the attestation of sanity that pervades Herzog .This is ample testimony to his coming to terms with himself and the attainment of selfhood.

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PLACES IN CONSTANT FLUX: MULTIFACETED URBAN BARRIOS IN U.S. PUERTO RICAN DIASPORA WRITING

Ms. Sini Jose

Place-based aesthetics and politics form a central part of diaspora writing. This is especially true with the U.S. Puerto Rican diaspora writing. Puerto Ricans in the U.S. stand for the group of people who live in cultural borderlands with the experience of in-betweenness. Their socio- spatial experience marks the paradox of being the citizens and aliens at the same time. The literary representations of the U.S. Puerto Rican barrios mark a shift from the traditional, stereotypical, negative depictions of urban barrio life as a site of violence and crime, to the new positive descriptions of barrio as a significant cultural space.

Urban barrios ("El Barrios"/barrios in East Harlem, New York) are central topos of the Puerto Rican diasporic imagination. They represent a particular urban geography as New York city's Puerto Rican population ("Nuyorican") settled there. Barrios are border spaces where different cultures coexist. It is what Neil Smith suggests as "simultaneous spatial experiences at a single site" (724).

Urban barrios generate multivalent forms of writing and signification. U.S. Puerto Rican writings are narratives of spatial contexts and marked by a place- based consciousness. Significant portion of Puerto Rican diaspora literature is barrio centric. Most recognized authors of Puerto Rican diaspora have created a barrio centric literature oriented toward the practices, languages and conditions of New York City barrios ("El Barrios") in particular. In his "Writing Migrations: The Place(s) of U.S.Puerto Rican Literature," Frances R. Aparicio says,

Like other U.S. ethnic literatures, U.S. Puerto Rican literature has been traditionally defined, constituted and bounded by the literary production of Puerto Rican writers in the diaspora, a corpus that was based on a linear paradigm of migration from the island to the mainland. Given its historical role as the receptor city of thousands of Puerto Rican migrants throughout the twentieth century, the geocultural space of New York City has represented the center of that diasporic literary space, establishing itself as its hegemonic site. (151)

Historically, the literary representations of diaspora are marked by experiences of segregation and repression. Early Puerto Rican diasporic writings depicted negative vision of the city, by pointing to the marginalization and racial discrimination within the city. Barrio as a marginalized site within a city, has a long tradition as a site of representation in writing. Writing about the bodega and the barrio in Nuyorican fiction is a legacy that begins with Piri Thomas' *Down These Mean Streets* (1967). The Puerto Rican writings of the 1970's have been informed by a specific, marginal socio economic experience.

Barrios' socio-spatial situations and place-based interpersonal networks made them a physical and cultural refuge, against the social and racial discrimination outside. With its fixed territories and identifiable culture, barrios satisfied the re-territorialisation imaginings of a deterritorialised people. It was something like a "home away from home," "a portable home" (*Writing Off the Hyphen* 278). Barrios came to be a symbolic geography, a representative site for the re-signification of ethnicity. Thus the socially deforming and culturally affirming spatial practices together produced the form and meaning of "an imagined community" (*Imagined Communities* 224), placed across the boundaries of nation.

Barrios exemplify the imagined and changing nature of place, underlined by geographers like Doreen Massey. Barrio is a discursive space that is subject to the reimagining and re-definition of American space by a displaced and colonized people. Although they have settled in America, they have also developed a new home and identity as U.S. Puerto Rican. Antonio Domínguez Miguela argues,

They have developed a new home identity as U.S. Puerto Ricans, that resides at the borders of cultures. Because of its spatial multiplicities, I prefer to describe this new identity as a 'pendulous identity', which implies a constant movement among the cultural, social, and emotional spaces, the individual inhabits. This constant movement responds to the constant negotiations, the individual is involved in every day and to the "world travelling" that applies to anyone living between cultures. (171)

U. S. Puerto Rican writings of twenty first century are marked by "multiple migrations", and "transnational circulation" (*Beyond the Borders* 154). They bring a unique blend of cultural heritage and acculturation process in to Anglo American Society. The rigid racial, ethnic and spatial identifications prevailed in the dominant narratives are challenged and boundaries are shown as fluid in the modern literary representations of the barrio. The literary representation of polycentric geographies and multiple identities celebrate the cultural heritage while also welcoming new elements and possibilities of multicultural existence. José L. Torres-Padilla and Carmen Haydée Rivera argues,

(T)he works of Puerto Rican diaspora writers entails a movement away from insular conceptions of nationality toward a more integrated awareness of a hybrid self constantly shifting between historical time and geographic spaces, a movement that perpetuates the "flying bus" metaphor so accurately coined by Luis Rafael Sánchez and restated in Jorge Duany's book title *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move*. (15-16)

For example, Judith Ortiz Cofer's works make barrio a contested space where various cultures meet and collide. Her *The Line of the Sun* (1989), and *The Silent Dancing* (1991), brings the idea of circular journeys and continuing border crossings. The back and forth migratory movement evokes the constant transitions Puerto Ricans experience in their travel between two worlds, the island and the mainland. Coming and going between worlds thus reflect, the cultural negotiations, in which, the diasporic identities are engaged.

While the early barriocentric works were concerned with the community's living conditions, the recent writings are characterized by competing needs and changing nature of these ethnic communities. The place-making dynamics of the present Puerto Rican diaspora writing involves an understanding of the complex multi-ethnic and multi-racial dilemmas of contemporary cities. These multicultural tendencies are also reflected in the construction of fictional subjects as "incorporative" identities.

Diasporic writers such as Tato Laviera, Sandra María Esteves, Miguel Algarín, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Aurora Levins Morales, Ferre Rosario, and others have represented the contradictory, multiple and complex subjectivities in Nuyorican barrios, thus questioning the essentializing elements of Puerto Rican national identity as it has been generated through popular media. These writers place their characters in a particular conflictive zone of the barrios, that serves as a meeting point of the island and the mainland cultures. Thus they subvert the dominant American culture by reconceptualizing U.S. culture as a multicultural and polycentric rather than a single, unified, homogeneous site. Thus they resist the forces of assimilation in to the dominant U.S. culture. The fiction of Ed Vega exemplify these practices.

Textual representation of urban barrios as an "imagined community" (*Imagined Communities* 224), or a "delocalized transnation" (*Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* 190) is a symbolic reappropriation of American cultural landscape in the discursive realm of fiction. They offer a resistance to the assimilation process into the Anglo American mainstream. They also resist the dominant U. S. normative representation of barrios.

Manifesting alternative needs and interests from those of the dominant Public sphere, the expressive practices of barrio social and cultural reproduction reveal multiple possibilities for recreating and re-imagining dominant urban space as community enabling space. These cultural practices subvert the totalizing impulses of the dominant social space containing the barrios. (*Writing Off the Hyphen* 6)

The barrio centric narratives of U. S. Puerto Rican represent the questions of displacement and dislocation, and the practices of resettlement and translocality. Urban barrios can be seen as a contested domain that particularly satisfies the reterritorialization imaginings of the diasporic people in a global city. In this process, the seemingly single, unified, material site of Nuyorican urban barrios, undergo a constant metamorphosis and become a site for conflicting claims.

The twenty-first century barrio centric literature interrogates the larger landscaping of power in the context of rapid gentrification and social change. They reflect the expansion and transformation of neighborhoods through rapid economic investment and population shifts. These tendencies affect the discursive, cultural production of barrios and the literary representations of the transformations under the pressures of global urban development.

The rhetorical tendencies that inform Puerto Rican Diaspora writing exhibit an "affirmative orientation toward community place practices" and a "critical orientation toward dominant spatial practices" (*Barrio-Logos* 15). Arturo Escobar, in 2001 article on place and globalization, underlines the importance of place-based resistance movements in a regime of globalizing capitalism that builds on placelessness as practice and ideology. So many of the Puerto Rican diaspora writing assert a place based imagination centered on barrios. They manifest the subaltern strategies of localization.

The struggles over space, in the contemporary American culture are symbolically presented as the struggles over El Barrios (East Harlem, in New York). Within the context of everyday life, El Barrio is the reaffirmation of culture, a defense of space, an ethnically bound community, and a spiritual zone of Latino identity. The literary representation of struggles over El Barrio stands for resistance practices for space, on the backdrop of the challenges posed by neo liberal policies and global capitalism. It is part of the subaltern tactics of socio-spatial resistance, in an era marked by continuing erasure of ethnic cultural landscapes.

The barriocentric Puerto Rican diasporic literature interrogates the larger landscaping of power. It is this same geographic consciousness in writing diaspora, which makes barriocentric works geopolitical. As stated in *Barrio Logos*, barrios are the "real and rhetoric locations" from which to enact "ideologically expressive critiques of domination" (15).

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RACIAL SEGREGATION IN LANGSTON HUGHES'S SELECT POEMS

Ms. Sneha K.

Racial segregation is the practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions and facilities on the basis of race or alleged race. Racial segregation provides a means of maintaining the economic advantages and superior social status of the politically dominant group, and it has been employed primarily by white populations to maintain their ascendancy over other groups by means of legal and social colour bars.

Langston Hughes, a dominant black poet of the Harlem Renaissance, is noted for his representation of African American gender, race and culture. His exploration of the convergence of race, gender and culture earned him the title, "The Shakespeare of Harlem." The thematic scope of his poetry covers the faithful portrayal of social realism, primitive naturalism and the democratic current of protest against racial and sexual injustice in America. To Hughes, it seems that identity is inseparable from the individual and society.

Hughes wrote "I, Too" from the perspective of an African American man - either a slave, a free man in the Jim Crow South, or even a domestic servant. The poem reflects a common experience for many African Americans during his time. The poem, "I, Too" is also known as "I, Too, Sing America," and was initially titled "Epilogue," when it appeared in *The Weary Blues*, in the 1926 volume of Langston Hughes's poetry.

The speaker begins the poem by declaring that he too can "sing America" (2), meaning that he is claiming his right to feel patriotic towards America, even though he is the "darker" brother who cannot sit at the table and who must eat in the kitchen. This alludes to the common practice of racial segregation during the early twentieth century, when African Americans faced discrimination in nearly every aspect of their lives. They were forced to live, work, eat and travel separately from their white counterparts, had few civil or legal rights, were often victims of racial violence, and faced economic marginalization in both the North and the South. It is evident that the opening lines of the poem are an illustration of W. E. B. Du Bois's theory of "double-consciousness":

It is a peculiar sensation, this double- consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (307)

The speaker does not languish in despair, however. He proclaims that "tomorrow" he will join the others at the table and no one will dare send him back to the kitchen. Not only that, but the 'others' will see 'how beautiful' the speaker is and will therefore feel ashamed. This statement is extremely hopeful and optimistic. The future tense,, as in "Tomorrow / I'll be" (8) is an indicator of hope. The narrator is suggesting that by eating both literally and figuratively, he will get to a point where he will be on equal footing with his white oppressors.

The image used in this poem is closely related to the "Kitchen and Domesticity" set, but it also

envisages the notion of nourishment as symbol. It poetically means to nurture his soul, to educate himself and to grow from experiences. Instead of letting the oppression pull him down, he goes to the kitchen to eat and "eats well" and grows strong" (9-10). Health here is being used as a symbol for perseverance growing in the face of adversity. The imagery in the first part of the poem is reversed. The speaker is no longer in the kitchen, now he is at the table. This means that he is moved into the dining room and is a symbol for racial equality. The speaker demonstrates a heightened sense of self and proclaims his ambition to assert his legitimacy as an American citizen and a dignified human being.

The invocation of America is important, for, Hughes is expressing his belief that African Americans are a valuable part of the country's population and that he foresees a racially equal society in the near future. Many critics believe that "I, Too" is an unofficial response to the great poet Walt Whitman's poem, "I Hear America Singing." This seems likely, given Hughes's expressed affinity for Whitman's work, as well as the similarity between the titles and choice of words. In Whitman's poem, a variety of Americans - including a mechanic, carpenter, boatman, and mother - sing joyfully about America. Hughes suggests that even though the circumstances are different for African Americans, they also deserve to experience patriotism.

The poem, "Theme for English B," is undoubtedly, one of Langston Hughes's most famous, beloved, and anthologized poems. He wrote it in 1951, towards the end of his career, and it addresses one of his most ubiquitous themes—the American Dream. The poem is written in free verse and lacks a systematic form or meter; its language is simple and casual, and it flows in a stream-of-consciousness style.

The narrative centers around a young student, whose instructor has asked him to write a page about himself with the caveat that the page ought to be true. The speaker reflects on himself, noting that he is twenty-two years old, "colored," and born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He lists the schools he has gone to and explains that he is currently a student in New York. As he walks home, he realizes that he is the only "coloured" student in his class. This was a common occurrence during the Jim Crow era, because African Americans had more difficulty in gaining entrance into elite schools than their white peers. When this poem was published, the word "colored" was a prominent way of describing someone who was black or African American. The word is almost taboo, and certainly would make anyone who used it seem at the least old-fashioned and probably racist. The word "colored" is used instead of black or African American. This gives a vivid image of one black person in a class full of white people. The speaker must feel a little isolated, a little out of his element, a little alone. Still, he connects himself with other people, saying that he likes the same things people of other races like. Regardless of race, he is making a case for shared humanity.

A little word play is used in the line "Being me, it will not be white" (28). The speaker asks if the page that he writes will be colored. He is asking if the page he writes is going to be different because it is written by a black person. But he is also playing on the idea that a page of paper is white and that there is ink on it, it will no longer be white. The black and white word-play continues. The word "white" has two meanings here. The page will not be like it was written by a white person. But it also will not be white because it will be written on.

On his page, the speaker begins by expressing his belief that it is hard to know what is true at such a young age. He identifies himself with Harlem, evoking the sounds and sights of the city, claiming to hear Harlem, and, in fact - all of New York. While he feels like an anomaly at school, he fits in within Harlem,

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which is where he is most content. He lists some of the commonplace but meaningful things he likes to do - eat, sleep, "understand life," listen to music - and points out that being "colored" does preclude him from liking the same things that white people like.

The speaker's musings become more philosophical as he wonders, "So will my page be colored that I write?" (27). He knows that his perspective is not the same as his white instructor's, but observes that he and his instructor are linked, whether they like it or not - through his writing and in the fact that they are both Americans. He recognizes that they can both learn from each other even though the instructor has the superficial advantages of being older, white, and "more free" (27). Even though the speaker and his instructor are of entirely different colours, they are a part of each other. Skin colour, in this poem, has become a symbol of freedom, reflective of the age when the poem was written and possibly still reflective of the world today.

Through this poem, Langston Hughes asserts that there are multiple types of Americans, and there is no singular defining "American" experience. Black, white, young, old, oppressed, free – all can strive for a piece of the American Dream. This poem is thus much more optimistic than some of Hughes's other writings on this subject; however, it also is a bit more ambiguous than it initially might appear. Critic Tanfer Emin Tunc writes that there are "other aspects of [the speaker's] life that can only be inferred" (234).

Tunc points out that the speaker writes about attending different schools in North Carolina before moving to New York, a pattern that traces the Great Migration of African Americans from their homes in the South to urban centers in the North like New York and Chicago. Throughout the poem specific locations are mentioned. It gives the sense that geographic locations form a significant part of the speaker's identity. Geography indeed plays a major role in race, especially with relation to the time this poem was published. About a century after the Civil War, the southern United States was the hub of racism, while the north was considered more progressive. As seen in this poem, the races were in conflict everywhere. This poem also uses places to enrich its specificity and detail. An important place mentioned in the poem is "home." This is part of the instructor's assignment but it also suggests how the term has different meanings to the speaker and the instructor. Winston-Salem is a city in North Carolina. It could definitely be considered the South. This gives an idea of the speaker's roots and some of the racism that he may have encountered growing up black in the South. Durham is another city about an hour away from Winston-Salem. He has gone to school all over the southern United States. This geographical detail leads to the thought of City College, in Harlem- part of New York City. Harlem is a rich place for thinking about race. In the 1920s, the Harlem Renaissance made Harlem a hull of new thinking. Art and music helped Harlem advance away from racism.

The speaker's experiences become more universal, and his claim that he and his teacher are a part of each other simultaneously affirms a common experience with white America while also resisting the impulse to justify his life to that culture and reshape himself in that image. Overall, the young speaker is trying to figure himself out, as well as grasp the holistic identity of his multifaceted and complicated country.

When Hughes writes this poem, which is told from the point of view of a young black student, he is connecting an individual's struggles with the struggle of an entire race. The poem is a powerful look at how a black student might relate to his white professor. Though the greatness of this poem goes beyond the question of race, it applies to any human being who has ever wondered about the nature of his or her

own identity. The title of the poem sets the stage for its educational tone. It is no surprise that there is a lot of talk about learning in this poem- after all, the poem is supposed to be an assignment for an English class. But learning in this poem is much more than school. It is about figuring out one's identity and growing by interacting with other people.

Hughes's poem is a cry of protest resulting from his exploration of African ethnic identity. His creative corpus stresses the cultural tension resulting from racism and conflict with the white ideology. The agony of the blacks in their slavery and suffering, exploitation and torture form the historical background for his writing. His poetry stands strongly for black existence, the African tradition and culture. He actively spreads the seed of social reformation that aims at the re-contextualization of black identity.

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DEPICTION OF REVOLUTION AND MATRIARCHY IN THE WORKS OF GLORIA NAYLOR

Ms. S. Snekha Sri

Literature is the verbal picture of society and revolution and rebellion find ample space and elaborate treatment in literary artefacts. African American Literature is a part of American Literature and culture. The strong inculcation of African American Literature paved the way for the emergence of Native American, Asian American and Chicano American streams of literatures. African American literature has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects. It was only during the mid- twentieth century after the ground breaking influential socio political texts Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin devised a brand of African American Modernism. Right's *Native Son* (1940), Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Baldwin eloquent volume of essays *The Fire Next Time* argued for social and cultural emancipation of African Americans. It is James Baldwin who addressed the issues of African American masculinity, sexuality and the gay rights of African Americans.

The emergence of African American Women writings brought in double jeopardy of racism in African American Women's movement. Gloria Hull examined the dilemma of African American women in All the Men are Black. All the Women are White, But Some of Us are Brave. This has made many African American women to turn toward each other for a better introspective and analytical understanding of African American Women's problems. Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1970) and Tony Morrison's The Bluest Eye (1970) addressed the question of how self-identity and respect is achieved by an African American girl in a marginalised society, which hardly values her existence. Tony Morrison expanded her thematic range from female identity to African American people relationship with African American past in her works Song of Solomon (1977), Beloved (1987) and Jazz (1991). These novels have explored folk heritage, slavery and motherhood. This is followed by Alice Walker's The Third Life of Grange Copeland that discussed the issues of poverty and family violence. She exposed the contradictions within the African American movement depicting the issue of domestic violence, father daughter rape and female genital mutilation in The Colour Purple (1982) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1982). Despite the negative representation of African American men, Alice Walker's works have initiated the renaissance of African Women's writings. This has paved the way for the emergence of literature of place, small towns, and neighbourhoods and of home. Many creative writers who are veterans of African American movements and African American feminism assisted by activist stance provided insightful literary and political essays.

Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place (1982)*, Audre Lorde's *Zami* (1982), Paul Marshall's *Praise Song of the Widow* (1983) and Gayle Jones *Corregidora* (1975) have redrawn the map of African American literary canon. The younger writers like Sherley Ann Williams with a sensitive portrayal of African Women's life in *Dessa Rose* (1986), Terry McMillan with *Waiting to Exhale* (1992) broke the new ground in the genre of fiction for African American men's writing has been receiving less attention. Yet the autobiographical resonances and the sharing of the themes continue to hold the significance and relevance among African American men's writings. John Edgar Wideman's *The Homewood Triology*, *Philiadelphia Fire* (1990), *Brothers and Keepers* (1984), Charles Johnson's *The Middle Passage*

have proved that African American literature has unleashed a new creative talent on par with other significant streams of Post Colonial and Post Modern literatures. This paper discusses the female leadership power and matriarchy in the works of Gloria Naylor.

Gloria Naylor, a contemporary African –American novelist, stands unique in the World Literature by her narration and characterisation. All her novels have a splendid literary text limning the revolutionary activities of women in African – American society. Many of her novels are gifted with a variety of women. Naylor's women are common women who possess uncommon power within them. They are the reflections of African – American women who are marginalized by their gender and race. She is a renowned African American novelist who specialises in probing into the inner self of African American women, their pangs and silent sufferings, partly because of the upper handed white society. She explores the triple consciousness of being economically marginalised, an African American, and a female. They live in a white patriarchal society where they become pawns in the hands of the society. Inspite of the cruelty, sufferings and betrayal, they manage to lead on their lives and emerge as strong women, drawing their support mainly from the other women.

Gloria Naylor's debut novel, The Women of Brewster Place, is a novel in seven stories, and each story tells about the life of seven women characters. She focuses on seven women who triumph over all odds by simply managing to survive in an impoverished and threatening neighbourhood by bonding with each other and finding refuge. She feels that just a single character is not enough to represent the status of African American women in America, so she chose to portray the lives of seven different women from different ethos. This novel is about the poor, working class women whose relationships with each other help them to bear the brutal realities of urban life, where the concept of no discrimination was merely a myth. Each of the women faces a different kind of challenge. Compared to men in this novel, women are so daunting even in their desolation, that they make their strong stand and fight the hostile world through love, humour, support and companionship from other women. They develop deep bonds which helps them to cope up with the ruthless injustice meted out to them by father, son or husband. Naylor's characters are hard-edged, soft-centered, brutally demanding and easily pleased. Their names are Mattie Michael, Etta Mae Johnson, Lucielia "Ciel" Turner, Melanie Kiswana Browne, Cora Lee, Lorraine, and Theresa. Each of their lives is explored in several short stories. The women of Brewster Place are hard-edged, soft-centered, brutally demanding, and easily pleased. Their names are Mattie Michael, Etta Mae Johnson, Lucielia Ciel Turner, Melanie Kiswana Browne, Cora Lee, Lorraine, and Theresa. Each of their lives is explored in the short stories.

The principal character Mattie Micheal acts as a sort of surrogate mother to the other female characters. She swam through her life facing a multitude of all sorts imposed on her by men, which makes her a matriarchal figure acting as a pillar of strength, helping others in their almost impossible lives. As a naive young girl, pregnant and abandoned, with no support from her father, she took the responsibility of raising her son single handed. Fate being cruel, she is again abandoned by her own son who runs away from bail stripping Mattie out of her only house she owns. But with her indomitable spirit, she not only survives but lends a lifesaving hand to Ciel, when she is on the verge of giving up her life after the accidental death of her baby. Mattie takes charge and literally rocks Ciel back to life. Naylor comments on how Mattie came into being, by which she also slightly touches upon what she means by an earth mother. Naylor explains that Mattie came into being in response to the needs of another character, Lucielia

Louise Turner, and that they were both originally figures in a short story called "A Life on Beekman Place," published in 1980 in *Essence*, from which *The Women of Brewster Place* later evolved:

... The work began with that rocking scene. And I had written that as sort of a catharsis for myself. I was going through what I considered as being a great deal of pain. And I imagined a woman who would be feeling pain that intensely but for other reasons. And I sat down and wrote that. And what I had hoped for was a kind of earth mother to just knock down this door and come sit here on this couch and just rock. I wanted to be rocked out of my pain. And that's how I invented Mattie Michael in that scene. (55)

In *Bailey's Cafe*, Naylor takes the stories of seven marginalized women and tells their unheard stories which are previously missing from the mainstream feminist discourse. Eve, proprietor of Eve's Boarding House, located down the street from Bailey's Cafe was thrown out of her house by Godfather who raised her, because of her display of sexuality. Bailey himself says that Eve is not a charitable woman. The way in which she brings out Jesse Bell out of her heroine addiction is commendable.

Bailey's wife, Nadine is another firm character who is reticent but narrates the story of Mariam which she says no man would want to say it. All the women who feature in this novel have undergone pain, suffering, disappointment and betrayal but they are forceful women who take life in their own hands and explore their sexuality in the way they see fit.

Naylor advocates an independent spirit to her women which springs from one's own inner spirit but which is strongly sustained by shared familial support, enriched by deep womanly bonds, from the lap of mothers. Her characters not just strive to survive, but strive to excel in the unjust world with their courage and inner strength.

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TRAUMA OF THE AFRICAN AMERICANS AS PORTRAYED IN LORRAINE HANSBERRY'S A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Ms. Srivaishnavi Devi T. V.

Harlem Renaissance, widely known as New Negro Movement, came into existence during the 1920s in a place called Harlem, which is near New York City. Harlem Renaissance is also considered as the cultural movement that gave rise to various African American art forms such as dance, drama, and visual arts in America. In fact, the 1920s is also known as the "jazz age." Moreover, Harlem Renaissance is also a social integration for Africans all over the world. They came together to revolt against the issues of equality, racial discrimination, human rights etc. African American Literature is a literature which gave predominance to the black people, their culture, and history. This literature is written by African people, who settled in America during eighteenth and nineteenth century as slaves. These writers depicted the society through their works and they wrote on societal issues like culture, slavery, and struggle for freedom, and also gave voice for equality in the world history.

Loraine Hansberry heralded a new movement in American drama. During her short 34 years of life, she left an indelible mark on American theatre. There is also an autobiographical element in the play *A Raisin in the Sun*. She is one of the first playwrights who depicted the reality of African American life. Hansberry also received New York Drama Critics Aircle award for her play, *A Raisin in the Sun*.

According to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, trauma is defined as an unpleasant experience that makes you feel upset or anxious. The trauma of African Americans may be interpreted in two ways: through the deferred dreams, and through the portrayal of racism. In the year 1957, when Lorraine Hansberry began her work on *A Raisin in the Sun*, she first gave a title as *Crystal Stair* which is taken from Langston Hughes poem, "Mother to Son." The final title like the original one also comes from Langston Hughes poem, which appeared in a sequence of his poem titled, "Montage of a Dream Deferred." Every individual possess certain dreams in his or her life, and is living to achieve that goal. It would be most accurate to quote from Langston Hughes poem, as acknowledged in the title page of Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*:

"What happens to a dream deferred ? Does it dry up Like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore – And then run? Does it stink like a rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over-Like a syrupy sweet? May be it just sags Like a heavy load. Or does it explode?" (1-10)

Almost every character in the Younger family possesses dreams. Mama and her late husband Big Walter's dream of owning a home forms the major plot of the play. Big Walter tells his wife Lena that "seem like God didn't see fit to give black man nothing but dreams" (29). But this dream of theirs had been deferred for nearly thirty five years. Mama has dreams of not only buying the house but also making a little kitchen

garden at the back. Walter Lee dreams of becoming a self sufficient owner of liquor store and his dream stands in contrast of Beneatha's dream of becoming a doctor .Walter Lee's male chauvinism is seen when he asks his sister either to become a nurse or get married instead of becoming a doctor. Both the dream of sister and brother becomes a question mark when Walter loses money to Willy. Walter is in a traumatic situation and tells "That money is made out of my father's flesh" (116). Mama's trauma can also be realized when she reacts after Walter Lee loses his money!/ "I seen him grow thin and old before he was forty.../ Working and working and working like somebody's old/ horse ... killing himself ... and you-you give it all / away in a day... (117).

According to George Fredrickson, the term "racism" is often used in a loose and unreflective way to describe the hostile or negative feelings of one ethnic group of people towards other. During civil war and after math of the war thousands of black southerners moved to north to relieve themselves from the oppression of Jim Crows laws which mandated the segregation of public places, transportation and even restrooms for white and blacks. According to *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, the black population in Chicago was 44,000 in 1910, after World War II and during the time in which *A Raisin in the Sun is* set, black population had increased tenfold. By 1960, there were nearly 813,000 blacks residing in Chicago.

African Americans were optimistic in moving towards north, when many blacks flourished in the community and became entrepreneurs and business owners, those who could not find suitable work fell into poverty. The law which was passed by the Congress in mid 1960s helped the poor blacks and other minorities a choice of neighbourhood in which they could live. F. I.Stone acknowledges in an article entitled "Rat and Res Judicate," "prior to this legislation, residents of Chicago's Black Belt had been paying some of the city's highest rent in the city relative to income, because they were not entitled to live wherever they pleased" (495-96). This realistic situation is portrayed in the *A Raisin in the Sun*, when Mama chooses a house in Clybourne Park, a white neighbourhood. Mama explains "Them houses they put up for coloured in them areas seem to cost twice as much as other houses" (85).

The play is also mainly based on racial prejudice and the tension between Americans and African Americans. The African Americans were rejected because they were discriminated by Americans .This racial prejudice is deliberately done by one section of the white people who are called as racist or fundamentalist. These fundamentalists wanted to retain their own identity, and did not want unity among the African Americans and Americans. They abused the African Americans mentally by not giving them equal rights. There are two types of racism explored in the play, one is internal racism, and the other racism is portrayed through external factors.

According to Donna K. Bivens, the co-director of Boston Theological Institute, internal racism is "the situation that occurs in a racist system" when members of the oppressed group support the supremacy and participate in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures and ideologies that under grid the dominating groups power. The victims of the internalized racism in *The Raisin in The Sun* are George and Walter Lee.

George's internalized racism is seen when he tells Beneatha that her "African heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts" (72). Though George is from a wealthy family, he distances himself from African heritage and preferring instead to adopt the culture and attitude of the Americans. In the case of Walter Lee,, a poor chauffeur internalized racism is seen when he tells

his wife, "We all tied up in a race of people don't know how to do nothing but to moan, pray and have babies" (17). Irrespective of their socio economic status Walter and George are affected by internalized racism and are traumatized by this.

External racism is felt by the members of Younger family through Karl Linder. After a long delay, when Mama gets the insurance check for her husband's death she uses the part of the money to put down a payment of the house with the garden which she always desired. This happiness is stopped temporarily and causes trauma to the family. In the year 1959, in a upcoming neighbourhood outside Chicago, Progress Development Corporation planned to sell nearly ten to twelve new homes to African Americans. When all the white neighbourhood of Deerfield discovered this, they were furious.

One resident, Bob Danning, explained his feelings and also the feelings of his neighbours when he stated, "We're not bigots. We don't go around calling people names. And I don't think we want to deny Negroes or anybody else the right to decent homes, just as good as ours. But not next door" (Rosen 16). In the same way, Karl Linder, an American from Clybourne Park, openly asserts to the Youngers, "What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighbourhood where you aren't wanted" (105). Although Linder is careful to point out that the actions of Clybourne park residents are not a matter of "race prejudice" that is the exact case. Linder further tell them that he will provide them with money if they do not move to Clybourne Park, but unfortunately when the money is lost to Willy, Walter thinks that he has to take the money after all but Mama refuses "ain't no body in my family never let nobody pay' em no money that was the way of telling us we wasn't fit to walk the earth" (133).

When Walter meets Linder again, he tells him that, "we are very proud people" and "we don't want your money" (135). Thus, Lorraine Hansberry's work, *A Raisin in the Sun*, can be considered as a masterpiece, because she has not only portrayed the trauma of African Americans but also has given the solution to the trauma, through the Younger family, especially Mama. S,he never gives up and the younger family move to Clybourne with the hope of new beginning towards their life.

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DON DELILLO'S *WHITE NOISE:* A READING OF POSTMODERN HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WORLD OF SIMULACRA

Mr. Sujith Babu S.

White Noise, DeLillo's magnum opus, has been identified as the replica of the postmodern literature which substantiates the idealism of its creator. The novel, published in 1985, analyses the cultural situation in America, perceives the problems and strives to make the inhabitants aspire for a better life style. It is with the publication of *White Noise* that DeLillo began ascending the heights of literature to become the noted and respected novelist he is today. *White Noise* is DeLillo's most accessible work, less complexly structured, more traditional and realistic in its portrayal of American life when compared to his other works. The novel explores several themes that emerged during the mid to late twentieth century such as novelty intellectualism, media saturation, the disintegration and re- integration of family and society and the psychic turbulence of human beings on account of the invasion of media and technology.

The world of *White Noise* is considerably the postmodern one in which the cultural spheres – family, school, society and human psyche disintegrate into undifferentiated signs. The technological innovations such as television, tabloids, radio and film described in the novel act as catalysts for the eternal disintegration of human consciousness. In the Gladney household, television and radio voices filter through the house as white noise. Galdney states, "I have come to understand that the medium is a primal force in the American sealed off, timeless, self-contained, self- referring" (5).

The simulation which becomes the dominant feature of contemporary postmodern life expands to include people, feelings and illnesses. People have come to believe pseudo- representations more than the direct perception even when it comes to the symptoms of illnesses. Inspite of being a late modernist, Jack is not able to escape from the labyrinth of postmodern pre-suppositions. The novel brilliantly demonstrates the existence and survival of a postmodern society in the shackles of the postmodern simulacra. The apparent instance of simulation in *White Noise* is in the role played by SIMUVAC (Simulated Evacuation) and its activities are part of the constant confusion between reality (signifier) and simulation (signified). In *Simulations*, Baudrillard observes: "The very definition of the real becomes that of which it is possible to give an equivalent production. This is contemporaneous with a science that postulates that a person can be perfectly reduced in a set of given condition" (186).

In *White Noise*, the daily life of the characters is influenced by the representation of images. Simulacrum, which is an image or representation of something that replaces reality with its representation, pervades the life and thoughts of all those who are engulfed in the ocean of postmodern culture. It is the copy of the original that sometimes conveys superficial messages. Technological innovations such as TV and Radio seem to have succeeded in pervading their lives and shaping their behaviour, responses and traits and even the expectations and aspirations about themselves and others. The media act as an eternal source of new epistemological experience and ontological option that doubles the fictional world of the characters and the real world of the readers. The novel comments on the importance of TV in the postmodern American society through the character Murray Siskind, a teacher of popular culture:

TV offers incredible amount of psychic data. It opens ancient memories of world birth; it welcomes into the grid, the network of little lazing dots that make up the picture pattern. There is light, there is sound. The medium practically overflows with sacred formulas if we

can remember how to respond innocently and get past our irritation, weariness and disgust. Television is the death throes of human consciousness, according to them. (51)

The characters in this novel, especially Jack Gladney and his followers, tend to believe what these technological devices exhort, not the inner consciousness which guides a human being. Heinrich, Gladney's elder son, refuses to trust his senses completely in observing and analyzing the weather and chooses to believe the radio instead. He thinks that whatever is broadcast through these devices is true and correct. Heinrich utters: "It is going to rain tonight. It is raining now, I said the radio said tonight" (22).

The simulacrum which is the dominant feature of contemporary postmodern life expands to include people's feelings and illnesses. Steffie and Denise, members of Gladney family, suffer from *déjà vu* after the airborne toxic event that shook the family. *Déjà vu* itself is a simulacrum as it is a mental image, a psychic illusion that leads to the original event. Babette, Gladney's wife who is seemingly a normal character in the novel has a *déjà vu*, which is explained as a dream where there are images explaining the superficiality of the postmodern society. While discussing the unnatural *deja vu*, Babette proclaims: "This happened before, she has finally What happened before? Eating yogurt, sitting here, talking about 'déjà vu.' The yogurt was on my spoon. I saw it in a flash" (133).

The supermarket in the novel like all other prominent signs acts as a rendezvous where the image and simulacra have declared their triumph over reality. It is a miniature form of this entire universe where all its inmates are after simulacrum which is attractive, but lacks originality. At this juncture, the supermarket becomes a replica of postmodern consumerist society, where shoppers are attracted to colours, size, and artistic packaging that ignite their desire to buy items regardless of need. The narrative reads:

Everything is concealed in symbolism hidden by veils of mystery and layers of cultural material. But it is psychic data, absolutely. All the letters and numbers are here, all the colours of the spectrum, all the voices and sounds, all the code words and ceremonial phrases. It is just a question of deciphering, rearranging, peeling off the layers of unspeakability. (38)

Notwithstanding the variant influences of modern technology, the postmodern beings themselves lead their life in a way of simulacra. Jack Gladney and his comrades stand for the simulated representations. The discipline which the protagonist is interested in, symbolizes the concept of simulacrum. Hitler, the historical leader is depicted as a different personality by simulating the reality that he was once the master brain behind the historical holocaust. During the period of his regime, Hitler was the cynosure of the world and the nightmare of the Jews. He launched an anti- Jew campaign and spread the awesome cloud of fear and anxiety for the supremacy of the Aryans. Jack Gladney, the college professor, focuses on the issue of propaganda, spectatorship and crowd manipulation of Nazism through imagery, as part of the course 'Advanced Nazism,' deliberately forgetting the historical reality. Thus, the image of Hitler is simulated and the so called newly formed image enriches and enhances the concept of simulacrum.

It is true that Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum has been mentioned repeatedly by critics of *White Noise* all over the world. Instead of envisaging extremity of skepticism as in Baudrillard's concept, DeLillo exemplifies the distinction between reality and simulation. In his article, "Baudrillard, DeLillo's *White Noise* and the End of the Heroic Narrative," Leonard Wilcox says:

DeLillo differs from Baudrillard in one important aspect. Baudrillard's position toward the postmodern world is ultimately one of radical skepticism. Finally there is nothing outside the

play of simulations, no real in which a radical critique of the simulational society must be grounded. DeLillo's writing on the other hand, reveals a belief that fictional narrative can provide critical distance from, a critical perspective on, the process it depicts. (363)

White Noise is a novel which takes the readers on a tour into a postmodern world of contemporary American society and to the current psychic status of mankind. As Baudrillard illustrates in his book *Americana*, "People especially in contemporary America, live in a perpetual present, in a perpetual simulation and in a perpetual present of signs" (18). The postmodern society has been identified as the abode where human fear and anxiety towards the super reality of death takes new shapes and forms. The fear of death is everywhere in *White Noise* and its omnipresence can be found not only in the plot construction but also in the profound psychic status of the individual characters. In this novel, Jack Gladney is identified as the epitome of the disintegrated consciousness in the postmodern era owing to the exaggerated fear and anxiety towards the realities of the contemporary society. In *Don DeLillo: The Physics of Language*, David Cowart opines, "As the physician introduces a discreet quanta of some weakened pathogen into his body to stimulate its immune system, so will Jack in a professional embrace of the chief death merchant of his age, promote his own resistance to 'timor mortis'" (79).

Through this novel, DeLillo endeavors to detail the attempts of modern life to push this fear out of sight as in the character of Gladney. The fear continues to resurface and fill the human mind with dread. The different attitudes and approaches, envisaged by the postmodern human beings reflect the diversity of thoughts predominant in the contemporary culture. A sincere attempt has been made in the novel to demonstrate the spreading of panic due to the threatening phobia of mortality in the postmodern consciousness. Although the novel delineates the anxiety of a phobia- stricken society in an era of scientific advancement, it sends signals to the human mind which are indirect exhortations for the need of mental stability, a sense of death rather than horrendous phobic thoughts. Although some argue that there are least chances for the eternal escape from the perilous and poisoning postmodern consumerist environment, we can at least change our way of life, neither surrounding ourselves with the threat in the form of consumer products nor supporting the consumerist circle. It has been estimated that despite being spectators and sufferers who find it difficult to cope with the existing situation or escape from the triviality of life, human beings need to be conscious about the inner soul and consciousness until the right answer appears through the senses.

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ETHNICISM IN LANGSTON HUGHES'S SELECT POEMS

Ms. C. S. Thangamani and Dr. Narasingaram Jayashree

Ethnicism is a form of nationalism wherein the nation is defined in the terms of ethnicity. It is based on the members of the nation who descend from that particular nation. A nation which derives political legitimacy for the ethnic group from its homeland, from its protective function against colonization, persecution and racism and from its claim to facilitate the shared cultural and social life, which may not have been possible under the ethnic group's previous status as an ethnic minority. Ethnic minorities are struggling to get their ethnicity.

Langston Hughes is an African American poet, essayist, columnist, lyricist and novelist. He was born on Feb 12, 1902 in Joplin, Missouri (U.S) and died on May 22, 1927 in New York. He wrote many poems and among those, "As I Grew Older" and "Let America Be America Again" deal about Hughes' dreams about America. These poems speak about the ethnicism for the minorities of America.

The poem "As I Grew Older" deals with the African American's dreams. The speaker is an African American. He has forgotten his dream which he had as a child of having bright future. The dream is compared to 'sun' as he says, "In front of me, /Bright like a sun- / My dream" (4-6). As a child, the speaker believed that the world was a good place to achieve his dreams. But as he grows older, he is exposed to the injustice of the world (particularly, as an African American exposed to injustice).

As the speaker grows older, the wall slowly rises between him and his dreams. The wall here refers to the 'domination of White American and Racism'. The hurdles and hindrances for him increases and make him to suffer a lot because he is Black as he states,

Rose until it touched the sky-The wall. Shadow. I am black. (11-14)

As the speaker is exposed to the injustice of the world- racism and struggle of being Black, he lost his dreams. All he can see is only a thick wall and the shadow which it casts. He wants to break the wall with his dark hands and he has to find his dreams. The last stanza of the poem ends with an optimism to break all the domination and achieve his dreams, as he says,

To break this shadow Into a thousand lights of sun, Into a thousand whirling dreams Of Sun! (26-29)

The poem "Let America Be America Again" is about the American dream. The speaker speaks of the dream which the pioneers dreamt. The first line is the title of the poem which stresses its importance. The people of America have a desire to seek a home for their own because they feel that they are not free. They do not enjoy the freedom. Hughes also voices his opinions in the poem which is mentioned in parenthesis like "(America never was America to me)" (5). The dreamers dreamt America as the 'great strong land of love' which is free from 'kings connive' or 'tyrants' because it will crush the people's liberty.

The speaker wants America to be the Land of Liberty. Liberty should be there without any false patriotic promises. If Liberty is attained then the pervasive opportunity will be there for everyone and the Life will be real for the people. The people will feel equality in the air they breathe. Again, Hughes speaks aside as "(There's never been equality for me, / Nor freedom in their "homeland of the free")" (15-16). Here the reality is portrayed through the words that America is never be the 'homeland of the free'.

As the speaker veils the reality, someone is enquiring in the poem about the speaker. The speaker says that he is talking on the behalf of the poor Whites, the Negros, the Red Indians and the Immigrants because he wants freedom and equality for these people rather than them being crushed as the weak. Hughes expresses it in the following manner,

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart, I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars. I am the red man driven from the land, I am the immigrant, clutching the hope I seek. (19-22)

He also explains about the greed of Americans. They are grabbing gold, profit, and property because it is all about money in America. He says it as, "Of owning everything for one's own greed!" (30).

Hughes constantly uses 'I am' in "Let America Be America Again" to personalize the fact as to how people feel about their existence in America. The workers and the Negros are working hard not for their own dream but for that of others as well. Hughes says, "I am the people, humble, hungry, mean" (34). The people feel that they are beaten up in every place. The speaker is also the representation of the people who sailed from Poland, Ireland, Black Africa and England as slaves. They have come to America with the hope that they can build their 'homeland of the free'. They thus dreamed about America: "... a dream so strong, so brave, so true" (41). Then the speaker takes a pause and repeats 'the free?' because he contrasts the hope with the reality.

There are millions of people struggling for their equality and their dreams are dead today. The Red Indians are the natives of America but they are driven out from their own land. The poor Whites could not feel that they are Liberal. The Negros did not get their equality. But these are the people who made America by their sweat and blood. So Hughes says, "O, let America be America again" (62). He repeats the same line because he wants the American dream to come true. Whatsoever, he hopes that the people who are marginalized in America will get Liberty and Equality. Hughes also insists on reality as, "America never was America to me, /And yet I swear this oath/ America will be!"(76-79). Hughes says furiously, "We, the people, must redeem" (82) and "And make America again!"(86) because he is determined to make 'America' again. The tone is one of anger with a little hope at the end.

In the poem, "As I Grew Older," the poet deals with the dreams which he could not achieve because of racial discrimination and he wants the White people to treat him equally as their fellow people. "Let America Be America Again" explains the American dream. Hughes also says that there is no liberty, equality, justice or freedom in the land of America for the Negros, the Red Indians, the poor Whites and the immigrants. He is hoping that America will be America as the dreamers dreamt it and it is up to the poor Whites to reclaim their America with their American dream. Moreover, he contrasts his hopes with the reality. As a social activist, he expressed the oppression of the marginalized in America through his poems.

Hughes shares his thoughts on the American Dream, and decades later, in 2004, Democratic Senator John Kerry used the title of the Poem "Let America Be America Again" as a slogan for his presidential campaign while running against George W. Bush. The study attempts to portray Hughes' yearning and fervent dreams as he was bitterly disappointed because he saw the United States as a haven which offered safety and security.

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- 14. Ms. Parvathy U., Research Scholar, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady.
- 15. Ms. M. K. Praseeda, Assistant Prof. in English, Kongunadu Arts & Science College, Coimbatore.
- 16. Ms. Radhika B., Research Scholar, Dravidian University, Kuppam.
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- 18. Dr. Rani Jeba Shanthi, Assistant Prof., P. S. G. C. A. S., Coimbatore.
- 19. Ms. Razeena P. R., Assistant Prof., Sri. C. Achuthamenon Govt. College, Thrissur.
- 20. Ms. Reshmi S., Assistant Prof., M. E. S. Asmabi College, Vemballur.
- 21. Ms. Resmi R., Guest Faculty in English, Mercy College, Palakkad.

- 22. Ms. Rosmi Lukose and Neethu Tessa Baby, Assistant Professors, Dept of English, Assumption College, Changanachery.
- 23. Ms. Sangeetha Verma, Assistant Prof. in English, N.S.S.College, Ottapalam, and Dr. Janaky Sreedharan, Associate Prof., University of Calicut.
- 24. Mr. Sanil T. Sunny, Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of English, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady.
- 25. Dr. Sanil Raj Johnson, Associate Prof., St. Thomas College, Thrissur.
- 26. Dr. Santhakumari R., Associate Prof. and Head, Dept. of English, Kongunadu Arts & Science College, Coimbatore.
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- 28. Ms. Sheena John, Associate Prof. in English, Mercy College, Palakkad.
- 29. Ms. Sheena N.G., Ph.D. Scholar, Mercy College, Palakkad, and Dr. T. C. Brindha Kumari, Former Head, Research Guide, Research Centre for Comparative Studies, Mercy College, Palakkad.
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- 34. Mr. Sujith Babu S., Assistant Prof., Pillai H. O. C. College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Raigad, Maharashtra.
- 35. Ms. C. S. Thangamani, M.Phil Scholar, P. S. G. R. Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore, and Dr. Narasingaram Jayashree, Assistant Prof. in English, P. S. G. R. Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore.