

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH:  
LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & SKILLS**



**Volume 7 Issue 2, July 2018**

**ISSN 2278-0742, [www.ijells.com](http://www.ijells.com)**



## Founding & Chief Editor

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju, Department of English, Osmania University is trained from EFLU and a Doctorate from Osmania University. She prefers the designation of a trainer and a writer. She has presented several academic articles to international and national seminars, conferences, journals, and magazines. Casual and creative writing is also her forte. She is a prolific reader and writer. Her areas of interest are Post colonial Literature, Gender Studies, Film Studies, English Language Teaching, Contemporary Literature and Communication Skills.

## Board of Editors

Dr. Thirunavukkarasu Karunakaran  
English Language Teaching Centre,  
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Dr. George Kolanchery  
Bayan University College  
Oman

Dr. Isam M Shihada  
Al Aqsa University,  
Gaza strip

Dr. Hareshwar Roy  
Govt. Autonomous P.G. College Satna  
Satna, Madhya Pradesh

Dr. Ravi Bhushan  
Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya  
Khanpur Kalan, Sonipat, Haryana

Dr. G. Venkata Ramana,  
BVRIT, Narsapur



## Editor's Note

Dear Readers & Contributors,

Welcome to this unique issue where most of the contributors are not from India. We have in this issue, articles from USA, Iran, KSA and Nepal. We also have some very interesting articles from India.

Some articles worth mention are '*Neuromancer* and Elements of Hyper-reality', 'De-Limiting Storytelling: A Post-structural Approach to the Medieval Narrative of the *Panchatantra*', *Dispel Inhibitions: Create Opportunities to Soar & Pair* and *Group Work in the Language Classroom*.

A 'Literature and Film' special issue is planned to be released in August 2018.

Happy Reading and Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju  
Founding & Chief Editor



## Contents

<b>Editorial Board</b> .....	02
<b>Editor's Note</b> .....	03
<b>Contents</b> .....	04

## English Creative/Casual Section

<b>The Valley of Coffins</b> Gazala Gayas .....	05
--	----

## English Literature

<b>Neuromancer and Elements of Hyper-reality</b> Elnaz Morsali Ahagh, Mohammad Ali Alaeddini & Shirin Pourebrahim .....	06
<b>De-Limiting Storytelling: A Post-structural Approach to the Medieval Narrative of the <i>Panchatantra</i></b> Ishita Verma and Nirban Manna .....	16
<b><i>The Soul of All Great Design: A Cultural Mosaic</i> by Neil Bissoondath</b> Madhav Astik .....	32
<b>Re-visioning the Gender: A Reflection on Toni Morrison's Fiction</b> Shaju Nalkara Ouseph .....	36
<b>Translation of Keats' Poem "When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be"</b> Sukhmani Kaur .....	44
<b>Change in Macbeth's Verbal Behaviour towards Lady Macbeth: A Psycho-linguistic Study</b> Uday K Mishra & K.N. Yadav .....	47
<b>Voicing the Female: Portrayal of Cassie in Taylor's <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i></b> Veena Vijaya .....	50
<b>Trauma of Incest in Wordsworth's Lucy Poems</b> Vijay Kumar Datta .....	60
<b>Women Identity and Defiance in Arundhati's <i>The God of Small Things</i></b> Vikash Kumar .....	68

## English Language Teaching

<b>Dispel Inhibitions: Create Opportunities to Soar</b> Ameena Kidwai .....	72
<b>Pair and Group Work In the Language Classroom</b> Jimalee Sowell .....	79
<b>Author Profiles</b> .....	89

### Images Courtesy:

<http://www.creativehdwallpapers.com/rain-desktop-wallpaper-hd/>

<http://wapfun.sayt.im/images/cloudy-cartoon.html>

<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/in-the-valley-of-death-miro-gabriel.html>





## The Valley of Coffins

Gazala Gayas

(Displayed on the painting 'The Valley of Death' by Miro Gabriel)

Inhabitants of cursed land  
 Live in the valley of coffins  
 Dull, depressed, and deprived  
 The river flows between the hills  
 It's waters are transparent, and clear  
 It flows zig- zag in a rhythmic ways  
 A cadence of different notes, a chasm  
 A spell, an unforgettable conjuration  
 The river is divine, called Vitasta  
 Flows from a holy spring, Varinaag  
 It has poison of thousand serpents  
 It carouses, quaffs, and consecrates  
 Their live souls into whirlpool of death  
 It is a mirage, an illusion, a deception  
 Which Sheeba saw, when she visited  
 The great palace of Solomon

They drink, and quench their thirst  
 To be bemused, amnesic, oblivious, and  
 Obsessed with death, they drink and die  
 They get hallucinations of Eden and Eve  
 Held in between serpents, scorpions, and snakes  
 And dream the façade, fake and fantasy  
 Trapped in this illusion forever  
 Like Faraun they try to cross the ocean  
 But got trapped deep in the heart of sea  
 This mirage of life is thrice moved  
 From the reality, honesty, and transparency  
 And follow the steps of angel of death  
 And the waters of Vitasta are like  
 A chimera, an illusion, a phantom and a trance  
 In the cursed land, the valley of coffins



## ***Neuromancer* and Elements of Hyper-reality**

Elnaz Morsali Ahagh, Mohammad Ali Alaeddini & Shirin Pourebrahim

### **Introduction to Baudrillardian Hyper-reality**

For Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) the major concern was reality and reality-oriented ideas such as hyper-reality, media and cybernetics etc. and large amounts of his writings dealt with diversity of reality. For a curious person like Baudrillard, a cultural theorist and a sociologist from France and a philosopher influenced by Hegel, he attempts to provide a clear definition for reality early in his works. Later works are more concerned with Mass Media (TV and early forms of internet), consumer society, mind control, mass control, half-life projects and genetic manipulation of humans. Some of his most famous books are: *The Mirror of Production* (1973), *The Illusion of the End* (1994), *Cool Memories* (1990), *America* (2010), *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981), *The Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (1978), and *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981).

A quick check with Wikipedia on *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) "Simulacra and Simulation is most known for its discussion of symbols, signs, and how they relate to contemporaneity simultaneous existences. Baudrillard claims that our current society has replaced all reality and meaning with symbols and signs, and that human experience is of a simulation of reality." (Wikipedia) According to Baudrillard, the problem arises when these meanings do not need their origins and build up in humans mind without any origin/signifier. The issue does not lie in one or two examples. The major concern of present study is a matrix-like world, saturated with hyper-reality that none recognizes anymore copy from the original; a world such full of originless copies that one easily can doubt himself. In such a world in which everything is manipulated with mass media and stimulation of human nervous system, greater concepts such as humans' life and free will and even the way that they think and behave, their personality are controlled and dictated through hyperreal and stimulated world of mass media. As Hegelian notion, this world like a computer game creates situations that humans' decision are controlled and dictated without their knowledge and to them it would seem that they are in charge but again what happens behind the curtain is the bitter fact that whichever way they choose to go, will end up with the same and predesigned conclusion.

*Neuromancer* by William Gibson is an excellent representation of simulation and simulacra where Case the main character lives a life of simulated experiences that it is only at the end of the novel he understands that even his existence is also stimulated for another real Case outside of this matrix..



## Examples of Hyper-reality in *Neuromancer*

The whole story is happening in a hyperreal world, with hyperreal characters, objects and lifestyle; however, the characters are unable to realize reality from hyper-reality. Considering *Neuromancer*, Hyper-reality is the opening sentence/s of the story. The story starts with:

*The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.*

*'It's not like I'm using,' Case heard someone say, as he shouldered his way through the crowd around the door of the Chat. 'It's like my body's developed this massive drug deficiency.' It was a Sprawl voice and a Sprawl joke. The Chatsubo was a bar for professional expatriates; you could drink there for a week and never hear two words in Japanese.'* (Gibson 1)

The opening lines represent a world conquered with mass media. The world is a big TV show and the sky above is representative of a hyperreal world. The story has not started yet and it is just like a TV channel turned to a dead channel. It is not representative or a copy of the world around. The narrator could have easily said the sky's reflection on the port is like color of television, turned to a dead channel. As Baudrillard states, it has the originality of its own and it is no longer needs the real sky to exist. Indeed, it is representative of a hyperreal world.

People who live in a hyperreal world sometimes feel something fishy in their life, something far from real but they are looking for something they do not know and they are looking the wrong place. The anonymous character in bar has got an interesting dialogue: "It's not like I'm using,' Case heard someone say, as he shouldered his way through the crowd around the door of the Chat. 'It's like my body's developed this massive drug deficiency.'" (Gibson 1) The speaker senses something weird about himself and shares it to the crowd around the door of the Chat [room]. The speaker mentions that it is like a massive drug deficiency, representing addictive essence of world of hyperreal; but as for a world of hyperreal, nobody cares and nobody reacts; not even hero of the story, Case. And it is not a Sprawl joke; it shows the unawareness and lack of recognition of the issue by mass media. Also, it mildly highlights the manipulation of senses, time etc. for humans.

Final line of the opening paragraph is also an interesting one. Although the 'The Chatsubo' bar is a special spot for expatriates of presumably Japanese, yet you can drink there for a week or two and never have to speak a word in Japanese. It is one of the main characteristics of a hyperreal world, because cultural differences do not matter anymore. In a world of hyperreal patriots or ex-patriots do not matter. Language differences do not matter anymore. They speak the language of the media, special language that anybody understands it, communicates it, a language probably based on humans' nervous system.

The ending paragraph also is very important from various points. To commence with, and in its relation to the first paragraph, it should be kept under the consideration





that Neuromancer is a complete hyperreal story that not only it is opened up in a hyperreal world but also it ends with a hyperreal world. The story ends with this paragraph:

*The screen woke, random patterns flickering feebly from side to side, as though it were trying to rid itself of something that caused it pain.*

*'I don't need you,' he said.*

*He spent the bulk of his Swiss account on a new pancreas and liver, the rest on a new Ono-Sendai and a ticket back to the Sprawl.*

*He found work.*

*He found a girl who called herself Michael.*

And one October night, punching himself past the scarlet tiers of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority, he saw three figures, tiny, impossible, which stood at the very edge of one of the vast steps of data. Small as they were, he could make out the boy's grin, his pink gums, and the glitter of the long gray eyes that had been Riviera's. Linda still wore his jacket; she waved, as he passed. But the third figure, close behind her, arm across her shoulders, was himself.

*Somewhere, very close, the laugh that wasn't laughter.*

*He never saw Molly again. (Gibson 217)*

At the beginning of the story, narrator opens the story with a sky, colored like TV screen turned to a dead channel. As if individuals are waiting for the program to start so does a blue pale screen before the show. The screen which symbolizes world of hyper-real, is somehow shattered, at least for Case. The narrator says: "The screen woke, random patterns flickering feebly from side to side, as though it were trying to rid itself of something that caused it pain." The pain that world of hyperreal feels comes from case and his awareness, new insight he has gained through recent events. And Case's final word is that: "I don't need you," which signifies his release from magic of the hyperreal and the ability to recognize real from hyperreal for Case. The pain for the hyperreal world also comes from facing reality which threatens its existence or being in the first place and means death of hyperreal being.

Next line of final paragraph is representation of deeper simulation and simulacra when the voice says Case spent large sum of money on a new pancreas and liver, and the rest on Ono-Sendai and a ticket to Sprawl. It represents the lack of originality and mass production of almost everything. People can buy new pancreases and livers. It is not anyone's liver, it is just a liver for itself. In the modern era, now some parts of external ears and ear drums can be printed with highly advanced 3D printers. Therefore, humans are not so far from hyperreal of Gibson. Yet there is another fact hidden in the line and it is society of consumer and consumption. People spend large amounts of money on the things that they do not need, something that society forces them to buy. There is nothing





wrong with Case's liver or pancreas; people do such purchases all the time, just for the reason that they might need them sometimes in the future. The world of hyperreal has always highlighted the consumption. It does not advise Case/individuals to take care of their health. It just gives you instant replacements for large sum of money. That is the way it works.

There are other applications to the screen in the story that on the background hints the keen readers that this might be artificial world in the story and after merging Neuromancer and Wintermute, there is nothing but true, real and original world of existence. Here is one of the greatest of description about sky and this time sky of Chiba city:

*A gray disk, the color of Chiba sky.*

*Now --*

*Disk beginning to rotate, faster, becoming a sphere of paler gray. Expanding --*

*And flowed, flowered for him, fluid neon origami trick, the unfolding of his distanceless home, his country, transparent 3D chessboard extending to infinity. (Gibson 43-44)*

The lack of originality, the cultural differences and language turn into indifference toward the days and the gender at the end of the story. First, Case finds a girl "who called herself Michael" (Gibson 217) which unlike 2017, was very unusual for girls to desire such acts. And the story continues to one day. It is not a special day. It is like any other days. It is one day from October and it is all the narrator knows. At such an important day that he wants to go and see Molly, it seems that it is not important for him to know the time when he has got what he wanted: work, money, a girl named Michael, new pancreas and liver, new Ono-Sendai and a ticket back to the Sprawl. All of which are what a consumer society needs.

Final lines still carry greater example of hyper-reality and it is when Case meets Linda in the cyber world. He stands at the very edge of one of the vast steps of data and little by little recognizes Linda and her boy. Then he recognizes himself. Linda is still wearing Case's jacket he gave her before starting the adventures. Then the readers realize that maybe the Case who thinks himself as the original version of himself, is indeed himself a copy. Maybe both of them are copies without originality.

An interesting fact about this novel is that there is no specifically defined name for the setting and places. The description of towns and cities are barely a description and mostly they add to the complexity and ambiguity, and lack of originality. The places are almost everyman's type. The Clinic for example can be any clinic. It does not mention if the clinic is for specific illnesses or a general clinic; if it is big and famous or not, if its doctors are well-known or not. If it is the only clinic in town or not? It does not have even a name. "The clinic was nameless, expensively appointed, a cluster of sleek pavilions separated by small formal gardens. He remembered the place from the round he'd made



his first month in Chiba." (Gibson 24-25) Cheap Hotel, the hotel across the street, Chiba clinics, M Street restaurant, several floating restaurants on a small lake near the Intercontinental, French hospital, Chat bar and many more.

Personality without a person is the exact definition of hyper-reality. The examples of such existence are numerous in the novel, some of which as instances are going to be discussed below. The examples includes dead people, whose real body, signified is gone but they exist without their original beings and now their existence is of their own. There are also examples of colonies even numbered one, example of existence cut from half and a pure personality and pure ego; both without any real original existence which where at the end of the novel they merge with each other, no one has clue what does it mean now. What they become remains a mystery even for an expert reader because Gibson has left readers with no hint.

Marie-France Tessier is one of the minor characters. She is mother of 3Jane and John Ashpool's wife who has been killed by her husband before the events of novel, although her presence is felt and she's the one who "helped make the Tessier-Ashpool name into a financial powerhouse. She also began overseeing the formation of the AIs Wintermute and Neuromancer. Her goal was to create a 'symbiotic relationship with the AI's' one where the 'Tessier-Ashpool would be immortal, a hive, each of them units of a larger entity'." (Shmoop University)

Another minor character is 3Jane, a pure example of simulacra and mass production. Her Tessier- Ashpool family provides her with enough money to have party and hire a ninja assassin but her family goes beyond that and make a colony out of her; countless copies that reader faces up to 8 copies during their reading. "Ashpool kills one of the Jane clones and is all set to commit suicide when Molly runs into him during her incursion into Straylight." (Shmoop University) There is a dialogue by 3Jane on her essay that she claims the fact that the original members of family hide themselves behind their money by creating self-regarding representatives. "*We have sealed ourselves away behind our money, growing inward, generating a seamless universe of self.*" (Gibson 141)

Now let's have a closer look on more serious characters of novel. The Dixie Flatline, also known as McCoy Pauly, is one of the most effective cyber-man in the novel. When he was alive, he was a legendary console cowboy and taught Case his moves. According to Shmoop University:

By the time the events of the novel go down, Dixie has been dead awhile, but his memories live on in a ROM construct stolen by Molly and Case, meaning Dixie can't create new memories or learns or grows in any meaningful way. The ROM construct is simply the memories and instincts of a dead man that create a feedback loop, so he "always does what [you] expect him to" (Gibson 166-167). Dixie finds his inability to change a total drag and asks Case to delete him once the job is done.



Therefore he is not alive. The original Dixie does not exist and is dead but some hyper-reality version of him is kept alive in the cyberspace with limited information that he had, and now no one can add to his data anything more i.e. update him.

Next instance of such hyperreal being is Linda Lee. She dies very early in the novel when she steals ROM containing Dixie and while trying to sell it. Right before her death, *Neuromancer's* character absorbs her into the world of hyperreal and she lives there. That means she lives there as a data. She is now an existence and personality without her original person and being. In a conversation between *Neuromancer* and Case toward the end of the novel, *Neuromancer* explains life in a world of hyperreal as same as original life. "You were wrong, Case. To live here is to live. There is no difference." (Gibson 209) It is indeed one of the most hyperreal sentences ever written.

Characters of *Wintermute* and *Neuromancer* together are one separated entity and being with no original being. Their personalities exist beyond existence and in act they steal existences and alter them as they desire. *Wintermute* wears a mask and speaks behind that mask for each gathering, sometimes caring, sometime cold-blooded murderer; however, *Neuromancer* is more complicated and becomes someone from your past and someone from your memory, someone you know and trust and feel close to them. These two merged are told to be complete version of hyperreal world and one reading of end of the novel is that when they merge they become all the reality (here hyper-reality) that exist. Now what they have become can create reality of its own without requiring the link from original essence. Information that Shmoop University literary website provides repeats the same conclusion:

Some possible interpretations have *Wintermute* as a sentient, free-willed being that's like a pantheistic, all-encompassing God of cyberspace. Linda Lee continues to live after death in the matrix, suggesting that Case never got free of the matrix, or another Case was created to take his place.

Yet there are other scholars who take this to mean that the 'consensual hallucination' (Gibson 43) of cyberspace will become a reality, almost like another dimension; where your doppelgangers can exist without bothering you with pesky hashtag clone-problems. What was once thought of as just data will be considered actual intelligence. (Shmoop University)

Building personality in *Neuromancer* is technically and literally is present with or without a person. Sometimes it is addressed directly in the novel like Dixie who makes most part of Case as console cowboy or 'Neuromancer' imitating personality of others. Nevertheless, there are direct examples of forging fake personalities on a person. Example below shows prevalence of such project in the novel as truly Shmoop University states that:



In the novel's back story, there was a war (the specifics don't matter much), and in this war, there was an operation codenamed Screaming Fist. U.S. Special Forces tried to disrupt some high level Russian computers. Things went bad and everyone died except a guy named Colonel Willis Corto. Corto was severely wounded and then betrayed by his higher ups. The betrayal caused Corto to eventually go insane, and an experimental treatment was tested on him. The idea was to graft a brand new personality over the broken one, creating essentially an entirely new person. That person's name was Armitage.

Now, the worlds in Neuromancer are worth mentioning more than anything. So far almost everything was more of a hyperreal, from the characters, time itself; to setting and all that there exist. The last piece of puzzle to see the whole picture lies in The Elders of Zion. But who are they exactly? According to novel and Shmoop University they are:

Five space workers just up and decided not to return to Earth. Instead, they built their own colony and founded a society based on the Rastafarian ideology. Only two remain alive by the time Case and Molly visit Zion.

The Elders demonstrate a certain type of freedom that seems lacking in other places of the novel. Armitage is betrayed by his country, Molly by her employers when she was a meat puppet. Wintermute tries to control the fates of just about everyone in the novel. That just goes with the territory when you're stuck on earth and the folks in power control all the information.

The Elders of Zion decided to do away with all the power and betrayals on Earth and start their own free state. Considering the issue and adding it to what Case says to 3Jane at the end of the novel about the future of the things in the novel. "I got no idea at all what'll happen if Wintermute wins, but it'll change something!" (Gibson 211). And at the end Wintermute won, and things did change, but books keep it as open ended. How did it exactly end?

Why Rastafarian? Who are they and why are they important? What does it have to do with ending? The answer lies in a bigger hyper-reality. The whole things are just a set up. In a world full of hyper-reality and simulation and simulacra, what seems real is unreal and what is granted for unreal is most probably real one. Elder are the remaining people of the earth from Africa, and by the time Case and Molly visit Zion there are only two of them left. They have freedom because they are not in the Matrix. Wintermute or Neuromancer have no leverage or control over them. And according to the school of Rastafarian, their ultimate goal is to return to Africa and get back their old school life i.e. a life without any hyper-reality in it. Africa, at the time of Gibson probably was the last place under the power of computers and AIs.





When Neuromancer and Wintermute merge with each other in fact they stop existing separately and become one entity, quality of which is completely unknown. But the intelligent guess is they become something pure hyperreal or something pure real. The Case in the novel has the ability to guess the ending but is unable to understand and perceive it for the fact that he is only one hyperreal version himself, although the novel tries to depict it otherwise. It is obvious from the beginning; the sky was in the blue channel of a TV turned to a dead channel, in the spin of the gray disc, spinning and spinning very fast; or at the end of the novel when sky is in the black color of a shutdown TV screen. All the ambiguity of the novel lies in the fact that it is an entity of hyper-real existence with some deficiencies in it. Those who die are those who flat lined i.e. they are not dead bona fide they are just disconnected from the Matrix. The Case, that Case visits having children and the women who loves him is the real Case unlike the Case of the novel who cares for nothing except his past; the very thing that makes his future moves and Case and all characters of the novel, all are linked to their past. It is more like a programming method in Artificial Intelligent that you let the avatar owner to decide, and define him afterward based on his decisions. The decision that you make in the world of hyperreal on the surfaces seems to be yours, but exactly like in the sophisticated video games, they are some choice that exist for you, and each one of them you choose, does not matter, you reach the same ending as the programmer wants you to reach. You think that you are controlling the avatar in the game but indeed it is the programmer of the game that controls it.

## Conclusion

Gibson by creating such complicated and ambiguous novel claimed to create a cyberpunk novel, which he succeeds; but indeed he accomplishes more than that. As the novel has it, the readers face a world full of simulacra and simulations, a complete world of hyperreal in which all the realities are hidden and/or twisted. The locations, the sense of hunger or cold is simulated, the setting are hyperreal, the personalities are hyperreal, even the loves and incidents of the novel are symbolic and hyperreal since everything happens and exist in a world created by hyper-realities.

Gibson in this novel has warned people of the earth and future eras to be more careful about the responsibilities that they are increasingly deliver to computers and AIs. He has warned humanity about their free will that worth more than anything in this world. He has warned humanity about how much humans enter computers, cyber space and cybernetics to their life; and more or less he has tried to depict the future version of humanity if bestowing their administration to the AIs and simulations.

## Additional analysis

There is no solid reference that how many elements of hyper-reality exist altogether to say that in *Neuromancer* there is 7 out of 10 elements exists; however, certain elements are the commonplace for hyper-reality. Below are some of them in terse:



1. Having too much trust in future to solve all human problems through computers and world of artificial brains.
2. Living in an artificial world, in a way that character's existence like Neuromancer has no meaning outside cyber world. Or people who are dead and their real existence is now disappeared; however, they may have limited life in cyber world.
3. Preferring life in cyber world to the real physical world. Like Linda Lee's character who gets more complex when the readers discover that the Neuromancer drew her into his world before she dies. That means she lives on as data within the matrix. She seemed happier in the cyber-world.
4. Existence of parallel countless matrix-ish world of cybernetics, each version for each person who can modifies it.
5. Having the technology which can manipulate your nervous system and simulate an artificial world. The hyper-reality of such world based on human nervous system plus computer cybernetics is so powerful that certain actions in an artificial world can be end up killing the user in the process as known as flatlining.
6. Having personalities without necessarily having a person.
7. Ambiguity.
8. Everyman and anonymous palaces like The Clinic, Cheap Hotel etc. which can be everywhere with unknown and vague descriptions.
9. Giving clues on the hyper-reality of the world in the story like: sky in the TV screen blue or black, gray disk spinning fast etc.

## References

- Abrams, M .H.A Glossary of literary Terms. Boston: WordworthCengage Learning, 2009.Print.
- Baudrillard, Jean. Simulation and Simulacra. trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, Ann Arbor (1994). University of Michigan Press. 1981. Print.
- Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulation. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. London: Verso. 1999. PDF File.
- Gibson, W. Neuromancer. London: Grafton. 1984. Print.
- Gibson, William. Neuromancer. New York: Ace Books, 2004. PDF file.
- Neuromancer Wiki. N.p. n.d. Web. 2017.02.13.  
<<https://sites.google.com/a/rwdaenglish.org/neuromancer-wiki/Home/setting>>.
- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22.  
<<http://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/summary.html>>.
- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22.  
<<http://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/elders-zion.html>>.
- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22.  
<<https://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/ending.html>>.
- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22.  
<<http://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/john-ashpool.html>>.



- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22. <<http://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/linda-lee.html>>.
- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22. <<http://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/3jane-tessier-ashpool.html>>.
- Shmoop Editorial Group. "Neuromancer". shmoop.com. N.p. 2011. Web. 2016.12.22. <<http://www.shmoop.com/neuromancer/armitage-corto.html>>.
- Writing Center Editorial Group. Literature Reviews. UNC College of Art and Science, Chapel Hill, NC 27599. n.d. Web. 2016.11.24. <<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/literature-reviews/>>.



## De-Limiting Storytelling: A Post-structural Approach to the Medieval Narrative of the *Panchatantra*

Ishita Verma and Nirban Manna

### Introduction

India is a land of endless narratives which include standardized as well as local versions of folk tales, fables, lore, legends and myths. Each narrative is so promiscuous in nature that it puzzles readers with a false sense of foregone conclusion. Its melting structures, characters, and events imperceptibly penetrate into other narratives so well that they can often be found in any literary, cultural, even socio-political codes. Thereby, the traditional narratives exhibit a universal appeal in the way they can be analyzed from the point of view of modern theoretical models of narrative analysis including structuralism and post-structuralism. Belonging to the genre of oral tradition, the fables are not limited to recognition by a single author. This is there as on that the texts have surpassed the boundaries of time and space; and survived for so long. The Indian fables exhibit “the relativisation of the scriptor’s, the reader’s, and the observer’s (the critic’s) relationships” (Barthes, *From Work*, 414). The *Mahabharata*, for instance was compiled in oral form through the combined efforts of Vyasa, Ganesh, the Bhrigus and the Sutas who included a number of ‘mini-narratives’ in the text from time to time. The fables have neither been created by the characters like Bhishma and Vidura nor by the reciter, Vyasa. The compositions have developed through the ages with the alterable relation between the composers, the observers, and the listeners. The text circulates within a culture through generations with the help of a new relationship between the narrator and the listener. Similarly, the *Jatakas* might be attributed to a single author the Buddha, whose presence seems to dominate the structure of the tales. However, even in this case, it becomes difficult to identify an individual narrator-author in the form of the Buddha as the tales were narrated in oral form and hence do not require the signature of the narrator-author to give them a final shape.

Another set of fables which do not require the signature of the author is the *Panchatantra*. Belonging to the tradition of oral narratives, these fables were for a long time circulated without a reference to its author. The fables of the *Panchatantra*, in fact, are predominantly about the movement of the text itself, irrespective of who the author or the narrator is. The text was originally meant to be a treatise to teach the principles of *rajniti* or political science to the three ignorant princes of the king Immortal-Power and is divided into five sections popularly called the five *tantras* of the text which include:

*Mitra-bheda* or the loss of friends (the Lion and the Bull)

*Mitra-labha* or The Winning of Friends (The Dove, Crow, Mouse, Tortoise, and Deer)

*Kakolukiyam* or Of Crows and Owls





*Labdhaprasham* or Loss of Gains (The Monkey and The Crocodile)

*Apariksitakaraka* or Ill-considered Action (The *Brahmin* and The Mongoose)

Each book or *tantra* functions as a frame story in which several other stories and verses are embedded. The tales have a complex narrative structure which knits a maze of labyrinthine inter-related stories the beginnings and ends of which cannot be ascertained. The narrative of the text is fragmentary and disconnected, in a manner that perplexes readers who cannot keep track of the change in narrative points of view. The narrative of the text begins with an anonymous voice narrating the story of the king and his sons. However, when the fables are narrated, the narrative voice changes and Vishnu Sharman becomes both a narrator as well as a character. Even though the identity of the narrator, author and characters are open-ended, it never hinders the fluidity of the narrative. In the third book, "Crows and Owls" for instance, the narration begins with Vishnu Sharman narrating the frame story but soon the narratorial position shifts from Vishnu Sharman to other characters namely, Live-Strong, the Crow-king's counsellor and from him to the crow in the story narrated by Live-Strong and back again to Live-Strong and then to Red-Eye, the Owl-king's counselor, to Fierce-Eye and to Flame-Eye and the narrative continues. Thus, it becomes difficult to assign a fixed position to the author amidst such shifting narratorial positions.

### **The Panchatantra and its Author**

Assigning the text to a particular author is difficult because a number of stories in the fables have been borrowed from different sources. A number of fables in the *Panchatantra* have been borrowed from the *Jatakas*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. The story of "The Lion and the Bull" in the first book of the *Panchatantra* for instance, can also be found in the *Jatakas*. The story of "Crows and Owls" which forms the frame tale of the third book of the *Panchatantra* also occurs in the *Mahabharata*, though under a totally different context. Michel Foucault in the beginning of his essay "What is an Author" says:

*The coming into being of the notion of "author" constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy and the sciences. Even today, when we reconstruct the history of a concept, literary genre ,or school of philosophy, such categories seem relatively weak, secondary, and superimposed scansions in comparison with the solid and fundamental unit of the author and the work (Foucault, What is, 205).*

In the case of the Indian fables, no such moment of "individualisation" occurs except for the *Jatakas* in which the Buddha can be considered as an individual author. However, even the Buddha cannot be identified as the single most important author-narrator of the fables. Thus, it becomes clear that the "author-function" (211) in Indian fables is used only as a signifier with which the narrative is labeled. In case of the *Panchatantra*, Vishnusharman cannot be considered the author of the text in the sense of



the creator but the text is attributed to him only to provide the text with some “authenticity”. Similarly in the *Jatakas*, too, the Buddha functions as a signifier around which the fables are organised. This leads to the conception laid down by Barthes in the “Death of the Author” which questions the position of the author as a result of the apprehension to cut loose from the restrictions enforced by the dichotomy of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. In this essay he declares the ‘death of the author’, “which is a rhetorical way of asserting the independence of the literary text and its immunity to the possibility of being unified or limited by any notion of what the author might have intended, or ‘crafted’ in to the work” (Barry, *Beginning*, 63). According to Barthes, ascribing a text to as single author and giving it a single and fixed meaning limits the idea that the text intends to convey. “A text’s unity lies not in its origins” (Barthes, *Death* 148) or its creator“ but in its destination” (148)or its reader. Barthes and other theorists have tried to liberate the text from the clutches of the author:

*. . . it can be broken (this is exactly what the Middle Ages did with the two authoritative texts, the Scriptures, and Aristotle). The text can be read without its father’s guarantee: the restitution of the intertext paradoxically abolishes the concept of filiation. It is not that the author cannot come back into the Text, into his text; however he can do so only as a ‘guest,’ so to speak (FromWork 418).*

In this context, an analogy can be drawn between Indian fables and Greek texts. Like the Indian texts, the Greek texts also cannot be ascribed to a single author. Homer, for instance, is considered by some critics merely as a figure of speech in the *Odyssey*. In the words of Barthes, a novelist is no different from any other character that appears in the text, he is in fact, “inscribed in the text like any other character” (418). This is also the case with Indian texts like the *Panchatantra* where Vishnu Sharman appears as a character in the tales when an anonymous narrator introduces Vishnu Sharman to the readers when, one of the counselors recommends his name to the king and tells him that only he could be entrusted with the task of educating the princes, “Now there is a Brahman here named Vishnu Sharman, with a reputation for competence in numerous sciences. In trust the princes to him. He will certainly make them intelligent in a twinkling” (Ryder, *The Panchatantra* 14). Vishnu Sharman functions as the ‘scriptor’ of the text, one who illustrates the knowledge of the various texts through narratives. He is simply the learned master who has “studied the cream of all the *Arthasastras* in the world” (Taylor, *The Indigo Jackal* 109). According to Taylor, “In the case of the *Panchatantra*, we have a ‘collective author’, being the long line of creators, compilers and, redactors of the text” (101). These include the various versions of the text that have been created and compiled in several languages in different parts of the world.

In the case of the *Panchatantra*, it can be seen that it reveals several levels of authorship, both fictional and real. At the fictional level, the authorship of the text can be attributed to the various animals and birds in the tales. The primary narrator creates a fictional world of talking animals and birds that perform the task of narration for him.



At the most basic level, certain anonymous authors created the primary building blocks from which the *Panchatantra* was assembled. These included the narrative units and the thousand-odd verses, many of which are so found in the *Jatakas*, *Dharamasastras*, and in the pool of oral tradition on which the *Panchatantra* may have drawn. The historical individuals who actually composed or wrote this primary material are virtually invisible to us and are therefore usually overlooked (106).

The multiplicity of narrators makes it difficult for the reader to identify a single narrator in the text and hence they fail to notice who the composer of the text is. The second level of authors consists of those authors that compiled the text from its various pre-existing versions such as the Pahlavi (1), the *Tantrakhyayika*(2), and such others. These anonymous authors combined the various versions of the text into a narrative whole through the addition of their own ideas to create a simpler version of the *Panchatantra*. The third level consists of Purnabhadra's version, a Jain Monk who "compared corrected and combined pre-existing versions of the *Panchatantra*" (106). To this version, he added some of his own writing and also some material drawn from other sources like the *Tantrakhyaika* and the *Brihatkathamanjari* (3). He is considered by the famous critic, Taylor to be the compiler and editor rather than the author of the text. He created a whole new version of the text by combining the two previous versions of the text.

Finally, at the fourth level of authorship is Vishnu Sharman himself. "Vishnu Sharman is said to have "created" the *Panchatantra*, and also to have prepared, arranged or composed the five individual *tantras*. There is nothing, however, to suggest that Vishnu Sharman himself was anything other than the literary creation of some other authorial hand" (106). However, Vishnu Sharman is different from other creators or authors of the text as he has been credited with the creation of the five *tantras* or sub-divisions of the *Panchatantra*. He is said to have given the text its present form. The *Panchatantra*, is like a number of texts from Sanskrit literature like the *Mahabharata* or the *Brihatkathamanjari* is impersonal and indifferent to the author. The reader, while reading the fables, remains scarcely aware of the presence of Vishnu Sharman or even the authors or editors before him. A text without an author becomes more authoritative than the one associated with an author. "When reading an anonymous text we are not, it seems, are confronted with the mere opinions and prejudices of an individual, but we encounter "truths" that transcend the individual and reflect upon some deeper communal verities" (107). An anonymous text does not portray the opinions and views of an individual rather; the reader comes across truths that surpass which are beyond an individual. The tales of the *Panchatantra* too do not require the signature of an author. As Vishnu Sharman himself appears as a character in the fables they can certainly be read without any reference to the author-narrator as anonymous moral stories; hence its readers are the master of the texts. The appearance of the narrator as a character is not only seen in Sanskrit texts, but also in a number of later European texts like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* where Marlow, the narrator of the novel is introduced as a character in the text by an anonymous narrator. In



the case of the *Panchatantra* the anonymous narrator provides objectivity to the text by beginning with the description of the city of Maiden's Delight:

In the southern country was a city called Maidens' Delight. It rivaled the city of heaven's king, so abounding in every urban excellence as to form the central jewel of Earth's diadem. Its contour was like that of Kailasa Peak. Its gates and palaces were stocked with machines, missile weapons, and chariots in great variety. Its central portal, massive as Indrakila Mountain, was fitted with bolt and bar, panel and arch, all formidable, impressive, solid. Its numerous temples lifted their firm bulk near spacious squares and crossings. It wore a moat-girdled zone of walls that recalled the high-uplifted Himalayas (Ryder19).

All the five *tantras* and even the individual tales begin in a similar manner, that is, with a detailed description of a city or a forest. This provides objectivity to the texts and also distances the narrator or the author from the text.

### Intertextual Web in the Fables

The *Panchatantra* along with the other fables has been in circulation for so long that one cannot deny a certain amount of intertextuality in them. Intertextuality is a theory that refers to the texts that were written or formed successively in a culture or a number of cultures together. The theory of intertextuality was developed by Julia Kristeva ". . . to indicate that a text (such as a novel, a poem or historical document) is not a self-contained or autonomous entity, but is produced from other texts. This interpretation that a particular reader generates from a text will then depend on the recognition of a relationship of the given text to other texts" (Edgar, Sedgwick 197). According to Kristeva, a text has two axes, a horizontal axis which links the author of the text to the reader and a vertical axis which connects one text to another. Each text is connected to the other in some way or the other. This approach especially has an influence on texts like the *Panchatantra* which are drawn from multiple sources. It is concerned not only with sources and influences but also with "the components of a textual system . . . the transportation of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by anew articulation of the enunciative and denotative position" (Kristeva, *Word, Dialogue and Novel* 15). It is seen that intertextuality applies more to oral narratives than the written ones since the oral narratives are modified with every narration, new elements are added and some old elements are rubbed out. As Indian fables are primarily oral the concept of intertextuality can easily be applied to them. The various fables like the *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesha*, and the *Jatakas* have been circulated through the oral technique and hence, the texts overlap each other. The intertextual element exists not only between the two texts but also between the various versions of the *Panchatantra* itself.

This crisscross of texts and subtexts between the texts and within the text is much evident in several stories; for instance, the story titled "The Lion and The Bull", the frame





story of Book I of the *Panchatantra*, is also found in the *Jatakas*. A number of scholars believe the story to have been borrowed from the *Jataka* fables, however the tales are not exactly the same. In their first encounter, in the *Panchatantra*, the lion becomes frightened after hearing the roar of the bull but, he later befriends the bull on the suggestion of his minister, the jackal. The jackal eventually becomes jealous of their friendship and instigates them to fight against each other resulting in the death of the bull at the hands of the lion. Whereas, in the *Jataka* tale the lion and the bull are seen to be friends and the jackal is not accepted in their friendship. In order to avenge himself the jackal tries to bring about a quarrel between the two but fails in separating the two friends. Not only are the tales similar but also the motif present in one tale is found in another. The motif of the roar, for instance, is central to both, the *Jataka* as well as the *Panchatantra*. In the story of the lion and the bull in the *Panchatantra* the lion is terrified of the bull's roar, whereas in the *Jataka* the Bodhisattva is born as a lion and uses his powerful roar to kill the jackal and not the bull. Hence, it is seen that in one tale it is the 'roar' of the bull which is powerful and in the other, it is the 'roar' of the lion. Apart from the *Jatakas*, the *Panchatantra* the *Mahabharata* has also had a considerable influence on the *Panchatantra*. The frame story of the third tale of the *Panchatantra* titled "Crows and Owls" is said to be borrowed from the *Mahabharata*. However, the context of both the stories is different. The crow king's attack on the owl king's army at night in the *Panchatantra* is done only for self-protection and there is no ethical element attached to this story. The same incident drives Ashwatthama to attack the Pandavas at night while they are asleep in their tent. His action, however, is faced with ethical questions. Ashwatthama's justification to his action comes close to the Crow King's reason for attacking the owls at night.

A number of references in the *Panchatantra* have also been taken from the different *Sastras*, the *Vedas*, and the *Upanishads*. The discourse on polity, strategies related to war, the way of living a good life propounded in the *Panchatantra* have all been drawn from the various *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and also the *Arthashastra*. References from a number of scholars like Panini, Jaimini, Vatsyayana is clearly discernible in the fables. The discourses on politics and strategies related to war and a well-organised army in the third book "Of Crows and Owls", for instance, are drawn from the *Arthashastra* by Chanakya. Chanakya in his *Arthashastra* writes about how to deal with a powerful enemy,

*...whoever goes with his small army to fight perishes like a man attempting to cross the sea without a boat. Hence a weak king should either seek the protection of a powerful king or maintain himself in an impregnable fort. (547)*

The same idea is reiterated by the Crow-King's minister Live-Again when he says

*Never struggle with the strong  
(If you wish to know my mind)  
Who has ever seen a cloud  
Baffle the opposite wind? (Ryder294)*



In this section of the fables, the crow minister Live-Strong, while discussing the various strategies to defeat the owl king, refers to what Narada Muni had said to the King Fight-Firm in the *Mahabharata* about the various vulnerable points of an enemy. He says:

On these points, the sage Narada gave the following information when questioned by King Fight-Firm. In the hostile camp are eighteen functionaries; in one's own, fifteen. Their conduct is discovered by assigning to each three secret-servicemen, by whose efforts both friends and enemies are kept in good control (Ryder 303).

The need of a king to have a well-organised army is also taken from the *Arthashastra*. According to Chanakya:

*In front the leader (náyaka),; in the centre the harem and the master the king; on the sides the horses and bodyguards (báhuítsára); at the extremity of the (marching) circular array, elephants and the surplus army; on all sides the army habituated to forest-life; and other troops following the camp, the commissariat, the army of an ally, and his followers should select their own road: for armies who have secured suitable positions will prove superior in fight to those who are in bad positions. (Arthasatra 522).*

A description of the "Circle of Four" (Ryder 22) seen in the first book of the *Panchatantra* proves this to be true. The lion king, Rusty, travels in a circle of four consisting of the lion, the lion's guard, the under trappers and the menials. Further, the *Panchatantra* also draws on the *Arthashastra* for the strategies of war specially, the part where Chanakya talks about the importance of a strong fortress. Fortress was adopted as a means of defense by several kings during ancient times. The strong walls of the fortress protected the king and his subjects from the enemy. The owl-king in the third book titled "Crows and Owls" is powerful because he lived in his fortress in a mountain cave along with a countless retinue of owls. The crow king also resided in a fortress-like a banyan tree with innumerable branches. In the second book the mouse God lives in a hole which he has converted into a fortress to protect himself against his enemies:

*The mouse, in social ethics, skilled,  
Saw danger coming. Then  
He built and was residing in  
A hundred-gated den (Ryder 218).*

These references from other texts are often not acknowledged in the Indian texts and it is the responsibility of the reader to read and find out the various intertextual elements:

Every text, being itself the intertext of another text, belongs to the intertextual, which must not be confused with a text's origins: to search for the 'source of' and 'influence upon' a work is to satisfy the myth of filiations. The quotation from which a text is constructed are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read; they are quotations without quotation marks (Barthes, *From Work* 417).



There are a number of references of the *Sastras* in the *Panchatantra* which has not been acknowledged to their proper sources and yet these references can be traced by the reader as belonging to the various *Sastras*.

Apart from the prose section of the *Panchatantra*, the verses also exist in “a web of intertextuality”. Most of the verses in the *Panchatantra* can be traced back to Chanakya’s *Arthashastra* and other scriptures such as the *Vedas*, the *Upanishad*, and the *Mahabharata*. Verses are used in the text to assert the truth of the story and also because they add a certain amount of authority to the text. According to Taylor, “. . . the verses are the nectar churned from the ocean of the narrative; they are the distillation, the quintessence, of the discursive truth of the stories” (139). All five frame tales of the *Panchatantra* open with a verse either introducing the characters in the story or telling about what the story contains. Even the embedded narratives open with a verse and close with the same verse. The verses, like the narratives, are also found to be a part of an intertextual network. In the Book I of the *Panchatantra*, for instance, a number of verses have been borrowed from different scriptures, for instance, the verse recited by Victorin Book I about the ways to gain power by attending to the master is taken from the *Sastras*:

*Win the friendly counselors,  
To the monarch dear,  
Win persuasive speakers; so  
    Gain the royal ear.  
On the undiscerning mob  
'Tis not wise to toil:  
No man reaps a harvest by  
    Plowing barren soil.  
Serve a king of merit, though  
Friendless, destitute;  
After some delay, you pluck  
    Long-enduring fruit.  
Hate your master, and you fill  
    Servant's meanest state:  
Not discerning whom to serve,  
    'Tis yourself you hate.  
Treat the dowager, the queen,  
    And the king-to-be,  
Chaplain, porter, counselor,  
    Most obsequiously.  
One who seeks the vain fights,  
    In the palace clings,  
In the city walks behind,  
    Is beloved of kings . . .(Ryder31).*



In the third book also, the various strategies related to the ways to deal with the enemy have also been borrowed from the *Sastras*. Live-Again, for instance, suggests the crow king not to fight with a powerful enemy for:

*Bow your head before the great,  
Lifting it when times be seem,  
And prosperity will flow  
Ever onward, like a stream.  
And again:  
Make your peace with powerful foes,  
Who are rich and good and wise,  
Who are seasoned conquerors,  
In whose home no discords rise.  
Make your peace with wicked men,  
If your life endangered be;  
Life, itself first made secure,  
Gives the realm security. . . (293)*

These and several other verses have been borrowed from the *Sastras*. A number of proverbs and adages in the text have also come from various scriptures and have become a part of everyday lives of the people. Numerous instances of such proverbs are scattered throughout the text, "A man to thrive / Must keep alive" (420), "Scholarship is less than sense; / Therefore seek intelligence" (442), "a friend in need is a friend indeed . . ." (155), and such others.

Apart from the verses and narratives Taylor also suggests the inclusion of visual arts resources and vernaculars texts from the oral tradition. According to him "the *Panchatantra* narratives have provided the subject for sculptural art in monuments in many parts of India" (Taylor 137). The story of "The Lion and The Bull" can be identified at two sites—Navalinga temple, Kukanur, and Somesvara temple, Abbalur in Karnataka. The story of Shell-Neck, Slim, and Grim is depicted at seven places such as Mallar, BodhGaya, Mathura, Nagunur, Nalanda, Alampur and Bellagame. "Right-Mind and Wrong-Mind" is seen in a sculpture at Sirivalin Karnataka. The tale of "The Monkey and The Crocodile" is depicted at eleven places in Karnataka and one in Orissa. Similarly, the story of "The Loyal Mongoose" is also depicted at four places in Karnataka and one in Andhra Pradesh (Taylor 137). In addition to the visual arts Taylor also talks of intertextuality in the vernacular and oral texts. The story of "The Ungrateful Man", in the first book of the *Panchatantra*, for instance, have appeared in a number of other folktales such as the *Bengali Folklore*, *Indian Antiquary*, *Folklore of the Santhal Parganas* and such others. (Brown "The Panchatantra in Modern Indian Folklore" 24). Similarly, the tale of "The Loyal Mongoose" and "Mouse Maid Made Mouse" is also found in a number of dialects. Intertextuality is seen also in the way certain similarities can be drawn between the fables of the *Panchatantra* and those of the West. The fables in the Western literary discourse appear





with a few changes such as the character or the setting except the motif remains the same.

For instance, the mongoose in the story of “The Loyal Mongoose” is changed to a dog as the story enters the Western culture and is titled “The Greyhound, the Serpent and the Child” as it appears in the Roman folktales *The Seven Wise Masters*, but the meaning or the moral of the story to be communicated, that is, to think before acting remains the same everywhere. In the East also the same story also in eighteen versions in different languages from Mongolia to Malaysia. It is also found in the Jewish narrative tradition in Egypt and Morocco. J.Gorres describes the journey of this fable in the following words:

*It sprang originally from the Indian mountains whence from primeval days it took its course as a little rivulet, and flowed in a westerly direction through Asia's wide fields, and, while it proceeded for thousands of years through space and time, always spreading more and more in reaching us. Out of it whole generations and many nations have drank; and having passed to Europe with the great tide of population, it is now also in our day and generation supplied to such a considerable portion of the public, that in regard to its celebrity and the magnitude of its sphere of influence, it reaches the Holy Book, and surpasses all classical works (Blackburn 494).*

Several other tales from the *Panchatantra* also occur in various folktales across the world. The narrative of “Mouse-Maid Made Mouse”, for instance, found in the third book of the *Panchatantra* is found under the title “Bridegroom for Miss Mouse” in the *Burmese Folk-Tales* and “The Rat’s Bridegroom” in the *Folktales from Korea*. Similarly, the story of “The Monkey and The Crocodile” found in the fourth book of the *Panchatantra* has traveled all the way to Central Africa and has been included in a collection of folk tales entitled the *MagicDrum*.

Thus, it is seen that intertextuality is neither about one text being borrowed from another text nor about one text influencing another text. The Indian fable narratives and verses are drawn from several sources and as such promote Kristeva’s view that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva, *Word, Dialogue* 37). This makes the text “plural” (Barthes *From Work* 416) to use Barthes’ term. The plurality of a text does not simply mean that a text has multiple meanings it means that the fables require reading at several levels as in the case of the Indian fables. In the view of Linda Hutcheon extreme interest in intertextuality leads to the rejection of the role of the author since it can be found in the eye of the reader and does not involve the intention of the communicator.

### **The Virtual World of the Tales**

In traditional narrative, the reader is usually the observer who follows the plot of the text but remains outside the text. The reader is not involved in the plot of the narrative like a character but he observes the various twists and turns retrospectively. The reader studies the events and happenings in the narrative and also everything that a character undergoes. This can be compared to the game narrative in which the player is an active



participant in the narrative of the game. The player anticipates what is going to happen. The character in the game is a virtual representation of the player himself. However, a distinction can be drawn between the narrative and game. While a narrative addresses an “external observer” who comprehends what has happened, a game requires players who are involved in the game and are concerned with what will happen. In a game narrative, a character might meet new characters and face new changes as the plot unfolds. When a narrative is composed to a game it is seen that the end is usually anticipated in the beginning, but when a reader reads a narrative he does so from the view point of the characters whose destiny slowly unfolds in the plot. Games have a certain amount of indeterminacy that checks the player from knowing the final outcome before the game ends. For the external observer, the game narrative involves following the representative character while for an internal observer or the player it is a simulation. For an external observer of the game, the internal observer assumes himself to be the character in the game he assumes the image on the screen to be a virtual reality of himself. The internal observer knows that whatever happens to his image onscreen his real self will remain harmless.

The narrative of *Panchatantra* can be said to be analogous to that of the game studies. If a reader reads and observes the narrative design of the fables like an internal observer in a game the narrative becomes prospective. The reader then becomes one of the characters in the tales and follows the twists and turns in the plot as Vishnu Sharman slowly unfolds it through his narration. The internal observer, then, is like one of the princes listening to the stories narrated by Vishnu Sharman and anticipating as to what would happen next. While the game has rules, a narrative has a plot. The plot of the fables is divided into five books and each time a new book begins the internal observer is taken back to the beginning where the disciples are sitting around their teacher listening to him narrate the tales. In the second book *The Winning of Friends*, for instance, the reader or the internal observer observes Vishnu Sharman as he introduces his tale:

*Here, then, begins Book II, called “The Winning of Friends”. The first verse runs:  
The mouse and turtle, deer and crow,  
Had first-rate sense and learning; so,  
Though money failed and means were few,  
They quickly put their purpose through (213).*

And the internal observer like the rest of the disciples asks, “How was that?”(213) Then the observer follows Vishnu Sharman as he narrates the story of Swift the crow and Gay-Neck the dove- king who in turn narrates the story of the Bharunda birds. In this way, the narrative continues with one character narrating the tale of the other and the reader anticipating the end. In the end, the narrative again shifts back to Vishnu Sharman and his disciples.



“Narrative authors (or narrauthors) usually have one shot in their gun—a fixed sequence of events”(Frasca “Simulation versus Narrative” n.p). The events are arranged in an order already decided by the author. No matter how important a role a reader plays in such a narrative the events are pre-decided and will take a turn accordingly. This is what traditionally happened in the Greek dramas where the fate of the characters played a significant role. In Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, for example, the readers’ or the audience’s opinion did not matter for Oedipus was destined to marry his mother and so he would. The traditional narrative does not offer scope for any changes to the story with an exception of oral narrative. In an oral narrative, several versions of a story are created with each narration. However, games require a player to go through several sections before the goal is reached. The narrative in this case is multiple and uncountable. The same is the case with the fables of the *Panchatantra*. The tales do not follow a fixed sequence like a traditional narrative. At the end of each book the narrative shifts to the frame story and also the tales keep shifting between animal and human worlds. The internal observer goes through the bumpy ride like a player in an adventure game and waits in anticipation as the various stories are narrated.

### **Rhizomatic Structure of the Tales**

This leads to another aspect of poststructuralism as portrayed in the Indian fables, that is, the decentering of the narrative. A fable cannot constrict the narrative to its boundaries; it often oozes out of the fissures created by the fable itself. In the *Panchatantra*, for instance, the flow of the narrative is broken, decentered and diversified at several places to accommodate the other discourses. The tales are broken in the middle of narration to refer to a verse by Chanakya or some other great thinker and then the narrative is completed. For instance, in the story of “The Jackal Who Killed No Elephant” in Book IV of the *Panchatantra* the narrative is suddenly broken to refer to the scriptures:

*One bold and plucky fighter*

*Will give an army pluck:*

*One broken, routed blighter*

*Diffuses evil luck (Ryder, 403)*

The main narrative is then returned to after a reference to the scriptures. It is especially in the use of verses that the flow of the narrative is broken. This makes the fables a heterogeneous combination of distinct narrative units.

Another aspect of poststructuralism that can be associated with the tales of the *Panchatantra* is the structure of the tales. The fables along with the main frame tale and the five other frame tales and several embedded tales resembles that of a rhizome with no beginning and no end resembles that of the rhizome with no beginning or end. It can be called an assemblage of matters drawn from a number of texts such as the *Jatakas*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. The structuralists often refer to a text as an



assemblage of variously drawn materials. According to Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*:

*A book has neither object nor subject: it is made out of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speed. To attribute a book is to overlook this working matters, and exteriority of their relations . . . In a book, as in things there are lines of flight, movements of deterritorialisation and destratification . . . All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity—but we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the structure of a substantive (DeleuzeandGuattari3-4).*

A book according to the critics is a machine with everything outside the book. Literature, so to say, is an assemblage without any ideology, all there is to talk about is:

*multiplicities, lines, strata and segmentarities, lines of light and intensities, mechanical assemblages and their various types, bodies without organs and their construction and selection, the plane of consistency, and in each case the units of measure (4).*

The book is divided into two categories— a “root-book” (5) and the “radicle-system” (5) or “fascicular root”. (5) A root-book imitates the world of nature and is considered to be the traditional book. It functions like a tap root with a spine in the center with several secondary roots branching out of it. A fascicular root, on the other hand, is the one in which the central root does not exist; rather what exists is an “indefinite multiplicity of secondary root grafts” (5). Here too, the book remains an image of the world with all its multiplicities. A book then becomes a rhizome. Simon O’Sullivan describes a rhizome in his book *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari Thought Beyond Representation* and defines a rhizome in the following words:

*A rhizome is a system, or anti-system, without center or any central organizing motif. It is flat system in which the individual nodal points can, and are, connected to one another in an on-hierarchical manner. A rhizome then fosters transversal connections and communications between heterogeneous locations and events. Indeed, a rhizome ultimately, is composed not of points but of the lines between these points (12).*

A rhizome spreads by “accretion, multiplication and underground connections” (Hunt158) and is based on a principle of connectivity. Such connectivity can be identified in all art forms. Every art form is connected to the other in some form or the other. It is also based on the principle of multiplicity. “There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or to divide in the subject. There is not even the unity to abort in the object or return in the subject” (Deleuze and Guattari 8). A multiplicity shows changes in dimension with the expansion of connections. The rhizome spreads by multiplying its adventitious roots. It resembles amaphthatisal ways “detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable and has multiple entry ways and exits and its own lines of light” (21). It is made of plateaus which



have no beginnings and no ends only middle. A plateau can be read from anywhere in the middle and can be connected to any other plateau. In a book, “each chapter is a plateau of intensities which the reader will experience on its own merit” (Hunt 157).

The tales of the *Panchatantra* when analyzed from this perspective resemble a rhizome with all its connections and multiplicities. If the genre of fables is considered to be a rhizome, then the individual tales can be said to be adventitious roots branching out of it. These adventitious roots have spread through multiplication to various parts of the world and the impact is such that one fable can easily be connected to the other. A connection between such fables as the *Panchatantra*, the *Arabian Nights*, *Aesop's Fables* can easily be discerned even though they belong to the different parts of the world. In India, an interconnection between the *Panchatantra*, the *Jatakas*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Hitopadesha*, the *Brihatkthamanjari* is also evident. Each of these texts is a plateau which can be read separately without knowing the other. Not only are the reconnections between the fables but they are also connected to the literature of the later period. The mode of narration seen in the fables of *Panchatantra* especially, the method of embedding narratives within the larger frame narratives is seen in a number of later poems and novels not only of the East but also of the West.

The tales of the *Panchatantra* are like a fascicular root system which constitutes “multiple and even adventitious roots” (Deleuze and Guattari 6). It has multiple points of entry and exits. A reader can start reading a tale from anywhere in the middle. Each story can be read separately as an individual tale, yet remain connected to the stories they are a part of. The *Panchatantra* is divided into five books each of which can be considered as a separate plateau for the reader to go through and analyze. The rhizome of the tales spreads in the same manner as propounded by Deleuze and Guattari, that is, through multiplication. The text can be said to be made through cut-up technique implying the “folding of one text onto another” (6) to make a new text. The tales of the *Panchatantra* as is clear is made up by drawing on the *Jatakas* and the *Mahabharata*. It is an assemblage drawn from variable sources before it. The tales have no beginning and no end and can be read from anywhere in the middle. The tales have been arranged in a manner by the narrator. First, comes Book I “The Loss of Friends” followed by Book II “The Winning of Friends”, “Crows and Owls” comes next followed by “Loss of Gains” and “Ill-Considered Actions”. But the arrangement of the fables in this manner is not at all fixed. The tales can begin as easily from Book III as from Book I. The position of the tales can be shifted according to the wish of the reader. A reader can start reading the tales from Book II or Book III as easily as he can start reading it from Book I. When it comes to the individual embedded tales each tale can be read as a separate entity as well as in connection with the main frame tale it is a part of. The tales continue in a linear motion, one tale emerging from the other and the connection between them is easily established. This is what a rhizome looks like—with “neither beginning nor end” (21) just spreading its roots through multiplication.





## Conclusion

Indian fables have always required a double reading since, they contain two levels of meaning. They function at two levels of meaning – the literal and the metaphorical. The same is applicable to the *Panchatantra* also. On the surface though they appear to be adventure stories, on a deeper level they contain discourses on politics and war strategies drawn from a number of ancient scriptures like the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Puranas*, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and others. A study of the *Panchatantra* from the point of view of the contemporary theories brings out the fact that though the tales are ancient their structure is modern. The use of embedded tales, intermingling of prose and verse and the use of short and aphoristic sentences indeed make the tales quite contemporary. Its structure has had an influence of both ancient as well as modern literature, both in the East as well as west.

### End Notes

1The *Panchatantra* was translated into Pahlavi by Borzuya in 570CE.

2 The Kashmiri version of the *Panchatantra*.

3 An ancient Indian epic composed around 6th century A.D. and is usually attributed to a poet named Gunadhya.

## References:

- Bakhtin, Mikhail (1981) *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Translated by Carly Emerson and Michael Holoquist: University of Texas press.
- Bal, Mieke (1985) *Narratology Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1985). Toronto Buffalo London: University of Toronto Press.
- Barry, Peter (2010) *Beginning Theory an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited.
- Barthes, Roland., and Lionel Duisit (1975) "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." *On New Literary History* 6.2: 237-272. Accessed December 14, 2015, Doi: 10.2307/468419
- --- (1979) "Death of the Author." In *Image-music-text*, edited by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press.
- ---(1985) "From Work to Text." In. *Literary Criticism A Reading*. Compiled by B. Das and J.M. Mohanty. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Blackburn, Stephen (1996) "The Brahmin and the Mongoose: The Narrative Context of a Well-Travelled Tale." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59.3:494-507. Accessed February 2015. Doi: NA
- Brims, R.N (2014) "Management Lessons from Panchatantra "Rewrite Rules, Retain Values". Paper Presented at Dr. V. N. Bedekar Institute of Management Studies. Thane, Mumbai.
- Brown, W. Norman (1919) "The Panchatantra in Modern Indian Folklore." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 39: 1-54. Accessed December 23, 2015. Doi: 10.2307/592712
- Cruzat, Charmaine S. 2011. "An Analysis of Five Fables Using Structural Approach." Word Press. Accessed February 18, 2015. <https://ilovethecharmaine.wordpress.com/2011/06/13/an-analysis-of-5-fables-using-structuralism-approach/>.
- Cuddon, J.A. (1976). *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Penguin Books.



- Dharma, Krishna (2004) *Panchatantra: A Vivid Retelling of India's Most Famous Collection of Fables: Five Wise Lessons*. Bdager CA: Torchlight publication.
- Deleuze, Giles and Felix Guattari (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Edgerton, Franklin (1915). "The Hindu Beast Fable in the Light of Recent Studies." *The American Journal of Philology*, 36 (1): 44-69. doi: 10.2307/289519
- Foucault, Michel (1998) "What Is An Author?" In *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, edited by James D. Faubion, 205-222. New York: The New York press.
- Frasca, Gonzalo (2003) "Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology." In *The Video Games Theory Reader*, edited by Mark J.P Wolf and B Perron, 221-236. New York: Routledge.
- Genette, Gérard (1983) *Narrative Discourse an Essay In Method*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Gough, Noel (2006) "Rhizosemiotic Play and the Generativity of Fiction." *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 3.1: 119-124. <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/complicity/article/viewFile/8767/7087>
- Hunt, Chris (2012) *Fifty Key Texts in Art History. Routledge Key Guides*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Kautilya (1915) *Arthashastra*. Trans.R. Shamasastri. Bangalore: Government Press.
- Kristeva , Julia (1980) "Word, Dialogue and Novel." In *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* by Julia Kristeva, edited by L.S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
- O'Sullivan, Simon (2006) *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari Thought Beyond Representation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- "Panchatantra (Writer)." *When-What-How In Depth Tutorials and Information*. Accessed February 22, 2015. <http://what-when-how.com/writers/panchatantra-writer/>.
- Pinault, David (1992) *Story-Telling Techniques in Arabian Nights*. Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
- Raje, Swati (2006) "Tales for Ethics; Ethics for Tales: Panchatantra and the Arabian Nights." Presented at IBBY, Mumbai.
- Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith (1983) *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. Methuen & Co. Ltd.
- Ryder, Arthur W (1956) *Panchatantra of Vishnu Sharma*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Schmid, Wolf (2010) *Narratology an Introduction*. Trans. Alexander Starritt, New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Simons, Jan (2007) "Narrative, Games, and Theory." *Game Studies: International Journal of Computer Games Research* 7.1. <http://gamestudies.org/0701/articles/simons>
- Singh, Dhananjay (2011) *Fables in Indian Narrative Tradition: An Analytical Study*. New Delhi: D. K. Printworld.
- Taylor, McComas (1956) *The Fall of the Indigo Jackal the Discourse of Division in Purnabhadra's Panchatantra*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Winternitz, Maurice (1977) *A History of Indian Literature*. Vol-III. New Delhi: Motilal Banrasidass.
- Yamuna, T P (2010) *Narrative Devices in Panchatantra*. Diss. Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit.



## ***The Soul of All Great Design: A Cultural Mosaic by Neil Bissoondath***

Madhav Astik

*We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic: different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, and different dreams. -Jimmy Carter*

Jimmy Carter mentions that the mosaic prepared by different people, beliefs, yearnings hopes and dreams is beautiful. The term “melting pot” if literally taken would be resulted into confluence of soil and nothing more. As if pots melt down soil (sand) melts down and it merges with another one. Whereas mosaic is something which even has been made up by separated parts when it comes together in a certain pattern gives a beautiful design. The separate parts lose their identity for playing a role in providing the whole design. This design of mosaic if deconstructed will not be beautiful and will remain only shattered, unsystematic parts. Literature too can be decorated and designed with such multicultural aspects.

Canadian literature has been coloured with so many different cultures as ‘Canadian society’ the word itself comes with the imprints of multiculturalism in the mind of a reader. Multiculturalism was adopted as the official policy of the Canadian government during the premiership of Pierre Elliott Trudeau in the 1970s and 1980s. For understanding Canadian Literature through the prism of multicultural element, following terms are necessary to keep in mind.

- **Multiculturalism/Cultural Confluence:**

Multiplicity of cultures in any particular field can be called as multiculturalism. Multiplicity tends the results like diversity, combination, hybridization and clubbed culture or society. While all these cultures get fused themselves with each other it is impossible to find out their distinctiveness. Their boundaries have melted into another and become a new form of clubbed culture like bowl of Salad and a cultural confluence came into existence.

- **Mosaic Culture:**

The federal government, under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, declared in 1971 that Canada would adopt multicultural policy. Canada would recognize and respect its society included diversity in languages, customs, religions, and so on. In 1982 multiculturalism was recognized by section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was then enacted by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.



- **Cultural Mosaic:**

Cultural Mosaic is a term derived from a French term "la mosaïque culturelle" which means the co-existence of distinguished cultures, languages and ethnic groups under the same roof. John Murray Gibbon had first used the word mosaic in his book *Canadian Mosaic* (1938) to refer to Canadian society.

Keeping in mind the demographic divisions of the world, so many distinct variations can be found as a result of their inheritance by nature and the environment they are living in. These variations or differences further will produce the peculiar distinctions like race, ethnicity, cast, gender and so on. All these when comes together and forms a unique pattern of living and behaving for a group gives birth to a new culture. Globalisation has erased the physical boundaries and so co-existence of different culture is possible. This co-existence of culture actually means co-existence of two or more individual of different culture is living in the same region. When two individual of different culture came together they come with their own cultural identities which have been rooted in them traditionally. These ideologies, behaviors, manners, rituals, thoughts, and many more will be fused with each other and creates a confluence. Looking apparently these may be differences while examining in detail they create a design like mosaic. This mosaic when represented in literature even the text becomes a mosaic of cultures represented in it. This paper too having aim of examining the multicultural aspects in Neil Bissoondath's *The Soul of All Great Design*.

**An outline of *The Soul of All Great Design*:**

*The Soul of All Great Design* opens with the young and independent Alec in late thirties who is very much passionate about the interior decoration. Alec, being a child of normal parents, does not want his life as their parents are living. He is of the thought his parents have lived life as it occurred to them in a very casual way. After shifting fields decided by his parents, once he heard a rude comment like "He doesn't even look like a fag, what could he know?" (13) When he was advising a creative idea to a couple. This comment has given him a crucial turning in his life. And he has decided "If gay was what they wanted, gay was what they would get - on a professional level" (14). This is how the journey to be an artificial gay has been started. He was actually not a gay but artificially he wanted his personality like a gay as the general assumption is there that gays can be feasible for the job of Interior designer. Consequently he has cultivated his personality like a "gay" for the solemn purpose to achieve success in business of interior decoration. Manicured hand and speech and gestures like a female compelled others to imagine him as a Gay and s not interested in woman. To possess gayness naturally he has visited a "gay village" but was not successful in that and so has pursued to show his gayness to others worrying that is it the right way for the profession or not?



Meanwhile Ian, a gay has given him contract and then suddenly in a half year he got projects more than he imagined even. As he was earning enough he has decided to leave the job and start his own independent business as an interior decorator. By playing the role of gay he had succeeded enough and started searching for an office in the middle of the town. Here Alec feels that Canada is a multicultural country and so due to this the prices have hiked in no time. Then, The Classic Car Association has arranged a gathering for the people interested in vintage cars. Where he met Sue and both of them have decided to meet again. Sue is from India and here two cultures: Indian and Canadian meets. Sumintra father Manohar and his family have emigrated from Calcutta, India. Sumintra was a traditional Indian girl who follows the Indian mindset who has been always compared with Kelley, a Canadian girl who represents Canadian youth and mindset of them completely. Sumintra's mother represents a complete Indian Minded Mother who always compared her daughter with Rima, an intelligent girl and has good prospects in Chemistry at Toronto University. Rima and Sumintra both represent the Indian culture in Canada and so have suffered a lot. Sumintra was like a pendulum between Indian and Canadian Culture as she cannot take a firm stand. She was punished when she calls her parents "guys". Her parents always have a hidden fear in their mind that her daughter might adopt Canadian manners. She has been forced to choose a groom even from three choices given to her by her parents. However, Sumintra was determined that whosoever will be her husband will accept her as she is.

Sumintra's parents advise her that "They're not like us, the kids living with the parents till they get married. It's just different way of doing things." (122) they tell Sumintra that here children may live their life as they want but in India it is not the case in India. She cannot pursue such life which is stretched between two extremes: Indian and Canadian ways of living. As she tries to adjust her between both of these extremes she started suppressing her dreams and imaginations. As a result she even has used sex toys to fulfill her sensual desires. She has even started to pass nights with the boyfriends of her friend called Kelly. Once while meeting British man called Dan, she has been insulted by Dan as a "cunt". She could not free herself in meeting with Dan and Dan did not like this so got insulted by them.

Sue and Alec came near and have shared their sensual pleasure with each other. Alec was worried as he felt that if anyone comes to know about this his business will be in danger. Both of them have their own secrets which they have not shared with each other even after having the most intimate relationship with each other. When the time came for both of them to accept each other Sue was ready and desperate to get him in her life whereas Alec did not want to accept the relationship in public as his business got a huge success only via his personality of "gay" which at any cost he did not want to ruin. At the end both of them have decided to roam in a newly designed car by Alec, where Sue was very upset by the refusal of Alec for making the relation public. Getting very upset, frustrated and torn she has rushed out of the car and in darkness of the jungle she has been crashed by Alec only. Anyhow as the car is not registered anywhere and so Alec was





not in doubt, however the incident has been reported as hit-and run case. From news report Alec comes to know that Sue is actually Sumintra who was living with her parents in Suburb.

### ***The Soul of All Great Design: a Cultural Mosaic:***

The novel has been divided into three parts by Neil Bissoondath where he has shown a great design of Indian and Canadian Cultures. The first part is about Alec, his upbringing, his dreams and his being Gay as an interior designer. Second part is about Indian girl, Sumintra who is Sue and her torn situation in the Canadian culture. How Sumintra has to be Sue and how she has been imposed with Indian traditions where she actually had to suppress a lot and so she is half Indian and half Canadian. The third part of the novel is about the relationship of Sue and Alec. At the end Sue's acceptance of making their relationship public has been refused.

As the title suggests it is really a great design made up by souls. The journey of all character in the fiction is base on their secrets and that's the central theme of it. However the co-existence of cultures (Indian and Canadian) moulds a great design to the readers by showing their own differences and individuality. Two cultures have been represented with two central characters of the novel: Alec and Sue who represents Canada and India respectively. Both of them are in love and so they are connected with "Soul" in this way the soul of both the cultures meet and merge here. Whatever happens as consequences of this meeting comes out as a great design or as a mosaic of cultures.

The cultures have been represented by Bissoondath, being "gay" in Canada is very usual and Alec chooses to look like a gay by his own choice. The person who is actually not gay but shows others that he is shows the carefree and casual culture of Canada where as in religious country like India even those who are gay cannot accept it publically as it's a social taboo. When time comes to disclose that he is actually not a gay and is in relation with a girl, he refused to do so which in actual world people are trying to show other that they are not gay. He has chosen the business at the end which shows the culture over there values career more than relations. Canadians take relationship as casual and career as the most important part of their life even at the cost of their personality.

For Sumintra, Canada is a country where she feels like a fish out of water in the beginning but gradually she becomes the part of it. The treatment of her parents with her upbringing shows us the typical traditional Indian manners. She has been advised to be away of the Blacks, Muslims and Whites. She has been forced even to choose her husband enlisted by her parents which shows us the Indian culture. When she hears a name Kelly for a girl she gets surprised. His notion for Indian has been represented with "Boys with names like John or David or Andy- or Kelly-are threats. Unlike boys with name like Ranjit or Ashok or Yogendra, they are the prospects for annihilation". She was embarrass many times as she does not know the way Canadians manners. She was even insulted by Dan



for not being sexually liberated. Identity of Sumintra is changed with the new name "Sue". This shows how her individuality has been affected by a new culture. She is like pendulum that cannot be at any single extremes and so she is torn between what has been imposed by her parents and what Canadian friends want her to be. She never gets any clear idea and always is in a confused state of mind.

Through relationship of Alec and Sue the struggle between two cultures is represented by Bissoondath. The struggle and fight is between emotion and practical approach towards life. Alec always calls Sue's parents racist as they are not ready to accept Alec. Alec who is only interested in physical pleasures with Sue was very casual even in relationship and is not emotionally attached with her whereas Sue being an emotional girl has determined feelings for Alec.

At the end of the novel also Sue chooses her love whereas Alec chooses his career. Bissoondath, by showing the death of Sue represents the death of a culture via another one. She has been crushed by Alec and in the same way the culture has been swallowed by Canada. In Canada Sumintra has to live a double life which actually is the result of her trying to become the Canadian. While transferring herself from Indian to Canadian she has been lost and she remains nowhere, at home she is intends to be a pure and chaste Indian girl whereas in public life she is tries to acquire the Canadian traditions.

A beautifully woven novel by Bissoondath represents the cultural differences and their clashes. It can be considered as Cultural Mosaic as differences represented in novel actually unites the story in a design which amuses the reader. The pieces from different cultures have been arranged and create a Cultural Mosaic.

### **Bibliography:**

- Longhurst, Brian. (2011). *Introducing Cultural Studies*. Indian Edition. Dorling Kindersley India Pvt. Ltd.
- Cuddon, J.A. (1998). *Dictionary of Literary terms and Literary Theory*. Penguin Books Ltd. England.
- Bissoondath, Neil. (2008). *The Soul of All Great Design*. Cormorant Books Inc., Canada.

### **Webliography:**

- Multiculturalism. Retrieved March 20,2017 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism>
- Indo-Canadian writers. Retrieved March 20,2017 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Indo-Canadians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indo-Canadians)



## Re-visioning the Gender: A Reflection on Toni Morrison's Fiction

Shaju Nalkara Ouseph

Gender theories concentrate on social, material and discursive features which are indivisibly intertwined and have gained from the heterogeneity of critical approaches. The idea of a gender as a cultural construct had started to gain wide critical acclaim during 1960s and 1970s. The impact of post-modernism and its emphasis on the decentering of identity led critics to believe that patriarchal certainties can be subverted and challenged without challenging men themselves. Post-modernism insisted that relationships are mediated through one's understanding of the ideas and concepts by means of which one makes sense of the world. Gender criticism emphasizes the process whereby subjects become gendered as a process in which subjectivities are formed in relation to the meanings that people have ascribed to them. It recognizes that the socially offered structure of men and women relationship is inclined to devalue and subordinate women eventhough it does not have any aggressive political agenda. It also confirms that the cultural constructions of gender excludes and condemns those women and men who do not fit neatly into the heterosexual binary. Psychoanalytic and social constructivist approaches help us to understand that gender binaries link biology with social roles. Early interactions within the family and immediate social groups also shape up the internalization of gendered roles. Families often provide separate learning atmosphere to girls and boys, emphasizing structural constraints on children and ensuring that men and women are in different and unequal positions in the social hierarchy. Subtle psychological processes generate subconscious/conscious commitment to a specific image of self within the pre-defined gender scaling.

In comparison to historic or ethnographic accounts, fiction provides an atypical form of imaginative space from which to analyze the issues pertaining to gender. Historic or ethnographic modes of representation often provide snapshots of certain episodes in women's lives. Consequently, issues are complicated by the compromises that simply have to be made to maintain relationships or work conditions. In clear cut juxtaposition of these modes, fiction allows for issues/ resistance to be intricately and calculatingly constructed in terms of a metaphoric convolution, narrative resolution and ideological conquest. Toni Morrison, the famous African-American novelist, has also portrayed gendered identities similarly in her novels. Her characters can be read as an elaborate examination of conventional gendered responses. Their sexuality, marital relationship and attitude towards motherhood display a constant struggle against gendered norms governing women's choices. Patriarchy has always controlled sexuality and its understanding, which is a significant aspect of individual self-hood. The cultural and social construction of gender regards biological bodies as 'blank sheets which either via social practices of segregation or via the operation of layers of cultural meaning are turned into gendered subjects' (Alsop et al, 2002:165).Inquiries in to gender are intricately



intertwined in its thematic motifs with the issues of the gendering of the genre and literary production. The intricacy of her plots and subtlety of characterization demonstrate the multiple voices of gender for the reader.

A historical relationship exists between gender as a cultural experience, and the public expression of gendered identity. The study of gender in African-American literature considers the way in which the literary texts by male and female writers come to have distinctive and unique expressions. Critical and theoretical studies explore the consequences of gendered identity on the structure, theme and style of the text in such studies as African-American fiction with its explicit racial identity. African-American tradition is largely concerned with the history and development of its cultural presence and identity within the American literary tradition. A post-structuralist feminist perspective represents women as the subject of representation. It emphasizes the significance of gender issues in history, politics and culture. It also examines the relationships between men and women and the consequences of power differentials for the economic, social and cultural status of men and women in different locations and periods of history.

The essentialist reliance upon sexual and gendered identities has been thoroughly exposed by Butler (1999), who demonstrates that these identities are not stable and immutable even within patriarchal culture. According to Butler, bodies do not pre-exist discourses about them; they support the limits of the social constructs of sexuality with their surfaces and boundaries which guarantee a separation between an inner and an outer world. In *Gender Trouble* (1999), Butler remarks that gender is not synonymous with sexual acts; it inscribes its own culturally prescribed meanings and effects on bodies, rather than being dictated by their demands. Butler's description of sexual acts and gender poses in terms of performance underlines the imitative aspects of socio-cultural constructions of gender. A discrete and differentiated repetition of these acts ensures the re-enactment and re-experiencing of meanings in the public as well as private domains. Women are encouraged to curb their sexual desires in conventional societies, by encouraging models of restrictive purity. Simone de Beauvoir writes: 'because man is ruler in the world, he holds that the violence of his desires is a sign of his sovereignty; a man of great erotic capacity is said to be strong, potent- epithets that imply activity and transcendence. But on the other hand, women being only an object, she will be described as *warm* or *frigid*, which is to say that she will never manifest other than passive qualities' (1997: 397). Morrison's female characters follow patriarchal norms which necessitate the overwhelming presence of male in the female world. Foucault (1979) describes the way in which power can be exercised through concern with sexuality. The identity of the subject is found within these discourses, which multiply the areas of possibility for sexual pleasure only to control and classify the subject.

Toni Morrison gives voice to the voiceless through her novels centering on black middle-class characters. In her novels, black middle-class life is generally characterized by



a measure of alienation from the cultural heritage of the black rural South. She consistently problematizes what it means to be black and privileged. Toni Morrison's eloquent essays in literary criticism like "Playing in the Dark" (1992) invoke biographical material alongside the inter-textuality of meaning precisely in order to expose and explain the impact of a culture's racial values on the literary imagination. In a subaltern situation, black women are subjected to marginalization, segregation and subordination. In her influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak (1988) remarks that "...both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak; the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Nelson and Grossberg, 1988:287). For the "figure" of woman, the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves; race and class differences are subsumed under that charge.

Black women are racially and sexually marginalized. They are subjected to a kind of intra-national colonization on account of their race. It is a kind of interior colonization. Their sexual marginalization is a kind of intra-racial colonization on account of their gender. Those who belong to the proletariat or working-class are again marginalized on account of their class. Toni Morrison is a doubly marginalized writer on account of her race and gender. Most of the characters in her novels are triply marginalized. Morrison, like other black womanist avoid bitterness in their confrontation and relationship with men. They do not negate men, they rather accommodate them. Men are central to their lives not merely as husbands, but also as sons and brothers and their continuous presence are assured. This does not mean that they cannot do without men or stand on their own. The success of African-American womanism derives from the discovered awareness by women of their indispensability to the male (Eboh, 1998). Thus, the myth of male superiority disappears; for, the woman looks inward for a fresh appreciation of self. African-American womanism is characterized by female bonding or solidarity and it surprisingly enlists male support.

Morrison depicts the necessary bonding that has always taken place between black women for the sake of barest survival. In most of the novels, her critical stance is towards the hetero-sexual institutions of male-female relationships, marriage and the family. Bhabha (1985) observes that in Morrison's novels woman serves as the figure of ambivalence and the home as the space where the personal and political merge (Benstock, 2002). Morrison fuses personal guilt and public accountability, past and present, fantasy and reality. Her prose is visionary and lyrical, drawing on the unconscious and dreams to transfigure the experiences of African-American women.

The black women's struggle for equality must be seen in historical and contemporary perspective. Changing images of gender in American society indicate greater equality. The ultimate possibility is a new conception of the human personality, one that allows both males and females to pursue their individual interests unfettered by





gender. If this ever occurs, it may well result in a transformed society. The battle of the sexes is not implicit in the anatomy of man and woman. Society, being codified by man, decrees that woman is inferior. She can do away with this inferiority only by destroying the male's superiority. The modern woman accepts masculine values. She prides herself on thinking, taking action, working and creating on the same terms as men. Instead of seeking to disparage them, she declares herself their equal. The woman of today is a creation of nature. In human society nothing is natural and that woman is a product elaborated by civilization. Woman is a signifier in cultural politics. Eisenstein introduces the concept of 'Capitalist Patriarchy' as descriptive of 'mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring' (1979:42). The distinction between men and women, bourgeoisie and proletariat, is based on a network of interconnected relations rather than a set of dichotomies. These relations are not simply parallel or analogous, but are fused in a web which is created by the mutually supportive structures of capitalism and patriarchy.

Morrison's novels deal with multiple oppression and marginalization that contribute to the identity formation of the African-American female. Her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, the black girl whose insatiable desire to be loved is manifested in a desire for blue eyes that ultimately drives her into insanity. The novel's treatment of some tragic dimensions of black life, like incest and poverty, and the larger racialized context from which some of this tragedy springs reflect Morrison's interest in the portrayal of family values, gender politics and community secrets that shape individual and collective identity. It explores the problem of establishing self-worth in a society where one is the victim of racism, sexism and classism. It is an incisive probe into the complex dynamics of gender relations and of black self-hatred. Although the novel is not directly concerned with historical practice, it does reflect how the mass culture industry disallows African-American history and culture in its drive towards homogenization under the rule of consumption. One strand of Marxism views culture simply 'as a soft means of managing people than physical force or threats...culture is one of those few sites where one can pause, stand back and look at the system critically' (Rivkin and Ryan, 2002:233). This strand brings it closer to patriarchy as it similarly negates possibility of plurality and employs its own definition of cultural hegemony and hierarchy. Patriarchy encourages what Bakhtin has termed as 'ideological environment' (Bakhtin and Medvedev, 1985) in which the culture of the ruling class does not have any place for the polyphony of voices.

*Song of Solomon* (1977) unveils a specific gender conflict that has different ramifications. Milkman's father, Macon Dead, reveals his tension with wife Ruth, Milkman's mother, alleging that she had an unhealthy fixation for her father. It culminated in finding her in bed with her deceased father, "naked as a yard dog, kissing him," with his fingers in her mouth. But Ruth presents herself as a lonely person who needed the support of her father. She accuses Macon of trying to eliminate Milkman and her own father. As a woman, she is driven to take her dead father as a clandestine lover, lying at



his feet in the cemetery, because her husband has refused to make love to her in the twenty years they have been married. She is passive and serious and she has a secret garden where she generates and plays with life. Each retelling of a story in the novel raises new questions and inevitably generates fresh interpretations. The black history that Pilate, Macon's sister, wears in her ear rings is symbolic of her gendered identity. She defies the construct of gender through her androgynous appearance, being a woman but dressing like a man, wearing her hair short like a man or covering it and displaying traditional masculine behavior. Everything about Pilate supports Morrison's rejection of traditional norms, especially those which limit one based on gender.

Patriarchy marginalizes women in the same manner it marginalizes ethnicities. Morrison presents male and female Black characters as polar opposites in *Tar Baby* (1997). Jadine and Son are polar opposites. Their backgrounds are so different that neither one will concede the claims of the other. Jadine is educated and successful under Valerian's patronage. In Morrison's view, black women like Jadine, who neglect any thought or remembrance of the ancient features of black womanhood, are incapable anchoring themselves in the past and holding together that which would otherwise fall apart. For Morrison, examining the tar baby myth reveals black women's cohesive power in relation to family and community in history. Morrison advocates through the novel that to become a true culture-bearer and community-builder, black woman must remember the moral wisdom of the ancestors. Morrison deals with the issue of gender complicated by issues of race and class in this novel presenting characters as symbols of the oppression of women and of dark-skinned people.

The long history of the oppression of women is evident in the way in which the men of Ruby victimize the members of the Convent in *Jazz* (1992). This history is conflated with another that is based on the Bible. Their belief is that the Convent is really "the devil's bedroom, bathroom and his nasty playpen". The implication is that the two are interconnected. While in the former there is a history of the oppression of women within the house, in the latter there is a history, which "others," opponents of Judeo-Christianity as idolaters, evident in the allegation that "graven idols were worshipped" in the Convent. Invoking this history, the men of Ruby seek to justify the massacre by associating it with the killing of the idolaters at Moses's command in the Old Testament (Exodus, 32). Again this is ironic, for in making a shrine out of a utility, the Oven, the men of Ruby have committed an analogous kind of blasphemy according to the Bible.

Fear of female sexuality is a recurring motif in *Paradise* (1998). Milkey's tale of the reaction of a Methodist community to a rock formation of a couple making love suggests an uncomfortable experience on their part not only with sexuality but with lesbianism: "The committee members said their objections were not against sex but against perversion, since it was believed by some, who had looked very carefully, that the couple was two women making love in the dirt" (1998: 63). Sexuality can change the social, psychological and geographical map of an area and produce extreme reactions. Betty Freidan has



remarked how for a girl, identity is exclusively sexual: 'The identity issue for the boy is primarily an occupational-vocational question, while self-definition for the girl depends more directly on marriage...The girl's identity centers more exclusively on her sex-role-whose wife will I be....The sexual identity so critical for feminine development....is a mysterious and romantic issue, freighted with fiction, mystique, illusion (1984:164).

In *Love* (2004), the women who inhabit Cosey's world are Heed, his second wife, the girl he married, Christine, his granddaughter, who was Heed's best friend until she married Cosey and became an enemy; May, Christine's mother, Cosey's daughter-in-law and widow of his only son Billy Boy; Vida, a former employee, Celestial, his pleasure woman, Junior, recently released from Correctional who talks herself into a job as "assistant" to the aging Heed, and the "humming" voice of L, the hotel's former cook; her presence is quite ghostly but her words wise as she opens and then closes the story. All women are obsessed with Bill Cosey. He shapes their yearnings for father, husband, lover, guardian and friend, yearnings that dominate the lives of these women long after his death. Yet while he is either the void in or the centre of their stories, he himself is driven by secret forces, a troubled past and a spellbinding woman named Celestial. This audacious exploration into the nature of love, its appetite, its sublime possession, its dread, is rich in characters, striking scenes, and a profound understanding of how alive the past can be.

Gender as a social construct represents difference in interpersonal relationships based on sex difference. In postmodern context, it is a cultural category that differentiates male and female behaviour. In the gendered division of labour, men exercise the instrumental functions and women perform the expressive functions of the society. Thus gender can be read in sexual stereotypes and power relations between individuals and groups. This power structure exists at several levels like social, economic, physical and psychic. In postcolonial feminist perspective, woman is represented as object and objects of representation. It emphasizes the significance of gender issues in history, politics and culture. Gender roles and values vary according to race, class and culture and gender discrimination pervades every society touching all facets of life.

To conclude, Morrison advocates the political necessity for African-American women writers to construct alternative and re-visionary representations in order to counter the images, primarily negative, of black people that predominate in the minds of White Americans, both male and female. By crossing the solid-seeming walls that separate the factual and the fantastic, Morrison's novels gain a vantage point from which the black women reclaim an identity and voice of their own. Morrison's creativity and writing, enables her to express the independent perspective of a woman without excluding a space for the male. Her novels suggest that the issues of gender are always there as a background and bring cultural beliefs about gender to bear on people's expectations for self and other, on their behavior and judgments.



## References

- Alsop, R, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon (2002). *Theorizing Gender*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Bakhtin, M. and Medvedev, P (1985). *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Practices*. Trans. Albert Werhler. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Butler, J (1999). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Benstock, S, Suzanne F. and Susanne W. (2002). *A Handbook of Literary feminisms*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bhabha, H.K (1990). *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge.
- De Beauvoir, S. (1997). *The Second Sex*. Tr. H.M Parshley, Great Britain: Vintage.
- Eisenstein, Z. Ed. (1979). *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*. New York: Monthly Review.
- Eboh, M. P. (1998). "The Woman Question: African and Western Perspectives." *African Philosophy: An Anthology*. Ed. Emmanuel, ChukwudiEze. Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- Foucault, M. (1979). *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. London: Allen Lane.
- Morrison, T. (1990). *The Bluest Eye*. London: Picador.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1992). *Jazz*. New York: Knopf.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004). *Love*. London: Vintage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998). *Paradise*. New York: Knopf.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1992). *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York: Vintage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1977). *Song of Solomon*. New York: Knopf.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998). *Sula*. London: Vintage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997). *Tar Baby*. London: Vintage.
- Nelson C. and Lawrence G. eds.(1988). *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: MacMillan Education.
- Rivkin, J and Michael R. (2002). "Starting with Zero: Basic Marxism", *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden: Blackwell.
- Spivak, G.C. (1988). "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. London: Macmillan Education.



## Translation of Keats' Poem "When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be"

Sukhmani Kaur

### Introduction

Life is too short for regrets. Each day you live, you are using the limited quantity of the time available to you. In this poem as well, John Keats, who is well known for his love poetry is assailed with concept of death. Death that is inevitable and one true phenomenon, that everyone faces in his life, be it death of their relatives, friends, parents or in short anyone of their loved ones. Whenever there is death in family or in your circle, you tend to realise the fragility of human life.

John Keats too suffered from the fear of death, he had faced death from his early years, when his father departed him, followed by his grand-father, his mother and even his brother. The death of all the close relatives and family troubled him and made him think about his own death. What would happen, if he dies before attaining and fulfilling all his dreams?

Each one of us suffers through the same troubles, similar questions assails us even today. Each day we go through the monotonous life, thinking we would pursue our passions, our hobbies, once we get a bit settled in life, or attain a particular status or goal in life. Keats' poem helps us realise the frailness, the vulnerability of human life. You don't know the fate or what destiny has in store for us, or for how long are we given this lifetime. Keats begins his poem by telling us about his fears,

*When I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,*

He explains to us his fear of death, before he has fulfilled all his desires, before he has fulfilled his goals in life. John Keats was a known for his poetry; he wanted to write numerous poems and prose. In these phrases, He shows us his fears that he will die, before he has had time to pen down or write all his poems and stories that keep on going in his mind. He doesn't know the amount of time he has on earth, whether he would have enough time to pen down all his thoughts or not. He shows us the vulnerability, the weakness of being a mortal that we never have enough time to chase through or get all that we desire in life.

*Before high-pilèd books, in charactery,  
Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain;*

In these phrases he lets us know the knowledge that is encompassed in all the books will never be read by us during our lifetime. He lists another weakness of being mortal, he tells us that the time we have on this mortal land is not enough to learn about





all the characters in the all books, which lets us to form an opinion that no matter how long we study for, or how many hours or days of our lives we spend, immersed in books trying glean or learn that secret knowledge that is available in the books, it is never going to be enough to read all the books available in the world. Our knowledge of a subject or of the world will always remain incomplete, and books will continue to hold treasures of knowledge, like ripened grains are held in the storages.

*When I behold, upon the night's starred face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And think that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows with the magic hand of chance;*

In these phrases, he takes us in the magical world of romance, where lovers stay awake the whole night, missing each other, imagining their lover, embracing the distance between them, deciphering their faces or emotions in the night's star filled sky. He let's us imagine, the pain, the quench of being away from their lover, even if it is only for a night, where the lover spends the night, under the starry sky, reliving the moments they had shared together, imagining the face of their lover in the formations of cloud, cherishing the feel of their lover's touch, as the slakes of wind blows on their faces.

He then jolts us awake with his next phrases, that we may soon cease to exist, and loose the opportunity to enjoy those magical moments., loose the hope of tracing their imaginary faces in the clouds, forgo the chance of relishing their embrace to our heart's content. He lists another frailness of being human, that we may never have enough time to trace the huge cloudy symbols for the faces of our lovers, imagining their love for us, never have enough time to love them and enjoy the magical world of love.

*And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
That I shall never look upon thee more,*

In these phrases, the poet lets us feel his pain, and warn us at the same time about the lack of time, we get to enjoy with our loved ones, or our partners in this lifetime. He tells us, he feels that the maiden, that he so deeply loves, the maiden without whom his day is incomplete, he will no longer be able to enjoy looking at her. This phrase relates to each one of us, our day is incomplete till the time we meet or talk to our loved one. The poet briefs us about the nimbleness of the life, the quickness with which the life passes us. The days which seem long without the company of the loved ones, will soon cease as we would leave or depart them and then we'll never be able to look at them anymore.

*Never have relish in the faery power  
Of unreflecting love – then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.*



In these phrases, the poet acknowledges the might of the fiery power, the power of the one-sided love, the sorrows of the unrequited love, which remains unanswered. The poet stands alone on the shore of the sea or ocean and reflects on the life he has lived so far and comes to a realisation that love and fame in the end come to nothingness, as nothing lasts forever in this world.

In the last Para, the poet not only acknowledges the power of one sided love, which is pure in every form as you don't even require other person to complete that love but also enlightens us that at the end of the day, when you cease to be, nothing in this world will last, neither love, no matter how long we swear to make it last, nor fame, as people often forget the fame, sometime after the death of the person.

To conclude, the poet accepts the fragility of human life, he scares us of what might happen if we cease to exist and along with it, the poet guides us to enjoy each and every moment, till we have time as nothing in this world would last after death, neither fame nor love.

### Work Cited

- "John Keats." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 2 Oct. 2017, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Keats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Keats).
- "John Keats." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, [www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/john-keats](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/john-keats).
- Keats, John. "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be by John Keats." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, [www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44488/when-i-have-fears-that-i-may-cease-to-be](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44488/when-i-have-fears-that-i-may-cease-to-be).
- "John Keats." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, 6 Oct. 2015, [www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/john-keats](http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/john-keats).



## Change in Macbeth's Verbal Behaviour towards Lady Macbeth: A Psycholinguistic Study

Uday K Mishra & K.N. Yadav

Language behaviour is no different from the behaviour of rats in laboratory conditions and that the behaviour can be explained in terms of observable events (Skinner: 1957). A study of change in Macbeth's verbal behavior in course of the development of the story can be based on certain observable events that we find in the play. With the dramatic events taking place, Macbeth shows certain verbal actions indicating his mind or showing his unconscious. The language used in the context or situation clearly indicates the social relations between the speaker and the hearer (Palmer : 1976) ; and the choice of linguistic variety: formal or intimate, language or dialect or slang, is according to the relevance of the context. Firth acknowledges 'context of situation' as part of the linguistic apparatus- 'a suitable schematic construct' to apply to language events as summarized below:

- a) the verbal and non-verbal actions of the participants,
  - b) the relevant objects and
  - c) the effects of the verbal action
- (Firth: 1950,1957,1968).

### Change in Macbeth's Verbal Behaviour

The features as quoted above may well be helpful in analyzing the texts to know the brain or the behaviour of Macbeth changing with experiences he gains in course of the development of dramatic action. The paper is an attempt to make psycholinguistic study of Macbeth's verbal/linguistic behaviour in relation to his development as a tragic hero particularly analyzing his interactions with Lady Macbeth whom he finds responsible for his fall or tragic end, if not overtly but indirectly as reflected in his verbal behaviour. This we find in the instant reaction of Macbeth over lady Macbeth's death is remarkable as it shows his changing or changed attitude considering his wife somehow responsible for his fall. Macbeth says, "She should have died hereafter." This, no doubt, is an admission of Macbeth's own understanding that she deserved the death, though it should have come later. There is a presupposition in this statement that her death was all warranted for her act but it could have come later. So the news of her death was not a shock for him. This is quite an observable event in the development of Macbeth's character or his attitude to Lady Macbeth. Macbeth has either distanced from his wife or lost the intimacy he had with his wife or has become impersonalized in his behaviour towards his wife. This change is observable later in his speeches or addresses to his wife from informal to formal.

Macbeth's verbal actions after Duncan's murder and even after Banquo's murder do indicate that Macbeth has adopted a formal speech than an informal one in relation to Lady Macbeth in particular. The loss of intimacy is reflected in his terms of address. He addresses her as 'My dearest love' ( I, v ) or my 'My love' at the beginning but later as 'dear



wife' only. This can be visualized in his relationship as well. Before the change takes place and when she is or appears to be his 'love', before the murder of King Duncan, he believes her words/ promises as expressed by L. Macbeth at the beginning:

*... only look up clear;  
The alter favour ever is to fear:  
Leave all the rest to me. (I, v,70-71)*

Here she assures all support and receives his trust as a trusted wife or a true friend . She , no doubt, plays the role of a mother breasting her baby with poison, not milk.

*... Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall,... (I, v,46-47)*

These words show her hidden motive before Macbeth enters the scene. This he realizes later and exhibits in his verbal acts or language behaviour by distancing himself from Lady Macbeth. However, he does not show the same interest later when it comes to the murder of Banquo. In contrary, Macbeth does believe in the words of Lady Macbeth and her promises.

She comes as a support and functions as a catalyst in the execution of the fatal act but the realization of the guilt makes an observable shift in his relationship with L. Macbeth. This change, surprisingly, is an inversion from informal to formal or intimate to distant relationship. Macbeth's words or expressions after the murder of King Duncan serve as evidences to prove that Macbeth is no longer having the intimacy or closeness that he had with L. Macbeth. Whether she acts as the fourth witch or not could be a matter of debate, but the verbal actions do indicate that she is no longer his 'My dear' but 'dear wife' or his queen as he says "my hostess keeps her state." Someone who has become 'wife' definitely suggests a change in Macbeth's verbal behaviour to Lady Macbeth.

Perhaps, the role of Macbeth in emboldening him or forcing him to commit a heinous crime to achieve the throne is more to perform the role of an ambitious wife who, too, is ambitious to be the queen of the throne. But what is in the mind of Lady Macbeth is not our concern here. Macbeth's mind has definitely changed as far as his relation to L. Macbeth is concerned. Now Macbeth does not address his wife as his 'love' after the murder. He becomes formal to call her 'dear wife.' Lady Macbeth also addresses him formally as 'My worthy lord', 'My royal lord' and or 'Sir.' This shows that distancing between the two continues to pervade over their relationship. Perhaps, this is because of the growing consciousness of the guilt in Macbeth and his realization or understanding of the situation in which he committed the crime. The illusion of Macbeth to see Lady Macbeth as an honest, loyal and trusted wife is exploded. The reality grips him causing distancing between the two and making him conscious of the situation. The veil of illusion is removed and Macbeth's understanding of his self and the situation around grows



stronger making him more and more formal in his choice of language, particularly in his conversation with Lady Macbeth. His language changes from informal to formal adopting longer sentences, full of images and symbols, idiomatic expressions, philosophical generalizations and so on. His speeches become explanatory and less elliptical or cryptic. It is mainly because of the fact that the situation or the context becomes unpredictable and unreliable. When things are beyond his control and uncertainties prevail he contextualizes his speeches with maximum of words to express his ideas or feelings. He grows philosophical and metaphorical in his speeches in his conversations with his wife in particular and in the play in general.

His speech after the murder of the king Duncan, when Lady Macbeth asks him not to be so thoughtful over the act of murdering King Duncan, is highly philosophical.

Lady Macbeth: *These deeds must not be thought*

*After these ways; so, it will make us mad. ( II, ii, 34-35 )*

Macbeth : *Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!*

*Macbeth does murder sleep', the innocent sleep,*

*Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care,*

*The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,*

*Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,*

*Chief nourisher in life's feast,- ( II, ii, 35-40 )*

Macbeth's behaviour towards Lady Macbeth is no more that of wife and husband speaking in an informal manner using a language showing intimate relationship. Rather, he speaks metaphorically with philosophical overtones. Before the murder of Duncan, Macbeth's speech is matter-of-fact and not philosophical for which Shakespeare is known. This is all because of distancing between him and his wife. This could also be because of his honest realization of the heinous crime he has committed by killing someone who is the guest and the noble king.

## References

- Firth, J.R. ( 1950,1957). *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*. London: Oxford University Press
- Lerner, Laurence . ( 1963 ). *Shakespeare's Tragedies* , Ed. London: Penguin.
- Palmer, F.R. (1976) . *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957) . *Verbal Behaviour*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.





## Voicing the Female: Portrayal of Cassie in Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Veena Vijaya

Since the publication of Mildred Taylor's novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, it has been critically analyzed and praised for many reasons. Most critics read it as an example of the Logan family's resistance to racial injustice that prevailed in United States in the early twentieth century. Following a retrospective technique of narration, the protagonist Cassie Logan, the African American girl develops an extraordinary resilience and become iconic in this racial struggle. Bosmajian (2009) suggests, the title of the novel, '*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*,' cannot be seen as an exhortation to divine law. Rather, it is a voicing towards the white dominant society where they are lynched, muted and considered invisible. It is the beginning of their resistance and protest, revealed in hidden ways. Cassie resembles these characteristics as a part of her maturation process. She questions and resists the racial attitudes of the Whites in the process of attaining self-knowledge and awareness upon which her sense of identity depends. Her development has its roots in the warm and nurturing familial relationships where she learns the importance of values in life, freedom and happiness. The Logan family works hard to keep the small piece of land they own and pay the taxes. David works in the railways and Mary works as a school teacher.

Cassie realizes the importance of owning land when Papa tells her: 'Look out there, Cassie girl. All that belongs to you. You ain't never had to live on nobody's place but your own and long as I live and the family survives, you'll never have to. That's important. You may not understand that now, but one day you will. Then you'll see.' (p. 5). Also, to Stacey Papa explains: 'You were born blessed, boy, with land of your own. If you hadn't been, you'd cry out for it while you try to survive...like Mr Lanier and Mr Avery. Maybe even do what they doing now. It's hard on a man to give up, but sometimes it seems there just ain't nothing else he can do.' (p. 226). These incidents help the Logan children to have a sense of belongingness in spite of the racial discriminations.

Following the pattern of a traditional bildungsroman protagonist in mind, the critics Joel Taxel (1986), Pat Pinsent (1997), and Wanda Brooks and Gregory Hampton (2005) perceive Cassie as a character developing from a naïve and susceptible character to one with resilience and empowered with life experience. Taxel (1986) describes "Cassie's growth from a naïve, vulnerable child... into one who is wise beyond her years and imbued with the self-confidence necessary for the struggles sure to come" (p. 260). In the process of growing up, Cassie learns lots of lessons from her family and community which enable her to realize the importance of partial resistance as necessary for survival. Her experiences provide her with sufficient proofs that all kinds of segregation practices are unjust which only distorts the soul and affects personality. It results in a real threat to the



identity or individuality hampering self-development. Cassie becomes aware of law's instability and its dangers when lawlessness is used to prevent lawlessness.

There are various instances in the novel where racial prejudice and segregation are evident. In the beginning of the novel, we see how the Logan children are bullied by a school bus full of White children. The school bus would come roaring down the road spewing red dust over the children while 'laughing white faces pressed against the bus windows' (12). On a rainy day, 'the bus driver liked to entertain his passengers by sending by sending us slipping along the road to the almost inaccessible forest banks...[and] we consequently found ourselves comic objects to cruel eyes that gave no thought to our misery' (46). As part of their resistance, the Logan children dig out a ditch in the road in order to trap the bus and break the axle.

Cassie defends her younger brother, Little Man, who refused to take the old and dirty book, meant for Black children from Miss. Crocker. When Cassie told her that the county school board has written 'nigra' in the book, which is an offensive term, Mrs. Crocker says that that is what Cassie is. The children are highly supported by their mother, Mary Logan, in expressing their distaste of being ill-treated. On another occasion, Cassie is astonished while going to Barnett Mercantile in the nearby town in Strawberry. Mr. Barnett attended the White customers while Cassie and T.J had to wait for a long time. When Cassie told Mr. Barnett that it is unfair, he asked 'Whose little nigger is this!' for which she felt humiliated and retorted: 'I ain't nobody's little nigger!' (Taylor, 122). Cassie's intolerance for racial mockery and her sense of identity and eagerness to challenge any racial prejudice is evident in these episodes. Cassie stumbles over a white girl named Lillian Jean, who with her father Mr. Simms pushes Cassie out in the street forcing her to apologize and call Lillian Jean 'Miz.' Cassie becomes furious when Big Ma makes her apologize. Cassie shows her confidence by saying that 'If that had been Papa, he wouldn't've made me apologize! He would've listened to me!' (p. 128). But Mary tries to pacify Cassie.

Mary never wants Cassie to feel that being colored or black should curb her sense of identity or individuality. She tells Cassie: 'It is something, Cassie. White is something just like black is something. Everybody born on this earth is something and nobody, no matter what color, is better than anybody else' (p. 139). About Mr. Simms attitude she continues: '...he's one of those people who has to believe that white people are better than black people to make himself feel big' (p.139). She says that white people may demand the respect of blacks, but what they give them is not respect but fear. Also, what the blacks give to their own people is far more important because it is given freely. She gives a good message to Cassie: 'Baby, we have no choice of what color we're born or who our parents are or whether we're rich or poor. What we do have is some choice over what we make of our lives once we're here' (p. 142). She imparts the values of making one's own decisions about future.



To make Cassie understand the issue further she explains the history of slavery.

*'You see, Cassie, many years ago when our people were first brought from Africa in chains to work as slaves in this country – like Big Ma's papa and mama...were born in Africa, and when they came there were some white people who thought that it was wrong for any people to be slaves; so the people who needed slaves to work in their fields and the people who were making money bringing slaves from Africa preached that black people weren't really people like white people were, so slavery was all right. They also said that slavery was good for us because it taught us to be good Christians - like the white people...But they didn't teach us Christianity to save our souls, but to teach us obedience. They were afraid of slave revolts and they wanted us to learn the Bible's teaching about slaves being loyal to their masters. But even teaching us Christianity didn't make us stop wanting to be free, and many slaves ran away-'* (139-140).

The doctrine preached by white slave owners to justify their cruel actions even by using the name of religion and their fears of slave revolts are evident in Mary Logan's words.

Cassie felt proud of her Great-Grandpa's story that even though he was caught and punished for his disobedience, as he ran away three times, his owners did not try to break him, as he had knowledge of herbs and cures. He tended both slaves and animals of the plantation and from him Big Ma learned medicines. This is the cultural knowledge passed down to the generation of blacks. David tells her that there will be many things that she will be forced to do as part of survival. Later, pretending to be her friend, Cassie leads Lillian Jean into the woods and beats her up as a way of retaliating. This action shows the courage and strength she has gained to question the White authority and racial bias.

The novel depicts the rich cultural values of the Blacks that the elders pass on to their younger generation. The family survives by finding strength in one another. The Logans have raised the children to have self-respect, irrespective of their race. Cobb (2009) identifies the importance of education, both formal and informal, to southern Black families that Taylor emphasizes in the novel. The significant role played by Black women in this process gains much attention. Motherhood, which is a major theme in African-American novels, is very evident in this aspect. Mothers and grandmothers have strong influence in the lives of their daughters. Cassie is shown as the representative or mouthpiece of these Black women and of Taylor herself. Mary Logan stresses the necessity of a formal education for her children. Big Ma, whose daughter died in infancy, finds the necessary substitute in her granddaughter Cassie. She expounds the values of their strong cultural roots and tradition, which is highly essential for Cassie in her creation of an independent self.

Taylor reveals how both Big Ma and Mama -two women who were denied the full chance to 'bloom'- rely on Cassie, their 'strong-willed, plain-spoken and full of energy' granddaughter/daughter, to reject her 'fallen dead' role in order to become the 'tree' that refuses to be moved (Donnarae, 1991-1992). Big Ma acts as a strong link for Cassie for her cultural past and upcoming decisive future. Mama through her thoughts, words and



deeds acts as a role model for Cassie and guides her in her journey towards independence. She encouraged Cassie making her feel that she looked very pretty and also that she possess a beautiful heart.

Logan's role lies more closely to the informal or family education as Mary Logan with formal ones. He becomes a role model to his children, being kind and disciplined in nature. He explicates that there are always compromises to be made and advises to be cautious when while determining how to act in certain occasions. He passes on to Cassie his beliefs that there are certain things that are worth fighting for and instructs her to be furtive in orchestrating her revenge. They must have a 'wary eye upon the present, but yet another turned toward the past' (Smith, 2001). David teaches Cassie how they should be alert and self-controlled, even if they are enraged by injustices imposed upon them, being the victims of willful power. Implementation of the realization of this message is evident in Cassie's silence towards the end of the novel when David Logan sets fire to the Logan crops to avoid lynching. She realizes that 'this was one of those known and unknown things, something never to be spoken, not even to each other' (Taylor, 1976: 303). She learns that in order to protect herself, her family and community she cannot show her anger. She tries to internalize the apprehension of the dreadful consequences that David's act could have into her inmost silence. Everybody gets involved in distinguishing the fire, which was said to have started due to lightning that struck a fence post. This incident takes us back to the title of the novel, where the action can be seen as an aftermath of the 'roll of thunder' and answers to its plea 'hear my cry.'

Mary Logan is concerned with teaching her students about the brutal reality of the history of slavery. She does this in a brave and subversive way even though she was aware of its consequences, as she lost her job. She deliberately took a valiant action to teach her students in class about the realistic and decoded Black history as with her own children. Cassie inherits her mother's qualities of being gallant and independent which enables her to create an identity of her own. Children become empowered through the actual knowledge of their past and act in an intelligent way with proper awareness of the circumstances. The children observing their mother's work as a political organizer realizes that they too can be active agents. There are various instances in the novel where Mary demonstrates her concern for unveiling racist power structures. She wants both her children and students to be aware of the way in which the dominant power works in the society against them. Cassie finds her mama's ideas as always a bit too radical and her statements a bit too pointed. Mary tells Miss Croker that the blacks, even the children, need not have to accept all humiliations shown towards them by whites. She takes the Logan children to see Mr. Berry who was burned nearly to death by 'night men.' He has been horrifically deformed by the burning and unable to speak. Mary urges people to boycott the Wallace Store as Wallaces were the ones who burned the Berrys and created much trouble among the Blacks and the Whites. She covers the issuance charts on the inside of the textbooks of her students, as it shows the poor condition of the book and the race of the student to whom it is reissued. She does not want her students to have an



inferiority feeling. Mary, being a teacher in and out of the school, molds a generation aware of the strength of their cultural roots than being muted by the White dominant culture. Black mothers who advocated for female emancipation from America's 'controlling images for black women' (Collins, 1991) wished to see their daughters formally educated in either the North or the South. Dill (1994) noted that some southern Black domestics and field laborers viewed their work as enabling their daughters to strive for opportunities that appeared to be unobtainable. In the novel, education enables Cassie develop her own individuality with a strong sense of her race, gender and class.

Elders, especially parents and grandparents, serve as typical role-models for Logan children in advocating as how to be victorious. Their triumphs might not be evident; however they are able to control their own lives as they are conscious of the nature of power play. It is mainly through informal education the Logan children receive through parents, Big Ma and Mr. Morrison, the helper and protector in Logan household provides them with a strong sense of familial history and Black culture. They educate them about the trials that the Blacks suffered. They realize the hardships suffered by their community being 'Negro.'

Big Ma's memories of her youth, marriage to Big Pa and how he owned their land gives Cassie a good lesson of the sufferings, hard work and obstacles they faced and the ultimate success in spite of all hardships. Cassie learns the life of slaves through the experience and memories of Big Ma.

Recalling her old memories, Big Ma tells Cassie about Big Pa:

*He had himself a mind like a steel trap. Anything he seen done, he could do it. He had done learned carpentry back up there near Macon, Georgia, where he was born. Born into slavery he was, two years 'fore freedom come, and him and his mama stayed on that plantation after the fightin' was finished. But then when he got to be fourteen and his mama died, he left that place and worked his way 'cross here up to Vicksburg...my papa took me in with Vicksburg- we was tenant farmin' bout thirty miles from there...and there was ole Paul Edward workin' in that furniture shop just as big. Had himself a good job, but the ole job wasn't what he wanted. He wanted himself some land. Kept on and kept on talkin' 'bout land, and then this place come up for sell...he bought himself two hundred acres from that Yankee (p. 98-99).*

Big Ma explains how they bought the land with the hard-earned money when the Grangers were poor, after Reconstruction. Big Ma talks about their way of living and love for land:

*'We worked real hard getting' them crops sown, getting' 'em reaped...We was young and strong when we started out and we liked to work. Neither one of us ...never was lazy and we didn't raise us no lazy children neither...boys grew strong and all of 'em loved this place as much as Paul Edward and me. They go away, they always come back to it. Couldn't leave it (103-104).*





The narration of the history of African-Americans and the truths of slavery heard from the family members gives the Logan children a strong sense of their history and lineage, thereby helping them in evolving a strong sense of will-power to fight for their rights, freedom and equality with whites.

Mr. Morrison also reminds the children about the blacks' experience during civil war and Reconstruction period:

*'...They came down like ghosts that Christmas of seventy-six. Them was hard times like now...Reconstruction was just 'bout over then, and them Northern soldiers was tired of being in the South and they didn't hardly care 'bout no black folks...And them Southern whites, they were tired of the Northern soldiers and free Negroes, and they was trying to turn things back 'round to how they used to be. And the colored folk...well, we was just tired. Warn't hardly no work, and during them years I s'pose it was jus' 'bout as hard being free as it was being a slave...(p.162).*

The stories narrated by Mr. Morrison and elders in the family helps Logan children to understand real history of the suffering of African Americans as it was based on his first-hand experience.

Uncle Hammer has a short temper and he doesn't want to be treated lower than any white. He lives in Chicago and owns a car. When Big Ma asks him whether he has a car like Harlan Granger, the white rich plantation owner, Hammer replies: 'Well, not exactly like it, Mama. Mine's a few months newer...It seems that me and Harlan Granger just got the same taste' (131). When Cassie explained to him about Lillian Jean incident, Hammers gets angry and tells Big Ma that 'I ain't gotta use David's gun...I got my own' (p. 135). This incident vividly portrays his character, who is ready to take arms against the whites for their cruelties. On another occasion, he tells Stacey, Cassie's eldest brother, about the way of the world: 'It's tough out there, boy, and as long as there are people, there's gonna be somebody trying to take what you got and trying to drag you down. It's up to you whether you let them or not...You care what a lot of useless people say 'bout you you'll never get anywhere, 'cause there's a lotta folks don't want you to make it' (p.157). This is a strong message given by Hammer to Logan children in determining their future.

Children are taught not to befriend Whites. David Logan teaches them separation from Whites as means of their survival. He makes his point very clear when he says: 'Far as I'm concerned, friendship between black and white don't mean that much 'cause it usually ain't on a equal basis...We Logans don't have much to do with white folks...'Cause white folks mean trouble. You see blacks hanging 'round with whites, they're headed for trouble. May be one day whites and blacks can be real friends, but right now the country ain't built that way' (174). Mr. Logan tells the truth of inequality existing in American society at that time. While talking to Mr. Jamison about Logan family's hatred towards Harlan Granger and Wallaces, Jamison comments that it is hard to beat them.



However, David clarifies: 'I want these children to know we tried, and what we can't do now, maybe one day they will' (182). This shows the hope for future kept by the blacks in attaining equality with whites. When Mr. Granger tells David about their land as Granger land before it was Logan, David replies that it was slave land. He is not ready to give up the land to Mr Granger.

It is mostly through oral tradition that the children are connected with their history. In the Logan family, members share a deep bonding and possess values of personhood and community. They have the ability to talk things out which creates a sense of belongingness to their culture and community. It becomes a vital force in their struggle for survival. Anderson (1988) suggests that education and knowledge of history becomes a major lived experience to them, as it is delivered through their intimate elders. When Mary tries to silence Mr. Morrison for the sake of the children, when he talks about the extreme acts of violence that their ancestors suffered due to racism and slavery, David says: 'These are things they need to hear, baby; It's their history' (Taylor, 1976:163). Through the Logan men, Taylor retells the stories and experiences of her paternal relatives and portrays how they have benefited more from informal education than formal education. They possessed 'plain common sense' as they faced prejudice and attempted to survive in a 'racist culture' (Crowe, 1999). Didacticism presented through elders in the novel function as tools for children in building up their own individuality.

Big Ma comforts Little Man after the school bus incident where the white children laugh at Logan children when their clothes are covered with mud. She tells him: 'Now, look here, baby, it ain't the end of the world. Lord, child, don't you know one day the sun'll shine again and you won't get muddy no more?...One day you'll have plenty of clothes and maybe even a car of yo' own to ride 'round in, so don't you pay no mind to them ignorant white folks. You jus' keep on studying and get yo'self a good education and you'll be all right' (p. 48). The Logan children are encouraged to be educated so that there is hope for them in future.

Importance of education is further exemplified when Mr. Logan explains to his children how Mary Logan's father wanted her to get educated and eventually became a teacher, which was a passion for her. Papa explains to children: 'Your mama was his baby child and every penny he'd get his hands on he'd put it aside for her schooling...and that wasn't easy for him either 'cause he was a tenant farmer and he didn't see much cash money. But he'd promised your grandmamma 'fore she died to see that your mama got an education, and when your mama 'come high-school age, he sent her up to Jackson to school, then on to teacher training school' (207). In spite of his poverty and hardships, he wanted Mary to have education and become independent. This knowledge about the importance of education held by the family serves as a motivation for the children to get proper education. The mutual love and respect that the family members have for each other also plays a vital role in molding them as good individuals.



Child characters in the novel are given greater autonomy and they treated as 'subjects' and not 'objects,' regardless of their age. They are encouraged to oppose unlawful authority enforced on them and view themselves as powerful means of change. Mc Dowell (2009) discusses that child agency in the novel is enabled through demystification of history. For Logan children, African-American history is not what they read in books at school, as it is fabricated by dominant White culture. The history of slavery is interpreted to Logan children through Mr. Morrison's stories of his family. He gives an authentic account to Cassie about his ancestors as coming from 'bred stock,' a term very much related to the brutalities of slavery. He also tells them how his family was killed on a Christmas Day. Displaying his own intimate connection with his roots and history, Morrison makes the children aware of the need to be connected with their cultural roots, which is the vital force in their struggle for resistance and survival. Thus the children get the source of the ill-treatments they experience as Blacks in their own lives. Cassie struggles toward the right and lawful actualization of herself and her community. Taylor indicates to the differences in male and female insights of education. This is evident in the case of Little Man and Cassie. Little man is obsessed with his appearance whereas Cassie displays her practical attitude.

As seen in any classic work, the novel takes on a didactic course where adults impart appropriate values in children and gives them the option to decide their own life with much autonomy. Apart from giving an object position, children are also treated as subjects capable of independent action by adult subjects. Papa's philosophy and advices have great impact on Cassie in her vision about life. He tells her the need for self-control and silent protest against the adversities shown towards blacks by whites.

*'You're a lot like me, Cassie girl, but you got yourself a bad temper like your Uncle Hammer. That temper can get you in trouble...Cassie, there'll be a whole lot of things you ain'tgonnawanna do but you'll have to do in this life just so you can survive...But there are other things, Cassie, that if I'd let be, they'd eat away at me and destroy me in the end. And it's the same with you baby. There are things you can't back down on, things you gotta take a stand on. But it's up to you to decide what them things are. You have have to demand respect in this world, ain't nobody just gonna hand it to you. How you carry yourself, what you stand for - that's how you gain respect' (193-194).*

They should learn the art of self-control as the weapon for survival. Thus, they should show their real presence in a world which treat them as invisible and raise their voice where they are muted by the whites. He tells her to keep in mind that Lillian Jean probably won't be the last white person to treat her badly. This is just a small beginning of the upcoming bigger struggle she would be facing in future. Whenever whites treat Cassie and her family in a humiliating way, she retaliates.

There are characters and incidents in the novel, which represents white men who are supportive and sympathetic towards blacks and their sufferings. Mr. Jamison, the white lawyer is a typical example of this type. Cassie notices that he was the only white



man she had ever heard addressing Ma and Big Ma as 'Missus,' and she liked him for it. In this way, Cassie finds similarity between Mr. Jamison and Papa. Mr. Jamison honestly admits to Mr Logan and Uncle Hammer the attitude of some whites including himself: 'I'm a Southerner, born and bred, but that doesn't mean I approve of all that goes on here, and there are a lot of other white people who feel the same...there aren't enough of those same people who would admit how they feel, or even if they did, would hang a white man for killing a black one' (178-179). This shows that there were whites who objected slavery and discrimination towards blacks. The presence of people like Mr. Jamison also helped Cassie in developing a sense of self-respect in her journey towards self-realization and independence.

Taylor purposefully breaks away from the convention and gives Cassie freedom of choice in her journey towards self-realization. In this process, Taylor joins the great tradition of writers who offers greater freedom and agency to her rather marginalized characters in the eyes of the Whites. The Black, female child protagonist is treated as the focal point and representative of a generation who realize their dignity and role to be played in a place where they face double or multiple consciousnesses. Taylor conveys the warmth of Black family life and shows how Black parents taught their children to survive. The education that Cassie received from her elders, especially the matriarchs, will enable her to pass a legacy on to her daughters and in forming a new generation of Black female fully conscious of their strength. It will enable her to redefine the identity of the African-American female.

Taylor is the first African-American writer to encrypt education as the primary concern in Southern Black families. This study attempted to highlight the role that education takes in the twentieth century African-American culture. It envisions and emphasizes the need to construct positive images of African-Americans who overcame the racial hardships in their struggle for equality. The novelist has succeeded in presenting the African-American history, experience and identity through the medium of strong oral tradition, the hall-mark of African-American fiction. This study also underlined the attempts iconic characters like Cassie to reclaim and revive a specific realistic African-American history. Being a semi-autobiographical novel, '*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*,' records her experiences and memories and emphasizes that Black women were determined on gaining formal education while maintaining informal family education within southern Black society as part of creating their female identity.

## References

- Anderson, J. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel hill, NC: University of New Carolina Press, 1988.
- Bosmajian, H. "A Search for Law and Justice in a Racist Society." *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Eds. Heather Montgomery & Nicola J. Watson. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 231-237.



- Cobb, C.D. "The Role of Education in Mildred D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder*." *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Eds. Heather Montgomery & Nicola J. Watson. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 247-253.
- Collins, P.H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Crowe, C. *Presenting Mildred D. Taylor*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1999.
- Dill, Thornton and Zinn.(ed). *Women of Color in U.S. Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Donnarae, M. 'The Family Chronicles of Mildred D. Taylor and Mary Mebane.' *Journal of African Children's & Youth Literature* 3 (1991-1992): 93-104.
- McDowell, K. "Child Agency in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*." *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. (Eds). Heather Montgomery & Nicola J. Watson. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 237-246.
- Pinsent, P. (1997). *Children's literature and the politics of equality*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Smith, K. P. 'A Chronicle of Family Honor: Balancing Rage and Triumph in the Novels of Mildred D. Taylor.' In *African-American Voices in Young Adult Literature: Tradition, Transition, Transformation*. Ed. Karen Patricia Smith Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 2001: 246-76.
- Taxel, J. (1986). The black experience in children's fiction controversies surrounding award winning books. *Curriculum Inquiry* 16(3), 245-281.
- Taylor, M. D.( 1976).*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. New York: Puffin.





## Trauma of Incest in Wordsworth's Lucy Poems

Vijay Kumar Datta

An undercurrent of agony and anguish informs Wordsworth's early poetry which remains, in the words of Stephen Gill "peopled with abandoned women and destitute figures and haunted guilty men. The haunted, guilty one was the poet himself," a "tormented spirit" due to gossips about his incestuous "relations with his sister, Dorothy" (2). The individualizing pain—adolescent trauma, guilt, and self-reproach—has a bearing on his early poetry, particularly those which he penned at Gosler. As Richard Matlak asserts, "Wordsworth's relationship with Dorothy is the emotional foundation of Lucy poems" (46). Lucy, the protagonist of the Lucy poems which he wrote there, is alleged to be a real girl (Dorothy) whom Wordsworth murders in a fit of passion due to the traumatic guilt of incest.

The overtones of agony and anguish in Wordsworth's early poetry derive from his incestuous feeling for Dorothy. Following is how Adam Kuper upholds this charge:

*William Wordsworth [. . .] had a strange, obsessive relationship with his sister Dorothy. Separated for long periods in their childhood, they lived together throughout their adult lives. Their friend Thomas De Quincy heard rumors of Wordsworth "having been intimate with his own sister," but put these down to his eccentric habit of kissing female relatives. F. W. Bateson has suggested that at some point William and Dorothy began to fear that they were falling in love, and that Wordsworth's marriage was a desperate attempt to deal with this crisis. On the night before William's wedding, Dorothy slept with the wedding ring on her finger, and the next day she had some sort of breakdown. Clearly William and Dorothy had a complicated emotional relationship, but according to Dorothy Wordsworth's biographer, Frances Wilson, it rested on a very particular romantic ideal: 'The relationship between the Wordsworths was organized around a notion of perfect and exclusive brother-sister love which was imaginatively assimilated by them both to the point where it became the source of their creative energy, but its physical expression would have been of no interest to them.'* (42)

William and Dorothy, who undoubtedly had a passionate association, lived together in their early years—a relationship which might be a recipe for a sibling incest. In this connection, John Powell Ward observes:

*Since they knew each other from their first consciousnesses in babyhood (William was a year old when Dorothy was born) their mutual formation, inter-confidentiality, role-learning, intermarrying of personality configuration, linguistic echo, self-image and other-image, must have occurred in ways which became deeply embedded and silently understood in their two personalities . . .* (620)



The period of the brother-sister association in Wordsworth is founded on intimate memories and is strongly connected to the Romantic privileging of childhood. The sibling incestuous relationship between William and Dorothy, this essay argues, informs the length and breadth of the Lucy poems. Wordsworth's engagement with brother-sister incest stems from the trauma of guilt and its redemption with an affect for sympathy. The sympathy that is generated is despite the inevitable moral imperative to kill either one or both of the siblings, since the incestuous relationship is a contravention of the social law. In this regard, Alan Richardson's statement is worth-quoting:

*Freud (drawing on Frazer) has suggested that death, the standard punishment for incest in primitive times, persists in psychic life as 'the horror of incest'; the inevitable intrusion of death in Romantic portrayals of sibling love seems to indicate that the alliances they depict, even when between technically eligible partners or when not explicitly sexual, are all implicitly incestuous. (740)*

The guilt-impelled killing of Lucy—Dorothy-surrogate—is due to the traumatic pressure of societal abhorrence of incest, but the power of erotic passion and the sibling bond of childhood help evoke the affect of sympathy. The replaying of Lucy's death in the Lucy poems is geared towards acting out the trauma of the incest-guilt.

Walter Pennington takes the poem "Lucy Gray," which was written at Goslar and which is generally taken as belonging to group dealing with the theme of childhood and the development of the mind, "as the basis for" other Lucy poems like "Strange fits of passion have I known," "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," "I travelled among unknown men," "Three years she grew in sun and shower," and "A slumber did my spirit my seal" (314).(1)

"Lucy Gray" was written at Goslar in Germany in 1799 When Wordsworth and Dorothy had gone there on a short tour. Also known under another title "Solitude," the poem is based upon an actual narrated to the poet by Dorothy. Wordsworth's own traumatized state of mind finds an expression in this story in which a girl becomes dazed by a snow storm, and falls and drowns in a canal lock near Halifax. The poem is structured in three main segments: stanzas 1-3, which are in the past tense, constitute the first stanza, harking back to her living time and place; stanzas 4-14 make the middle division and narrate Lucy's futile search for her mother in the storm; the remaining stanzas comprising of the finale is in the epitaphic present which mourns the memory of her loss. About this structure of "Lucy Gray," Herbert Hartman comments thus: "a coupling of the first three and last two stanzas (the framework of the narrative) results in a perfect 'Lucy' poem (140).

The first movement of the poem—the opening three stanzas—places the spotlight on Lucy's isolation:



*Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray,  
And when I cross'd the Wild,  
I chanced to see at break of day  
The solitary Child.*

*No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew;  
She dwelt on a wild Moor,  
The sweetest Thing that ever grew  
Beside a human door!*

*You yet may spy the Fawn at play,  
The Hare upon the Green;  
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray  
Will never more be seen. (Wordsworth, "Lucy Gray," 1-12)*

And forewarns the reader that she will 'Never more be seen', foreshadowing the poem's balladic sense of doom. In this opening movement, the stress falls clearly on Lucy's aloneness—the isolated girl-child played all alone because she had no mates, no comrades—and her absence: it is a pity that her sweet face will that will be now absent comes as a stark contrast to the fawn and the hare at play upon verdant commons. While this poetic stress heightens the reader's sense of her as innocent victim, what it also does is that it builds up, right at the outset, an atmosphere of "denying Lucy any place in the present," thereby foregrounding "a recognition of Lucy's absence rather than a re-presenting in acknowledgment of her remembered presence" (Ferguson, "Lucy Poems" 532).

The second movement of the poem, which actually presents the narrative, further enhances contrast between the local animals' presence and Lucy's absence. Herein the poet finds her cheerfulness as superior to that of the blithe "mountain roe" (Wordsworth, "Lucy Gray" 25). The image of a little Lucy, doing her father's bidding in spite of the danger to her life, succeeds in attaching the reader towards her as her parents are to her, thereby making their grief at their daughter's death the grief of the reader: "They followed from the snowy bank / Those footmarks, one by one, / Into the middle of the plank; / And further there were none" (53-56). Both the poet and the reader mourn Lucy's premature and accidental death just as their parents do.

The last movement reinforces Lucy's isolation (being distant) and absence for the final time with a great of poignancy:

*--Yet some maintain that to this day  
She is a living child;  
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray  
Upon the lonesome wild.*



*O'er rough and smooth she trips along,  
And never looks behind;  
And sings a solitary song  
That whistles in the wind. (57-64)*

As these two final stanzas seem to suggest, even as Lucy becomes a part of Nature, her isolation and absence, at best, culminate into a position of limbo: hovering between mortality and immortality. This feature of limbo extends, as Ferguson rightly remarks, to the genre of the poem – “part love poem, part epitaph. The deference common to much love poetry becomes over-justified by the epitaphic acknowledgment of Lucy’s absence” (“Lucy Poems” 532). The whistling wind reminds the folks, including the poet and his reader, of her presence and absence, her nearness and distance at the same time, thereby making the final sense of mourning even more touching.

The poignant mourning which informs the length and breadth of “Lucy Gray” is aimed at pulling on life without her: “In the dreary months at Goslar, Wordsworth . . . ritually destroyed her, buried her, mourned her, and then, like many another bereaved person, turned with a mixture of regret and relief to the task of going without her” (Virginia Ireys 403). As the beginning part of this essay has laid out and as also John Beer observes, what lurks behind the poetic texture of “Lucy Gray” or Lucy poems is Wordsworth’s attempt to act out the trauma of his alleged incestuous relationship with Dorothy through a death-wish of her: “That the idea that he might have been responding to the death of a real woman has therefore been set aside in favour of his exploring some kind of death-imagery, perhaps even in order to acknowledge a wish – however unconscious – that his sister might die” (11). The mourning frame of Wordsworth’s mind at Goslar is geared towards disengaging his libido from the loved one who has died.

Like “Lucy Gray,” “Strange fits of passion,” too explores the traumatic psychology of love. The speaker anxiously admits that

*Strange fits of passion have I known:  
And I will dare to tell,  
But in the love’s ear alone,  
What once to me befell (1-4)*

The poet, thus, takes the reader as voyeur to whom he is out to unburden his traumatized mind. The narrative part of the poem begins in the second stanza with an odd introduction: Lucy, the girl he loved, was beautiful – “fresh as a rose in June” (5). The past tense forewarns the reader that the beloved girl is no more. So like “Lucy Gray,” the poem turns out to be an evacuation of the guilty “fond and wayward” thoughts that have been haunting the speaker (25). The evacuation is actuated through mourning – the frantic cry “‘O mercy!’ to myself I cried, / ‘If Lucy should be dead!’” (27-28). what is interesting here



is that this grieving comes in the backdrop of his arrival at Lucy's cottage presumably for an assignation. The meta-ironic recollection of this sinister supposition is aimed at letting out the trauma of incest in a shocking intense manner: throughout his horse ride to Lucy's cottage, the speaker-lover has been thinking about his passionate fits of love she has evoked, but as he arrives he has ironically to be reconciled with her death: the impelling romantic anticipation ironically-traumatically gives way to plangent grieving. "Strange fits of passion," as a Lucy poem, exposes the enigmatic tendencies of erotic love, particularly if it is not sanctioned by the society.

The song that follows "Strange fits of passion" – "She dwelt among untrodden ways" is even a clearer example of the inscrutability of erotic love:

*She dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the springs of Dove;  
A maid whom there were none to praise,  
And very few to love.*

*A violet by a mossy stone  
Half-hidden from the eye!  
--Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.*

*She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be;  
But she is in her grave, and, O!  
The difference to me. (1-12)*

Lucy is esoteric save as an unfathomable being attached to precise locations – "the untrodden ways / Beside the springs of Dove" and finally "in her Grave" – and as who is virtually a cast-off – "A maid whom there were none to praise, / And very few to love" – an isolated entity from the world, is most probably loved only by those "very few" with familial obligations. The speaker is presumably one of the 'very few' to love her, and he loves quite erotically as it is suggested by high voltage language of the second stanza, particularly the metaphor of a "violet" and the simile – "Fair, as a star." Only the speaker knows this unknowable girl; only he knows what her death means to him: "But she is in her grave, and, O! / The difference to me!" The exclamation 'O!' plainly is a zero that rhymes with "know," – a virtual nothing that meta-ironically says everything about the speaker's feelings for Lucy: the intensity of his erotic love and the sharpness of his shock at her decease cryptically captured in the close "The difference to me."

Unknowability is, however, not a factor at all in "I travelled among unknown men." Beloved Lucy's location is pinned down: "The bowers where Lucy played" (14) are the "green field(s)" (15) of "England" (3). It is obvious that Lucy's value now derives from her





residence on the English soil and not from herself. In a biographical sense, this poem reveals an important truth about Wordsworth's relationship with Dorothy. Implied is Wordsworth's discovery that place and knowability are catalysts to his love for Lucy or the Lucy-surrogate. Even a celebration of Wordsworth's love for Lucy and Grasmere (where his strong love for Dorothy returned) cannot cancel out the unconscious death-wish for the sister. The implied death of Lucy encapsulated in "the last green field / Which Lucy's eyes surveyed!" (15-16) serves as a grim reminder of his death wish, the foundation of which, according to Matlak, was Wordsworth[']s tendency to] both love[. . .] Dorothy and wish[. . .] to be rid of her, because of the serious inconvenience of her presence" (46). As he rightly avers, Lucy poems "form as an outlet for Wordsworth's ambivalence and frustration" (51).

Another 'Lucy' poem "Three years she grew in sun and shower" expresses Wordsworth's ambivalence – feelings of erotic love and death wish for her. As per her his unconscious wish, Lucy, in this poem is dead but her absence has been painful to him:

*Thus Nature spake – The Work was done –  
How soon my Lucy's race was run!  
She died, and left to me  
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;  
The memory of what has been,  
And never more will be. (37-42)*

The speaker mourns over Nature's killing of Lucy, and his heart is lacerated by the pangs of this permanent, physical separation, which is powerfully captured in final two lines. Here Nature, the killer of Lucy, is not a caring mother, but rather a killer-rapist. As Ferguson observes:

*Through most of thirty-five lines, Nature dwells lovingly on his plans for Lucy, with the prurience of an aged lover contemplating a young girl forced to be his bride. If Lucy is a flower, she has been sown to be reaped, in Nature's view; Nature's reaping and raping have moved so close to one another that human laments on the death of virgins become inevitable rather than extraordinary. Even though Nature speaks like a reaper who considers himself more gay than grim, his tone of noblesse oblige has a sinister edge. He steps in to speak at just the time at which Lucy might really have begun to speak for herself; an expectable progression from 'Three years she grew' to 'and then she said' has been thwarted. ("Lucy Poems" 544)*

In order to make comfortable his reason at the incest which the society takes as a horror, Wordsworth rationalizes Nature as lover and, by so doing, he becomes able to substitute his guilt.

The psychological rationalization of Wordsworth's guilt in "A slumber did my spirit seal" is far more ambiguous than in "Three years she grew in sun and shower." The



poetic texture mutes the poet's plangent pain so efficiently that the text, in fact, swings between the limits of intense lament and dispassionate indifference, particularly when the reader interprets it in the light of the psycho-biographical knowledge that Wordsworth was writing with an unconscious oomph of love and hatred for Dorothy. The poem begins with the speaker-lover's open avowal of his gullibility:

*A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears;  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years. (1-4)*

The speaker-lover's slumber, which in "Strange fits of passion" was simply sleep, has here been used a figure of his nonchalant attitude towards death. However, the contrast between the two sleeps does not sustain itself, since it was exactly in his slumber in "Strange fits of passion" that he became susceptible to the presentiment of Lucy's demise. The figural slumber – death – seals this premonition in the last stanza:

*No motion has she now, no force;  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees. (5-8)*

The last stanza turns out to be an ironic deflation of the speaker-lover's naïveté vis-à-vis his slumber (meaning "death"). The seeming extreme indifference is nothing but a façade of the "human fears" of Lucy's death and the accosting pain welled up inside the speaker-lover. With Lucy disappearing into Nature from where she has sprung, the poet thinks he has finally exorcised the trauma obtaining from the guilt of incest: "Nature is capable of incorporating the dead and, in some sense, retrieving them: that process is held to comprise an expiation" (Duncan Wu 26).

Wrapping up, the *raison d'être* of Wordsworth's trauma is his guilt of incest which he tries to redress through a repeated, imaginative killing of Dorothy in the Lucy poems. He plays out this acting out of trauma on a terrain of tension between passion and frustration—an ambivalence which make the Lucy poems a *mélange* of a lyric and an epitaph.

#### End notes

1. In "Wordsworth's "Lucy" Poems: Notes and Marginalia," Herbert Hartman, too, groups these poems under Lucy lyrics (134).

#### Works Cited

- Ferguson, Frances. "The Lucy Poems: Wordsworth's Hartman, Herbert." "Wordsworth's 'Lucy' Poems: Notes and Marginalia." *PMLA* 49.1 (March, 1934). 134-142.



- Gill, Stephen. "Introduction." *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth*. Ed Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 1-4.
- Ireys, Virginia. "The Death of the Muse: Wordsworth's Lucy as Pastoral Heroine." *Papers on Language and Literature* 24.4 (1988). 384-403.
- Kuper, Adam. *Incest & Influence: The Private Life of Bourgeois England*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2009.
- Matlak, Richard E. "Wordsworth's Lucy Poems in Psychobiographical Context." *PMLA* 93.1 (January, 1978). 46-65.
- Pennington, Walter. "The 'Lucy' Poems." *Modern Language Notes* 41.5 (May, 1926). 314-316.
- Richardson, Alan. "The Dangers of Sympathy: Sibling Incest in English Romantic Poetry." *Studies in English Literature* 25. 4 (Autumn, 1985). 737-754.
- Ward, John Powell. "'Will No One Tell Me What She Sings?': Women and Gender in the Poetry of William Wordsworth." *Studies in Romanticism* 36. 4 (Winter, 1997). 611-633.
- Wilson, Douglas B. *The Romantic Dream: Wordsworth and the Poetics of the Unconscious*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1993.
- Wordsworth, William. *Works by William Wordsworth*. Accessed on June 12, 2018. [www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/authors/search/?query=Wordsworth,+William](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/authors/search/?query=Wordsworth,+William)
- Wu, Duncan. "Wordsworth's poetry to 1798." *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth*. Ed. Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 22-37.



## Women Identity and Defiance in Arundhati's *The God of Small Things*

Vikash Kumar

Arundhati Roy with her solitary novel has generated much of discussion on the theme of feminism where she presents her women characters asserting for their identity by showing their defiance against the patriarchal boundaries. As a social activist she has made the transition from self expression of her individuality to today's concept of mass consciousness. Perhaps, the best part of her personality is her honesty to share instances from her life while writing on any relevant subject and all these qualities. According to R. K. Dhavan (1999): "A writer whose novel is authentically Indian as is her writing style.... Roy is the novelist extraordinary.... Her victory for a first time novelist is the culmination of a - fairy tale". Her commitment to infuse positive vibes and to prompt this burning issue of gender discrimination let the whole generation move on a new path with a new definition. It is a kind of revolution of thought where no need of division on the basis of gender and identity could exist. She settled a keen perception where she does not demand any different world for female but what she wants for the better sex is recognition in the world which according to her could be equally shared by everyone apart of gender discrimination.

The word 'feminism' is well associated with women identity in a world dominated by male with its long and established system where female folk has very little place. Now this exploited and marginalized class has asserted its identity and independent existence against all odds. Perhaps, feminism is that umbrella which provides all socio-cultural and ideological framework. Writers especially from the different parts of the world have defined it differently in their own contexts. But the basic similarity among all the existence and the phase of development is the acceptance of expression. What are the most tragic convulsions among all expression is the question which stands or places today's most technologically and scientifically advanced society at a place where half of the population of world still demands the acceptance of their presence in terms of their strength, power, capacity and intellectuality.

### Female Identity

An ability to reflect his or her individual actions as well as a capacity to respond to the action of others with complete independence is called a person's identity. It is an active participation of an individual to play his or her own role in the world of social, political and religious arena. Identity of a person always revolves around main area of their social nature, their interaction with others and their representation of the social world. It deals with the subconscious state of the mind which if psychologically analyzed than lead us to the conclusion that how people retain the power to make choices as a part of authorization. The demand of power relates this term of identity with gender. With



gender identity described a person in pure physical terms as an essential part of individual existence. It is not an ego boosting game but an urge from within. It is the run up to achieve that identity while fulfilling other duties and responsibilities. As people are essentially social beings, human thought and action is influenced not only by genetic structure but also by the pattern of culture and custom. Nature sends us with pure forms, it is our social stand ups which with established norms with togetherness of gender provide an identity to an individual. In '*An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*' she says, "The theme of much of what I write, fiction as well as non-fiction, is the relationship between powerlessness and the endless, circular conflict they're engaged in" (Roy: 2006, p. 13). The woman characters sketched by her as Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Rahel articulate the variants of resistant rebellion through the examination of the marital and inter-gender relations. Somewhere, she casts the resistance against gender oppression and predicament of Indian women in the light of global inequalities. The marginalization of the main character Ammu of *The God of Small Things*, reflects the rebellion nature of her, against the set conventionality. The laws of love, quest for self identity, biased social structure, law of inheritance and the cornering of all these tantrums by challenging the power structure of social order personifies Roy as a feminist. While weaving the role of her protagonist of her fiction *The God of Small Things*, Roy explores the crisis of identity. Throughout the novel, the struggle of her protagonist at various strata, as discussed above, segregates the real picture from the fabricated one. The patriarchal plot, financial and sexual exploitation, figuration of woman as material of pleasure and social injustice prefigure Roy's inner voice struggling for freedom and equality, challenging traditional ideas and conventions. Through the characters portrayed as Ammu or Baby Kochamma or Rahel, the novelist as a woman rebels against such social structures and even challenging the institution of marriage. She expresses her disillusionment with the social conditions, position of woman and the steps taken to stop every possible change. In short, it can be said that in a very bold and aggressive way, Roy tried to characterize the issue of identity through her characters by way of showing them resisting oppressive and repressive social and political structures. In away, the writer tries to show the fall of the great patriarchal order controlling the place of women and their identity as the oppressed lot. A. Subhashini writes, "...In *The God of Small Things* there is a great deal of revelation of female experience. The setting is a well-established patriarchal society, where women are naturally oppressed and exploited (2011)."

Identity is whatever makes an entity definable and recognizable, in terms of possessing a set of qualities or characteristics that distinguish it from entities of a different type. As of Sophie Mol, whose made in England materials and curiosities in the mind of Estha and Rahel confirms her identical presence in the mind of readers. In a word of layman, it could be said that identity is whatever makes something the same or different. This includes operational definition that either yields a yes or no value for weather a thing is present in the field of observation or that distinguishes the thing from its background, allowing one to determine what is and what is not included in it. The character of Baby





Kochamma portrayed by Roy shows her strength to assert their identity with her prowess and defiance.

### **Defiance against Patriarchy**

Arundhati Roy's women Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Margaret Kochamma and Rahel are victims of patriarchal in one or another way in her novel '*The God of Small Things*'. These women challenge patriarchal rules and regulations in the novel. Ammu is fights against her father, husband, brother and mother and the society at large to be free and independent. Baby Kochamma, the sister of Pappachi, transgresses the boundary of religion and converts to Roman Catholic to win Father Mulligan's love but in vain. He becomes Hindu and preaches widows later on.

Mammachi is a conservative lady but she suffers from patriarchy. She is the victim of her husband's physical oppression and mental torture. Her practice on the piano is stopped because of the fear that she will surpass him in the future. He is jealous of her musical talent. She is also the victim of her son Chacko who usurps her business of pickle. However she is the cause of women's oppression also as she helps Chacko to exploit women workers of the factory sexually. She thinks Margaret is another whore like women workers who sleep with Chacko.

Rahel tends to be more aggressive than her mother and brother. Many cases of her transgression of patriarchal boundaries are found in the novel. She has been expelled from the schools for her violation of traditional rules. She disobeys the traditional rules of marriage and gets married with a man outside her community. When she is divorced, she is not sorry for it. Therefore Comrade Pillai is surprised when she says, "We are divorced" (Roy, 1997). She gives a huge blow on the face of patriarchy by breaking the Love Laws. She sleeps with her brother, which is a crime in a patriarchal society.

Margaret Kochamma is found to be a rebellion as she gets married with an Indian without her parents' agreement. However her marriage is not successful as she finds her patriarchal Indian husband careless about marital relationship. He cannot understand that she happens to a white woman who does not like to be dependent on husband. She realizes that her life won't be easy with Chacko as he cannot earn well and he is not serious in family life also. Her daughter Sophie Mol's untimely demise affects the lives of almost all character in the novel. She has a very tragic character because the punishment she gets is not justified.

It is for the identity that women of Roy struggle throughout their life. Female identity and defiance of women is found throughout her novel. Arundhati Roy, without having any ideological leaning, presents the whole reality of women world in general and Indian women in particular emphatically. The novel '*The God of Small Things*' has thus



proved to be a testimony to the dissent and the dream of Indian women as presented by a writer with social commitment.

## References

- Dhawan, R.K. Arundhati Roy: *The Novelist Extraordinary*, ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige, 1999. p. 11.
- Roy, Arundhati: *The God of Small Things*. New Delhi: Indiaink. 1997. Print.
- Roy, Arundhati: *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 2006. Print
- Subhashini Smt. A.: Feminine Sensitivity with Reference to '*The God of Small Things*', E Research Journal, Vol. II Sep. 2011. web



## **Dispel Inhibitions: Create Opportunities to Soar**

Ameena Kidwai

Given the relevance and centrality of English, one major concern that arises pertains to the development of English language skills among learners who study in non-English medium schools. They learn it as a second language and the knowledge imparted in traditional classrooms is totally inadequate in helping them transcend the barriers of poor English language skills.

In her book entitled *Teaching English* (1982), Tricia Evans proposes 'aims and objectives' in the light of the findings of Newsome Report, London, (1963):

*"English well taught, should train a 16 year old secondary school pupil to use the language confidently, appropriately and accurately, according to the circumstances in which it is used. He should be able to speak his own mind, to write what he has thought and to have a care for the correctness of written and spoken English. He should be able to understand what he reads and hears, to master the ideas and restate them in his own way."* (p.152)

In the light of this statement, teaching of English assumes an important place in the school curricula. As it is often said, English should be taught keeping in view the communicative needs of the learners. For such a task, we need not only comprehensive textbooks but also motivated and skilled teachers who are competent to develop the communicative competence of the learners through various tasks and activities revolving around the syllabus. For the latter to happen, appropriate methodology and content have to be evolved.

In the investigator's experience as a senior secondary school teacher of English, learners with many years' experience in English learning still have considerable difficulty in coping with English in its normal communicative use. It, therefore, is of great significance and urgency to study and evolve pedagogies that shall answer the problem.

An experimental programme the Access English Language Program was introduced for non-English medium learners at the secondary level as an endeavour to hone communicative competence in the learners by changing the formalized, structured pattern of conventional classroom teaching.

### **Afterschool Language Programme**

As Genesee (2005) maintain: *"English language learners are more successful when they participate in programs that are specially designed to meet their needs (English as a Second*



*Language, bilingual, etc.) than in mainstream English classrooms and when the program is consistent throughout the student education".*

After school programs are not necessarily bound by a set curriculum and assessments, which means they have more flexibility to tailor instruction and activities to the language needs of individual participants. There are many advantages of afterschool programs:

- A relaxed environment to practice English communication while playing games or participating in hands-on activities without the pressure of being graded
- A chance to build confidence in a stress-free environment with peers in similar circumstances
- Lower student-to-teacher ratios, and therefore more personal attention to each learner
- Additional time for learner-centered language instruction

This two year After School Programme at Jamia School succeeded to a great extent due to its task-based, interactive approach, and, therefore, its pedagogies of teaching and learning formed the crux of this study. The findings of this study put forth suggestions, reforms and practices of English language teaching for the future.

### **Effect of Socio-Economic Status on Second Language Learning**

Socio-economic status is defined as “one’s access to economic and social resources and the social positioning, privileges, and prestige that derive from these resources” (Magnuson & Duncan, 2006). Socio-economic status of families is a major contributing factor to learners’ English language achievement. This is primarily because the financially well-off households have access to expensive private education and are able to provide an encouraging learning environment even at home. In contrast, socially disadvantaged children have to cope with sometimes over-crowded classrooms in poorly managed schools, where there is a scarcity of adequate learning resources and teachers are often not adequately equipped to deal with the need of these learners.

In the present study, the learner population in the special after-school English language intervention constituted children from mostly socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

### **Role of Motivation in Learning Second Language**

Motivating learners to study and use the language is one of the main challenges faced by teachers, specifically in vernacular medium schools where opportunities to use English are few. For many learners, their primary motivation is what researchers call *extrinsic* motivation, that is, motivation based on a reward that comes from outside the



learner. Examples of extrinsic motivation include the desire to get a good grade or a good job. Such rewards, though motivating, may also be problematic. *Intrinsic* rewards tend to be especially effective is that, coming from within the learner, they are always there to drive one's study – they are not years away, and they don't disappear when the test ends.

Motivation “*provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process*” (Dörnyei, 1998)

In the present study major motivating factor was found to be the relaxed, unthreatening learning environment where learners especially from socially underprivileged sections of society felt at ease to freely speak their mind and share their thoughts with the peer group and teacher. Therefore, a friendly class atmosphere is a key factor that intrinsically motivates learners, to continue to attend as the afternoon timing of the lesson is a major de-motivating factor.

Additionally, the teachers inculcated a discipline of respecting everyone's opinions in class, which in turn encouraged a democratic class environment. Encouraging real life English language usage by way of relevant home tasks, role plays, interactions and interviews in class with real people from the outside world, and the use of realia too to an extent were also the motivating factors.

### **Teaching Methodology**

Teaching methodology was crucial in deciding the success of this particular after-school language programme. This programme succeeded to a great extent by changing the formalized, structured pattern of conventional classroom teaching and due to its task-based approach.

Collaborative work promoted learners' language development and increased language opportunities for learners, thus motivating them to participate actively. Students were also monitored unobtrusively during these activities, after which they received constructive feedback.

Use of prompting and elicitation as techniques to encourage learner engagement and invite more responses proved effective in increasing student talking. Concept-checking was noted to be effective checking students' understanding as opposed to the traditional classroom where learners simply nod along. With regard to error correction, delayed feedback was used often and this gave learners a chance to think about and correct their own mistakes.

### **Active Learner Participation**





Students' academic performance may be influenced positively by their active engagement in the classroom (Emerson & Taylor, 2004). In traditional classrooms, students engage in recitation of scripts, minimal interaction, and less involvement in productive thinking. Interaction between the students, the learning materials, other students, and the teacher are significant to learning outcomes (Singh & Mohammed, 2012).

Second language (L2) learning requires that learners take ownership of learning activities through interaction, active participation and the use of the target language in a more authentic context (Lantolf, 1994).

In the recent time, most educational theories emphasize social learning and learner-centered learning in knowledge construction. As stated in SMART Technologies Inc., (2006) there are three learning theories:

- Constructivism relies on the learner selecting and transforming information and making decisions to construct meaning.
- Whole-class teaching brings the entire class together, focuses their attention and provides structured, teacher-focused group interaction.
- Active learning learners actively engage in the learning process through reading, writing, discussion, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, rather than passively absorbing instruction (e.g., lecture model of instruction)

The three learning theories emphasize the importance of student's active participation in the instructional process. It is evident that students would be motivated to learn when they are actively engaged in learning activities than they would have when they are passive in the classroom.

In the context of vernacular-medium learners in the present study, engaging in small-group discussions was a confidence boosting exercise. Learners received feedback not only from the teacher, but also from peers. This in turn promotes sharing and application of knowledge.

Low proficiency level of students often hindered participation as they felt nervous about speaking in front of the class. It was noted that responses were elicited from the timid students and were encouraged to speak out and participate. Learner-centric methods and supportive teachers made learners feel comfortable and encouraged them to share their thoughts freely.



## Materials in English Language Teaching

Teachers depend on a variety of materials to support their teaching and their students' learning. However, despite the availability of commercial English language teaching materials most of the teachers of ESL devote time and efforts to find, select, evaluate, adapt and develop materials to use in their teaching.

Materials are considered instrumental in shaping the quality of classroom interaction and language use by teachers. Materials thus have the principal role of stimulating communicative and meaningful language use. For the current study, the researcher evaluated the following types of instructional materials used in the after-school English language learning program within the context of the materials rubric created for this purpose:

1. Course book
2. Teacher-made and other task-based materials
3. Realia

As Cunnings worth (1995) states, "*Heavy dependence on course books is far from ideal as it reduces the importance of the individual contributions that good teachers make at all levels in the learning process.*" Thus, heavy dependence on a single course book may be detrimental to learners' needs, and flexibility and supplementary materials are always welcome additions. (Swales 1980, Nunan 1991, Medgyes 1994, Allwright 1981, Stern 1992, Cunnings worth 1995). It was noted that teacher-made and other task-based materials was frequently used effectively in these after school classrooms. As current researchers are also supporters of the opportunity for choice in an English language classroom, in accordance with student's learning needs and interest. Informal, teacher-made materials will always assist professional, published courseware and will only enhance the learning experience for students.

The researcher evaluated the course book used for the programme and found it was structured logically and promoted integrated skill development as all the units focused on reading, speaking, reading, and writing. The presentation of content and use of images was visually appealing which engaged learners. However, a major drawback was that some of the content was from a different cultural context which learners sometimes lost interest in. They exhibited more enthusiasm in talking about familiar topics rather than alien concepts.

The supplementary teacher-made material was customized to the learners' needs and took into account their proficiency level as well as interests. Use of realia by teachers supported communicative activities successfully and brought the real world into the language classroom, besides making learning interesting.



## Teacher development and Preparedness

Teacher development and school development must go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other. (Fullan 1991)

In context of the present study during in the special English language programme the teachers were frequently provided with hands on workshop on the best innovative practices for language classrooms. It has been observed that teachers who are fully aware of programme goals and recommended methods of achieving them are more effective in promoting objectives of the programme and more informed when discussing them. The teachers could monitor what was happening in the classroom ("Are the learners becoming more confident/motivated/independent/ communicatively competent?"); ii) as a basis for reflection ("Am I promoting the objectives of the language programme effectively?"); and iii) to feed back into programme development ("Are these objectives being fulfilled, are they appropriate? Do they need to be altered?"). Sample lessons, workshops and monthly trainings became indispensable in providing support to the teachers.

Therefore, for any learning programme to be successful- teacher training and motivating teachers towards professional development must be stressed as it equips teachers to handle the classroom well. The teacher should ensure to get proper teaching aids and facilities which include- proper space, books and teaching aid. This would create a proper learning ambience for the learner. When the learners get proper learning facilities, their learning process will be effective and speedy.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the process of acquiring the second language can be effective when both the learner and the teacher are involved in the process and derive fun out of it. This is the only way to dispel inhibitions to use second language and keep the motivation and interest levels high. When this is achieved all the problems of teaching and learning get resolved and better results are attained. In the experience and observation of the researcher, these new-age techniques and methodology worked successfully in the Special English Language School Programme, and thus there is no reason they will not work in traditional classrooms. The English language teaching landscape in India can only be reformed when the teaching community, parents, and school management open their arms and minds to fresh approaches that lead to effective learning.

## References

- Allwright, R. I., 1981. "What do we want teaching materials for?" ELT Journal Vol. 36/1, Oxford University Press.
- Cunningsworth, A. 1995. Choosing your Course book. Macmillan Heinemann.



- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Demotivation in foreign language learning. Paper presented at the TESOL.
- Emerson, T.L.N, Taylor, B.A. (2004) Comparing student achievement across experimental and lecture- oriented sections of a principal of macroeconomics course. *Southern Economics Journal*, 70,672-693.
- Evans, T., 1982, *Teaching English*, London: Croom Helm (p.152)
- Fullan, M.G. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell Educational Limited.
- Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W., & Christian, D. (2005). English language learners in U.S. schools: An overview of research findings. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk*, 10(4), 363-385.
- Lantolf, J.P.(1994). Sociocultural theory and second language learning: Introduction to the special issue. *Modern language Journal*, 78,418-420.
- Magnuson, K., and Duncan, G. (2006). The Role of Family Socioeconomic Resources in. *Racial Test Score Gaps. Developmental Review*, 26,365-399.
- <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/001/751/6%20Role%20of%20family%20socioe>
- Medgyes, P. 1986. "Queries from a communicative teacher." In Rossner, R. and Bolitho, R. (eds.) *Currents of Change in English Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Nunan, D., 1991, *Language Teaching Methodology*. Prentice Hall.
- Singh, T.K.R, & Mohammad, A.R. (2012). Secondary students perspectives on the use of the Interactive Whiteboard for teaching and learning of Science in Malaysia. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(97), 9-15
- SMART Technologies Inc. (March 2006) *Interactive Whiteboards and Learning Improving student learning outcomes and streamlining lesson planning*.
- [http://www.sharpsav.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Int\\_Whiteboard\\_Research\\_Whitepaper.pdf](http://www.sharpsav.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Int_Whiteboard_Research_Whitepaper.pdf)
- Stern, H.H., 1992. *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Swales, J. 1980a. "ESP: the textbook problem." *The ESP Journal* 1.1:11-23



# Pair and Group Work In the Language Classroom

Jimalee Sowell

## Introduction

Pair and group work has become the cornerstone for the communicative language classroom and with good reason: teacher-centered, lecture-oriented classes do not allow for much student production of language, which is a key element of acquisition. However, typically, teachers who are oriented towards a more lecture-style approach to teaching are not always versed in how to implement an interactive, student-centered class. Many of these teachers are interested in making their classes interactive but are not sure how to teach using a more student-centered approach. This paper seeks to fill that gap – to give a framework for implementing pair and group work. This first part of the paper examines the pedagogical reasons to use pair and group work in language classes. It then lays out the procedures for conducting pair and group work activities: before, during, and after. The last section is devoted to common problems inherent in pair and group processes and presents solutions to overcome these challenges to make pair and group work as effective as possible.

## Why use pair and group work?

### 1. Interaction is important for language acquisition

There are many reasons to use pair and group work in the language classroom, but perhaps of greatest significance is the fact that they provide opportunities for interaction in the L2, which is important in acquiring a new language. Many researchers in the field of second language acquisition (e.g., Artigal 1992; Ellis 1999; Lantolf and Thorne 2006; Swain 2000; Vygotsky 1987) have determined that spoken interaction is an essential part of learning a new language. In a teacher-fronted class, students might get a lot of listening practice but not much productive speaking practice. In fact, according to research by Long and Porter (1985) in a teacher-fronted class of 30 students, each student gets approximately 30 seconds of practice per lesson, adding up to only one hour per year. Pair and group work significantly increase the amount of speaking practice students have in the language classroom, and as such are much more efficient for language practice than student-teacher interaction alone (Baker and Westrup 2000; Scrivener 2011). While pair and group work are often associated with speaking and listening, it's important to note that all skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) can be integrated into pair and group work activities.

### 2. Students learn by doing

Students are much more likely to retain information when they are active participants than when they are passive listeners. While teachers often believe they are teaching effectively by sharing their knowledge through lectures; in fact, students are not getting





much. According to Sousa (2006), on average, students retain 27 percent of what they learn by doing as opposed to a mere 2 percent learned from listening to lectures. While these statistics paint a grim picture of the effectiveness of lecturing, it is important to realize that teachers are still responsible for teaching; using pair and group work does not remove the teacher from the responsibility of directing students towards essential concepts and information: some of this direction necessarily comes from teacher-fronted work. In addition to improved retention, students themselves often prefer a more active class with student engagement. In *The Good Language Teacher* by Luke Prodromou (1997), from the students' perspective, one of the characteristics of a good teacher was the use of group work in class; on the contrary, the bad teacher talked and talked and didn't let the students speak. Students often become bored and, therefore, inattentive when the teacher does all the talking. Interactive tasks help students feel more interested in and engaged with the subject and materials they are learning as it gives them an opportunity to participate and express themselves rather than just idly listening.

### **3. Pair and group work is less-threatening and develops a variety of skills and competencies**

Pair and group work offer the opportunity to practice language with more comfort than speaking in front of the entire class (Hess 2001). It can be frightening to speak out and even more nerve-racking to speak in front of the entire class in a foreign language. In the process of pair and group work, students can practice with less pressure (Baker and Westrup, 2000; Harmer 2007; Hess 1991; Scrivener 2011) and often participate more actively than they do in a whole-class setting (Harmer 2007). Pair and group work can function as a kind of scaffolding and support network for more public situations. Once students have had a chance to practice in pairs or groups, they often then feel confident about sharing their ideas with the whole class (Harmer 2007; Hess 1991). In addition to improving language skills, students also develop other important skills. Research on cooperative learning has shown that students who learned through collaborative tasks generally had higher academic scores, higher self-esteem, and improved social skills in addition to improved race relations and a better mastery of skills and content (Stahl 1995). In the process of collaboration and cooperation, students also practice important communication skills such as turn-taking, agreeing and disagreeing, and clarification. Additionally, through pair and group work, students can improve time-management skills (Scrivener 2011). Much of what is practiced and learned through pair and group work activities is applicable to numerous situations outside the classroom, whether in an L1 or L2 context.

### **Is pair and group work possible in large classes?**

At a teacher-training workshop, I heard a story about a teacher in Africa who had an unfathomable number of students—five hundred or so per class. When asked how she managed, her response was, “Easy. I break them into small groups of fifty.” Whether fact or fiction, the point is that pair and group work can work with large classes. If you can



make four or five groups in a class, why can't you make ten or twenty? In fact, in large classes, pair and group work area practical way to provide students with opportunities to practice language (Hess 2001; Rhoades 2013). A teacher I knew with conversation classes of 80 students found that group work was the only way to effectively teach his class. In large classes, teachers might rely on group leaders who are in charge of tasks such as giving handouts to their group members, making sure everyone in the group understands the assignment, and submitting work to the teacher (Harmer 2007). Of course, by design, large classes have some constraints. You might, for example, be able to do only one pair activity or one group activity during a class period. However, some classes really might be too large to manage pair and group work. In the case that classes are extremely large, teachers might have to think of focusing interaction outside of the class. That is, the classroom might be a place for language input and individual work while language practice is focused outside of the class where students can interact through group assignments, language club activities, and online platforms. In Africa, where classes are typically large and crammed with content, there has recently been a positive trend of English clubs, which are precisely designed to give students a chance to practice language. These clubs are sometimes facilitated by English teachers and sometimes facilitated by students or former students who have become proficient in English.

### **Aim for a balance of interactional patterns**

While pair work and group have numerous benefits in the language classroom, it is not sound pedagogy to use them exclusively. There is still a need for instructors to instruct and for students to do individual work. Ideally, we want to achieve a balance of teacher-fronted work, pair work, group work, whole-class work and individual work (Hess 2001). Using a variety of interactional patterns and activities throughout the class helps students stay alert and active. It might not be possible or even necessary to have all interactional patterns in one session (especially in large classes), but there should be a variety of interactional patterns throughout the course. Sometimes it's not the teacher, but, rather the activity that dictates the interactional pattern. For example, some activities such as interviews and dialogue practice are better suited to pair work while other activities such as discussions or ranking-order activities are better for groups.

### **Before pair and group work**

We cannot just put students in pairs or groups and tell them to talk or have a conversation. For one thing, they do not know what you really expect of them; for another, it's unlikely that they will have any progression since they cannot without specific instruction incorporate anything new. Students need specific tasks to work on while carrying out pair and group work (Woodberry and Aldrich 2000). They also need enough familiarity with the language to be used in the task to carry it out properly; otherwise, the activity is doomed to failure. For example, if the task is to ask about the past weekend, students need to know how to ask the question and how to answer it before they can ask a



partner or group members (Baker and Westrup 2000). This means that before a pair or group work activity, students need enough prior instruction to carry out the activity successfully; successfully, however, does not mean perfectly. We can expect that students will have errors in the production – this is a part of learning.

### Steps to follow before starting an activity

- **Set up furniture.**

If possible, set up the furniture before class in a manner that allows for students to easily work in pairs in groups. The most logical way is to have sets of four, whereby students can be a group of four when needed and two pairs when needed. For large classes, it is often easier to have students work with those in close proximity. To make pairs, students could simply work with the student next to them or directly behind or in front of them; to make groups, the pair in front turns to the pair behind (Hess 1991; Renaud, Tannebaum, and Stantial, 2007).

- **Organize pairs and groups.**

Establish pairs and groups and make sure that all students know who they will be working with before you give instructions for an activity. You can check by asking questions such as, “Which group are you?” Oh, the green group. “Who is your partner?”, etc. (See below for ways to get students into pairs and groups.)

- **Make sure students know what to do.**

Once pairs and groups have been established, give clear instructions and check for understanding. As a back-up, it’s a good idea to have a copy of the instructions on a PowerPoint, board, or handout that students can refer to in case they get confused while carrying out an activity (Baker and Westrup 2000; Sowell 2017).

- **Give students a time limit for the given task.**

Specifying a time limit will help students manage their time and focus on the task (Sowell 2017). In reality, it is not always possible to predict how long some tasks might need; you can allow for some flexibility.

- **Make sure students know how and when the activity will end.**

Establish a clear signal that will let students know when time is up. You can clap, ring a bell, raise your hand, blow a whistle, etc. (Baker and Westrup 2000; Hess 2001; Renaud, Tannebaum, and Stantial 2007; Scrivener 2012; Sowell 2017).

- **Let students know when to start the activity.**

Have a specific word or phrase that lets students know when they can begin an activity. You can simply say *Start* or *Okay, let’s begin* (Sowell 2017).

### Getting students into pairs and groups

As a general rule, students should not be allowed to choose who they work with. When students can choose their partners or groupmates, they will generally pick students



they feel comfortable working with or like. This can create an awkward social situation whereby those who are not quickly chosen might feel left out and possibly demotivated. In addition, letting students choose who they will work with can be time-consuming. Putting students in groups by random selection often works best as they don't sense a hidden agenda, and they can be paired or grouped relatively quickly.

### **Techniques for pairing/grouping:**

- **Count off**

To make pairs, divide the number of the students in class by two and count off. If there are twenty students, have the first ten students count off from one to ten, and then have the next ten students count off from one to ten again. Students pair with their like number. To make groups, have students count off. One's get together; two's get together, etc.

- **Letter / Numbers**

Give each student a piece of paper with a number or letter on it (e.g., 1, 2, 3 .... A, B, C). Students find their matching letter(s) or number(s) to form pairs or groups.

- **Names on paper strips**

Have each student write their name on a piece of paper. Collect the pieces of paper, and then randomly draw them from a box or bag to create pairs or groups.

- **Match words or questions and answers**

Prepare a set of cards, half of which have questions and half of which have the matching responses. Give each student one card. Students walk around until they find their match. For example, one student has a card that says *How are you?*; another student has the card that says *I'm great*. Make sure that each question and response has only one other match to avoid possible confusion. You could also make pairs with related words such as antonyms or synonyms: *hot finds cold*; *smart finds intelligent*, etc.

- **Vocabulary groups**

Give each student the name of a vocabulary item for a chosen category; for example, if you choose fruit, you might have pineapple, apple, cherry, and lemon. Then, each student finds their fruit group. All the pineapples get together as a group and so on.

### **During pair and group work**

#### *Monitor pair and group work*

Some teachers feel oddly passive during pair and group work. However, pair and group work activities should not mean that the teacher becomes absent or otherwise engaged in something outside the present moment. It should not mean a time to catch up on marking



papers, preparing future lessons, checking email, or otherwise showing students you are unavailable. You should circulate to monitor student activity and be available to answer questions and assist with any problems. However, you do not want to be an imposing or interfering presence (Woodberry and Aldrich 2000). During pair and group work, do not interrupt students to make corrections; rather, note down errors so they can be addressed later (Baker and Westrup 2000; Brown and Larson-Hall 2012). If you find some students are not participating actively, you can ask them to explain what their pair or group has done so far (Hess 2001). You can also monitor language use, reminding students to use English when they get off track (Harmer 2007).

### **Following pair and group work**

Wrap up a pair or group work activity before transitioning to the next activity or ending the class. In smaller classes, you can ask each student to report to the class something interesting learned about their partner or one of their classmates. You might also choose one or two questions from the discussion or language practice and go over the answers as a whole class.

In larger classes, you can ask a representative from each group to summarize their discussion or present the results of their group work—for example, if you asked students to create an imaginary viable business in their country, then each group should present their business to the other groups. If time is limited, you can have one or two groups present to the class, choosing different groups each time (Baker and Westrup 2000). If time allows, the non-presenting students can pose questions. You can also have two groups come together and present to each other (Baker and Westrup 2000). So, in the business example, groups A and B come together; A presents their business to B and vice versa. You can also use this time to go over some of the common errors you heard while monitoring the pair or group work session (Baker and Westrup 2000).

### **Dealing with common problems related to pair and group work**

#### **Problem: Some students are more active than others**

##### ***Solution: Assign roles***

In group dynamics, it is common that some members are more active than others. In a language class, the better speakers often become the more dominant ones, and sometimes the weaker students don't participate much. As teachers or facilitators, however, we want all students to participate actively in their groups. One way to help get everyone involved is to assign roles so that each member of the group has a certain role to carry out (Nation 1989; Renaud, Tannebaum, and Stantial 2007). Some common roles that have been used in the language classroom are: leader (keeps other members on task and makes sure everyone participates), secretary/writer (records the group's ideas and answers)





timekeeper (makes sure the group gets their work done on time), monitor (makes sure everyone stays on task in the target language), and reporter (reports the group's findings/discussion to the class). These roles can be rotated for different activities so that each student can experience different roles; shier students might find that they can be leaders, and more dominant students might realize that they do not have to lead all the time. For more mature and experienced groups, you can announce the different roles and let the students negotiate them amongst themselves.

***Solution: Use activities where all students must participate equally***

Another way to control dominance is to use some activities in which students all have an equal part. For example, in the activity 'Speak for one minute,' each student in a group has a turn to speak about a particular topic for one minute. When one person is speaking, the others in the group are listening. After the speaker has finished, each listener in the group asks the speaker one question. Such activities ensure that all students have the same opportunity to speak and no one student dominates.

***Solution: The numbered heads technique***

In the numbered heads technique, students in each group number themselves. Students do not reveal their numbers to the teacher. At the end of a group activity, the teacher calls for a summary, report, or answer pertaining to the group activity by randomly calling out a group name and number. For example, the teacher might call green 3 – that would mean that student 3 in the green group should report on their group's activity. Because students do not know who will be called on, they are more motivated to stay on task and contribute during group work (technique explained in Harmer 2007 and Kagan and Kagan 2009).

**Problem: Some pairs or groups finish their task before others**

***Solution: Organize the activity so that it is not necessary to complete all items***

It's very unlikely that all pairs or groups will finish an activity at the same time, which can be problematic if you wait for all pairs or groups to finish before calling the end of a task. Early finishers often become bored and restless while waiting for other students. One of the best ways to control this is to give a time limit from the outset. For many activities in the language classroom, the point is to practice language and not necessarily to finish an activity. Students don't always need to go over every question in a list of discussion questions, for example, to have gotten the planned benefit from the activity. In the planning stages of an activity, you want to have enough material for pair and group work activities so that faster students will still be engaged when time is called. You can set minimal tasks, for example, answering at least five of the eight questions. In this way, those working at a slower pace feel they have accomplished what was required, and faster learners can forge ahead (Hess 2001). In the case that all items of a task must be completed



by a group before moving on to the next step, have an activity or activities that are not a distraction that early finishers can do while waiting for others to finish their work.

**Problem: Too much use of the L1 in pair and group work**

*Solution: Set goals, have zones, and appoint language monitors*

In monolingual classes, it can be a great challenge to keep students working in English during pair and group work, especially if they are lower-level students or not super-motivated. While teachers should be understanding about some use of the native language, overuse defeats the purpose of most interactive activities. Renaud, Tannebaum, and Stantial (2007) suggest having students set a goal for their use of English before starting an activity and then asking them to evaluate themselves at the end of the activity. You can work with students' imaginations and tell them that once they enter the classroom, they are in an English-speaking zone, which could represent an imaginary or real place. Another way of working with zones is to allocate time zones in which students can use the L1 or must use English only (Scrivener 2012). In each group, you can have one student work as the language monitor who is responsible for getting students back on track when they steer off into the L1. You can also give each group a small poster that says *Speak English*. When a student or the whole group gets too far off into the L1, one student can pick up the poster as a reminder to get back to the target language.

**Problem: Students are mixed-ability**

*Solution: Ability grouping*

Ability grouping can help students work together in multi-level language classrooms. Groups can be heterogeneous or homogeneous. In homogeneous groups, students can be given differentiated tasks, i.e., the given task might be in essence the same, but graded for different levels of ability. For example, for a reading task, you might have two different versions of the reading text: a lower-level text and a more-advanced one. Lower-level students are grouped together and given the lower-level text; higher-level students are grouped together and given the higher-level text. In heterogeneous groups, students of different abilities work together. In this case, all groups would have the exact same reading text. The common idea for a mixed-ability group is that stronger students benefit from giving explanations to weaker students, and weaker students benefit by learning from stronger students. According to Nation (1989), the manner of grouping should relate to the goal of the activity. When the goal is for students to master new language, a heterogeneous arrangement with stronger students as givers of information and weaker students as receivers is preferable, but when the goal focuses on fluency development, homogenous groups working on cooperative tasks are preferable (Nation 1989). Ability grouping should be handled in a careful (and sometimes clandestine) manner; an



awareness of the methods behind your grouping choices can lead to resentment and demotivation.

**Problem: Assessment of pair work and group is difficult and potentially unfair**

***Solution: Assess pair and group work loosely***

While pair and group work are good for practicing and learning language as well as other social skills, assessment can be tricky and, ultimately, unfair. Frequently, students suffer or profit through the performance of other students. Think about it: would you want your teaching evaluations to be averaged in with the evaluations of your colleagues? If students write a report in a group and the report receives a B grade, there is no way to be sure that each student in that group would actually write a B report when asked to do so individually. If you must in some way evaluate group work, you might give participation points according to how well students work together rather than a score for the work produced. You can also consider grading group work as pass/fail and evaluate students more thoroughly on individual assignments and exam scores.

**Conclusion**

Teachers who are more familiar with a teacher-centered, lecture approach to teaching might find implementing pair and group work difficult in the beginning. Sometimes the classroom becomes noisy and chaotic, or learners are not sure how to work in pairs and groups (Kozar 2010; Scrivener 2012). Teachers who are used to a more teacher-centered approach can feel a loss of control or that their role as teacher has been diminished during pair and group work activities (Rhoades 2013). However, considering the great benefits afforded by pair and group work, especially in terms of its efficiency in language practice, learning how to effectively implement pair and group work is an important skill for the language teacher. Like any new skill, using pair and group work becomes easier as both teacher and student become more familiar with it (Baker and Westrup 2000; Hess 2001; Kozar 2010). Teachers who move from a lecture-mode to an interactive mode of teaching often find their classes become more enjoyable and more productive. This article has provided the groundwork to help teachers in their journey of finding methods of incorporating pair and group work in their classrooms.

**References**

- Artigal, J. 1992. Some considerations on why a new language is acquired by being used. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2: pp. 221-240.
- Baker, J. and Westrup, H. 2000. *The English Language Teacher's Handbook: How to Teach Large Classes with Few Resources*. London, UK: Voluntary Service Overseas.
- Barkley, E. F. 2010. *Student Engagement Techniques*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, S. and Larson-Hall, J. 2012. *Second Language Acquisition Myths*. Ann Arbor,



MI: University of Michigan Press.

- Doff, A. 1988. *Teach English: A training course for teachers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. 1999. *Learning a second language through interaction*. Studies in Bilingualism 17. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Harmer, J. 2007. *How to Teach English*. Essex, UK: Pearson Education.
- Hess, N. 1991. *Headstarts: One hundred original pre-text activities*. Essex, UK: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Kagan, S. and Kagan, M. 2009. *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan.
- Kozar, O. 2010. Towards Better Group Work: Seeing the Difference between Cooperation and Collaboration. *English Teaching Forum*. 46: 2, pp. 16 – 23.
- Lantolf, J. and Thorne, S. 2006. *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Long, M. H., and Porter, P.A. 1985. Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*. 19:2, pp. 207-228.
- Nation, P. 1989. Group Work and Language Learning. *English Teaching Forum*. 27:2, pp. 20 – 24.
- Prodromou, L. 1994. The Good Language Teacher. In *Making the Right Moves*. In Kral, T. (ed.): *Teacher Development: Making the Right Moves. Selected Articles from the English Teaching Forum 1989 – 1993*. Washington, DC: US Language Programs Division, pp. 18 – 33.
- Renaud, S., Tannenbaum, E., and Stantial, P. 2007. Student-Centered Teaching in Large Classes with Limited Resources. *English Teaching Forum*. 45: 1, pp. 12 – 34.
- Rhoades, G. 2013. Minimizing the Chaos through Cooperative Classroom Management. *English Teaching Forum*. 51: 4, pp. 28 – 34.
- Scrivener, J. 2011. *Learning Teaching: The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). London, UK: Macmillan.
- Scrivener, J. 2012. *Classroom Management Techniques*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Slavin, R.E. 1995. *Cooperative learning: theory, research, and practice*. (2nd edition). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sousa, D.A. 2006. *How the Brain Learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Sowell, J. 2017. Good Instruction-Giving in the Second-Language Classroom. *English Teaching Forum*. 55:3, pp. 10 – 19.
- Stahl, R. J. 1995. Cooperative learning: a language arts context and an overview. In Stahl, R. J. (ed.): *Cooperative Learning in Language Arts: A Handbook for Teachers*. Menlo Park, Ca.: Addison-Wesley. pp. 1 – 16.
- Swain, M. 2000. The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In Lantoff, J. P. (ed.): *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, pp. 97 – 114.
- Vygotsky, L. 1987. *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 1: Thinking and speaking*, New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Woodberry, R.D. and Aldrich, H.E. 2000. Planning and running effective classroom-based exercises. *Teaching Sociology*. 28: 3, pp. 241 – 248.



Dr. Gazala Gayas is an Associate Professor in English at Amar Singh College, Srinagar Cluster University. She has authored two books, and has published almost fifteen papers in International Journals. She has published more than twenty poems, and six short stories in renowned International Journals in English.

Elnaz Morsali Ahagh is pursuing M.A. in English Language and Literature. Her main field of research is Hyperreality and cyberpunk.

Dr. Mohammad Ali Alaeddini is a PhD in English Literature and currently working in Payame Noor University (PNU) Iran

Dr. Shirin Pourebrahim is a PhD in Linguistics. She graduated from Tarbiat Modarres University. She is an associate professor of linguistics at Payame Noor University, Iran.

Ishita Verma is a Doctoral Fellow at the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, India. Her area(s) of interest include Bhasha Literature, Literary Theory, Indian English Literature, Folktales, and Narratology.

Dr. Nirban Manna is an Assistant Professor at the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, India. His areas of specialization are Theatre, Masculinity Studies, Bhasha Literature, Indian English Literature, and Postcolonial Literature.

Madhav Astik (M.A. M.Phil. B.Ed. Pursuing Ph.D.) Having three years of experience in the field of teaching, at present, he is working as an Assistant Professor of English Literature and Language at Institute of Language Studies and Applied Social Sciences (ILSASS). He has completed his Post Graduation with special subjects like Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Stylistics, ELT, ESP and Cinema Studies along with English Literature. His fervent interest in research led him to National and International Publications.

Shaju Nalkara Ouseph is currently working as a coordinator, Faculty of Language Studies, AOU-KSA. He is an Assistant Professor of English literature. An Ardent lover of English Fiction, he devoted his studies and research in this field and secured Bachelor, Maters & M.Phil Degrees in English language and literature. His doctoral dissertation was in the field of African-American literature.

Sukhmani Kaur had done her Masters in Commerce and is also pursuing her father's dream of being a Chartered Accountant. An avid reader, she is currently pursuing job of an Assistant Professor. She has already published her short story on Amazon Kindle. She aims to pursue writing professionally one day.

Dr. Uday K Mishra works at University Dept of English TM Bhagalpur University Bhagalpur

Dr. K N Yadav works at University Dept of English TM Bhagalpur University Bhagalpur TM Bhagalpur





Veena Vijaya is an Assistant Professor of English literature Faculty of Language Studies, AOU-KSA. She is particularly interested in African-American fiction. Her doctoral dissertation was specifically focused on the works of Toni Morrison's Fiction. She taught literature in Indian universities and examined doctoral dissertations. She has received Indian President's award for National Guide.

Vijay Kumar Datta who is the associate professor in Sanskrit University in Janakpurdham, Nepal, has done the PhD on the title of "Wordsworth's Poetry As a Cultural Artifact: A New Historicist Study of Trauma, Guilt and Commodification." Having with vibrant as well as multi-dynamic personality, he has been serving the humanitarian literature by writing the unsaid pangs

Ameena Kidwai is an Assistant Professor at Taiba University, KSA. As an ESL teacher and trainer, she has been associated with ELT programs of RELO, US Embassy and Cambridge Assessments in India.

Jimalee Sowell is a Ph.D. student in Composition and Applied Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania USA. She has taught English in South Korea, Cambodia, Uganda, Ecuador, and Bangladesh. She also worked as a teacher trainer for the Malaysian Ministry of Education. She has worked as a teacher and teacher trainer in a number of contexts. Her research interests include teaching writing and teacher training.