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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Editorial</i> | 2 |
| Research Articles | |
| Degeneration and Disease in Bram Stoker's Dracula Dr. U. Fathima Farzana | 3 |
| The Need and Development of a Remedial English Programme for Improving English Communication Skills Sukanya Garg | 10 |
| Exploring Socio-Political Epistemologies: An Examination of Power Structures and Exploitation through a Marxist Lens in Selected Poetry Collections of Niyi Osundare Otutu-flo, Rita Emonena & Agbeye Oburumu | 23 |
| The Feminist Voice for Dalit Trauma in Selected Poems of Meena Kandasamy: A Contemporary Indian Poet Harshita Shukla | 35 |
| Caste and Outcasts: Casteism and Disability as Horrors of Post-Independent India in Real and Fictional World Atolanto Ghoshal | 41 |
| Reconstruction of Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Children Cinema: A Critique of Centuries-Old Fairy Tales and Classic Disney Movies Sumitra Dahiya | 49 |
| Dalit and Tribal Sensibilities in the writings of Arundhati Roy and U R Ananthamurthy Anjali Malik & Dr. Anupam Kumar | 57 |
| Censorship and the Artist: A Study of Osip Mandelstam's Stalin 'Epigram' and 'Ode' Prajalya Bajpai | 67 |
| Our Esteemed Contributors | 75 |

Editorial

The January 2025 issue of GNOSIS had a very warm response from the readers in India and abroad that articles have been flowing in quick succession to fill the folder or this issue even before the deadline of 30 November 2024. The thumping reception of the journal shows the depth of multicultural issues in literature to which critics and readers are attracted. As a journal committed to quality research and writing, we are aware of the need to delink quality from publication cost. Hence, our decision is to charge no publication fee from the scholars whose papers will be published in the issues of GNOSIS. At the same time since GNOSIS is a self-financed venture, co-operation and support in the form of subscriptions are solicited from the readers and admirers of English Literature and Language from all over the world.

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

Dr. Saikat Banerjee

Editor

Degeneration and Disease in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Dr. U. Fathima Farzana

Submitted 27/10/2024 Revised 30/11/2024 Accepted 30/12/2024, Published 31/01/2025

Abstract: Gothic literature aims to instruct the readers on the social horrors of the time through the elements of terror and disgust. The persona of the vampire is constructed around these elements but with a hint of allure and macabre. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which has been inspiring countless sagas, is a perfect example of the fears of Victorian England. The novel is a record of disease and degeneration. Plague, anaemia, cholera, and syphilis are represented through the bite of the vampire. Dracula's migration to England examines a fear of invasion from the East. Likewise, the novel also explores the Ripper murders, opium dens, the scientific devolution of man into a beast, and the degeneration of sane civilised people into psychologically deviant homunculi. This paper dwelves into Count Dracula's character, historical persona, and presence in different places as representations of contamination, disease, and invasion.

Keywords: degeneration, Dracula, Gothic literature, pandemic, invasion.

Introduction

Dracula, the spine-chilling Victorian Gothic fiction, is a pillar of the canon of vampire literature. With its dark macabre castles full of bleak history, haunted vaults, and nightmarish visions, the novel abounds in doom and gloom. But beyond the darkness and the vampire, there is a world of Victorian anxiety nurtured by the increase in death rate, disease, poverty, unemployment, and migration of foreign nationals. The novel is haunted by everything from Darwin's evolution to preserving aristocracy in an age of equality. The terrifying protagonist is a representation of mutation, degeneration, and disease. He is a threat to British Victorian morals and lifestyle. Therefore, he must be staked to the heart and purified with holy water.

Evolution sparks up a huge uproar in the genesis of all beings. Though evolution seems good for the species, the reverse is also possible. Victorian fiction like *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Time Machine*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* reveals that devolution is also real. Educated people from a civilised society devolve into monsters or develop personality disorders. Scientists and psychologists like Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordeau propagate theories on mutational decay. Crime and corruption are other factors that add to Victorian anxiety. Grave robberies, Jack-the-Ripper murders, and kidnappings lay the field for Gothic fiction of the time. Immigration of Jews and Eastern nationals adds to the poverty and unemployment factors. Pollution and a change in food and fashion create terror more than the supernatural could ever fathom.

Methodology

The paper analyses Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with the degenerative theories propounded by Max Nordeau and Cesare Lombroso. Max Nordeau's *Degeneration* (1898) defines the term as "a morbid deviation from an original type" (*The Project Gutenberg eBook of Degeneration, by Max Nordau*). These degenerates lack morality and decency. They commit crimes to satisfy their impulses. They are emotionally imbalanced, and pessimistic and are endowed with a more-than-average sense of anxiety and fear. They constantly live in a world of mysticism and delirium. Further, Cesare Lombroso has recorded that these degenerates have deformities in the cranium and asymmetrical facial features. Other physical features include Squint eyes, hare lips, protruding external ears, webbed fingers, and irregular teeth. The Gothic archetype is built upon these physical and mental characteristics. Manfred, Carmilla, Mr. Hyde, and Dracula are constructed upon degenerate physiognomy.

Furthermore, the paper looks into addiction to narcotics, opium, tobacco, and alcohol as the cause of degeneracy. Opium dens - as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* - were quite popular then. Syphilis, contaminated foods, pollution, and fatigue are other reasons. Hysteria, delirium, emotional sensibility, and personality disorders were also common. The Gothic archetypes are afflicted with these addictions and disorders as well. The claustrophobic spaces in Gothic fiction - like crypts, vaults, towers, dungeons, trapdoors, and basements - represent a degenerate body and a sexually perverted psyche. Dracula addresses all these issues lurking in society. This paper analyses the social and psychological issues of Victorian society as explicated in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The analyses are based on the degeneracy theories of disease, delirium, and depression.

Count Dracula: A Vampiric Contagion

Stoker presents Count Dracula as a respectable chivalrous aristocratic gentleman through the eyes of the unsuspecting Jonathan Harker. Dracula appears an exemplary gentleman minding his vast estate at Transylvania and eager to learn the ways of the English. Upon closer examination, the Count has eyes "which seem red in the lamplight" (Stoker 19); skin "cold as ice" (25); his complexion is morbid "without a single speck of colour" (25); he has "sharp white teeth. . . protruded over the lips"(27); his ears are "pale and at the tops extremely pointed"; his fingers are "squat. . . nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point"; his "breath was rank" (Stoker 27), and "there was no reflection of him in the mirror!" (Stoker 34). The physical appearances match Cesare Lombroso's description of the born criminal.

Thus was explained the origin of the enormous jaws, strong canines, prominent zygomæ, and strongly developed orbital arches which he had so frequently remarked in criminals, for these peculiarities are common to carnivores and savages, who tear and devour raw flesh. . . the excessive size of

the orbits, which, combined with the hooked nose, so often imparts to criminals the aspect of birds of prey, the projection of the lower part of the face and jaws (prognathism) found in negroes and animals, and supernumerary teeth (amounting in some cases to a double row as in snakes) and cranial bones (epactal bone as in the Peruvian Indians): all these characteristics pointed to one conclusion, the atavistic origin of the criminal, who reproduces physical, psychic, and functional qualities of remote ancestors. (*The Project Gutenberg eBook of Criminal Man, Cesare Lombroso*)

Dracula commands and controls wolves and the elements are at his call. He transforms into all sorts of gruesome creatures like the bat, the wolf, and the rat. These are narrative markers that point to pandemics like the plague that haunted Romania in the fifteenth century. Castle Dracula is in a state of ruin. The grand yet decrepit castle with its broken battlements, tall black windows, old library, and musty furniture are suggestive of Dracula's broken physical and mental self. The fact that he does not cast a reflection proves that he does not have a conscience. He remembers fighting in every war that shook Transylvania. He proudly speaks of his Boyar lineage from Attila the Hun. Dracula is all unconscious - centuries of primeval destructive libido stored within a broken identity.

Stoker borrowed the persona of Vladislaus Dracula III, commonly known as Vlad the Impaler for his tyranny of Wallachia in 1428. He fought the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II who claimed tax from Romania for years. Vlad proudly displayed the impaled Ottomans on the road to Romania to keep off the others. Though he was a terror for the conquerors, he was a local hero. Boston professors Raymond T. McNelly and Radu Florescu claim in their 1994 book *In Search of Dracula The History of Dracula and Vampires*; "In one version Beheim described Dracula as dipping his bread in the blood of his victims, which technically makes him a living vampire – a reference that has induced Stoker to make use of this term" (McNelly, Raymond T. and Radu Florescu 85).

Vampirism is a medieval concept of contamination; the Caragea Plague that hit Romania in 1813 has been described as "the plague struck the country in successive waves, but the Romanian annals do not mention a more terrible illness than Caragea's plague! Never did this disease make as many victims! Up to 300 people used to die daily and it is believed that the number of deaths in the entire country surpassed 90,000. Contagion was so high, that the tiniest contact with an infected household brought death to an entire family, and the progress of the disease was so violent, that an individual struck by the plague was a doomed individual." (Ghica 23) The novel frequently mentions Dracula morphing into a bat, the primary host for rabies. "In correspondence with Dracula, the rabies virus was frequently associated with bats, and it is possible that the virus actually originated from these creatures but has just transmitted itself to other

animals such as rats” (Plotkin 4). The Count also controls rats, the main carriers of the Bubonic Plague. He cannot tolerate garlic, a herb that was used “to successfully treat cholera” (Paradox and Wells 894). Stoker’s vampire also indirectly hints at syphilis, which was rapidly spread by prostitution and drug cartels in the nineteenth century. Dracula’s sexual relationships with his wives, Lucy Westenra and eventually Mina Harker examine venereal diseases. The virginal and innocent Lucy becomes sexually voluptuous after being bitten by Dracula. The vampire holds a blood baptism with Mina after which she becomes psychologically connected to Dracula. All these relationships, and the fact that Stoker himself was affected with syphilis, subtly hint at venereal diseases.

Gothic narratives from Britain always originate the vampire or the villain from the East. Carmilla is a vampire from Austria; Manfred is from Italy; *The Monk* is set in Spain and Dracula is a Count in Romania. The authors of these narratives were afraid of the Eastern contagion - immigration and being taken over by foreigners from the East. Jonathan Harker is uncomfortable with the Romanian geography, the food, and the culture. He thinks that the food is too spicy, that the Romanians dress like peasants, and that the farms are a “bewildering mass of fruit blossom” (Stoker 18). The roads are rugged, the clouds are grey and ghost-like. (Stoker 18) He is taken aback when the Count wants to learn the English language and the culture. Jonathan’s fear of invasion is indeed the anxiety of Victorian England. The Aliens Act of 1905 was passed to curb immigration from Eastern Europe. The arrangement of sections mentions the Act as “power to prevent the landing of undesirable immigrants” (Aliens Act) and the means to expel them as and when needed.

Devolution and Madness

The Victorian fin de siècle was marked by industrial progress and scientific development. But it was also an age of contradictions accelerated by Darwin’s publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). Evolution became the talk of the day but it was also debated and opposed. While evolution firmly believed that man would only become better, the much-feared devolution of man dwindling into a beast was also in the highly agitated Victorian mind. That “organisms could de-evolve into simpler, less complex forms” (Danahay, 2005: 20) remained lurking in the darkness of Victorian progress. Cesare Lombroso’s *Criminal Man* (1876) argued that criminal behaviour was based on physiological and psychological traits. Criminals were a class of degenerate people whose evolution was halted or mutated. Max Nordeau’s *Degeneration* asserted that pollution, lifestyle, and fashion were the causes of these mutations. The case of R. M. Renfield in Stoker’s *Dracula* provides a clear picture of devolution.

Renfield is a fifty-nine-year-old criminal admitted to Dr. Seward’s sanatorium for observation. He is “gloomy, sanguine, selfish and ambitious” (Stoker 67) and constantly hallucinates. Dr. Seward records

that he is a “zoophagous homicidal maniac” (Stoker 77) who consumes flies, spiders, and sparrows to evolve into someone better. Renfield gradually degenerates into a beast when Dracula is nearby. He jumps into the Carfax estate purchased by Dracula and howls like a wolf. He gets into a coma before these escapades. He is sick during the full moon and delirious at night. He yells “the blood is the life!” (Stoker 143) acknowledging the contamination brought to England by Dracula. Renfield somehow degenerates into a primal beast with a slave mentality ready to serve Dracula, the infector. Renfield conforms to Lombroso’s description of the criminal as a mutation. He is also a degenerate succumbing to the pollution brought about by Dracula.

There are other instances of brain fever spreading in the sanatorium at Budapest. Mina receives a letter from Sister Agatha that Jonathan has “brain fever” (Stoker 104). He was raving about wolves, poison, blood, ghosts, and demons. There is also a reference to Lucy sleepwalking and getting delirious after being bitten. Anaemia, somnambulism, delirium, hallucinations, paroxysm, and paranoia are mentioned repeatedly throughout the novel. Max Nordeau classes degeneracy and hysteria as minor stages of neurasthenia. This was the result of imitating foreign fashion, culture, and lifestyle. He terms this imitation “anthropomorphism or zoomorphism” (*The Project Gutenberg eBook of Degeneration, by Max Nordau*). Renfield, Lucy, Mina, and all those under the bite of the vampire do not morph into a vampire but rather imitate him, and this imitation brings about their degeneration.

There was an abundance of psychological theories in the Victorian Age. As with any progress, this too had its contradictions. Thomas Brown’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Mind* (1820), Alexander Bain’s *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855), and Herbert Spencer’s *The Principles of Psychology* (1885) preceded the innovations of Freud and Jung. Spencer was the one who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” (*Nineteenth-Century Psychology: An Introduction*) which became associated with Social Darwinism. Gothic novels take on the theme of madness as an additional feature of physical illness.

Social issues were often the narrative features reflected in fiction. Industrialization and urbanization led to pollution. Body snatchers, also known as resurrectionists, haunted the graves of the poor to supply medical students with corpses. The case of William Burke who supplied anatomist Robert Knox is widely known for their body-snatching adventures. *Dracula* shows the grave of young Lucy broken into by Arthur Holmwood, Robert de Quincey, and Dr. Seward. They are led by the infamous Abraham van Helsing who avows that Lucy has become one of the Undead and must be cleansed. Likewise, murder and mutilation were also common. The notorious Jack the Ripper murdered and mutilated five women in the Whitechapel District in 1888. Judith Flanders is of the opinion that Stoker based his notes for *Dracula* on the Ripper murders: “One East End newspaper, reporting the murders, wrote that ‘the mind turns ... to some theory of occult force, and the myths of the Dark Ages’, and a year

later, one part-time writer began to concentrate on exactly that: Bram Stoker wrote his first notes for what would become *Dracula*” (“Jack the Ripper | the British Library”).

Discussion

Dracula is the epitome of fear that gripped Victorian society. This fear can be categorized into the following:

- i) a fear of pandemics - the revelation of new diseases and the centuries-old fear of plague added to diseases like syphilis, rabies, cholera, and infection. The very first entry of Jonathan Harker’s journal sets the tone for the novel thus “At the very beginning of the seventeenth century it underwent a siege of three weeks and lost 13,000 people, the casualties of war being assisted by famine and disease” (Stoker 13).
- ii) anxiety of invasion from the East - immigrants from the Jewish community, gypsies, Indians, and Eastern Europeans stepping into England throttled Victorian anxiety of getting conquered and dominated by these people
- iii) terror of the scientific unknown - scientists and writers were tormented with contradictory concepts like devolution, degeneracy, and criminal physiology. They sincerely believed that man would become a primal beast in the future.
- iv) social horrors - drug cartels, prostitution, murder, mutilation, and kidnapping spooked the rich and the poor. A tinge of the occult in these crimes added fuel to the flames of fear.

Vampirism is a troubled product of all these fears combined. *Dracula* is capable of all sorts of contamination. He is an alluring ageing, decrepit reminder from the past but he has to be sterilized.

Conclusion

The Vampire has often been depicted as an alluring persona of macabre and mystery. Although Gothic fiction aims to bring horror with vampires dwelling in ancient ruins and dark crypts, deep down the monster is actually a representation of the anxiety of the time. Bram Stoker’s Count *Dracula* is a Romanian aristocrat with charming manners. His Castle *Dracula* is a vast estate with secret chambers, dark towers, and mouldy basements where the vampire lives in a coffin. The Count desires to live in London, to infect the teeming millions with his bite. These explicate the fear of disease, invasion, and social horrors. Science and technology add fuel to the fire bringing in a terror of the scientifically unknown - devolution, degeneration, and delirium. Psychology was a developing science that was represented in fiction as hysteria and hallucination. *Dracula* is more than just a vampire novel; it is a gripping tale of a pandemic looming around the corner with death and destruction.

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The Need and Development of a Remedial English Programme for Improving English Communication Skills

Sukanya Garg

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Abstract: A country such as India faces a unique challenge in English language learning, which is the varied educational backgrounds of its learners at the college level, with this disparity creating a huge disparity in English proficiency. In such a case, the concept of remedial classes in English Language Teaching (ELT) would offer a solution. Remedial classes, by definition, aim to identify learners' weaknesses, guide them to overcome issues, and bring their competence up to the basic expected level. However, due to constraints like racing against time to complete the prescribed syllabus, remedial classes are not practised by academic institutions, thus leaving the weaker learners behind. Considering that English is the lingua franca, it is essential that learners are equipped with the language and comprehension skills necessary to present them with opportunities in the global market. To achieve this, remedial education must be introduced to Indian colleges in a revised capacity by broadening its focus beyond academia to real-world contexts. Keeping all this in mind, the present research paper details a project undertaken to identify the gaps in traditional English language courses with reference to a learner's competence in communication skills, the learners' own needs to be addressed, and how a remedial course may be designed to work on these gaps and empower the learners with a more pragmatic understanding of the English language for both college and life.

Keywords: Competence; ELT; Language; Remedial; Proficiency.

Introduction

In an increasingly globalised world, English proves itself time and time again as the lingua franca and a crucial skill to develop for communication. This has led to a heightened demand for English language proficiency. However, despite the constant revision of academic curricula, teaching methodologies, and the establishment of many Spoken English classes, a significant number of learners struggle to master the English language. This can be attributed to how an average class contains learners of diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds which presents unique challenges for both the learners and teachers (Brown, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). To tackle this, aspiring teachers are often suggested to start remedial classes.

A 'remedial class' is a concept under the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) that seeks to identify learners who struggle with learning the English language, pinpoint their areas of weakness, and guide

learners accordingly to overcome their issues. This is often done to bring the weaker learners' grasp of the English language up to the average or expected level of competence for that particular grade or batch. Simply put, it is a short-term intervention to tutor the weaker learners outside the regular class hours. For a multilingual country like India, remedial classes would especially benefit learners whose primary schooling was in a non-English medium, as later on in college, it is observed that batches are more often than not a mix of learners from English-medium and Indian language-mediums. Thus, due to the varied levels of exposure of English granted to the learners in the past, in college, many tend to struggle to cope with their peers, and this disparity in competence leads to issues like low confidence and self-esteem, and affects their grades and future prospects. Especially considering how English is the lingua franca, such learners are keen on correcting and improving their English beyond the syllabus.

What is interesting about ELT in India is that the syllabus depends on rote learning and reproducing grammatically-accurate answers in the examination. This is a huge obstacle for the learners mentioned above as they lack a general understanding of the grammatical concepts, which is rarely if ever addressed in the college classroom due to the assumption that the basics were clarified for all at the school level. In such a situation, a facility such as remedial classes would immensely help the learners gain a working understanding of the language akin to that of their peers with an English-medium background.

Keeping all this in mind, the present research paper details a project undertaken to identify the gaps in traditional English language courses with reference to a learner's competence in communication skills, the learners' own needs to be addressed, and how a remedial course may be designed to work on these gaps and empower the learners with a more pragmatic understanding of the English language for both college and life.

In order to curate a remedial course that is most beneficial and appealing, the selected demographic to study was the first, second, and third year UG students of all the three offered streams at Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce (Autonomous), Shivajinagar, Pune 411005. A registration form was distributed to interested learners of this demographic to gauge their self-identified issues in English language learning, based on which a syllabus was decided with a self-made workbook titled 'Educare' ©. A course of two months and nineteen hours from February to April 2024 was conducted, starting with an hour-long pre-test and ending on an hour-long post-test in order to compare and contrast the effects of the remedial course on the learner's English language usage. The learners were divided into three batches based on their college timings, and taught for one hour thrice a week by two trainers from the Department

of English at the same college that they were familiar with. To keep the learners from preparing for the coursework beforehand, the materials of each topic were shared on the day of the respective sessions.

A mixed analysis approach was employed, where the learners' performance in the 'Listening' and 'Reading' tests were graded quantitatively, while their 'Speaking' and 'Writing' tests were relatively qualitative with a few guidelines on checking the content, grammar, and vocabulary.

Syllabus and Testing Modules

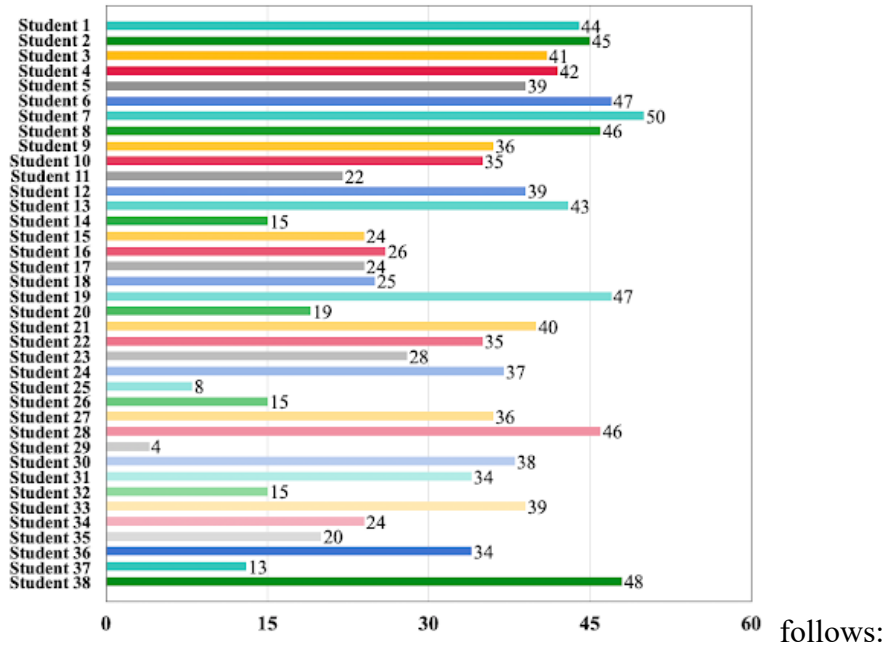
Based on the registered learners' self-identified language areas to be improved, a workbook titled 'Educare' © was curated with illustrative examples and exercises on topics like introducing oneself, formal and informal communication skills, tenses, tone, vocabulary, and listening and reading comprehension. The sessions were tailored to address specific situation-based language skills like introducing oneself, other people, or topics; role-plays to practice tone, tenses, and small talk; how to infer details while reading a passage; the use of active and passive voices in informal and formal essay writing respectively etc. The curating of these topics was based on the self-identified gaps and areas to be improved as reported by learners in their registration forms. Each topic was taught through class activities, participation-based discussions, illustrative examples, and practice sessions to ensure each learner's active engagement with the course. There were also a few 'check up' sessions where learners' assignments and worksheets were assessed, and one-on-one feedback was provided by the trainers to ensure personal attention to detail and improvement.

Accordingly, in order to gauge each learner's grasp of the four essential language skills before and after the course, a pre-course test and post-course test were designed. The tests were divided into four sections each – an audio-based Listening (L) comprehension section, passage-based Reading (R) comprehension section, Writing (W) section with a set of informal essay topics to choose from, and a minute-long Speaking (S) section on the same topics offered in the previous section. The 'L' tests were for five marks, 'R' for fifteen marks including a vocabulary test, 'W' for ten marks, and 'S' for thirty marks. To make the testing as quantitative as possible, a set of criteria was decided for the 'W' and 'S' tests – the learners' performance was to be graded along the lines of vocabulary, grammar, coherence, relevance, and development of thought. For the 'S' test, an additional criteria was the novelty versus repetition of thought.

Pre-Course Test Results

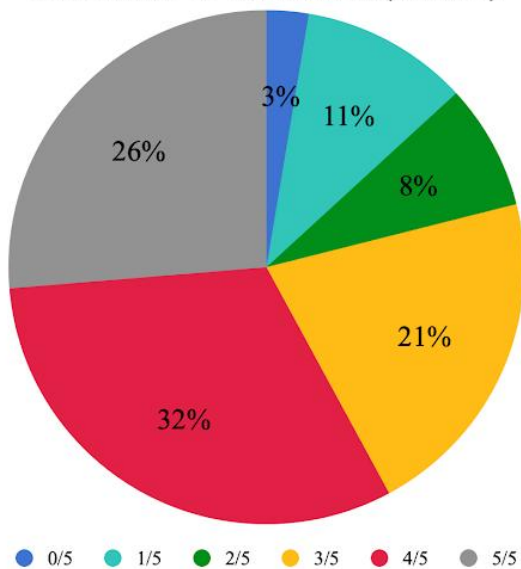
A total of thirty-eight learners attempted the pre-test, the overall results of which are as

Consolidated Pre-Course Test Scores (out of 60)

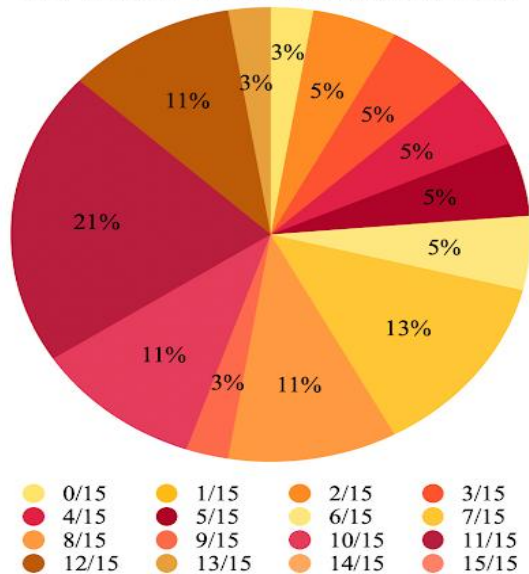


Details of each section – ‘L’, ‘R’, ‘W’, and ‘S’ – of the pre-course test have been represented in pie-charts below, where the percentage of learners per score can be seen for the four sections:

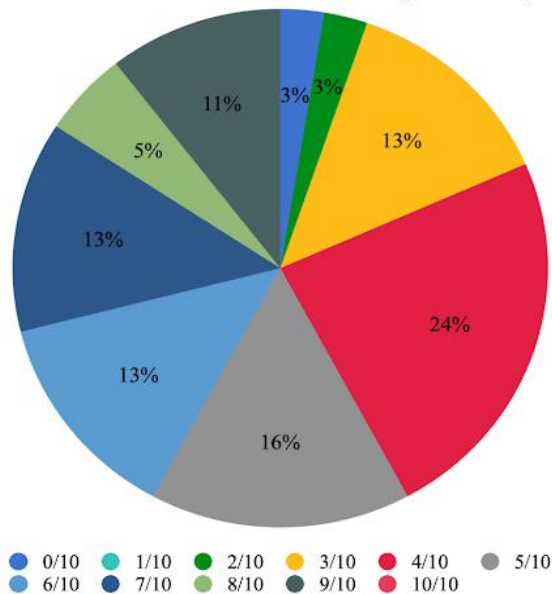
Pre-Course ‘L’ Test Scores (out of 5)



Pre-Course ‘R’ Test Scores (out of 15)

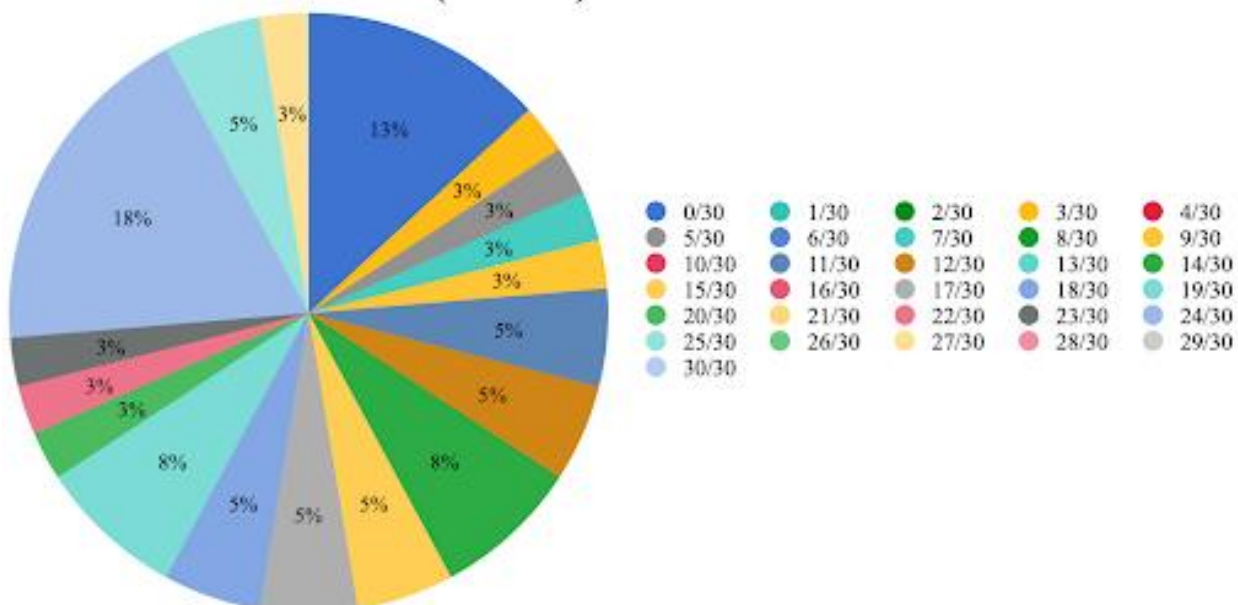


Pre-Course 'W' Test Scores (out of 10)



What was notably observed during the pre-course test was that learners were very nervous during the 'S' section, and many needed guiding questions to be able to speak. Eight out of thirty-eight learners chose not to speak entirely. In both cases, it was reported that the visible presence of a timer affected the learners negatively, as they felt pressured by the time running out as they struggled to speak for a minute. When the trainers put the timer away, the learners visibly relaxed and were able to speak comfortably.

Pre-Course 'S' Test Scores (out of 30)



Upon evaluation and discussion of the pre-course test results, a few observations were made on average by the trainers about the learners' competencies in each language skill. Most learners required multiple listens of the audio in order to attempt the 'L' section, and while most were able to answer the reading comprehension questions in the 'R' section, very few were able to infer the meaning of new words from the passage's context in the vocabulary questions. Tenses, particles, and vocabulary were a glaring issue in the 'W' section, where not many learners adhered to the ten-statement limit. In the 'S' section, most learners were hesitant to speak unless the timer was hidden from them to reduce the pressure, and required guiding questions related to their chosen topic as opposed to spontaneously speaking.

The conclusion of the pre-course test results was that the remedial class needed to focus more on tenses, vocabulary training, and a constant usage of the English language, however inaccurate, just to boost learners' confidence and familiarity with the language.

Observations during Sessions

Based on the conclusions of the pre-course test, nineteen hour-long sessions were conducted by the two trainers for the three batches thrice a week. The worksheets explained the topic comprehensively in simple English, along with formats, exercises, and situational prompts to better reinforce the concepts taught. Thus, the topics were addressed and clarified with the help of the worksheets during the sessions accordingly, and were revised during the one-on-one 'Check-up' sessions as per the syllabus. Learners were also encouraged to interact with one another in English during the 'Check-up' sessions, which helped them observe both mistakes and improvements in their own and others' speech.

At the end of each session, the trainer was given a sheet to make a record of what topic was taught and what the general observations were regarding the learners' comfort, interactions, and any issue or development in their understanding or practice of the topic. The most common observation was that the learners enjoyed the interactive sessions and actively participated in the same, with their hesitation reducing over the duration of the course. There seemed to be better reception to the topics and sessions oriented towards speaking skills, with more reluctance recorded for topics and sessions focusing on writing skills.

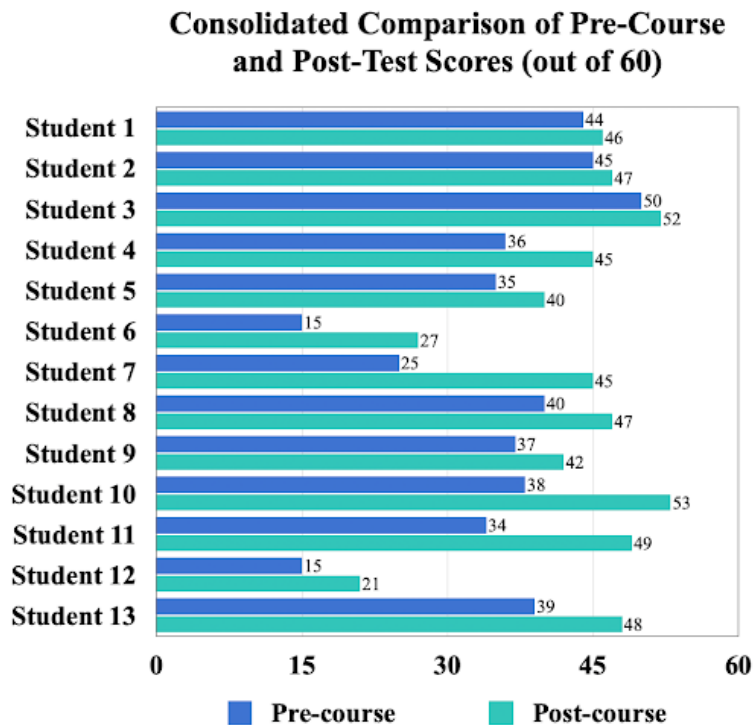
The most noticeable change in learners over the course was their increased confidence. They became more willing to answer and engage in conversations, especially during sessions on common issues like tenses, vocabulary, and listening skills. However, they were more reluctant to participate in writing

activities, preferring to discuss assignments with trainers and write at home rather than work on worksheets in class. They also avoided group discussions on writing, favouring one-on-one feedback.

The nineteen sessions revealed that learners were more eager to improve their speaking skills than their writing. Some learners noted that the writing-focused academic exams influenced their view of language competence and felt they would perform better with a spoken component. During speech-focused activities, many learners realized their comfort and ability in English through classroom exercises like situational role-play.

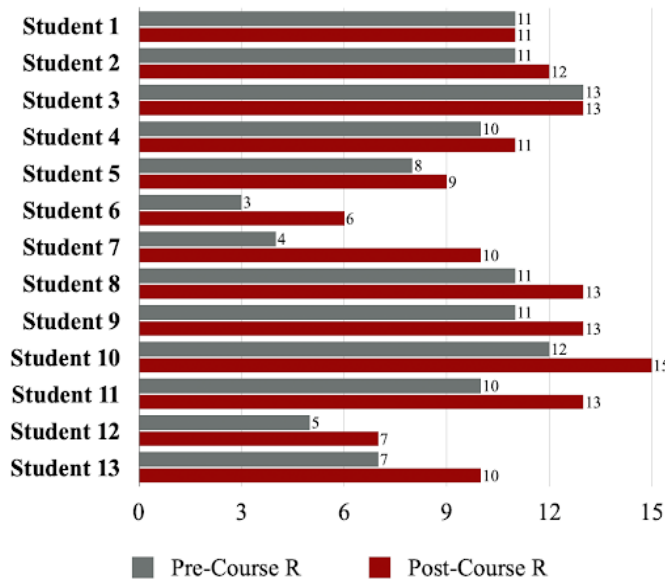
Post-Course Test Results

On the last day of each batch after the nineteen sessions, an hour-long post-course test was conducted in the same format and difficulty level as the pre-course test. A total of thirteen learners attempted the post-course test, the overall results of which have been represented in a bar-graph below in comparison with the same learners' pre-course test scores:

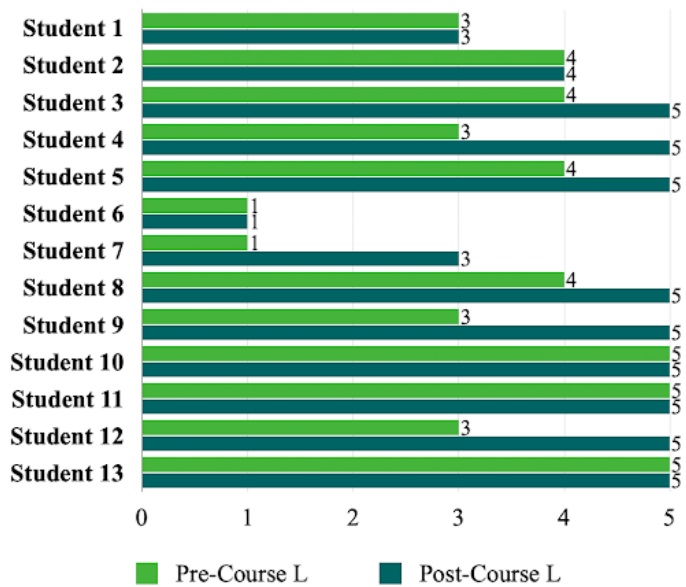


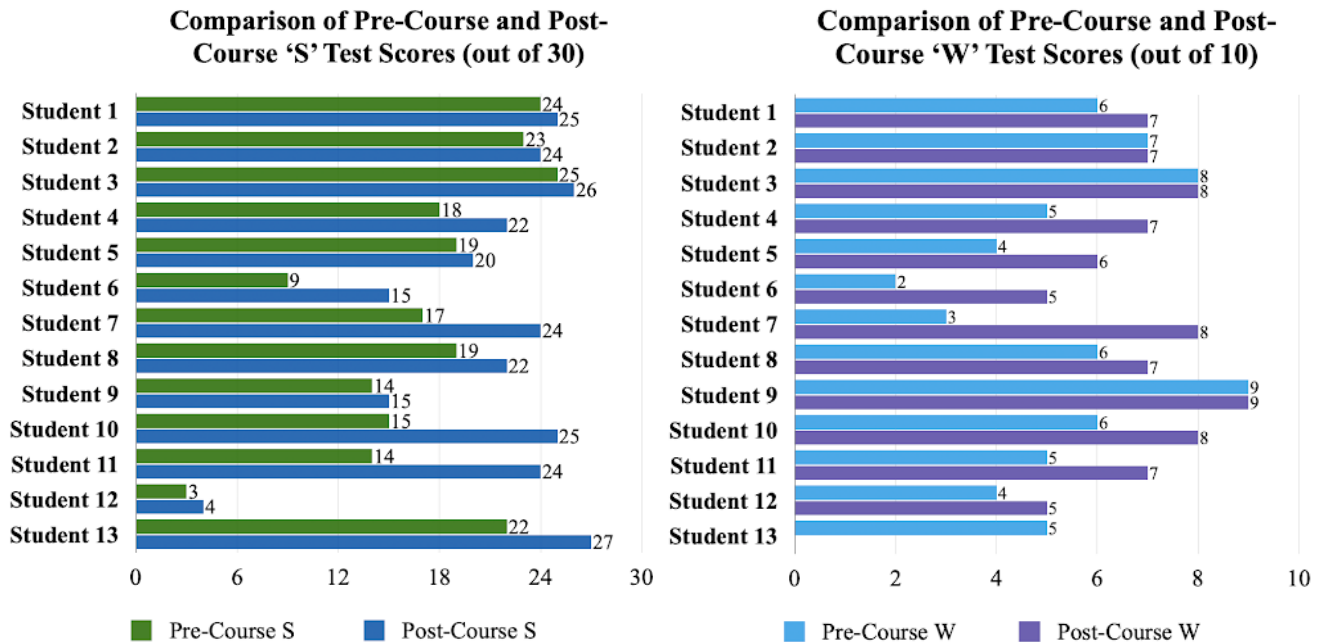
Details of each section – ‘L’, ‘R’, ‘W’, and ‘S’ – have been illustrated in the bar-graphs below in comparison to the same learners' performance in the respective sections in their pre-course test:

Comparison of Pre-Course and Post-Course 'R' Test Scores (out of 15)



Comparison of Pre-Course and Post-Course 'L' Test Scores (out of 5)





On an average, there was an improvement between the pre-course and post-course test scores by 8.07 marks. This could be attributed to how the learners were much more comfortable with speaking unprompted, and very few required guiding questions for the 'S' section. Learners also wrote up to ten or more sentences in the 'W' section, which shows their improvement in confidence, as reflected in their competency. This is in stark contrast to how, in the pre-course test, they refused to speak or write nearly as much as required due to a lack of confidence and hesitation.

Findings and Observations

One prominent issue during the remedial English course was the fluctuating attendance rates in the three batches, where the initial total of thirty-eight learners reduced to thirteen by the end of the course with the conduction of the post-course test. It was revealed that the reason for this was the college's regular and backlog examinations, along with extra classes being conducted by their professors earlier for the same. However, the following findings and observations were recorded on the learners that did attend their batch regularly, evidenced by the attendance sheets.

Gaps in Traditional English Language Courses

During the three-month course of 'Educare', the following areas were identified as gaps in traditional English language courses and problem areas that learners themselves wish to improve:

1. Grammatical notions like articles and singular/plural: The learners reported never to have understood the function and need for such grammatical concepts, which was reflected in their pre-

test written worksheet and gradually improved as noted in their 'Check-up' sessions. It was also noted that the Grammar Translation method was used and rote-learning was encouraged earlier on in school, but as English grammatical notions do not directly correspond with those in Indian languages, there was a lack of understanding and clarity in the same.

2. **Tenses:** The learners emphasised on the need for clarity regarding the logic behind the perfect and perfect-progressive tenses, as they were never explained properly in regular classes. Some learners also seemed to have understood tenses by rote, but did not know in which situation each tense would be used. This was resolved in the situational role-plays conducted to teach tenses in 'Educare' as per the coursebook's worksheets.
3. **Confidence:** The learners reported regular classes being more theoretical and focused on reading and writing, rather than being practise-oriented. As a result, the learners had little awareness of their own comfort and competency in speaking the English language, which translated into low confidence levels when made to speak within and beyond the classroom. However, due to constant participation-based activities, learners reported being able to practice the English language enough to get comfortable with it. This was also due to the trainers encouraging them to speak in English regardless of grammatical errors, as the goal was to become familiar with the language before developing accuracy.
4. **Lack of individual attention:** Many learners reported that the one-on-one feedback and 'check up' sessions helped them better understand where they were facing issues in grasping the English language, and how they may improve. They added that the one-on-one attention was desirable as they felt more 'seen' and 'heard' by the trainer, as opposed to traditional classes where teachers addressed the class as a whole instead of catering to individual needs and issues.
5. **Lack of clarity on the application of grammatical concepts to real-life conversations:** Many learners reported that the use of the active and passive voice, or more advanced tenses like the present perfect continuous or future perfect were confusing to them in school due to textbooks simply offering examples and formulae without explaining the logic behind such phrasing and syntax. Thus, learners would blindly use tenses or voices without understanding their implication or relevance to a conversation. Comparatively, the situation-based illustrative examples offered by the 'Educare' © coursebook aided in a better understanding of the grammatical concepts, thus clarifying many doubts that learners had since their schooling years.

6. Linguistic confusion in the classroom: Learners reported that English grammar was often taught verbatim in English with no explanations offered in English or the local language, else directly translated to the local language without a sense of mediating between meaning. Accordingly, learners had to rote learn the English grammatical concepts, and knew the answer in their local language but not how it served as a parallel to the English concepts. In the 'Educare' course, trainers employed bilingualism where English grammatical concepts were taught with their element-wise equivalents in Hindi for learners to understand exactly what each element of a statement in English referred to. This especially helped learners clarify their doubts on the difference between 'has' and 'had', gendered pronouns, the use of the '-ing' suffix, the passive voice etc.

The Need and Effectiveness of a Remedial English Course

In cases like India's where an average class is a melting pot of learners from various cultural, educational, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds, there is a huge disparity in English language proficiency. Remedial courses can help identify and work on learners with weak proficiency, thus bridging any foundation gaps they may have in the language between their school and college levels. Remedial courses would also empower such learners by boosting their confidence and improve their overall communication skills, as proven by 'Educare'. This can aid in their personal and professional growth, and ensure that they are not left behind in the global job market. In the case of competitive and standardised examinations in India, learners can better prepare for the English language sections by clarifying their basics of comprehension in remedial courses. Lastly, the fundamental issue of basic literacy would be addressed through remedial courses, thus enhancing the learner's overall academic performance.

In ELT, remedial classes are taught as a concept that seems to work in theory but is hardly practised in colleges. This can be due to a variety of factors like lack of time, prioritising the completion of the prescribed syllabus, focus on test scores and academic performance etc. As a result, in a class full of learners of varying proficiencies in the English language, ensuring a uniform overall development is a daunting task for teachers, and many learners tend to get sidelined in favour of completing the syllabus within the stipulated time of the semester. Learners are introduced to various aspects of the English language through the syllabus, but have little to no practical understanding of them, and thus their language skills remain weak. If a remedial course were tailored to work on learners' weak skills and empower them with a proper understanding rather than focusing on strictly academic performance, the learners may raise their skills to at least the basic required level expected of them.

This was proven through the ‘Educare’ course as reflected in the trainers’ notes, improvement in test scores, and feedback from both the trainers and learners. The use of classroom activities such as vocabulary games, situational dialogues and role-plays, and classroom discussions greatly aided in improving the learners’ confidence and understanding of tenses, as opposed to how the same grammatical concept was taught in regular college classes. This proves yet again that language is indeed ‘doing’ - as observed by the Hetchinger Report, “Instead of giving students disconnected grammar exercises and quizzes, Daugherty says, the grammar should be taught in the context of what the students are reading and writing in the college-level course” (U. S. News). However, the study transgressed from the usual premise of remedial classes - instead of focusing solely on improving the learners’ English language skills in relation to their regular curriculum, ‘Educare’ was more concerned with making the learners more comfortable and familiar with the English language on the levels of LSRW. This shifting of focus to the bigger picture aided in the success of the remedial course, as learners not only showed improvement in their post-course test scores, but also reported feeling at ease with the English language examinations that came after.

For remedial courses to be successful and effective in enhancing a learner’s English proficiency, it is essential then that its focus shifts from academic performance to the larger purpose of equipping the learner with language skills for the real world. The facility of a remedial course would provide a comfortable and more eclectic environment for weak learners to practise and enhance their communication skills without being hyper-aware of their better-performing peers.

Conclusion and Scope

The findings of this study underscore the critical need for remedial English language courses in India, to bridge the gap between academic requirements and real-world language proficiency. This can be achieved by creating a supportive and interactive learning environment that goes beyond the traditional academic framework. The ‘Educare’ course was created along these lines for this study, and its success can be seen in how it improved learners’ confidence and language skills across the levels of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course’s observed increase in learners’ confidence and active participation during situational role-plays and discussions, goes to show the need for less theoretical and more practical, context-based teaching of the English language. Any further classes conducted as a remedial course in mind can bring more of such positive responses from learners, especially if issues like attendance, clashes with holidays and regular examinations etc. can be tackled. Accordingly, further research may also be conducted on what kind of lessons, worksheets, class structures etc. may be considered while structuring a remedial course, and how its effectiveness is reflected in learners’ class performance and grasp of the English language.

While academic English classes may focus on the curriculum, remedial English courses aimed at such a context-based approach would not only improve test scores but also prepare learners for the real world and job market, granting them better opportunities. This shift in focus from purely academic performance to equipping them with practical language skills is essential for a more holistic development. Thus, there is much value in remedial education, and its broader implementation in Indian colleges would help learners achieve greater proficiency and most of all confidence in the English language.

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Exploring Socio-Political Epistemologies: An Examination of Power Structures and Exploitation through a Marxist Lens in Selected Poetry Collections of Niyi Osundare

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&
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Abstract: This study explores the themes of corruption and disillusionment in Niyi Osundare's poetry collections, namely *Songs of the Marketplace*, *Eye of the Earth*, and *Village Voices*. Employing a Marxist theoretical framework, the researchers conducted a comprehensive analysis of the selected poems in the various collections to gain deeper insights into their socio-political implications. The study reveals that works of art, including poetry, are not created in isolation but rather are intricately intertwined with the social realities of their time. Osundare's poems, examined through the lens of Marxism, are shown to serve as vehicles for exposing, reforming, transforming, and revolutionising society. Furthermore, the research uncovers the close affinity between revolutionary writers like Osundare and the masses, particularly the underprivileged segments of society. Through his poetic voice, Osundare becomes an advocate for the marginalised, using his art to amplify their concerns and struggles. This study underscores the pivotal role of "art" as an inevitable medium for social engagement in any human society. The findings demonstrate how Niyi Osundare, as a poet, adeptly employs his craft to champion the cause of the masses and call for societal change. This research establishes Niyi Osundare as an exemplary poet who harnesses poetry as a transformative tool for advocating on behalf of the marginalised and striving to bring about positive change in society. The study contributes to the understanding of the broader socio-political implications of art and literature and emphasises their potential as catalysts for societal advancement and liberation.

Keywords: Niyi Osundare, Nigeria, Corruption, Politics, Marxism

Introduction

As an active participant in society, it is anticipated that the literary writer possesses a comprehensive understanding, heightened sensitivity, and a keen awareness of the socio-political and economic dynamics that include their immediate environment and beyond. In addition to depicting harmful social constructs, the writer is anticipated to actively engage in shaping, influencing, and directing societal matters. The significance of a literary work is contingent upon its alignment with the consciousness and experiences of its populace. It is imperative for him to refrain from disregarding or turning a blind eye to the prevailing social and political challenges afflicting the country. It is anticipated that he will perceive it as his duty to diligently examine, bring to light, and critique the various maladies and inequities present within society, impartially and without apprehension. Neglecting the prevalent socio-economic and political difficulties

experienced by individuals on a daily basis would be deemed exceedingly irresponsible and insensitive on the part of any writer.

Chinua Achebe, a prominent Nigerian novelist and esteemed figure in modern African literature, shares the perspective that the notion of "Art for art's sake" is really a sanitised form of excrement. (19). Osundare posits that the purpose of Art should extend beyond its own intrinsic value. The inclusion of purpose is vital in the realm of art, as the absence of substantive substance renders form devoid of significance. It is hardly surprising that the poet himself asserts that art possesses a purpose. I advocate for the significance of art within the realm of social hierarchy, asserting that its purpose should be directed towards the progression of humanity's interests. The contention put forth is that the inherent purpose of art lies in its connection to humanity. I identify as a humanist. The significance of the content is equivalent to that of the work. A piece of artwork does not consist of technical jargon...An empty container is one that lacks any contents. According to Hogue et al. (16), justice serves as the fundamental underpinning of all art, as asserted by conscientious and dedicated artists. He exhibits a keen interest in the events and political dynamics inside his societal context. Over the course of time, he has established a distinct position for himself as a poet who consistently seeks to contextualise his poetry within the comprehensive scope of human experience. Osundare's poetic works effectively employ the techniques of lampooning and satire to critique and expose the detrimental influences that impede and impede the progress of effective government and leadership within Nigerian society.

Osundare is a poet known for his radical and sarcastic approach, focusing on the intricate dynamics between the repressed Nigerian populace and the deeply entrenched corruption among the country's leadership. The primary focus of his thematic exploration centres on the topics of corruption, mismanagement, exploitation, extortion, poverty, and ineffective leadership, among others. Osundare's poetic works exhibit a profound engagement with the prevailing societal circumstances, wherein he contemplates and portrays the modern challenges within the nation. Particularly, he sheds light on the dearth of sagacity and foresight exhibited by the political leaders of the country. According to Nwachukwu Agbada, Osundare can be seen as more than just a trailblazer of his time, as he actively aimed to challenge the prevailing tendencies in Nigerian poetry. Agbada further asserts that Osundare stands out as one of the most productive and unwavering poets in his utilisation of folk elements and exploration of the experiences of common individuals (73)

The pervasive motif of corruption in *Songs of the Marketplace*

Osundare addresses sociopolitical, religious, cultural, and economic issues in Nigeria in his poetry collection, *Songs of the Marketplace*. In contemporary Nigerian society, his deep concern for the plight of the oppressed influences his deep concern for sociopolitical and economic matters. He conveys his

displeasure due to his Marxist ideology and describes the perpetual conflict or unnatural relationship between the wealthy and the poor.

In Nigeria, corruption is evident in a variety of attractive and irresistible garments of various sizes and shapes. The current level of corruption is mind-boggling, and it permeates every sector of Nigerian society. Corruption has manifested itself in virtually every aspect of Nigerian society, like a cankerworm. This manifests itself in a variety of ways, including election rigging, falsification of census results or figures, examination malpractices, certificate and visa racketeering, extortion by public officers, forging or issuance of fake medical certificates, falsification of age, false affidavits, over- and under-invoicing, etc.

The entire Nigerian judicial system, often viewed as the last hope for the average Nigerian, has become a symbol of corruption, symbolizing the loss of hope. Corruption in the judiciary consists of bribes, larceny of public funds or property, favouritism towards friends or family, political interference, criminal extortion, and hierarchical pressures within the judiciary.

In his work "Reflections," Osundare places significant emphasis on topics such as corruption, misappropriation of funds, inadequate leadership, and the social and economic deprivation prevalent in Nigerian culture. The individual in question portrays the persona of an incompetent and morally compromised governmental representative who engages in embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. They ostensibly contribute these ill-gotten gains to the church in order to seek divine favor, acknowledgement, and spiritual protection.

Ayederu empties the government treasury for a
generous donation to a church building foundation.

He receives special prayers and commandership of the order
of Saint Michael (37).

Osundare employs the term "Ayederu" as a metaphorical representation of both private individuals and government officials who engage in the embezzlement of public monies for personal gain, thereby highlighting their self-centred motivations. The author then goes on to criticise the church, which should be promoting and instilling moral values in society, but instead seems to be complicit in fostering corruption.

In his quest to shed light on the deplorable state and lived realities of individuals, Osundare employs the poem "Excursion" to vividly depict the presence of adversity, suffering, corruption, famine, destitution, illnesses, and squalor that afflict the region.

The purpose of these images is to depict the failure of leadership and government to meet the expectations of the populace as providers and protectors of the citizens. Conversely, they avert their gaze and pretend to be unaware of the hardships experienced by the populace.

The speaker portrays a collective of individuals as recipients of governmental incompetence. The author depicts various groups, including farmers, market women, undernourished children, and civil officials, as those negatively impacted by the aftermath of conflict. These individuals experience economic hardship, food insecurity, and social deprivation, as well as signs of mental distress and instability. The living conditions experienced by individuals are undeniably deplorable. The author portrays a nation in which both individuals and vultures compete for resources amidst piles of waste. This statement highlights the pervasive presence of laxity and corruption within government circles, which has led to a significant decline in societal values and the erosion of humanity in Nigeria. The character expresses a sense of discontentment and sadness in response to the hardships endured by the general populace.

We meet eyes in sunken sockets
Teeth bereft of gum
Skin scaly like Iguara's
Feet swollen like water melon
We see village boys' kwashiorkor bellies Hairless
head impaled on pin necks And ribs baring the
benevolence
Of the body politic (7).

In "Siren", the poet lambasts the gross irresponsibility, nonchalance and dehumanizing attitude of the political elites or rulers while plying the roads. He frowns at the inhuman attitude of those in authority and their disgusting leadership lifestyles. The persona laments thus:

Siren Siren Siren
Police acrobats on motorbikes
Wielding whips with consummate dispatch The roads
must be cleared at once
For which worthy ruler Ever
shares the right way Siren Siren
Siren
The clangorous convoy
Of power and power brokers
Conditioned in Mercedes back
Far, very far, from the maddening crowd (18)

According to the poet, these leaders are welcomed by a cheering crowd who received nothing in return but lies, empty and unfulfilled promises when the rulers go on the campaign rallies as well as make occasional visits to the rural areas.

The persona further laments the pretentious attitude of the leaders who though are aware of the lack of basic social amenities such as hospitals, schools, potable water, and electricity instead of attending to these basic needs, feign ignorance and go around as if all is well:

Siren Siren Siren
Even on highways where potholes Snail the
jaguar
They manage not to see
A land emboweled by erosion ... (18)

In "Sule Chase", the poet persona emphasizes on the different levels of poverty ravaging the land. He presents the image of a collapsed system. A society where nothing works and people engage in all sorts of things to eke a living. He presents the picture thus:

The chase starts in some shadowy stall On a
hungry afternoon ...
The race gathers more legs in every lane Tailors
with giant scissors
Permsecs with PENDING files Barristers
with dusty wigs NEPA experts with
fused bulbs
The doctor with coughing stethoscope ... (16)

The poet reflects a prevalent societal ailment in which each sector of society is affected by, or has been affected by, the desperate pursuit of survival at any expense. Consequently, individuals become deeply entangled in acts of corruption and various forms of unethical behaviour.

Osundare directs his attention to the economic aspects of the nation as he traverses several sectors of its predicament. In his "Udoji" work, Osundare comprehensively explores the multifaceted aspects and varying degrees of bribery and corruption within the Nigerian governmental system. The user provides an analysis of the Udoji payment and its subsequent impact on the Nigerian economy. The individuals possess monetary resources; nonetheless, it is noteworthy that not only are goods and services costly, but they are also limited in availability. In response to the aforementioned situation, the individual urges the government to address inflation by implementing measures aimed at ensuring that essential services are provided to the populace. Additionally, the individual suggests that promoting agricultural activities could

serve as a viable approach to mitigating inflation and alleviating food shortages. In his literary work, Osundare expresses his concern for the societal repercussions of the excessive influx of wealth:

Now pockets burst with arrears But
market stalls are empty Garri is dearer
than eyes
A naira cannot buy a yam Tell the
givers of this bribe that what we
need
is more than money can buy (36).

Instead of the money being a blessing to the people, it turned out to be a curse. As a town crier, the poet refused to give up on the world as doomed. He hopes for a better world, nation, people, government and a promising future. In "I Sing for a Change", Osundare envisages a world where man would be set free from the shackles of the oppressors, a world that would be free and devoid of bad and wicked leaders as well as the horrible experiences of the past.

He hopes for a reordered and a reshaped world and states that, it would be good for the society to be reshaped so that we can have a world that is good and free from the horrible experiences of the past. In anticipation of this, the poet sings:

I sing
Of a world free
Of kings and queens
And other remnants of an arbitrary past
I sing of a world reshaped (15)

Osundare's remarks and criticism of the different segments of the society is suggestive of the fact that he cherishes what is right and deserving for the society. He detests and abhors abnormality no matter what but prefers a good and dignifying society. He prefers that the modern world be detached and disconnected from its horrible past. Thus he says:

But soon
The people will shout
When murmurs break through muzzles And will
powers into action
The oppression's cloud will clear
The sun eastering hence a life full and free (15)

Corroborating Osundare's desire for a cleaner society that is devoid of filth and dirt, Osioma Nwoli at a public paper presentation entitled "Public Expectation from Parliamentarians" delivered at the inauguration of Committees of the 7th assembly of Oyo State House of Assembly, suggested that politicians and public officials who stole between one and five million naira should be sent to ten years imprisonment with hard labour, while those who embezzled between five and ten million should be given life jail. He went on to propose death penalty for politicians and other public officers who stole or embezzled ten million naira and above".

In Nigeria, corruption is so ubiquitous that it almost passes for a state policy. As a monster, corruption aggravates poverty, fuels conflict, brings misery, and sustains injustice as well as promotes bad governance and under development. Its varied forms, shapes and sizes are so institutionalized that, the socio economic and political system cannot function effectively without it.

Social Stratification in *Eyes of the Earth*

In his work titled "They too are the Earth," Osundare establishes a correlation between individuals of affluent socioeconomic status and those who are economically disadvantaged. The phrase "The Swansongs of Beggars sprawled out in brimming gutters" vividly depicts the dire and desolate state of poverty experienced by the underprivileged. The poet draws a connection between the individuals and the affluent, symbolised by their luxurious snakeskin shoes and Mercedes tyres. Paradoxically, the poet additionally asserts that:

They too are the earth the sweat and
grime of
millions hewing wood and hurling water
they are the earth
mudding every pore like harked moles.(45)

Given this perspective, the poet espouses the notion that impoverished individuals are the ones responsible for generating the riches, but they do not get any benefits from it. The poet thereafter went on to provide a catalogue of individuals who are economically disadvantaged and socially marginalised. This includes "millions engaged in laborious tasks such as chopping wood and carrying water," "the remote echoes of countless individuals trapped in perilous and incomprehensible mines," "elderly individuals succumbing to a secluded demise in deserted and constricted villages," and "women enduring centuries of oppressive enslavement." People who are economically disadvantaged and socially marginalised endure profoundly agonising distress. In contrast to this particular group of individuals are those who possess significant wealth and seemingly prioritize their own existence at the expense of the Earth's well-being. However, it is important to note the sad irony that, despite their actions, the Earth, being a creation of God, is inherently

incapable of perishing. Individuals who reap the benefits of their labour without making the initial effort will ultimately face mortality due to their limited lifespan on this celestial body.

The phrase "They too are the earth" serves as a catalyst for the impassioned poet, transitioning from the role of an observer and commentator on environmental and social matters to that of an advocate for intellectual mobilisation towards a greater purpose, particularly among the general population.

The Theme of Inequality In *Eyes of the Earth*

In "unequal fingers", the poet clearly creates a picture of two types of livelihood, with a description of what it takes to belong to one part of the group. The poem opens with a prophecy that the time to account for their doing is not ready as quoted:

When the time is ripe the stick will tell
all Ears the silent secret of the drum
(60).

The first stanza contains a plethora of symbolism and imagery. The poet symbolically represents the passage of time as being unripe initially, but when the time for harvest arrives, there will be a noticeable indication of the fruit's ripeness through the audible expressions of joy and contentment from people. This will serve as a signal to those who are unaware of the hidden hunger and fury, represented by the secret of the drum.

The initial group of individuals depicted by the poet can be categorised as economically disadvantaged, in accordance with Marxist theory. The poet's portrayal effectively captures their distinctive characteristics. These individuals have experienced extended periods of time without access to sustenance, and have dedicated years of physical exertion on the agricultural land with no tangible outcomes. A conflict arises between the agricultural producers and the purchasers of their goods due to the withholding of payment. This concept is an integral component of the central theme being conveyed by the poet.

And yam was gold from distant farms cocoa
buyers withheld our pay and money
monopolized the pocket
of a farm (60)

The total condition of these people reflected neglect and suffering. They are totally detached from the economy of the state "Our ragged roofs leak cold fears of the coming rain" (60).

Even their house is no different compared to the sufferings experienced by the owner. Their roof is leaking and this brings fear when they can feel the coming of the rain.

The Theme of Unfulfilled Promises in *Village Voices*

Osundare portrays the African environment around the wealthy people going for political post in his poem. “A villager’s protest.” It is about promise and hope. The poet made us understand how the rich and the politicians would come begging every time and making different promises:

They come more times than the eye bat its lid
when they need your vote at cockcrow
at noon
at sundown (47).

This shows the importance of the voters that would make the politicians come “at cockcrow” morning, “at noon” afternoon and “at sundown” night this poet describe the odd hour in which the politicians come to advocate for the peoples support because they need their vote. They walk hand-in-hand with them, to gain their trust:

They come
armed with sweet words
inflated promises (47)

They come with sugar coated mouth to live the people to their side and the money which they are to spend when in power will be used to bribe the water as if they have their interest in mind, together with their prostration to gain their thrust. Promises like building of schools, hospital and other social amenities. When the politicians are looking for power, they say different unrealistic plan and promises. This they do to win the heart of the people, though the level of suffering has blinded the villagers’ eye to know which plans can be achieved. He says:

And turn all nights into day
WE’II turn every foot path into a
motor way
And fashion out a city
From every hamlet (47)

These are part of the imagery Osundare used to picture the realistic plans of the politicians. The poet emphasized the coming of the politician with the repetition of “they”

They come
They talk
They promise (47)

Now, irony is the case when they got the power. They are the longer approachable and high level of security all the promises from the politicians could not be traced. They now fulfil their own selfish interest and belly.

Now in

And promises forgotten

“Now in” signifies the power which the politicians was gotten. And all the promises they made has been forgotten they” cottager” could not have access to their politicians again.

Our man becomes a locust

Seen but once in several seasons (48)

This tells us the antics of the politicians when they need the people’s vote, they do go forth into different locations and house hood making promises and making themselves with the village but when they get the post and power, reverse is the case, as all network will be blocked and commitment will be too much for them to see and remember that they once made some promises to some people. This attitude of the politicians made the poet to compare them with “Esuru” a kind of yam, soft, loose, tasty but impossible to pound. This is a metaphysic statement which implies that the people are not to be cheat because they still possess the power of vote another time Osundare’s personal is of the opinion that they shall still come back to ask for their support. As he says:

Men of deep un-wisdom

Knowing not that

Power in the bird of the forest

Which nests on one tree today

And tomorrow pitches its tent

One another.

Another time for election will come and the votes and support of the village will be needed. Another opportunity to show their loyalty will come. Also Osundare uses proverbs to achieve a more coherent vision. This is evident in the “Villager’s Protest”, where the village speaks in proverbs to express his anger against corrupt politicians.

From the foregoing it is evident that Osundare uses, poetry to show his concern for the plights of the downtrodden masses by conscientizing the reader to be conscious of their environment. The poet also uses poetry to make dialectical commentaries on the socio economic experience of his people.

Conclusion

The pervasive issue of corruption and disillusionment within African society compels African writers to imbue their writings with a sense of functionality, serving as potent instruments for social engagement. This is distinctly evident in literary works such as *Songs of the Marketplace*, *Eye of the Earth*, and *Village Voices*. These works underscore Osundare's unwavering dedication as an artist deeply committed to addressing the social, political, and psychological concerns of the marginalized. As a poet, Osundare assumes the role of advocating for the voiceless, employing his artistic prowess to vividly portray the myriad afflictions that afflict a typical African society while simultaneously embarking on a quest for enduring solutions to these multifarious challenges that afflict the broader African community. In this sense, Osundare exemplifies the literary artist as a conscientious agent of social change, utilizing the creative medium as a catalyst for constructive transformation within African society.

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The Feminist Voice for Dalit Trauma in Selected Poems of Meena Kandasamy: A Contemporary Indian Poet

Harshita Shukla

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Abstract: The word Dalit etymologically means broken, torn, oppressed, and crushed. The idea of Dalit women being doubly marginalized and being “twice Dalit” found little representation in the mainstream literature. Meena Kandasamy's poetry proved to be a powerful tool for social change, perplexing the governing narratives of the conventional perceptions of Dalit while trying to highlight the struggles of Dalit people and women. Poetry is seen as a vehicle to convey their experiences of sorrow, pain, and anger and to ask questions about the eye with which Dalits were painted throughout history, in her poems they are neither treated as sympathetic beings nor as an inferior class that needs aid.

This paper will examine the spectrum of Dalit trauma and its feminist representation in the selected poems such as *Aggression* and *A Cunning Stunt*, from her collection of poems *Touch* (2006) and *Ms. Militancy* (2010), using the poetic narrative within the frame of discourse of Dalit feminism to underscore how these poems serve as a powerful tool for both personal and collective healings from the traumas deeply embedded within the part of society.

Keywords: Dalit Trauma, twice-Dalit, Dalit feminism, Aesthetics of Dalit writing.

Introduction

Dalit literature is a movement for Dalit writers who view writing as a vehicle to convey their experiences of sorrow, pain, and anger, and ask questions. It challenges the prevailing knowledge system and hegemonic structures that relegate untouchables to inhuman status. Dalit literature is often criticized as the outpourings of pain and anger manifested in ‘artlessness’. Dalit writers believe their literature should be analyzed from a sociological perspective focusing on social values rather than beauty. They argue that an exclusively aesthetic consideration of Dalit literature will disregard the Dalit writers’ fundamental role and hence is unacceptable to Dalit writers. Meena Kandasamy, an emerging poet, fiction writer, translator, and activist, has won numerous laurels in poetry competitions and is currently working on her doctorate on caste in the Indian language classroom.

Her poetry collections *Touch* and *Ms. Militancy* touch upon aesthetic considerations and sensual human bonds of affection, while also referencing the rigid hierarchies of caste. Indian English poetry has become a powerful tool for addressing the marginalized sections of Indian society, particularly women. Dalit women's writings highlight the uncharted territories of caste-ridden violence, discrimination, and the

burden of victim-blaming carried by every Dalit. Their writing impacts their existence in the socio-cultural dynamics, subtly marking their shift from a peripheral position to a central one. Meena Kandasamy, a poet, critiques the homogenizing propensity of the narrative of national history and tries to advance an alternate version of history for the Dalits by reconstructing their past.

Traces of Dalit Trauma

While mainstream trauma theory has long been used by many scholars to address trauma, there is a need to critically examine the universalization of the concept of 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder' (PTSD) and its potential to overlook the pain experienced by oppressed groups, such as Dalits. The suffering and anguish endured by Dalits across generations have deeply impacted their mental and emotional well-being, a recurring theme in Dalit literature that reflects the profound trauma resulting from their experiences of suffering and oppression. Dalit trauma is expressed differently

“They find two aspects particularly problematic: one is its exclusive focus on sudden and unexpected catastrophic events which ignores the chronic psychic suffering caused by structural violence such as racism, classism and other forms of structural oppression” (Cherechés 48).

While analysing we see how our silence waits, sometimes breaking into wails. However, sometimes our inward struggles take colossal forms, leading to revolution and often using aggression as a trouble-shooting method. *Aggression* from the collection (*Touch 2006*):

Ours is a silence
that waits. Endlessly waits.
And then, unable to bear it
any further, it breaks into wails.
But not all suppressed reactions
end in our bemoaning the tragedy. (Kandasamy 1-6)

The poem explores the theme of silence and the emotional build-up that can lead to explosive reactions. It examines how suppressed feelings can lead to moments of catharsis, rebellion, or aggression. The subject matter focuses on the tension between internal struggles and external expressions, suggesting that while silence may be a form of endurance, it can also be a precursor to significant upheaval and change.

Sometimes,
the outward signals
of inward struggles takes colossal forms
And the revolution happens because our dreams explode.
Most of the time:
Aggression is the best kind of trouble-shooting. (Kandasamy 7-12).

The poem utilizes evocative and stark language to convey deep emotional resonance. Words like "silence," "wails," and "suppressed" highlight the tension between quietude and the eventual release of pent-up emotions. The phrase "colossal forms" suggests that these internal struggles can manifest in powerful and impactful ways. The choice of the word "aggression" implies not just conflict but an active response to enduring pain or frustration.

The poem "A Cunning Stunt" establishes the relationship of the carnal involvement of a woman's body to the arena of language. 'Bound in bed and blindfolded/ I hear the man of words come to me. / ...cunt now becomes seat, / abode, home, lair, nest, stable / and he opens my legs wider/ and shoves / harder and I am torn apart / to contain the meanings of family, race, stock and caste (Lines 1-27).

The poem bears clear reference to the violence and assaults made on Dalit women by men. It also highlights the truth that a woman's body does not belong to her for experiencing pleasure rather she is seen as an object of men's needs and pleasure and is understood as an asexual and non-existent being. (Patni 42). The experiences and living spaces of marginalized women are shaped by complex and intersecting layers of discrimination, rooted in their marginalized positions based on social class, gender, and caste. Their suffering exists on the fringes of society, often normalized as an inherent part of their everyday lives. These women lack agency over their bodies and are subjected to various forms of oppression and control. The act of body mutilation is not simply a single act of violence, but rather a culmination of multiple layers of oppression and domination that has become normalized within the context of marginalized women's lives.

More Dalit persons began to improve the situation of Dalit through their writings with great zeal after their higher studies abroad and their return to India. Their aim was not to bring the lowness of the Dalit society but to highlight the real picture of the plight of the Dalits. They brought a close and real imagery as obviously true in the case with Mulk Raj Anand's "Untouchable" and "Coolie". Poems, short stories, novels, and autobiographies written by Dalit writers provided useful

insights on the question of Dalit identity (Priya 291).

Kandasamy's strong desire to develop an alternative tradition of Feminist poetry in order to amplify the distinct voices of women demonstrates a connection with the third stage of "Gynocriticism" as proposed by Elaine Showalter. This stage, known as The Feminist phase, articulates the tendency of female authors from the latter half of the twentieth century to seek their independent voices and identities, challenging the constraints imposed by patriarchy. Showalter's theory highlights the deliberate departure from traditional patriarchal norms and the assertion of individual identity by female writers during this period.

Kandasamy is that Marxist for whom freedom from the clutches of patriarchy and casteism is possible through something radical as that of a rebellion. (Chaudhuri 15). Marx proposed that once the working class joined together and revolted against the capitalist class, the hierarchical structure of society would crumble. This would lead to the establishment of communism, resulting in the eventual dissolution of the state as a tool of oppression. As a result, the state would gradually "wither away" and cease to exist. Kandasamy embodies a Marxist perspective, believing that liberation from the constraints of patriarchy and caste discrimination can be achieved through radical acts of rebellion. Her poems convey a strong sense of anger and sarcasm, reflecting her commitment to these ideals. The dominant ideologies prevail over marginalized identities and cultures because those who are marginalized often lack the power to defend themselves and assert their own identities. This power imbalance allows the dominant forces to relegate the marginalized groups, leading to the suppression of their cultural identities.

Contemporary importance

In contemporary India, the poetry crafted by women has evolved into a powerful and transformative force, embodying the continual strive for empowerment and self-expression. These modern-day women poets fearlessly confront and defy long-standing poetic conventions, aiming to deconstruct and disrupt established power dynamics. Their skilful use of connotative language serves as a thought-provoking commentary on the societal and political status of women, effectively questioning the predominant male-centred framework. As 'others' in a patriarchal society, these poets strive to transcend boundaries and fixed identities, ultimately redefining their cultural representation.

Their poetry serves as a powerful medium for embracing and celebrating their unique identity. The language of her poetry shows the interplay of the semiotic in the symbolic. (Bhadra 99). Through the medium of writing, the repressions and marginalization of women can be perpetuated, shaping and reinforcing societal norms and expectations. Women must write from their unique perspectives and experiences, as writing serves as a powerful tool for expressing and promoting subversive thoughts,

challenging the status quo, and suggesting possibilities for change. When women write authentically, their words have the potential to disrupt the traditional symbolic order, exposing unconscious societal drives and energy. Through the use of language and the retelling of horror myths, women can confront and redefine the narratives that have historically silenced and diminished their voices.

The writings of Dalit authors are defined by a strong emphasis on real issues that have taken place and are ongoing in society. Unlike other writers, Dalit authors do not aim to establish strict rules for writing in various literary genres. Instead, they actively oppose the existing rules and norms set for producing literary work. This approach is particularly significant as it acknowledges the challenges faced by individuals who have experienced life in extremely difficult conditions in adhering to traditional writing standards.

Conclusion

Dalit literature is revolutionary as it serves as a tool for bringing social awareness. It is characterized by questioning, subversion, and interpretation. Dalit writers reject the ideas and ideals of classical Brahmanical literature and conventional theories of aesthetics in their works. Meena Kandasamy's writings reflect her belief that the caste hierarchy is the root cause for the subaltern class to suffer exploitation and remain under the clutches of power. In her poetry collections "Touch" and "Ms. Militancy," Kandasamy's characters protest against their oppressors. The poems discussed in this article are taken from these collections.

The youthful characters in her poems rebel against the unequal societal system. Kandasamy's poems are grounded in real social issues and do not dwell in imagination or fantasy. Meena's poetry addresses themes and uses diction that are considered taboo in the cultural context of India. In his review of Ms. Militancy, Ranjit Heskote rightly points out that there is a surprising and elusive quality in Kandasamy's poetry that challenges the predictable nature of feminist self-assertion. He acknowledges her keen eye for detail, worldly insight, and skilful use of language. Meena's poetry is a testament to her significant presence in Dalit literature and Indian English literature as a whole.

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Caste and Outcasts: Casteism and Disability as Horrors of Post-Independent India in Real and Fictional World

Atolanto Ghoshal

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Abstract: This paper attempts to examine the plight of the people of lower caste in post-independent India and the violence committed upon them from two perspectives by taking into consideration two different periods and two different types of violence perpetrated upon the Dalits of two different Indian states in both the fictional and natural world. It closely observes the character of Langar in Shrilal Shukla's (1925-2011) novel *Raag Darbari* (1968). It attempts to portray the sorry state of a Dalit individual in post-independent Nehruvian India during the 1960s. It also traces the event of the infamous 'Khairlanji Murders' of 2006 to show the physical violence committed upon the Dalits after nearly 60 years of independence. It also tries to connect the real and fictional world using the element of disability: Shukla's fictional character, Langar, gets his name as well as his identity from being disabled, and on the other hand, Sudhir, one of the victims of the 'Khairlanji Murders' was partially vision impaired which made him an easy prey for the lynching mob. Langar is a representative of Dalits in *Raag Darbari* who, on the one hand, faces an identity crisis because of his disability and, on the other hand, suffers a lot from unjust social oppression. Unlike Langar, Sudhir faces physical violence in the real world as a disabled, and his family is brutally murdered in the early decade of the 21st century. Using Anand Teltumbde's discussion, this paper attempts to show that the type of oppression and the place of occurrence may change, but the Dalits always stayed at the receiving end of violence. Both the real and fictional events show the involvement of power and politics in caste, which leads to social, psychological, and, finally, physical violence against the Dalits. Foucault's idea of power can be related to it.

Keywords: Caste, Dalit, disabled, violence, real, fictional, post-independent. "Capitalistic modernity, the republican constitution, neoliberalism, and globalization, all have failed to prevent the persistence of casteism." – Anand Teltumbde (38)

This paper delves into a meticulous examination of the plight of the lower castes in post-independent India, with a particular focus on the positionality of the Dalits and the violence inflicted upon them. The research unfolds through the lens of two distinct perspectives, spanning different periods and delineating two varieties of violence perpetrated against the Dalit community in both fiction and reality. The study initiates its exploration by closely scrutinizing the character of Langar in Shrilal Shukla's seminal novel *Raag Darbari* (1968). Set against the backdrop of post-independent Nehruvian India in the 1960s, the

paper endeavours to portray the harrowing conditions experienced by Dalit individuals, as exemplified through Langar. An intricate analysis unfolds, revealing the challenges faced by Langar, who, as a disabled individual, becomes a target for societal discrimination, manifesting primarily in the form of psychological oppression. The narrative sheds light on the subtle yet pervasive ways in which prejudice operates, shaping the experiences of Dalits in a supposedly egalitarian post-independence society. Simultaneously, the paper broadens its scope to encompass a contrasting temporal and geographical context by investigating the notorious 'Khairlanji Murders' of 2006. This real-world atrocity serves as a stark reminder that, despite nearly six decades of independence, physical violence against Dalits remains a distressing reality. The juxtaposition of these two distinct incidents, one fictional and one tragically real, underscores the enduring nature of the challenges faced by the Dalit community. The argument of the paper revolves around the assertion that while the manifestations of oppression and the settings may vary, the Dalits consistently find themselves at the receiving end of violence. Through an intricate tapestry of literary analysis and historical inquiry, the paper paints a nuanced picture of the multifaceted struggles faced by the Dalits in post-independent India, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics that perpetuate their marginalization. This endeavour to contextualize the experiences of Dalits across different periods and types of violence adds depth and relevance to the scholarly discourse on caste-based discrimination and oppression.

This paper attempts to examine from two different perspectives the plight of the people of lower castes and investigates the positionality of the Dalits in post-independent India and the violence committed upon them. It has taken into consideration two different time periods and two types of violence committed against the Dalits of two different Indian states in both the fictional and real world. This paper closely observes the character of Langar in Shrilal Shukla's (1925-2011) novel *Raag Darbari* (1968) and attempts to portray the sorry state of a Dalit individual in the post-independent Nehruvian India during the 1960s. The challenges faced by Langar as a disabled individual are put forward by society in the form of psychological oppression. On the other hand, this paper attempts to trace the events of the infamous 'Khairlanji Murders' of 2006 to show the physical violence committed upon the Dalits even after nearly 60 years of independence. This paper attempts to show that the type of oppression and the place of occurrence may change, but the Dalits mostly stay at the receiving end of violence.

In *Fundamental Principles of Disability*, published by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976), it is stated- "It is the society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is imposed on top of our impairments by how we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society" (Oliver 42). Disability adds a new dimension of horror to the horrible system

of casteism in post-independent India. The real and fictional world can be connected by using the element of disability: Shukla's fictional character, Langar, gets his name as well as his identity for being disabled. Society treats him as an outcast for not just being a Dalit, but his disability constitutes his identity as the novel mentions, "People called him Langar- the Lame one" (Shukla 31). On the other hand, Sudhir, one of the victims of the 'Khairlanji Murders,' was partially vision impaired, which made him easy prey for the lynching mob.

Shrilal Shukla situates Langar in an imaginary village of Uttar Pradesh, Shivpalganj, which has been used as a microcosm of Nehruvian rural India in *Raag Darbari*. As a bureaucrat, Shukla has seen Uttar Pradesh and rural India from close vicinity and has applied his knowledge and experience to capture the negativities of casteism. Caste politics became influential in India after independence, and caste is still an essential factor in the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh. After independence, the Indian government introduced caste-based reservations, but rural India was not aware of these benefits. The fiction shows the reflection of the Ambedkarite Movement- it shows the attempt of the government to eradicate the discrimination based on caste as the novel mentions, "Gandhi and Nehru are not the names of castes, but the names of individuals. This is a simple way to rid the country of the caste-system" (Shukla 20). However, the novel shows time and again that this attempt has gone in vain. Langar is a representative of the Dalits in *Raag Darbari* who, on the one hand, faces an identity crisis because of his disability and, on the other hand, suffers a lot from unjust social oppression. The 'social model of disability' shows disability as a social construct, and it refers to the "forms of oppression, restricted activity, exclusion, and discrimination that people with impairments might face, from inaccessible environments to prejudice and hate crime" (Barker 101). Shivpalganj excludes Langar from mainstream society- he does not enter into Vaidyaji's 'darbar,' i.e., sitting room, but always squats down outside. He greets Vaidyaji in the way "prescribed in the scriptures for a low caste man meeting a Brahmin" (Shukla 32). Shivpalganj does not try to get rid of casteism- the discrimination is accepted as there is no physical violence. The fictional village does not care about Article 17 of the Indian Constitution, which states the abolition of 'Untouchability' and announces the enforcement of any disability arising out of 'Untouchability' as an offense. Shivpalganj has a separate quarter of the village, named 'Chamrahi,' where the Dalits live- the landlords use the Dalits' muscle power, but they remain there as outcasts. People like Langar, who cannot help with muscle power, have no place. Shukla has satirically shown how, in spite of having the 'Gandhi Platform' as a symbol of co-existence, the conditions of the Dalits have not changed in Shivpalganj. Even the Dalits have accepted this system and touched the Brahmins' feet without question.

Langar wants a copy of his document from the Tehsil office, but he refuses to bribe the official, increasing

his plight. He does not get any positive help from anyone, and in spite of visiting the office multiple times, he does not get his copy. He leaves his home for a long time to visit the office regularly but ultimately falls ill and misses the date. The local administration does not provide any facility to Langar in spite of his disability, and clearly, his disability adds an extra burden on his Dalit identity. Langar's case supports the 'social model of disability'; as Michael Oliver mentions in *Understanding Disability*, "it was not impairment that was the main cause of the social exclusion of disabled people, but the way society responded to people with impairments" (43). *Raag Darbari* focuses on the issues regarding caste discrimination and disability ironically and satirically, but the plight of Langar is who suffers the most in the novel- he tries to conceal his tears, but "Ruppan and Rangnath saw he was crying" (Shukla 317).

The mental and psychological oppression of a Dalit individual in the fictional world changes its form in the real world and turns out as physical violence against the Dalits. The shameful incident of 'Khairlanji Murders' tracks the event of physical violence on the Dalits in a place that was considered one of the fortresses of the Ambedkarite Movement. Four members of the Bhotmange family were brutally killed by the lynching mob in Khairlanji district of Maharashtra in 2006. I will not go into the details of this incident as they are mostly known, but I will highlight certain facts. As a Dalit family, the Bhotmanges overcame their economic hardship and became financially stable. Bhaiyalal Bhotmange and his wife, Surekha, managed the family quite well in spite of suffering from casteism. Teltumbde has pointed out, "Surekha Bhotmange was an archetypal Ambedkarite woman- socially conscious, intolerant of injustice, courageous and outspoken" (Teltumbde 93). The family was conscious about education and lifestyle, and unlike the Dalits of Shivpalganj, they refused to conform to the expectations of their upper-caste Hindu neighbours which led to physical violence and their tragic end. The Dalits of fictional Shivpalganj stopped touching the feet of Brahmins after the abolition of landlordism, but they used to show verbal respect. Nearly 50 years later, the Bhotmanges refused to pay unnecessary things like part of their land to OBC landowners. Though Khairlanji is a part of Maharashtra, the birthplace of the Dalit Movement, it tried to exclude the Dalits from mainstream society just like Shivpalganj. The Dalits were held unworthy of modern living arrangements, and the Bhotmanges faced discrimination in accessing drinking water. Unlike the Dalits of Shivpalganj, the Bhotmanges did not accept this discrimination, and they had to pay the price for their lives. The wounded caste pride of their neighbours resulted in the deaths of Surekha and her three children- Sudhir, Roshan and Priyanka.

Sudhir was the eldest son of the family, who was partially vision-impaired, and he could not continue his education beyond class 3 due to non-existent resources for people with disabilities in Khairlanji. While his brother and sister continued with their education, Sudhir had to work in the field because of his disability.

Sudhir's disability added a new dimension to his suffering as a Dalit individual. Even after 50 years of independence, Sudhir's case proves the 'social model of disability' where he was socially excluded and had no access to higher education. Though the 'social model of disability' gained recognition across various sectors in the late 1980s and a report was published in London in 1988 named *A Wider Vision for the Blind* (DHSS), the application of such models and providing facilities to disabled people in places like Khairlanji was hard to imagine even in 2006. Being a disabled individual, Sudhir could not protect himself or his family members from the mob attack, and the women were brutally raped multiple times. Even the attackers ordered Sudhir and Roshan to rape their sister and mother, and when they disagreed, their genitals were crushed and mutilated. It is evident from the real and fictional events that the disabled Dalits are easy prey to caste atrocities- be it the fictional Uttar Pradesh of the 1960s or the real Maharashtra of 2006.

Langar's not getting a copy of his document from the Tehsil office and the local Panchayat's 'veto' against the proposal of the Bhotmange family's house show the inability of the local administrative bodies to prevent caste discrimination. Both the real and fictional incidents indicate what Meena Dhanda has mentioned as "unmasking the unethical operations of caste" (Philosophical Foundations). Neither Langar nor Sudhir has any disabled-friendly environment in Shivpalganj or Khairlanji. Also, local bodies like the Tehsil office or school did not provide equal opportunities to Langar or Sudhir, which violated their rights as citizens up to an extent. Thus, they became outcasts in their respective places. Even in the 21st century, in spite of the government policies for the Dalits, the Bhotmange family did not have electricity in their house. Teltumbde mentions in his essay "The Khairlanji Murders" that "they (Bhotmanges) accumulated enough money to be able to afford to build a house, the village panchayat did not sanction it...the bricks bought for the construction were loosely stacked into walls; cement was never applied" (Teltumbde 93). Even the police were not concerned with the violence against the Dalits- on 1st September 2006, Surekha first lodged a complaint at Andhalgaon police station about the ongoing harassment by the Dalit haters. The inactivity of the police became a major cause of this mass murder on 29th September 2006. In spite of being informed, the police did not take any action; moreover, they harassed Bhaiyalal when he went to the station to lodge a complaint against the murderers of his family. The first FIR (number 56/2006) was lodged finally on 30th September at 10 AM. The inability of both civil and judicial bodies against caste atrocities is prominent in both the real and fictional world.

Khairlanji was not much different from Shivpalganj in the matter of using derogatory terms for the Dalits and disabled individuals. 'Langar old fellow,' 'Changu' or 'Six Fingered Ram,' 'Deaf Grandpa,' and 'Honeycomb Prasad' were quite common modes of addresses. Terms like 'Chamar', and 'beggar' was in

use in the fictional world, whereas terms like ‘dheds’, and ‘Mahars’ which are derogatory terms for the Dalits in Maharashtra used for the Bhotmanges, and they were in constant fear of being ‘straightened out’. As women, Surekha and Priyanka were constantly under shameful remarks, and the whole family had to hear casteist taunts and threats- Sudhir, as a disabled individual, was no exception. Though there are existing laws against hate speech in post-independent India, such incidents prove the inability of theoretical laws against caste atrocities, as the laws are futile when crimes are committed against the Dalits and disabled individuals in the real world. Constant use of derogatory terms might create an identity crisis within the individual and also affect the psychological well-being of that person. Being constantly bullied by everyone, Langar creates a parallel identity for himself, which is definitely the result of an inferiority complex as he mentions, "Now everyone just calls me Langar, father...But my real name, given to me by my parents, is Langar Prasad" (Shukla 266). Shukla satirically points to the bitter truth that Indians traditionally show their love for cripples and amputees in such a way. Langar accepts the mental and psychological violence and thus agrees to his identity as a Dalit disabled, unlike the Bhotmanges, who not only refused to accept such a derogatory identity but also decided to pay the caste Hindus back. The upper caste people did not accept such an attitude of the Dalits, and some trivial matters about the land finally led to physical violence on the Bhotmanges.

Both the real and fictional events show the involvement of power and politics in caste, which led to social, psychological, and, finally, physical violence against the Dalits. Langar’s constant fight against power and corruption can be compared with Surekha’s indomitable spirit. Langar tells the story of his fight against injustice while sitting on the ‘Gandhi Platform.’ However, influential people are not interested in his story as the novel narrates- “When he raised his head, he saw near him only the familiar dogs, pigs and piles of rubbish in whose company he had set out to fight a righteous war against officialdom” (Shukla 103). The rural authority does not care about the Dalits, but they care about their votes- election strategies are made based on caste ratios. Similarly, in Khairlanji, Dalits' interests became a political agenda. Local political leaders were involved on both sides of the violence- few tried to support the Dalits, and many were involved in the crime itself. The tragic event became a political agenda, and multiple political parties tried to gain an advantage from it. Influential people tried to mislead the investigation using various means and became somewhat successful. Even the roles of media, police, and medical authorities were driven by power and so were not neutral during the course of this event. Michel Foucault has mentioned a new kind of ‘disciplinary power’ that could be observed in the administrative systems and social services such as prisons, hospitals, and schools. These systems of assessment and surveillance no longer required violence as the subjects learned to discipline themselves and behave in expected ways. The Dalits of Shivpalganj could avoid physical violence by showing such an attitude- they never forgot to mention “I touch your

feet, father” (Shukla 267) to a Brahmin or never wanted equal respect. Bhotmanges rejected this power structure, rightfully so, and became prey to caste atrocities. The brutal physical violence upon them did not care about gender or disability- women were active participants in the attack on women.

This analysis draws parallels between the seemingly inconsequential challenges faced by Langar and the profound hardships endured by the Bhotmange family. Through this comparative lens, we can conclude that it transcends both time and geographical boundaries, asserting that the Dalits have consistently borne the brunt of suffering in post-independent India. Whether navigating the fictional landscape of 1950s Uttar Pradesh or confronting the harsh realities of Maharashtra in 2006, the paper contends that the conditions experienced by Dalits, particularly disabled Dalits, have tragically remained unaltered. Examining Langar's predicament in Shrilal Shukla's novel *Raag Darbari* serves as a microcosm reflecting Dalits' persistent challenges in post-independence India. The narrative unfolds in the 1960s when the Nehruvian vision of a progressive and inclusive society was ostensibly in play. However, Langar's experiences as a disabled individual expose a deeply ingrained societal prejudice, manifesting in the form of psychological oppression. This echoes the broader assertion that governmental initiatives, though existent, have failed in their implementation, leaving vulnerable communities, such as the disabled Dalits, without adequate support or redress. The juxtaposition of Langar's fictional struggles with the tragic real-world events surrounding the Bhotmange family in Maharashtra in 2006 further underscores the continuity of the Dalits' plight. The government's introduction of schemes ostensibly designed to uplift marginalized communities has fallen short due to bureaucratic negligence and systemic bias. The denial of housing for the Bhotmanges exemplifies how institutional prejudice can have real and devastating consequences, perpetuating the cycle of Dalit marginalization. In a similar context, the Deputy Director in *Raag Darbari* commented, “Now the children of sweepers and chamars are coming to study, so what sort of education can there be?” (Shukla 322). In synthesizing these literary and historical examples, the paper argues that the intersectionality of casteism and disability exacerbates the challenges individuals like Langar and Sudhir face. These characters, both representative of their communities in fiction and reality, compel readers to confront the stark reality that, even 75 years post-independence, the plight of disabled Dalits remains a pressing concern.

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Reconstruction of Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Children Cinema: A Critique of Centuries-Old Fairy Tales and Classic Disney Movies

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Abstract: Every Disney film begins with “once upon a time” and concludes with “happily ever after.” The source materials for these family-friendly films are centuries-old fairy tales. There is, however, a significant difference between the original sources and the animated films. The original sources were a reflection of a problematic society, and movies make the content more romantic and fanciful for the audience. In this paper, I intend to revise the Western world's centuries-old fairy tales and study them with a critical approach to myths and stereotypes that are used in Disney movies with a sense of modification. There are some dusty spots that need to be cleaned, and they are related to social biases. Some following questions are; what exactly is myth and stereotype revision, how do Disney films conceal the true essence of their original sources while establishing new moral values in society, Disney films teach us to live in our imaginations, impact children when they are young, Disney movie enthusiast a daydreamer, they destroying the spirit of self-actualization and self-respect.

Keywords: Gender role, identity, imagination, folktale and animation.

Introduction: Modern childhood is almost unimaginable without fairy tales. More than half of the world population is familiar with these tales, especially Disney movies which are the most common way people come into contact with them. The Brothers Grimm, Jacob Ludwig Carl and Wilhelm Carl were eminent German folklorists in the 19th century who dared to frame them in literature first time. They established ideal images for every human role in society, whether it be a heroine, a hero, a saviour, a villain, fate, deed, condition or situation. Many Disney Movies are inspired by the fairy tales of The Brothers Grimm such as “Cinderella”, “The Frog Prince”, “The Goose Girl”, “Hansel and Gretel”, “Rapunzel”, “Sleeping Beauty” and “Snow White” from their collection *Children and Household Tales*. (Tatar, 2014) These tales are an integral part of every person’s childhood and represent their first step in learning. However, the extent to which they affect human psychology and shape societal stereotypes, as well as how fantasy influences real life, is a subject of debate among intellectuals.

The term “fairy”, “wonder tale”, “magic tale” or “marchen” tale comes out with fantastic and magical settings, magical influences and enchantments rather than the appearance of a fairy in it. Fairy tales are often traditional. They were strewed from one storyteller to another storyteller before being recorded in books. The fairy tales that form part of children's literature also address universal issues and

social problems. They typically involve a series of motifs or episodes and are of considerable length. The characters and motifs found in fairy tales are straightforward and archetypal. So it can be said that a fairy tale is a story that targets children readers with imaginative characters and magic. It involves around, fairies, gnomes, witches, unicorns, trolls etc. with a common beginning, “once upon a time.” As Hans Christian Andersen says, “every man’s life is a fairy tale written by God’s fingers.”(Winter, 1894, p-301) “Folklore” also shares the same characteristics.

The term “fairy tale” was first introduced by Madame d’Aulnoy in 1697 in her work *Conte de fees*, and Thompson provided an accurate definition of it in his book *The Folktale*. Due to the extensive and ancient history of literary fairy tales, some well-informed individuals find Disney's interpretation to be peculiar. The true origins of fairy tales remain a mystery as they originated as oral stories shared among various groups of common people worldwide. Each time the tales were adapted by different writers, these writers could “adapt the motifs, themes and characters to fit their tastes and the expectations of the audiences for which they were writing.”(Doster, 2002, p-1)

Centuries of human society have frequently assigned distinct roles, codes of conduct, and ethical standards, as well as different emotions and perspectives, to men and women. A woman's character should be soft, sensitive and sweet like a rose and strawberry; a man should be able to curb emotions and be strong like a stone that can crush her. This kind of learning sets separate roles for both genders in society. In Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice* male protagonist Darcy admits his rudeness and says, “I was spoilt by my parents, who... almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing: to care for none beyond my family circle; to think meanly of all the rest of the world...” (Austen, 1998) In other words, his parents encouraged him to think that he was pretty special and that he did not need to be a soft-hearted man. His statements are accurate as parents utilized the biological difference between sexes to create and uphold the societal differentiation of gender, particularly in relation to “hearth and home.” Besides these two things, there is no other mark of her identity. “Read and Speak” are weird words, she never understood the importance of these two words in her entire life. Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*, threatens Belle for her desire to learn and read books, “it’s not right for a woman to read”; (Beauty and the Beast, 1991) because learning about how to maintain a home is enough for her knowledge.

Man is dominating party, if he wants to rule, he must keep the woman in a dilemma that she is soft and submissive. Anne Eliot in *Persuasion* comments on the status of women: “Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree: the pen has been in their hands.” (Austen, 2009) Men have created a mythical aura surrounding her; no need for reading and no need to speak. In her essay *Silly Novels by Lady Novelists* George Eliot critiques literature

lacking literary merit that could potentially harm by promoting melodrama among female readers and perpetuating the belief among men that education does not enhance women. This kind of literature objectified women's silliness and disregarded reality. She calls them 'mind and millinery' novels. The heroine in these kinds of stories is presented as beautiful, virtuous, silent and supremely intelligent. Stories ended happily with the marriage of a female protagonist to a man whom she adores. This kind of education and culture has set the ideal image of a woman who should be as silent as possible she can manage because nothing to do (sleeping) is the ideal state of beauty. Villain Ursula, the Sea-Witch assures Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*; "she won't need her voice on land as men prefer silent women." (Clements, 2019)

Aurora in "The Sleeping Beauty" reflects the true personification of a woman's submissive state that is sleeping for a long time. She does not need to know the outer world, dreaming of a fairy tale where learning and observing have no room. This dream has killed her desire of creating and searching new thoughts and things. She is living the most comfortable life, in a big illusion. Seim Dahiya writes in a poem "Letter from You" from the perspective of an angel who is trying to console a heartbroken girl;

Stupid girl!

You should it know

That you're not elfin;

This life is not a magic fin.

You should not oversleep;

Should not stand on stairs or well

Waiting for him who actually

Passed by home, every eve.

Break your dreams before

Someone let you down;

If there is too late for me or my wings

To come you around. (Dahiya, 2018, p-46)

Snow White the first Disney princess is described by her evil stepmother's magic mirror as having, "hairs as black as ebony, lips as red as the rose, skin as white as snow." (Hand, 2019) The idea of the central theme was also the beauty conflict between the daughter and mother. In the end, it was justified that the daughter was more beautiful than her mother and the mother must die then. So, in this fairy tale,

morality is taught to children that beauty is the most important thing in this world. If you have no beauty, you are nothing. This is the implicit meaning of the story. This is about the obsession with the beauty of women in society. In movies like *Beauty and Beast*, beauty seems to be necessary for being happy. Heroine definitely would be scared if her admirer is a beast, but if the same person turns into a handsome prince, the proposal is well accepted. Children are accepting white skin beauty standards to judge a person's qualities as white beautiful and dark ugly. It also inflames the obsession for beauty in children's hearts.

Keats was a passionate lover of beauty in all its forms and manifestation; beauty in the polar star, nature, woman and art. For him, 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever.' (Foundation, 2021) Keats and beauty have become almost synonymous. It is impossible to think about Keats without "beauty." Beauty is abstract. It is not easy to give a definite meaning to it. Keats writes and identifies beauty with truth, "the mighty abstract idea I have of Beauty in all things..." (Foundation, 2021) He dedicated his brief life to the expression of beauty. For Keats, beauty was a place of imagination where everything is beautiful, everything is peaceful and everything is full of life. He desired to escape from the painful world into the realm of imagination. He may overcall be termed as a poet of escape. However had he fantasized life merely as a beautiful dream, he wouldn't have denied the existence of dreadful and ugly things as fairy tales do. It was his positive aspect that he celebrated desperate feelings as gloom and sorrow. And he could see the beauty in every little thing of nature. Even autumn has beauty and charm in his eyes. It is the concern of the soul for salvation. A true poet enjoys light and shade foul with the same delight. As Rabindranath Tagore emphasizes his point, "Beauty is truth's smile when she beholds her own face in a perfect mirror." (Rabindranath, 2010) Every person is beautiful in his or her own way: every person's eye has its own standards of beauty. Thus, Keats' concept of beauty encompasses joy and sorrow, death and life which cannot be separated. *The Alabaster Girl* gives the opinion, "All beautiful things must end. Otherwise, they are not beautiful." (Zan Perrion, 2013)

Fairy tales are important because they spark the imagination in minds. They provide an imaginative experience to minds before experiencing it in the real world. Through imagination, we all learn about the world and explore the outcomes and possibilities. There is a story: A girl is born with long beautiful hair and a witch kidnapped her in early childhood. She is trapped at the top of the tower and waiting for a prince charming. After a long solitude, he comes: climbs the tower with the help of her long hair and rescues her from the prison of an evil witch. And they lived happily ever after. But the question arises, can it be possible that they lived happily ever after in real life? Eugene O'Neil shows his concerns, "obsessed by a fairy tale, we spend our lives searching for a magic door and a lost kingdom of peace." (Khare, 1912, p-142) Rapunzel seems an escapist of reality, a bland and synthetic character who seeks dreams of flying

lanterns and freedom. But it can be only possible if Prince Charming would enter her life. Can it be possible, she dances among criminals and rogues in a beer bar and everyone appreciates her sweetness and her chasing dreams. In reality, a girl who dances among criminals would be called in the wrong manner. Grimm Brother's story is a little different from this popular fantasy. In the beginning, Rapunzel is not kidnapped by the witch but exchanged by her parents for the flowers 'rapunzel.' When the prince finds the way to meet Rapunzel, the sorceress cuts the hair of Rapunzel; the prince falls from the tower and goes blind landing on a thrush bush. In the modern world, the mere mentions of fairy tales are equated with actual forms of stories. Does it mention that one of the evil sisters in "Cinderella" cut parts of her feet off to fit into the glass slipper? Or, in the original French version of "Little Red Riding Hood," the young girl was eaten by the wolf, not saved? Each of these fairy tales that everyone adored during childhood was extended metaphors in hopes of teaching life lessons- but it causes wonder: what was the Prince Charming tale trying to teach us? Who always saves different heroines in different stories in the same way?

Interestingly, the heroines in Disney fairy tales expose all the feminist qualities with headstrong, ambitious and independent appearances. But when the characters separate from the dialogue and we focus on the central idea of Disney movies, all ends up with the conclusion that a woman's ultimate goal in life and her true motive for happiness comes with marriage. If finding a metaphorical Prince Charming is the epitome of living happily ever after, then maybe all women should strive to find that special someone who can make their lives whole. Prince Charming may be living their life on their terms but it happens that means it is a fairy tale, not reality. But questions arise upon the role of Prince Charming who only rides in dreams and upon his true love. The fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" is ultimately a romanticized tale of domestic abuse and glorification of male authority where Belle offers herself to the beast in place of her father to save his life. The unchanged core message is that abusive and aggressive men simply want to ameliorate their naturally violent side. Most of the girls have started to believe that they have to tolerate and survive the male abuse because they must keep staying with their abuser. It will be unsupported and unappreciated in society. Natalia Kills pen down lyrics of "Wonderland: I don't believe in fairy tales" the strong critique exposure of Prince Charming's fanciful image, a dream breaker in reality;

I'm not Snow White,

But I'm lost inside this forest

I'm not Red Riding Hood

But I think the wolves have got me...

You be the beast

And I'll be the beauty, beauty

Who needs true love?

As long as you love me truly? (Kills, 2011)

The answer is simple and clear for this issue: people enjoy the concept of a dominating male hero and helpless heroine who is easy to tempt. Disney movies target the audience's tendency for marketing and production according to the interest of society. Despite this, many of the older fairy tales possess damaging and problematic human relations and social values. However, there is a need to think critically about the types of ideologies and stereotypes represented by Disney movies because they affect children's psychology and create a new reality. As Toni Morrison said, "but to find out the truth about how dreams die, one should never take the word of the dreamer." (Morrison, 2002) "Cinderella" or "The Little Glass Slipper" is the story of a teenage poor girl who always dreams about the life of luxury balls and royal families. And her dream also comes true with the help of a magic fairy. Her magic chariot, a white horse, glittering gown, glass slippers and ball dance with Prince Charming, these luxurious elements make fairy tales more glorious more enchanted. "Sneewittchen" (Hand, 2019) included elements such as the magic mirror, the poisoned apple, the glass coffin, the killing of a mother, the killing of a child, the huntsman, and an enchanted forest in another tale. Perhaps, these luxurious and aristocratic elements are important in overshadowing royalty to startle by blood and marriage into the royal family and both fit in the princess mythology. But what about those who didn't come from money? Poverty life is not as easy as it seems in fairy tales and not as enjoyable as Cinderella represents it. Her tale reveals the truth about the historical social structure that has been influenced deeply by the concept of social class. The poor will be always poor:

Gold teeth, grey goose

Tripping in the bathroom

Bloodstains, ball gowns,

trashing the hotel room

We don't care

We're driving

Cadillac in our dream...

We're fine with this

We didn't come from money. (Lorde, 2013)

Lorde, meanwhile, is writing about class consciousness and conspicuous consumptions: the gap between lux-culture fantasies of Cadillac and chariot and the reality of being someone, who didn't come from money:

And we'll never be royals

It don't run in our blood

That kind of lux

just ain't for us

We crave a different kind of buzz...

Let me live that fantasy. (Lorde, 2013)

"Royals" lyrics successfully make us understand the push and pull of two classes. The song goes on to find satisfaction and joy in lower status despite the celebration of false totems that do not exist in real life. It is a stinging comment on luxury culture and materialism that is overtaking reality.

Conclusion: To conclude the paper, it must be kept in consideration that Disney movies are imaginatively recreating fairy tales and reinforcing stereotypes for children at the scale of gender, race and class. They suggest that men must be strong and protective like Prince Charming who reappears in Disney movies to marry poor and helpless heroines. And women should be soft, sweet, tender and caring who are only bothering about marriage, home and hearth. This kind of presentation sets a biased psychology in children's minds. And it is important to research on this issue because children will frame the future. But with the impact of Disney movies, they are not ready to face reality. They want to see it through the fancy glasses of Disney movies which can be red or blue but not true white sunlight. Literature indeed represents society but Disney movies are not presenting literature with its true essence. They modified the real message of fairy tales. It is not wrong to say that Disney Movies are not good for a social structure because they undermine the cause of women's education, freedom and rights. Although Disney Movies are Female characters centred their beauty, education and wealth only make them self-satisfied and tedious.

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Dalit and Tribal Sensibilities in the writings of Arundhati Roy and U R

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Abstract: Dalit sensibility means the distinct cultural, social, and emotional outlook of Dalit groups that face ongoing marginalization and oppression in India and some other South Asian regions. People have shown they can inflict extreme violence and cruelty on each other since the dawn of human existence. This includes the domination of one person over another as well as acts of cruelty and humiliation. Wars, battles, and conflicts represent isolated events where violence and killing happen for a set time before coming to an end. Yet certain events have doomed people to suffer indemnity, violence, and humiliation for generations. To achieve this, powerful groups created social structures that would keep coming back, continuing cycles of dominance, violence, and humiliation. Those in power treated the dominant groups as less than human. They justified this brutal treatment by claiming these people lacked civilization, deserved punishment for past lives, or didn't merit human therapy because of their skin colour.

Keywords: Caste, Dalit, marginalisation.

Lower-caste people have resisted in many ways. Literature stands out as a critical method. Lower-caste writers use their works to share stories of suffering and express hopes for a society without caste. They also join social and political movements and fight legal battles to improve their standing. Modern democracy, politics, and ideas like citizenship and human rights have made this second type of pushback possible. "Dalit" translates to "oppressed" or "downtrodden." People have long used "Dalit" to refer to various groups facing caste-based discrimination, which has deep roots in Indian society. Dalit sensibility has many crucial elements. It stems from the long history of unfair treatment, violence, and oppression Dalits have faced for hundreds of years.

The caste system, with its strict ranking, pushed Dalits to the bottom of society leading to their exclusion from social, economic, and political life. This movement shows a rising sense of identity and a wish to claim their unique cultural and social place. Dalits now reject hurtful caste-based names and use terms like "Dalit" to own their identity and power. we can see this movement in different types of art, books, songs, and movies. Dalit writers, poets, and artists often use their own lives to create works that reveal their experiences to highlight their communities' hardships, hopes, and strength. Getting involved in

politics was key to making Dalit communities more aware.

Leaders like B.R. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram have fought for Dalits' rights working to empower them through political movements and parties. In the past few years more people have started to understand and value Dalit perspectives, both in India and around the world, including non-Dalit writers. This has led to more talks and efforts to stand up for Dalit communities' rights and well-being. But problems still exist, and the road to true social equality and justice for Dalits is tricky and has many sides to it.

A bit different is the Tribal sensibility, which points to the unique cultural, social, and emotional outlook of native tribal groups across the globe. These groups often called tribes or indigenous peoples, have distinct histories, customs, and ways of seeing the world that are tied to their bonds with the land, nature, and their ancestral roots. To grasp tribal sensibility is key to acknowledging and valuing the variety and input of native cultures. Tribal sensibility has many important features.

Some of these features are Connection to Land and Nature: Tribal sensibility puts great weight on the profound sense of connection that they hold for their ancestral lands and the natural world. The land isn't just a resource but a holy and vital part of who they are.

Oral Tradition: Many tribal cultures depend on word-of-mouth to hand down knowledge, stories, and cultural practices from one generation to the next. This focus on spoken history plays a key role in tribal thinking, as it keeps alive the wisdom and heritage of their communities.

Communal Living: Tribal communities often live together as a group. People choose things together, and what's good for everyone comes before what one person wants. This idea of working as a team stands at the heart of tribal thinking.

Traditional Knowledge Systems: Native tribes know a lot about their surroundings healing plants, and ways to live without harming nature. This know-how often passes from old to young and forms a big part of tribal thinking.

Cultural Practices and Rituals: Indigenous tribes have a wealth of unique cultural practices, rituals, dances, and ceremonies that are woven into their daily lives. These traditions serve a purpose beyond entertainment carrying deep cultural and spiritual significance.

Resistance and Resilience: A history of standing up to colonization, oppression, and forced assimilation defines tribal sensibility. Many tribal communities have shown incredible strength in keeping

their cultural heritage alive even when faced with huge obstacles.

Indigenous Rights and Advocacy: The last few decades have seen a worldwide push to acknowledge and safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples. Fighting for land rights, self-governance, and the safeguarding of cultural and its heritage plays a key role in modern tribal sensibility.

Cultural Diversity: Keep in mind that tribal sensibility isn't one single idea. Native groups around the world have their own languages customs, and traditions. We need to recognize and respect these differences.

Challenges and Contemporary Issues: Even though there are efforts to protect native rights many tribal communities still struggle with problems like losing their land, having their culture misused, and facing unfair treatment.

Tribal sensibility is a deep and varied concept. It covers the rich cultural, social, and emotional views of native tribes. It stresses the need to respect and keep safe these communities' special identities and what they bring to the world. At the same time, it deals with the current problems they face as the world becomes more connected.

U R Anantmurthy's novel "Samskara" shows us the clash between old ways and new ideas. This book looks at how traditional beliefs and modern thinking collide in a small Indian village. The main character Praneshacharya, is a traditional Brahmin priest who struggles with changing social rules and new ways of thinking. This leads to an inner battle between sticking to long-standing customs and wanting a more open-minded view. The story puts caste and social rankings front and center.

The novel digs deep into the ins and outs of tribal life and thinking. It shows how caste has an impact on the characters' lives Praneshacharya, who belongs to the Brahmin caste. Praneshacharya's story makes us think about religious beliefs and moral puzzles. His search to be pure and righteous makes him face moral gray areas fake behavior, and the limits of religious customs and rules. The book looks at identity as Praneshacharya goes on a trip to Varanasi. His journey turns into a way to find himself and think . He struggles with questions about who he is and what his life means.

The book also looks at gender roles and how traditional Indian society favors men. Chandri and Praneshacharya's wife represent the limits and expectations women face in this kind of society. The book criticizes how society says one thing but does another in religious and caste-based systems. It shows the gap between what people say and what they do. As Praneshacharya's view of the world changes throughout the story, "Samskara" explores how people can change and grow when Dalits step in.

This book hints that people can change and adjust to new situations even when they're set in their ways. "Samskara" is a book by U.R. Ananthamurthy, an Indian writer, that looks at several topics, including tribal or native identity. While the story focuses on the clash between old and new ways in a Brahmin community, the character Naranappa, who's like a tribal person, and the surrounding tribal culture bring up the idea of tribal identity and how it clashes with strict Brahmin society. The book shows the tribal culture around the Brahmin village, which the Brahmin people often see as basic and not as good as their own.

Anantmurthy has made Chandri's character graceful. From the start, the author aimed to honor the Dalit and female characters in the story. Praneshacharya guesses when he hears the cry.

It sounded like Chandri's voice. Chandri was Naranappa's concubine.

If the Acharya talked to her, he would be polluted; he would have to bathe again before his meal. But how can a morsel go down the gullet with a woman waiting in the yard?

He came out. Chandri quickly pulled the end of her sari over her head blanched, and stood there, afraid.

What's the matter?;

He... He...

Chandri shivered; words stuck in her mouth. She held on to the pillar.

What? Naranappa? What happened?

Gone...

She covered her face with her hands.

Narayana, Narayana-when was that?;

Just now.

Between sobs, Chandri answered. 1

The Brahmin ego is voiced by Durga Bhatta of the Smarta sect, who cackled and said :

'Chi Chi Chi, don't be too rash, Acharya. O no, a brahmin isn't lost because he takes a lowborn prostitute. Our ancestors after all came from the North--- you can ask Praneshacharya if you wish---

history says they cohabited with Dravidian woman. Don't think I am being facetious. Think of all the people who go to the brothels

of Basrur in South kanara...’ 2

Love has the same language and ways of expressing the innermost feelings and sentiments. Chandri loved Narnappa in the real sense. She did something interesting as the decision to cremate Narnappa took too long.

Suddenly, Chandri did something that stunned the brahmins. She moved forward to stand in the front courtyard. They couldn’t believe their own eyes: Chandri loosened her four-strand gold chain, her thick bracelet, her bangles, and placed them all in a heap before Praneshacharya. She mumbled something about all this jewellery being there for the expenses of the rite, and went back to stand in her places. The women calculated swiftly: that heap of gold was worth at least two thousand rupees. 3

And so-called women of high class are exposed by the Brahmin writer. It shows how honest the writer is in describing the social reality.

Seeing Chandri offering her jewels the woman of Agrahara calculated swiftly: that heap of gold was worth at least two thousand rupees. One after another, the wives scanned their husbands’ faces. The Brahmins bowed their heads: they were afraid, fearful that the lust for gold might destroy Brahmin purity. 4

Chandri is the example of a feminine force also ready to be matched by the masculine force naturally. We see Chandri was afraid that Praneshacharya might scold her. There was also a hope in her that his touch might bear fruit in her body. And a gratefulness that she, too, might have earned merit. But she didn’t say anything. Chandri is an honest woman; though she is a Dalit, she is a full one. So, listening to Praneshacharya’s gentle grief-stricken once, Chandri suddenly overflowed with compassion. She ponders:

The poor man Famished, distressed, he had suffered and grown so lean in a single day for me. The poor Brahmin. She wanted to hold his feet and offer him her devotion. The next second, she was falling at his feet. It was pitch dark, nothing was visible Rose bent over as if overcome with grief, she didn't quite fall at his feet. Her breast touched his knee in the vehemence of her stumbling, the buttons on her blouse caught and tore open. She leaned her head on his thigh and embraced his legs. 5

The woman in Chandri meets the man in Praneshacharya that night. No inhibitions. No restrictions. But afterwards, Chandri rethinks about the sexual encounter with him.

Did he take her then out of compassion? That is doubtful. His body's tigerish lust, taking on the form of pity and compassion, tamed by a righteousness which had brought him this far it could be nothing else. At the touch of Chandri's breast, the animal leaped to its natural self and bared its teeth. Naranappa's words came to his mind: Let's see who'll win, you or me... go to sleep in the arms of Matsyagandhi, the fragrant fisherwoman. 6

The man in Praneshacharya is longing for Chandri. The real woman. Not like Bhagirathi, his sick wife. But a woman in full bloom. He examines his own religious existence.

Has that experience become a mere memory? And as memory is roused, I begin to desire it again. Once again, I press forward to embrace Chandri. As desire stirred in it, the Acharya's body craved for touch. His eyes grew dim. He thought of going to Kundapura and searching out Chandri. The usually undisturbed logic of his self-examining seemed disturbed.

The waves were broken. I went now in search of her and enjoyed her,

I would be fully responsible for my act, wouldn't I? At least then I might

be released from this agony. 7

So, the author makes room for a lady in this book even though she's from a lower-caste Dalit household. In "The God of Small Things," the main girl is cool with having a dude in the story. Arundhati Roy, an Indian writer, penned "The God of Small Things." The tale spins around family vibes, unfairness in society, romance, and heartache, but whispers of tribal life are there too. The setting's Kerala India, and the tribal folks and their ways kind of weave into the plot. So here's a sneak peek at the tribal bits in "The God of Small Things." The big standout for the tribal stuff in the book is this character Velutha—he's an Untouchable and part of the Paravan crew. ! Please provide the content you would like me to paraphrase. Ammu, a main character, feels love for Velutha crossing the big no-nos of caste and society rules with their secret romance. They're pushing against tough caste walls that split the Paravans, who folks see as tribes or no-touchables, from other folks. See, this book shows the big-time unfairness the Paravan crowd deals with fitting into this tribal or not-so-well-off slot in the big picture of Kerala's community. The rough stuff they go through shines a light on the uneven bits and nasty bias stuck in the caste thing.

The book digs into the whole untouchability scene revolving around folks who are kind of on the edges, like tribal or pushed-aside peeps. Velutha being an Untouchable sort of screams about how soul-crushing this whole caste mess can be. You get to see how messed up it is when people from different castes or backgrounds try to get together. Ammu and Velutha, they fall for each other hard, but man, it's like they broke some big rule, and they pay for it.

Velutha, along with the Paravan squad, they're like a window into how tribal groups or the underdogs are pretty much ghosted in Indian circles. It's like they get shoved aside, all the doors to the good stuff stay closed.

When we look at Ammu and Velutha, they're all in with the love game. Thing is, it's a no-go 'cause of their caste drama and what society's playbook says. Their thing, their love? It's like this big sob fest about romance getting kicked in the teeth by everyone being judgy. In "The God of Small Things," tossing in the tribal bit helps you see the story through a whole different filter. The book digs into the tricky parts of Kerala's society, like caste unfair treatment, and lack of fair play. It shines a light on how mean the caste system can be and what a mess it makes when someone tries to break its rules even if it's just for love. Looking at Velutha and Ammu, you see the steep price to pay for going against the grain in a place that's

stuck on caste order. Ammu, the lady, is always on the lookout for Velutha, the guy. There's no division between Dalit and non-Dalit in their story.

if he touched her, he couldn't talk to her, if he loved her he couldn't leave,

if he spoke he couldn't listen, if he fought he couldn't win... Who was he,

the one-armed man? Who could he have been? The God of Loss?

The God of Small Things? The God of Goose Bumps and Sudden Smiles?

Of Sour metal Smells - like steel bus-rails and the smell of the bus conductor's

hands from holding them? 8 Page 217

This is a psychological case of facing oneself. Ammu wants to confirm to herself.

I've told you before, she said. I don't want you going to his house.

It will only cause trouble. What trouble, she didn't say. She didn't

know. Somehow, by not mentioning his name, she knew that she

had drawn him into the tousled intimacy of that blue cross-stitch

afternoon and the song from the tangerine transistor. By not

mentioning his name, she sensed that a pact had been forged between

her Dream and the World. And that the midwives of that pact, were,

or would be, her sawdust coated two-egg twins. She knew who he was

the God of Loss, the God of Small Things. Of course, she did. 9

The writer has gone beyond the conventional characterization of the male and female in this novel. The Dalit /tribal issues are dissolved in physical love, opening a new vista of souls. Ammu remembers how:

She went to him and laid the length of her body against his. He just

stood there. He didn't touch her. He was shivering. Partly with cold.

Partly terror. Partly aching desire. Despite his fear, his body was prepared

to take the bait. It wanted her. Urgently. His wetness wet her. She put her arms around him. He tried to be rational: What's the worst thing that can happen? I could lose everything. My job. My family. My livelihood. Everything. 10

Thus, we see that non-Dalit and non-tribal writers have also written the novels without inhibitions and with genuine concerns. Great writers like Anantmurthy and Arundhati have tried to make us sensible towards the Dalit and tribal people and their issues.

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Censorship and the Artist: A Study of Osip Mandelstam's Stalin 'Epigram' and 'Ode'

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Abstract: The established notions regarding censorship in literature highlight its restrictive function in limiting the freedom of the creator and chosen topics. While the artists are seen as the victims, the main focus is on the institutions of the State that impose censorship to secure and maintain political power and authority. Such an approach undermines the artists' thoughts and negotiations with the State and censorship. This paper is an attempt to complicate this understanding by exploring the nuances of the circumstances and possibilities censorship creates both for the artist and the art. The paper looks at the works of Osip Mandelstam, with greater focus on his two contradictory poems on Stalin, to bring to light the ambivalent nature of censorship as experienced at the level of an individual, shifting the focus from the censor to the censored in Soviet Russia. Mandelstam is regarded as a revolutionary Soviet poet who was arrested for his poem on Stalin and consequently, sacrificed his life for the cause of resistance. This study contests the popular pedestalization and explores the confused nature of the relationship Mandelstam shares with Stalin and Russia. It also discusses the conscious imagining of the poet as a "hero" and the problematics involved in the claim.

Keywords: censorship, freedom, State, poetic license, hero-artist.

"Poets greeted the Russian revolution by wild exclamations, by tears and cries of the possessed by the devil, by ecstatic delirium, by curses. But Mandelstam-the poor Mandelstam who never drinks unboiled water and who crosses the street when he has to pass by police station-was the only one to comprehend the pathos of events".

- Ilya Ehrenburg

Osip Mandelstam, one of the most important Russian voices of the Stalin time, divided literature into two parts- "I divide the world literature into authorized and unauthorized works. The former are all trash; the latter- stolen air. I want to spit in the face of every writer who first obtains permissions and then writes." (Coetzee 80). In another translation of the same quote, Mandelstam divides the writers into the friends and enemies of the word. Mandelstam is considered to be a friend of the word- a breath of stolen air in the claustrophobic chamber of the Soviet system. He is both the victim of censorship under Stalin and the hero of resistance against institutional and military control of words. Mandelstam exists amidst the tension between the creative and the censor. He is one of the many who met with death for their words but

whose words outlived the same tyrannical rule that repressed them. The history of literature has also been the history of the relationship between the creative and the censor. The first relation between the two goes back to Plato's disapproval of mimetic art which in turn created space for lengthy discourses on the notion of art as a cathartic necessity. Along with the cathartic function, the modern centuries also recognized the aesthetic and political function of words, indicating a more complex dynamic between the two. Literature has also had to cyclically address the existential questions about its need and value in society. This anxiety is reflected in the necessity of a defense of poetry by famous writers of almost every age. In addition to limiting the scope of art and literature, censorship and control also distort its "purpose". The power of State-imposed censorship in the modern world transforms the word into an official medium of propaganda and political power. The discourse of censorship, thus, broadly contrasts the discourse of creative freedom. Combined with the extremely violent and totalitarian nature of the political set-up in the post-war years, the relationship becomes further muddled. Censorship under the Soviet system exposes significant insights both into the functioning of this antithetical relationship and the ambivalences it carries within.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his work "Censorship and the Imposition of Form", defines the correlation between primary censorship and "structural censorship". In such a scenario the prohibitions are internalized by the cultural producers to such an extent that there exists no further need for prohibitions (14). The traditional outlook views censorship as the prohibitive act of control over thoughts and their linguistic manifestations; it situates the seat of power in the middle and analyses the reactions such authority elicits from the people who are seen as the victims of oppression. This understanding, however valid in acknowledging the methods of dictatorial control over culture, limits the fluidity that exists between the system and the individual artist. The generalized idea of "cultural producers" as one group and "prohibitions" as another overlooks the subtleties of individualistic negotiations that happen at the lowest levels of the discourse. Sue Carry Jansen differentiates between "regulatory censorship" and "existential censorship". The former alludes to the popularly known definition of censorship- recognizable forms of control and repression enacted by the figures constitutive of authority and power. In contrast, existential censorship enacts an "insidious influence" on the consciousness which blurs the knowledge of one's selfhood (Jansen 4). The categorization seems important it places the individual at the centre as opposed to bringing attention to the operation of control. It is not synonymous with the academic claim of censorship being the regenerative act in itself that allows writers/artists to explore more nuanced ways of literary constructions. Instead, it highlights the need to maintain some distance from the oppressor-victim paradigm of censorship and complicate the bond the writer directly shares with oppressive state machinery. As Samantha Sherry writes, the need becomes to "elucidate censorship by focusing on the individual, whether censoring or censored, emphasizing the personal factor in their approach to censorship,

and thus foregrounding the individual at the heart of the censorship system in the Communist period” (607). This paper attempts to establish the nature of relationship Osip Mandelstam, the “sacrificed hero-artist”, shared with Stalin and his Russia. It majorly deals with two famous Mandelstam creations composed for Stalin- his ‘Epigram’ attacking the Secretary in 1933 and his ‘Ode’ eulogizing Stalin during 1937-38.

Andrei Zhdanov, the secretary of the Communist Party during the years 1936-1945, invoked Joseph Stalin’s famous reference in his speech to the writers:

Comrade Stalin has called our writers "engineers of human souls." What does this mean? What obligations does this title impose on us? First of all, it means that we must know life so as to depict it truthfully in our works of art-and not to depict it scholastically, lifelessly, or merely as "objective reality"; we must depict reality in its revolutionary development.... Soviet literature must be able to show our heroes, must be able to catch a glimpse of tomorrow. (Wallach 76)

The writers, through their words, are expected to convey the grandiosity of Stalin’s stature and the conviction of the Communist dreams to the souls of their readers. Zhdanov’s quote lays bare the entrapment of creative freedom. The title *imposes* the *obligations* of being a Soviet writer post the Bolshevik Revolution. Yevgeny Gabrilovich, a celebrated cinematographer, discusses the impact of state-sanctioned obligations on the artist:

“... I think the restrictions do their greatest harm not so much where particular works of art are concerned. Restrictions kill the artist's inspiration; they nip the breadth and depth of his conception in the bud. What does art begin with? A concept, a dream to create this or that work, to show this or that problem. If you have the barrier of "You can't do this," "this won't do" in front of you, your concept shrinks unintentionally and vanishes altogether.” (Wallach 83)

The Soviet form of censorship succeeded because governmental support became the sole support available to the artists. In April 1932, the Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party issued a Decree on the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations which dissolved all existing literary organizations stating that these organizations might become elitist vehicles and move away from the cause of Soviet Construction (Wallach 75). In its place, the Academy of Arts was revived, which defined true art as Socialist Realist in nature, and became the only route accessible for any type of career in art and literature. Ambiguity in words and meanings was punishable. Any literary construction that did not aid the heroic father image of Stalin was labelled blasphemous and the writer who constructed it was considered a traitor. James Billington writes- “The Socialist Realism was in fact, a formula for keeping writers [artists]

in a state of continuing uncertainty as to what was required of them: an invaluable device for humiliating the intellectuals by encouraging the debilitating phenomena of anticipatory self-censorship" (70). The writers were forced to police themselves to avoid the Soviet secret police which would persecute them on their slightest of diversions. They found different ways of circumventing their ways around the spectre of Soviet censorship. Some gave in to the State demand (Gorky and Tolstoy), some refused to write (Pasternak and Akhmatova) and some simply perished (Gumilyov and Mandelstam). Joseph Brodsky, in his book *Less Than One*, captures the dilemma aptly-

“If one had brains, one would certainly try to outsmart the system by devising all kinds of detours, arranging shady deals with one's superiors, piling up lies and pulling the strings of one's semi-nepotic connections. This would become a full-time job. Yet one was constantly aware that the web one had woven was a web of lies, and in spite of the degree of success or your sense of humour, you'd despise yourself. That is the ultimate triumph of the system; whether you beat it or join it, you despise yourself.” (9)

Ilya Ehrenburg, while commenting on Mandelstam's “The Dusk of Freedom” (1918), writes – “The "great men" vociferated, but the little busybody of St. Petersburg cafes, having understood the grand scale of what was happening, the majesty of history in the making, glorified the madness of our times when he exclaimed: ‘Well, let us try this huge, unwieldy and screechy rudder's turn’” (104-5). The trial proved ceaselessly arduous for him and his wife. Mandelstam found it difficult to be published during the 1920s and had to take up translation work to sustain. In 1934, he was arrested and sentenced to execution in the torturous Lubianka prison in Moscow. Fortunately, his patron Bukharin intervened and Mandelstam was sentenced to “Isolate and Preserve”. The Mandelstams chose Voronezh as their place of exile for almost three years. In 1937, just when Mandelstam thought that the dark days were behind him, he was arrested and sent to Siberia. He died in the winter of 1938 in a transit camp in Vladivostok where his body was piled up with other dead bodies in dust. During these tumultuous four years, Mandelstam battled with paranoia, insanity, suicidal tendencies (that manifested into two unsuccessful attempts), depression along deteriorating physical health. Nadezhda Mandelstam writes in her memoir *Hope Against Hope*: “All of us led a double existence, and no one could avoid that fate” (45). Mandelstam features as a dissenting poet intellectual in the popular imagination. After Gumilev's execution, both Mandelstam and Akhmatova decided to not emigrate. For Mandelstam, the nation and the State existed as two separate entities- mutually exclusive of each other- he owed allegiance to his nation, his city, and his people but he refused to concede before the oppressive State. He writes in “Humanism and the Present” (1923), “the mountain cannot yet be seen, but already it casts its shadow upon us and we—unaccustomed to monumental forms

of social life—move about in its shadow with fear and bewilderment, unsure whether this is the wing of approaching night or the shadow of our native city, which we must enter” (6). Boris Pasternak once remarked- “I envy you your freedom but it is alien to me. I need non-freedom.” (Neville 184). Leonid Strakhovsky notes that Mandelstam was afraid of anything and anybody unknown to him. But he knew poetry (5). “Poetry is power”- he told Akhmatova once- if words get writers killed, the words must contain more power than Power itself (Coetzee 79).

In 1933, Mandelstam recited his first poem on Stalin to some friends. The poem was not written down then, not only because that was extremely dangerous but also because Mandelstam never felt the need to sit with a pen to find an outlet for his poetic musings. Walking restlessly, he composed all his poems inside his head, almost as if the poems kept coming to fill his mind and capture all the space; once the space was filled, Mandelstam would dictate them to his wife. Elsewhere, Mandelstam has written in a different context- “To build means to fight against emptiness, to hypnotize space. The fine arrow of the Gothic belltower is angry, for the whole idea of it is to stab the sky, to reproach it for being empty” (Monas 4). His poetic process bears resemblance to the agony of the belltower; Mandelstam shares the anxiety to create, to say, to fill the voids within with words. The 1933 epigram is an attack on Stalin and the Soviet system. The poem presents an animalistic portraiture of Stalin- with his thick worm fingers and cockroaches on his top lip. The “Kremlin Mountaineer” is said to forge “decrees in a line like horseshoes/one for the groin, one for the forehead, temple, eye”. The man loves killing innocent children- “He rolls the executions on his tongue like berries/ He wishes he could hug them like big friends from home”. After an attendant leaked the poem, an incessant search was conducted at Mandelstam’s house, and even with no evidence of the poem, he was arrested. In his last book- *Journey to Armenia* (1933), Mandelstam posed a philosophical question- “What tense would you choose to live in? I want to live in the imperative of the future passive participle - in the “what ought to be”(Shirazi 204). In 1933-34, the Soviet authorities decided that Mandelstam does not deserve “to be”. His arrest became the first step in his transformation from a respected poet to a non-person.

In Voronezh, Mandelstam gathered his lost sense of self and started writing again. The number 372 from his Voronezh poems reads, “I won't fall silent or deaden the agony, / But will write what I am free to write” (McDuff 107). In 354, he writes-

I still have not died. Still not alone,
With a beggar-woman for companion,
I am delighted by the immense plains,
And the haze, and hunger, and snow-storm

(McDuff 104)

These poems advance the myth of Mandelstam as a figure of resistance and heroism, who is remembered as a poet of unflinching integrity, challenging the grand mountain of Soviet censorship and oppression. Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoir, *Hope Against Hope*, gives life to this characterization- Mandelstam as a Christ-like figure, a sacrificial cost for the brutal world. However, Mandelstam's "Ode to Stalin" disturbs this easy classification of heroism and bravery. Mandelstam indeed persevered in front of his desk for half an hour every day to write praises for Stalin but the Ode also turned out to be his third longest poem. Nadezhda claims that Mandelstam was not himself while writing the Ode- "he tuned himself like a musical instrument" to come to terms with the compulsive ideas to celebrate Stalin. For her, the primary reason behind the Ode was Mandelstam's dissociation with his coherent sense of the self. J.M. Coetzee, however, argues that infused in this narration of events, is the attempt to preserve Mandelstam's image as a poet-hero. He notes no falsity on Mandelstam's part in the verses: "So, to think of the ode as a sly piece of work guarded by an irony invisible to its subject, as an insult masquerading as a tribute, would be entirely mistaken. Not only is there no insincerity written into and readable out of the poem, there is even a certain fervour or at least feverishness detectable" (Coetzee 76). The poem presents two important figures- Prometheus and Christ. Prometheus- the bringer of light for humankind- bears the wrath of unrelenting Zeus for his deed. In stanza five, the poem discusses Christ- the figure who makes the perfect sacrifice for humankind- and is resurrected by the merciful God. Mandelstam casts himself in the image of Prometheus and Christ, waiting for the paternal Stalin's forgiveness and his resurrection from a non-person to a genius. Gregory Friedin makes an important discovery- the "Ode" is not an exception in the Voronezh poems. Mandelstam has written other poems that provide a hint of his guilt and desire for atonement and forgiveness (403).

It is to him-into his very core-I came,
entering the Kremlin without a pass,
tearing the canvas of distance,
bowing my head heavy with guilt.

(Freidin 409)

In another poem, Mandelstam writes, "Lenin will rustle like a ripe thunder storm, and on this earth that shall avoid decay, Stalin shall keep awakening life and reason" (Freidin 409). Bengt Jangfedt notes that contrary to Nadezhda's claims, Mandelstam was not ashamed of the Stalin verses and used to recite them on many occasions (103). Viewing the "Ode" as a divorced piece from the rest of Mandelstam's works is to undermine both the complexity of censorship and the understanding of a poet as a member of the same socio-psychological space. In the Voronezh poems, Mandelstam is both the rebelling voice that shouts its refusal to stay silent and the guilty poet who desires a path back to an unfractured, untortured selfhood. The pedestalization of the idea of sacrifice and bravery under repressive circumstances unfairly

covers the ambivalences that Mandelstam lived towards the end of his life.

Nadezhda Mandelstam and Clarence Brown construct an empathetic image of Mandelstam and his decision to celebrate the figure of Stalin. While Nadezhda gives it the name of torture-induced madness, Brown asks kindly- Which of us is immune to the blandishments of trying to go on living? (603). While these considerations are not false, they work towards a conscious image-building of Mandelstam. Both responses preserve the liberal image of a revolutionary poet figure who must sacrifice the life for the pursuit of truth. For this image to gain acceptance, the words that do not align with the image must be erased. In other words, for Mandelstam to be the voice against Stalin, his voice for Stalin must be silenced and poems like the Ode must be kept hidden from popular access. Frighteningly enough, this silencing resonates with the idea of censorship as a prohibitive act of control that does not allow space for discomforting truths. In essence, it serves the same censorship that it proclaims to be its oppressor. Thus, it can be established that censorship is not an abstract concept imposed on the populace by defined seats of State institutions but a complex web wherein multiple negotiations, creative and psychological, operate. The application of censorship and the reactions to it do not follow the strictly defined boundaries of the creative and the control- it is the interaction amidst all these forces that defines the literature of any period. The liberal fascination with resistance as a way of life divorces the fluidity of the individual self from its experience of censorship and ultimately reflects an undernourished idea of the human sensibilities and their malleability in any political system.

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