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# Practising Theory



**Editors**

**Dr. Suddhasattwa Banerjee**

**Mrs. Abhinanda Chakraborty**

**Vol. 01**

**Issue: 01**

# **Practising Theory**

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**Mrs. Abhinanda Chakraborty**



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## Message from the Desk of Principal, Hiralal Bhakat College



Hiralal Bhakat College, Nalhati is a premier institute of higher education in the district of Birbhum. It is pursuing the excellence in teaching- learning methods. It has already set up an exemplary standard in pursuing higher education which is recognised by the highest body of assessment and accreditation in the country. It has scored well for its graduate outcome and perception.

Department of English is the leading department of the College. During pandemic situation it has taken effective measures to reach every student through online platforms. Besides taking regular classes and keeping constant contact with the students it has successfully organised student seminar in collaboration with Chandidas Mahavidyalay, Khujutipara.

This online magazine of the department is the outcome of the online seminar held recently. I hope, English department will lead other departments in the journey of attaining excellence in higher education.



*Naimul Islam*

Principal

Hiralal Bhakat College

Nalhati, Birbhum

*Principal  
Hiralal Bhakat College  
Nalhati, Birbhum*

# Chandidas Mahavidyalaya

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**=Message=**

*from*

**Principal, Chandidas Mahavidyalaya, Khujutipara, Birbhum**



I am very much happy to know that Department of English of Nalhati Hiralal Bhakat College, Nalhati Birbhum and the Department of English of Chandidas Mahavidyalaya, Khujutipara, Birbhum are going to publish jointly and successfully the very 1<sup>st</sup> issue of “**Departmental Journal**”, “**Practicing Theory**”, (Vol-1, Issue-1) in the session-2021-22 under the motto of inter college ‘Faculty exchange’ and ‘Students exchange’ programme. Here I have learnt that this journal is of almost exclusively to publish students’ research papers and articles. Generally, students of undergraduate level are not so acquainted in research methodology and analytical study but they have finally been mentored and motivated by their departmental teachers, specially HODs, of the colleges, Dr. Suddhasattwa Banerjee of Hiralal Bhakat college and Prof. Abhinanda Chakraborty of my college. I think it is a big task to encourage our students to present their thoughts, analysis and expression before others through their writings. It is also an opportunity to the students of the colleges to focus their knowledge in a public domain.

I express my heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation to Dr. Banerjee and Madam Chakraborty who have also reviewed all the articles. I would like to congratulate all the students whose papers are published in this issue of the journal and simultaneously wish them to contribute their articles for the successive issues as well. Also, I do hope this initiative will inspire other students who couldn’t publish in this issue but to publish in the next.

Best wishes for all.

**Date- 26.07.2021**

  
**(Dr. Sk. Ataur Rahaman)**



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## Editorial Note

From,

**Dr. Suddhasattwa Banerjee**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Hiralal Bhakat College



This journal is an outcome of a collaborative venture of the Department of English, Hiralal Bhakat College, Nalhati, Birbhum and the Department of English Chandidas Mahavidyalaya, Khujuti Para, Birbhum. It is rich with the contributions both of the students and the teachers of both the Departments. "Literary theory" incorporating both the body of ideas and methods we do use quite often in the practical reading of literature as it helps to reveal what literature can mean. Hence this journal is basically an attempt to unfold the underlying principles rather the tools by which we attempt to understand literature.

All recent literary interpretations are usually drawn on a basis in theory and can serve as a justification for a different kind of critical activity. It is literary theory that formulates the relationship between author and work. It develops the significance of race, class, and gender for literary study, both from the standpoint of the biography of the author and an analysis of certain thematic presence within texts. Literary theory offers varying approaches for understanding the role of history in interpretation of a text along with the relevance of different elements lying hidden within the text itself. Literary theorists often try to trace the history and evolution of different genres while also investigating the importance of formal elements of literary structure. Literary theory in recent years has also sought to explain the degree to which a text is more a product of a culture than an individual author and in turn how those texts help to create the culture. Incorporating a theoretical approach following Poststructuralism, Feminism, Marxism, or Postcolonialism into a scholarly paper often provides a useful framework. It often helps to determine the required specifications to focus on certain hidden aspects and analyse them by using certain field-specific vocabulary.

Hence through this journal we have attempted to analyse different 'texts' either within the prescribed syllabus of the University of Burdwan or even beyond that through the glasses of any one of the four specific Literary Theories prescribed in the said syllabus: Marxism, Poststructuralism, Feminism and Postcolonialism.

**Dr. Suddhasattwa Banerjee**  
Dept. of English  
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## **Brief Prelude**

Teaching cultural and literary theory is no mean task. Teaching it to students of the Bachelor's Degree is, perhaps, considerably more difficult. When I finished my lectures on Marxism and Poststructuralism with the students of the sixth semester, it was as a matter of the application of theory to texts that I had proposed a students' seminar where the students would each apply some theory they had learned to any text of their choice, whether literary or otherwise. The collaboration with the department of English, Hiralal Bhakat College, meanwhile, led to the prospect of a better, combined seminar where students from both the colleges would be able to attend and present their individual papers. To say that we, as teachers, were pleasantly surprised by the result would be quite an understatement. The progress in thought, expression and presentation that our students exhibited was a true moment of pride for us and it also revealed to us how far they had advanced in their learning and understanding from their first year in college! Consequently, when Dr. Banerjee proposed to turn the students' papers to an e-journal, it seemed like a wonderful idea to me and after all our efforts through the last few weeks, individual and collective, we have finally been able to put this journal together. To see one's name in print is considered a great motivation. We are hopeful that this issue, though our first joint venture, will not be the last but only the first among many others to follow and that, in the future, our students will continue to find this journal a helpful medium to begin a literary journey which will enable them to realize their aspirations and improve their understanding and practice of theory which has become an important and integral part of the English literature curriculum.

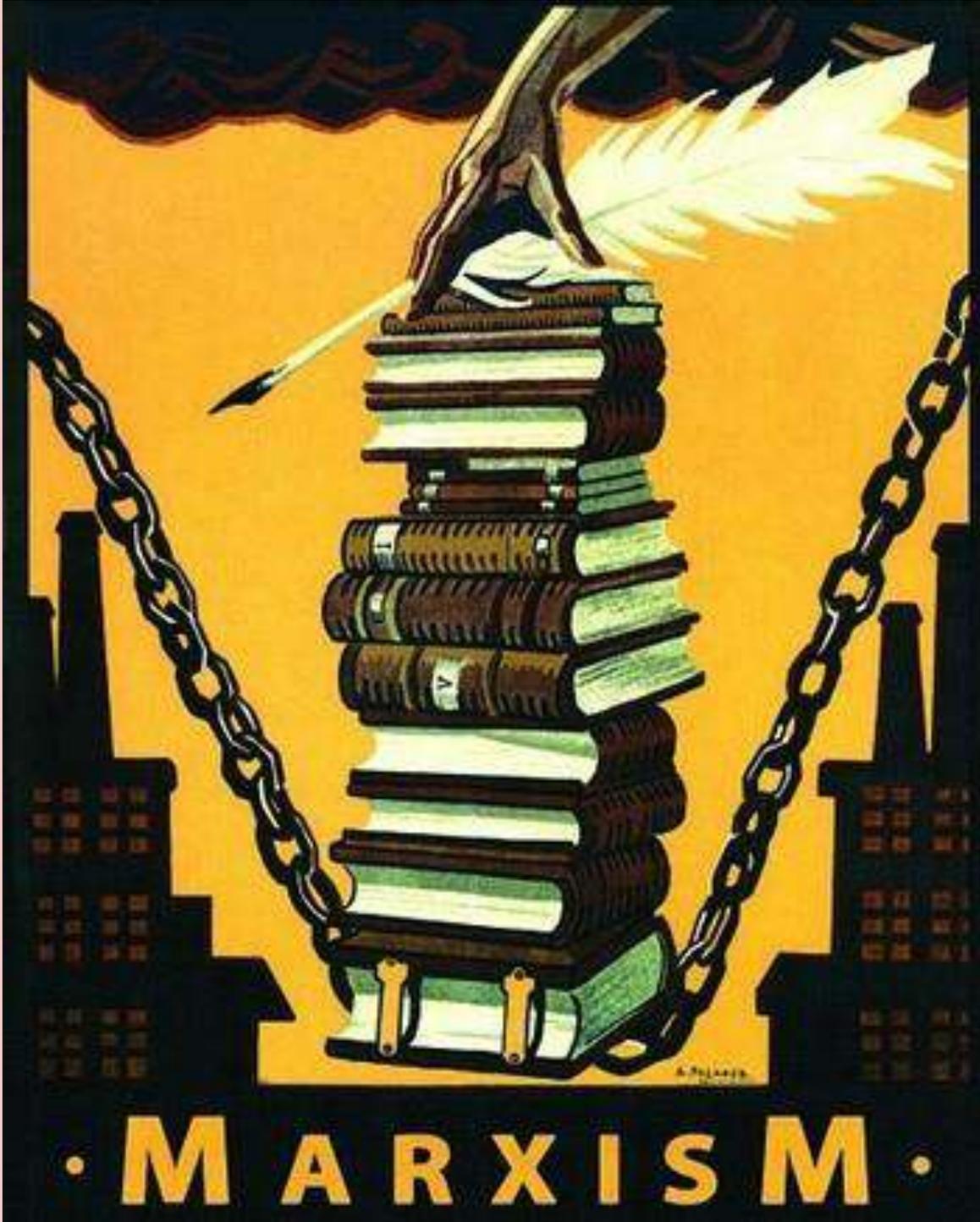
With best wishes,

*Abhinanda Chakraborty*

Abhinanda Chakraborty  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Chandidas Mahavidyalaya  
Khujutipara. Birbhum

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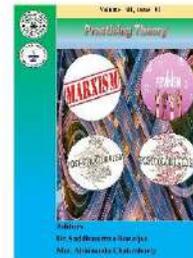
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## Absurdity in waiting for Godot: A kind of Marxist Depiction of the Proletariat World

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### ABSTRACT

Samuel Beckett, the most eminent Irish playwright wrote *Waiting for Godot* in French in 1949 and then translated it into English in 1954. This play has been performed as a drama of the absurd with astonishing success in Europe, America and the rest of the world in the post second world war era. For this reason, Martin Esslin calls it, "One of the successes of the post-war theatre" (Esslin, Martin, 1980) In this play, the two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, wait expectantly to see a man simply known as Godot, a character who does not make an appearance in the play, despite being the titular character. The play begins with waiting for Godot and ends with waiting for Godot. *Waiting for Godot* is new, innovative and useful interpretation for readers and scholars on Samuel Beckett in many respects. The study analysed that the text's conflict and disparity of its meanings reveals its unspoken portions that the late modernist bourgeois ideology has suppressed. As a result, the difference, conflict and contradiction of text's final meanings are flux, contradictions, silences, absences and unspoken portions of the text, which show its complex relationship to the late modernist bourgeois ideology.

**M**arxism refers to the political and economic theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, later developed by their followers to form the basis of communism. Marxism introduced ideas such as Dialectical Materialism, Alienation, and Economic Determination. Proletariats are the wage earners, the members of a society whose only possession is the significant economic value they have in a society. The word proletariat has been evolved from the Latin words 'proletarius' meaning 'offspring'. This social class includes the

members the only possession of whom is the economic value as an effect of their labour. A member of such a class is a proletarian. This class is either in the lowest or in one of the lowest positions of economic and social classes in a society. In the theory of Karl Marx the term proletariat is designated to the class of wage earners. Because of its subordinate position in a capitalist society and the effects of periodic depression on wages and employment the proletariat as described by Marxist theorists was usually living in poverty. But it was not identified with the poor as some members of

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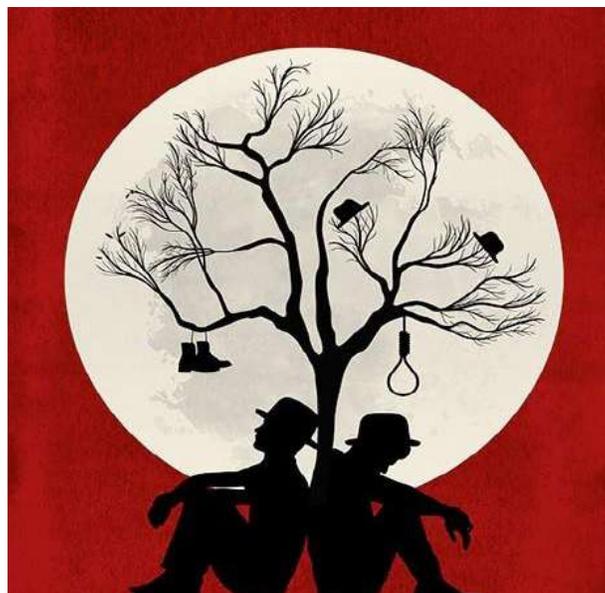


food, which is why Estragon greedily seeks the leftover bones of Pozzo's chicken. Therefore, within this social structure, Vladimir and Estragon are treated as outcasts, and have very few resources, especially compared to Pozzo, who has food, better clothing, land, and tragically so – a slave of his own in the form of Lucky. Both Vladimir and Estragon see themselves lower in the hierarchy of social positions, vis-à-vis Pozzo, as they see him and his slave with a sense of curiosity and adoration. Within this social system, if the base of resources were food, clothing and shelter, it is Pozzo who possesses these essential items. It is on this base that the superstructure of relations is built. The control over resources places Pozzo at a higher level in the hierarchy of class, giving him the power to commodify Lucky and treat him as a slave, and treat Vladimir and Estragon as outcasts.

The relationship between Pozzo and Lucky is one of the most important socio-political themes in the depiction of Master-Slave

relationships, shedding light on class relations and symbolizing economic exploitation. Lucky, who is to be sold at the fair, is a human being reduced to a commodity; he can easily be seen as an oppressed worker, a part of the exploited and dehumanized proletariat. His futile task is lugging a suitcase filled with sand, and when his usefulness has diminished he is deemed as expendable as any replaceable part of a machine. Pozzo- a member of the landowning class, is clearly an effete and pretentious member of the bourgeoisie, whose well-being and physical comforts (the pipe, the stool, the chicken) depend on the unrelenting subjugation of his burden-bearing servant.

Despite synonyms used in agitational literature the term proletariat was distinguished from the working class as a generic term. This play has been performed as a Theatre of the Absurd with astonishing success in Europe, America and even in the rest of the world in post World War II Era.



**Fig.3**

The slave owing pozzo, his subservient slave lucky and the boy whose name is not mentioned in the play discusses Godot who has nothing significant to do with their lives. The play begins with “waiting for Godot” and ends with the same waiting. It presents many themes of existentialism which is an ideology of the late modernist bourgeois. Therefore we found in the text of the. Play many theme’s of existentialism ; such as Absurdity nothingness ; futility ; uncertainty ; and disappearance of solutions on the part of human beings who are in turn left exploited suffered and bewildered by powerful forces of the bourgeois prevalent in the social formation. The Mo characteristics and important literary movement of modern age beginning in the late thirties with Albert Camus and Henry Miller is the theatre of the absurd and the most characteristic protagonist of the movement of Samuel Beckett.

Samuel Beckett used the symbol of Godot in the play to portray human situation in Modern capitalist social formation and this conflicts comes to a head of the meaning of Godot in which the text of the play; is ambiguously torn between contradictory meanings. In this way waiting for Godot “becomes and ambiguous play and ideological basis of this ambiguity is that the play reveals human suffering exploitation and oppressive effects of modern capitalism on human beings.

Finally the play tries to make us believe that any action to change the prevailing modern capitalist system is futile; absurd and impossible. Waiting for Godot is a part of the Theatre of the Absurd. This implies that it is meant to be irrational and pointless in nature since you do not have a proper moral and conclusions to the play i.e. It is an open ended play.

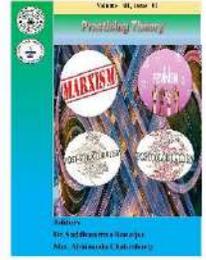
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## A Comparative Marxist Analysis of ‘Draupadi’, ‘Mahesh’ and *Hirak Rajar Deshe*

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### ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the theme of exploitation in three separate contexts - in Mahasweta Devi’s short story, ‘Draupadi’, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay’s story, ‘Mahesh’, and the song ‘Kotoi rongo dekhi duniyay’ in Satyajit Ray’s film, *Hirak Rajar Deshe*. As a comparative analysis of the texts will show, the power politics of the privileged, wealthy classes against the repressed, poor classes leads to their unmitigated suffering and misery. Any resultant attempt to counteract that exploitation is, however, met by forms of state-sponsored violence which not only represses rebellion but also further reinstates the unchallenged authority of those in power.

Marxist theory propounds the notion of the existence of two distinct groups in a typical society – the bourgeois, who own and control the means of production, and the proletariat, who are the large masses of workers whose labour is essential for

production. Also referred to as the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’, respectively, the privileged bourgeois class can be further divided into three categories – the high, the middle, and the petty bourgeois, based on their accumulation of wealth and capital.



Fig.1

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In Mahasweta Devi's short story, 'Draupadi', we find the stark portrayal of such a class-based society as Marx talks about in his theory. In the story, Surja Sahu is representative of the petty bourgeois class. He is one of the wealthiest individuals in the village of Bakuli. Draupadi, or Dopdi Mejhen, the eponymous heroine of the story, is narrated as having been born at Surja Sahu's house when her mother went there to thresh grain that year and it was his wife who, in a moment of generosity, bestowed upon her the high-class name of the mythical Draupadi. The irony of such an incident shows that for the poor, tribal woman, not even her own name is her own by right – indeed, one of the characters questions how a low-class woman could have as sophisticated a name as Draupadi; it is therefore befitting that the name is transformed in their tribal accent to become Dopdi, perhaps a more apt name for the unfortunate heroine.

Dopdi, her husband Dulna Mejhen, and the entire tribal community presented in the story can be looked upon as the proletariat, the oppressed. Water is synonymous with life and it is water that becomes the reason for the tribal rebellion against their oppressors. Surja Sahu had arranged to dig up two tubewells and three wells within the compound of his house. But, when a severe drought hits the district of Birbhum one year, he simply refuses let the tribal people have any access to his water sources.

Dulna Majhi also speaks about the exploitation they had faced at the hands of Surja Sahu. He remembers that his great

grandfather had once taken paddy from Sahu and says 'I still give him free labour to repay that debt'. When Sahu refuses them water during the drought, all the suppressed anger against him bursts forth and the tribal people join together to take revenge on him for all his injustices. Marx had said that when the exploitation of the bourgeois reaches its height, the proletariat will – and must – use rebellion as their weapon against them. Similarly in the story, the tribals finally unite against Sahu and they murder him and his son, taking control over the upper-caste wells and tubewells. Their rebellion, however, is countered by the police and military forces who inevitably seem to be on the side of the oppressors. Dulna Mejhen, is thus killed while lying flat on his stomach on a stone and drinking water from a lake – ironically, it is water again, that seems to connect both their lives and deaths.

Louis Althusser, in his concept of interpellation, talks about the RSAs and the ISAs. While the Repressive State Apparatuses consist of armies, police, prisons and the like that use violence to control, the Ideological State Apparatuses include large social and political institutions like families, religion, schools, books and so on to train us in thinking a certain way that support the dominant culture. In Mahasweta Devi's story, Senanayak and his military personnel represent the RSAs whose function it is to squash the tribal rebellion and bring the rebels to 'justice' while the validity of their cause is ignored and forgotten.

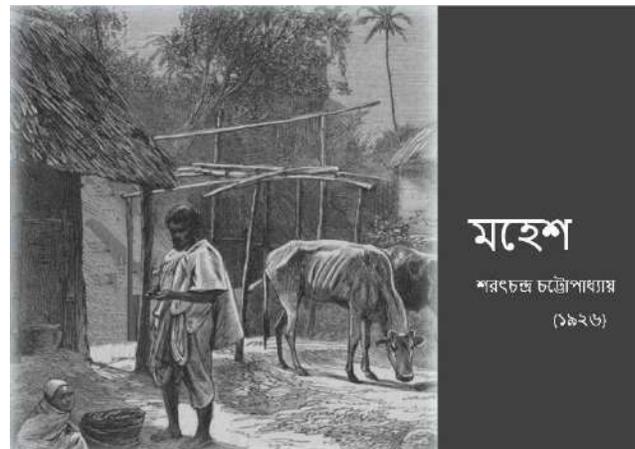


**Fig. 2**

Draupadi ends with Dopdi's brutal rape at the hand of Senanayak's soldiers to get valuable information out of her regarding the rebels but the text's significance lies in Devi's portrayal of Dopdi's protest against the male, oppressive forces. After the rape, she refuses to bow to them for, as she states, what more can they do to her except kill her? She uses her own bloody, naked body as her form of protest and its power is asserted in the fear that Senanayak expresses when he realizes that he can no longer control her or her body.

The class struggle that we find in 'Draupadi' can also be found in Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's short story, 'Mahesh'. A tale of poverty, exploitation and suffering, the story represents the conflict between the Hindu zamindar of Kashipur and the poor villager, Gafoor Jola who struggles hard to provide for his family and his bull, Mahesh. As in 'Draupadi', the story is set against the backdrop of a drought and portrays the desperation of Gafoor as he is unable to provide for either his young daughter, Amina, or his bull. The theme of exploitation is seen in these lines as Gafoor explains how he was refused any help by the wealthy zamindar:

'I did get some hay this year, but karta mashai took it away to pay for taxes left over from last year. I fell at his feet, I said, Babu mashai, you are the supreme authority, where will I go if I leave your kingdom, give me at least a little hay...we can still manage with palm leaves this monsoon, but my Mahesh will die of starvation...'



**Fig. 3**

The story thus ends with the killing of Mahesh by Gafoor but more than an act of cruelty, it represents the desperation and the frustration that poor proletariats like Gafoor experience at the hands of the bourgeois which strips them even of their humanity.

Apart from these two texts, the themes of class struggle and exploitation can also be found in a famous Bengali song 'Kotoi Rongo Dekhi Duniay' from the movie *Hirak Rajar Deshe*. The movie focuses on the exploitation of the poor subjects at the hands of the tyrant ruler of Hirak - the king's coffers are shown to be overflowing with gold, gems and other treasures while his repressed subjects starve and suffer. The king's tyranny is demonstrated when the baul singer sings his song –

কতই রঙ্গ দেখি দুনিয়ায়  
ও ভাইরে ও ভাই কতই রঙ্গ দেখি দুনিয়ায়।  
আমি যেই দিকেতে চাই  
দেখে অবাক বনে যাই  
আমি অর্থ কোনো খুজি নাই পাইরে,  
ও ভাই অর্থ কোনো খুজি নাই পাইরে,  
ভাই রে, ভাই রে  
আমি কতই রঙ্গ দেখি দুনিয়ায়।

দেখ ভালো জনে রইল ভাঙা ঘরে,  
মন্দ যে সে সিংহাসনে চড়ে।  
ও ভাই সোনার ফসল ফলায় যে তার  
দুই বেলা জোটেনা আহার,  
সোনার ফসল ফলায় যে তার

দুই বেলা জোটেনা আহার।  
হীরার খনির মজুর হয়ে কানাকড়ি নাই,  
ও ভাই হীরার খনির মজুর হয়ে কানাকড়ি নাই।  
ও তার কানাকড়ি নাই, ওরে ভাই রে,  
ওরে ভাই রে, ভাই রে  
কতই রঙ্গ দেখি দুনিয়ায়।  
ওরে ভাই রে, ও ভাই  
কতই রঙ্গ দেখি দুনিয়ায়,  
আমি কতই রঙ্গ দেখি দুনিয়ায়।



Fig. 4



Fig.5

The song is a powerful critique of the Hirak kingdom where the ruler's authority results in the suffering and poverty of his subjects but the importance of the song lies mainly in its universal aptness – the social conditions of repression it portrays can be true of any society in any country at any

point of time. The song thus expresses the tone of protest that such repression evokes in human beings no matter when or where they may be situated.

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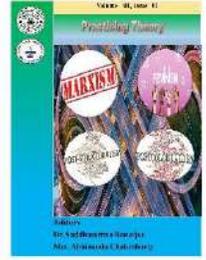
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## A Marxist analysis of the play *Waiting for Godot*

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

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This paper attempts to analyze Samuel Beckett’s famous Absurd play, *Waiting for Godot*, in the light of Marxist criticism. It analyzes the characters of Vladimir and Estragon as marginalized characters in a capitalist society without access to the privileges reserved for the wealthy and the powerful. In the same vein, it also attempts to study the relationship between Lucky and Pozzo as that of the master and the slave where Lucky embodies the bourgeois class, exploiting the hapless proletariat, represented by Lucky, who is brought down nearly to the level of a beast of burden. This dehumanization of the underprivileged and marginalized characters thus reveals the fundamental imbalance of power and wealth that informs the world of the play against the context of the post-World War II era.

**S**amuel Beckett was an eminent Irish Nobel prize-winning playwright, theatre director and short story writer who wrote ‘Waiting for Godot’ in French in 1949 and then translated it into English in 1954. This play has been performed as a specimen of the drama of the absurd with astonishing and tremendous success in Europe, America and the rest of the world in the post Second World War era.

Marxism refers to the political and economic theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, later developed by their

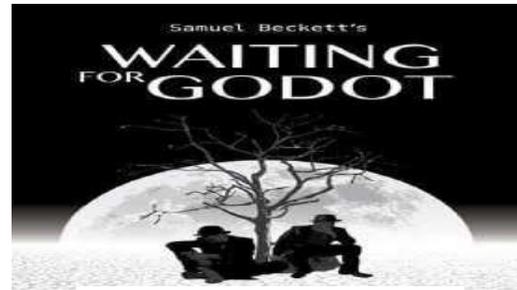
followers to form the basis of communism, Marxism. Marxism has introduced many significant ideas to us including those of dialectical materialism, alienation and economic determinism.

Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* has a minimalist setting, with only two discernible visual objects on stage apart from the actors and their props - a road and a tree. There is, in a manner, an other-worldly alienation in the sparse setting. It could be anywhere in any country of the world. In the barren landscape of these characters, the most essential resource becomes that of food, which is why

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Estragon greedily seeks the leftover bones of Pozzo's chicken. Therefore, within this social structure, Vladimir and Estragon are treated as outcasts, and have very few resources, especially compared to Pozzo who has food, better clothing land and even a slave of his own in the form of Lucky whose character we will analyse later. Both Vladimir and Estragon see themselves as being posited lower in the hierarchy of social positions. Within this social system, if the base of resources were food, clothing and shelter, it's Pozzo who possesses these essential items/things. It is on this base that the superstructure of relations is built. The control over resources places Pozzo at a higher level in the hierarchy of class, giving him the power to commodify Lucky and treat him as a slave and treat Vladimir and Estragon as outcasts while he enjoys a privileged status compared to the others. We can also analyse the play using the theory of alienation which is one of the central concepts of Marxism. Marx argues that in a society based on capitalism, alienated labor produces an alienated self. In the play, Lucky and Pozzo's relationship is a perfect example of it. When we are first introduced to Pozzo, he is portrayed as a man of opulence in a land of paupers, someone who is uncaring, ruthless and self-obsessed, a brilliantly drawn caricature of the capitalist master. He is a member of the land-owning class, is clearly an effete and pretentious member of the bourgeoisie. Lucky, on the other hand, is Pozzo's slave – the worker laboring away for the master in an inhuman condition, tied up with a leash, dragged around and exploited. It must also be noted that he has been subjected to torture and exploitation of both the physical and mental kind.



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**



**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**

The laborious tasks which Lucky is forced to perform, like carrying a basket of food, wine and other things of luxury while he himself is painfully deprived of any of it, portray him as being stripped of any sense of passion, creativity, and the most valuable and the most important thing, that is, liveliness or vivacity.

Lucky's muteness is also an important symbol in the play. It symbolically represents the working classes' lack of voice. He can easily be seen as an oppressed, repressed and suppressed worker, a part of the exploited and dehumanized proletariat. As an example of repression, we can see that Pozzo puts an end to Lucky's torrent of words by taking off Lucky's bowler hat and saying, "There is an end to this thinking".

So, one can draw parallels between the

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Pozzo-Lucky relationship, and the Marxist notion of base and superstructure: while Lucky, a member of the repressed and exploited proletariat, represents the base, and Pozzo, as the privileged member of the bourgeoisie, represents the superstructure which sustains itself on the economic base.

In conclusion, the play thus represents how the actions and the thoughts of all the major characters, including those of Vladimir and Estragon, have been undeniably affected by the actions of these capitalist structures, going on only to prove Marx's worst fears of a society which has lost its essence and has been alienated from its very humanitarian spirit which raises human civilization above mere survival towards those higher objectives that make life worthwhile.



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## ***Metropolis: A Critique of Capitalist Society***

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### ABSTRACT

*Metropolis* (1927) is one of the finest films belonging to the genre of German expressionism and has come to be regarded as a stark portrayal of modern urban capitalism with its preoccupation with industrialization and economic progress, more often than not at the cost of the working classes, or the proletariat, who come to be perceived as mere labour force and not as actual human beings of flesh and blood. This paper focuses on the plight of the labouring classes as depicted in the film as a critique of the capitalist ideology that remains callously indifferent to the suffering of the majority of the urban underclass whom it exploits for its selfish gain and progress. The hidden realities of urban living are thus brought to the forefront and its glittery exterior is revealed as being superficial and shallow, camouflaging an underlying harsh reality of intense pain and darkness that characterizes the lives of millions of workers who remain virtually invisible to the eye.

**M**arxism is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx which examines the effect of capitalism on labor, productivity, and economic development and argues for a workers’ revolution to overturn capitalism in favor of communism. Marxism posits that the struggle between social classes, specifically between the bourgeoisie, or capitalists, and the proletariat, or workers, defines economic relations in a capitalist

economy and will inevitably lead to revolutionary communism. In *Metropolis*, we see how the bourgeoisie increase their wealth by exploiting the proletariat and the movie can be considered as a critique of the proliferation of capitalist ideology.



**Fig. 1**

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*Metropolis* is a 1927 German expressionist science fiction drama film directed by Fritz Lang, based on a 1925 novel by Thea Von Harbou. It is one of the

most famous films of German expressionism and a movement in which inner feelings and emotions were given precedence over realistic depictions.

The movie has multiple themes, and implies many things about modern day theories and entails many views on Marxism, capitalism, industrialism, and organized religion. The story reveals surprising co-dependency between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, represented by Joh Fredersen, ruler of the upper industrial city of Metropolis and the workers of the lower city.

In *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang creates a futuristic dystopia in which the underground laborers work tirelessly to keep the industrial city of Metropolis running smoothly. Lang pictures the idealized modernity of the high-rise Domesne, the home of the wealthy and privileged, with theaters, buildings, gardens, stadiums, and an underground lower city where huge machines are manned by automaton-like workers. The workers are shown marching into the factory. They look depressed and overworked, their heads down, their shoulders slumped, and sometimes, they even die, as dispensable as a useless,

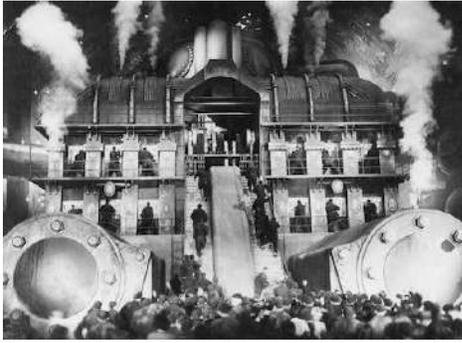


**Fig. 2**

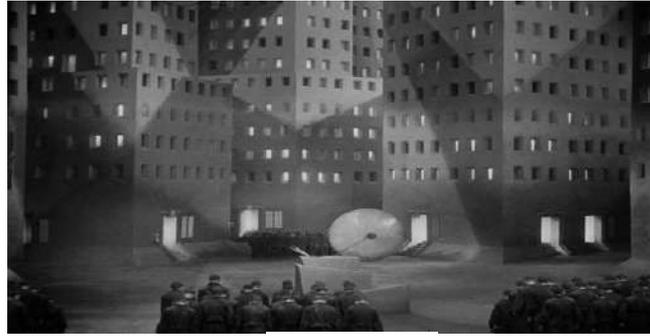
worn-out object.

This reflects the terrible living conditions of the working class.

The film thus explores the decadence and delights of modern cities but also the inequality and social problems that exist beneath the glossy surface. When a machine explodes, killing many workers, a plan is hatched to free the workers and close the gap between the proletariat below and the rich industrialists above, thereby ending on the same note of revolution and socio-political unrest that Marxist thought generally upholds as the means of usurping power from the capitalists. *Metropolis* is also an early example of postmodernism in cinema and in it, the violence of capitalism upon the working class is made clearly evident. The Marxist strain inherent in the film is thus deserving of attention for it posits the theory that the working class deserves respect, because without them, nothing would be possible and human society would crumble beyond reparation.



**Fig. 3**



**Fig.4**



**Fig. 5**

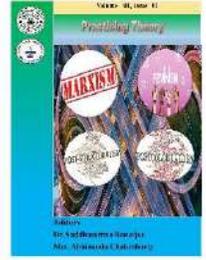


**Fig.6**



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## Marxist in “Look Back in Anger”

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### ABSTRACT

John Osborne’s play *Look Back in Anger* represents the suppressed angst and anger of the post-World War II situation in England as the once most powerful colonial nation lost its stronghold over most of its colonies, thereby drastically reducing the prosperity of the nation and the prospects of employment and progress of its subjects in the aftermath of the colonies’ independence. This paper analyzes the text from a Marxist perspective to understand the role of wealth and power in determining the privileges and advantages that are made available to the already-prosperous classes but are denied to the people belonging to the lower classes, thereby widening the existing gap between the haves and the have-nots and contributing significantly to the feelings of anger and indignation in the minds of those that are underprivileged and who are inevitably fated to suffer the most because of class differences and lack of opportunities and amenities.

**M**arxist theory or Marxist criticism is one of the theories that can be used in literary criticism. This theory is based on the ideologies of Karl Marx, a German philosopher who criticized the inherent injustice in the European class/capitalist system of economics operating in the 19th Century. Marx viewed history as a series of struggles between classes, in other words, the oppressed and the oppressors.

The Marxist theory is more concerned with social and political elements of a work than its aesthetic value. Marxist theory can be applied to literature by analysing the social, economic

and political elements such as class division, class struggle, and oppression.

Superstructure is determined by the economic base of any society. Therefore, literary texts are a reflection of the economic base rather than "the social institutions from which they originate", for all social institutions, or, more precisely human - - social relationships, are in the final analysis determined by the economic base.

Jimmy Porter, the Marxist Critic of the Post-War Society. Marxism fundamentally attempts to explain all human relationships in terms of the distribution of power and socioeconomic

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relations. The core of Marxist analysis is the clash between societal classes, especially working class and middle class. The real difference is the difference between 'haves' and 'have-nots'. The middle class uses the superstructure and the dominant ideology of the society to exploit the working class. The middle class takes advantage of religion, politics, race, ethnicity, gender, patriotism and etc. to differentiate itself, to demonstrate itself as normal. And the working class is blind to these differences. To rise up against their oppressors and to create a classless society, the working class is needed to develop the class consciousness.

Jimmy Porter is the angry young man of the play who is aware of these fractions. He is the deputy of an alienated and unconscious class, who detects the fragmentation and injustice of the post-war society. The society which the play portrays suffers from the trauma of the World War, from inflation, unemployment, high taxes and etc. Post-war England is no longer a big power in the world and its infrastructure are destroyed. Consequently, it provides free education for anyone to improve the condition of the society. As a result, a sense of complacency is created among both the middle-class and the working class. The problem arises from the fact that the working class does not enjoys these improvements as the upper classes, and yet they are not conscious of it.

The play depicts a new kind of colonization of an imperialist and capitalist country through its realistic representation of the contemporary society. This kind of colonization is remarkably different from the colonization of the Edwardian age in which Colonel Redfern lived. It is the colonization of the consciousness of the working class in order to persuade them that they are culturally, spiritually and mentally inferior and they should conform to the norms and rely on the guidance of the bourgeoisie.

This colonization is the result of complex interactions of hidden ideologies within the dominant culture, such as classicism, religion, patriotism and gender.

Jimmy Porter act as a Marxist critic of this society who realizes the status quo, and his life and his marriage is a bitter criticism of it. As an angry young man, he is dissatisfied and disappointed with life in general and he finds fault with almost anything, from religion to politics. He attacks the society which educates the working class as the middle class, and yet is unable to provide the proper job and equal status for them. Jimmy is a university cap, but he is unable to find a job of his choice. He resorts to a sweet-stall job which does not suit him. On the one hand, he peruses newspaper — a habit of upper class and university wits — as a symbol of his education. On the other hand, he understands that newspaper is an ideological instrument which contains trifles — such as the alleged story of Shakespeare who changed his sex — and is not in touch with the actual condition of the society, which creates a feeling of inferiority and ignorance in the working class — as Jimmy scolds Cliff for his simple reading of newspaper without understanding. Jimmy, however, is not accepted into the upper class; he is deemed as a criminal by Alison's mother for the absurd reason of having long hairs.

His attack against the dominant ideology of the middle class can be seen in his marriage with Alison, who is a member a middle class family. Right from the beginning of their nuptial life, Hugh and Jimmy treats as a hostage from those sections of society they have declared war on, and this shows that conflict is inevitable. His marriage with Alison is a kind of revenge against the middle class. For him, the life is a war, a challenge against the life-style of the bourgeoisie. This war requires bravery, guts, and suffering. He chastises his wife Allison for her cowardice, her neutrality — as his father



Fig. 1



Fig.2



Fig.3

puts it —, and her complacency. In reaction to his slanders, she does nothing. One reason for this inertia is the morality and courtesy developed by the ideals of the middle-class. Such complacency can be seen in her father or Helena.

For Jimmy, suffering and anger are part of identity and existence. The ideals promoted by the dominant ideology are to keep the working class in their places, to avoid any turmoil in the society. Morality, patience and non-attachments of the middle class are the accepted values advertised by religion and classicism which have plagued the society. Jimmy calls Allison “lady pusillanimous”. For Jimmy, she is the monument of non-attachment. Jimmy even criticizes Allison who intends to go to the church. The church and the sound of its bells are the symbol of the middle class morality which Jimmy finds it oppressive. The morality promoted by the church is the fact of the society associated with the middle class ideology to show some acts more right and some others wrong. It produces a double standard which justifies the cause of the middle-class. And this is exactly what Jimmy

finds oppressive. This lack of responsibility and social commitment are the diseases of twentieth century.

Another area of Jimmy’s criticism which subverts the ideology of the middle age is sex. Jimmy criticizes Allison’s virginity and scolds her for her dispassionate affair with Cliff. She lacks the enthusiasm that he needs. That is why he becomes nostalgic about Madeline, her first love as an example of enthusiasm. Among Alison’s friends, Webster is the one that Jimmy considers as speaking in his dialect, the dialect of anger and suffering. Webster works against the accepted norms of society for his being gay. Playing banjo is a cry of protest for him. This corresponds with Jimmy’s love for jazz known as the music of protest. He suggests that her complacency and lack of enthusiasm makes her less human, less connected to the reality of life. For Jimmy the war against the middle class is more important than love. His victory over Alison’s mother by winning her daughter is what he wanted.

The significance of the ending of the play lies in the position that Marxism holds about the clash between the classes. The play shows that the simple relationship between the classes is not possible like bear and squirrel game of

them. This clash between them and the suffering is needed. However, the reconciliation of Alison and Jimmy builds a sense of hope. It seems possible that they will unite their worlds and form a happy relationships—but it is equally possible that they will form into a cycle of suffering and reconciliation. The class

factions that they represent might find a way to live in harmony—or they might remain perpetually at war.



**Fig.4**



**Fig.5**

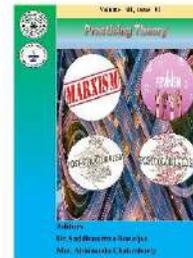


**Fig.6**



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## A Marxist Critique of Charles Dickens' Novel *Hard Times*

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### ABSTRACT

Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* is a classic novel depicting the social, political and economic conditions of Victorian England. The representation and critique of utilitarianism forms one of the central themes of the novel and its depiction of the working-class population – through characters such as Stephen Blackpool – offers a harsh critique of the repressive and exploitative nature of the bourgeois-proletariat relations that inform the world of the novel. This paper focuses on an analysis of these power relations and the imbalance of wealth and privileges amongst the characters with an emphasis on the marginalization of the poorer sections and social prejudices and classist presumptions that render the labouring classes as barely human and fated to live lives of quiet frustration and desperation with no respite except for death.

*Hard Times* was written by Dickens in the middle of the 19th century and it is considered as one of the classics of the Victorian age. In this novel the author focuses on the issues related to Marxist notion that are based especially on labour, working classes and class struggles. In the novel, the upper class is represented by characters like Mr. Thomas Gradgrind while the middle class is portrayed through the character of

Bounderby. Bounderby is a person who was poor in his childhood but has now become the owner of a factory and a bank. And for this reason Gradgrind chooses Bounderby for his daughter Louisa. He states that the marriage is a reasonable thing to do. To him, Louise's emotions are not important in the least. Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy leads to a mismatched marriage. It shows the rationalistic and materialistic views of the bourgeois. As Mukesh Williams suggests, 'Coketown in *Hard Times* symbolizes

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the negative effects of industrialization on English towns.' In the novel the labourers in Coketown's factories are called 'Hands' – symbolic of their value only as workers or labourers in the process of production with no recognition whatsoever as individuals or human beings, one of the most damning effects of capitalistic thought. One of these 'hands' is Stephen Blackpool, a worker in Mr. Bounderby's factory, who belongs to the class of the proletariat. Blackpool struggles with his love for Rachael who is also a factory worker but he

cannot marry her since he is already married to a drunken woman who disappears for months. Stephen decides to divorce his wife and discusses with Bounderby on this matter. But Bounderby tells him that is not possible for Blackpool since it is a matter of a lot of money

- only the rich man can afford to get a divorce. This incident shows us how a proletariat becomes helpless in this materialistic society where there is no value for their individual feelings or desires but considers and exploits them only for the selfish profit of a specific privileged class of people.

The novel effectively concerns itself with the effects of the Industrial Revolution of

the 1840s. There are the class differences and class

struggles. People were led to live like machines or robots in the Victorian age and fancy and imagination were not allowed, resulting in the large-scale alienation of the people.

For the Marxist critic Louis Althusser, interpellation is the process by which we encounter our culture's values and internalize them, thereby becoming subjects within the larger societal structure. In the Victorian age, the culture was predominated by a heavy reliance on 'facts' and this became the driving force of the period and its people who emphasized the need for rationality as opposed to emotions and thereby internalized the same values. In the novel, Gradgrind thus always supports reason and facts. For this reason, he rears his children with a deep rationalistic view which he quite succeeds in passing onto them. As rapid changes of science and technology took place during this period, it came to adversely affect the human component of our lived lives, leading to an unapologetically capitalist society which, deliberately or not, sought to destroy the sheer humanity of individuals.

One of the 'Hands' named Slakbridge tries to form a union to cause a strike in the factory. He wants his friends to be aware of their repressed position in society. He thinks that the ruling class exploits

them. To him, they should earn as much as their labour. They are used like machines and to stop this inhuman working a strike is necessary. They are alienated

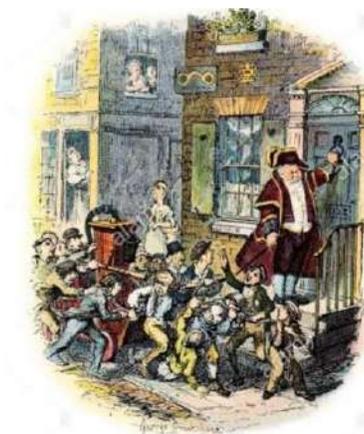
because they have no control over the labour or the products which they produce. But Stephen Blackpool, the other factory 'hand', refuses to join this because he feels that a union strike would only increase the hostility and tension between the employers and the employees. There is thus a labour dispute that shows the strained relations between the rich and the poor.

Even though Stephen does not want to join the strike, he goes to Bounderby's bank and they talk about the strike of the hands. Stephen states that they have not been allowed to use their minds since they were born. They are used like machines from generation to generation. Stephen wants to show the employer that the hands are used up and are not treated like real human beings. This critique of capitalism informs the text throughout and is woven into the textual fabric. Although the novel deals with a number of varied themes, the novel thus treats the theme of capitalism and its

exploitation of the poor as one of great significance which has the ability to have considerable implications and consequences for the society as a whole.



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**

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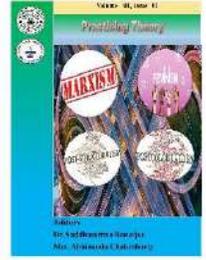
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## Marxist Criticism of the Disney Movie *Cinderella*

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### ABSTRACT

*Cinderella* has been part of the staple diet of stories and tales of countless children from time immemorial. The classic tale of complete transformation from misfortune to fortune, *Cinderella* has inspired innumerable spin-offs and stage and movie adaptations to cater to the human desire for fantasy and wish-fulfilment. In this paper, the Walt Disney adaptation of *Cinderella* (1956) is analyzed through a Marxist lens to better comprehend the ideological ideas that are woven into the text. The supposed inferiority of the eponymous heroine because of her working-class status and lack of wealth; the cruelty of her stepmother and stepsisters who seem to embody the privileges of the proletariat; *Cinderella*'s good fortune of finally falling in love with and marrying the crown prince, thereby successfully climbing the social ladder right to the top, all seem to suggest a preoccupation with class differences and the play of power between various kinds and groups of people that can be splendidly studied in greater detail through a Marxist framework.

### INTRODUCTION

**C**inderella, a movie released in 1956 and produced by Walt Disney was based on a European folk tale about a young woman who suffered from intense cruelty at the hands of her stepmother and stepsisters and who is finally able to transform her destiny after the events of one eventful night. This paper analyzes the film from a Marxist point of view and intends to discuss about the class struggle, class and status, and false consciousness within the movie. In this analysis we can conclude that *Cinderella* is not just a regular animated movie but a movie full of complex elements and

ideologies that need to be analyzed.

The story revolves around a girl named *Cinderella* who lived with her father, stepmother and step sisters. At first everything was alright until her father passed away; since then, her stepmother made *Cinderella* do all the household chores and treated her unfairly. Her stepmother always called her ‘‘*Cinderella, Cinderella*’’. Meanwhile in the castle, the king wanted his son to immediately get married, so he decided to hold a ball and invited all of the young woman across the kingdom to the ball to find a suitable bride for the prince.

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Cinderella had no suitable party dress for a ball, but her friends the mice and birds helped her. The evil step sisters, however, immediately tore apart the dress on the evening right before the ball, leaving Cinderella in utter despair. Finally, on the evening of the ball, the fairy Godmother appears magically to help her

out of her misery. Fittingly dressed, Cinderella was thus able to make it to the ball, and being the most radiant of them all, the prince noticed her and immediately fell in love. The two of them dance together but Cinderella had to go back before midnight, because, as the fairy godmother had forewarned her, the magic would be gone once it was past midnight. The prince tried to look for Cinderella after the ball but he could find no trace of her except for a single glass slipper that she had mistakenly left behind while leaving in a hurry. The prince then searched the entire kingdom for Cinderella by fitting the slipper to every maiden in the kingdom. If it fitted, then she would be Cinderella. Despite all odds, Cinderella's foot was finally able to fit on that slipper, and the prince married her after recognizing her and they lived happily ever after.



**Fig.1**



A Marxist analysis of this fairytale-cum-movie can help us to analyze the story behind **Fig.2** rays the socio-cultural times when the aristocratic system dominated the countries or kingdoms, and it reveals how society considers as the meaning of life.

These points are interesting to analyze, because this film depicts the social ideology and views of that time through its characters' views and attitudes, setting up their consciousness towards class, class differentiation and social struggle. Many such aspects can be found in

the scenes of this movie and a few will be analyzed to reveal the underlying ideologies and power structures.

### CLASS STRUGGLE

One of the most significant concerns in Marxism is class struggle. In the eyes of Karl Marx class struggle will never end. As Karl Marx implied, the history of man is actually a history of class struggle – between the proletariat and the bourgeois, the dominant and the subordinate.



**Fig.3**

A Marxist analysis of this fairytale-cum-movie can help us to analyze the story behind this film which portrays the socio-cultural context of older times when the aristocratic system dominated the countries or kingdoms, and it reveals how society considers as the meaning of life.

These points are interesting to analyze, because this film depicts the social ideology and views of that time through its characters' views and attitudes, setting up their consciousness towards class, class differentiation and social struggle. Many such aspects can be found in

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At first we see a scene when Cinderella has a conversation with Bruno the dog. Bruno was dreaming about chasing Lucifer the cat. Cinderella told him that if he insists to chase Lucifer he will lose his place to sleep inside: “Bruno, dreaming again about chasing Lucifer and catching him, this time that’s bad, suppose they heard you upstairs? You know the orders so if you don’t want to lose a nice warm bed, you better get rid of those dreams and just learn how to like cats”

In this scene we can consider Bruno the dog as a proletariat who must work hard and never get a chance to play or do something

for his own entertainment. On the other side,

Lucifer the cat is a bourgeoisie that has all kinds of privileges offered by the owner - sleep on a luxurious bed, eat delicious food, and be treated differently from other animals.

From this scene we see how the cat represents the higher class compared to the dog. Lucifer was Cinderella’s stepmother favorite pet and on other side Bruno the dog was just a working dog. From that scene alone we can clearly state that the cat and the dog refer to the distinction between the various social classes that are also established in Cinderella’s house.

The scenes also present an imagery of class struggle for Lucifer the cat is emphatically shown as being extremely arrogant knowing that he belongs to a higher class than Bruno the dog. The bourgeoisie can do whatever they like to the proletariat, but when the proletariat want to harm the bourgeoisie, they simply cannot do anything which reveals their essential powerlessness. This scene of interaction between Bruno the dog and Lucifer the cat is thus a perfect depiction of social or class struggle between these two opposing sides.



Fig.4



**Fig.5**

## **CLASS AND STATUS**

The development of Capitalism divides people into two classes: one who controls and owns the means of production (the bourgeoisie) and the other, who does not have access to the means of production but is essential to its proper functioning (proletariat).

In the Disney movie adaptation, we can see the king and his advisor discuss about the prince who has not yet decided his bride and the king is impatient because he is getting old. The he has an idea to throw a ball in order to choose the perfect maiden for the prince. The king can be considered as the depiction of the bourgeoisie because, as stated in Marxist theory, it is the bourgeoisie that controls the means of production and, in the story, it is the king who controls the economic aspect of the kingdom and dominates the social aspect as well by virtue of being the highest power in the domain.

## **FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS**

According to Marxism, the proletariat have a false consciousness due to their condition of being oppressed and ruled by bourgeoisie; they often

do not know that they have been oppressed all along by the ruler. False consciousness blinds their mental state to prevent them from freeing themselves from the oppression of the ruling class.

In the movie, there are clear references that Cinderella's character was that of a proletariat. She worked relentlessly from day to night, never got a chance to pursue what she wanted, and was treated unfairly and even cruelly in return. Although Cinderella belongs to a good family, her lack of money and status reduce her social standing and therefore, despite being noble and deserving, she barely has a chance to

meet the prince or fulfill her dreams. In despair, she comes to consider herself as unworthy and this, in a way, can be an example of the false consciousness which misleads the poor classes.

In the last scene we are shown that Cinderella is finally married to the prince. From this scene we can imply that the main idea being implemented in every person's mind through the tale is that, to live a happy life one must be rich, set a high standard for everything, and live luxuriously like the bourgeoisie while the poor continue to strive and struggle their entire lives with no reprieve.

Everyone has their own problems and we rarely notice it; the only thing we see is just the good side of it. It also happens in Cinderella - we notice how was Cinderella was dreaming to be another girl for a night, to be something more than she was, to be with those who joined the ball and dance with the prince. But when she thought that she would not be able to go to the ball, she was saddened and depressed to an extent where she felt as if her life had lost all meaning.



**Fig.6**



**Fig.7**

So, this movie led us to believe that to have a happy life one must be like Cinderella, but this is a misleading idea. Everyone has to live their own life of the fullest because what determines our life as worthy or not is not money, status or achievements. It is we ourselves.

## CONCLUSION

*Cinderella* is a tale that has surpassed countless generations. The movie, with its special effects and animation, likewise fairytales which conditions human thinking. It is therefore important to free ourselves from needless ideologies and understand our true

presents an interesting take on the traditional story but, as this analysis has shown, ideologies lie underneath all the characters and their actions and they need to be analyzed well to understand their true implications for the society.

*Cinderella* thus tells us about the social classes and their associated struggles and how this conflict between the two opposing sides, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, are inherent to even simple traditional

standing and relevance in our contemporary society.



Fig.8



Fig.10

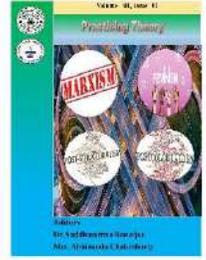
Fig.9





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## A Marxist Analysis of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*

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### ABSTRACT

Chinua Achebe’s novel *Things Fall Apart* has come to be considered as one of the most significant texts of African literature in English. The transformation of the society of the Igbo people due to the intervention of colonialism is splendidly portrayed in the text and this historical documentation, as it were, albeit in the fictionalized form, makes the novel relevant despite the passage of time. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze the novel from a Marxist perspective to reveal the impact of wealth and power on Igbo life. The interrelationships among the tribal people and between the colonizer and the colonized is closely studied and themes of exploitation, betrayal, and the detrimental effects of colonialism are brought to the forefront.

“Things Fall Apart” follows the tale of a wealthy and respectable man in Umuofia by the name of Okonkwo, who faces traumatic experiences that ultimately lead to his imminent death. With Okonkwo’s tragic story comes the inevitable colonization of the native tribes of lower Niger. A clear lens to look through is the Marxist lens, which explains that

economic and political conditions determine social conditions. Karl Marx’s theorem transposes itself in Umuofia as the colonists brought their capitalist ideologies and the way of life to the natives of lower Niger, and as a result, the rise of capitalism lead to the decent of the Umuofia community. A trademark to Umuofia life is the captivating lust for power and wealth.

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Once the albino missionaries arrived in the village, the “...white man brought a lunatic religion, [and] he had also built a trading store and for the first palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia”. New forms of development were introduced to the natives, and as a result, tensions grew over whether or not to trust the white man's seemingly benevolent efforts to grow their society. Prior to the colonist's arrival, Umuofia's economy drove men to insanity as “...many farmers wept as they dug up the miserable and rotting yams. One man tied his cloth to a tree

branch and hanged himself”. A man generally became so reliant on a good harvest that a poor harvest could make him resort to suicide. It can be further stated that Okonkwo is a primary example of this fear, as “...his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and weakness”. With the sudden cultural changes to the natives' way of life came hostility, as the natives opposed the dispersal of their traditions as a tribe. Okonkwo, returned from his exile, “mourned for his clan , which he saw breaking up and falling apart”.



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**

With a father like Unoka, Okonkwo did not have the start in life which many young men had. He neither inherited a barn nor a title, nor even a young wife. But in spite of these disadvantages, he had begun even in his father's lifetime to lay foundations of a prosperous future. Hard work, determination, a sense of personal responsibility to his growing family, all these played a part in Okonkwo's financial success. Marxism, as an economic theory, is concerned with capital. In Igbo culture capital was not measured in dollars but in yams and cowries. Material possessions aside from land were scarce, but there were

possessions of a different sort. And it was these possessions, such as wives, children, and most importantly titles that gave men status in society. Those unable or unwilling to conform to society in gaining possessions were cast out, and seen as failures. One such man was Okonkwo's father, Unoka, who had taken no title at all and he was heavily in debt up until he died. It was this sort of man who Okonkwo swore never to become. Okonkwo was ruled by one passion – to hate everything that his father Unoka has loved. One of those things was gentleness and another was idleness.

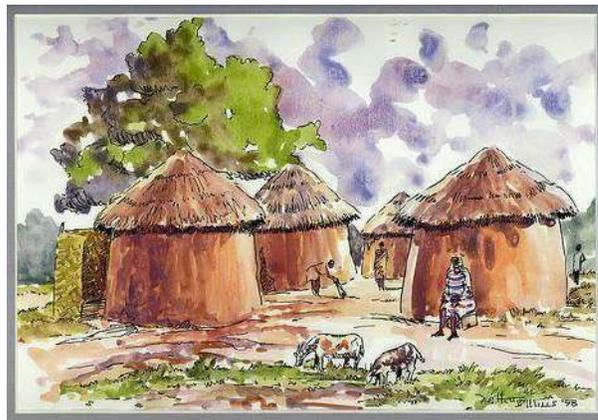


Fig. 3

**Conclusion:**

After analyzing Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart", it can be concluded that the Igbo society, like most other societies, was similarly structured with different social

stratifications. In material structure, the ruling class is someone who has large numbers of barns of yam. In religiosity, the chief of priests and oracles become the ruling class. Title is very important for the

society. In Igbo society, a man is judged by his own ability and worth, not by his family or father. Women are placed at the bottom of this hierarchy. There are also social outcasts who effectively fall outside of the societal structures and who are, therefore, classless and negligible.

The discussion shows that class conflict is derived by the clash of the oppressed class and the ruling class. The oppressed class comes to challenge the authority and the power of the clan because the Igbo society denied their status. The coming of the white men also aggravates the conflict between the ruling class and the oppressed class in Igbo society. The oppressed class takes the advantage of the white men to fight with the ruling class while the white men, in turn, use covert methods to convert the Igbo society into Christianity and thereby become allied with them at the cost of their own religion and beliefs.

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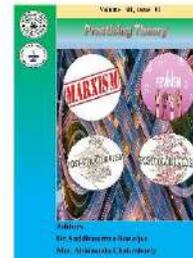
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The novel thus portrays many aspects of Igbo culture realistically. The everyday, ordinary lives of the people is depicted in the novel. There is also the depiction of colonization that happened in Nigeria. The ways by which the white man intruded into the Igbo land were multiform, making use of force, diplomacy and military action and even signing peace agreements. Such an attitude thus shows that no culture or people are truly free from the clutches of wealth, and power struggles characterize even the remotest individuals living away from the more advanced and capitalistic societies. The gradual breakdown of the tribe and its age-old traditions and belief systems which forms the heart of Achebe's novel thus can be considered as a critique not just of colonialism alone but also of its economic and social implications that adversely affected races and cultures even in the farthest reaches of the world.



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## Marxism in “Haroun and the Sea of Stories”

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes Salman Rushdie’s novel, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, in the light of Marxist thought. It analyzes how the dank and dark portrayal of the Sad City can be interpreted as an implicit representation of a society reeling under the effects of unbridled industrialization and the suppressed misery of the working classes whose lives are entirely bereft of any happiness, joy or fulfilment. It also analyzes the power relations existing amongst the various characters – whether individual or collective – to show how these relations and differences essentially mirror those in the real world, portrayed and disguised in the text through the garb of magic realism.

**“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”**

– Karl Marx; The Communist Manifesto

In Marxism, economic factors affect social change, in which the economic base influences the political and ideological superstructure. The history of society can be viewed as showing progressive stages in the ownership of the economy and thus the control of The introduction of Rushdie’s *Haroun* immediately establishes its capitalistic economy and hierarchical social

political power. Marx and Engels predicted that a classless, communist society would be achieved through a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

structure. The first image of the Sad City evokes an image of a modern, industrialized city. Marx would see these

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factories as agents of oppression and alienation. In a factory setting, workers inevitably lose control of their lives as they lose control over the process of production, the products they produce, and the relationships they have with one

another as each becomes competition. Consequentially, the workers become less human and the capitalist factory owners become the controllers of economics, culture, and politics.

Certainly within the first few pages of his book, Rushdie clearly indicates the social classes of the Sad City. The city is described as having three different classes: "super rich," "poor," and "super poor." This exemplifies the Marxist image of the strictly defined opposing classes, the proletariat - the "poor and super poor" - and the bourgeoisie, the "super rich." Through this description, the reader can see that much of the population has been taken advantage of, as the majority of Sad City's citizens cannot earn enough capital to get ahead. This also reveals the fragmentation of the

city, as its population are alienated from one another.

Rushdie's characterization of the children of these two groups goes to further show the separation of the classes. While the poor children live in poverty and with health complications, the wealthy children are well-off. This shows the effects of the "oppressed" by the "oppressors." The quality of life for the poor continues to decrease as the quality of life for the rich only increases through the labor of the poor.



**Fig.1**



**Fig. 2**



**Fig. 3**

## Ideologies of Kahani

Most notably in Kahani is the polarization that has occurred between the Gup and the Chup populations. The two groups then represent two forms of belief systems. QUOTE 1: “How many opposites are at war in this battle between Gup and Chup!... Gup is bright and Chup is dark. Gup is chattering and noise, whereas Chup is silent as a shadow. Guppees love Stories, and Speech; Chupwalas, it seems, hate these things just as strongly” QUOTE 2: “The Chupwalas... turned out to be a disunited rabble. Just as Mudra the Shadow Warrior had predicted, many of them actually had to fight their own, treacherous shadows! And as for the rest, well, their vows of silence and their habits of secrecy had made them suspicious and distrustful of one another... The upshot was that the Chupwalas did not stand shoulder to shoulder, but betrayed one another, stabbed one another in the back, mutinied, hid or deserted... simply threw down

The Chups, then, are representative of the opposite ideology that evokes that of communist Marxist ideologies: one of idolatry, muteness, and dictatorship. The lack of democratic dialogue compromises all of their efforts to

These two groups then engage in a Marxian struggle against one another. By the end of the story, harmony is restored through their conflict, eliminating the latter of the two distinct ideologies and uniting them under the prevailing ideology of the Gups. Rushdie thus shows the reader how Marxist ideologies and plans are ultimately failures.



**Fig. 5**

their weapons and ran away”. In the realm of Kahani, there is a split in the population of its inhabitants. The two groups that had once lived harmoniously before are now in two separate groups with two distinct ideological stances. The Gups live in a culture that revolves around the written word and speech. The names of each of the Gups characters or groups shows this inclination towards stories. This includes, for example, the Plentimaw Fish who renew stories, Mali the Floating Gardener who untangles and preens stories, the Pages who belong to the army of General Kitab (General Book), Blabbermouth the female page, and the government that is ruled by king “Chattergy” and the “Chatterbox” parliament. The Gups have openness, freedom of expression, and democracy.

band together and leaves the Chups susceptible to their own internal conflicts rather than having one uniformly understood plan of action and solidarity



**Fig.4**

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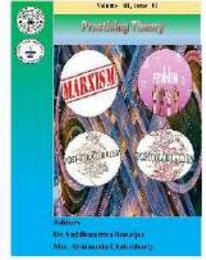
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## A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN’S MOVIE *MODERN TIMES* (1936)

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### ABSTRACT

The age of modernism has been one characterized by fragmentation of the self and an increasing sense of alienation from one’s immediate surroundings. Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936) embodies the modern condition of humans living a mechanized life while being constantly exploited and dominated by the capitalist classes who consider the workers as no better than automatons. The paper analyzes this condition further and tries to emphasize the underlying tragedy of proletariat lives as they struggle to retain a basic sense of dignity in the face of capitalist repression.

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**T**he life and experiences of the characters in Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* reflects the reality of the workers in the modern age. The movie uses comedy to express important social messages and makes references to the theory of alienation and the theme of capitalism as emphasized by

emphasizes and embodies this concept. As a worker in the factory, his only job is to tighten the bolts and the screws of the machines in the assembly line. The repetitive work alienates him from the labor.

Karl Marx.

The movie *Modern Times* illustrates the theory of alienation, a concept by Karl Marx, that explains the dehumanizing impact of capitalism on the workers. In the movie, Chaplin’s character

There is a scene where Chaplin’s character becomes robot-like by his involuntary actions. He keeps doing the same monotonous actions, tightening the bolts, even when it is lunch break. Because of his

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repetitive labor and alienation from the work, he becomes depersonalized and dehumanized. This results in an inevitable loss of control over his life as he loses control of his work. With Marx's theory, it becomes more comprehensible as to why workers in a capitalist society often become alienated from their work. Just like Chaplin's character as a worker in a factory, workers lose their individuality and humanity the more they produce, becoming nothing more than meaningless and lifeless commodities in a capitalist context. It is the capitalist alone, then, who earns greater profits and reaps the benefits of the same labour that has alienated and dehumanized the workers in the first place.

For instance, the president of the factory in the film continually monitors and dominates the workers as technology provides him with the means to do so –



**Fig. 1**

In one particular scene, Chaplin's character tries to take a short break in the bathroom but even in that scenario, the head of the factory is able to tell him to get back to work through the camera. This

In the film, the capitalist owner is the president of the factory who begins by giving instructions to the labourers to speed up the production. Right at the beginning, his control and ownership over the labor process is shown. The president continues to send instructions to speed up the assembly line which reveals the machine or automaton-like behaviour of the workers since the speed of their work will ultimately determine the speed of their production.

Typically, the capitalist's survival depends on the success in market, siding on the profit of the company.

cameras set up throughout the factory enable him to see both the stations and the workers so they may not neglect their work or take undeserving breaks.



**Fig. 2**

becomes a reflection of the ruthlessness of the capitalists who hardly deem the workers as humans.

In the movie, there is a scene where we encounter the workers protesting. The

protestors' placards and posters have written phrases like "Unite", "unidad", and death". This protest ends up with police raiding them, beating the protestors up and arresting Chaplin.

The caption in the movie states that Chaplin's character was mistaken as a communist leader, implying that protest is only for communists in the world of capitalism. This scene shows how the government sees Marx's idea of communism as threatening because the law enforcers treat the protest with utmost importance and immediately try to repress it. The social and political context of *Modern Times* also refers to mass unemployment and poverty with the Gamin's family story emphasizing these points. People are stealing food and

"libertad" which translates to freedom, and "liberty or robbing department stores to survive. Life in jail appears more comfortable than life outside of it. Even homelessness is against the law. Interestingly, this exposes the hypocrisies and double standards of the powerful and the wealthy by questioning how homelessness can be against the law when people can never deliberately choose to be homeless. If given a chance, people in poverty will prefer and love to have a home, just like the girl in the movie. However, it is government, economic situations and corruption that lead people to be homeless. The film thus effectively portrays the corruption of capitalism and shows, in a manner, how communism can significantly serve as a medium of social change even today.



**Fig.3**

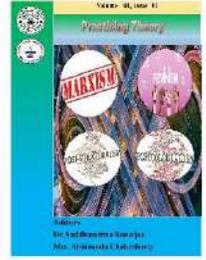


**Fig.4**



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## A Marxist Analysis of the Bengali Film *Proloy* (2013)

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### ABSTRACT

Marxist theory has been a significant methodological tool in analyzing the relations of power in any given society and time. Not only does Marxism enable us to understand the insidious workings of power and control between different classes or categories of people but it also shows us the way to subvert those existing power structures and resist predominating ideologies. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze the Bengali film, *Pralay* (2013), by using the Marxist framework to reveal the corruption of power and politics against a rural backdrop and to trace its subsequent connection with the intense suffering of the people as depicted in the film. The paper ends with an evaluation of the prospect of rebellion which is integral both to the film and to Marxist thought and with the positive note of transformation that rebellion has the potential to bring to a corrupted and debased society.

### Basic Concept of Marxism:

According to classical Marxism, there are two classes in society, the rich or the capitalist class – referred to as the ‘bourgeoisie’ – and the poor or the underprivileged class, referred to as the ‘proletariat’. In general, it is the capitalist class that almost always dominates over the labour class. For Marxist ideology, the only way to transform the disbalance of power in society is through revolt –

the proletariat must revolt against the bourgeoisie and forcibly take control of the means and modes of production to neutralize the class division.



Fig.1

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**Movie Analysis** This paper attempts to make a Marxist analysis of a famous Bengali film, “Proloy” which was released in 2013. In the very first scene we can see that a village is fully dominated by the politicians. The corrupt politicians rape and torture the villagers. Marxism concerns itself not only with economical issues but also with social and political issues. The politicians in this movie represent the capitalist class who dominates over the villagers or the poor classes and causes them untold misery and suffering.

Despite the tremendous torture of the politicians, neither the police nor the law takes any steps against the politicians. Hence, the capitalists continue to enjoy their political power unchallenged and unchecked.

At this critical juncture, an ordinary man known as Barun Biswas enters the plot. In a manner, he represents a Marxist

critique of the entire system in this movie. He raises his voice against the capitalists (politicians) from his jagoron moncho – the stage of awareness or consciousness, as it were, and the capitalists unite at once to suppress and silence him. They try to stop the revolt by beating up Barun Biswas and the others as they protest from the jagoron moncho but, despite all odds, the revolt gains momentum and does not stop. Later on in the movie, Barun Biswas is shot and killed. After some years, an old man arrives and wants to know from everyone about Barun Biswas. But, quite shockingly, while everybody seems to remember even meaningless trivia about film actors and so on, nobody seems to remember anything about Barun Biswas.



**Fig.3**



**Fig.5**



**Fig.6**



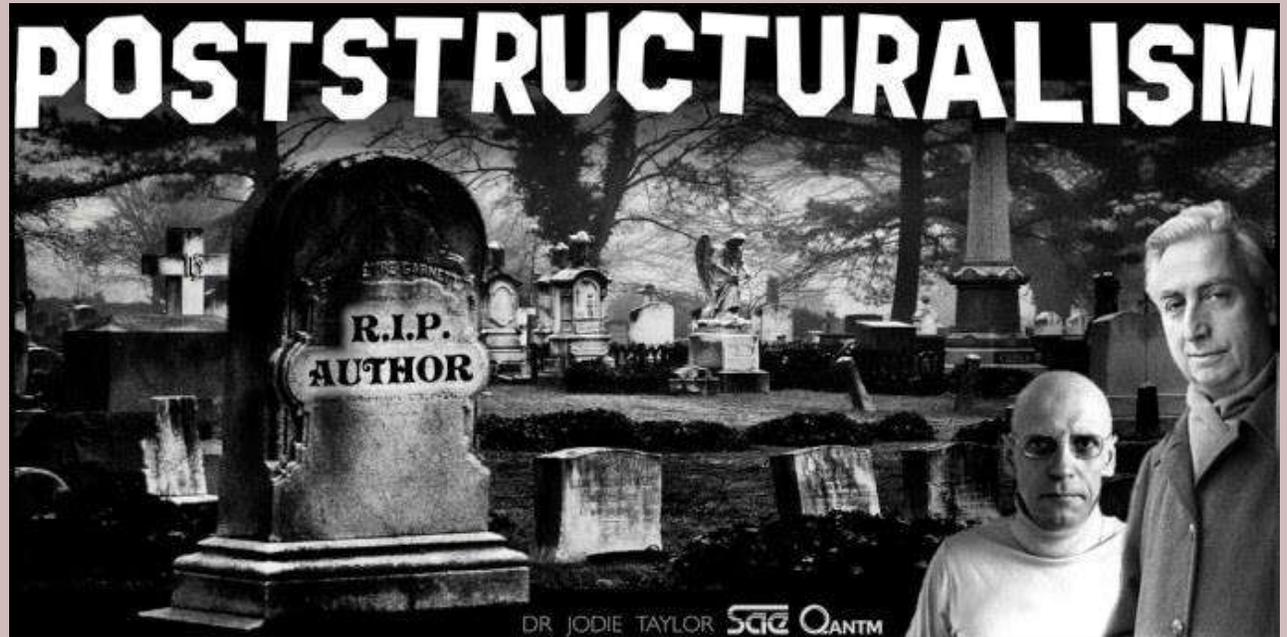
**Fig.2**



**Fig.4**



# POSTSTRUCTURALISM

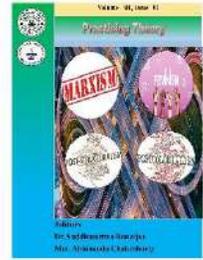


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## WAITING FOR GODOT AS A DECONSTRUCTIVE TEXT: A PERPETUAL SEARCH FOR TANGIBILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The study deals with the elements of deconstructive text which shows a perpetual search for tangibility. The study has found that Beckett's dramatic text has a considerable amount of breaking of the traditional techniques. Here in *Waiting for Godot* vagabonds are searching for their Godot to get rid of their cursed life. In reality, post modern people are also searching something like Godot. So, it's a searching to touch a relief or something that can relieve anyone. The text is a linguistic paradox; lexically simple but structurally complex. The fragmented syntax of the play corresponds with the chaotic existence of man. The meaninglessness and monotony of human life have been conveyed through broken language. Due to these changes in thematic and structural point of view. The play is able to mark on the minds of the reader. The present study has explored of the positivity of reconciliation between literary and linguistic approach to the study of literary texts in general and modern drama in particular.

No way can one exaggerate the unique position possessed by Samuel Beckett and his seminal Play *Waiting for Godot* on the stage and in the dramaturgy alike. Samuel Beckett is considered to be a representative modern dramatist. His expression was favoured with the techniques of experimentation and invention because of which he was categorized as the 'last modernist'. Ezra Pound's renowned saying "making it new"

was marked as the prime feature of modernism. Samuel Beckett in spite of various and diverse influences, had something of his own in his works.

The study of literature remains incomplete without the study of Beckett. How strange it seems that in this age of objectivity, little attempts have been made to employ objective techniques of analysis of his texts. *Waiting for Godot* was a

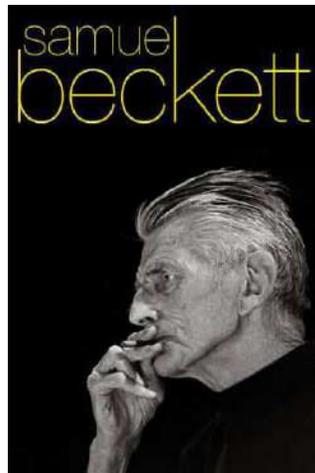
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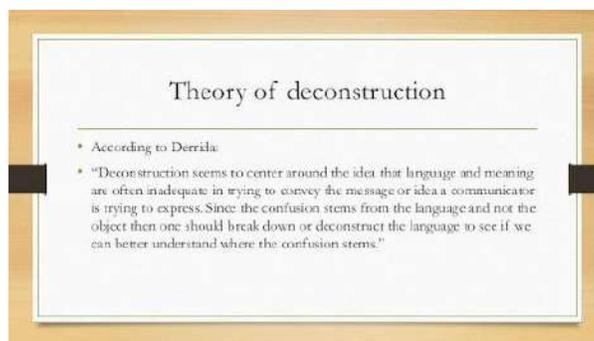
hallmark in English literature. The conventional type of writing and its style, language, grammar, vocabulary, theme all got changed in *Waiting for Godot*. After the World War II, when the world was traumatized by the war's devastating effects, people were disappointed and frustrated. In such situation the very existence of people was questionable.

This paper examines *Godot* through a post-structural lens by integrating the theoretical concept of

deconstruction suggested by Jacques Derrida with the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan's symbolic language. Readers seek to identify and interpret the symbols of the play as signifiers. The abundance and specificity of Beckett's symbols and their corresponding meanings can be further appreciated by a complete and thorough deconstruction that opens up the potential to uncover a deeper understanding illuminating the symbols which Beckett described.



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is a new kind of drama. Moreover it is a very puzzling Play. Naturally different critics have approached the play and interpreted it in various ways. The play begins with two vagabonds-Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot in a state of twilight. These vagabonds seem to

have hardly any idea about Godot. They do not actually know for what personality they are waiting. Yet they are waiting and cherishing a vague idea about Godot and expecting that Godot will rescue them from their present wretchedness. They wait helplessly rather ignorantly.



**Fig. 3**

At the end of the first act, a boy messenger arrives and he informs them that Godot will be coming tomorrow. Once again tramps are confronted with the problem of waiting.

Boy-(in a rush) Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow

Very interestingly in the second act everything again starts from nowhere. Two friends are found to wait once again on the next day in

the same way. But they have the same experience of the previous day. Another boy messenger comes to them with a message that Godot won't come today and may be he will come tomorrow. So again this happens to them.



**Fig.4**

In this play both Vladimir and Estragon are the products of post world war .After two devastating world war, human losses its potentiality,3ven their very existence become questionable. This play brings out waiting, frustration and pointless existence. The situation of the two tramps is obviously an utter despair in which existence becomes a matter of meaninglessness and monotony .Vladimir



**Fig. 5**

is busy with his shoes .He offs it and again puts it on. Hos doubt and uncomfot about his shoes that may be there are something inside it that hurts him again and again but he cannot find it.

STARTING SCENE—ESTRAGON sitting on a low mound, trying to take off his boots. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again.



**Fig. 6**

Vladimir is much concerned with his hat. He puts it off and looks into it and trying to see what is there inside it, he finds nothing and again puts it. Both Estragon and Vladimir are doing such things that reveal the irony of the existentialism. Beside the main plot there is a subplot including Pozzo and Lucky This scene is subsidiary theme. Pozzo and Lucky signifies the slavery system 3ven after its abolishment legally in the society. IN the first act Lucky is described as a subhuman and Pozzo is powerful master .In the second act Pozzo becomes blind and Lucky becomes deaf.

Surprisingly enough, Estragon forgets them completely and even the place where they waited is also out of his memory. Long wait sometimes make them hesitated and frustrated .Estragon’s first dialogue is “Nothing to be done” Again he says “Nothing happens. Nobody comes, nobody goes, it’s awful”. After the first act when the boy messenger disappears darkness approaches suddenly. That symbolizes till them vagabonds hop that probably that day they can meet Godot but the very declaration of boy again push them into the sea of waiting.

In the second act when another boy messenger comes and informs them about Godot, for the time being they become disappointed. But next very moment they gain hope about tomorrow.

Vladimir—We have to come back tomorrow

Estragon—What for?

Vladimir—To wait for Godot

At the end of both the act, they decodes to go but nobody moves from their respective place

Vladimir—Well? Shall we go?

Estragon—Yet, Let’s go.

(They do not move)

In the first act, in the background setting there is a tree without any leaf as if the tree has no hope to revive, to cheer ,to live. It signifies the life of people who also do not have any hope for good. Vladimir and Estragon plan to suicide from this decaying tree, whereas in the second act the tree is found with some green leaves in it which signifies new hope, new life.

Beckett tries to convey the post world war situation but not in a age-old structured way rather in an unconventional way. He points out the problematic lives of people, how aimless and hopeless they actually are. He uses the technique of absurd drama to deconstruct the conventional way. By this absurd style he establishes the actual situation of the war ridden victims who continuing their search for tangibility.

Beckett breaks all the traditional way of writing and he accepts the way of writing where the new style of writing more perfectly reflects the ongoing situation. According to Aristotle, a play must have only one action and a single place and within the course of one day. These three rules are combined as ‘Three Unities’ by Aristotle. Beckett in his play *Waiting for Godot* partly follows partly changes the style by his own calibre. Beckett’s play obeys the Unity of Aristotle fully in respect of place, and partly in respect of time. He uses two acts probably to establish the intensity of problem by the

1<sup>st</sup> act and the continuity and a sprinkle of hope through the 2<sup>nd</sup> act. These acts start from nowhere and end at nowhere.

So, to establish the circle of waiting strongly and getting nothing in return, this innovative style is necessary. Beckett's theme of nothingness clearly fingers at the fact that these two vagabonds know that their waiting is meaningless but still they wait and wait for the search of the unknown.

Even the opening time is very decaying here. It is twilight. When the last light of

day just about to go. This reflects their transient hope and endless problem that is compared to night.

The theme of despair has dominated all over the plot. But there is an irony inherent in the whole theme which carries deeper meaning. The two tramps are waiting for something to turn up and end to their parent despair. But Godot never appears. They know, 'Nothing happens. Nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful'.

Estragon—We all are born mad. Some remain so.



**Fig. 7**

This is the way modern life moves. There are definitely some comic elements in the ironical expectations of human being. This is what makes the play *Waiting for Godot* both diverting and deep. In the absurdity of the tramps, the utter absurdity of the life is remarkably perceived.



**Fig. 8**

In Beckett's play *Godot* is a mysterious personality and it is also an important point of Beckett's deconstructive writing after the world war ii. Godot symbolizes what is mystic, inexplicable and unknown force of which man have no clear conception. The two tramps resemble the needy and suffering mankind looking eagerly towards Godot for their relief and restoration to happiness.

The text of the *Waiting for Godot* represents such ideational world which has comparatively high processes as compared to the number of participants. Even the number of circumstances is also low. These proportions of Grammatical Ranks signify Actorless and Goalless clauses in the text. Most of the actions are not directed to any Goal. The world of *Waiting for Godot* represents actions but they are directionless. A relatively small number of circumstances in the play also reveal that the actions and activities going on are less statically and temporally oriented. These features of Transitivity in the play develop a theme of “Alienation” to interpret the concept of Existentialism.

The frequency of relational clause is relatively high as compared to the rest of

the clause types except Material clause. Mental process is very frequent in this work of Beckett. It shows that the participants in the text are involved in a mental activity and they have the potential to think.

The structure of such communications and language are also unique in Beckett’s play. Most of the statements are very crisp and concise, short and absurd, also meaninglessness. The structure of the communication attracts the readers and the language style points out the characteristics of the society. The in coherent talks of Estragon specially mark the arrival of poststructuralist language.



**Fig.9**

Putting the absurdist, existential and symbolist reading of the play reveal the difficulties of searching for meaning in

*Godot*. As Beckett plays with meaning, the characters’ search for meaning is clearly visible in both the actions and thematic

journey of the play. In fact, characters use language as a connection to their understanding of the world. Esslin comments that Beckett devalues language and has dangerous implications, even though it is a means for Esslin to explain the aesthetic experience of the play.

Continuing to the question of signification and symbolism of many objects would allow greater meaning to be derived directly from the play, without imposing meaning from outside of the text.

*Waiting for Godot* is a play with unconventional style by Samuel Beckett where he either is unable or just refuses to explain *Godot*. The search for tangibility has always been complicated in this play. Though it was written in 1950s but till today it is relevant in today's context. Deconstructive texts are somewhat followers of Roland Barthes' *Death of the Author*. Thus, we the audiences, the readers, being the products of post modern era, are continuing our search for tangibility, but find nothing and again start searching endlessly just like the vagabonds.

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# Practising Theory

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## Lucky's Speech: A Poststructuralist Critique of the Post-War World

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### ABSTRACT

Lucky is one of the characters in Samuel Beckett's absurdist drama *Waiting for Godot*. He is presented as a sub-human character. He is symbolically presented as the epitomized form of the disgraceful slavery system which undoes all the hopes and aspirations of the victimized souls. This system commodifies human beings. Lucky is the slave of Pozzo who represents master class. Lucky has been dumbfounded by Pozzo in Act II. Lucky being dumbfounded doggedly follows the instruction of his master and lives on the bones and abandoned food of his master. Now he seems to be physically challenged and that's why his master wants to sell him. On hearing this he weeps. Finally Lucky bursts into tirades in incoherent and illegible human language and discharges invectives against the so called civilized master class. Now his tirades may be interpreted in the light of Poststructuralism which does not accept the preformatted signifier- signified model and advocates confused state of everything termed as aporia. Lucky seems to present the disjointed society through his speech. This paper seeks to establish the relation between Lucky's speech and Poststructuralism.

Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* discusses the transition from Modernism to Post- modernism. Beckett's characters are constantly portrayed as a product of external influences and not considered as unified rational beings. Beckett is seen to be greatly influenced by the emergence of structuralism which places great emphasis on the importance of language, hence

*Waiting for Godot* uses language and speech in order to create confused realities. Beckett's work is defined by the

consciousness that words are incapable of expressing the inner self and by the simultaneous acceptance of the fact that language is intrinsic to the human situation and thus not a movable element. Beckett regards language as constitutive of identity of the self. The dialectical relationship between the object to be expressed like theme and the mode of expression such as form, style are significant in Beckett's play. Lucky's speech is probably the most spectacular part of *Waiting for Godot*. The speech which consumes three pages of play takes the form of a long seemingly Martin

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Esslin considers Lucky's thinking act as 'wild schizophrenic word - salad.' Lucky's speech gives the impression of total dissolution of language and thought. Lucky's soliloquy can neither be identified as a dialogue nor a monologue, but in fact, it is a voiced out accumulation of thoughts.

Lucky's repetitious and pseudo- scientific speech is used against the mediated language representative of conventional literary, religious and scientific discourses. Lucky's speech can't be reduced to mere gibberish or anti intellectual however it may situate the intellect as the domain responsible for the mind's appropriation of feelings and sensations. It brings about a sense that words have been put together haphazardly to produce a particular structure and meaning can be perceived from this structure. In this way, Lucky's speech is a microcosm of the play itself as it produces meaning from its formlessness and lack of content. Beckett himself remarked on this speech: 'The threads and themes of the play are being gathered together [in this speech]'. He further explains that the theme of this monologue, as that of the play, is to shrink on an impossible earth under an indifferent heaven'. Lucky's speech is initiated when Vladimir requests Pozzo to make Lucky speak. Pozzo asserts that Lucky needs his hat to do so. After Lucky has his hat placed on his head, Pozzo orders him to "Think, pig!", mocking the traditional phrase, "Think big". To provide some sort of structure to Lucky's speech, it can be roughly divided into three sections. The first section starts with a hypothetical statement about the

existence of a personal God, outside time, living in divine 'apathia' (non responsiveness), divine 'aphasia'(speechlessness) and divine 'athambia' (lack of the capacity for amazement), In fact , the very existence of God is in doubt. He is referred to as "quaquaquaqua" with white beard'. The speaker assumes a God who is pictured as the benevolent grandfather with white beard about whom the children learn in Sunday school and who will be with them the rest of their lives – even if they rebel against him. Opposite of a caring father this personal God doesnot communicate or can be felt and eventually condemns his creations for 'unknown reason'. In this respect even if a God exists, he has abandoned earth and humankind. He is reduced to a mere projection.

The second section of Lucky's speech reveals human being in modern times as those who "shrink and dwindle". Even though humans engage in various activities to improve themselves but all end in vain. Beckett uses the mouthpiece of Lucky to attack all academies and human sciences that, according to him, are "labours left unfinished" even as they attempt to deal with human concerns. Thus, intellectual efforts of human beings are undigested, a matter of "alimentionation and defecation". In this way, it is a satire on the Enlightenment project that promised progression for humanity instead led to gruesome world wars, causing modern humam beings great loss and suffering. Interrupt by parodies of scholars like Fartov and Belcher, repetition and list of activities, the basic

statement is that men is in a process of shrinking in spite of physical exercise and technical progress. Beckett further makes reference to empirical philosophers, such

The third section describes the eventual chaos. Such contradictions finally lead to the ultimate certainty – death. Lucky foresees an apocalyptic earth where darkness would prevail and nature runs its course. The process of deterioration of Lucky's speech suggests his inability to communicate eloquently the various meaning, which may give structure of life. The name Lucky is significant in this story and reflects upon his speech as well. Like Estragon and Vladimir he doesn't have to worry about what to do, what the consequence will be, and whether or not he's happy. He has some one commanding him. He's free from any accountability or the anguish of choice. Just as Lucky is enslaved by Pozzo, Estragon and Vladimir equally enslaved to their concept of Godot, which is why they "can't leave", but they believe themselves to be free. They can't break the bonds of their enslavement for they refuse to even admit that such bonds exist. The difference between them and Lucky is that the latter can see the rope around his neck, while Vladimir and Estragon cannot.

The speech is carefully structured around recurrent phrases and words. The particular phrase 'for reason unknown' which recurs more functions as an effective summation of Lucky's message to the audience – the impossibility of reasoning when causes are intelligible.

as Berkeley and Voltaire, to undermine the notion of rationality in human beings.

The course of diminishing of Lucky's life: At first he was Pozzo's teacher and controlled them graciously. Now, his dance takes after his speech : he is caught in the mesh of clichés. Lucky's deterioration is not accompanied by a natural increase in Pozzo's status as master. Pozzo is blind and less articulate than he was in Act-1. Emblematic of Pozzo's having himself entered in a meaningless world absent of time and space. Lucky falls down at the close of his speech. He seems to have become exhausted by the revelations she has made because the speech has taken everything out of him. Lucky, figuratively, leaves the question of God up to the reader to determine, and when one tries to take all of the unnecessary diction out of the speech, Lucky seems to understand God more than readers may first acknowledge.

Beckett's use of language and speech as an exploratory tool is essential as he manages to construct meaning using fragmented words and phrases, and ensures that speech is sufficient enough to create a narrative in a static play. Many of the dialogues remain futile attempts by his characters to express themselves, yet these repetitive dialogues succeed in representing the characters as a product of external influences. 'Waiting for Godot' reveals that every man is enslaved to some sort of bondage Lucky is a demeaned

slave, tied with a rope by Pozzo. Vladimir and Estragon are slaves of time. They have no prospects or they're never put into a situation where they have to make decisions. The passing of time becomes obvious as the characters waiting with eagerness for Godot's arrival. The fact that they wait in vain, however, makes life seem as worthless as death itself. As a Postmodern text, *Waiting for Godot*, not only portrays the damaged psyche of the Post War individual, but also depicts the most quintessential attributes of man related to the futile wait, dissipated memory and the repetitive action. Beckett's play remains heavily influenced by existentialism, and he portrays this through the use of his characters who become a representation of whole

Vladimir and Estragon, thus resolve to wait and depend on personal, interpersonal and

humanity.

To conclude, this essay shows that *Waiting for Godot* portrays the Post-World War II atmosphere as that one which is absurd and nihilistic. Also, waiting in the play reflects the existentialist philosophy that denies that an individual or a creed can construct meaning of life and that humans have free will to explore their purpose and the meaning of their own life. All the characters in *Waiting for Godot* progresses along the track of Camus's approach on Existentialism: the idea that that one must have purpose and meaning in life, even waiting for something to happen can be the purpose, though it may be pointless but is actually meaningful.

divine salvation in a world where they are subjected to the Sisyphean foe.



**Fig.1**



**Fig. 2**

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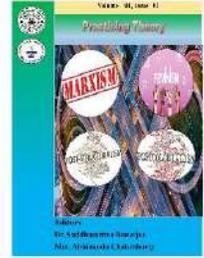
# Feminist Theory





# Practising Theory

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## ‘Satitva’ and Femininity: Prominent Contraries in the Widow Characters in Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Bengali Fiction

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### ABSTRACT

Position of widows in the context of feminine identity at the intersections of the contested space in a colonial situation of domination and subordination from mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal is my prime focus in this study of a few novels consisting powerful young widow characters belonging to the specified period. Their female - ness and sexuality were elements that were debated and constructed by men, both colonizers and colonized, to fit their varied needs. The women's question had been the focal point of the very controversial reform debates for most of the nineteenth century in Bengal and it includes the debate concerning Hindu Widow Remarriage Act' 1856. The middle – class Bengali 'Bhadralok' community fuelled and fanned these debates to accept dichotomized lifestyle distinctions, i.e., home/ world, spiritual/ material, feminine/ masculine, 'satitva'/ 'asatitva', 'kulalakshmi'/ 'alakshmi'. While these opposites afforded recognition for difference with equality, in reality they worked to strengthen traditional gender divisions to the disadvantage of the widows almost by wiping out the question of their feminine identity. Depiction of Kundanandini in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Bishabriksha* initiated a series of powerful young widow characters in the works of the three masters of Bengali novels of the period, specified for my study, namely Rabindranath and Sarat Chandra to follow Bankim. I will finally try to look into various social nuances of widowhood related to the concept of 'Satitva' as a contrary to feminine identity in the so called 'Bhadralok Society' of the aforementioned period to complete my study.

The women's question had been the focal point of very controversial reform debates for most of the nineteenth century in Bengal and it includes the debate concerning Hindu Widow Remarriage Act' 1856. A number of social reformers tried to address this issue. Rammohan Roy initiated this movement in the 1820s, as did Derozio and the Young Bengal group in the 1830s. The Indian Law Commission (1837) considered the issue

seriously and concluded that infanticide could be curbed only if Widow Remarriage was legalized. However, the government took the position that, even though such a law was socially desirable, passing it would involve going against Hindu strictures and laws of inheritance and hence infeasible. There were scattered attempts to legalize Widow Remarriage in the 1840s as well. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar took up the issue in the 1850s and led it to an apparent success. While these opposites afforded

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recognition for difference with equality, in reality they worked to strengthen traditional gender divisions by raising the concept, 'Satitva' to the disadvantage of the widows.

The articulations of widow characters in the specified time and space always tended to reinforce patriarchal traditions, as was all too apparent for example, in the social reform movement in Bengal in the nineteenth century. The tendencies here illustrated quite clearly how for male reformers, femaleness emanated from the fulfilment of traditional roles of wife and mother within social systems under male control. Unsurprisingly, all the major players in these constructions of women were male. Women were debated, discussed, acted on and constructed by men with very little input from women themselves. The women's question had been the focal point of very controversial reform debates for most of the nineteenth century in Bengal. However, it disappeared as a result of a "resolution" of sorts when the middle - classes were busy in distinguishing between a 'Kulalakshmi' and an 'Alakshmi'. Thus, in essence what occurred was the promotion and preservation of separate spheres.

Despite much opposition from conservative sections, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act was passed on 26th July 1856, permitting Widow Remarriage to be performed in the same way as a first marriage. It was a permission law: modalities such as the registration procedure were left quite unaddressed. The Act had two main provisions. First, Widow Remarriage would be legally valid and the offspring would be legal. Second, the widow would forfeit all claims to wealth and financial support inherited through earlier marriages. The first Widow Remarriage

took place on 7th December 1856 in Calcutta. Quite a few Widow Remarriages occurred in 1857. However, overall, the movement was a failure. The Bengal Census of 1881 reported about 50,000 Hindu widows in the 0-14 age bracket, about 93,000 in the 15-19 group, and about 3,76,000 in the 20-29 category. Only about 80 widows were remarried in Bengal over a span of 20 years (between the years 1856 and 1876, published in the newspapers of that time), and only about 500 remarriages had taken place by 1889.

Contrary to current articulations of feminist theory, in which agency is synonymous with resistance, the upper caste, middle class Bengali widow characters in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Bengali fiction exercises agency, by which I mean self-realization, through a performance of devotion or 'satitva' to a man other than her deceased husband. This act of devotion is replete with her unfulfilled sexual desires, and is also modelled sacred practices of devotion drawn from Hindu devotional practices. I would like to attempt to open up feminist modes of inquiry to include the sacred as a system of knowledge that can productively inform our understanding of gendered agency, through a close reading of late nineteenth-century Bengali fiction.

*Bhadralok* society revered the married woman as the kulalakshmi or goddess Lakshmi of the household or clan, and rejected the widow because she had lost her husband and was thus alakshmi or unlucky. While the conjugal bond tied the widow to her marital home, she lost all her rights within it the moment her husband ceased to exist. Due to the practice of

marrying young girls to older men, a large number of widows were young women in their reproductive prime, who lived in their deceased husband's home, often within an extended family, where they looked upon conjugal relationships, but could not enter into any themselves. Although the *Widow Remarriage Act XV* of 1856 allowed a widow to remarry, this was taboo in bhadrak society, and thus a large number of widows were either burnt on the funeral pyre or left to live an impoverished life in their marital homes.

The figure of the nineteenth-century bhadrak Bengali wife and her counterpart the bhadrak bidhoba, has been the subject of much scholarly debate. In his book, *The Nation and its Fragments*, Partha Chatterjee argues that bhadrak women were the repositories of an asexual spirituality; a woman who defied this norm was considered Westernized and 'would invite the ascription of all that the 'normal' woman (mother/sister/wife/daughter) is not—brazen, avaricious, irreligious, sexually promiscuous'. (Chatterjee, 1993) In equating "good" Indian femininity with an asexual spirituality, Chatterjee occludes the possibility of a sexual femininity that is a part of Hindu bhadrak society, rather than a Westernized otherness. Feminists have hotly contested Chatterjee's theorization of the bhadrak wife as a mere, asexual token of nationalist discourse, and suggested that the bhadrak woman was capable of autonomy and interiority. The nationalist and colonialist emphasis on upper-caste, middle-class women occluded lower-caste, poor, Muslim women: "This image foregrounded the Aryan woman (the progenitor of the upper-caste women) as the only object of historical concern.

[Meanwhile] the Vedic Dasi (the woman in servitude), captured, subjugated, and enslaved by the conquering Aryans, but who also represents one aspect of Indian womanhood, disappeared without leaving any trace of herself in nineteenth century history...[The] Aryan woman came to occupy the centre of the stage in the recounting of the wonder that was India" (Chakravarti, 2000).

Similarly, other feminist work has also emphasized the way in which the figure of the widow was co-opted by imperialist and nationalist discourse. Lata Mani's groundbreaking work on the colonial discourse of sati or widow immolation brings to the fore the production of the widow as an object of colonial strategies for power, while Tanika Sarkar's *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation* suggests that the figure of the widow was used similarly by nationalists as a symbol of the pristine, spiritual essence of India. Building upon the work of these feminist theorists, in this paper, I suggest that the widow becomes the subject of the narrative of her life only in late-nineteenth-early twentieth century Bengali domestic fiction, written by male bhadrak writers who used the novel form to put forward their social critique of orthodox Hindu society. In her chapter, "Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Bengal," Sarkar focuses on the figure of the Hindu widow, who remains unaccounted for in Chatterjee's theorization of the nation. She argues that the widow enables the construction of a pure spiritual sphere because "[S]trict ritual observances root [her] body in ancient India, thus miraculously enabling her to escape foreign domination. The cloth she wears is necessarily indigenous, the water she drinks

is to be carried from the sacred river and not through foreign water pipes...Ergo, the nation needs ascetic widowhood". Sarkar's theorization of the nation, then, foregrounds the widow's spirituality, thus separating her further from the outer sphere of materiality, which Sarkar signifies as "foreign domination." Her insistence on the widow's "asceticism" excludes the possibility of her sexuality, the desires of her body, its materiality. Once again, the widow is relegated to the "ancient," and the traditional; she is outside modernity, even as she lives within it.

The first novel to deal exclusively with this issue was Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Bisha Briksha* [The Poison Tree] (1873), which was soon followed by *Krishnakanter Uil* [Krishnakanta's Will] (1878); in both novels, widow protagonists fall in love with married men and eventually destroy the men and their households. The widow's illicit love for a man other than her deceased husband was a concern that persisted in the Bengali literary imagination because a few years later, Rabindranath Tagore reworked Bankimchandra's plot in his novel *Chokher Bali* [A Grain of Sand in the Eye] (1902), and Saratchandra Chatterjee reworked both novels in *Charitraheen* [The Characterless One] (1913) and *Srikanta* (1917-1934). All three novelists were involved in varying degrees with the nationalist struggle, and thus they were all concerned with the "women's question" in different ways. As a staunch Hindu, Bankimchandra was primarily concerned with the way that the widow was reconfiguring the traditional structure of Hindu society. On the other hand, as a reformer deeply invested in women's right, Saratchandra suggested that Hindu, caste

society was to blame for the injustices perpetrated on the widow.

These debates occurred in local journals and newspapers, as well as in fiction. The serial publication of novels in reputed literary journals such as *Jamuna*, *Bharatbarsha* and *Prabashi*, edited by famous luminaries such as Rabindranath Tagore and Dwijendranath Roy, made them the subject of serious consideration for the bhadralokreading public, who voiced their concerns and often compelled the author to reconsider the plot of his story. For instance, Sarat Chandra's *Charitraheen*, a novel that dealt with a widowed maid-servant's love for her master, provoked moral outrage in the reading public who could not stomach the thought of a maid-servant much less a widowed maid-servant falling in love with her master.

In a letter to his friend and editor Pramatha, Sarat Chandra writes: 'I'm not bothered about my name, people may think whatever they about me...and whether it [*Charitraheen*] is immoral or moral people will read it eagerly...Phoni [the editor of *Jamuna*] has written that people await my stories eagerly. Let it be! "Time" alone will judge me for people make good decisions and bad decisions. To worry about their opinions is a mistake' (Chatterjee, 2004). Despite his disavowal of public opinion, Saratchandra was compelled to change the unseemly conclusion of *Charitraheen* because of societal pressure. Thus, it is evident that fiction was an important medium for the dissemination of ideas and an agent of social change.

In this context of an evolving nationalist discourse centred on the figure of the widow, fiction provided an alternative



**Fig.1**

means through which writers could explore the figure of the widow. In what follows, I read the aforementioned novels as offering alternate trajectories for the widow's life. Through a close reading of these novels, I argue that the widow character of late-nineteenth century bhadrakok fiction performs 'satitva' or devotion in an attempt to gain conjugality, domesticity and in some cases salvation for herself. Nineteenth-century bhadrakok society privileged a particular Hindu notion of devotion or 'satitva', which variously means chastity/devotion, and was a term used specifically for the good wife's undying devotion to her husband.

Within the context of bhadrakok society, the wife embodied 'satitva' or wifely devotion to gain god through service to her god-like husband. Once the wife became a widow she was supposed to renounce all the bhadrakok signs of femininity, such as coloured saris, jewellery and long hair. Perhaps the most significant sign of the wife's adherence to bhadrakok norms of



**Fig. 2**

femininity is her asexual 'satitva', her devotion to her husband, which will be her salvation and for which she is revered as a kulalakshmi. Therefore, the wife's ultimate act of 'satitva' is her self-immolation on her husband's funeral pyre; thus, the widow's very existence suggests that she has failed in her 'satitva' to her husband.

Within this socio-historical context, the widow character's embodiment of 'satitva' is a contradiction in terms: it cannot exist because the object of her 'satitva' has passed away, yet it exists. I argue that in an attempt to resolve the question of the widow's place within bhadrakok society, the novelists created the widow as the double of the wife. Thus, while the wife represented an asexual 'satitva', the widow was her sexually aware counterpart. However, because the widow is not the kulalakshmi, her inhabitation of 'satitva' is necessarily different from the kulalakshmi's asexual 'satitva'. I argue that widow replaces the kulalakshmi's asexual 'satitva' with a 'satitva'a that is sexual and spiritual at the same time. In making this

argument, I come up against Dipesh Chakrabarty's theorization of the widow character of bhadrakalok fiction as embodying primarily an asexual 'satitva'. (Chakrabarty, 2002)

Dipesh Chakrabarty sees the spiritual and the sexual as binary oppositions. Therefore for Chakrabarty, the widow's 'satitva' is characterized by pabitrata or purity and not sexuality. He argues that while the post-Enlightenment European subject possesses interiority and autonomy, the widow, as a product of an indigenous modernity, is characterized by pabitrata rather than sexuality. However, I argue that what differentiates these widow characters from the European post-Enlightenment subject is not their inhabitation of a Westernized modernity, but their performance of sexual desire which is intertwined with a longing-- not for autonomy (like the European subject)-- but for sexual *and* spiritual subjugation by the lord.

In making this argument, I build upon the theoretical framework of agency articulated by Saba Mahmood in her anthropological work on women's participation in the Mosque movement in Cairo. (Mahmood, 2004) Mahmood argues that in the context of Islamic Egypt, women realize themselves by acquiescing to the norms of Islam which necessitate submission to patriarchal authority, and thus, 'what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency—but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment'. The word Islam means submission, and

thus the "discourses and structures of subordination" are intrinsic to leading a virtuous Islamic life.

Drawing upon Mahmood's work, I suggest that a similar system of submission underlies Hindu practices of devotion, especially as they were articulated in Bengal. Bengali Hinduism was largely characterized by the particular strand of Vaishnavism promulgated by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a sixteenth-century saint, who believed that Lord Krishna could be achieved through intense loving devotion, which entailed a complete submission of the self to Krishna's will. This form of worship was known as *bhakti* or devotion and became a central feature of Bengali Hinduism. Within the context of late-nineteenth century Bengal, this Hindu system of devotion had been formalized into the exclusive worship of Lord Krishna, over and above other Hindu gods.

In her essay on the itinerant saint Mirabai, Kumkum Sangari suggests that bhakti was an inherently feminized form of worship, and was especially apparent in its Bengali manifestation "The 'feminisation' of worship is more pronounced in Vaishnava texts. This tendency was later foregrounded by Bengal Vaishnavism wherein "The essential nature of all men is that of a gopi [cowgirl] in the Bhagwat Purana, one of the relations it is possible to have with Krishna, among others, is that of a lover as the gopis do ". (Sangari, 1989)

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's vision of bhakti was popularized in the late-nineteenth century by Bijoy Krishna Goswami. He was an ardent worshipper of Krishna, who became associated with

Rammohun Roy's Brahmo Samaj, but eventually withdrew from it to revive Krishna worship in the tradition of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: "Bijoy's [Krishna Goswami] partial disillusionment with the [Brahmo] Samaj led him to study the *Chaitanya Caritamrita*, a biography of the great bhakti saint, under the guidance of Harimohun Pramanil. Bijoy visited various Vaishnava gurus but did not break with the Samaj. Instead in 1869 he returned to his work as a Brahmo missionary, yet Bijoy increasingly blended devotional Vaishnavism as taught by Chaitanya with his own concept of Brahmoism...in 1899 he finally broke completely with the Brahmo movement and began his career as a spokesman of revived Vaishnavism". (Bannerji, 2001) Devotion had been subsumed by the overly ritualistic practices of Brahmanic Hinduism, in which men were the rightful worshippers of god, while women could hope only to reach god by worshipping their godlike husbands.

The widow's desire for subjugation, then, stems from a larger discourse of devotion as subjugation. More specifically, I suggest that the widow's devotion is modelled on that of another widow, Mirabai, a fifteenth-century itinerant saint, who repudiated her lawful husband and considered Krishna her lord. The figure of Mirabai was popularized by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal and Mira's ecstatic worship of Krishna was taken to be paradigmatic of the true bhakta's (devotee's) worship of god. This form of Krishna bhakti popularized by Mirabai gained currency in Bengal and at the turn of the nineteenth century it was customary for

Bengali women who had been abandoned by society, such as widows, to follow Mirabai's example and become Vaishnavis or devotees of Krishna. However, the priests of the temple, upon whose goodwill these destitute women depended, often misused their power and compelled them to become prostitutes. Therefore, the term Vaishnavi came to be synonymous with a "loose woman" and consequently, the term for prostitute in Bengali and Hindustani was baishya or vaishya, a modification of Vaishnavi.

The Bengali intelligentsia was very concerned with the liminal status of these women, who were once respectable kulalakshmis but had now been driven to prostitution. Bankimchandra condemned the sect of Vaishnavis because it was separated "by a very slight line from the utter negation of female morality which constitutes prostitution" (Sen, 2003). Saratchandra on the other hand drew sympathetic portraits of these unfortunate women in his fiction. In *Srikanta*, Kamal Lata, a minor character, is a widow who has become a Vaishnavi, and is the epitome of selfless devotion, but is charged with immorality because of her association with the sect of Vaishnavas. It is evident then, that the widow characters of these Bengali novels are drawn from the larger cultural context in which widows became Vaishnavis, and thus their devotion has the same sexual-spiritual tenor as Mirabai's devotion:

"Though Mira appears in some ways to choose and advocate an ascetic way of life, her *bhajans* [devotional songs] are filled with sensuous yearning...In a sense it is the

female, voice-with its material basis in patriarchal subjugation which provides the emotional force of self abasement and willed servitude....The sensuous symbolism and performative mode transgress the austere conventions of upper caste widowhood, but what occurs at the same time is that her songs re-evolve a new relation of bondage which is now replete with desire” (Sangari, 1989).

The term ‘*sativa*’ comes from *Sati*, the mythological goddess who was married to the Lord Siva. Legend has it that *Sati*’s father, Lord Daksha invited all his daughters and their husbands to a great holy sacrifice, but neglected to invite his daughter *Sati* and her husband Siva because he was embarrassed of his son-in-law’s hermetic appearance and unpredictable behaviour. When *Sati* learnt of the sacrifice she went to her father’s palace and threw herself into the holy sacrificial fire because her father had insulted her husband. The term ‘*sati*’ then, came to be synonymous with the good woman, and by extension the good woman was the one who would fulfill her duty by her husband by willingly immolating herself on his funeral pyre, and thus the term ‘*satitva*’ came to connote devotion both conjugal and spiritual to one’s husband whether alive or deceased.

It is tempting to read the widow’s desire for ‘*satitva*’ as an act of rebellion, and therefore of feminist agency, in keeping with the discourse of liberal humanism, in which agency is synonymous with rebellion. However, this is a peculiar rebellion, if it indeed is a rebellion because through this “rebellion,” the widow defies one set of norms (of ascetic widowhood) in favour

of another set of norms (of sexual and spiritual subjugation) in the hope of limiting her freedom.

Freud defines the unhomely as that ‘which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression’ (Freud, 1955). He discusses the unhomely in the context of a psychoanalytic reading of Hoffman’s ‘The Sand-man,’ where he suggests that Nathaniel’s childhood castration complex reveals itself in adulthood as the fear of having his eyes plucked out, and the manifestation of this fear is the unhomely. While Freud used his understanding of the unhomely for the purpose of psychoanalysis, Homi Bhabha adopts the notion of the unhomely in the colonial context. Bhabha suggests that the colonized subject’s condition of unhomeliness arises from the “deep historical displacement” (Bhabha, 1997) caused by colonial categories of differentiation (such as race), which alienate her from herself, and cause her to experience the “insider’s outsideness.” I contend that this displacement from the self, this experience of the ‘insider’s outsideness’ arises not from the racist ideology of the colonial state, but from the patriarchal norms of bhadrlok society, which decree asexual asceticism for the widow.

In other words, the widow’s ‘*satitva*’ is illegitimate because she is a widow. Therefore, in the novels, the widow’s performance of ‘*satitva*’ is at odds with the bhadrlok home because in these novels the home is metonymic for the nation. In her analysis of the construction of women in imperialist and nationalist discourse, Inderpal Grewal extends Chatterjee’s argument to suggest that “Indian women’s

location in the women's part of the house becomes the symbol of what is sacred and private for Indian nationalist culture" (Grewal, 1996). If the home is the repository of nationalist culture, and nationalist culture makes no space for the sexual-spiritual 'satitva' of the widow, then similarly, there is no space for the widow's 'satitva' within the bhadrak home. In the novels, both the widow and her lover are compelled to leave the bhadrak home and set up a home elsewhere. The second home, then, becomes an externalization of the widow's interiority, of her sexual-spiritual 'satitva', and thus another site of the unhomey. The second, illegitimate home cannot be housed within nationalist discourse or its extension, the bhadrak novel, and hence the narrative usually ends with the destruction of both manifestations of the unhomey: the second home and the widow. Bhadrak society's refusal to make space for the widow or the second home ultimately leads to its own destruction as the widow's enactment of her sexual-spiritual satitva destabilizes its very foundations.

Both the widows Savitri and Kiranmayi are deprived of sexual pleasures throughout their lives. However, Savitri remains chaste and prizes her sexual purity more than the unalloyed love of Satish. She is not prepared to encounter the consequent social condemnation if she gives way to her fervour. In contrast, Kiranmayi gives way to her passions at every opportunity but outshines all other women in terms of her unique personality and individuality. Binodini is a contrast through her autonomy and her refusal to be bent and subjugated by daunting patriarchal customs for widows. She understands very clearly that being a widow she would have to strive for her own

survival and self-dependence.

In *Charitrahin* and *Srikanta*, Sarat Chandra projects several widows as 'fallen women', yet depicts their room as a patch of purity amidst an abject atmosphere of general squalor. It might be read as the purity of their virtue and integrity despite the adversity which they encounter. In *Charitraheen*, Satish respectfully removes his shoes before entering Savitri's room in the servant's tenement, which is otherwise inhabited by women of dubious reputation. The presence of books neatly arranged and the paraphernalia of worship reveals to Satish her high caste and refined tastes. Similarly Rajlakshmi's room in her mansion in Patna is simple, tidy and contains minimum furniture in contrast to the lavish style of the rest of the house. Kamallata's room is cosy, austere and inviting although the remaining akhra is mean and wretched.

Binodini (*Chokher Bali*) had been educated by an English tutor. Tagore visualised that the impact of western education, if used judiciously, would immensely assist the progress of the nation. Sarojini in Sarat's *Charitraheen* also adheres to western culture. She holds her English education in high esteem. Tagore's Binodini reads Bankim's novel *Bishabriksha*, a story of a widow who ruins a household and thereby reads what she should not do as a widow. It shows how Indian women became the consumers of the new identity for women. These are the seeds of the new woman cast through the characters studied in this paper. Keeping in mind these feminist reflections it may be derived that a 'Novum Femme' was being evolved by Bankim Chandra, Sarat Chandra and Tagore combining eclectically the positive aspects of the women characters

in their fiction. It is the contemporary perception of woman's status that gives these women their uniqueness. They boldly exhibit their firm resistance to the tyranny that patriarchy inflicts on them. Confidence, determination, candour, creativity self-dependence and sincerity are some of the positive traits that may be distilled from these characters to create a kind of a woman who may not exist as a character in the works discussed so far, but may aid in building-up the image of a new woman who could become the role-model of the present-day society and the generations to come.

Tanika Sarkar's *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation* suggests that the figure of the widow was used similarly by nationalists as a symbol of the pristine, spiritual essence of India. In her chapter, "Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Bengal," Sarkar focuses on the figure of the Hindu widow, who remains unaccounted for in Chatterjee's theorization of the nation. In his book, *The Nation and its Fragments*, Partha Chatterjee argues that *bhadralok* women were the repositories of an asexual spirituality; a woman who defied this norm was considered Westernized and 'would invite the ascription of all that the 'normal' woman (mother/sister/wife/daughter) is not—brazen, avaricious, irreligious, sexually promiscuous'. Sarkar argues that the widow enables the construction of a pure spiritual sphere because "[S]trict ritual observances root [her] body in ancient India, thus miraculously enabling her to escape foreign domination. The cloth she wears is necessarily indigenous, the water she drinks is to be carried from the sacred

river and not through foreign water pipes...Ergo, the nation needs ascetic widowhood". (Sarkar,2001) Sarkar's theorization of the nation, then, foregrounds the widow's spirituality, thus separating her further from the outer sphere of materiality, which Sarkar signifies as "foreign domination." Her insistence on the widow's "asceticism" excludes the possibility of her sexuality, the desires of her body, its materiality. Once again, the widow is relegated to the "ancient," and the traditional; she is outside modernity, even as she lives within it. All three novelists were involved in varying degrees with the nationalist struggle, and thus they were all concerned with the "women's question" in different ways. As a staunch Hindu, Bankimchandra was primarily concerned with the way that the widow was reconfiguring the traditional structure of Hindu society. On the other hand, as a reformer deeply invested in women's right, Sarat Chandra suggested that Hindu, caste society was to blame for the injustices perpetrated on the widow.

In her study of the widow character, Susie Tharu writes "It could be argued, and I am going to do so, that when a writer features a widow as protagonist he or she is, consciously or unconsciously, making an intervention in a debate centred on this figure...Widow stories therefore are invariably also subtly modulated historical engagements with questions of governmentality and citizenship". (Bannerji, 2001) Following this, I too suggest that the widow characters of Bengali fiction of late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century must be read as the *bhadralok* mediation between the private

sphere of bhadrak social and moral codes, especially that of Satitva and the public sphere of colonial law at the face of the gradual development of the budding notions of Human Rights.

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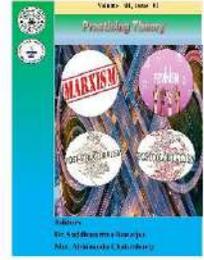
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## Tracing Gender differences in Vrata Katha and Pnachali: A Feminist Reading

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### ABSTRACT

Gender has always substantiated itself to be an important category in religious studies to evaluate the position of men and women ; as the figure of the Indian woman in maximum places is represented as an inherently oppressive and no autonomous. Hinduism, the world’s third largest religion with a wide-ranging cast of characters(both men and women), displays a views on their position .Vrata kathas and Pnachalis also consists of various characters consisting of both the genders, which actually helps us out to assess their roles and position as many of them are still performed in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Using qualitative thematic content analysis along with Linda Lindsey’s ‘Gender Roles- A Sociological Perspective,’ this study explores the roles of culture and gender in Vrata Kathas and Pnachalis. This study also deals with how gender inequality is influenced by the culture; but besides that there is somehow also a balance , at least there is no provocation of discrimination to treat the women indifferently. As we can trace out that there are quite a few examples where the vrata can be performed by both the genders like ‘Vaimi Ekadashi Vrata’, ‘Janmastami Vrata’ ‘Shivratri Vrata’; And even in the vrata like ‘Etupuja and Ashoka Sasthi’ we can find out that the girls are treated with affection by their parents. The fact is that the women are depicted as a compassionate and acquiescent one and their desires are limited to the family members and households and basically the foremost quality they must have is that they have to be beautiful ;but one must not forget that there is no indication to treat them indifferently or devaluate them rather than we can say that in both of the pnachali and vrat katha we do found that both the gender should follow all the sacrifices to maintain the household .Thus this study concludes that in both of the kathas and pnachalis there is somehow a balance between treating both the genders and whatever discrimination is there ,is not because of only men create those but because both the genders are also influenced by the culture.

### 1.Introduction:

All over the world, religion is formed around a divine, supernatural figure, while the idea of the divine, supernatural figure varies from religion to religion. Each one is formed around different concepts of what is means to be male and female. Furthermore, the religion of a culture usually directly corresponds or is influenced by the culture’s gender structure. Therefore, the religious structure and the gender structure work together to form and define a culture, creating the

defining structures of equality and uniformity.

No doubt , two significant areas of human life are gender and religion; and human beings are pretty much affected by both of them. Gender is a useful category of analysis in religious studies. One reason for this is that studying religion provides an opportunity to explore the most basic ideas shaping and affecting the lives of women (Baker, 2014). People’s ideas concerning their identities and communities (King and Beattie, 2005). These ideas of identities and communities are formed, maintained,

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and revived through rituals and stories (Jones, 82014). That is to say, religious stories educate and provide a sense of morality the per formative acts of its virtuous and no virtuous characters and people often emulate and mimic these acts in their lives in order to feel a sense of belongingness to their religious communities. This has implications regarding how gender is understood and acted upon in the context of a particular religion. Furthermore, one must keep in mind that the relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal, religious systems are locked in a circle of mutual influences with social norms and patterns of social organizations.

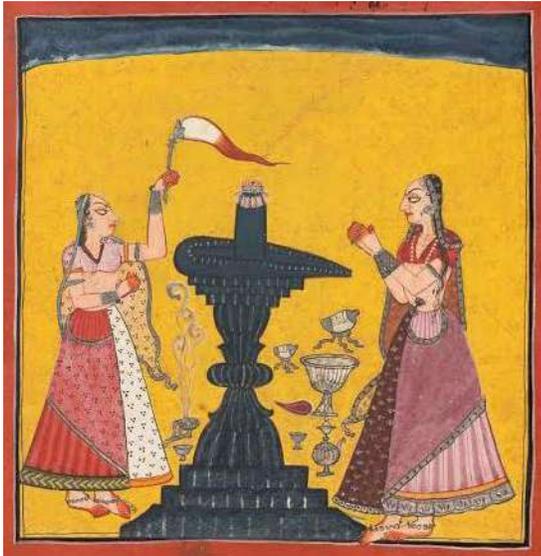
## **2. Origins of Vrata katha and Pnachalis:**

Vrata is a Sanskrit word that means "vow, resolve, devotion", and refers to the practice of austerity, particularly in matters related to foods and drinks by people in Hindu and Jaina culture, as part of a pious observance or prayers seeking health, fertility, long life or happiness for her loved ones. Derived from the root 'vr'- the word is found over 200 times in the Rigveda. It is also found in other Vedic literature including the Upanishads, but the context suggests that the meaning of the word in the Vedic era was not as a personal pious observance, and instead was related to dharma, in the sense of inner principles and universal laws that keep order in the cosmos. Every man's vocation, as in hymn of the Rigveda, is called his Vrata. Thus, whatever profession one is devoted to, resolves to do his best in, is deemed Vrata in the Vedic literature. The act

of sacrifice, in another context such as in hymn 1.93.8 of the Rigveda, is also a

vrata. The post-Vedic texts use the term as a form of self-imposed restrictions on food and behavior, sometimes with a vow. The concept evolves as a form of religious votive rite, personalized and interiorized, one that does not need a public ceremony or a private one, but that is privately observed. Its meaning retains a sense of personal sacrifice (fast, or restricted diet), in exchange for hope, accompanied with a prayer to a personally defined or cherished divinity, and propelled by the wish for the well being of one's loved ones. The Grihya-sutras (domestic life manuals), the Puranas and the epics describe the practice particularly in the context of Vedic students, brahmins and women, as "devotion, solemn vow, holy practice, resolve, dedication".Vrata is a religious votive rite, a vow often involving abstinence from food, particularly common with women. It may be accompanied with elaborate prayers, other rites such as charity or visit to a temple, sometimes observed during festivals or with 'sanskar' ceremonies. It is found in ancient Hindu texts such as the Vedas, but in a fluid context that is not in the sense of pious observances. The Hindu Upanishads conceptualize Vrata as an ethical and behavioral discipline process, one where food is respected, the needy helped, the stranger welcomed, the student carries on the pursuit of knowledge. The Puranas link the practice to the empowering concept of Shakti of a woman, while the Dharamashastras link the practice to 'prayachastira' ,one possible form of penance through the concept of for both men and women. A vrata is a personal practice, typically involves no priest, but may involve personal prayer, chanting, reading of spiritual texts, social get

together of friends and family, or silent meditation. A Vrata may be motivated by



**Fig. 1**

many factors and is observed by both genders, but far more often by women. The most common are temporal wishes, such as the speedy recovery of a sick child, success or happiness for a loved one, fertility, ward off negativity or dangers, make prayers and good wishes for someone departing for a distant place. In the case of women, the prayers are usually on behalf of brother(s), children or husband, but sometimes for her own prosperity, mind-body balance and health. Sociologists who have interviewed women who observe Vrata report that the practice is explained, according to Anne Pearson, as something that gives "peace of mind", that she has made an effort to the best of her abilities and out of duty towards those important to her in her life, she has a sense of contentment in her heart and intellect, and thus she feels she has achieved something. It is also an expression of care

and love, a reminder of ethical principles of the Hindu traditions. A Vrata is sometimes a result of voluntary vow or part of practice by Bramhacharya (student) or Garhastra (householders) that they feel as obligatory before or during certain spiritual or religious practice. Utsavas, or religious festivals, share some elements



**Fig. 2**

with vratas, incorporating the practice of restraining food and similar austerity, as a part of the festive observance. Some Vrats are for religious or soteriological goals some are for nonreligious reasons, some celebration of one's cultural tradition, and others are a form of quid pro quo sacrifice to get or give divine help to someone. Another reason for observing Vratas is the belief that they are a form of sorry, self-correction, penance and expiatory. However, a Vrata can consist of many different activities. Other examples of Vrata activity include fasting, burning incense sticks, prayers before a deity, meditating and such activities. The śmrtis go into great detail on the subject of vratas, discussing even the details pertaining to what type of flowers should be used in worship.

Men and women, state the Dharamashastras and the Puranas, can expiate their sins through the use of vratas.

For *prāyaścitta*, the Vratas are the second most discussed method in the Puranas, after the Tirtha.

A Vrata is observed either as an independent private ritual at a date of one's choice, as part of a particular ceremony such as wedding, or as a part of a major festival such as Diwali (Lakshmi, festival of lights), Shivratri (Shiva), Navratri (Durga or Rama), Ekadashi (Krishna, Vishnu avatars).

A typical Vrata involves a fast for a fixed period of time, usually a full day, where either no food is eaten, or only one meal is eaten in the entire day, or only a certain food such as milk is consumed during the period of the Vrata. Other observances include sleeping on the ground or a short sleep, or alternatively Yoga with meditation, reading scripture and charitable giving.

Some Vratas are more elaborate, such as those associated with major festivals or tirtha or rite of passage ceremonies, involving weeks of preparation, the drawing of Vrata mandala from various colored grain flour, wall decoration, cleaning of the house, special bath and festive dress, charity, a visit to a Hindu Temple for a 'darsan' of the inner sanctum. Kane lists hundreds of Vrata found in Hindu texts. Vrata is a Hindu ritual that has been defined and described differently over the history of Hinduism. However the term 'vrata' has roots in 'vr' which refers "to choose or to will". Vrat hence is a noun which means 'what is willed' or 'will'. It can be literally translated as religious vow or fast. The meaning of the term ranges from command to vows. On one hand, where the meaning command is associated with obligation of vrata, the word vow gives an idea of vrat being optional. Obligatory vrata have been

mentioned in the old texts like Manusmriti. However optional vrata are more popular in contemporary practices .

Further, these obligatory and optional vrata can be categorized into different categories. These categories can be understood on the basis of (1) time that the vrata begin, (2) duration of vrata, (3) deity to whom the vrata are directed to. The time of vrata is dependent on Hindu lunar calendars. Vrata are performed for the different position of moon like no moon vrata (Amavasya vrata), full moon vrata (Purnima vrata). Similarly, other vrata that are performed yearly or weekly like karvachauth is also observed based on moon's position. The saptvaar vrata are based on the Gregorian/Julian calendar. Secondly, the duration of some vrata like Navratri can be of 8 consecutive days and some vrat are just observed weekly or yearly. Thirdly, different vrata are performed for different deities. The Monday vrata for instance can be observed for Lord Shiva and Purnima vrata is observed for the Moon God. Vrata can be performed for multiple deities and gods, and for multiple reasons. Some vrata are performed to resolve woes of life and getting what one desires. Vrata like these aim at bettering a person's life by pleasing the deity being worshipped for vrat .These vrata can be observed by a person by their own will and faith in a particular god or can be recommended as a upaya (remedy) by priests and astrologers. Other religious purposes can be to gain bhakti (objects or enjoyment), mukti (salvation) and the destruction of sins. Psychoanalytically vrats are considered to be important tool for cultural socialization (Wadley, 1983).While there exists some amount of diversity regarding vrata practices, several constituents remain the same for the most

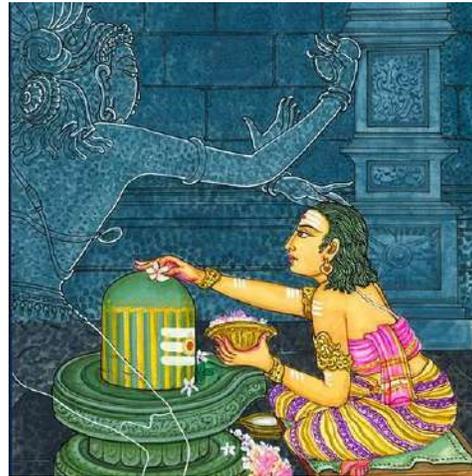
of them . Importantly, most of the vrata include some kind of abstinence from food. To understand this abstinence, we need to understand the concept of three different categories of food. These are 1) Sattvic, 2) Rajasic 3) Tamasic and they are all said to



**Fig. 3**

have specific properties and proper and improper uses. Firstly, Sattvic food, that supplies human body with purity, goodness and calmness includes fruits, water, vegetables, dairy products etc. Secondly, Rajasic food, includes coffee, tea, hot spices etc. Thirdly, Tamasic food, that leads to death, darkness, destruction and ignorance includes meat, onion, garlic, alcohol and stale food. During vrata, there is a prohibition on Tamasic and Rajasic food and Sattvic food is allowed with different restrictions during different vrata. For instance, although citrus fruits are Sattvic, their consumption on Santoshi maa(mother) vrata (Friday vrata) is prohibited. Along with abstinence, ritual of pooja is common to all the vrata. Pooja includes auspicious items such as bangles, toys, kumkum (vermillion), roli (in red sacred thread), flowers. Moreover, it includes lighting oil lamp, singing aarti (pray-songs), and importantly reading the katha related to the fast. Details about these

prohibitions and other rituals to be done during a vrata are usually written in thin pamphlets, available for specific vrata, that can be bought from temples and street markets. These thin pamphlets are instructional and educational in nature. These pamphlets explain who can perform



**Fig. 4**

the vrata, and how to perform the vrata. Hence, performativity is clearly included in the conceptualization of vrata. Importantly, these pamphlets also have narratives (vrata kathas) that are supposed to be told or read out loud during the pooja ritual of vrata. These narratives often portray a person taking part in the vrata ritual itself for particular reasons. If not read aloud, it is supposed that one might not get the fruit of vrata (Wadley, 1986, 229). The mere hearing and reading of the stories is aid to be able to provide health, wealth and prosperity. Menzies (2007) mentions a few narratives where he saw and heard people talking vrata kathas aloud, even if they were alone. On being asked they said that this is how it is supposed to be done. The assumption underlying it is that holy stories or a part of it might be heard by someone passing by and hence they might get the results of the karma. Vrata kathas usually

have an aim of providing the information about vrata in an entertaining way. These kathas give practical information (What to wear, eat etc.) and educate regarding moral conduct (how to behave). Moral conduct is conveyed through values about dharma, family and responsibility. These stories postulate the relationship between the karma and their results. This causal relationship can relate two different yugas (ages).

If we look minutely then we can observe that the vrata kathas are nothing but some stories or rituals that generally deals with the good luck that can be brought to the family by the women by practicing them and most interestingly all the vrata kathas and pnachalis are practiced by woman for the men and there is no single vrata kathas where the welfare of only woman is wished for.

As the vratas and Pnachalis are derived from the Vedic period and we all know that Vedic age has always been conservative and the women as a individual being was never ever accepted by Vedic age, women were looked as inferior as status. Women were treated as objects for fulfillment of passion. An ideologist cum litterarturer Sukumari Bhattacharya in her books clearly shows up how the position of women has always been.

### **3. Gender hierarchies in vrat kathas and Pnachalis:**

The relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal. Religious systems are locked in a circle of mutual influences with social norms and patterns of social organizations. We learn very early about the categories of gender in our culture that individuals are either male or female and that elaborate beliefs behaviors and meanings. So basically it is the culture which sets a barrage as well as norms which both the genders follows consciously or unconsciously. As the ideal women of India are appreciated based on her kulinism and characters like fidelity, charity, servitude towards her husband and his family, nonfickle mind behaviour, honesty, purity and many. By fascinating and conditioning women based on these characteristics given by society Indian masculine egotism made women a dump driven cattle from womb to tamp. So when both the genders perform the vrats or read out pnachali their purposes varies. To women vrata are a way to their 'stri-dharma' and as per the ritual it is only the women's performance of vrata that can save her son, brother and husband from death. Vrata is mainly a primary vehicle available to women for the recognized pursuits of religious duties and aims. If we take a notice meticulously we can figure out that the women performed the vratas for the welfare of their family or for their husband, sons or father and brothers, they never want anything for themselves; the individuality of their personality is no doubt missing; whereas the males perform the vrats for themselves or for the family and no doubt they perform the vratas very selectively and most importantly when the males do read the pnachalis they read it out as a priest whereas the women listen to them. Basically

the world religions all agree on the respect for women and their crucial role in family life, especially with emphasis on women as mothers, and wives, but they do not however advocate emancipation in the sense of total equality with men.

#### **4. Analysis and findings**

In this section, firstly, I would mention a few literary observations regarding the vrata kathas and panchalis.

While reading the text, I observed a few features of the vrata kathas. These features are important to understand the result. There are three main literary observations. First, the stories are written without punctuation marks. This feature gives a sense of oral tradition to these written stories and these lines are sung following a pattern closer to rhythmic talk and though the vrata kathas are mainly performed by women but while reading them out it is done by both the genders unlike the sanskrit mantras of pujas which is believed can be read out by men only (though this type of stereotypes are breaking now-a-days).

If we go through the texts like ' Pather Panchali' which has the fragrances of rural bengal, we can see that in it vrata kathas has taken place as in one scene Durga do obey some rituals like 'punni pukur' vrata in the fear of her mother and where she recites some rhymes of that vrata katha and we can easily find out that the rhymes do contain some lines which meanwhile means that if some girl have a brother then it is no doubt a sheer blessing, and even the objective of the vrata is to find a suitable match. Another example of this kind can be

traced out in Ashapura Devi's novel 'Prothom Protishruti' where the protagonist Satyabati is represented as a free spirited rebellious girl, who is more than a kitchen milieu; but still we find that she does believe in these vrata kathas and when her father Ramkali told her to not practice these kind of stuffs, she finds herself in a dilemma; as it is her culture in which she is used to since her birth.

Literature is called the mirror of the society and no doubt through many of the literature of the bengal it is clearly portrayed that vrata kathas and panchali do have a significant place in the lives of the commons.

#### **5. Conclusion:**

The relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal, religious systems are locked in a circle of mutual influence with social norms and patterns of social organization (Sinclair, 1986). As the relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal, religious systems are locked in a circle of mutual influence with social norms and patterns of social organization (Sinclair, 1986). Vrata Kathas and Panchalis are a major part of the Hindu religion and in both of them gender plays a major role and no doubt there is differentiation and this differentiation leads also to inequality by provided stereotypes. In general, genders of the opposite sex devalue woman who is regarded as being inferior to man, without capacity to reason, as it appears in Aristotle or Jacques Rousseau works. Basically woman appears as a reflection of the man being unable to decide her own destiny.

So in conclusion we can say that no matter how it represented both the genders but one

thing is sure that religion itself can also be a driver of the trend towards gender equality or inequality.

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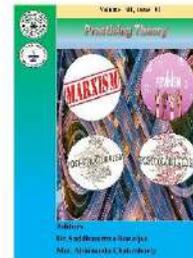
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# Practising Theory

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## Genders in Life and Cinema: Kaushik Ganguly's 'Arekti Premer Golpo' As a Microcosm

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### ABSTRACT

Gender and sex, though at the basic level are linguistic constructs, but the game of power is everywhere including gender difference. We forget about the 'before the law' thing and just like in a patriarchal society men overpower women, in a hetero-normative system, both men and women overpower the homosexual people. They seldom talk about the 'queer' people in a sensitive way. Kaushik Ganguly, in his Bengali film called 'Arekti Premer Golpo' creates a microcosm where there are people representing almost every kind of sexuality and the cinema is embedded with many layers of characterization and representation so that it can include the whole picture of the society within a single frame. Usually the gender-related films concentrate on a single sexuality, but Ganguly here creates a cosmos which is all inclusive. Besides this movie has a political importance as it is the first film on homosexuality to be shot after the Delhi High Court struck down portions of section 377 as unconstitutional with respect to homosexuality. Kaushik Ganguly's desperation of normalization of the 'queer' love is noticed from its subtitle 'Just Another Love Story'. The using of 'just' before 'another love story' says it all and the rest is presented in the engaging text ('Arekti Premer Golpo') which I selected to discuss. 'another love story' says it all and the rest is presented in the engaging text ('Arekti Premer Golpo') which I selected to discuss.

### 1. Introduction

The social and cultural construct of gender identity has always been based on the binary of masculinity and femininity. Though in the ancient Indian major texts like 'Kamasutra', 'The Mahabharata' etc we find transgender characters and homosexual relationships but many of those narratives have been erased and it has been done in other ages as well. In a hetero normative society, sexual preference has become an utopic idea.

We are encultured into a dual gender system, armoured by all the major institutions in the society. We have internalized it into such an extent that, "When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is "male or female"? And you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty." (Freud 26) People are expected to conduct, perform and clothe themselves appropriate to their sex or suffer punishment for deviating from the social norm.

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In fact it is after the abolishment of 377 act that Indian people in a large scale got to know about the pain , agony and trauma of the homoerotic people around them . Though it has both positive and negative effects we won't elaborate the issue. Rather we will concentrate on Kaushik Ganguly's 'Arekti Premer Golpo' , the first film made on homosexuality after the anti - liberal act was abolished. So the film has a historical relevance.

Ganguly's 'Arekti Premer Goplo' reveals its essence in its very suggestive subtitle 'Just Another Love Story'. The application of the word 'just' signifies that eroticism doesn't need a determinator before it. Homo or hetero, love pain suffering are central to human existence. The narrative technique , characterization and treatment with the plot is also absolutely different from other several homosexual narratives. Usually homosexual narratives deal with a singular sexuality and its troubles, those narratives often end in marriage of the homosexual couples and so on so forth. But Ganguly creates an alternative chaotic society in his movie. There are heterosexual people , there are transgender persons and bisexual as well. The story is an embedded narrative where there are basically two waves... the frame narrative is about a film - maker's personal life and personal experiences as a homosexual in a heteronormative society and the central narrative is about a documentary film based on the life of Chapal Bhaduri, a legendary actor of Bangla Jatrapala who used to act in the female characters of various iconic mythical stories and became renowned as Chapal Rani, the queen of the theatre. Now both the plots are intertwined as a whole and creates a cosmos, hence the film itself becomes an alternative world .

## 2.Aspect of love

Ganguly's 'Arekti Premer Golpo' begins with the song , "Oh gardener divine, be re-born next time as Radha / Only then will you know that your Radha suffers so" ( "Bonomali tumi poro jonome hoiyo radha") the expression of labour of love . Emotional attachment is the same within either homo or hetero eroticism! There is nothing to taboo people because of their non - heterosexuality.

Roop and Chapal Bhaduri have the parallel life of living, loving and suffering. Both Roop and Chapal are deep in love with Basu and Kumar Babu. But the way of loving and desire of living is different to the two. While Chapal desired to become the wife of Kumar Babu , Abhiroop doesn't want to be a wife. In fact, Abhiroop doesn't feel himself a female soul which Chapal feels intensely. There is a conversion between the two about it :

Abhiroop : Do you really think yourself a woman, Chapal-da?

Chapal : O my! If I thought I was a man, there would be no problem. Why? Don't you?

Abhiroop : No

Chapal : You don't think that lord started making you a woman and then made a mistake?

Abhiroop : No. I don't. I think women are one category, men are another, and we're a third category.(APB)

The relation between Roop and Rani even differs from the relation between Chapal and Gopa. Whether Rani desperately wants Roop , more after getting pregnant , on the other hand Gopa and Chapal share an

affectionate relation. At the end of the movie we see Abhiroop getting away from Rani's life, whereas Chapal receives a letter , Gopa is calling her .

Thus one can notice the subtlety of showing the relationship of two persons, one, a heteronormative woman and another a homosexual Male who love the same man.

Let us come to the bisexual male perspective now. Apparently the life of Basu and Kumar Babu seem parallel, both share the same sexual preference, but, as human being they have certain differences. Kumar Babu is actually belongs to the 'babu' class of Kolkata. He used to go to Chapal Rani's jatrapala and from there he was attracted towards Chapal. He used to go to forests during weekend with Chapal and lied to his wife.

On one hand he celebrates Chapal's success of acting in a hundred Jatrapala and on the other he uses Chapal for his family. Even apart from Gopa and Chapal he engages sexually with the young jatra-heroine which Raima Sen plays. Kumar Babu is conscious about his identity in front of the society and henceforth he addresses Chapal as a male servant working for him for many years. Basically Kumar Babu turns out to be an utilitarian. In the case of Basu , he is confused about how to deal with the society and with the two loves he has.

Abhiroop once says to Basu,

“ It bothers you, hunh? That the law will catch you one day? “(APG)

This insightful remark of Abhiroop reveals Basu's fear of the society.

He really loves both Roop and Rani but cannot choose between the two or keep

balance in his life. Because of Basu's indecisiveness both his beloved suffer. Basu doesn't want to betray Roop but he has to do so and as a result he also turns out to be a sufferer. The director created Basu's character with such sensitivity that it provokes the thought of the suffering of a bisexual in audience's psyche.



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**

Another sensitive character is Uday acted by Jishu. Everyone will like Uday because of his positivity and helpful nature. It is Uday who understands Roop's pain and he is the first to ping Roop that he forces himself too much in front of everyone to prove that he is different . Uday remarks:

"Seems you are too desperate to prove a point" (APG)

Roop gets deeply moved by Uday.

### 3.The heteronormative perspective

Ganguly has not presented the heteronormative people dead against the homosexual. Rather they co-exist in such a way that at the end Roop is accepted by Prashanta as 'dada', a brother who , throughout the shooting period calls Roop as 'didi' (a sister) or madam ! Roop embraces Prashanta which metaphorically means the union of the homo and hetero.

Through the hairstyle, dressing and intimacy with Basu, Prashanta , like a typical subject of heterosexual hegemony , assumes Roop as an ambiguous gender and repeatedly calls Roop as madam or sister. Once Abhiroop replies Prashanta:

"Prashanta, if you call me Madam once more,I will make you buy imported sanitary napkins for me" !

But Prashanta's disbelief again is revealed in the statement in a car:

"There's an eating place ahead. With toilets. We can stop if you like." (APG)

Then Abhiroop replies:

"I can use the field. No problem I just don't need to now, ok?"(APG)

Abhi and Basu are always surrounded by people with heteronormative gaze . Their relationship is not limited in the closet like that of Chapal and Kumar Babu. So just as at one side the homosexual Basu and Abhiroop are trying to negotiate with the normative world, the heterosexual people also know about the homosexual affairs. There are recurrent shots in the film having intimate communication of Roop and Basu in places surrounded by the 'straight' people.

There is a reporter who came with the interest on how Abhiroop , the filmmaker is showing the sexual life of , in his language, 'the' Chapal Bhaduri . Abhiroop immediately throws a question to the reporter that if he would make a documentary film on Amitabh



Fig.3

Bacchan , would he ask the same question because both Chapal Bhaduri and Amitabh are legendary actors! The reporter doesn't get the deep meaning of Abhiroop's words and makes fake news about the the film on media. And there are the neighbours of the colony where Chapal Bhaduri lived . They believed the fake news and insulted Abhiroop . They also threatened Chapal not to shoot for the film.

These instances nevertheless suggest the constructed and rooted ideas of gender in a normative society. The homophobic people cannot make out that homosexuality is also

normal. The politics of the normative power intentionally thrust the attribute 'abnormal' upon them. Michael Foucault observes how the power structure shapes the mindset of the common people, he writes in 'History of Sexuality( volume I)' :

On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law. The couple imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy.

A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom. The rest had only to remain vague; proper demeanor avoided contact with other bodies, and verbal decency sanitized one's speech. And sterile behavior carried the taint of abnormality; if it insisted on making itself too visible; it would be designated accordingly and would have to pay the penalty. (Foucault, 21-33)

So the power structure is always there at the backdrop of sexual preference as a

repressive apparatus. The showing of the rage, gaze, wonder etc of the heteronormative people gave the film an effect of verisimilitude.

#### **4. The different ideologies and intersections**

Abhiroop and Chapal do not share the same ideology about their identity. Since adulthood, when he first played the role of Marjina, Chapal wholeheartedly desired to be a woman. He thought that his soul is the resident of a wrong body.

He once remarks: "I sometimes wonder why God had no mind on his work. When he made me, gave me everything except the right body!

After ma died, they all ganged up on me insisted I shave my head.I said, No! My sister's not doing it, why should I?

O my, how they glared at me!

They had to shave my head and make a man of me." (APG)

But at the same time Chapal has fear of the society. He says that after the part of Devi Sheetala was over, he had to take off the women's attire and makeup and had to go home in shirt and pants, by bus or tram. Chapal Rani's suffering suppressed soul is revealed by this remark.

On the other hand Abhiroop categorizes himself as a third one apart from male or female and he desperately chooses to dress like himself. As Virginia Woolf writes "clothes are but the symbol of something hid beneath" (123) , Abhiroop reveals his sexual preference explicitly through his clothing ,styling of hair. He is not fearful of the

society. Besides, Abhiroop's mother seems to be a strong support in his life.

There is the aspect of intersectionality between Abhiroop and Chapal . Abhiroop's economical class helps him living a private life. He belongs to Delhi where homosexuality can be practiced publicly. Whereas Chapal Bhaduri belongs to a low economical class who doesn't have a singular person to support, his lover also didn't support him without taking his labour. These subtle differences of the subjects help the film turn out to be a microcosm where every single entity lives with difference and the real world itself is like that.

## 5. Conclusion

Hence Kaushik Ganguly's 'Arekti Premer Golpo' creates an all inclusive world in itself . Each character is portrayed with so much care and subtlety that it does not give one supremacy over others. Each subject is different from another, whether they have

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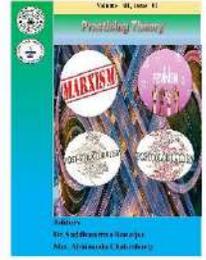
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any single similarity or not . That is why the two bisexual entities are in the core difference from one another; even all the heterosexual people do not carry the same temperament though they all inherit the normative power structure. The leading actors have their intersectional differences. This heterogeneous world neither neglects the power structure nor does it establish one over another. The first feature keeps its verisimilitude intact .So it gets relieved from becoming utopic and the second feature gives this particular film a different pattern among the mainstream films. Thus "Arekti Premer Golpo' is a story of including, of adding and not of creating binaries. The sensitive treatment with the theme, the all-inclusive pattern and the lucid yet powerful language breaks the barrier between normal and queer with so much ease that it set an example of thinking in another way about life, gender, sexuality and identity and love.



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## CHRISTINE’S DECISION TO STAND BY KROGSTAD AS A CONSCIOUS CONTRARY TO VICTORIAN SOCIAL HIERARCHY: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS. (From A Doll’s House by Henrik Ibsen)

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### ABSTRACT

Henrik Ibsen’s path-breaking play “A Doll’s House” (1879) has often been considered as a conscious contrary to contemporary Victorian Social Hierarchy in many occasions. The main purpose of this article is in the first place, to show how this play reflects victorian society concerning women’s situation and family life from a historical perspective. Secondly, it unfolds the variegation of concepts related to the private and public spheres to the text from the perspective of feminism. “A Doll’s House” can be re-examined from new post feminist perspectives in order to address contemporary social issues such as women’s position in family as well as in society.

Christine is a female character of Ibsen’s Doll’s House. Nora is the protagonist of this place and Christine is a childhood friend of Nora’s. Mrs. Linde is a widow and quite desperate for work. At one time she was in love with Krogstad, but chose to marry for money so that she could provide support for her mother and younger brothers. At the end of the play, she and Krogstad are reconciled, but it is Mrs. Linde who decides that Nora and Torvald must face their problems. Thus, she stops Krogstad from retrieving his letter

and moves the play towards its conclusion and this attempt of Christine’s is a feminist enterprise against the so called social knocks.

The play opens on the day before Christmas. Nora is visited by an old friend, Christine Linde. Mrs. Linde tells Nora that she has had some difficult problems and is seeking employment. Nora confesses to Mrs. Linde that she too has been desperate and recounts that she had been forced to borrow money several years earlier when her husband was ill. The money was necessary to finance a

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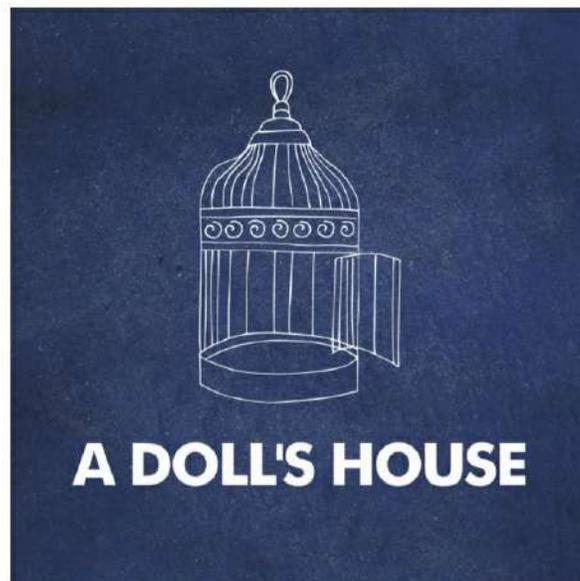
trip that saved her husband's life, but Nora forged her father's signature to secure the loan and lied to Torvald that her father had given them the money. Thus, she has been deceiving her husband for years as she worked to repay the loan. She tells this story to Mrs. Linde to demonstrate that she is an adult who is capable of both caring for her family and conducting business. Unfortunately Nora's secret is shared by Krogstad, an employee at Torvald's Bank. After a confrontation with Krogstad, Torvald decides to fire Krogstad and hire Mrs. Linde in his place.

Desperate after being fired by Torvald, Krogstad arrives at the house. Krogstad informs Nora that he has written a letter

detailing her crime (forging her father's signature of surety on the bond) and put it in Torvald's mailbox, which is locked. Nora explains to Mrs. Linde that Krogstad is blackmailing her about the earlier loan and she gives her Krogstad's card with his address, and asks her to try to convince him to relent.

Christine has found Krogstad and while she's talking to him about retrieving his letter, it comes out that Christine and Krogstad once had a relationship. Christine had to leave him for a more stable prospect, but since her husband has died, she would like to get back together with Krogstad.

## A Doll's House



**Fig.1**

Mrs.Linde: “I want to be a mother to someone and your children need a mother. We need each other. Nils, I have faith in your real character----- I can dare anything together with you”.

Krogstad is overjoyed at this news and says he will retrieve his letter, but Christine tells him not to. She says that Torvald needs to find out about Nora’s secret. After he learns the news, he runs back out of his office and he insults her, completely disappointed in her decisions, blaming her father for her bad morals.

Then a new letter arrives from Krogstad. It contains the contract and says that he is letting them off the hook. Torvald is elated and tears up the letter. He tells Nora he forgives her.

Ibsen’s was controversial in his presentation of ‘A Doll’s House’ challenging traditional stereotypes and social norms. Mrs.Linde and Krogstad play a significant role in showing Ibsen’s negative opinions of Victorian Society. Mrs.Linde has been left a lonely widow without job prospects and Krogstad has committed forgery and therefore has been shunned by the community. However,

it seems to be this that brings them together. Christine, Ibsen draws a strong work ethic within her character, contrasting her with the traditional female role of the Victorian Era.

Christine brings with it a clash of two different worlds and conceptions of womanhood. Having lost her husband, Christine found herself forced to work outside the home. Throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the only jobs that were considered appropriate for a middle-class woman were those of governess. This was precisely Christine’s case.

The patriarchal society has so fashioned the society by their ideology that female actors in Germany refused to act in the play. The voice of feminism becomes more prominent here.

Ibsen might have used Mrs. Linde’s character to challenge the traditional public/private split of society. Contrary to Victorian the common belief, Mrs. Linde had not been deprived of her morality by having entered the male dominated public sphere.

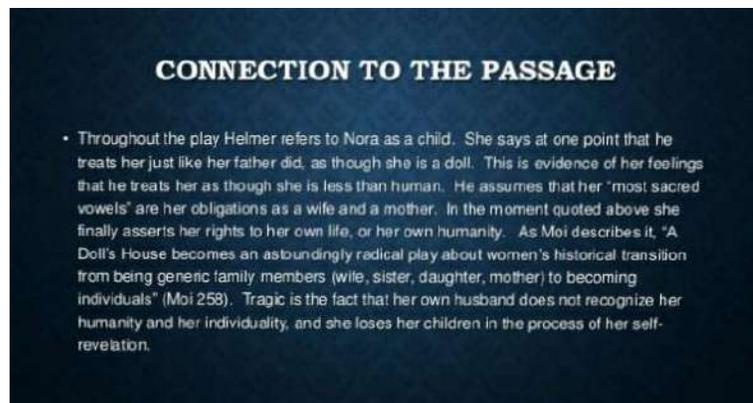


Fig. 2

## FEMINIST APPROACH INTRODUCTION

- A Doll's House examined in the Feminist Nora's Husband, treats her as she isn't an individual but that she is some sort of property of his.
- It took a confrontation at the end of the poem for her to realize that she could be her own person
- That is when she decides to leave.



**Fig. 3**

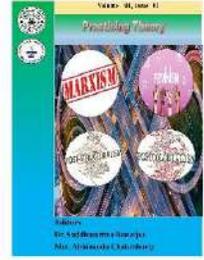
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## Feminist Analysis Of The Three Witches And Lady Macbeth In Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*

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### ABSTRACT

Like Bernard Shaw Shakespeare in his play *Macbeth* tries to recreate the myth of gender role. Here, Shakespeare does not follow the Jacobian stereotype; he makes Lady Macbeth and the witches more dominating than the heroes like Macbeth and Macduff. But at the same time the fall of Lady Macbeth from a masculine character to a fragile tattered and insane woman shows that if a woman tries to debunk the moral code set by the male dominated society, she will have to face the consequence like that of Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth becomes insane at the end of the play because her moral was built with the patriarchal norms. As she does not follow these norms, she has to face the consequences.

As a distinctive and concerted approach to literature, Feminism was not inaugurated until the 1960s. Behind it, however, lie two centuries of struggle for recognition of women’s cultural roles and achievements, and for women’s social and political rights, marked by such book as Mary Wollstonecraft’s “a vindication of the rights of women”(1792) and John Stuart Mill’s “the subjection of women”(1869). “Macbeth”(1606) sometimes liable Shakespeare’s misogynistic play and

characters like Lady Macbeth and Three Witches prove it. These characters are nothing but a critique of women of that era. They are representative of Jacobian stereotype. Here, Shakespeare tries to break the traditional gender role-the submission of women to men and the subjugation of women by men. According to Linda Bamber, “*Macbeth* presents the idea of the feminine ‘other’ in relation to male ‘self’”.

*Macbeth* is a play that seeks to understand morality, especially how it relates to healthy and unhealthy expression

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to gender. Shakespeare's characterization of Lady Macbeth seems to be a critique of those who don't follow the rules set by the patriarchal society. Lady Macbeth has been presented in negative light. At the very beginning of the play she was shown as a loving wife who is proud of her husband's victory but immediately gets transformed into a power hungry and aggressive woman who tries to pursue her husband to commit murder of Duncan. This kind of behaviour from a woman of Shakespeare's era is rare. The audience does not like Lady Macbeth as she is not following the rules set by the patriarchy- she should be supportive of her husband. When the three witches prophesies that he would be the king hereafter Lady Macbeth says "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be what thou art promised". Here both Lady Macbeth and the three witches plays a sinister role in the life of Macbeth and this connects women to witchcraft. The three witches are shown over a barren land signifying the unproductive nature of the three witches. Lady Macbeth, too is a barren character as she is childless.

Unlike the traditional Jacobian women, Lady Macbeth chides her husband for his negative answer regarding the murder of Duncan. She says "you are too full of the milk of human kindness". She even desires to pour her 'spirit' in Macbeth's ear and convince him to murder Duncan. Lady Macbeth's ambition and confidence in decision making is the complete opposite of the gender role of that time and its negative portal feeds into the effect that women should be submissive and obedient. The role of Lady Macbeth is vital as she is able to change the mind of Macbeth (Act-1, Scene-7). Lady Macbeth criticizes the cowardice nature of Macbeth. She puts a series of Rhetorical questions to goad her husband

and saying "Art thou...to be the same in thine own act and valour as thou art in desire?" she also chides him by calling Macbeth a 'poor cat' who wants to get fish from the pond without getting wet. When Macbeth said he could not murder his guest, Lady Macbeth tried to put question about his masculinity. She showed her masculinity by saying that she would dashed the brain out of her own child during its breast feeding. This image contrasts a kind an humane mother to a cruel one. Macbeth seems to follow Lady Macbeth's order submissively. She even plans to murder Duncan. During this murdering she was the 'Dearest partner of greatness of Macbeth'. She even invokes dark spirit to "unsex" her. She even expressed her desire to transform her milk into gall.

But she has a touch of kindness, when she desires to get the taste of tender milk suckling of a baby. After the murdering of Duncan there was a complete change in the behaviour of Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is now tormented with a sense of guilt. This feeling transform her from a demonic woman to a human one. Act-5, Scene-1, shows her famous sleep-walking scene. She is now an unstable woman, the masculinity in her is now erupted, she is rubbing her hand to clean the drop of blood. She cries out 'Damned Spot'. She is now cannot stay with the company of evil. At the very beginning of the play, Macbeth, who was an unstable coward character is now the king of evil. He has a sense of insecurity. Macbeth now tries to kill Banquo and his son and his family. Macbeth realizes what he has done is fruitless as he has no son. Behind this fruitlessness there was an instigation of the three witches and the Lady Macbeth.

By the end of the play, Macbeth fantasies completely eliminated women from the birthing process. Lady Macbeth is pushed to the background and almost forgotten and Macbeth becomes obsessed with the prophecy that no man born of woman shall be able to threaten his new position. Adelman argues that Macbeth comes to believe that not only he is infallible because all those around him were born of women, but he is infallible because he is not. Macduff's destruction of Macbeth proves him wrong, yet enforces the idea that the mark of a successful man is a violent separation from his mother. Adelman sees the lesson as being 'heroic manhood is exemption from the female'.

Lady Macbeth presents herself as her husband's collaborator, rather than as a being with her own self interest. Because her identity is based upon her conception of manliness, she subs to block Macbeth's existence from the world of men. The character of Lady Macduff is however, able to fulfil this role as a partner. She is hostile towards her husband's public life when she takes him away from his family, being first concerned with his obligation to the home. At the time of her death by Macbeth, Macduff seeks to take revenge on her death, on the contrary Macbeth simply shrugs off the suicide of a woman whom he had only recently called his 'dearest partner of greatness'. Lady Macbeth was an empty

figure, offering no feminine balance for Macbeth, and hence he has lost nothing in her death.

But we cannot merely accuse Lady Macbeth and the three witches for this. There was a latent desire of Macbeth to be the king. Lady Macbeth and the three witches just instigate Macbeth by inflaming his latent desire.

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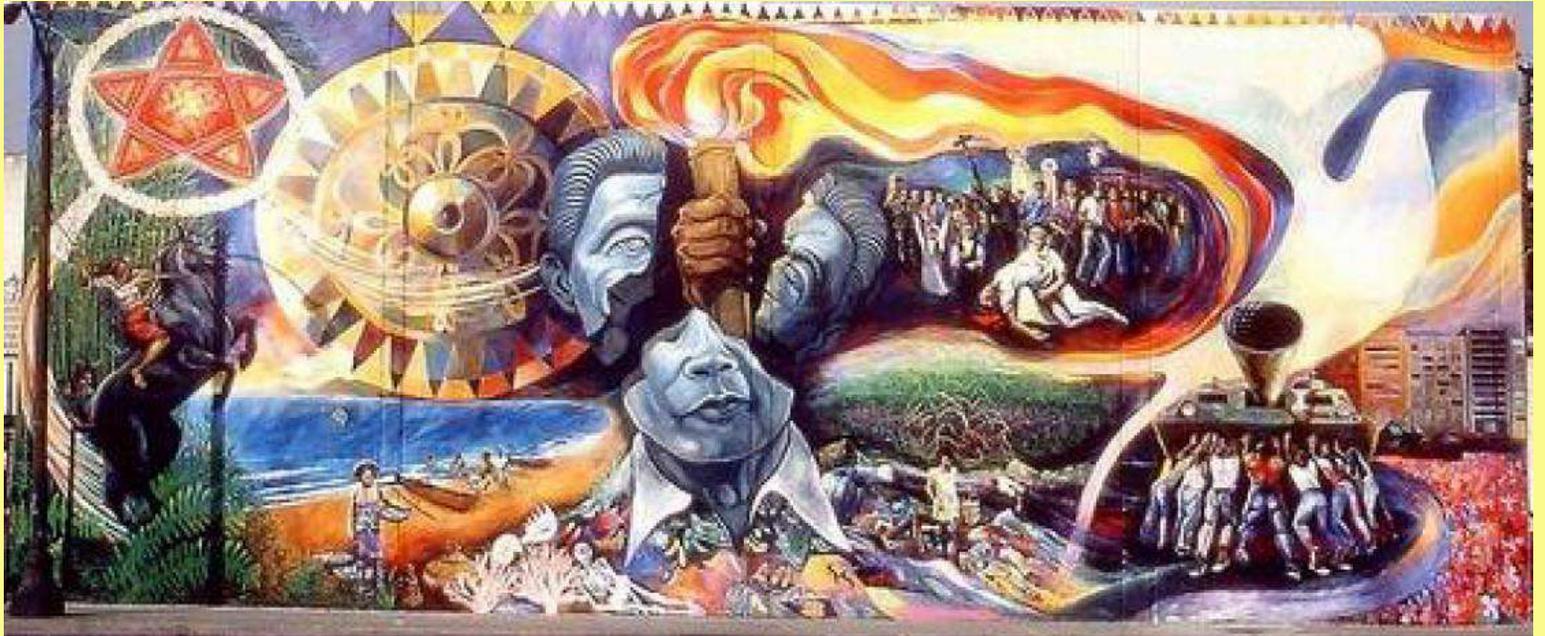
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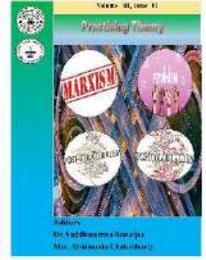
# Postcolonialism





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## MANIFESTATION OF COLONIAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE ARROW OF COTTI MUNDA

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### ABSTRACT

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While focusing on the history-fiction interface, this paper aims to analyse MANIFESTATION OF COLONIAL EMPOWERMENT IN *THE ARROW OF CHOTTI MUNDA* that seemingly springs from her introspection into the heart of the subaltern segment of colonial India. Her fiction seeks to uncover the gaps in the official paradigms of history and thus seeks to problematize it. *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* produces a deconstructive, colonial, counter-historical discourse that aims at centering the hitherto historical margins by re-examining the dominant nationalist history and exposing its elitist discriminations by focusing concentration on the ignored and marginalized locations and articulating the deleted oral history tribal leaders/heroes/revolutionaries and thus making an effort to return to the subalterns their role-models. It aims to counterpoise the personal histories of the individual subaltern with the wider socio-political-economic historical context. Mahasweta Debi's *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* digs deep into the heart of colonial and cultural history of the nation by rewriting the dominant myths and replacing them with the local tribal myths.

Colonialism is a practice or a policy of control by one people over others or areas often by establishing colonies and generally with the aim of colonization. Colonizers may impose their religion, language, economy and other cultural practices. It can be more dominating if they can capture the psychology of the colonial.

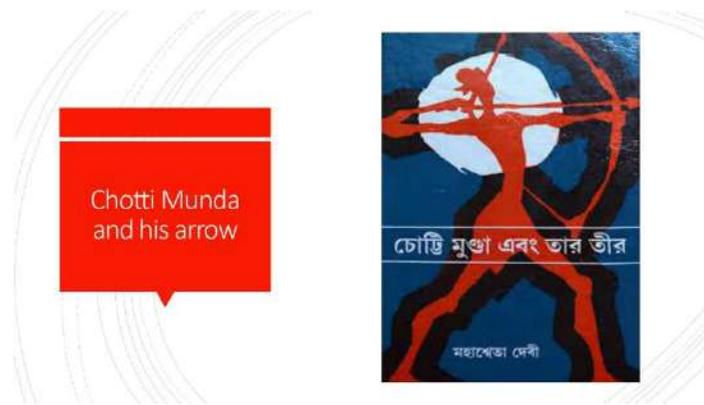
According to the Kenyan writer, Ngugi Wa Thiong colonization is not all about the

capturing of land but of the psychology of the colonized.

Mahaswata Debi's *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* is a manifestation of colonialism. After the rule of britishers, there was another type of colonization over the subaltern. Cotti Munda and his munda village is representing this colonial perspective. Chotti is a disciple Dhani Munda. He was carrying the tradition of rebellion. Though Dhani Munda was killed, Chotti was trying to continue this

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**Fig. 1**

tradition. At Indians were against the Britishers and Chotti was against Indian culture that demeans the Adibasis. He fought against such practices to get his own rights.

*Chotti Munda and his Arrow* by Mahasweta Devi, a novel that tells of the eponymous chotti and his Munda village across seven decades in colonial and postcolonial west Bengal. Chotti Munda as a teenager against family warning. He is drawn to Dhani Munda, his sister's grandfather-in-law, who has fame as a rebel and an archer. No one else wants to hear the old man's stories, so Chotti becomes their guardian when he asks Dhani to teach him to shoot arrows. when Dhani dies, killed by the colonial police for breaking and order expelling him from the region, Chotti takes on his legacy and earns a reputation as an archer with a magic arrow who win tournaments at every local fair Chotti becomes an agent of continuity and tradition over a seventy-five year period in which everything changes and yet nothing changes. Everything changes in that beyond the departure of the British and the transition to independence, modernity and economic development also transform even this relatively remote landscape of rivers and forests. The railway comes and even if the

train doesn't always stop, it means modernity. Meanwhile the Mundas and other so called lower casts of Chotti village enters the economic pattern of independent India and capitalist relations of commodification and wage labour replace traditional communal ties. The day is coming when Mundas will not be able to live with their identity. Then there will be a shirt on his body. Perhaps shoes on his feet. Then the 'Munda' identity will live only in festivals in social exchange. Not that the Tribals are simply unwilling victims of these transformation when feudal, bonded labour is banished it is the land owner who finds himself stuck in the past as work force demands that the new law is enforced, and refuse to collect the harvest otherwise, much against his wishes if Chotti is not particularly sentimental about the transformations he witnesses over the course of his long lifetime, it is perhaps because in other ways to little changes. In the final, violent showdown over the shift from bonded to wage labour, two agents of the congress who have been instrumental in repressing the Naxalite insurrection under Indian government state of exception, the emergency are killed in the forest. One named Romeo had been especially brutal. But when he is killed and as Chotti Munda

considers the inevitable police reaction to come. In the novel's conclusion, this identification between Chotti and the river becomes explicit, as does the notion that the subaltern is outside of history not because history has left them behind but more because they see things from the perspective of eternity. At a village festival, in the tense aftermath of the killing of the youth congress members Chotti revives memories the part as he steps forwards to compete in archery contest. Then he invokes his former teacher who six decades earlier had taught him both the art of the bow and arrow and the language of rebellion as he says fast in

the language of rebellion as he says fast in the language of the Munda as Dhani Munda. As he waits he mingles with all time and becomes river folklore eternal. What only human can be . Brings all adibasi struggle into the present, today into the united struggle of the adibasi and the outcaste.

Mahasweta Debi is a social hebel. She is against colonial culture after the britishers it is the Indian culture that was trying to dominant over the subaltern and adibasis. She expresses her rebellion against this tradition to give a position to the subaltern in Indian society.



**Fig.2**



**Fig. 3**

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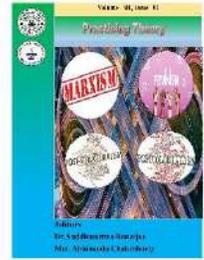
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# Practising Theory

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## ESSAY TOPIC: THE POWER OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE: A MYTH OR A POSSIBILITY SHOWN BY M.K.GANDHI

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### ARTICLE INFO

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### ABSTRACT

Gandhiji is rightly regarded as the father of nation. It is because he plays a significant role in freeing India from the British bondage. This essay is about the passive resistance philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and the possibility of using it. It also shows that passive resistance is the highest and most powerful form of resisting English rule and gaining home rule for India.

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**M.K.** Gandhi was the most influential thinker of pre and post independent India. He also known as Mahatma which means ‘the great soul’. Gandhi wrote “Hind Swaraj” in 1908 during his return visit to South Africa from India via London by ship. The book first appeared as an Indian opinion and then came into book form in 1909. In this book, Gandhiji has employed the classical style of question and answer in presenting his arguments on Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule. He projects a Reader who

questions him and he appears to Editor who gives the elaborate answer. The Reader states the issues and beliefs surrounding the current colonial situation while the Editor offers explanation and solution of these issues.

Gandhiji very often studied as a pacifist, humanist and non-violent revolutionary, bears a great relevance to the study of postcolonialism. ‘Hind Swaraj’ is a seminal text with strong opposition to the colonial evils, can be classified as one of the most

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important writing in the postcolonial literature. This book resists the colonial hegemony and teaches a great sense of nationalism among his countrymen. As the book was potent enough to expose the colonial hypocrisy and thus Indians against Europeans, the British government banned it. But Gandhiji undertook the challenge of the British government by publishing the English translation of the book. *Hind Swaraj* broadly discuss the possible ways of decolonizing Indian society in real manner. Hind Swaraj is the seed from which the tree of Gandhian thought has flourished to its full stature. In this book, he puts forward his thoughts on issues like swaraj, way to free India, passive resistance etc. Swaraj basically meant Indian independence from British rule. Gandhiji increasingly demand it. According to Gandhiji, passive resistance is the most powerful form of resisting English rule and gaining home rule.

Mahatma Gandhi is considered as an apostle of non-violence. For him the path of Ahimsa or non-violence was the only way to achieve freedom and truth which was the supreme reality for him. Ahimsa for Gandhi was not cowardice. He always declared that non-violence always wins or never fails. Gandhiji often said that he could teach non-violence to a violent person but not a coward because true violence came from renouncing violence. Non-violence resisted a evil in a calm manner. Non-violence as Gandhi said is not the weapon of the coward but of the strong. Ahimsa is an ancient Indian principle of non-violence which applies to all living beings. Gandhiji successfully promoted the principle of Ahimsa to all sphere of life, in particular to politics. In the history we have many examples like Buddha who emphasised the path of Ahimsa, Ashoka who was repent after the kalinga war,

follow the path of Ahimsa, Swami Vivekananda who emphasised the importance of Ahimsa.

Gandhiji's key message is that achieving independence or Swaraj is not as simple as taking up arms and forcing the British out of India. In the text 'Hind Swaraj' Gandhiji who appears to Editor asks the Reader if he considers the presence of the British harmful if they do not take our money away, become gentle and gives us responsible posts. In reply the Reader makes a meaningful comparison between the British and tiger. He says that the association with tiger is never secure even though the tiger promises to change its nature. He says 'when a tiger changes its nature, Englishmen will change their'. The indication is that both the changes are impossible. As the British will never change their innate nature of colonization and the exploitation of the colonized, the question of tolerating them in the criteria of their harmless presence is completely useless. But Gandhiji says that Indians must win their independence through a method he calls Satyagraha which is usually translated as passive resistance or non-violence civil disobedience. Gandhiji believes that satyagraha is the best way to overthrow the British colonial government. He thinks that revenge is never an adequate to fight a war because it creates endless cycle of escalation. If the Indians take revenge to the British aggression by arm force, the British would pay back and become even more aggressive. This means that taking up arms would likely only worsen India's situation. He believes that "the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms. There is the harm in the exercise of brute force, never in that of pity". Passive resistance is the only free and just tool for protest which means it

is the only legitimate strategy Indian can use to fight for independence from the repressive government.

One being asked by the Reader that is there any historical evidence of passive resistance. Gandhiji who appears to Editor says that by the phrase 'passive resistance', he means soul-force, love-force or truth-force. He is inspired to these forces by the great Indian poet Tulsidas who has said, "Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive'. It appears to him to be a scientific truth. According to Gandhiji, it is important to know what history means. If it means a record of the wars of the world, there can be no record of passive resistance. How the kings played, how they become enemies to one another is found accurately recorded in history. He quotes that there is a proverb among the Englishmen that a nation which has no history, that is no wars, is a happy nation. He believes that if the story of the universe had started with war, not a man have been alive today. The fact is that there are so many men still alive in the world. It shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. The most important evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on. But history does not record this type of force. Here Gandhiji gives an example that two brothers are quarrelling, but they use this force in the place of arms force and are united, nobody takes note of this. On the other hand if the two brothers use the arm force or go to law which is another form of brute force, their doings would be noticed immediately in the press and they would probably go down to history.

Then the Reader says that according to the Editor it is plain that this kind of resistance is not to be found in history. So it is necessary to understand passive resistance more fully. So he asks the Editor to enlarge it. The Editor then defines that it is a method of securing rights by personal sufferings. It is the reverse of resistance by arms. When one refuses to do a thing that is repugnant one's conscience, one should use soul-force. He must not use arm force. Suppose that the government has passed a law which is inimical to one. One must not force the government to repeal the law by using arm force. Rather, one will accept the punishment for not obeying the law. It is the soul-force and it involves sacrifice of self. It is the key to use the soul-force or passive resistance. After this the Reader wants to know that if the government says that we must obey the laws that have passed. But if the law is bad, we must drive out the law givers even by force. We have always been considered a law abiding nation. But in that situation what can we do. The Editor answers that the real meaning of the statement that we are law abiding nation is that we are passive resister. We may not like certain laws but that does not mean that we break the head of the law givers. It means we suffer and do not surrender to the laws. Gandhiji says that "a man who has realized manhood, who fears only God, will fear no one else. Man made laws are not necessarily binding on him".

After gaining the answer from the Editor, the Reader supposes that passive resistance is the weapon of the weak. Gandhiji-cum-Editor replies that passive resistance is not

the weapon of the weak. It is matchless and superior to any armed force. A passive resister will not obey unjust laws which are against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces in the mouth of cannon. Gandhiji believes that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister. He admits that even a man weak in body is capable of offering passive resistance. Both men and women can be satisfied in it. Passive resistance is said to be all sided sword. It never rusts and cannot be stolen.

Again the Reader wants to know that passive resistance is the speciality of India. Have cannon never been used in India? The Editor answers that according to the Reader India is represented by few princes but for him it is represented by millions of people on whom the existence of the king is depends. The kings want to command but those who have to obey commands do not want guns and these are in a majority throughout the world. India as a large nation always used passive resistance. He believes that real home rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people. The Reader then wants to about the necessary to train the body for us. The Editor replies that it is difficult to become a passive resister if the body is not trained. As a rule, the mind residing in a body and where there is no strength of mind there can be no strength of soul. The Reader then thinks that become a passive resister is a small thing. He wants to know how a man may become one. According to Gandhiji to become a passive resister is easy enough at the same time it is also difficult. He also noted that if a man wants to become a passive resister, he must have four attributes

and these are perfect chastity, poverty, truthfulness and fearlessness

Gandhiji is a strong supporter of the soul-force or truth-force. He says that the force of love is the same as the force of soul or truth. He thinks that the universe would disappear without the existence of that force. He again says that this passive resistance is effective in winning any kind of battle. The arm force is not as strong as soul force. He believes “those that take the sword shall perish by the sword “. There are many men still alive in the world based on soul or love force not on the force of arm. Many nation and people depend for their existence on a very working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of a family in their daily lives disappear before the existence of this force.

We have seen that passive resistance is a powerful force. It is stronger than physical force. The world is desperately in need of this as a way of life to spread peace and love. Gandhiji shows that only the path of passive resistance or soul-force or love-force or truth-force can truly provide mankind release from all ills. Only passive resistance can restore sanity around us.

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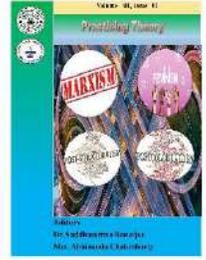
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# Practising Theory

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## Memory and The Crisis of Nationality in Manto’s Toba Tek Singh

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### ABSTRACT

Saadat Hasan Manto was a great writer. He was born on 11th may in 1912. He also known as great novelist, playwright, essayist, screenwriter and short story writer. He produced 22 collection of short stories, a novel, five series of radio play’s, three collection of essays. His best short stories are held in high esteem by writers and critics. He is best known for his stories about the partition of India. In the story of 'Toba Tek Singh', which describe the exchange of mental asylum inmates between India and Pakistan in the wake of partition. At the border we can see how the present is as much constituted by the concentration of new realities that call shifting frame works of understanding as it is by past events that continue to hunt memory. In Manto’s story, the border is embodied in its central protagonist, Bishen Singh, who experienced an ontological struggle between being and belonging that exceeds the particular, historical, geographical, and national context of the partition. The devastating partition and Indian Diaspora is very clearly stated here. Bishen Singh, though is an insane, his memory of past of his past life, crisis of nationality and crisis of identity all these points out the sufferings and struggles of the people at large. This paper seeks to establish the relation between the memory and the crisis of nationality in Manto's Toba Tek Singh.

Saadat Hasan Manto’s 1953 story, 'Toba Tek Singh', ends with the haunting image of Bishen Singh, known to others as clear Toba Tek Singh, the name of his village, lying dead face down on a piece of nameless land between Pakistan and india. knowing only that the 1947 partition of British India resulted in the division of the Indian subcontinent and the creation of the nation’s of Pakistan and India, Bishen Singh in unsure of the new location of his home village, and thus of his newly assigned national identity. Here we explore the

entanglement of memory and the crisis of nationality in the context of India and Pakistan, as depicted in Saadat Hasan Manto’s short fiction. How we will investigate how Manto’s fiction is reflective of the trauma of geographical and existential dislocation with the birth of two nations following a programme of political and epistemic violence and remapping .The study will place special focus on the entanglement of memory and madness alongside the border issues of nation-formation, alienation and loss. It will examine the trauma of 1947 partition as a

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psychological as well as existential crisis that often manifested itself in madness aphasia and amnesia. According to the medical science, the term “Trauma” can be referred as physical damage and injuries. Physical trauma is simpler and can still be cured unlike the psychological trauma which conceal themselves in to the subconscious mind which persists for a long span of time

and are hard to be solved. The subconscious mind is generally repressed by the conscious mind by adopting the policy of rejection. After a certain lapse of time it bursts out in a dangerous way by escorting it’s victims towards “Insanity, horror, violence, death”.



**Fig. 1**

The event of partition has caused immense trauma as well as horrors in to the mind of the people in the form of gruesome murder, lathsome, rapes and molestation. Several families has been uprooted and displaced the memory of which still lingers in their subconscious minds. The memories of intolerable violence they have witnessed

resulted many to either turn insane or permanently numb or to commit suicides. It turned up as a major question whether the town or village was important or the nation’s state was to be preferred over the other.



**Fig. 2**

The event of partition has caused immense trauma as well as horrors in to the mind of the people in the form of gruesome murder, lathsome, rapes and molestation. Several families has been uprooted and displaced the memory of which still lingers in their subconscious minds. The memories of intolerable violence they have witnessed resulted many to either turn insane or permanently numb or to commit suicides. It turned up as a major question whether the town or village was important or the nation's state was to be preferred over the other.

Saadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" deals with the the trauma and the subject of insanity with an open – minded attitude. The story is influenced by the real of the lunatics over India and Pakistan border in 1949. After an overt reading of the story, one of the dominant themes – the theme of insanity strikes the mind of the readers which compels them in to inspect the psychological and political aspects of madness- madness as a living aliment or madness as a momentary termination. Insanity is deeply related to the trauma of partition which has left deep scars on the victimized minds.

Two or three years after partition ,the Government of India and Pakistan decided that just as there had a cordial exchange of prisoners, there should now be a similar exchange of lunatics. This joint declaration of the Government to exchange the "insane in mate's" of the asylum generates a course of reaction which are at the same time "tragic, hilarious and melodramatic". The very opening lines of the story " Toba tek singh " yields a sardonic realization that

firstly it is completely legitimate to exchange the time of partition and then the second thought follows if such an act of exchange is legitimate, then who actually are the asylum. The difference, however ironically seems to dissolve at this point and everyone stands at the same level of victimization in the hand of partition. This point is further clarified in the story of various renowned personalities. It seems to be a quest on their part to enter in to the world of the sane which ironically has turned more Insane as compared to the lunatics of the asylum.

In the midst of this disorientation, we meet Bishen Singh, the story's central protagonist. Little in known about him except that he is an elderly Sikh man who grew up in a small village named Toba Tek Singh, and that his family had brought him to the asylum 15 years ago , after he suddenly and unexpectedly went mad . Since his arrival at the asylum, Bishen has remained standing, refusing to lie down to sleep. After news of the partition and the transfer reaches Bishen, he begins to in quire about the location of the people from his home village. In order to answer this question, one must know whether the newly drawn border locates Toba Tek Singh in India or Pakistan. Since no one can answer this question, Bishen ,who has come to be known as and called Toba Tek Singh by the guards and inmates alike, becomes increasingly more disoriented and agitated by the unknown whereabouts of his home village.

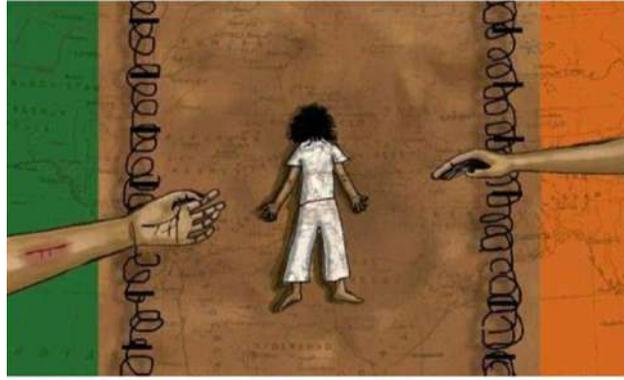


**Fig. 3**

The settings of madness have allowed Manto to assign in to the freedom which insanity grants. He has brilliantly reviewed partition of the mother land from a mad view point .From the asylum to the “no - man’s -land belt” , Toba Tek Singh represent a figure who goes beyond all category”. He emerged as the importable champion engaged in a continuous struggle that possess the “Tragic courage and tragic enterprise” to fight and prevent the practice of “categorization and stereotypes”.

Partition has affected everyone during that moment of crisis. The perpetrators as well as the victims have become equally insane though in different ways. At the end of story, most of the lunatics have been

successfully taken to the other side of the border except for Bishen singh who cannot be moved from the “no man’s land, inspite of several forceful attempts to move him. Thus, he symbolises the meaning of partition. Though partition has dragged him to the extent of insanity, he still act’s like a sane person denying the actual insane decision taken by the Government. Bishen singh through his insanity flights harder and tries to defy the concept of insanity. His rigid denial to cross the border reflects to reunite. With his microcosmic insanity he wants to stand against and stop the macrocosmic insanity.



*“Every man is born as many men and dies as a single one.”*

**Fig.4**

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reunite. With his microcosmic insanity he wants to stand against and stop the macrocosmic insanity.

When they tried forcibly to send him across, he dug his swollen heels at a point in the middle of the border. These lines clearly suggest that Bishen Singh acts as a bridge with a desire to reunite both the nation’s even at the cost of his life. Before the sun rose ,a piercing scream broke from the throat of a rigid Bishen Singh lying face down. The lines convey Bishen Singhs forceful rejection of partition and it’s adverse effects on him. However ,he is ultimately defeated in his attempt which is shown by lying face down and it reflects the universal defeat of all the common mans who fell victims in the monstrous hand of partition there by suffering traumas which ultimately engulfs each and everyone’s innocent lives.

If Bishen Singh’s death tells the story of how the border drawn during the partition become dynamic entities for the confrontation between national spaces and identity, then so too does it tell the story of the failure to name and understand the relationship among the people, land, and identity exclusively in nationalist terms. The

final and haunting image of Bishen Singh lying face down on the ground implicitly renders him, despite the passage of time, as yet another victim of the profound quandary of national belonging and social suffering that exploded as a result of the construction of new national consciousness. Yet the ontological struggle for being and belonging that sends Bishen crashing down on to the land becomes more than a polemical struggle for those displaced and marginalized by the partition.

It also an allegory for how the trauma of the partition was a much about the very creation of new identities and geographies—a creation that reaches its most profound confusion at the site of the border that cannot be neatly accounted for by references to past events under which the Pakistani and Indian National banners were raised. Those new identities, represented by and as toba tek

sing, are much rooted in an intrinsically different present moment as they are in the past and the tendency towards a totalizing discourse about the partition in which we are constantly looking backwards runs the risk of implicitly articulating that the subcontinent can never recover from the event's that befell the land in 1947. Bishen's death is no less tragic or any more redemptive because of my emphasis on the creation of new identities that exist outside of the usual national identities. But the moment that Bishen dies face down on the land, Toba Tek Singh breaks from its past referents and become the new name of and thus the referent that just one part of the wounded cartography of the subcontinent, it is nevertheless a break in to something new, in to a new identity that exceeds the nationalist rubric and become the collective face of the subcontinent.

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