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(जुलाई-दिसम्बर)



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(जुलाई - दिसम्बर)

(अर्धवार्षिक शोध पत्रिका)

सम्पादक

डॉ. मधु रानी शुक्ला

सम्पादक मण्डल

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सह सम्पादक

सुश्री शाम्भवी शुक्ला



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प्रयागराज - 211011

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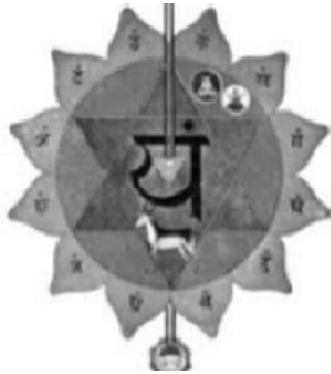
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## सम्पादकीय

अनहद लोक, वर्ष 2023 का यह विशेषांक आप सभी के शुभ हाथों में सौंपते हुए अत्यन्त प्रसन्नता का अनुभव कर रही हूँ। आपसे मिल रही सकारात्मक प्रतिक्रियाओं से नवीन ऊर्जा का संचार हुआ है, भविष्य में भी इसी प्रकार के सहयोग की अपेक्षा रहेगी।

प्रस्तुत अंक अपने नवीन तथा महत्वपूर्ण विषय के साथ विशेषांक के रूप में आपके समक्ष उपस्थित है। इस अंक की अतिथि सम्पादक डॉ. पारूल दत्ता चौधरी जी हैं, जिन्होंने इस अंक में समाहित लेखों के मौलिक विषयों पर विस्तार से प्रकाश डाला है।

हिंसा एक अभिशाप है और उसका प्रदर्शन नकारात्मक ऊर्जा को प्रवाहित कर अवसाद ग्रसित करता है। वीर गाथाओं व साहसिक कार्यों की प्रशस्ती तो ऊर्जा प्रदान करती है किन्तु जब यह समाज के विकृत पक्ष को प्रदर्शित करता है तो तनावग्रस्त बनाता है। आज मीडिया के सभी रूप प्रिंट मीडिया, सोशल मीडिया तथा इलेक्ट्रानिक मीडिया, हिंसा, युद्ध, नर संहार, जातीय संघर्ष वंशवाद, परिवारवाद, राजनैतिक उठापटक, वैचारिक मतभेदों की अतिशयता, मर्यादा विहीन व्यवहार, संस्कारों को छिन्न-भिन्न करने वाले संवादों, स्त्री विमर्श के अजीबो गरीब तर्क-वितर्कों से भरे पड़े हैं जो विघटनाकारी रूप में सामने आते हैं। साहित्य, धर्म, लोक कथाएँ, शास्त्रीय व लोक कलाएँ स्वस्थ समाज के निर्माण में सहायक तत्व हैं, अतः इन विषयों को उजागर कर इसमें चिन्तन, मनन, विश्लेषण कर समृद्धशाली, वैभवपूर्ण, गौरवपूर्ण राष्ट्र के निर्माण एवं कलम तथा भावाभिव्यक्ति के समस्त माध्यमों से स्वथ समाज के निर्माण में हमें सजग रहना है।

डॉ. मधु रानी शुक्ला

## Guest Editor's Message

Since time immemorial, the representation of violence in varied forms has served as an important motif in literary texts. Even before written literature came into existence, human beings depicted their experiences of violence in various forms through cave drawings, clay tablets, storytelling, etc. Heroic deeds and adventures were passed on from one generation to the next through epic poetry, folk songs, and other oral media. The motif of violence was juxtaposed with the themes of wars, slaughters, inter-tribe rivalry, ritualistic sacrifices, natural disasters, diseases, and so on. Religious literature has also been fraught with the depiction of violence. Human-induced violence to penalize sinners is a common motif in these texts. A complete revolution in the use of the depiction of violence and suffering could be witnessed in the literature of the Romantic and Victorian periods. The gothic genre, in particular, presented ample scope to the then-writers to depict violence in the most brutal forms, such as gruesome murders, tortures, and confinements, to symbolize social injustice and corruption. The modern era and contemporary literature brought in new literary genres, such as detective fiction, sci-fi, various kinds of speculative fiction, dystopian texts, and many more. Issues of violence in such texts are juxtaposed with psychological and emotional suffering. Representations of violence in the media have also undergone tremendous changes. With the tremendous popularity of OTT platforms, violence has become one of the most popular themes in narratives. The depiction of violence in the media is not restrained as before and is much more graphical, upfront, and sensational. Regardless of the genre and the time period, the depiction of violence in literature and media was and still remains controversial and a matter of great interest as well as concern.

This issue, an outcome of the 'Two-Day International Multidisciplinary Conference' on the topic "Representation of Violence in Literature and Media," organized by the School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, REVA University, Bangalore, on May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, aims at a study of the various perspectives on the broad area of violence and its constant dialogue with media and literature. A closer look into the representation of violence in terms of the motifs of gender, caste, class, religion, community, body, and so on was the primary objective of the conference and also of the papers that have been compiled here.

It is heartening to see the response of scholars to this fascinating arena of varied representations of violence from their perspectives. The papers, therefore, talk about a vast range of mutually interdependent views and values on the one hand and completely different from each other on the other. This myriad point of view, with the web of independent and interdependent perspectives and values that influence society and its

institutions, is what this issue aims at too. In undertaking this journey, it was imperative to inquire about the ways in which violence has been portrayed in literature and media, the associated questions of ethics, and the repercussions of such portrayals. Hence, while investigating the prominent features of the representation of violence, an attempt has been made to relate those aspects to contemporary issues and concerns that individuals of today can relate to. It is in this context that the present issue dwells upon the various facets of representation of violence in literature and media and the various questions that such depictions lead to.

I hope that this issue of *Anhad Lok* leads to many more queries and thoughts on the subject of 'violence' and its representation in literary texts and the media.

**Dr. Payel Dutta Chowdhury**  
*Professor & Director*  
*School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences*  
*REVA University, Bangalore*



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# Social Impact and Gender Representation in Select Contemporary Assamese Movie 'Bulbul Can Sing'

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## **Introduction :**

According to Burah B (2019), after the release of the Assamese film "Joymoti" by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala in 1935, the Assamese film industry was born. Thereafter, with the Assamese movies of Bhabendra Nath Saikia and Jahnu Barua, filmmaking in Assam has begun, although slowly and in a unique style. The Assamese film industry is also called "Jollywood," derived from the name of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and his Jyoti Chitraban Film Studio. With the release of "Joymoti" by Jyotiprasad Agarwala in the year 1935, Assamese cinema revived its glory. This celebrated filmmaker was also a poet, composer, playwright, and freedom fighter, and he contributed several works of art that have set benchmarks. Since 1935, the Assamese film industry has undergone numerous transformations. Assamese cinema has planted the seeds for a prosperous future with the release of movies like Jyotiprasad Agarwala's "Indramalati," Rohini Kumar Baruah's "Monumoti," Parvati Prasad Baruva's "Rupahi," Kamal Narayan Choudhury's "Badan Borphukan," etc. Eminent

scholars who triumphed in the realms of literature and art were also born in Assam. Its culture has long embraced the performing arts, and acclaimed film makers have produced masterpieces that have won awards on a global level (Rupaliparda, 2020). The start of a new phase in Assamese movie history was documented in the 1950s. "Piyoli Phukan," won the national prize for best regional language film which was directed by Phani Sarma. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, a legend in the realm of music, first entered the field of film directing in the 1950s. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's film "Era Bator Sur" created a contemporary wave and set a new basis for an Assamese film. Another revolution in Assamese filmmaking occurred between the 1960s and 1970s, when a plethora of genres, including biopics, were produced. The very first Assamese comedy movie, "Itu Situ Bohutu," was filmed by Brajen Barua. Assamese cinema won numerous national awards in the 1970s and 1980s. The films "Narakasur" by Nip Barua, "Pratidhwani," "Sikmik Bijuli," and Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's "Shakuntala" were also released at that

time. Aranya by Samarendra Narayan Deb and Opoja Sonor Mati by Brajen Barua are just a couple of the most popular movies from the era that claimed the Best Regional Film National Awards. Realistic art films were first presented to Assamese cinema by Padum Baruah's "Gonga Silonir Pakhi" in 1976. Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia's "Sandhya Raag" created a lasting impression on the field of film making in the 1980s. The majority of 1980s movies, nevertheless, were popular musicals. Popularity grew for the films directed by Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Jayanta Hazarika, Khagen Mahanta, Ramen Barua, etc. Jahnu Baruah's "Xagoro loi Bohudoor," "Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khai," "Firingoti," and "Konikar Ramdhenu" have the potential to win numerous national and international honours in the 21st century. It was the 10<sup>th</sup> year of The London Indian Film Festival which brought genius South Asian Filmmaking with overwhelming events showcasing the talent at reputed film Centers in which Bulbul Can Sing was one among them (Eddie Saint-Jean, 2019).

#### **Gender Representation :**

"Bulbul Can Sing": From 1935–2023, the golden journey of Assamese cinema has taken a new turn with recent releases. The young director Rima Das' "Village Rockstar" released in 2017 gives soul to the flow of Assamese cinema. As a director, producer, and writer, Rima Das is a self-taught award-winning filmmaker from Assam. Besides winning the "Swarna Kamal" at the National Film Awards, the movie "Village Rockstar" has been highly appreciated at various national and international film festivals and given a new dimension to Assamese cinema, Nongrum, B. (2021). It was also the official entry for

the 2019 Academy (Oscar) Awards from India in the best foreign language film category. Village Rockstar is about the beautiful dream of a little village girl who wants to buy a guitar to start her own music band. The film is set in Chhaygaon, Kamrup, in Assam. Through this motion picture, the writer and filmmaker Rima Das wanted to show the values and dreams of common people. However, the movie "Bulbul Can Sing" is a thoughtful and stirring coming-of-age Assamese movie, set in a village in Assam called Chhaygaon, and released in the year 2018. Rima Das wrote, directed, shot, and edited the movie by herself. The title of the movie seems like a curious choice at first, but it is a metaphor that the writer has presented in the film (Jain, 2018). Three adolescents run through awful experiences in finding new meaning in their life to see the world without flaps on. Das portrays the characters in a clearly structured way as in *Village Rockstars*. Das reveals the threats of doom that surrounded them with troubles that are hanging around. She brings out the patriarchy of the father who depends on his wife and daughter to find even his shirt missing. Despite Bulbul's modesty, she had to fight for the principles of masculinity when they were bullied like "ladies." Everyone was piled up by patriarchy including Das and undermined the beliefs and expectations (Namrata Josh, 2019). Bulbul's father dreams that she will become a singer. She has an inferiority complex and lacks self-confidence. But she feels somewhat different, and she could sing beautifully (nightingale) and has a beautiful voice. The movie gives undistorted and realistic.

Brinda Bose (2008) argues about the cinematic representation which is

ambiguous and gives rise to a multiplicity of sexualities in cities. But in a small village in rural India, the movie highlighted how the teens were too busy discovering their own identities, challenging gender roles assigned to them, and pouring passion into their weekly singing classes at school. Bulbul, the lead character, was told by her singing teacher that she lacks skills in singing and must give it more importance than roaming in the field with boys. However, throughout the film, different scenes of the Assamese rainforests hum responsively and metaphorically. The film is set in the region of north-eastern India, which is surrounded by Tibet, Burma, and Bangladesh. In the movie, there is no bulbul bird that sings at all, and the movie justifies this by the end because there is no bulbul. The movie highlighted stereotypes and how one whole village outcried when they discovered a teen couple spending time alone in the forest. School, family, marriage and other cultural institutions become discussion points, with moral policing by society and overprotective parents being helpless. The issues of “honor” and “shame” emerge in many instances, but the film deals sensitively with them, avoiding stereotypes while focusing on other areas that require open discussion. The character of Suman in the film shows how a teenager from a small village struggles every day with his assigned gender identity and a society that mocks his true expression of gender. Suman is a confused middle school student, studying in a co-education school in Assam. However, at birth, Suman is an assigned male who is confused about why he behaves differently than other male students. Due to this, a section of society discriminates against him. The movie contains sequences that depict Suman being tormented and made fun of for fishing in a

“manly” manner during a communal fishing event when the children harass him in the school again. The film depicts the theme of injustice and discrimination that someone with a defined gender may experience. It begs several concerns, such as whether rural Indian society views cissexism as a kind of discrimination against those who are not cisgender. A shattered childhood is aptly symbolized by a broken child’s swing, a close-up of a red grasshopper climbing a tree, and a brilliant red umbrella keeping Bulbul dry in heavy rain. The red setting sun also serves as a reflection of the loss of life. The film also demonstrated how a person may experience both love and rage at the same time. Despite all this heated conflict, Bulbul’s mother’s remarks remain uplifting, compassionate, and protective. Following disagreements with her only companion, Bulbul spent many lonely days with little company, but she never failed to inspire the audience with resilience. Although the background noise was kept to a minimum by the filmmaker, the sound of nature gave the scene a realistic feel. The peaceful and beautiful cinematic views were quite effective. The audience would need to pay close attention and reflect to discover the hidden message in a few darker sequences. The viewer may have felt hopeful by the time a rainbow appeared in the sky at the end of the film. The rainbow bravely demonstrated how Northeast India is moving towards a fresh and progressive future and how society is accepting of changes, including racial or queer identities. The movie “Bulbul Can Sing” also shows how Bulbul’s mother places restrictions on everything she does and considers it to be the fate of a girl when society discriminates. Thus, the movie shows how gender discrimination still exists in rural areas of India. However,

Bulbul, being a dreamer and a rebellious girl, doesn't give up on the harsh patriarchal norms; instead, she prepares herself for a better tomorrow. She is hopeful when the seven coloured rainbows appear in the sky by the end of the movie. Thus, the film highlighted the theme of queer positivism by exhibiting the vibrant rainbow as a symbol of hope as well as queer identity. The various situations that arise in the movie don't just make a statement about what society is lacking, but they also raise several questions related to gender roles and gender identity.

#### **Social Impact :**

The movie also presented the theme of social influence due to media, which was possible even with a very low budget, limited equipment, and in a natural setting. The choice of words must be skillful to grab the attention of the audience by using impressive words to persuade (Chamundeswari, 2019). The dialogue in the story was so impressive to the audience. The filmmaker Rima Das has achieved excellence in cinematography as revealed through various scenes and the representation of scenes along with the issues highlighted in the movie. Bulbul gets conscious of the people around her in the school as well, and one day she fails to sing to the best ability. Her father gets disappointed, as he was himself a folk singer, and he opined that his daughter would sing beautifully too. In one cinematic shot, Bulbul unwittingly sits down by the river with forest twigs in her hands, and she attempts to match her beautiful voice to that of the tune of raindrops falling into the river. She begins to sing from the depths of her heart, but as an audience, we barely hear what she sings. The camera stays far away from Bulbul, and we can tell that it is an extremely personal moment

for her. The effects of first love and its repercussions of it are explored throughout the film. The lack of music and cuts make it extremely distressing to watch these kids being humiliated. The movie also focused on the most profound point Rima Das makes in this film: that in a village where electricity does not reach, moral policing surely does. Bulbul's father dreams that she will become a singer. She has an inferiority complex and lacks self-confidence. But she feels somewhat different, and she could sing beautifully (nightingale) and has a beautiful voice. The movie gives undistorted and realistic (Dee, 2020). The village people show a fierce reaction to teen romance which is portrayed that becomes the natural cultural discussions of the oppressive village environment. Emotions of love and anger have an impact on the audience who are bound to the rural cultural tradition. At the end of the movie, when a rainbow appears in the skies of the Assamese land, it reassures the power from heaven of the mother's love, despite the world being opposed (Eddie Saint-Jean, 2019).

#### **Conclusion :**

The film "Bulbul Can Sing" highlighted several aspects of the teenagers' world and aspects of gender representation in contemporary Indian films. The film also talks about the existence of gender binaries in our society. We can understand that neither gender identities nor sexual identities can be assumed based on appearance, anatomy, social norms, stereotypes, or determined by assigned gender or sex, which often develops or changes over time. Such a coming-of-age film can challenge the stereotypes in the Indian movie industry and lead toward a brighter future.



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# Thappad : A Provocative Tale of Empowerment and Social Awakening

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Thappad, directed by Anubhav Sinha, is an Indian film released in 2020. It garnered significant attention and critical acclaim for exploring gender dynamics, empowerment, and social awakening. The film tells the story of Amrita, a young woman who experiences a life-altering event when her husband slaps her at a party. This incident catalyses a journey of self-discovery and empowerment as Amrita questions societal norms and the acceptability of violence within relationships.

The production of Thappad coincided with a global wave of movements and discussions centered around women's rights, gender equality, and the MeToo movement. The film's release came when society grappled with the need for change and dismantling deeply ingrained patriarchal structures. Thappad aimed to contribute to this ongoing conversation by shedding light on the subtle forms of violence, emotional abuse, and power imbalances in relationships. Furthermore, Thappad emerged within the larger context of Indian cinema, which has historically portrayed stereotypical gender roles and perpetuated patriarchal norms.

The film challenged these conventions and represented a departure from the mainstream narrative, providing a fresh perspective and raising important questions about the status quo.

The paper establishes a framework for the subsequent analysis and discussion by outlining research objectives. It thoroughly examines Thappad's themes, impact, and cultural relevance, providing a deeper understanding of the film's contribution to empowerment and social awakening in contemporary society. The portrayal of Gender Inequality and Power Imbalances in Thappad sections delves into the account of gender inequality and power imbalances within the film Thappad.

The portrayal of gender inequality and power imbalances in Thappad provokes critical reflection and sparks conversations about the unequal power dynamics within relationships. It challenges the notion that such imbalances are normal or acceptable, urging viewers to question and confront these societal norms. By analyzing the film's portrayal of gender inequality and power imbalances, this section contributes to a deeper understanding of Thappad's exploration of patriarchal structures and

their impact on individuals' lives. It highlights the film's ability to expose the subtle manifestations of inequality, encouraging viewers to critically examine and challenge these ingrained power dynamics in their lives and within society.

The patriarchal mindset and social norms have been depicted in *Thappad*. The film critically analyses the deeply ingrained patriarchal values and beliefs that influence societal attitudes and behaviors. *Thappad* exposes the patriarchal mindset through the characters' actions, dialogues, and societal expectations placed on women. The film highlights how patriarchal norms define women's roles within relationships, emphasizing their subservience and the prioritization of male authority. It showcases how society often trivializes or normalizes acts of gender-based violence and emotional abuse, perpetuating a cycle of oppression. *Thappad* challenges the prevailing social norms that uphold the patriarchal mindset by presenting contrasting viewpoints and perspectives. It encourages viewers to question the deeply rooted beliefs and attitudes perpetuating gender inequality. The film explores the impact of these norms on both men and women, illustrating the constraints and limitations they impose on individuals' personal growth and fulfilment.

*Thappad* also explores the intersections of patriarchy with other societal factors such as class, privilege, and cultural expectations. It depicts how these factors further reinforce and perpetuate gender inequities, affecting the choices and agency of individuals within the narrative. By contextualizing the patriarchal mindset within a broader societal framework, the film highlights the complex interplay of various social forces perpetuating gender inequality. Through

examining the patriarchal mindset and social norms, *Thappad* catalyses introspection and societal change. It encourages viewers to reflect critically on their beliefs and biases, inviting them to challenge and dismantle the structures that uphold patriarchal values. The film aims to foster a collective awakening, inspiring individuals to envision a more equitable society free from the constraints of patriarchal norms. It underscores the film's ability to prompt viewers to question and challenge the patriarchal mindset, paving the way for dismantling oppressive systems and creating a more egalitarian society.

Amrita's journey begins with the pivotal event of her husband's slap, which serves as a wake-up call, shattering the illusion of her seemingly perfect marriage. The incident forces her to question her worth and confront the systemic gender inequality underpinning her relationship and society. Amrita's journey is characterized by self-reflection, introspection, and exploring her desires, aspirations, and boundaries. As the narrative unfolds, *Thappad* showcases Amrita's growing awareness and determination to redefine herself. She gradually finds the strength to confront her husband, family, and societal expectations. Amrita's journey involves reclaiming her agency and refusing to accept the normalization of violence and emotional abuse. Through her resilience, she empowers herself and inspires others to challenge the status quo. The film emphasizes Amrita's personal growth and the importance of self-realisation. Amrita's journey extends beyond her immediate circumstances and catalyses broader change. She becomes an emblematic

figure, representing countless women who find the strength to break free from societal shackles and assert their independence.

Amrita's journey involves a process of introspection and self-reflection, wherein she confronts the expectations placed upon her as a woman and questions the power dynamics within her marriage. Through her personal growth, she rediscovers her value and begins recognising her agency in shaping her destiny. It portrays her breaking free from the cycle of emotional abuse and asserting her boundaries. Thappad underscores the significance of self-respect and the pursuit of personal fulfilment as essential components of reclaiming dignity. By presenting her transformation on screen, the film inspires audiences to reflect on their own lives and relationships, encouraging them to evaluate their boundaries, aspirations, and how they navigate power imbalances.

Thappad profoundly impacted audiences, resonating with viewers who connected with the film's exploration of gender inequality and the quest for dignity. Its thought-provoking narrative and powerful performances sparked conversations within families, social circles, and online platforms, igniting a collective introspection about the prevalence of subtle violence and emotional abuse within relationships. The film's reception among critics and the general public was overwhelmingly positive. Thappad was praised for its nuanced storytelling, sensitive portrayal of complex characters, and ability to shed light on the often-unseen aspects of gender inequality. Critics applauded the film's thoughtfulness and ability to challenge societal norms, while viewers lauded its authenticity and emotional impact.

The film's impact was not limited to the film industry or specific demographics. Thappad reached a broad audience, transcending age, gender, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Its universal themes and relatable characters made it accessible and relatable to a diverse range of viewers, contributing to its broader societal influence.

Thappad acted as a springboard for policy discussions and legal reforms. Its portrayal of subtle violence within relationships sheds light on the need for comprehensive legislation to address emotional abuse and establish support systems for victims. The film's impact contributed to ongoing conversations around legal protections, creating momentum for change within the legal and social justice systems. Thappad's influence on social consciousness and activism highlights the power of cinema as a medium for social change.

Thappad's Cinematic Brilliance; Direction, Performances, and Visual Storytelling The cinematic brilliance of Thappad delves into the film's direction, performances and visual storytelling. Thappad is a masterfully crafted film that captivates audiences with its technical prowess and artistic vision. Director Anubhav Sinha's adept storytelling and nuanced direction contribute to Thappad's cinematic excellence. Sinha skillfully weaves multiple narrative threads, presenting a thought-provoking exploration of gender dynamics and empowerment. His attention to detail and emphasis on character development create an immersive cinematic experience that resonates with viewers.

Thappad ignited conversations about normalising gender-based violence and emotional abuse within relationships and has prompted individuals to reflect on their behaviours, biases, and the power dynamics in their personal lives. The film's nuanced exploration of these issues opened up space for dialogue, enabling audiences to examine societal expectations and the inherent inequality that persists critically. The film's impact extended beyond the cinematic realm, permeating various social platforms and media outlets. Thappad sparked widespread debates on the representation of women in Indian cinema, the importance of consent, and the need for gender equality. It was a rallying point for feminists, activists and individuals advocating for change, reinforcing their efforts to dismantle patriarchal structures and promote a more inclusive society.

Thappad has also played a crucial role in inspiring future filmmakers and storytellers. The film's success has shattered the myth that socially conscious cinema cannot find commercial acceptance. It has emboldened aspiring filmmakers to pursue stories that challenge societal norms and shed light on pressing social issues. Thappad has been a guiding light for those who aim to create impactful cinema that sparks essential conversations and promotes positive social change. The film's impact on the industry is evident in the emergence of more nuanced and socially relevant narratives. Filmmakers have been encouraged to tackle previously considered taboo or uncommercial subjects. Thappad's success has paved the way for more stories onscreen focusing on marginalised voices, women's experiences, and social justice.

Thappad's Contribution to the Feminist Movement has been Amplifying

Voices, Advocating Change, fostering awareness, and advocating for change. The film's exploration of gender dynamics, the portrayal of female agency, and the depiction of emotional abuse have made it a powerful tool in advancing the cause of gender equality and empowering women. Thappad has been hailed as a feminist manifesto, as it challenges deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and sheds light on the insidious forms of violence and oppression that women often endure. The film's impact as a call to action is visible in the real-world initiatives and campaigns it has inspired. Viewers, moved by Thappad's message, have initiated conversations, organised awareness campaigns, and engaged in advocacy efforts to address gender inequality and promote healthy relationships. Thappad has become a catalyst for change, sparking grassroots movements and driving social transformation. Thappad's call to action also extends to the entertainment industry, challenging filmmakers and industry professionals to be more conscious and responsible in storytelling. Thappad motivates viewers to reflect, challenge norms and actively contribute to a more equitable society. It stands as a testament to the potential of cinema to provoke thought, drive social action, and inspire a movement towards a more just and compassionate world.

The film's technical prowess and artistic vision contribute to its impact and make it a standout work in Indian cinema. Thappad showcases the mastery of director Anubhav Sinha in crafting a compelling narrative. The film's pacing, character development and narrative structure create a seamless and engaging storytelling experience. Sinha's attention

to detail is evident in the precise framing, visual composition and meticulous use of cinematography to enhance the narrative impact. Each scene is carefully constructed to convey emotions, build tension, and immerse the audience in the story. The film's performances testify to the actors' talent and dedication. Taapsee Pannu delivers a remarkable portrayal of Amrita, capturing the character's emotional journey with authenticity and depth. The ensemble cast, including Pavail Gulati, Kumud Mishra, and Ratna Pathak Shah, deliver nuanced and impactful performances that bring the story to life. The chemistry and interplay among the actors contribute to the film's emotional resonance. Thappad's ability to evoke emotions and provoke thought is a testament to its exceptional screenplay. The film's screenplay, penned by Anubhav Sinha and Mrunmayee Lagoo Waikul, balances the exploration of complex themes with moments of emotional resonance. The dialogues are poignant and thought-provoking, capturing the characters' essence and experiences.

The film catalyses change, encouraging individuals and societies to challenge existing norms, strive for gender equality, and foster a culture of respect and dignity for all. By examining Thappad's cultural and global relevance, this section emphasises the film's far-reaching impact and ability to transcend boundaries. Thappad stands as a powerful testament to the transformative power of cinema in raising awareness, provoking thought, and inspiring positive change. Its relevance and resonance in different cultural contexts reinforce its status as a film that captures the zeitgeist of our changing world.

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# An Exploration of Environmental Violence in Sarah Joseph's *Gift in Green*

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While trying to understand the concept of environmental violence and its impact on humans and non-humans, one need not look further than the several instances of violence meted out upon the environment and its surrounding ecology in the name of development. One such incident is the Niyamgiri movement. In 2002, the UK-based mining company Vedanta Resources started acquiring land for the construction of an Aluminium refinery at the foot of the Niyamgiri Mountain, for which it had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Odisha state government in 1997. When it later became known that Vedanta Resources was also planning to acquire and mine the Niyamgiri Mountain, which was estimated to contain approximately 75 million tonnes of bauxite, the Dongaria Kondhs, who lived on the mountain and worshipped it, started protesting as a community against the impending mining of the Niyamgiri hills. After further protests and wide media coverage, the Supreme Court passed a verdict that refused Vedanta Alumina Limited to mine bauxite in the Niyamgiri hills.

This instance of developmental agenda based on profit maximisation is not new in India. Over the years, there have

been several such exploitations with the power-hungry capitalist corporations at its helm. This has led to the displacement of the people living along the margins, who suffer the most in this process. Their lives are inextricably bound to the resources provided by nature, and encroaching upon the forests and natural resources uproot their very sources of livelihood. Minerals, mountains and other natural resources are increasingly privatised for industrial purposes without caring for the natural habitats of countless people and other living beings. Since the lives of millions of people depend on access to these resources, selling them to private companies has begun to result in "dispossession and impoverishment on a barbaric scale" (Roy, 2010, p. 57).

While there have been successful resistance campaigns against this hegemony in India that have led to significant movements such as the Bishnoi movement, Chipko movement, Narmada Bachao Andolan and Silent Valley Movement, there have been innumerable instances where the sufferings of the tribal and Adivasi people have gone unheard. One such incident is the Nandigram Violence of 2007 where several people



were killed, burned, looted and raped in the villages of Sonachura, Bhangabera, Adhikaripara and Gokulnagar by the police and their 'irregular' forces during a harmless protest against the developmental agenda of the government.

These instances show that the separation of nature from human is the ideological position underlying capitalist orthodoxy, namely, that the biosphere is a subset of the economy, rather than the other way round. According to Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, the neo-colonial condition under which humans and non-humans currently live is characterized by an intensified exploitation of humans and non-humans in the name of globalization and development, where a term such as 'globalization' becomes 'faceless' in nature, thus allowing itself and the people in power who perpetuate it to not claim any responsibility conveniently. Arundhati Roy in her book *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2002) propounds, "What is happening to the world lies, at the moment, just outside the realm of common human understanding. It is the writers, the poets, the artists, the singers, the filmmakers who can make the connections, who can find ways of bringing it into the realm of common understanding" (p. 43). Thus, according to Arundhati Roy, in order to make the incomprehensible comprehensible, the intangible tangible, there needs to be "a fictional representation of the dispossession" in order to bring the issues into the realm of common understanding. She calls for "a new kind of art" that invites the readers to look beyond the arithmetic of monetary profit and loss, and to think more humanely and intimately about its irreversible human, cultural and ecological damages.

Eminent Malayalam author and activist Sarah Joseph is vocal in critiquing the developmentalism witnessed in the neo-colonial India. Born in Kerala, which is widely known for its bounty of nature and biodiversity, the abundance of natural wealth is accompanied by a "resource curse", as the state attracts the ravenous eyes of capital-hungry forces (Nixon, 2011, p. 69). In today's globalized world, Kerala has been targeted by many multinational corporations' and wealthy elites' greed for resources. Her novel *Gift in Green* deals with the predicament of the people of Aathi in the face of development and the environmental violence that is committed on the natural resources of the village in order to turn it into a megacity.

In order to understand the extent of environmental violence, a focus on the condition of Aathi prior to witnessing developmentalism is necessary. At the very onset of the novel, Sarah Joseph portrayed Aathi as a land known for its water-life and the mangrove forest that encircled it. At the heart of Aathi was its simple-minded people and the love for their homeland. Devoid of any greed and without believing in the extractivist policy of plundering natural resources, the people of Aathi rejoiced their ecologically driven slow life.

However, the fate of Aathi completely changed with Kumaran's return to the village. Kumaran, who was once a native of Aathi, left the village in his younger days as the water-life never satisfied him. When Kumaran returned to Aathi after 36 years, he brought along with him the idea of modernization and the immediate need to reform Aathi and transform it into a megacity. His arrival at Aathi Desham made the region subject to environmental

violence. In a glaring way, Sarah Joseph highlighted the way Kumaran's army partook in environmental violence and destroyed the whole place. The army "bursting into the forest, trampled its undergrowth so fiercely that the sky was at once overcast with a multitude of birds that took to their wings in terror" (Joseph, p. 40).

Kumaran's idea of development slowly began to damage the ecosystem of Aathi and transform the pristine landscape into a barren place. Buying the three hundred acres of land from Ganesha Subramaniam, Kumaran began to work on his plan to transform Aathi into a paradise. He began with the building of the bridge in the eastern part of Aathi. The natives of Aathi used to practice collective farming in the property of Ganesha Subramaniam by taking the land on lease. However, when Kumaran captured the entire land, the main source of living for the people of Aathi was jeopardized. In order to landfill and level acres of land, Kumaran's army brought in trucks, JCBs, drillers and tipper lorries that disrupted the tranquility of Aathi. The clear water of Aathialso became severely polluted. The prawns and karimeens started to change their place of breeding, the roots of mangrove trees began to dry up, fishes, oysters, mussels and fingerlings became extremely scarce. For Kumaran, "the water that bred fish for the local people and the roots of the mangrove trees among which the prawns spawned were non-issues in comparison" (Joseph, 2011, p. 142).

Kumaran's endeavour to landfill the entire region made him bring heaps of city waste that destroyed the fertile soil of Aathi, led to the growth of millions and

millions of microorganisms, which in turn resulted in an outbreak of an epidemic. Almost all the children of Aathi were affected by it and it took the lives of nineteen children of Aathi: "Aathi quivered with the sound of mothers weeping inconsolably. By the time it could be brought under control, typhoid had purloined the lives of nineteen children" (Joseph, 2011, p. 272). However, Kumaran was successful in his "orchestrated effort to suppress" the entire incident (Joseph, p. 272). The lives of these children did not matter to him.

The concept of development in the neo-colonial era is often synonymous with the idea of profit and loss. This is an essentially reductive logic which fails to take into consideration the larger cultural, ecological and human dimensions of dispossession. The relationship some people share with their places is far more complex and deep-rooted than simply based on profit-making. Having endowed with the social and cultural meanings, the land is the locus of their identity and being. An instance of it can be seen in the novel when Kumaran assigns Komban Joy to acquire more land from Kunjimathu. Komban Joy, in his greed of extracting more prawns, sprayed a harmful pesticide called endosulfan which destroyed the five-acre of Pokkali Paddy field. Due to the spraying of endosulfan, it was the animals and birds who were gravely affected. The harmful pesticide killed the fishes and prawns, yellow butterflies and white storks. Komban Joy's "ploy to purloin the last bit of fish from the farm before the contact expired" became a serious instance of violence being channelized towards nature (Joseph, 2011, p. 168).

Being unable to bear the perilous condition of Aathi anymore, Kunjimathu as a means of protest sat in a waist-deep water, “her body wet and shivering. Her arms were crossed over her breasts. Her fingers were pale like dead fish, and her lips death-blue” (Joseph, 2011, p. 203). The vision of Aathi turning into a barren land tormented Kunjimathu. She could visualize the “parched” paddy fields, trees, animals and birds perishing away from the face of Aathi and “children, howling in hunger” (Joseph, p. 196). In order to protest against the violence being directed at the humans and non-humans of Aathi, Kunjimathu took up a peaceful way of resisting against Kumaran and his army.

Contrary to Kunjimathu’s way of protest, Shailaja took part in armed rebellion as a means of protest. Shailaja became a part of Ponamani’s group and resisted against Kumaran’s developmental projects. Even though the police were supporting Kumaran and unleashed violence on the people of Aathi, they uttered, “Kill us. Kill all of us and bury us” (Joseph, 2011, p. 217). Watching the policemen violently attacking the natives of Aathi, Shailaja as a means of resistance emptied the kerosene can on her head. She threatened the policemen by saying that if they touch one more person, she would light herself up.

Sarah Joseph’s *Gift in Green* is a tale of resistance that highlights the way the women of Aathi actively participated in fighting against the violence that was channelized by Kumaran towards Aathi.

With the rampant anthropogenic ecological destruction resulting from the capitalist notions of development, there is a need to alter the human interaction with the planet. In the rapidly deteriorating environmental conditions that we are currently living in, the resistance against the environmental violence in Aathi in the name of development is a deeply symbolic one. It can be seen as a call to unite against the capitalist forces and save the environment that nurtures us, for in the words of Vandana Shiva (2003), “I believe that if you just do your little bit without thinking of the bigness of what you stand against, if you turn to the enlargement of your own capacities, just that itself creates new potential.”

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# Male Dominance and Female Violence in Shakespeare's *Othello* and its Cinematic adaptation *Omkara*

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## **Introduction :**

Women have been victim of asphyxiating patriarchal norms and rigid cultural constraints across historical, social and religious boundaries. This unequal social construction bestows freedom, power and dominance to men and pushes the fair sex into the margin of both society and domestic space. Since the ages women are expected to be submissive and dependent on men; they have to yield to their fathers since childhood, to their husbands after marriage and to their sons in old age. Men always remain heads of the family and demand complete obedience especially from their wives and daughters.

Literature, being the mirror of society, enables authors to express various sensitive issues of society which affect the life of every individual directly or indirectly. Many authors have presented the real pictures of women being suppressed, abused, tortured and even murdered under male dominance. William Shakespeare is such a literary artist and social critic who consciously depicts the seamy sides of men-women relationship reflected in brutal act of violence, verbal and physical abuse, mutilation and killing in the name

of honour. Though Elizabeth was the queen of England in Shakespeare's time, the secondary status of women in society finds vivid expression in his plays as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. In these plays males are so dominating that they cause commotion, destruction and death of female characters. During that era men were given dominion over women. They consider women as their property and personal belongings who have no legal independence and right to express themselves freely.

Every society whether it is Indian or in most other countries of the world sees a surge of cases in the matter of domestic violence. Though many women suffer silently and don't complain against it, violence within the confines of the homes is also a serious concern. Even in current time, women are forced to stay in abusive and violent relationships because society expects them to preserve the holy institution of marriage at the cost of their self-respect and rights. The National Commission for women has registered over 6,900 complaints in the 'protection of women against domestic violence' category in

2022. These cases accounted for 30,900 plus complaints registered by NCW across different categories of crimes against women. (Pandit, Ambika.)

### **Male Dominance and Female Violence in Shakespeare's *Othello* :**

William Shakespeare is a great literary genius whose plays depict timeless realities of human situations and institutions. He is a social critic who raises pertinent and disturbing questions on the issues which were relevant not only in his time but are found in contemporary society also. He was well aware of the fact that human beings have achieved great success in various socio-cultural, political and economic spheres but the status of women has largely been secondary to men. Through his plays he frankly shows female suppression and victimization in the male dominated society. *Othello, the Moor of Venice* written by William Shakespeare in 1603, was first published in 1622. During the time the play was set, women in society were brought up to marry, bring up children and fulfill household duties. They were considered psychologically and physically weak to the male members of the society.

The play *Othello* has various themes including racism, jealousy, love, betrayal, revenge, domestic violence and female victimization. However, sexual jealousy and domestic violence are the main themes which bring catastrophe in the end. The story is about a high ranked black army general Othello who has eloped with a leading senator's white daughter Desdemona. In a patriarchal society it is an act of disobedience from a daughter who is expected to follow her father's choice in every matter including her

marriage also. Desdemona is an example of a girl who is against all prejudiced views towards female as she flees without her father's approval to marry someone against his likings but she has to tolerate humiliation and abuse from many men within the government of Venice. Brabantio's speech before the senators "a maiden never bold of spirit, so still and quiet" reveals a father's dominance and daughter's submissiveness. In King Lear Cordelia and in Hamlet Ophelia are also demanded such obedience from their fathers. Brabantio is so shocked to see his daughter's rebellious nature that he curses her and warns Othello also "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see. She has deceived her father, and may thee." (I, iii)

A woman is regarded as the possession of her family; at first she belongs to her father and after marriage to her husband. After her marriage with Othello, Desdemona comes under dominance of her husband who eventually changes from a lover to a dominating husband. She easily becomes an instrument of taking revenge from Othello as Iago knew well that in this male dominated society women are nothing but possession so he makes up his mind that he will exploit Othello's insecurity against his beautiful and fair wife. Desdemona's appeals in favour of Cassio's re-appointment push her in the bottom of suspicion and anger of her husband. At first Othello starts abusing her by calling her a strumpet and mistress, he insults her by scolding and slapping her publically. This scene of domestic violence shows that Venetian society is barely aware of male violence towards women. When Lodovico (representative of the Venetian Duke and Senate) observes Othello striking Desdemona, he tells him

to “make amends” but makes no other intervention. Even Iago’s repeated insults and abuses of his wife Emilia are passed unnoticed by other characters.

Othello becomes more violent and aggressive when he feels that he is losing control over his wife. He takes a fatal decision of killing her. He not only tortures her by blaming her character but also threatens her as he says: “I would not kill thy unprepared spirit, No, heaven forefend. I would not kill thy soul.” He murders her brutally by smothering her with pillow in their matrimonial bed. After killing his innocent wife, Othello’s straightforward reason of killing her as “she must die, else she will betray more man” shows male dominating set up of society and female victimization on the name of honour. Desdemona’s death is not only due to Iago’s villainy and Othello’s simplicity but due to societal attitudes towards women and systemic violence also.

There are two other women also in the story: Emilia, the wife of Iago and Bianca, the mistress of Cassio. Both of them are also victims of violence and suffer under male dominance. In the beginning of the play, Emilia is portrayed as a sheepish fellow of her husband and she ignorantly supports her in everything he does. She becomes habitual of tolerating insult, abuses and humiliation by her husband. She tells Desdemona what men think of women in society:

“Tis not a year or two shows us a man  
They are all stomachs, and we all but food,  
They eat us hungrily, and when they are full,  
They belch us.” (Act III, Scene IV 98-101)

In the end of the play Emilia is also killed by her husband for disobeying him. Instead of favouring her husband, she was showing her faithfulness to her dead mistress Desdemona as she disclosed the truth of stealing the handkerchief and giving it to Iago who manipulated it as an ocular proof of Desdemona’s faithlessness to her husband. He knew well that his handkerchief was gifted to Desdemona by Othello as a token of love. Though Emilia seems to be weak character in the beginning of the play but in the end she comes forward as a strong woman who refuses to obey her husband’s command and reveals the truth.

In comparison of Desdemona and Emilia, Bianca has a smaller role in the play. She is treated poorly amongst male members in Venice. She is treated and referred as a prostitute by Iago and Emilia but there is no evidence of prostitution by Bianca in the entire play. She is deeply in love with Cassio and wants to lead a happy and respectable life with him but she is accused of being involved in the attack on Cassio. All these three female characters in the play are portrayed as inferior to the opposite sex and are victims of rigid patriarchal system of society. In many scenes of the play, Shakespeare depicts domestic violence and unfair treatment with women. After hundred years of the play was written, these problems are faced by women in present also. It shows that Shakespeare’s plays are relevant in every time and society.

#### **Male Dominance and Female Violence the Movie *Omkara* :**

Literature and cinema are the reflectors of society and they have enormous influence upon us as we are

directly involved in the world offered by both the art forms. Like literature, cinema is not only a powerful medium of communication and entertainment but also a medium of raising voice against sensitive issues of society. It makes people aware of what is wrong in society and politics and makes them think about it seriously. In its long journey cinema has represented various issues including female victimization, domestic violence, honour killing etc.

Vishal Bhardwaj is a great filmmaker of Bollywood. He has earned world reorganisation by adapting Shakespeare's three great tragedies *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth* as *Haider*, *Omkara* and *Maqbool*. His adaptation of Shakespeare's tragic tales of great kings and generals in Indian social milieu having contemporary socio-political problems are very interesting. In all these three filmic versions of Shakespeare's plays Bhardwaj represents specific culture of violence and female victimization. In his adapted movie *Omkara*, Bhardwaj faithfully presents this unending tale of female sufferings and violence as depicted in the play *Othello* in the background of 16<sup>th</sup> century England to 21<sup>st</sup> century modern audience in the form of its cinematic rendering. He sets the story of *Othello* as *Omkara* in rural background of Uttar Pradesh where he spent his childhood and observed male dominance and violence on women on a large scale. In the words of Mike Heidenberg: "the relative dearth of opportunities for women for public expression and advancement in both *Omkara* and in many villages in Uttar Pradesh mirrors a similar lack of opportunities for most women during the early modern period in England." (96)

Besides the infamous jealousy and racism of *Othello*, *Omkara* also addresses the sensitive issue of domestic violence against women in contemporary time. The play and the adapted movie are a study of crime against women, gender inequality and domestic violence leading to the pathetic murder of its innocent heroine Desdemona (Dolly). Though in the original play racism remains the centre of discussion, Bhardwaj changes it to the caste system of India as it also the cause of sufferings for many women belonging to the lower class of society. Nandi Bhatia observes in her essay *Different Othello(s) and Contentious Spectators: Changing Responses in India* :

"Bhardwaj's refusal to place race at the heart of his adaptation of *Othello* is to bring attention to the other kinds of urgencies that mark the contemporary post-colonial milieu in India: problems and crimes related to caste warfare and the violence against women that remains at the center of these crimes, along with lawlessness, clan rivalry and political deceit." (171)

In this movie Dolly becomes victim of his father's control in her choice of marriage. It is truth that a girl's match of her choice is neither accepted by her parents and society. She is forsaken by her father warning *Omkara* (*Othello*) about the infidelity of women: 'may you never forget the the two faced monster a woman can be! She who can dupe her father, will never be anybody's claim.'" (*Omkara* 20:51). Having been forsaken by her father, Dolly has all her hopes and desires centered on her husband only but he also criticizes her act of deceiving her father. He starts torturing her mentally and physically and finally murders her. The

first instance of domestic violence in the movie is found when Omkara loses his control and hits Dolly over the lost Kamabandh which he handed her as a family heirloom and for him it's lose is like losing family honour. Dolly who comes out from the world of romantic illusion and reflects on this act of her husband: "this is not the same Omkara for whom I gave up home and hearth. My Omkara used to shield me in his palms like a precious petals." (2:00:57-2:03:00)

Omkara thinks that women are deceitful as he says that it is 'triyā charitra', trying to indicate that a woman who has been disobedient to her father can be faithless to her husband also. In following patriarchal set up of society he forgets that an innocent girl became bold to do this act of elopement only due to deep love for him. Since ages women are demanded to prove their loyalty and faithfulness before the society. Even then people speak of their triya charitra. In the movie Indu ingeniously cites the example of goddess Sita from the great Indian classic epic to assert that women are treated as second-class citizens "Agni pareeksha bhi de ayegi tab bhi thagi kahlayegi sagi nhi." She questions many of the traditionally oppressive, misogynistic and repressive behavior toward women that has been accepted by centuries old mythologies and religious practices: "When the scriptures themselves have sullied women, who can blame mere mortals like you, we renounce our homes and walk into your life with bare empty hands, but even after the holy fire approves us, we are regarded disloyal sooner than loyal." (Omkara 2:04:08- 2:06:05)

Bharadwaj has radically re-imagined the character of Emilia as Indu who is

more empowered than her source character in the play. Indu is presented as a very affectionate lady like Emilia but she is more modern and active than her. She can't bear injustice like Emilia who only curses her husband and dies by his hands. In the movie, Indu kills her husband and retributes the order of justice. Even Billo, a public dancer is considered not as an entertainer or performer but an object of sex. She is in deep love with Kesu and wants to lead a happy life with her but she is not taken seriously. Through her character Bharadwaj expresses very delicately that the women like her also dream to get married and get respect in the society.

#### **Conclusion :**

Shakespeare's sensitivity towards the issues of gender inequality, marital violence and crime against women as eloquently expressed in the play finds clear representation in the adapted movie *Omkara*. In this paper I have tried to show how *Omkara* underlines an unresolved concern of the violence against women in current socio-political climate of India. Shakespeare's *Othello* remains significant after four hundred years also in highlighting the fact that domestic violence is a current and a universal phenomenon, which are not caste, religion and geo+graphically specific. In his cinematic rendition of Shakespeare's *Othello*, Bharadwaj adapts the misogynist critiques and issues of Shakespeare's time which are prevalent in modern Indian culture. He shows the patriarchal resistance, the oppressive ideologies, and the cultural beliefs which force women to operate within a system that has oppressed them since a long time. The filmmaker has also tried to make his audience understand the



complexities and pains of domestic violence that take place against women in society. It is very important issue to be paid serious attention that women have been victim of rigid patriarchal order and male dominance in different time and places so there should be a change in the established mind set of society.

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# Representing Violence through Select Ho Poetry: Exploring the Munda Rebellion of 1899–1900

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## **Introduction :**

The Austro-Asiatic Munda ethnic group includes the Ho and the Munda Tribes, two different indigenous communities that are native to the state of Jharkhand. The Hos are members of the Munda family.<sup>1</sup> Tribal communities in Jharkhand have a profound connection to nature and largely depend on the forest for their subsistence and sustenance. Unfortunately, following colonialism, their basic lives were in danger since they were evicted from the forests that had nurtured, protected, and sustained them. The intrusion of feudal lords, Zamindars, police, and labor contractors into the calm and tranquil lives of the tribals made them captives in their own lands. The land revenue system introduced by the British government paved the way for the influx of a huge number of people who were not tribals, also known as “Dikus”. The tribals were compelled to work as labourers, and the system was called Bethbegari (Forced labour).<sup>8</sup> The Munda, Hos, and other indigenous communities of Jharkhand have been battling against this cruelty for

the past three decades, this resulted in the Munda Ulgulan (Great Tumult) of 1899-1900. The rebellion greatly impacted British control and forced the government to take decisive action against the Adivasi masses. British forces attacked heavily on tribal warriors congregated at “Dumbari Hill” and made indiscriminate firing that killed many people. Following the terrible massacre, the hill was covered in dead bodies. The corpses were hurled down the steep gorges and ravines of the hill. The Mundas gave the “Dumbari Hill” the name “Topped Buru,” which means “the Mound of Dead.”

## **Literature Review, Theoretical Framework and Methodology :**

While there are only a few works on the Munda tribe, notably the Munda Rebellion, there are also a few attempts in Ho’s poetry to depict the struggle of Jharkhand’s tribal inhabitants during the Munda Rebellion of 1899-1900. Some of these include the 2014 book *Ho Kavitaon Ka Rashtriya Swar*, edited by Pradeep Kumar Bodra, which focuses on various poems about gallantry and patriotism. Yet,

there is no critical evaluation of the poems present.<sup>2</sup> Similar to this, Dobro Budu Uli's (2008) collection of folk songs, *Kolhan Dishum: Ho Durang*, promotes fraternity and communal love. Again, lacking is the critical interpretation and analysis of the poems.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly, there is a conspicuous absence of hermeneutics in Ho's literature. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyse some Ho-language poetry that was inspired by the Munda rebellion (1899-1900) to illustrate the various ways in which the colonised were physically harmed during various uprisings against the brutal treatment by British colonisers of Adivasi communities.

Michael Foucault begins his concept of the genealogy of power in *Discipline and Punish* by demonstrating the state's power over the body through brutally physical means, including torture and its accompanying spectacle.<sup>7</sup> The methods that the British used to oppress and cause misery to the indigenous people of Jharkhand to uphold the power of the relationship between the colonisers and the colonised will be shown in this article using poststructuralist Michael Foucault's theories.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her famous essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" characterised the silencing of the subaltern class as doing epistemic violence to them by removing their ability to speak for themselves.<sup>11</sup> This paper will also present how colonialists silenced, oppressed, and ignored the voice of indigenous people in Jharkhand.

The paper's methodology is based on a textual, descriptive, and critical analysis of a few Ho poems. It also includes an English translation of poems originally written in Ho.

### **An analysis of violence in select Ho Poetry :**

According to Martin Thomas, violence causes social disruption, incites fear, and creates instability in an established traditional order, in addition to being physically violent. During the colonial era, the colonisers used psychological, emotional, or physical violence to conquer and rule the body.<sup>12</sup>

The first chosen poem, "*Dombari Marang*" (Great Dombari), by Anant Kumar Pingua, describes the psychological and physical atrocities perpetrated by colonisers on colonised people during the Munda revolt.

Khunti sahayete purab  
Jojohaatu jaapah re  
Iting ge tinguwakan  
Dombari buru marang...<sup>2</sup> (Bodra 50)

In east of Khunti townlet  
Near Jojaahaatu hamlet  
Standing firm  
A great Dombari hill (My Translation)

Bodoh Chetan mauri leka  
Chetan re beelakan sereng...<sup>2</sup>(Bodra50)

Top is unsurmountable  
Like a crown unconquerable...(My Translation)

The poem opens with the Dombari hill, which served as the scene of the revolt and the location of the conflict. The peak of the mountain is metaphorically compared to the crown, which is unconquerable. This demonstrates the fighting spirit of tribal people who are prepared to liberate their country from the nefarious grasp of colonists. The poem describes a historical insurrection in which the Munda people fought against British torture and the corrupt zamindars decades ago. They were

tortured under the Bethbegari system while working on their land. According to Michel Foucault, to sustain power relationships, the government torments its citizens to produce submissive bodies that will boost the economy while reducing political unrest. Docile bodies are subordinate bodies maintained by acts of violence, which ensures their subject status in the relationship of power.<sup>7</sup> Similar to this, colonialists want to produce submissive bodies using forced labor.

Kakaalaa jaana ‘Hatu-Hatu, Tola-Tola  
Dombari buru mardola’  
Sar- aasar kaape sabaan te  
Senoh jaanko koda -kudi soben<sup>2</sup> (Bodra 50)

‘Hatu -Hatu, Tola- Tola  
Dombari buru mardola’  
Shrouds on head, arrows in the hand  
Men and women emerged as a band...  
(My Translation)

The poem continues with the rebellious voice of indigenous people. After much suffering, their voice resonated in unison with the words “Hatu-Hatu Tola-Tola/Dombari Buru Mardola,” suggesting that they urged residents of various villages to gather and march towards Dombari Hill for battle. In reaction to the physical and psychological violence, the colonised exhibited mimetic violence as well as resistance against the colonisers, their voices were suppressed as subaltern, and they were not allowed to speak; according to Spivak, the silencing of the subaltern class is characterized as doing epistemic violence to them by removing their ability to speak,<sup>11</sup> from long violence they were in pain, they acted against it with shrouds on their head, bows and arrows in their hand, all men and women emerged in one

band showing their community strength, creating subjugating bodies was not fruitful and it suggests the use of violence by colonizer was not an efficient way of creating the established order.

Gora paltan koaah  
Goli tey gojeyna ko...<sup>2</sup> (Bodra 51)

Firing started created a dearth  
Blood ruined on the earth... (My  
Translation)

Dokol janaa dombari buru  
Banduk goli top kakaala jan  
Aatu yaana mayom gada leka<sup>2</sup> (Bodra 51)

Dombari shooked up  
Gun and missiles roared up  
All around there is blood up... (My  
Translation)

The poem also illustrates how conquerors used physical force to subdue their subjects through a visual portrayal. With the help of his wife and soldiers, the British Deputy Commissioner attempted to take control of the Dombari Hill to end the Munda uprising, firing produced a sight where a torrent of blood flowed across the soil. There were corpses, guns and missiles were roaring, and a river of blood was flowing all around. The commissioner’s wife is called “Memín”, whose heart softened as she looked through binoculars at the commotion. She witnessed the scene of babies sobbing over their deceased mothers, who had been nursing them. When she appealed, the gunfire was halted.<sup>2</sup> This entire scene displays the horrifying physical abuse committed by colonists.

The second poem, “*Utan Pe*” (Wake Up), by Allobati Bari, depicts the faith and reverence that the indigenous people have for Birsa Munda as well as their solidarity

against the British.

Diku jaati ko haya tana  
Neko geda chakad bu tana<sup>3</sup> (BuduUli 33)

Diku's wicked eye  
Turned to us... (My Translation)

Sereng ladai uddu uraay mein  
Birsa Munda naam uraai mein<sup>3</sup> (BuduUli 34)

Let's remember Serengsiya battle  
Let's remember Birsa Munda's  
grapple (My Translation)

Here, colonists are referred to as Dikus, whose vengeful eyes are once again on them to deceive them emotionally and plunder their money. In this poem, the colonial people demonstrate mimetic violence as a resistance. According to Frantz Fanon, this type of violence is merely a reactionary effort against the oppressors from the viewpoint of the colonised.<sup>6</sup> This behaviour is seen as rebellious and criminal by the oppressors. On the other hand, the colonized see violence as a means of achieving freedom from an oppressive system and to allay the suffering that the coloniser has caused. Violence is used by those who wish to maintain the status quo.<sup>6</sup> The proportionate display of violence by the coloniser and the colonised, as explained by Fanon, illustrates the contradictory irony of violence as a tool for securing orders and achieving freedom.<sup>6</sup> The poet is trying to present the desire for mimetic violence in the hearts of the colonised, who, by uniting their community, want liberation. The poem showed admiration and enthusiasm for the Kol Revolt and Birsa Munda, the leader of the Munda Rebellion, who earlier had united their forces into a single force.<sup>3</sup> The poet is pleading with his people to raise their voices against the long-term violence of

colonisers that existed in the form of epistemic violence, which, according to Nixon, is a slow violence rather than physical violence. This is evident in changing policies that were unfavourable to the colonised.<sup>9</sup>

The next poem, "*Rashtriya Parva*," (National Festival) by Viswanath Bodra, depicts the severe physical abuse that colonists inflict on the victims.

Neya dadda re neya danam re,  
Birsa baba do ki jehal iita kiya<sup>2</sup>(Bodra43)

Birsa Munda, in search of freedom  
Died in the jail of slavery<sup>2</sup> (My Translation)

The sentence above describes what happened following the Munda uprising, during which Birsa Munda fought against the brutality of the British people that had persisted for the previous three decades. The long-running struggle that Jharkhand's natives spearheaded has taken a new direction. In the words above, he is portrayed as a great commander who waged a protracted war against the British. According to Foucault, authorities employed violence to instil submissive bodies and rigid social order. British officials imprisoned Birsa Munda to quell and contain the insurrection.<sup>7</sup>

Birsa became a rebel with a reason to fight since the tribal community of Jharkhand was being socially, politically, and economically exploited. With the intention of securing Munda raj and total independence for the tribal people, he led an uprising against the colonial authorities. Birsa seemed like a living god to the oppressed and depressed Munda people. They started to have hope that Birsa might be able to set them free from the chains of years of oppression and

inhumane humbling. Birsa issued a rallying cry for all the tribals to come together and started an uprising that he called “Ulgulan.” (Devi, 1977)<sup>5</sup>. Like a true leader, Birsa held meetings with the fellow Mundas, convinced them of their respective roles to achieve the goal of Munda raj, and succeeded in uniting them and making them believe in their abilities to fight against those colonial rulers, Zamindars, and moneylenders who were their real enemies. The Mundas all over the Ranchi region believed that Birsa was their ‘dharti-aba’ (Devi, 1977)<sup>5</sup>.

#### Conclusion :

This paper has examined and studied a few Ho poems in light of colonised people’s struggles. The power dynamics that are displayed between colonisers and colonised are only possible through violence, whether it be cultural, social, or psychological. These poems reflect societal violence since it permeates the lives of those who have been colonised. From the viewpoints of the indigenous community of Jharkhand, Ho poetries attempted to convey an accurate and truthful picture of the historical environment. The scenes of the tortures depicted in the poems are not only incidental occurrences; they have a direct impact on the individuals directly involved, either contributing to their docility or speaking resistance. It prompts the character to behave in a specific way, which leads to mimetic violence. So, we

may state that colonialism’s cruelty and torture in this literature affected the entire society as well as the individual victims.

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# “Dust of Memories”: Post-Violence Notion of Altered Home as a Space of Resistance in Ghassan Kanafani’s *Returning to Haifa*

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Palestinian activist and author Ghassan Kanafani’s novella *Returning to Haifa* (1969) is a result of his oppositional cultural production which highlights the traumatic effect on the people of the conflict zone who faced the ongoing violence between the Israeli state and the Palestinian Arabs and lost their homes in the process. The paper aims to focus on the aftermath of the event of Nakba in 1948 which is a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the microcosm of home and it investigates how the post-violence shapes the notion of home for the characters in Ghassan Kanafani’s novella *Returning to Haifa*. The Palestinian Arabs who were displaced from their homeland wanted to get back to their place of home but found it altered and misplaced from the originality of the home that they had known. The fractured notion of the home which had been latent in their memories in different ways takes shape and comes back in the form of trauma which proves its latency, as opined by Sigmund Freud. While for Safiyya, the idea of the lost home significantly meant losing her son, Khaldun, back in the crib in Haifa, Said S’ idea of the same was also

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attached to the political conflict outside and the way he had to escape from his homeland to save his life. Miriam, on the other hand, who was displaced from her home in Italy after the death of her father, at the hands of the Nazis, had to come to terms with her new home in Haifa which she was made to occupy after the dislocation of Said and his wife, had to embrace the idea of home very differently. The paper aims to investigate the altered notion of home that these characters find themselves in and how to assert their respective belongingness amidst the conflict zone, they in turn resort to counter-violence to restrain themselves from double-displacement. The paper further investigates how the belatedness of trauma gives rise to a ‘homing desire’, as termed by Avtar Brah and how the male and the female resort to different means in the microcosmic space of the home to deal with their trauma and altered space of memory and remembrance.

Safiyya and Said who are displaced from Haifa during the Nakba and decide to return to their homeland after a gap of twenty years in search of their son, Khaldun, whom they had left behind as a

baby while they left their home, perceive the place in entirely different ways. For twenty years they had locked up their emotions in their hearts and had never spoken about their lost son. However, as soon as they enter Haifa, the political conflict of the place for Said merges with the memories of their lost son that Safiyya had to deal with. As soon as they entered their homeland, “memories did not return to him little by little. Instead, it rained down inside his head the way a stone wall collapses, the stones piling up, one upon another” (Kanafani, 2015, p. 149). Said had mostly lost hope about ever finding Khaldun and thus, was not much interested to visit the place from which they were kicked out if it had not been for Safiyya. Emotionally attached to the place and unable to forget the memories attached to it, Safiyya claimed that she had never thought to see the place ever again. For Said, it was the outer space and the politics attached to it that had entirely changed the shape of the place and made it an Israeli nation, devoid of a single Arab. For him, the war was still fresh and the city looked, “dark and agitated” (Kanafani, 2015, p. 151). Said or Safiyya occupies a liminal space as they hang in a state of limbo between their homeland and host land and try to find the meaning of home which is mostly shaped by the macrocosmic world. In a similar context, Pramod K Nayar notes, “In many cases, the memory... is false in the sense that exile tends to superimpose a memory that may not be coterminous with the real one” (Nayar, 2007, p. 192).

For Safiyya, however, the idea of home in the post-violence period was in the microcosmic space of the home and with the memories of her son whom she

was compelled to leave behind. She had never been able to express her trauma to her husband and talk about the way she had to leave Khaldun in the crib before she found Said amidst the violence. Healing for them was never complete as according to Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, listening comes with its own crisis, “Coming to know lead to a rethinking of crucial role, the preservation of the truth, of knowledge and reality, plays in the enablement of psychological survival...to continue life after catastrophes” (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. xvii). Once Said understands the motive behind Safiyya’s desire to travel back homeland, he cries out “Delusions, Safiyya, delusions...! No, I don’t want to go Haifa. It’s a disgrace” (Kanafani, 2015, p. 159). It is this reaction that she had been scared of and resisted her desire to speak about it with her partner. Home for her meant her attachment to her family and when that got disrupted due to the conflict outside, she tried hard to clutch onto the space of home until she lost herself under the “endless flow of people streamed by her and around her as though she were a tree surrounded by a flood of rushing water” (Kanafani, 2015, p. 157). The larger world then became a barrier and reason for conflict in the space of home fracturing the unity in a familiar space. Unable to resist the dominant and violent force outside, Safiyya was forced to leave her only son back at Haifa which resulted in psychologically displacing her from her own space of comfort. Her visit to Haifa then becomes a means of resistance and a hope of reclaiming her own space which was occupied by Miriam and her family along with the possession of their son. However, the reclamation of her son and



her displaced location comes after twenty long years which completely alters the mindset of Khaldun and they are proven guilty of leaving away a five-month-old child alone in a crib. Safiyya resists the macrocosmic state-sponsored violence from the domestic space and by resuming her every day even after losing her child she becomes the face of resistance in the post-violence period as Veena Das highlights the importance of resuming every day in order to come out of violence.

Although Khaldun's upbringing had been problematic keeping in mind the ethics that Miriam as a Jew had imbibed within him which made him not only against the Palestinian cause but also against his own parents. Safiyya's inability to take her son along with her raises pertinent questions as leaving behind one's baby cannot be justified in any circumstances. However, she resists succumbing to the pain inflicted on her by the nation-state with her ability to cope with the detachment of her son on an everyday basis. Never for once, she loses hope of meeting Khaldun again unlike his husband who had lost every hope of getting him back right from the very beginning. Her resistance comes in the form of yielding to the larger conflict through everyday resistance in the space of the home. This also alludes to Palestinian author Adania Shibli's novella *Touch* where the little girl, intentionally kept away from the conflict of the larger world creates a space of her own in her home which she lives and relives by finding meaning in the minutest thing through her sensory perceptions. Shir Alon in his article "No One is Seen Here" discusses the aesthetics of neutralisation by which an individual can

resist the dominant forces by undoing the effectiveness of the power structure and by showing an indifference to the authoritarian structure, one can resist and act against the power by not succumbing to the means of violence. Though Franz Fanon has justified violence as a means of decolonisation, Shibli's text raises questions against it, and this dilemma amongst the Palestinian victims between resisting violence with counter-violence and resisting violence with their existence is reflected in Palestinian art and literature of which Rafeef Ziadah's poem "We Teach Life Sir", "I look inside of me for patience but patience is not at the tip of my tongue as the bombs drop over Gaza/ Patience has just escaped me" (Ziadah, 2011, Lines 9-11).

Miriam, on the other hand, who had been displaced from her home in Italy after her father's demise at the hands of the Nazis and later the death of her brother in their hands, was physically and psychologically uprooted from her home as she came to Haifa with her husband, Iphrat to find a place for themselves. At this point, they were given the house of Said and Saifiyya by the Jewish Agency along with the five-month-old child who had been left back in his home. Though Miriam always wanted to return to Italy, to her own home "she always lost the arguments quickly and couldn't find the words to express her views" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 169) and had mostly lost her arguments with her husband. Considering the home and the child as her own, her resistance came through the upbringing of the child who had been imbibed with Jewish culture and also made to take up arms against Palestine, against his own culture. Her altered space of the home is

reconciled through her relationship with Khaldun, who finally rejects his own parents and makes them guilty of not reclaiming him for twenty long years. Miriam here acts as an agential woman in resisting the macrocosmic world through her own space of the home. Primo Levi was asked if he is angry with the Nazis for making the Holocaust happen and as a survivor, Levi replied that he is not angry because he does not want to take the same way of violence to resist the violence. The Jews did not resort to violence against the Nazis in the post-violence period because they did not want another Holocaust to happen and their testimonies became their way of resistance as their slogan was 'never again'. Miriam does not support violence directly as she is shocked by the death of an Arab child but Kanafani raises the question if she has imbibed the seeds of violence within Khaldun. Exile for her becomes more of a rootedness in the words of James Clifford, and her rootedness lies in an attempt to carve out a space for herself in her new home and a child that she managed to call her own which can be validated through Saifiyya's comment, "She acts as if it's her own house!" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 171).

The violence outside affects the inner space of the characters differently and they take up different ways for reconciliation in their altered space of home. The day Miriam and Iphrat entered Said's home in Halisa with Khaldun and got relocated to a new home, the same day after multiple attempts of reclaiming their home in Haifa, Said and Safiyya got displaced and uprooted from their homeland. Both of them suffering from the aftereffects of explet, relocate and reconfigure the definitions of home and belongingness

with their own space of home. Said and Safiyya show a strong 'homing desire' like Faris who want to retrieve the place of home but finds it impossible as the home and their homeland are permanently altered. The 'homing desire' is prevalent in Palestinian literature but the return seems almost impossible though the Arabs try to return to their homes which are reservoirs of memories as Ziadah writes, "I will cross their barriers, their checkpoints/ their damn apartheid walls and return to my homeland" (Ziadah, 2013, SOA lines 12-13). They try to hold on to their memories by clutching on to the reminiscences of the past but they find that those memories are already taken away by the other. Faris returns the picture of his brother, Badr to the Arab family who has occupied his lost home because he thinks that the picture has become a part of the altered home as the Arab who has occupied the house says, "I felt a terrible emptiness when I looked at the rectangle left behind on the wall...I regretted letting you take the picture... We lived with him and he lived with us and became part of us" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 177). Faris takes up arms after this event as a part of his resistance in the post-violence period. Similarly, the peacock feathers, the curtains and the glass vase become symbolic of the altered home for Said and Safiyya, and they understand that their homecoming is not possible in its true sense. Kanafani clearly indicates that the post-violence altered home is just an imaginary space where the Palestinian Arabs want to return but it is not a place where one can physically return as the violence has changed the home and the homeland as when Safiyya says that she is glad that she is seeing her homeland, Haifa again, Said responds, "You're not

seeing it. They're showing it to you" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 151).

Benedict Anderson thinks that nation-states are nothing but imagined communities because people forge solidarity in the name of a nation-state, but the concept of the modern nation-state is based on the principle of exclusion as the nation-state does not allow everyone to stay within its limits or it does not provide anyone rights except its citizens. The birth of a new nation-state, named Israel in 1948 did not only exclude a group of people but also uprooted the Palestinian Arabs who were forced to leave their homes and to migrate. The event of 'Nakba' resulted in the displacement of almost 7 lakh Palestinians who had a 'homing desire', as Avtar Brah calls it but could not return because their homeland had vanished. The macrocosmic violence sponsored by the Israeli state affected the microcosmic space of Palestinian homes which is well reflected in Ziadah's poetry as she writes- "my mother was born under an olive tree/ on a soil they say is no longer mine" (Ziadah, 2013, SOA lines 10-11). The homeless victims had to settle down somewhere else and the home became only a space which can be imagined and is lost forever as Said remarks about the macrocosmic Palestine which is symbolic of his microcosmic home- "it's only a search for something buried beneath the dust of memories" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 187). Said and Safiyya had to leave their smaller space of home because of the violence caused by the larger nation-state and their loss of home and a child, and the simultaneous feeling of absence is caused by the ongoing conflict of which they are just a 'collateral damage' as Ziadah writes in her poem- "Yes my

liberators are here to kill my children/ and call them 'collateral damage'" (Ziadah, 2013, SOA lines 42-43).

The barrier between the periods of violence and post-violence is very narrow for a conflict zone like Haifa because the conflict between Israel and Palestine still continues to exist. Kanafani makes it clear that such a state of exception cannot be tagged as past as Said comments, "We were mistaken when we thought the homeland was only the past. For Khalid, the homeland is the future" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 187). The home is lost in the post-violence period- not only as a physical place but also as an abstract space because the emotions associated with the home are gone with the Nakba. Coming back to Haifa is an uncanny homecoming for both Said and Safiyya as Said comments, "Do you know what the homeland is, Safiyya? The homeland is where none of this can happen" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 186). The violence committed on one's home and homeland is like an open wound which can be opened anytime by the circumstances and which validates Cathy Caruth's idea of the repetitive nature of the trauma which she has elaborated by using the example of Tancred's trauma after killing his beloved in Tasso's *Jerusalem Liberated*. The memories of the forced displacement are traumatic for the Palestinian Arabs and the space of the home is permanently altered for them which is also altered for the Israeli Jews like Miriam who suddenly discovered themselves in a newly born nation-state. Kanafani problematises the notion of home in the text which becomes a microcosmic space from which the characters try to fight back- either by taking up weapons like Faris al-Lubda or by upbringing a child in her own way like Miriam.

The post-violence period gives rise to counter-violence and Kanafani raises the question if violence should be responded to with violence in a conflict zone. Khaldun takes up arms on behalf of the Israeli state and becomes an enemy of his own people. He has lost his Arab identity due to his upbringing and his belongingness is changed. He accuses his parents of leaving him behind and he accepts that his notion of home has changed as well as his identity. Kanafani presents Faris and Said's other son, Khalid as the faces of the armed rebellion who justify the counter-violence against the state-sponsored violence. On the other hand, women like Miriam or Safiyya resist state-sponsored violence by fulfilling their repetitive everydayness within the domestic sphere. Rita Felski in her work *Doing Time* discusses the nature of every day for women and highlights the repetitiveness in every day of a woman's life. Miriam is a representative of the larger Jewish community who had to forge a new identity in terms of a new nation-state due to the long history of antisemitism in Europe. Miriam lost her home, homeland and family members during the Holocaust and Kanafani raises the question that if it is justified for Miriam to respond to violence with violence. The readers cannot deny Miriam's responsibility as a mother behind Khaldun's taking up arms against Palestine because Khaldun accepts Miriam and Iphrat as his parents as he comments, "I don't know any mother but you. As for my father, he was killed in the Sinai eleven years ago. I know no others than the two of you" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 179). But the question remains if violence should be the mode of resistance in a post-violence period or the everydayness

should be resumed to resist the existing violence. Kanafani remarks through Said's voice, "Two wrongs do not make a right. If that were the case, then what happened to Iphrat and Miriam in Auschwitz was right. When are you going to stop considering that the weakness and the mistakes of others are endorsed over to the account of your own prerogatives?" (Kanafani, 2015, p. 185).

Bill Ashcroft thinks that projecting oneself as a victim can never be a way to resist the ongoing violence which alludes to Palestinian authors like Kanafani or Ziadah's body of works which are examples of 'oppositional cultural production'. *Returning to Haifa* is a sample of 'resistance literature' because it does not project the characters as abject victims, but highlights their ways of resistance against the larger forces in the post-violence period. Barbara Harlow thinks that the only way available to the Palestinian Arabs to retrieve their lost home is to knock loudly on the walls in order to make their voices heard. These loud knocks are symbolic of the resistance which is prevalent in Palestinian art and literature which are intensely connected with the politics of the conflict zone. The microcosmic space of home demands the interaction with macrocosmic politics in order to resist the probable counter-violence in the post-violence period and so art over politics is just a superficial position for the Palestinian literature as Ziadah protests, "But today, my body was a TV'd massacre made to fit into sound-bites and word limits. / And just give us a story, a human story. / You see, this is not political." (Ziadah, 2011, WTLS lines 20-22).

*Returning to Haifa*, thus, as resistance literature highlights how the characters amidst the violence resort to their own level of resistance and deny being subjected to the victimhood imposed on them by the nation-state. The microcosm becomes a means of upturning the larger conflict outside and thus becomes a space for finding a new solace and belongingness in ways different and acceptable to each character. Instead of relying on the past, the futuristic aspect plays an important role in helping the characters to discover new meanings of rootedness and homeland in the sense where resistance overshadows mere subjugation in the hand of the macrocosmic state at large. It is beyond something buried in the “dust of memories” (Kanafani, 2015, p. 187) and looks forward towards owning and correcting their mistakes which Khalid as their son personifies in the form of resistance that a victim state like Palestine expects to take forward. They deny their culture and memory being occupied by the perpetrators and resist remaining in the bubble of memory by narrating and re-narrating their past and owing their selves. Palestinian literature is about reclaiming the lost identity as their culture, language and identity were taken away along with the land as Ziadah notes in her poem, “Allow me to speak my Arab tongue/ before they occupy my language as well. / Allow me to speak my mother tongue/ before they colonise her memory as well” (Ziadah, 2013, SOA lines 1-4). In the case of Palestine, home becomes the microcosmic space of resistance against the macrocosmic violence sponsored by the nation-state because the space of the home is filled with memories which one

wants to reclaim at any cost, be it by one’s existence or everydayness against the larger authoritarian structure or by adapting counter-violence in terms of armed resistance as the home is the most hospitable unit in contrast to the larger nation-state which is based on exclusion. The Nazis wanted to erase the Jews from the face of the earth and by their existence, the Jews prove that the Nazi project has failed. Similarly, Said, Safiyya, Khalid, Miriam or Faris do not try to reoccupy their homes as places and prove to be hospitable while they definitely try to reclaim their imaginary spaces of homes associated with their memories through armed resistance or by mere existence. Kanafani emphasizes claiming one’s own culture and homeland as a method of resistance which reverberates in Said’s comment when he speaks of homeland, “I’m looking for a true Palestine, the Palestine that’s more than memories, more than peacock feathers, more than a son, more than scars written by bullets on stairs” (Kanafani, 2015, p. 186).

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# Reconstructing Reality of Violence from Individual Perspectives in Autobiographies - A New Historicist Approach

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## **Introduction:**

Literature, in any form, is a credible source of depicting society in its multiple facets, dynamics and emotions. Meaning making process of a literary text is a cumulative outcome of perception of the author, views of the reader and the reflection of the text itself. In this sense, contemporary context is ascertained from distinct perspectives – that of the author, the reader and the text itself – each complementing the other. Such multi dimensionality in individual narration encompasses reality discerned from every possible perspective. Perspective study is a cogent facet of New Historicism. The life narrative is often an account of the author's own image of her/himself, carefully choosing to divulge, leaving the readers to construe their own meaning. An autobiography, while presenting the self doesn't miss the opportunity to picturize the surroundings, invariably highlighting any friction, conflict or violence both on the domestic as well as the societal front. This study epitomizes the process of perceiving reality based on hybrid notions in the periphery of two autobiographies

with regard to domestic and social violence detailed from individual perspectives.

The theory frame New Historicism is a contemporary and much advanced ontological furore in the domain of literary theory and criticism that began during 1980s in Euro-American academia posing challenges to Practical Criticism and New Criticism. This impetus flowed mainly from new frames of theories in the domain of Linguistics, Deconstruction, Discourse Analysis, Feminism, New Historicism and Cultural Materialism. As a consequence, the new figureheads such as Michael Foucault, Jurgen Habermus, Roland Barthes, Benjamin, Jaques Derrida, Hans George Gadamer and Stephen Greenblatt held authority in the field of social sciences and literary studies. New historicism is an exemplary mode of literary theory and criticism, in holding both text (imaginary or fact-based content) and the context (contemporary backdrop) in equal measures. The literary consciousness of yesteryears pertaining to text-context relationship is far modified due to the advent of new historicism. The aesthetic perspectives in

literary studies are reinterpreted through individual subjectivity as a result. The grand conception of reality is questioned by prominent new historians like Greenblatt, Montrose and Gallagher which has resulted in understanding that the existence of text and inherent meaning are enforced in the circumference of its context. The text is the production in its cultural context according to this theory. The new historicists advocate that a text should be dismantled to expose the centralized hegemonic power in its construct and interpreted in parallel worthiness to its context. The methodologies of this approach include counting authors' perspective in intertexting the context within his/her social or personal slant. This enabled the field of literary production to re-establish its contact with the factual world from individualistic perspectives in order to acquire comprehensive conception of its depth of meaning. Inclusion of individual subjective sensibility in literary analysis is thought to provide closer look into the text resulting in encyclopedic interpretation. This theory has led to a process much microscopic in its far-reaching vision administering more exhaustive realities. New historicist perspective is a historical positivism which interconnects possible microcosmic elements in the literary composition into more pragmatic whole redefining the scope of critical thinking with respect to both literary and social science domains.

#### **Methodology :**

This research adopts qualitative approach to data collection using both inductive and deductive model for content analysis. Themes and main ideas documented in the texts form the primary content of the study and the context

information has been considered as latent content. The deductive method braids the jacket of theory into which the communication of qualitative content analysis flows. The ultimate objective of this investigation is to peruse different perspectives towards life situations indicating violence and reconstruct comprehensive reality.

**Violence** as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation”(WHO,2002, p.5). ‘To call something “violent”’ says Bäck (Ray,2018,p.101) ‘is often to give at least a prima facie reason why it is morally wrong’. As Marvin and Ingle (Marvin and Ingle, 1996, p. 212) point out, “people rarely accept responsibility for violence - to own or enjoy it is taboo except for the most ritually circumscribed conditions. Moreover, since violence is intimately interconnected with the body, pain and vulnerability, its discussion evokes fundamental issues of security, embodiment, culture and power”. The philosophy of violence from the sociological dimension is the performance of power and domination on the less powered or it might be between the two equally powered to find the less powered of the powered to suffer the fangs of violent act. (Ferrell et al.,2008, p.11). “The proponents of the ‘comprehensive conception’ of violence (broaden) the definition to include anything avoidable that impedes human realization, violates the rights or integrity of the person and is often judged in terms



of outcomes rather than intentions” (Ray,2018, p. 9) However, it is difficult to specify the concept of violence in an unambiguous way as the dynamics and aggression pertaining to violence is uncontainable in a single set of phraseology. Therefore, a generic definition finds its way strenuous. (Ray, 2018, p.108) For the purpose of this study, any act, deed or behaviour of a person or party intended to harm or hurt the other physically, mentally or emotionally, has been considered as violence.

The autobiographer Kushwant Singh was well known for secularism and liberal humanism, who proclaimed himself as an agnostic who opposed the practice of religion particularly in India. He was known to be a daring, forthright personal and individual voice in public. On the other hand, Kamala devi Chattopadhyay was a social reformer and freedom activist who pioneered the path for the women in India and played significant role in socio-economic alleviation of Indian society confronting severe opposition from power centers during both pre and post Independent India. She was a determined, courageous, revolutionary and enthusiastic voice of India who advocated swadeshi movement. The two eminent authors are opted for in this study for their individual scholarship and distinction representing two gender defined categories in society. Other than the difference in their gender identification, both rank equal in fame and popularity living their prime time approximately during same years.

#### **Inner Recesses Outer Spaces :**

In the autobiography of Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, *The Inner Recesses Outer Spaces*, she expresses her motto of

depicting an objective and dispassionate account of her personal life as she firmly believes, “it is neither possible nor necessary to narrate or to project every detail,”(Chattopadhyay, 2018, p.1)and states further, “I feel I am justified in deciding what seemed vital and what was not”. That explains why she chooses to etch her connections with the outer world more elaborately than depicting her biographical self in detail in her autobiography.

In a conversation with Amrita Sher-Gil, a prominent painter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, she opines, “I am convinced you are sincere and true to your perceptions. That is all matters. The perceptions of no two are alike. You know that the images we see are created out of our own vibrations.” She continues to say in this regard, “In this vast world there is scope for myriads of perceptions with differing reactions. It is futile agitating over this reality.” (Chattopadhyay, 2018,p.392)It is evident here that in order to understand things better, look at challenges from different angles to develop better evaluative concerns, let go of judgements, perceive things in more balanced state, explore and unfurl the inside out of any issue to respond more rationally, be objective and to attain accuracy of data, individual perspective is the means. This is genuinely true with the autobiographical narration as well. The past, engraved in the memory of the writer, guides not just the content of the autobiography but also the narrative language and style as pinned down by the individual perception of the self.

The episode of the philanthropic couple, Maharshi Karve and his wife Anandibai, who pioneered Widow’s Home with their attempt to train the

widows to be self-reliant and independent, is a testimony to the author's response to violent and unfair treatment inflicted by Indian society on the empathetic souls. It is interesting to note that the author draws the attention of the readers to the psychological integrity and solidarity of the couple and not just to the trouble they undergo; she tries to highlight their ability of resilience to violence. "Every morning as Karve walked down the streets to the Widows' Home the doors of houses he passed would be shut with a loud bang by men and women both, while some poured vile abuses on him someone even spat on him." (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 91) In reflection, the autobiographer idealizes Mr. Karve saying, "he had a slim frail frame, but he walked silently on holding his head high, a suggestive smile playing about his firm lips", (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 91) even after going through shattering experiences. Long period of persecution and ostracism did not seem to deter the couple from remaining to be the source of inspiration.

The autobiographer Chattopadhyay seems to have translucent ideas about violence and non-violence for she was thoroughly convinced and firmly believed in Gandhian principle of non-violence. She was able to make a clear distinction between the two concepts. Her rigorous and extensive understanding and the treasure of her experience in practicing non-violence in the contemporary context had brought about the perspicuity with respect to her conception of violence. It is noteworthy that she certainly had upheld the principle of non-violence under all circumstances. Her precision on the concept of violence is conspicuous in the plain expression: "Two significant

characteristics of a non-violent struggle are: the leader is publicly known and in the forefront unlike in a violent war; the battle plans would be open, on secrecy to be observed." (Chattopadhyaya, 2018, p. 140)

Referring to Gandhi's discretion on the practice of non-violence she illustrates: "I had by now become familiar with a certain mental process in him: his willingness to meet his opponents and discuss the difference. He had an inexhaustible fund of faith in the basic goodness of men, that there was in everyone a core that can be touched, moved enough to melt down the antagonism, wear down the anger and distrust and win at least good-will." (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 160) The secular and divine approach of Gandhi perfectly outlined the principles of non-violence to her.

Further, she extricates non-violence from violence in terrorism: "with my recent political experience I thought them (terrorists) more emotional, impulsive than realistic." (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 164)

As she continues to deliberate on this, she expounds: "To me Bhagat Singh was one apart from the normal run of terrorism and believed he deserved to be treated differently." and "it is not that I shared Bhagat Singh's skepticism about non-violent Satyagraha." (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 163-164) The subtle demarcation in the ideologies, similar in destination, converse the exactitude in the author.

The autobiography illustrates this ontological stance of her by recounting various instances. The violence involved in war for her incurred "loss of fundamental

social values, undermining of faith in human integrity in the face of oppression unabashed and unashamed.” (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p.127-128) The incident of Miss Molly’s personal failure narrated in the autobiography is suggestive of the fact that the large-scale violence in society shares its devastating impact with individual inhabitants as well.

The Lahore incident of hoisting the flag in 1930, wherein her attempt of preventing the act, explicitly demonstrates that a response to violence in the form of defense might result in bloodshed but not prevention of any disaster. (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p.138) As opposed to this, Anusuyabai’s scuffle to save the 24 villagers of Ashti and Chimur in Madhya Pradesh from a death sentence due to Quit India movement gallantly carried non-violence. (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 144)

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay reflecting on the domestic domain of her time, says that girls were taught to be self-reliant in married life along with being emotionally molded and mentally conditioned to be wives, mothers, and housewives, which meant they had to manage enormous physical and social responsibilities, left with no options. In connection with this she recalls an aunt of hers in domestic crisis at her early age due to her husband’s madness and his death later, leaving her with a small brood of children to be reared on slender resources: “Yet she was a reservoir of strength to the entire family. She was sought out in crisis, sent for in any serious illness.” (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p. 150) The author doesn’t interpret the life-long serious issue of widowhood in her aunt’s personal life as a problem at all. She seems to have acquired immense strength to look at the positive side of any

problem as an inspiration. It may be apt here to note how the author has elevated herself to be able to rationalize and examine ‘how’ and ‘what’ of violence and weigh violence vs nonviolence even while being in the midst of stark reality. Her narration is evidently free from the common stereotypical feminine perspective with exemplary lucidity and unbiased approach. She rises above the conventional female voice in her narration particularly in perceiving violence.

#### **Truth, Love & a Little Malice :**

Contrastingly, the author Kushwant Singh calls himself ‘coward’, ‘amazingly picked up audacity’ to involve in a supposedly violent situation while passing through *Subzi Mandi*, being throbbed by the terror of his past memory of partition. His unimaginable courage in dealing with two ‘Muslims’ having bought a cow for slaughtering has much to the readers’ thought. He was of the opinion that it was because of his officially clad demeanor that made the crowd deter and confess the truth. His unwavering intention to save the two Muslim men, foreseeing the probable consequent catastrophe, if that incident went unchecked, which made him utter loudly, “No one is going to touch these men! I have seen enough of this during partition. It has to stop.” (Singh, 2002, p.130). This situation involved violence of two kinds: one planned by the public who surrounded them brandishing iron rods and long knives; and the other, determined by the two men to slaughter the cow. The prolonged effort of the author to save the two men erupts out of his anticipated fear of the possible repetition of the partition like holocaust. The cascading effect, he feared, might end up in yet another calamity affecting huge

numbers on both sides. This incident is so tormenting to the author, that he goes to Gurdwar and prays, that he should be blessed as he has done a duty of a true Sikh. The intensity and the impact of possible violence is evident in his act of seeking solace by praying at Gurdwar, even being a staunch atheist. In his opinion, cow slaughtering for consumption signifies just another community food habit rather than being a token of violence. That is why, he ignores the fact that even after dropping the Muslim victims to their house carefully, they resume their search for the cow.

Kushwant Singh narrates a few instances in which his approach to broken families, especially to women and girl children within them, doesn't seem to breed a constructive energy circulation but provocative of the tendency to take advantage of the situation. These adversely stimulating details in the autobiography undoubtedly affect the psyche or emotions of the reader, especially if chanced, the young readers at their formative years. The narrative tone here specifically, doesn't take care of the possible destructive or unhealthy impact: "I kept reminding myself that I was a friend of her mother and should therefore look upon her as a father would towards his child" (Singh, 2002, p.222)

As the author recounts, his description of violence in the news article in connection with Raman Raghav's case to create sensation in order to catch the attention of the readers was to magnify and spotlight the violent act in it. The reality projected through the media literature being instrumental in forming public opinion, in most cases, the violence is most sensational and the most sensational

news often depicts violence. (Singh, 2002, p.46)

The violence involved in Emergency declaration by Mrs. Gandhi in 1975, according to the author, is *Freedom to Expression and Speech* curtailed by political force which had selfish needs evident in it. The author's attitude towards this context was ambivalent, yet he remained forthright by telling Mrs. Gandhi: "My family is sure that if I spoke my mind, you would have me locked up." (Singh, 2002, p.258). He supported the move about clamping down the law-breakers at the same time felt that the censorship on the press would be feckless as it would bereave the editors of credibility. He also has chronicled the facts about the insurgence of violence due to emergency: "The Emergency Powers turned the heads of many civil servants: they became rude and tyrannical. There were others who, though unhappy, carried orders issued to them without protesting. My friend Kishan Chand was one of them. After the Emergency was withdrawn and enquiries instituted against the misuse of power, Kishan Chand could not stand the strain. He wrote a short note in Urdu: *Zillat say maut acchi hai* - death is better than disgrace - he jumped into a well." (Singh, 2002, p.259) Such narrations are illustrious to depict the extent of hapless distress that the civilians underwent during Emergency.

The public apathy to violence is outlined in two different and equally vulnerable situations of personal violence in public in the autobiography. In both the cases, the social insensitivity is harped to the astonishment of the reader, as the spectators find reasons to manifest their helplessness in the form of callousness and yet camouflage the reasons for not

desisting violence: When he encountered a huge rat, the onlookers “taunted me (him), *Arey Sardar jichoohe say dargaya!*—look at this big Sikh getting scared of a mouse! I tried to protest that it was not a Choocha (mouse) but a big sewer-rat.” (Singh, 2002, p.239). Again, in a public gathering when Dharmendra’s wife Devyani was insulted by the drunk sons of an actor whom she was supposed to have written insulting him, the people around did not come to rescue her.” Now take this, one said pouring the contents of the bottle of beer on Devyani’s head. She shouted for help: *Bachao*—save me. None of the guests felt honour bound to *bachao* her: they enjoyed her discomfiture.” (Singh, 2002, p.261) In narrating such a series of instances, though the author brings out inappropriate behavior or act of violence in public, he doesn’t seem to have been affected by them. Isn’t the writer using the same tool that he condemned to critique the act? While the reader with some ethical sense can never appreciate inclusion of this episode as part of the text at all, the exclusion of the anomaly on the other side in the narration is felt to be deliberate. While one character is spotlighted the others involved are masked. The whole narration including the subtle details is indicative of the unfair treatment and thereby restricting the version to a slanted perspective.

Being closely associated with the family of Mrs. Gandhi, the author seems to have caught up in the mother-in-law, daughter-in-law muddle. The author portrays an unfair and disgraceful feat of the two parties fairly to some extent; he narrates how when one exerted violence the other retaliated or succumbed. The violent rage of the mother-in-law is

dramatically hushed up by holding her to ransom in front of the public and press. The long-sustained balance in the narration drops, with an interview that the author gives to a magazine about some allegations made against the daughter-in-law: “My comments obviously displeased her because, a couple of days later she stormed into my apartment and flung a copy of the magazine and stormed out. An hour later I received a registered AD letter from Amtesh accusing me of telling lies about the family.” (Singh, 2002, p. 300) However, while seeing through the lens of new historicism, one cannot escape to realize that no truth pronounced commits to an unchanging reality; the same holds good for human nature. (Veeser H. A.,(Ed.), 2013, p. xi).

Further, Kushwant Singh recounts a case of domestic violence in London while he was an apprentice. Brenda, basically infatuated with a poet called Muarice, had a bad marriage with him and had to tolerate his boorish and infidel nature, often being beaten up and abused. Violence, whether inflicted on self or on others, has a lasting dent even by merely being a witness to it. This might have prompted Singh to relate the incident in a far-off land, even after decades. Though he doesn’t particularly express his feeling regarding Muarice’s behavior, his narration and the style speak volumes for his opinion. He seems to regret his utter helplessness in not being able to help Brenda in any way.

In a research paper titled, *Gender, Subjective Perspective, and autobiographical Consciousness*, it is stated, “for some individuals, gender is a more critical and central part of their identity than for others and thus they are more likely to think and

act in gender-termed perspectives. This is why perhaps, a small difference in behavior in any context results in robust gender difference.” (Fivush *et. al.*, 2013, p.2-4) Following sociocultural theory, when children are engaged in a particular kind of activity repeatedly, they become more skilled in them. Out of habit, they continue engaging in similar activities. This is to culminate in the fact that if women are habituated to more elaborate way of thinking and emotional reminiscing than males in their formative years, they will be more skilled narrators of such style.(Phan, 2012,p.2-4) From the two autobiographies chosen which are from two different gender identities, it is noticeable that the author Chattopadhyay had clearly formed an emotionally strong and practically bold personality from the early days of her life, as a result of which her responses to life situations cannot be ascribed to conventional feminine kind. Relating to her grooming days, the author recounts about her mother, “she drew before me a vivid panorama of the women of the early Puranic period but did not stress the conventional line of holding them up as model husband-worshippers. In fact, they were presented as personalities with individualities of their own.” (Chattopadhyay, 2018, p.17) That means the orthodox gender consciousness was not fostered in her.

#### **Conclusion :**

Thus, the paper has attempted to analyze the standpoints of the two autobiographers with different backgrounds with respect to their gender, profession, ideology, and region. While examining instances related to domestic as well as societal violence, that are documented in the autobiographies under study, it is

interesting to note the role of perspectives in reconstructing reality. The destructive power of past violence is reminiscent in Kushwant Singh overpowering his consciousness affecting his perspective while Kamala Devi exhibits her capability to focus on resilience to violence. “Every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices” is one of the key assumptions of New Historicism. (Veaser H.A.(Ed.), 2013, p. xi). The cosmopolitan upbringing and the routine acquaintance with contemporary aristocratic and bureaucratic elites, must have influenced the author journalist to mold himself as a liberal humanist who called himself agnostic. Such influences whether cultural, material circumstance or the surrounding, that the authors are raised in seem to have groomed their persona. The paper also asserts the scope for infinite individual perceptions in realizing the comprehension of reality.

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# Understanding the Narrative Trajectory of “Wife” Through the Presentation of Marital Violence in Malayalam Movies

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## **Introduction :**

*Cinema is a reflection of society and, in most cases, can be a mirror and not just show the problems but also give solutions and help them reach a large number of people through faces and voices that matter - Kriti Kulhari*

Media has always been a pillar of social change<sup>1</sup>. Cinema is an essential means which transfers culture and maintains traditions<sup>2</sup>. Indian cinema is the largest film industry in the world in terms of the number of films produced<sup>3</sup>. Bollywood is the fourth largest film industry in India<sup>4</sup>. The culture and traditions told through Malayalam movies represent more ideal and sanitised roles<sup>2</sup>, especially while presenting the narratives of family, marriage and women.

For the Malayalam cinemas, marriage was sacred and bound by culturally defined role expectations and stereotypes for both husband and wife. Society defined the role of women in marital relationships as they must fulfil the desires of masculine characters, portraying them as “Perfect Wife”. The gendered behavioural

norms, which internalised through the socialisation process, are where “Good Women” and “Bad Women” notion is rooted. It is in terms of how women dress, behaves, approve sanctions and their relationship with the opposite gender, and how they ‘perceive, interpret and respond to sexual harassment’ that they are put into these boxes<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, a categorisation of wives is found in family narratives of Malayalam popular culture of the 20th century, such as ‘Good Wives’ and ‘Bad Wives’.

Batra (2022) defines ‘Good Wife’ as “a domesticated woman well versed with household chore, accept whatever little respect she’s given, put her husband and in-laws on a pedestal, only focused on taking care of the house, non-ambitious and does not have a life of her own”. A ‘Bad Wife’ is defined as a well-read, career-oriented woman who is too selfish to think for herself, independent in decisions and stands-up for herself<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, 20<sup>th</sup> century movies glorified the “Good Wives” and the transition of “Bad Wives” into “Good Wives” through the exercise of violence by husbands.



According to social constructionists, in a world where men rule, violence in marriage is treated with less seriousness or as normal<sup>7</sup>. These films thus established an expectation that the ideal wives should remain tolerant and smooth. However, bad wives will react when their husband shows aggression. With the entry into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Malayalam film industry started creating strong and independent wives. Here a reacting wife or a rebellious wife began to be presented as an image of strength and empowerment. Furthermore, this new role of 'wife' is glorified extensively too.

This paper examines how the discussions frame the role of the wife in Malayalam movies through the narratives of violence happening in marital relationships. This study explores the transition in the presentation and glorification of 'Wife roles' in Malayalam films of the 20th and 21st centuries. For this, the researcher purposively selected two movies released in the 20th century, *AvidathepoleIvideyum* (1985) and *Valsalyam* (1993) and two Malayalam movies of the 21st century, *Ottamuri Velicham* (2017) and *Jaya JayaJayaJaya Hey* (2022) which discuss the marital violence in detail. What makes these movies important is the deep family narratives told through the story and the increasing discussion of spousal abuses these films put forward in both the 20th and 21st centuries. The study employs qualitative content analysis.

#### **Wife role stereotyping in 20th-century Malayalam movies :**

In a patriarchal society, cultural constructions shape the roles<sup>8</sup>. The division of good wives and bad wives, and

glorification of the former, as represented in the Malayalam cinemas of the 20th century, served the expectations of the audience, driven by patriarchal conditioning of familial nurturing and organisation.

*AvidathepoleIvideyum* and *Valsalyam* are two Malayalam cinemas of the 20th century which fortified good and bad wives through family narratives. Sujatha (Shobana) in *AvidathepoleIvideyum*, Malathy (Geetha) in *Valsalyam* represents good wives. The movies present Neelima (Kavitha Thakur) of *AvidathepoleIvideyum*, Shobha (Ilavarasi) of *Valsalyam* as bad wives. According to Meena T. Pillai, the author of 'Women in Malayalam Cinema', "Cinema can exploit women to conform to certain types while rejecting others, allowing them to be moulded and defined by hegemonic social structures, and in the process unconsciously assisting in the reproduction of these hegemonies"<sup>9</sup>. The movies of the 20th century place the ideal wife as obeying her husband on every decision, tolerating him while he shouts at her and non-reactive when he abuses her. She forgives the aggressive husband, and tries to conform to the norms of a patriarchal family.

On the other hand, the same narratives portray bad wives as wealthy, educated, spoiled, aware of her rights and needs, speaking English, wearing a modern dress and maintaining short hair, hate cooking and reacting to marital violence.

A vital feature of these movies is how they justify marital abuse. According to the sex role socialisation theorists, the way men and women are socialised, justifies their behaviour in a society. The

compartmentalisation of men as dominant, powerful and sexually aggressive; and women as passive, submissive and obedient further aggravates the situation by regularising marital violence<sup>7</sup>. The good wives need to tolerate the pain, and the bad ones need to be saved<sup>10</sup>. These two films suggest that the husband figures must bring the outspoken, rebellious, deviant wives to submissiveness and perfection by exercising violence over them.

In *AvidathepoleIvideyum* and *Valsalyam* the role of a woman is given significance only along with men<sup>11</sup>, especially when the norm is to deliver the story from the male perspective. Anirudhan and Sukumaran of *AvidathepoleIvideyum* are perfect examples of hegemonic masculinity, as they never resist treating their wives as the property they own. According to Anirudhan, husband of Neelima, ‘a woman who takes the heat of his sweat, feeds the children he has and shares the life in his kitchen and bedroom can also share his individuality. A wife only gets individuality when she lives according to her husband’s ideas.’ Sukumaran, Neelima’s brother, justifies the marital violence perpetrated by Anirudhan, quoting, ‘Anirudhan has the right to beat his wife and abuse her verbally’. Towards the end, the husband and brother turn out to be correct, and a happy ending follows as Neelima decides to quit her dreams and obey Anirudhan, embracing his individuality at the cost of her own.

The ideological meaning, filmed through the presentation of structure, code and conventions which rules the life of women in cinemas, propagates patriarchal dominance and ruling<sup>11</sup>. According to

Janardhanan, the father-in-law of the younger son in *Valsalyam*, “a husband marries the wife, rather than someone bringing a husband to a wife”. This scene insists on the right over his property and denies the agency of a married woman from her own natal family.

The idea of dominance, which Gramsci referred to as the hegemony of the ruling class, primates every social system through the consent of deprived classes<sup>12</sup>. This perspective proves correct in Sujatha’s opinion on the violence caused by her brother (Anirudhan) to Nileema, ‘Neelima is a girl, does she have to be so stubborn?’ and of Malathy ‘if the girls show their anger in marital home, husbands will beat them that is the norm’. The cultural context where these movies are placed further justifies this dominance by legitimising power and supremacy of husbands over wives.

#### **Wife role stereotyping in 21st-century Malayalam Movies :**

“Cinema has become extremely important in any serious study of the women’s question today...women on screen come to represent not an individual but a type”<sup>9</sup>. With the beginning of the 21st century, the number of movies addressing violence in marital relations increased in production. Consequently there has been a transition in wife roles from fulfilling marital duties and responsibilities to liberation, aspiration and independence. To this response, the researcher analyses two films: *OttamuriVelicham* and *JayaJayaJaya Hey*.

In *OttamuriVelicham*, Sudha (Vineetha) breaks the ideal wife consciousness embedded in Malayali conscience by leaving her abusive

husband. In a social environment where the life of a wife is expected to end with the demise of her husband, Sudha embodies the social reality of gender discrimination in domestic-spaces<sup>2</sup>. The mother-in-law justifies the aggressive behaviour of Chandran (husband of Sudha) towards Sudha by referring back to her husband's violent behaviour. This clearly shows that a section of the ruled accepts and disseminates the ideas and systems the ruling class produces as common sense. Nevertheless, Sudha challenges this 'patriarchal terrorism'<sup>7</sup> by choosing not to save her husband when he drowns to death. Quoting Sudha, 'I have watched my husband cry out loud for help. He died in front of my eyes I was not scared'. She embraces freedom from the pain and abuse perpetrated by her husband and finally gathers the courage to fight against patriarchy.

When Jaya (Darshana) reacts to the physical violence and verbal abuse committed by her husband, here progresses the story and 'Wife' in *Jaya JayaJayaJaya Hey*. Her tolerance of violence at the story's beginning stemmed from various factors such as fear, manipulation, and lack of support. However, towards the film's end, Jaya stops all justifications over her husband's abusive behaviour provided by families of birth and marriage. When she tells her husband Rajesh (Basil), 'If you hit me, I will hit you too', here begins the 'enough is enough'<sup>13</sup> moment against patriarchy. From taking power and unconsciously producing submissiveness to finding independence and breaking norms surrounding marriage and marital socialisations, the trajectory of wife roles in Malayalam cinema delineates

progressive thinking, dialogues and debates surrounding marital violence and gender justice.

#### Conclusion :

In the 21st century, we have witnessed significant changes in the conversations concerning gender and marriage. The increasing number of abuses in marital relationships, the rise of feminist movements, and heated debates over marital rape are reasons for turning down the traditional roles and role stereotypes assigned to wife characters in Malayalam cinemas over centuries. Since the role of cinema in spreading ideologies and norms are very significant, it has become a tool for liberating wives from traditional roles to a new space where they have the opportunity for growth and self-reliance. The celebration of different shades of 'wife' roles thus began to be included in the journey of Malayalam film production of the 21st century.

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# Understanding Domestic violence During COVID 19 Pandemic: A study in special reference to Gujarat State

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After the declaration of COVID 19 as global pandemic almost all affected countries made policies to deal with it effectively and promptly. Many precautionary measures announced by our country to reduce the spread of disease. In spite of the measures, there had been negative consequences. As the virus affected common life all over the world, it brought in several new stress, isolation, loneliness, physical and psychological health, closure of all business, loss of jobs. Domestic violence was one of the major problems during the lockdown as women were affected physically and psychologically. Domestic violence can be defined as physical, sexual and economic violence that is committed by the elder member of the family or the intimate partner.

## **Introduction :**

The COVID 19 pandemic has been felt among the world population as one of the most prominent threats to humankind. The consequences of the disease have not only been restricted to the loss of life but also have severe socio psychological consequences. As of 20 December 2020,

over 1.6 million people across the globe have lost their lives (WHO-2020) With the spread of COVID-19 almost all countries have declared Lockdown and issued COVID SOP, social distancing as only way out to prevent the deadliest virus spread. Since there were no permanent measures and remedy it was resulted to closure of School, Colleges, public private industries etc. These preventive measures were seen as safety measures against COVID but other aspects of human life and security also badly affected. The government has become successful in providing safety to people from COVID but structure of society, human relationship, social bonding disturbed and there emerged the cases of domestic violence. Media, social media, print media all had reported across the country and state that domestic violence cases had seen a significant increase.

The cases of violence mostly observed and administered on the weaker section of society. In India women and children are considered marginalized and powerless section as most of the female fraternity is

dependent on the male fraternity. Due to dependency of wife and children on husband and father respectively it is observed that they use violence on them as symbol of control. "In India, the patriarchal theory and pattern of society is evident in every sphere of life. In Indian families, males are referred to as *annadata* (the giver of food), which portrays the man worshipping tradition and male's upper handedness" (Bhattacharya, 2004)

After the COVID, Lockdown had affected the economic and social lifestyle of people along with the psychological conditions of the people. All the educational activities, social activities and activities at workplace stopped as a result the victims of domestic violence had lost the support system which they get from such places. Although the prevalence of domestic violence in Indian society has always been pathetic, it became worst at an alarming rate during the COVID 19 pandemic (Mittal & Singh, 2020). In a recent review of the gender based violence during the COVID 19 pandemic, "Mittal and Singh (2020) marked a significant increase in the cases of domestic violence. There was also an evident lack of supportive policies and resources for these women, as they were bereft from their support networks during the COVID 19 pandemic and the lockdown." The cited few attempts to study the scenario and consequences of domestic violence there are few studies on domestic violence cases in India and their damaging impact on their mental health during the COVID 19 pandemic. The present paper is an attempt to fill this gap using a systematic review of newspaper reports of domestic violence cases during the COVID 19 pandemic.

### **Definition and types of Domestic Violence :**

Domestic Violence can be defined as the violence against women by a husband or intimate partner. Such Violence against women is considered as gender-based violence that result into physical, sexual or psychological harm to a woman. "WHO defines intimate partner violence as 'a physical, sexual, or psychological coercive act by a current or former partner or spouse to a woman'" (WHO, 2013). There are multiple psychological theories of intimate partner violence. "Psycho-analytic theorists, for instance, emphasis on relational masochism to explain a woman's decision to persevere with an abusive partner". However, this theory has been thoroughly criticized (Fisher, 1986) for indirectly blaming the victims, reinforcing violence, and considering masochism as a feminine trait (Young & Gerson, 1991). "Traumatic bonding theory (Dutton & Painter, 1993) states the power imbalance between the partners in explaining relational violence." Thus, domestic violence results from cultural values, rules and practices that afford men status and power than women.

### **Types of Violence :**

**Physical Violence** - This type of violence observed in a family where the intention is body harm. The abuser shows aggressive behaviour towards wife like hitting her, burning her, dowry related violence.

**Sexual Violence** - Sexual abuse is when a woman is forced to have sex without her agreement.

**Economic Violence** - The abuser has control over all economic resources. The aim is to create dependency of victim for

day-to-day expenses and essential commodities.

### **Domestic Violence in Gujarat :**

In India, lockdown was imposed on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 which continued up till 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020. It was a tough time for all citizen. All were compelled to stay at home. For some people home is turned to be the unsafe place during the lockdown, especially to the victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is immoral practice that continues to exist in Gujarat state. The government is taking this matter seriously than before but there are aspects which needs improvement.

According to the reports published in Zee news there is a tremendous rise of domestic violence in Gujarat. "As per the ABHAYAM helpline call data the rise is 35% during the year 2018 to 2020. The state government has issued helpline called ABHAYAM to help the women. In the year 2018, 52831 call. in 2019 61159 calls and in 2020, 79675 calls received. Most of the cases reported were regarding marital relationship and mental torture to women." As per the report Ahmedabad city recorded highest cases of domestic violence almost 50 % cases rise. The cases are even reported in Gandhinagar, Banaskatha, Dang, Surat Surendra Nagar, Mehsana, Navsari, Porbandar, Vadodara too. According to Society for women action and training initiative SWATI the cases of domestic violence had been increased during COVID years due to lock down, economic crisis, unemployment and stress in the family.

In a similar news report in Gujarat Samachar 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2021 on domestic violence in Vadodara district states that "ABHAYAM Women Protection helpline

team has received 5974 calls and the team had resolved the cases. Most of the cases were domestic violence, physical torture, rape and forced sex." The victims were helped by team members. According to Vadodara ABHAYAM Coordinator "In Normal days the number of domestic violence calls are between 24 to 26% but during COVID it increased by 42 to 44%. The team adopted the compromise - convincing attitude to resolve the cases.

One such report published in *Oneindia* news throws light on the domestic violence in Rajkot city. Report says on an average five women become victim of family violence. "The city Police has received 1723 complaint application wherein the victim had complained against the husband and in-laws for abuse and physical violence. The analysis indicates that the victims were among 26 to 30 years' age group. The major disputes were of marital issues and interference of In-laws. The cases were resolved by counseling by police department."

According to National crime records bureau zero cases were registered under the protection of women from domestic violence Act. While activist working for women's right claims different. TV 9 Gujarati on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021, in reference to a research, state that "in the beginning of COVID the cases of depression were more surprisingly most of them were female affected." During the period women have to face the problem of mental health abortion and menstrual health. Secondly, women also have to face the extra burden of taking care of children, family and the workplace. 44% women agreed that they faced problem in balancing family and professional life.

National Commission for Women (NCW) show that there have been 587 registered domestic violence complaints between 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 16<sup>th</sup> April which is a significant rise in the report between 27<sup>th</sup> February and 22<sup>th</sup> March which was 396 between these months. The report also shows that one in every six complaints is launched via WhatsApp. NCW had published the email address of their officials to receive the complaints through their online portals as a lockdown measure as its traditional modes, i.e. post and direct registering to complain would be a difficult procedure in lockdown. But in India where the only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the women have access to the internet most of the cases remain unreported. It is so as victims do not get access to cell phones most of the time.

These reports don't provide us the exact number of the violence going around in the country and state because of the prevalence of the orthodox social norms on domestic violence most of the case remains underreported. Most of the women don't report the cases due to the fear of their in-laws and the problem that they might face after their husband/partner is released.

It is not that domestic violence against women has not been reported earlier. But during Covid-19, the psychological factors affected to the most. The virus has mirrored the discrimination and oppression against women which exists in a male-dominated patriarchal society. Covid-19 also has stopped the economy of the lower middle class and BPL families. A woman who was considered as a lower rung in many of such families after the lockdown had completely been economically empowered. Further, during the lockdown,

women were expected to take up traditional gender roles, i.e. domestic work negligible contribution from men.

In many such families we have seen that a *Lakshman Rekha* has already been existing before lockdown for women. All these have led to a woman being considered as second-class citizens. Thus, women were caged in a violent home and placed in such a situation from where it was difficult for them to seek help. Thus, domestic abuse cases are certainly on a rise after lockdown.

#### **Factors aiding for domestic Abuse :**

Violence of any type shows the mentality of that person or society. The theories which have been given as to what is the real cause of domestic violence are.

#### **Psychological :**

A theory of personality traits, states that a person has primary and secondary personality traits. Primary traits are responsible for what one person shows to another person. While secondary traits are generally shown in front of the trusted people or close ones only. Anger, poor impulse control etc. are such traits which come under secondary personality traits which is responsible for domestic violence in many such cases. These traits have been developed in childhood and if ignored it will become more when the child becomes an adult. Reports suggest that about 80% of men accused as abusers' studies exhibited typical personality disorders.

#### **Stress :**

Stress has the biggest play in any type of violence. Stress increases when people are confined and their movements are restricted. Due to financial crisis stress may be increased in a family which attracts



tension. Violence is always caused by stress and many people found violence to be an act which relieves their stress. Families in poverty experience domestic violence, due to increased stress and conflicts about finances and other aspects.

#### **Behavior and Jealous :**

It is reported that men and families are generally patriarchy in India. They consider male fraternity to be superior than the female fraternity. If wife exceeds in any part of life than the husband feels jealous of her. Also, many such cases of domestic violence happen as the husband is jealous of his wife or when he suspects her to leave him if she becomes independent.

#### **Conclusion :**

Although the coronavirus responsible for the COVID 19 pandemic does not differentiate between genders in its clinical process, the socio psychological consequences of the pandemic might also be mediated by one's gender. The COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in a great crisis for the life and living of the entire world. Its impact on women, however, has been pathetic. Home quarantine, which was seen as the most effective method to protect the health and well being of the general public, had led to increased suffering for women. While women were free from out of home violence acts due to the nationwide lockdown, they were increasingly exposed to the violence within their homes without much socio legal support to help them. The rise in the domestic violence cases reported in the state news dailies in India is a clear indication of the trend that the domestic space is still unsafe for a majority of women. It must also be noted that while

the risk of this pandemic will be over and the lockdown would be lifted, the scars of the violence would be permanent for the affected women.

Although the present study delineates evidence of domestic violence in Gujarat, a multi fold increase in domestic violence cases is reported all over the globe (Evans, Hawk, & Ripkey; Mittal & Singh, 2020; Tadesse, Tarekegn, Wagaw, Muluneh, & Kassa, 2020; Usher, Bhullar, Durkin, Gyamfi, & Jackson, 2020). This is strong evidence of gender related disparities in every society. The outcomes of this study warrant not only for strict and effective legal provisions to help these women but also call for the attention of scholars and mental health professionals to study and design effective modes so as to educate and prepare a society that can provide safe and respective place. Not only the government and law agencies but also the non governmental organizations and the general public must come together to create conditions in which reaching out for help is made easy.

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# Violence and Women as Reflected in Indian Partition Literature

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*“Never before in South Asian history, did so few divide so many.” (Hasan, 1994)*

*This is not that long awaited dawn... Faiz Ahmad Faiz,*

The noted and well known Urdu writer in his famous verse laments that the way things have taken shape during the partition of the country; this is not the dawn all the countrymen were waiting for. When independence and partition are discussed in history books the partition violence and the after effects often contain data and statistics, which fails to express and exhibit the intensity, lacks the warmth of human emotion and cannot cipher the silences. Here literature comes to the fore and compensates this lacuna by fulfilling all these areas. Often it is doubted History - His story ! Where is 'Her' story? It is always 'HIS' story, and not 'HER' story as at the time of partition very few women historians and writers were there.

The genre of partition literature is comparatively nascent and marks its beginning with the writing of Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan, Ice Candy Man by Bapsi Sidhwa, Azadi by Chaman Nahal, Pinjar and other stories by Amrita Pritam originally written in Punjabi which was later translated into English by

Khushwant Singh, Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh, Stories by Sadat Hasan Manto, etc. These fictional writings are supported by the factual writings and documentation of oral histories like The Other Side of Silence by Urvashi Butalia, Borders and Boundaries by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, etc. Various other online platforms like 1947 Partition Archive, Project Dastaan are also contributing to the collection of memories, experiences and oral histories by the witnesses. Noted critic, Terry Eagleton rightly mentions, 'every writer is individually placed in society, responding to a general history from his own particular standpoint, making sense of it in his own concrete terms.' (Eagleton) Hence partition literature along with the themes like separation, alienation, dislocation, up rootedness, homelessness focus on the theme of violence locates the writer and its time. Violence was casted against children, elderly; lunatics (The famous story of Toba Tek Singh by Manto) women too were the most vulnerable in

this chaos as they were [are] the symbols of chastity, honour of clan, community and ultimately of the country.

It is, after all, the literature's job to raise the event psychologically and emotionally, to tie us into its complex of choices and pain. (Jason, 1996) Lost in History, but found in literature. The prime of history was to record the movement of freedom and consequently silence continued on the issue of violence against women, children and marginalized. But literature represents life of human beings with all its intricacies and pains recorded that part which history could not accommodate.

Indian partition literature shows that women were exposed to various heinous abuses and molestation to the extent that in order to save their chastity and dignity women committed suicides, (Thoa Khalsa) this is a type of self inflicted violence. Violence is reflected in many forms and shapes in works like *Tamas* by Bhisham Sahani and in *Other Side of Silence* by Butalia. As Arunima Day puts it, 'The women, however, limited to the territorial boundaries of home, are enhancers and markers of the social standing of the men whom they belong as wives, daughters and mothers.' (Day, 2016) That was presumably the reason for much violence against women during these chaotic days. Arunima Day in her paper, '*Women as Martyrs: Mass Suicides at Thoa Khalsa During the Partition of India*', tries to answer the victimization of women in partition violence as,

"The man purveys his religion, his caste and his class. But, where does one situate the woman? The woman becomes an object for the purpose of

defining the man, rather than holding an identity of her own. Hence, at a (supposed) time of need to assert one's religious identity, for instance the Hindu-Muslim riots during the partition of India (1947) the woman-object became the woman-object-signifier. Her status did not change, however, her body, her gender and its control by the (active) subject-man emerged as a trope for assertion of religious supremacy." (Day, 2016)

This could be one of the reasons behind much of the violence inflicted on women. Dealing with violence against women Vasihali Naik in her thesis, '*A Study of Indian Partition as Seen Through Selected Works of Literature and History*', writes, 'women along with other margins (children, old, insane, and religious minorities) were the worst affected victims. (Naik, 2013) Hence the novel *Pinjar* was selected as the representation of the voice of women in expressing their plight and to consider the female gaze even before the cataclysmic event.

Gayatri Spivak in her famous essay asked, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Spivak was of the opinion that women especially in colonized countries were at the last level in the social hierarchy. The repercussions of this event were long term and still can be felt in both the countries either on political, social or cultural levels.

Nonica Datta in her paper *Reframing Partition: Memory, Testimony, History* expresses in a single statement that, '*Pinjar* is Amrita Pritam's testimony of the partition of Punjab.' (Datta, 2008)

Partition or not, *Pinjar* is the novel mirroring various kinds of violence against women.

*'Kites shall hover, kites and vultures  
shall continue to hover for long'*  
(Sahani, 2001)

Violence is an integral part of the partition of the country. It was very obvious that this will be reflected in the literature produced then. Amrita Pritam the veteran writer who has received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1956, was conferred the prestigious Jnanpith Award in the year, 1981 and Padma Vibhushan in 2004. Amrita wrote with words dipped in blood. (Pritam, 2015)

Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*, first appeared in Punjabi and Hindi in 1948, and then it was translated into English by another man of words who has himself penned the partition through his *Train to Pakistan*, Khushwant Singh. It is translated in many Indian languages as well. Amrita Pritam is well known for expressing the strong feminine feelings in Indian social structures. She has very sensitively portrayed the characters in *Pinjar* and exhibited how common men suffer due to the decisions taken by political parties or government. *Pinjar* has the backdrop of partition and at the same time it is the indication violence due to the patriarchal set up of the society.

Anuj Bahri, the publisher of the book, in his tribute to Amrita Pritam mentioned that *The Skeleton* is set against the background of religious and clan feuds on the eve of partition. In the beginning of the novel itself we get a gloomy and grim picture of Pooro seating and imagining,

*'her body was a pea- pod inside which  
she carried a slimy,  
white caterpillar. Her body was  
unclean. If only she could take  
the worm out of her womb and fling it  
away! Pick it out with*

*her nails as if it were a thorn! Pluck it  
off as if it were a maggot or a leech...!'*  
(Pritam, 2015)

No mother would feel such anger for the one that is yet to take birth! But the circumstances that led to its conceptions are the reason why she felt so. Motherhood is otherwise such a celebrated thing, but in the case of Pooro, she was impregnated and married against her will. It was the result of her being helpless, being hopeless for any sort of help and being miserable. For being a girl in such a society and times that she was, she was refused and denied by her own mother and family... her last hope proved to be the worst nightmare for her. A girl who was imagining the pictures of happy married life was all of a sudden abducted and then many things happened to her and they were out of her control. She has to change herself altogether from Pooro to Hamida. Rashid who had abducted and married Pooro himself told the reason behind his abduction to her

*'Did you know our families, the  
Sheikhs and the Sahukars have been  
at loggerheads for many generations?  
Your grandfather had advanced us  
Rs. 500 on compound interest and take  
our house as mortgage. We could not  
redeem the mortgage. He attacked our  
house and had the entire Sheikh family  
ejected. We were rendered homeless.  
That was not all. His agents used foul  
language towards our womenfolk, and  
your uncle kept my father's sister in  
his house for three nights- with the  
knowledge of your grandfather! The  
Sheikhs were then like a bundle of  
sugarcane from which all the juice had  
been squeezed out. They wept bitter  
tears of blood and bided their time. My  
grandfather made my uncles swear  
that they would avenge these insults.  
When we heard of the plans of your  
wedding, there was talk of settling the*

*scores. They picked me; they made me take an oath on the Koran that I would abduct the Sahukar's daughter before she was wed.' (Pritam, 2015)*

History has many events where female bodies are treated as the sites of war and revenge. So Pooro had to pay off the rivalry and Rashid had procured and restored the honor of his clan. So, Pooro was used thus to 'settle the scores.' She had to pay for something in which she was nowhere, but only being a girl was all her fault and she and many like her had to pay dearly, heavily for that. Even worse jolt came from her parents as somehow Pooro manages to escape and returns to her home, her parents deny accepting her and her mother says to her,

*'Daughter, it would have been better if you had died at birth! If the Shaikhs find you here they will kill your father and brothers. They will kill all of us.'*

The plight of Pooro depicted by Amrita shows her misery. She was once abducted by force by Rashid and was deprived from home and family, this time she is denied by her own family members and is deprived of her home. Her mental state is very beautifully portrayed by Amrita, Pooro could never be the same Pooro again.

*'Pooro got up and went out of the door. Neither her mother nor her father tried to stop her. When she had come this way earlier, she had believed she was returning to life; she had wanted to live again, to be with her mother and father. She had come full of hope. Now she had no hope, nor any fear: What more could anyone take from her than life? The thought dried up all her tears.'* (Pritam, 2015)

Even she requests her father to take her to Thailand where none will know of

the abduction, but her father says, 'you have lost your religion and your birthright.' The concept of contamination of their daughter compelled them to disown her. How painful it would have been on Pooro's part and on the part of her parents too. Her mother too had to refuse her who had given birth to her. This situation Amrita has written with lot of dexterity and skill. She has portrayed hard hearted, helpless parents who finished the last hope for their daughter. Women have been used by Pooro's uncle and now by Rashid as a weapon to avenge. If *Sahukars* did the wrong so did the *Shaikhs* and thus the scores were settled. The revenge was complete. One feels astonished to see that the family, who has travelled abroad and has seen the world outside India, too can't free itself from the clutches of patriarchy and traditions. Not only Pooro was abducted and married forcefully, but now she was to see the pains of conversion too.

*'One day he brought a stranger with him and asked his wife to stretch out her arm. The man tattooed on it the new name she had been given when she was married to Rashida. From that day "Hamida" was not only inscribed on her skin in dark green letters but everyone began to call her by that name.'* (Pritam, 2015)

So she could return neither to her physical house nor to her religion in which she was born. Both the 'Homes' have been closed for her. It is so strenuous to see that in her originality, individuality, nothing remained which she could claim as her own. Not even her name, which is an integral part of an individual. Amrita says,

*'In her dreams, when she met her old friends and played in her parents' home, everyone still called her Pooro. At other times she was Hamida. It was*

*a double life: Hamida by day, Pooro by night. In reality she was neither one nor the other, she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name.* (Pritam, 2015)

She might have had to struggle a lot to resolve the conflict between Pooro and Hamida and come to terms with her new identity. This is a kind of violence which is on psychological level. Amrita very truly says that what remained her was only the structure of bones, skeleton, hence the name 'Pinjar' just a cage for the life to breathe, without all the joys of living, who was abandoned almost all the pleasures a young girl aspires for of marriage, of husband, of at least being surrounded by the known faces.

Only thing that could give her solace was Rashida was quite human and loved her. He was not savage and torturous towards her. He knew that he did wrong to her. When Pooro was in her labor,

*'He stood guard on the threshold. He could hear Haminda's long stifled moans through the closed door. He wished he could take some if not all the pain from his wife's body into his...'* (Pritam, 2015)

Amrita expresses his humaneness is in these words,

*'Pooro was no longer the girl he had abducted and made his mistress—not a woman he had brought in as a housekeeper. She was Hamida, the mother of his son.'* (Pritam, 2015)

Khushwant Singh a man with a very subtle sense of history, an editor having a hawk's eye on the society and a novelist carefully recording the changes in the society as a writer. An amalgamation of these genres made his writings at once very striking. The blurb of the book *Train*

*to Pakistan* mentions, 'The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured both raped.' (Singh, 2016) These sentences very eloquently express the use of women as a weapon by either side. He always challenged humanity and humanitarian point of view. One cannot forget that Singh was among the first ones to have articulated the pains of partition, separation, communal violence, religious hatred and many such things related to the division of the countries. A close examination of the dialogue between two characters, Bhola and Iqbal gives the reader a glimpse that objectification of women was there at the back of Singh's mind, *Bholeya, I hear a lot of women are being abducted and sold for cheap. You could find a wife for yourself.* 'Why, Sardara, if you can find a Mussulmanni without paying for her, am I impotent that I should have to buy an abducted woman?' replied Bhola. (Singh, 2016)

These two male characters are not talking about any merchandise but they are talking about women, as human, as they are in terms of buying and selling. The violence or pain women characters went through has varied layers. The case of Prakasho, a Brahmin girl, was abducted by a Muslim, and her parents are intimidated to accept her as her mother puts it, 'Of what use is she coming back? They must have already put the forbidden things into her mouth.' (Sahani, 2001) The innocent girl that was abducted is not being taken back due to harsh discrimination in the society. Allah Rakha her kidnapper marries her soon and she too knew it very well that even after successfully rescuing from him she will not be welcomed and hence being left with

no choice she accepts him as her husband. Azadi portrays vividly the horrors of the Partition, the colossal violence that still haunts the Indian psyche. It concentrates on the exodus of millions of refugees from Pakistan, and on the aftermath of the partition. (K. K. Sharma and B. K. Johri, *The Epic and Psychological Delineation of the Theme: Chaman Nahal's Azadi, The Partition in Indian English Novels*, (Ghaziabad, VimalPrakashan, 1984) p.89.) Tamas by Bhisham Sahani is yet another very impressive work on Indian Partition. The very name is suggestive of darkness 'Prakasho had really been kidnapped by Allah Rakha and brought into his house. When the riot broke out mother and daughter were collecting faggots from the slope of the hill. Allah Rakha, along with two or three of his friends, was already on the prowl, waiting for an opportunity. They came running, Allah Rakha picked up Prakasho, who shouted and cried but to no avail, and brought her home. During the first night, Prakasho was left alone in the dark room. On the second day, Allah Rakha got some sort of Nikah rites performed and married her, and brought a new pair of clothes for her to wear. For two days Prakasho lay crying without a morsel of food or a drop of water going into her, and kept staring at the wall of the house. But on the third day she accepted a glassful of lassi from his hand and also washed her face.'" (Sahani, 2001) At least Allah Rakha had a soft feeling for her from the beginning and hence he did not force himself upon her. But the loss of parents and family remained forever with her.

Another writer whose writings make the reader restless, is Sadat Hasan Manto. He gave the morbid and gruesome picture

of the commonest of the people that were affected by partition. He said "If you cannot bear these stories then the society is unbearable. Who am I to remove the clothes of this society, which itself is naked. I don't even try to cover it, because it is not my job, that's the job of dressmakers." (Iqbal, 2023)

In Thanda Goshta, Manto puts forward a horrifying picture of the society. Where he depicts that a woman's body is not safe even after her death. The story has many undertones and interpretations, but most prominent among them is Isher, the perpetrator, tries to deal with his impotency by raping a female corpse. Such bold, violent and dark stories of Manto reflect the other side of the society and bring to light the barbarism of the members of the society. Manto's other heart wrenching story is *Khol Do* where he shows the humanitarian face of the mankind along with the brutal and wicked human psyche. In *Khol Do*, a young girl is brought to the doctor after molestation and rape. She is unconscious and the doctor has very less hope of her being even alive. The doctor asks to open the window in Hindi 'Khol Do' Open it. The girl even though unconscious thinks that she is being asked to open the dress that is tied with a lace around her waist, and her hand mechanically goes to the lace. This is the result of repeated molestation to her. Partition literature is full of such incidences which not only shocks and horrifies the readers but as a social discourse documents and reflects the contemporary society. A society that was afraid to take back its daughters, the mothers unwilling to deliver the child. Violence against women in the given instances and many other exhibits the power play, gender dynamics



in patriarchal set up and the communal undertones on the backdrop of Indian Partition.

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# Through the Lens of Violence :

## An Inquiry into the Personal and Political Dimensions in Marjane Satrapi's 'Persepolis' and Chimamanda Adichie's 'Purple Hibiscus'

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### **Introduction :**

Within the vast tapestry of literary discourse, the theme of violence emerges as a resolute and poignant thread, weaving itself intricately into the fabric of human storytelling. Emerging from the hallowed pages of epics and ancient tales to the horrors witnessed during the world wars, and modern day politics, the exploration of violence assumes paramount significance. It is an indispensable lens that enables an in-depth scrutiny of human nature, the ramifications of power dynamics, and the labyrinthine complexities of societal dilemmas. Enveloped in the embrace of literary pages, violence in literature provides a platform for profound introspection, resulting in the careful cultivation of empathy.

Literature has always been an unwavering mirror that has reflected a kaleidoscope of human triumphs and tribulations, prudence and imprudence, casting a probing gaze into the convoluted corridors of human nature. The presence of violence in the literary realm therefore becomes a potent vehicle for social and

political commentary. Violence can manifest itself in the prevailing power structures, social and religious norms, consequences of societal maladies, systematic oppression, and abuse of authority.

The present study explores violence in personal and political spaces, focusing on two extremely compelling works that have delved deep into the dimensions of violence: Marjane Satrapi's 'Persepolis'; written during the tumultuous times of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'Purple Hibiscus' which explores the theme of violence in a personal setting in Nigeria. Although the selected works are distinct in their geographical and cultural contexts, they offer a substantial exploration of the personal and political manifestations of violence. Both the authors, Satrapi and Adichie, underscore the impacts on individuals, families, and societies, therefore offering an incisive commentary on human life within a turbulent family or political landscape.

### Political Violence : A Deep Dive into 'Persepolis' :

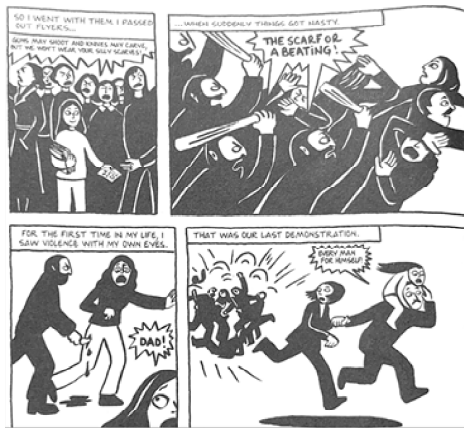
The initial events depicted in the novel unfold against the backdrop of the tumultuous political history of Iran. In 1921, Reza Khan established the 'Pahlavi Dynasty' which was mainly comprised of two leaders : Reza Khan, who renamed himself Reza Shah, and his son Mohammad Reza Shah, who took over the throne after his father abdicated in 1941. Due to internal conflicts and various coup attempts, Mohammad Reza Shah, in response, dissolved the multi-party system and set up his secret police, called the 'SAVAK' to stifle dissent, and this police was notoriously infamous, particularly for the violation of human rights.

Demonstrations against the Shah escalated and gained momentum in the early 1970s, when the police crackdown resulted in the deaths of many peaceful protesters. These protests were regarding the general discontent with the regime, but the violent act of suppression eventually made it worse, and the 1978 Rex Cinema fire that killed nearly 400 people was rumoured to have been orchestrated by the SAVAK, as they refrained from letting the others help rescue the victims, barring the entrances, and attacking them. In the third panel below, the technique of using sizing conveys power dynamics. The police officers are depicted as hyperbolically bigger in their physical structure, metaphorically suggesting their power over the common people, who appear to be significantly tiny. This visual juxtaposition shows the overwhelming control the SAVAK had over the populace and the extent of violence they can culminate;



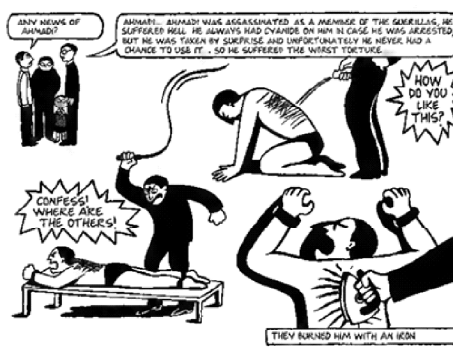
(Satrapi, 14)

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 that resulted in the removal of the Shah in Persepolis had promised democracy and freedom but had in fact led to an even stricter, oppressive regime that imposed a rigid and dogmatic interpretation of Islamic law. Growing up in these shifting times, Satrapi documents the jarring effects of this abrupt transition: a liberal society to a theocratic one, highlighting the repressive measures that were imposed on day to day activities that resulted in the collapse of democracy. This is evident through the mandatory 'veiling' of women, shutting down schools, practising religious orthodoxy, and the violent measures that the regime takes to suppress political dissent. The panel below shows the women protestors who had taken to the streets to show their discontent with the regime. We can see that violence breaks out when the guardians of the regime use physical thrashing of men and women. The use of a knife and baseball bat in the panel captures the way brutality ensues among the protestors;



(Satrapi, 76)

The author skilfully employs monochromatic visual graphics to capture this reality. The woman in the third panel above endures the piercing thrust of a knife upon her thigh, and evident through the depiction is the cascading blood from her wound. Her face shows pain and agony. Marjane and her family fled this harrowing protest, as we can also see how the protestors were beaten up with baseball bats. This is evident from the fact that political turmoil resulted in violence. Yet another manifestation of politically motivated aggression is the way political prisoners are tortured in Iran. In the chapter 'The Heroes', Marjane's parent's family friends, Mohsin Ahmed and Saimak Jari, recollect their horrific experience whilst being political prisoners. The panels in the novel depict graphically disturbing images that show Ahmadi, their fellow prisoner, who was tortured before being assassinated. He was an underwear-clad man being burned with iron, whipped, and then dismembered. This kind of physical torture was orchestrated by the government to instill fear and curb the revolution and the suppression of political dissent.

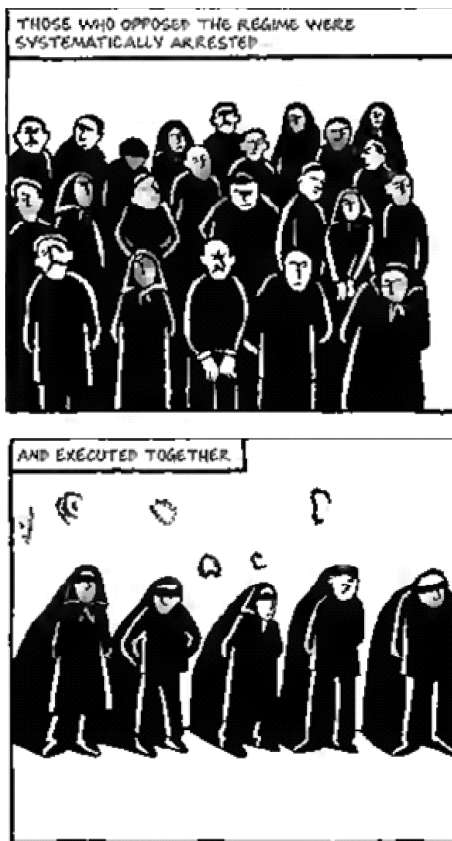


(Satrapi, 51)

This panel, particularly bereft of delineating borders, is a testament to the sheer absence of constraints pertaining to the violence that was inflicted upon these prisoners. The trauma is unavoidable. Marjane and her family were 'shocked' to hear this, and therefore the way this panel is made is a deliberate tactic to obtain the same 'shock' among the readers. What's more; Satrapi's narrative is punctuated with vivid scenes of protests, public executions, demonstrations, and the massive Iran-Iraq conflict that history records started in 1980–1988 and was fueled by Iraq's invasion of Iran. The war was long, and this devastating conflict between these two countries was propelled by a combination of religious differences, territorial disputes, and political rivalries and had resulted in significant civilian casualties, economic devastation, exploitation of the poor class, scarcity, refugees, migration, and a massive social upheaval for the nation.

There are episodes of loss and destruction strewn across the pages of 'Persepolis'. These scenes are not merely constructed to chronicle historical events but to highlight the profound impact of political violence on everyday life, the

turmoil that is faced by ordinary citizens. Marjane's firsthand experience of violence comes with the execution of her uncle Anoosh, who was wrongly considered a spy; the death of her classmate Pardesi's father, who is a pilot; the murder of Saimak Jari's sister; the death of Baba Levy; Satrapi's Jewish neighbours who die in an air raid that strikes their building; the murder of a communist girl named Nassrine; the killing of all the political prisoners after they are released and so many more who suffered in the regime's violent political repression.



(Satrapi, 117)

These constant threats of violence in the form of air raids, bombings, public executions, and imprisonments create an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty as people live in constant fear of anticipating attacks and for their lives every time the sirens go off. Their everyday lives are filled with anxiety and trauma. This captured daily life, many individuals lost their loved ones, and others experienced displacement of families like that of Mali's Abadaan, which was bombed. Schools and educational institutions are shut down, livelihoods are jeopardised, and the economy and well-being are severely disrupted as people try to navigate and cope within a society that is unstable, as even basic food and supplies become scarce. 'Persepolis' was internationally acclaimed for its unique way of depicting a child's sense of wonder that is humorous but shows an unflinching account of brutality and violence due to political destabilization.

#### Personal Violence: A Deep Dive into 'Purple Hibiscus' :

Situated within the postcolonial turmoil of Nigeria in the 20th century, the novel 'Purple Hibiscus' presents the reader with the tendrils of violence in the personal space of the Achike family. Adichie skillfully encapsulates Eugene's patriarchal practices within the microcosm of the family. He is the emblem of violent and toxic dictatorial practices, as he uses physical and mental torture to keep his family members obedient and religiously prudish and pompous. The scenes of brutality in 'Purple Hibiscus' hold a testament that violence can permeate into the most intimate spheres of life, affecting the dynamics of power within a family, relationships, identities, and its characters.

All these members of the family suffer domestic abuse by Eugene, not just in physical form, but in an array of frequent bantering that has become a normal phenomenon in the household.

Beatrice's character appears to be very docile, calm, and caring; she has accepted her fate and the torture that is inflicted upon her by her hypocritical husband. This domestic abuse manifests in the form of physical violence, beating frantically to the tipping point when Beatrice bleeds, faints, and even has miscarriages that also affect her mentally. Kambili's description of this violence is disturbing and enraging;

I hear the sounds. Swift, heavy thuds. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice... trickle of blood which trailed away. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped. (Adichie, 32-33)

In the narrative, we can see that Beatrice is reasonable with the children when they are expected to follow strict religious fasts and practices. But when Beatrice is considerate and gives Kambili food, because she is ill and can not fast on the day of the Eucharistic fast, they all get belt-beaten by Eugene;

He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as it landed on my back. (Adichie, 102)

In many such instances, the physical violence ends with Beatrice losing another pregnancy when he smashes the table on

her in a fit of anger. Both Kambili and Jaja are severely punished for spending time and sharing space with their own grandfather, Eugene's father, whom he disapproves of as he is a 'heathen' and has not accepted Christianity. In Eugene's eyes, this is sinful, and the children must endure his punishment, which involves burning their feet with hot water as a form of redemption. Eugene is a colonial product, and his outlook looks down upon the Igbo and pagan cultures, which are the root religions of the region. Kambili's description of this scene is highly distressing, and we see Papa, purposely inflicting severe violence on his own timid daughter, having no concern for her health or the trauma it will cause; rather, he feels he is doing the right thing by saving her from hell as she has committed a 'sin' by sharing space with a 'heathen'.

"Kambili, you are precious." His voice quavered now, like someone speaking at a funeral, choked with emotion. "You should strive for perfection. You should not see sin and walk right into it." He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it toward my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face... I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. "That is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin. You burn your feet," he said. (Adichie, 194)

Eugene's violence is not just physical; it obviously seeps into the psychological realm. This overbearing, tortuous control

over every aspect of his family, down to their hourly schedule and allotment of rules, creates an atmosphere of fear, repression, and anxiety. This stunts Kambili's and Jaja's growth. She becomes timid, lacks any confidence, and is quiet and fearful. Jaja eventually rebels, and Kambili begins to open up when they see and experience a completely different way of life with their Aunt Ifeoma.

### In the Name of Religion :

Religion is, ironically, intricately interlaced with violence. In both works, religion becomes a pivotal force that drives violence in personal and political spaces. In their respective narratives, Satrapi and Adichie explore the multifaceted role of religion and its intersection with violence.

Religion is at the forefront of all the political changes happening in Iran after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, leading to the establishment of a rigid theocratic nation that then used and manipulated religious norms to justify the violent suppression of freedom and the enforcement of an extremely strict code of conduct and social norms. One of the first instances of this is the mandatory veiling of women as young as 10 years old. Marjane detests it, and her mother Taji protests against it because they see the veil as a symbol of oppression. Women are not given the choice of wearing the veil but are forced to do so, and the consequences of not following the rules are very severe. Taji who is dressed modestly but doesn't wear a veil is brutally insulted and threatened to be raped by the so-called 'god men';

Uncle Anoosh and many other political prisoners are executed by the new

regime, as mentioned previously, which perceives their political views as a threat and uses religious justifications to come out clean. Since many, like Marjane's family, are liberal and secular, they become a target of violence here and there that exposes how the regime justifies its abuses in the name of religious piety to all those who deviate from adhering to strict norms. Religious fundamentalism is also used to mobilise young boys from poor backgrounds who are encouraged to participate in the war effort during the Iran-Iraq conflict, which resulted in a tremendous loss of life and culminating violence. The concept of religious martyrdom is promoted, and promises of a heaven convince young boys to take part in the 'carnage'.



(Satrapi, 101)

The novel highlights the duality of the religious preachers. Their hypocrisy is evident when they themselves engage in immoral activities such as bribery, sexual threats, raping communist women before executing them as per the norm of not killing a virgin, like Nassrine, and mistreatment of poor young boys. They preach religious virtues that are hollow,

leading to the erosion of freedom and the culmination of physical violence and trauma. Consequently, the use of violence to ensure strict practices of religious rituals and punishment as a form of redemption is highlighted in the novel 'Purple Hibiscus' especially in the character of Eguene Achike. His extremist ideologies stem from rigid Catholic practices, causing him to suppress his family's freedom of expression and enforce a moral code that comprises mental and emotional abuse and strict routines. This violence is hidden from the public eye as he maintains the prestigious role of an ideal man. He smashes Jaja's finger as a punishment for not being on the merit list for the Holy Communion class. Both Kambili and Jaja are brutally kicked with metal shoes for bringing their dead grandfather's, Papa Nnukwu's, painting back home from Aunt Ifeoma's place, which drives Eugene mad. He goes into a fit of rage, as he is a colonial product, and therefore he sees anything other than Christian traditions as sinful and wrong and calls for redemption through punishment.

Although Father Benedict is not aware of the physical abuse that Eugene showers on his family back home, he always praises him for his devout Catholicism and considers him a pious man. Father Benedict is a white British conservative priest who shares a similar rigid approach to practicing Catholicism with all the rules. Father Amadi comes as a complete contrast to Father Benedict as he respects his own roots, incorporating regional Igbo songs in the prayers, and has a much more compassionate approach that blends in both customs and is a testimony to the fact that religion has the ability to adapt and flourish instead of being rigid, toxic, and physically abusive.

### **Resistance and Resilience in 'Persepolis' and 'Purple Hibiscus' :**

Despite the prevalence of political and personal violence in the discussed works, the authors have emphasised on the ability and capacity of the characters to resist and strive towards freedom. Although this pursuit of freedom comes at a cost. In 'Persepolis', Marjane's resistance is evident through her active participation and genuine involvement in the rallies and protests from a very young age. Her defiance is asserted through her donning of western clothes and using contraband items like posters, music, CDs, shoes, and punk rock paraphernalia. However, she has to leave her family, nation, and culture to nurture her sense of self, freedom, and individuality as she moves to Austria permanently by the end of the novel. In 'Purple Hibiscus' Kambili and Jaja's quest for their own freedom and for their mother's liberation comes at a severe price. Initially, they are submissive and seem to accept and normalize their father's abusive and physical violence. The realisation of change occurs when they visit their aunt and experience totally different, equal, and lovable family dynamics that ignite the transformation. Jaja starts to defy Papa's wishes and commands. And Kambili finds solace in her relationship with Father Ahmadi, who plays a significant role in breaking her shell.

### **Conclusion :**

In conclusion, both works shed light on the multifaceted role of physical violence in literature and depict how violence permeates into political and personal domains. Through 'Persepolis' we witness the devastating impact of



systematic violence, orchestrated by the ruling powers, and the violent undercurrents of the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. 'Purple Hibiscus' on the other hand, explores how violence wielded in the name of religion and patriarchy can culminate in an abusive household, stunting the growth of its members, and the brutal repercussions of such behaviour. Both works show how violence affects lives at micro and macro levels. The study of physical violence in these novels urges us to confront the deep

rooted problems of power hunger and dominance that perpetuate violence in the world. Through these works, we get insights that foster empathy and understanding, which encourage us to take action to bring about change and make the world a better place.

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# The Oppression of Kashmiri Brahmins and communal violence in the movie - *The Kashmir Files*

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## **Introduction :**

The history of Kashmir is intertwined with the history of the broader Indian subcontinent in South Asia with influences from the surrounding regions of Central and East Asia. Historically, Kashmir referred to only the Kashmir Valley of the western Himalayas. Today, it denotes a larger area that includes the Indian-administered union territories of Jammu and Kashmir (which consists of Jammu and the Kashmir Valley) and Ladakh, the Pakistan-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, and the Chinese-administered regions of Aksai Chin and the Trans-Karakoram Tract. Ranbir Singh's grandson Hari Singh (the last ruling Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir) who had ascended the throne of Kashmir in 1925, was the reigning monarch in 1947 at the end of British rule of the subcontinent and the subsequent partition of the British Indian Empire into the newly independent Dominion of India and Dominion of Pakistan. An internal revolt began in the Poonch region in Kashmir against oppressive taxation by

the Maharaja, in August; Maharaja's forces fired upon demonstrations in favor of Kashmir joining Pakistan, burned whole villages and massacred innocent people. The Poonch's rebel declared an independent government of "Azad" Kashmir on 24 October 1947. The rulers of Princely States were encouraged to accede their states, to either Dominion - India or Pakistan, taking into account factors such as geographical contiguity and the wishes of their people. In 1947, the percentage of Kashmir's population was 77% Muslim and 20% Hindu". In order to demolish the powers that Kashmiri were facing, the Maharaja signed a standstill agreement with Pakistan, which ensured continuity of trade, travel, communication, and similar services between the two but such agreement was pending with India.

The plot frequently switches between the contemporary period set in the year 2020 and flashbacks to 1989-1990 throughout the film. In 1989-90 Kashmir, Islamic militants storm and banish Kashmiri Hindu Pandits from the Kashmir

valley using the slogans *Raliv Galivya Chaliv* (convert to Islam, leave or die) and *Al-SafaBatteDafa* (“with god’s grace whole Kashmiri Pandit community will leave valley. *The Kashmir Files* is a 2022 Indian Hindi-language drama film written and directed by VivekAgnihotri, It depicts the exodus and the events leading up to Kashmiri Brahmins a genocide, a notion that is widely considered inaccurate by scholars. The film claims that such facts were suppressed by a conspiracy of silence. The critical receptions of the film was combined, with the cinematography and acting thought to be compelling, but the storyline attracting criticism for attempting to recast established history and propagating Islamophobia. Islamophobia is the fear of, hated of, or prejudice against the religion of Muslims or Islam in general, especially when seen as geopolitical force of terrorism. Theatres across India have witnessed hate speech against Muslims, including incitement to violence. *The Kashmir Files* was set to release theatrically worldwide on 26 January 2022, coinciding with India’s Republic Day, but was postponed due to COVID-19. It was initially released in over 630 screens in India on 11 March 2022 and was later increased to 4,000 screens. The film was re-released on 19 January 2023. This movie weaponized the pain and suffering of Kashmiri Brahmins to create an environment of disaffection against Muslims of Kashmir and Muslims from the rest of the India. People watching the film are not improbable but rather then, seemingly intended consequences of the movie. It is Important to highlight the pain and suffering of Kashmiri Brahmins who left the valley in 1990 and also to demonstrate the violence and atrocity that

led to their life exodus but *The Kashmir Files* does show with the lens of inciting hate rate against people In this movie, we can say that the cruelty, terrorism and manipulation webbing the people with the absurd notions.

#### **Theoretical Aspects :**

Once known as “heaven of earth” Kashmir today is the world most militarized zone. *The Kashmir Files* is a 170-minute Bollywood drama about the tragedy of Kashmiri Pandits, or Brahmins-the priestly highest caste of the Hindu religion. Hinduism is a minority faith in Muslim-dominated Kashmir, and the Pandits left the region in the 1990s, as they were targeted by Pakistan-sponsored militant Islamists. Social media is flooded with videos of the audience erupting in rousing hate speeches after seeing the film, with calls for the slaughter of Muslims and a boycott of Muslim businesses. In a climate of growing intolerance, where exclusion and marginalization of Muslims have become mainstream political discourse, the movie is making Indian Muslims even more fearful. According to the author Rajesh Singh, the truth about Kashmir is more complex one and an endless cycle of alienation, distrust, and violence that had been fed by decades of broken political promises, rigged elections, the claustrophobia and humiliation of a constant military presence, foreign-funded Islamist insurgencies, custodial deaths, torture, rights abuses, brutal crackdowns, and the Indian state’s legitimate fears of loss of sovereignty. Kashmir’s long struggle for secession validates the Hindu nationalist case that Muslims with their extraterritorial loyalties are an existential threat to the integrity of country. Kashmir

thus, fits neatly into the BJP's use of Muslims as the bogeyman to unite the vastly disparate Hindu voter base against the dangerous "other." This mass radicalization is driven at various levels—through social media, divisive political messaging, a craven mainstream news media (at times compared with Radio Rwanda), and historical revisionism, increasingly through cinema. In 1947, when India gained independence from British colonial rule, Indian subcontinent got divided into two different nations: India and Pakistan. At the time of independence, the princely states, including Jammu and Kashmir, were given the option to accede to either India or Pakistan, taking into consideration geographical proximity, demographics, and the ruler's preference. The ruler of Kashmir at that time was Maharaja Hari Singh, who initially sought independence for his state. However, faced with an invasion from tribal militants supported by Pakistan in October 1947, he requested assistance from India. In response to the Maharaja's request, India agreed to provide military aid, but on the condition that Kashmir acceded to India. On October 26, 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession, officially integrating Jammu and Kashmir into the Dominion of India. This was in accordance with the legal framework established by the Indian Independence Act of 1947. During the late 1980s and 1990s the Kashmir valley witnessed an up surge in militancy and separatist movements. This is very challenging for the Kashmiri Pandits' Community. Many people got migrated from the valley of Kashmir due to the incidents of violence and threat in the valley. There were many

reports that gave information about the event showing torture, harassment and killing of some members of Kashmiri Pandits' Community. Some were targeted because of their religious belief of the Hinduism also asked them to get converted, who did not accept the proposal has to faced intimidation, physical abuse and even execution. These scenarios of violence and harassment led to the exodus of large number of Kashmiri Brahmins who were forced to flee from their homes and became Refugee in other parts of India. These acts were carried out by various militant groups operating in the value of Kashmir and supported by Muslim living in the valley. This miserable condition of Kashmiri Pandits enforced the researchers to revisit their history where under the rule of Aurangzeb Kashmiri Pandits were forced to go through the process of conversion. Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of Sikhs, played a significant role in protecting the rights and religious freedom of the Kashmiri Pandits during a turbulent period in the 17th century. During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, the persecution and forced conversions taking place in the valley of Kashmir. In this context, the Kashmiri Pandits, who were predominantly Hindu, were facing severe oppression and were being compelled to convert to Islam. These Hindus from Kashmir had been given a deadline by Emperor Aurangzeb to convert to Islam or be killed. Pandit Kripa Ram with his large delegation met Guru Tegh Bahadur, seeking his assistance. Guru Tegh Bahadur took up the cause of the Kashmiri Pandits and decided to confront the religious persecution being imposed upon the Kashmiri Pandits' community. Guru

Sahib addressed the Pandits with the following words:

“Go and tell Aurangzeb that if he can convert Guru Tegh Bahadar to Islam, they will all convert. Otherwise he should leave them alone”. [Kaur, 2020]

He traveled to Delhi, where he was eventually arrested by the Mughal authorities under orders from Aurangzeb. The Guru Sahib was put through severe trials and ultimately sacrificed his life for the cause of religious freedom. Guru Tegh Bahadur’s sacrifice not only brought attention to the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits but also served as an inspiration for subsequent struggles against religious persecution. The sacrifice roused the Hindus from their passive silence and gave them the fortitude to understand the power that comes from self-respect and sacrifice. Guru Tegh Bahadur thus earned the affectionate title of “Hind-di-Chadar” or the Shield of India.

#### **Conclusion :**

The movie “*The Kashmir Files*” directed by Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri focuses on the episode of the migration of Kashmiri Brahmins in the early 1990s. The research portrays the socio-political suppression, violence, including rapes and murders faced by the Kashmiri Pandits. The film also explores themes of socio-religious violence and gender domination. By depicting the suffering of the Kashmiri Brahmin Community, the movie aims to shed light on their experiences. The film intertwines the contemporary period of 2020 with flashbacks to 1989-1990, showcasing the exodus of Kashmiri Hindu Pandits from the Kashmir Valley due to militant attacks and religious persecution. However, it’s important to note that the film’s portrayal of events as a genocide

and its suppression by a conspiracy of silence have been subject to criticism from scholars. Kashmir’s history is complex, with political promises, rigged elections, militarization, foreign-funded insurgencies, human rights abuses, and the Indian state’s concerns about sovereignty contributing to cycles of alienation and violence. The film’s impact, combined with the current climate of growing intolerance, has raised concerns about further marginalization and fear among Indian Muslims. In historical context, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of Sikhism, played a significant role in protecting the rights and religious freedom of the Kashmiri Pandits during the 17th century. He confronted religious persecution and sacrificed his life to defend their beliefs. His actions brought attention to the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits and inspired subsequent struggles against religious persecution. Overall, *The Kashmir Files* highlights the experiences of Kashmiri Brahmins and sheds light on the historical dynamics of the region. However, it is essential to critically analyze the film’s portrayal and consider multiple perspectives to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues surrounding Kashmir. Where the movie elaborately discussed the violence happened to Kashmiri Pandits, at the same time enlighten the audience with the peace and love thorough the speech of Krishna Pandit (Played by Darshan Kumar). In his speech he said that -

“There is heaven surrounded by beautiful Himalayan mountains, and on those mountains, a rishi (Rishi Kashyap) meditated. Meditation means Research. He researched so that he can extract knowledge from that heaven. His name was Rishi Kashyap, and that heaven was named Kashmir.” [Ranjan, 2022]

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# Does Color Matter? :

## Confronting Racial Violence in Children's Picturebooks

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Progress is a term that has human beings rushing forward in all fields and even mundane lives where we strive to cross off every item on the to-do list. However, it is also ironic that the same human race is deterred by discrimination against fellow human beings based on caste, race, gender and so many other factors making one question the notion of progressiveness. It is a tragedy to note that such discriminations are often rooted in baseless statements and hatred causing unnecessary fear, suspicion and anxiety in people making them go against all rationale. Thus, the 'otherness' created by the binary oppositions instituted by society is more harmful in nature and creates divisions that have suppressed generations in an inhumane manner. Racism is a social construct that is centered on the belief that one race is superior to the other leading to inequitable opportunities and limiting or sometimes even completely disregarding the rights of the community that is often othered by not just prejudice but power. The recent pandemic is just another example of racial violence and the extent

to which it can harm people and their lives. Race-based violence has always been a hot topic in the US given the surge of crimes that have resulted due to such inbuilt prejudice. Considering the complexity of the issue and to avoid explaining the intricacies of it adults mostly avoid discussing it in front of children nevertheless discuss it with them. Conversations around any discriminatory behavior are treated as taboo subjects that young children need to be shielded from as it might be considered "too much" for them, especially in circumstances that involve violence and death. This paper attempts to analyze how picture books serve as agents in instilling awareness in children leading to not just an understanding of racial violence but further helping to create a context for productive conversations and action by focusing on two picture books namely *Something Happened in Our Town* and *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*.

*Something Happened in Our Town* is a picture book that unflinchingly addresses the topic of racism and gives an idea as to how to take the first step in

discussing it within families. The book written by Celno et al and illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin tackles racism and the ensuing discrimination in a direct yet tactful manner keeping in mind readers of all ages. The book opens with the police shooting of a black man and follows two families, one black and one white, and how parents navigate the questions of their children regarding the incident. This first step in itself is progressive as both the families do not try to put down the child as the topic of discussion makes them uncomfortable nor do they try to deviate or distract the child by bringing up other topics of discussion. The story and illustrations are striking as it demonstrates the parents modeling excellent questioning and listening without disregarding the child's intention to learn and understand why a black man was shot by a policeman thus untangling the complex web of racism.

Initially, the children do not clearly understand the racialized police shooting and seem to have no access to much information. Later at school they overhear other seniors discussing the shooting and are curious about the cause but find it difficult to comprehend without further guidance. Emma and her family represent a white family that is trying to discern the shooting of a black man. Emma questions her mother as to why the black man was shot and her mother responds that it was a mistake. However, her sister Liz intervenes and says "It was not a mistake. The cops shot him because he was black" (Celno et al, 2018, p. 3) and this is the first time the book directly addresses color as the cause for such violence. Emma as a child does not understand the concept of "color" as she comprehends it literally and

her mother explains that blacks refer to African Americans even though the color of their skin can vary in shades. They as a family discuss the history of how Africans were brought to America as slaves and the two page spread of a black-and-white image in which the African continent is bound by chains becomes symbolic of the oppressed state of the blacks in the US. They discuss how even basic rights such as voting and education were denied to African Americans based solely on color as a discriminating factor. Emma here as a white child raises the question as to whether they as white people have been responsible for such discrimination and her mother answers in the affirmative and asserts that it is the result of indeed an "unfair pattern" (Celno et al, 2018, p.8) implicitly referring to institutionalized and systemic racism. Emma tries to break down the concept of 'pattern' by comparing it to her blanket and her mother extends it to how not inviting a black child simply because of their skin color to Emma's birthday party who is white would be repeating the unfair pattern.

The story then unfolds in the black household of Josh and his family. Josh's narrative starts with the question "Will the policeman go to jail?" (Celno et al, 2018, p.10) referring to the shooting of the black man. The family gets into a nuanced discussion of how white and black people constitute the police force and how it's the choices that they make that determine the outcomes especially when it comes to crimes based on racial discrimination. The conversation turns into a page slapper when they focus on Malcolm's (Josh's brother) response as to how he as a young black man might get stopped while driving while a white man under the same



circumstances would not be stopped or even considered suspicious adhering to the baseless stereotype that young black men are dangerous. The conversation does not just stop there but evolves into a solution-seeking one with the mother explaining that many black leaders like Martin Luther King have fought against such discrimination by turning their anger into black power for the betterment of black people. His father advises him to use this power to stand up for people who are subjected to such verbal and physical violence based on race and Josh likens it to his brother Malcolm telling off people when Josh is teased/bullied for wearing glasses. This entire conversation happens during a game of chess with black and white chess pieces symbolizing the binary oppositions of black and white based on skin color. The illustrations with the words on the page weave a tale that strikes at the heart of the problem. The book not only discusses racism and its impacts but brings out the essential message of starting a “better pattern” and breaking the existing cycle of racial violence through the actions of Emma and Josh at the end where they embrace Omad, a new black student in class, and help him out by joining his team for soccer while other children avoid him.

*Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*, written and illustrated by Anastasia Higginbotham, has created quite a controversy in terms of defining white supremacy and tackling racial violence. The book opens with a white child watching the news coverage of a black person being shot by the police. When the child is curious about it the mother’s immediate response is “You are safe. You understand?” (Higginbotham, 2018, p.4) but the child’s thought bubble in response

is a strong “No” as they do not comprehend the situation completely. In the next spread, the child draws a gun pointed at a set of raised hands with no color in it but is contrasted by the words “Color matters” (Higginbotham, 2018, p.5) highlighting the discrimination caused by racial difference. This discrimination is further discussed in the following pages where the white child goes shopping and the verso depicts this child looking at items priced at 15 dollars and on the recto a black child looking at items priced at 5 dollars. However, the security guard contrary to logic is not monitoring the white child looking at comparatively expensive items but the black child who is also just looking at items much less expensive attesting to the fact that color does matter. The white child then proceeds to visit an aunt’s house where they hear a conversation about protests concerning the shooting of the black man that is being telecasted on the news. The aunt seems relieved that they reached home safely amidst the protests. The next illustration features the headlines of the violent shooting while the uncle seems to be frustrated only by the fact “They’re (protestors) blocking the roads” (Higginbotham, 2018, p.14) which is a blatant display of the power that white supremacists hold where the death of a black man is viewed as an inconvenience.

Overhearing such responses and witnessing their reactions the frustrated child visits a library and comes across the book titled ‘*Our shared history*’, the book talks about how blacks have been oppressed for more than 400 years based on skin color by being denied basic rights such as education, voting, housing, banking, etc. The book traces the history of white people who have over the

centuries stood in solidarity with black people in protest against such racial discrimination emphasizing the idea that whiteness and the unfair power exercised under such a banner need not be defended as it is not one's own idea but rather a misconstrued ideology that has been passed down by people who have benefited out of it. By the end of the fictional book, the child is overwhelmed by the information and while returning by car with their mom yells out in frustration and asserts that she understands the implications of the black man being shot. The book reasserts the fact that it's one's choice to understand and change for the better through the ringing question "What do you want to say?" (Higginbotham, 2018, p.32).

Released in February 2016 as Episode 16 of Season 2, "Hope" centers on the Johnson family as they discuss police brutality while watching television footage of a grand jury deliberating whether or not to charge the white cops who killed an unarmed Black youngster. The episode, which is almost entirely set in the family's living room, explores the moral dilemma of whether it is appropriate to inform black children about the true workings of the American justice system, even as the show's main characters wrestle with the same dilemma. Commenting on this episode The New York Times stated, "'Hope' proved how sitcoms can still matter; even in a time of fragmented audiences, they can connect. No talk is going to work miracles, but it beats saying

nothing" (Poniewozik, 2016). Likewise these picture books addressing racial violence serve as efficient conversation starters when it comes to discussing race, it's history, the ensuing violence and try to pave way for a better society in which the cycle of racial violence is broken. In conclusion, the purpose of these picture books is aptly summed up in a statement made by Kenya Barris, the *Black-ish* showrunner, i.e. "The best scenario would be that it motivates some change" (Bacle, 2016).

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# Ferity in Fantasy : Traversing and Perusing the Selected Works of Neil D'Silva

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## **Introduction:**

“Unexpressed emotions never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.”  
Sigmund Freud

The depiction of violence in literature is to highlight the tensions and conflicts in social and personal relationships. More works in literature are produced on the basis of a pleasant human emotion called ‘love, but anger is another prominent emotion in human life that is responsible for most of the inconveniences caused in life. The importance given to love in the literature among the readers was quite high when compared to the violence or horror works, which were structured by the emotion known as anger.

Violence plays a pivotal role in post-modern literature, where this era is filled with wars, crimes, assaults, etc. It reflects the harsh realities of the materialistic, inhuman, selfish, and self-centred world people dwell in and the struggles of the human condition. Violence is a common theme in literature and can take many forms, such as physical violence, emotional violence, and sexual violence. It is often

used by the authors to explore human nature, make political or social commentary, or create tension and drama in the story. While it can be difficult to read about violence, it can also be cathartic or empowering for some readers, and it can be a way to comfort or process difficult experiences. However, the depiction of violence in literature can also be controversial, especially when it is graphic or gratuitous. Some readers may find it disturbing or triggering. Overall, violence in literature can serve as a powerful tool for story-telling and exploring difficult themes, but it should be used with sensitivity to its potential impact on readers. Here, D'Silva utilised the concept of violence from two perspectives, namely one from the antagonist and another from the protagonist. The violence of Bhaskar Sadachari, Govind, and a few minor characters is represented as dark, evil, desire for women, and cunning, whereas the violence initiated by Maya and Meenakshi (Yakshini) is represented as good, protective, defensive, and unplanned. One argument for the significance of violence is that it can be used as a powerful medium for exploring

complex social, political, personal, and psychological issues.

The graphic violent acts can be used to illustrate the effects of injustice, oppression, dislike, and abuse of power. In addition to that, the inclusion of violence can make it more resonant and impactful. By portraying the consequences of violence, authors can create a sense of urgency and emotional investment in the reader, encouraging them to consider and confront the difficult issues that the literature addresses. Neil D'Silva is a contemporary Indian horror writer fondly known for his graphic and violent depictions of negative occurrences and human behaviour in his novels in an Indian style with Indian mythology in it. Violence is a prominent theme in his works and is used to convey the terror and brutality of the situations his characters find themselves in. D'Silva's debut novel, *Maya's New Husband*, depicts characters who are deceived by someone at some point in their lives, which leads them to make wrong decisions. Those flaws dragged Maya to the gate of death and pushed Bhaskar to death. The scar of being deceived has transformed the nature of both the main characters, Maya and her husband Bhaskar. It is a thriller story that deals with the marital life of a widowed woman named Maya Bhargava, who is deceived by a cannibalistic aghori named Bhaskar Sadachari.

The novel depicts how Maya killed Bhaskar to safeguard herself from his deadly hands. This novel can be cited as the finest example of a slasher thriller in Indian style. Through Bhaskar's character, D'Silva portrays the dark side of human nature, exploring the depths of depravity and the capacity for violence within

individuals. This is often showcased through his unimaginable actions like gruesome murder, thirst for lust, physical and mental torture of his victims, and pivotal violence of eating the internal organs of the victims to fulfil his vow by doing black magic, which makes him the epitome of violence. "Horror invariably includes an element of evil, channelled via a human, a creature, or a supernatural force, which has the power to change events, causing disruption and instability, and which must be challenged and defeated" (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, 2016). It is a psychologically violent horror that has a serial killer as its antagonist.

D'Silva used a stereotypical slasher in this work, with some changes in his motive. Through this work, D'Silva talks about several social evils like male chauvinism, sexism, suppression and oppression of women, murders, and mass killings in the name of politics that still prevail in society. The above-mentioned negative traits served as the main causes of both domestic and social violence. D'Silva's next work of fiction, *Yakshini*, published in 2019, demonstrates how gender oppression affects rural women. This is the touching and horrific journey of a girl in a male-chauvinistic society. It is about a society where only women have been suppressed, whose opinions are unsought, who are labelled as witches or seductresses, whose pleas go unheard, who are brutally punished and even murdered, tortured physically as well as mentally. Women, especially teenage girls, struggled to safeguard their modesty and chastity. The novel focuses on a teenage girl named Meenakshi, who is constantly abused by the boys in her village because of her heavenly beauty. D'Silva makes a

new attempt by making it a mythical horror. Because Indian society is deeply rooted in spirituality and most of the people in India are god-fearing by nature, the author had the idea to narrate a tale blended with myth as a social message that would reach and register in the reader's mind.

Meenakshi is possessed by a heavenly demi-god named 'Yakshini', which she unleashes from her soul or body and brutally punishes the perpetrators. The new attempt to portray women as demi-gods and depict her character in a bold, grotesque, alarming, fear-evoking, and ghastly way must be an eye-opener for the abusers. Through this work, D'Silva concentrates on women's safety and security, which gives them self-respect and self-empowerment. Several parts of the novel clearly depict how women were sidelined from society and made into puppets. The societal norms during the old times were more conservative when compared to the modern era. Nowadays, people are more liberal and broad-minded, accepting anything in society that was once considered taboo. Because of that, people thronged the theatres and bookstores to watch and buy horror books, which are filled with gore and violence. An article that was published in National Geographic emphasised the benefits of reading and watching horror filled with violence, which acts as exposure therapy and is used to cure anxiety disorders. Reading or watching this kind of work helps people escape from the harsh reality of the world, which acts as a coping tool. Exposing ourselves to violent imagery releases us from actual danger and helps us face our deepest fears and work to overcome them. According to the article by Martin Grotjahn, a university of South

California School of Medicine Professor and a Freudian psychoanalyst, argued that scary movies or novels are "self-administered" psychiatric therapy for America's adolescents." It is not only for Americans but also for the whole world.

#### **Physical violence :**

The major type of violence according to everyone is physical violence. Physical violence refers to the intentional use of physical force or aggression against another person, resulting in potential harm, injury, or pain. It typically involves physical acts such as hitting, punching, kicking, choking or any other action that causes physical harm to another individual. Physical violence can occur in various contexts, including domestic situations, interpersonal conflicts, bullying, riots, and acts of assault or aggression. Physical violence can have severe consequences, including immediate physical injuries, long term health problems, emotional trauma, and even death. Physical violence is often used in horror works to evoke fear and create a sense of fear. The threat of harm or death can keep the readers eager and it raises the tension and anticipation. This also creates a sense of real danger and increases the sense of urgency in the narrative. Moreover, physical violence can highlight the vulnerability of characters, making them more relatable and sympathetic. "And without any further warning, he plunged the carving knife deep into Padma's thigh—the one without the tattoo—and in a quick expert motion sliced off a chunk of her flesh" (D'Silva 152). This vulnerability can evoke a strong emotional response from the audience and readers as they connect with the characters struggles and fears.

Physical violence taps into primal fears that are deeply ingrained in human psychology. It confronts our instinctual fear of harm and reminds us of our mortality. It also helps as a vehicle to explore the dark aspects of human nature. It can delve into themes of aggression, cruelty, and the potential for violence that exists within individuals or society as a whole. This examination can lead to deeper reflections on the human condition and societal issues. In some cases, physical violence allows characters to confront and overcome their fears or adversaries. This can provide a sense of catharsis for both the characters and readers, as they witness the triumph of good over evil or the defeat of a terrifying threat. The novel *Maya's New Husband* by Neil D'Silva depicts physical violence in its full glory. It is about a dangerous and deranged individual called Bhaskar Sadachari who kills the innocent people in a most ghastly and gruesome way which is unimaginable and ineffable. Violence in this novel is symbolic, representing deeper themes or societal concerns. It may serve as a commentary on violence in society, the consequences of unchecked aggression, or the impact of trauma. The brutal murders committed by Bhaskar help to establish his threat and menace. The brutality of his actions demonstrates the extent of his depravity which makes him a formidable, inevitable, and terrifying presence within the narrative. The violent acts of Bhaskar also served as a tool to shock and provoke a reaction from the readers.

The explicit nature of the violence can be impactful and memorable, leaving a lasting impression on the audience. Graphic violence is also a major component in horror genre. It refers to the

explicit and detailed depiction of violent acts in literature. It involves the vivid portrayal of physical harm, injury, or brutality towards characters, often including bloodshed, gore, or disturbing visuals or descriptions. Graphic violence leaves little to the imagination and can be visually explicit or disturbingly realistic in its portrayal and used by the authors create a sense of realism or intensity, emphasising the impact and consequences of violent actions within the narrative. For example, "The corpse had been torn open, and rats were holding their own private feast. They jumped up and down the dead person, tearing off bits of flesh at every trip they made to the rotten fleshy parts". These lines from *Maya's New Husband* will stand as a perfect example for the graphic violence. Because it shows the gory and ghastly way how the victim's body had been torn into pieces by the rats which turned as food to them.

#### **Psychological violence :**

Psychological violence refers to acts or behaviours that inflict emotional or mental harm on individuals, causing distress, fear, or intimidation. Unlike physical violence that involves direct bodily harm, psychological violence targets a person's emotions, thoughts, self-esteem, and overall psychological well-being like verbal abuse, threats and intimidation, gaslighting, isolation, emotional manipulation, stalking and surveillance etc. It is important to recognise that psychological violence can have severe and long-lasting effects on a person's mental health and well-being. Thus, psychological horror holds a prominent place in literature and cinema by focusing on the psychological and emotional terror experienced by the

characters and readers. Instead of relying solely on explicit violence or gore, psychological horror delves into the inner workings of the human mind, exploring fears, anxieties, and the darkness that lies within. In this instance, the emphasis is on creating a sense of unease, suspense, and psychological tension. It often relies on atmospheric storytelling, intricate character development, and the manipulation of the readers perceptions to generate fear. It is used to tap into deep-rooted fears and phobias, playing on psychological vulnerabilities to unsettle and disturb the readers.

#### **Sexual violence :**

Sexual violence is a sensitive and important topic that has been explored in literature throughout history. It can serve as a means to shed light on the harsh realities of society, address power dynamics and provoke discussions about consent, trauma and gender issues. Sexual violence in horror serves various purposes and significant in several ways. Horror genre aims to evoke intense emotions, and the inclusion of sexual violence can be used to create a sense of terror, revulsion, and unease in readers. It taps into four primal fears and explores the darkest aspects of human nature, heightening the suspense and tension within the narrative. Horror often tackles taboo subjects and societal issues that may be difficult to discuss openly. For example, she shrank in her chair, hoping he wouldn't notice her for she wasn't up for a morning session of animalistic sex". (D'Silva 117). These lines clearly show Maya's disgust at having sex with her husband, who behaves like an animal at the time of sex. By incorporating sexual violence, authors can draw attention to the pervasive nature of

such crimes, the trauma experienced by survivors, and the power dynamics at play. It can prompt readers to confront uncomfortable realities and challenge cultural norms and attitudes. Sexual violence in horror can delve into the psyche of the perpetrators, examining their motivations, twisted desires, and the impact on their victims. This exploration may shed light on the root causes of such violence and serve as a cautionary tale about the consequences of unchecked power and depravity.

In some instances, horror films featuring sexual violence can empower survivors by highlighting their resilience, strength, and journey towards healing and justice. By depicting survivors who fight back or find ways to overcome their traumas, these narratives can offer hope and encouragement to real-life survivors and help them feel seen and validated. Horror often subverts traditional expectations and challenges societal norms. By incorporating sexual violence, authors can disrupt the notion of safety, expose the vulnerability of individuals, and critique power structures. This subversion can prompt readers to question prevailing attitudes and spark discussions about consent, gender dynamics, and social justice. Structural violence: The term structural violence was coined by Johan Galtung, a sociologist from Norway. Galtung introduced it in his 1969 article called "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research". Structural violence refers to the social, economic, and political systems and institutions that create and perpetuate inequalities and harm individuals and communities. Some examples of structural violence as proposed by Galtung include institutionalised adultism, sexism, racism,

nationalism, ethnocentrism, speciesism, elitism, ageism, and classism. Structural violence and direct violence are said to be highly interdependent, including family violence, gender violence, hate crimes, racial violence, police violence, state violence, terrorism, and war. While the horror genre is primarily known for its supernatural or monstrous elements, it can also serve as a powerful tool to explore and critique structural violence.

Horror often uses supernatural or monstrous entities as symbols or metaphors for real-world systemic issues. These entities can represent oppressive systems, institutionalised violence, or societal injustices. By externalising these issues through fantastical elements, authors can provide readers with a metaphorical lens through which to examine and understand the impact of structural violence. For example, “This may be said that the fear of possession by Savitri to Meenakshi’s mother Renuka. “She’s a witch, don’t you see? ’Dr. Jamblekar finished” (D’Silva 102). The people of the village have started to label Meenakshi as a witch and protested to outcast her from the village for the protection of the young boys. This shows how the society is against a woman who is truly an innocent and upholds the flag of sexism and gears up to save the perpetrators. This is known as structural violence. Horror genre can expose the flaws and failures of society’s structures and institutions. It can highlight how existing power structures perpetuate inequality, discrimination, and violence. By depicting the horrors that emerge from these flawed systems, horror genre encourages readers to question and challenge the status quo.

Horror genre often explores themes of power dynamics and social hierarchies. It can portray certain groups or individuals are marginalised, oppressed, or victimised due to structural violence. By depicting the consequences and horrors that arise from these imbalances of power, horror genre can provoke reflection and encourage readers to question and dismantle oppressive structures. Horror genre can uncover hidden or overlooked forms of violence embedded within society. It can bring to the light the everyday horrors that individuals experience, such as systematic racism, poverty, gender inequality, or institutionalised abuse. By exposing these hidden violences, horror genre can prompt readers to confront uncomfortable truths and inspire social change. Horror genre can generate empathy and understanding by placing readers in the shoes of marginalised or victimised characters. It allows readers to experience the fear, suffering, and injustice that result from structural violence. Through this immersive experience, horror genre can cultivate compassion and motivate readers to advocate for social justice.

#### **Conclusion :**

Violence also tests the limits of morality and ethics, it can serve as a vehicle for examining moral and ethical dilemmas. Characters may be faced with difficult choices in the face of violence, raising questions about the nature of good and evil, the human capacity for violence, and the consequences of one’s actions. Reading these violent plots which reflects the dark side of the humanity and offer readers a sense of hope that no crime can go unpunished. These moral quandaries can prompt readers to reflect on their own values and beliefs. Moreover, violence can



also be used to subvert expectations and challenge traditional narrative structures. By presenting unexpected or extreme acts of violence, authors can create a sense of unpredictability and keep the readers on edge. The violence plays a prominent role in the literature and its representation is must to turn the society in a most vigilant path.

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# Corporate Image Building: An Empirical Analysis of Role of Advertising

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## **Concept of Corporate Advertising :**

Corporate advertising is an art of marketing of goods and services in the new marketing environment. It is a specialized activity which enhances the brand knowledge, brand performance and brand utility. It enhances the popularity and prominence of the goods and services delivered by the modern organizations on the basis of effective advertising campaigns. It is practiced with a view to influence the attitudes and behaviors of consumers and other stakeholders of business management.

The corporate advertising is managed on the basis of active media intervention in modern times (Shah and D'Souza, 2009:16). It is also termed as institutional advertising which facilitates better corporate image building. The ultimate goal of corporate advertising is to enhance the brand image of corporate products and services. It basically promotes a positive emotional connectivity between the consumers and corporate houses.

## **Concept of Corporate Image Building :**

Corporate image is the impression formed in the minds of the people who

are directly associated with modern organizations. The customers and other stakeholders develop their perception about the products, services and contributions of corporate houses on the basis of publicity, propaganda, advertising and other promotional activities. Corporate image building has become a thrust area of organizational management in modern times. Positive corporate image is vital for the sustainability of modern institutions socially and economically.

Corporate image building plays a vital role in shaping investment results in modern corporate houses (Balmer, 1996:01). Advertising and other promotional activities basically influence corporate image over a period of time (Gregory, 1997:06). Corporate image is consciously built on the basis of sound delivery system, implementation of progressive policies and contributions for the welfare of people in modern society.

Sustainable corporate image ensures the professional and economic prosperity of corporate houses. Large corporations invest adequate resources for the promotional activities including corporate advertising to achieve great progress.

Corporate image is the overall image which is composite of many impressions and facts about the corporate houses. Corporate image is the cumulative perceptions of an organization by its key stakeholders who matter most from organizational development point of view.

Corporate image building practically confers a competitive advantage to modern business organizations (Gray and Balmer, 1998:05). Corporate image buildings require a holistic approach to organizational management in general and brand management in particular. Corporate image is considered as the most important assets of an organization in modern times.

Corporate image building, reputation management and advertising campaigns are inter-dependent factors (Swift, 2002:21). The corporate image and reputation building has tremendous economic value for modern organizations (Schultz and Boege, 2004:15). Several factors are taken into account while assessing the corporate image of modern institutions. They include noble thoughts and noble deeds most prominently demonstrated by modern institutions.

#### **Role of Advertising in Corporate Image Building :**

Advertising is an important tool of corporate communication in modern corporate houses. It is necessary to popularize the beneficial effects of the products and services manufactured by modern organizations through planned advertising campaigns. Sound corporate advertising acts as an umbrella covering all the products and services and facilitate better marketing. Advertising campaigns are part and parcel of marketing

communication strategy in modern times (David, 1987:03). Modern organizations viewsstrategic corporate communication resources and advertising campaigns to build image and boost business prospects. Corporate advertising builds the company's identity and promotes the reputation.

Advertising plays a vital role in brand image development in modern competitive marketplace. It has a central role to play in developing brand image which enhances symbolic values and salability of products and services (Meenaghan, 1995:09). Advertising practically serves twin purposes such as informational and transformational which are the primary routes to consumer persuasion and marketing management.

Corporate image and reputation are created by a combination of advertising and public relations elements in modern organizations. Corporate communicators manage the advertising operations to build corporate image (Melewar and Saunders, 1998:10). Planned advertising campaigns contribute for the corporate image building (Miller, 2003:12).

Corporate advertising has become an important tool of image building which benefits the corporate houses (Van et.al, 2005:22). Corporate advertising campaigns should be carried out on the basis of certain healthy parameters and practices. It creates a coherent perception of an organization in the minds of its various stakeholders including customers (Ghanbari, 2013:04). It has to be undertaken on the basis of strategic and creative approaches (Ranganatha, 2014:14). The effect of advertising on corporate image in modern organizations is examined by the scholars

who have noted significant association between advertising and corporate image.

Advertising has a marked effect on consumer attitudes toward company products and services (Spangardt, 2016:20). Brand image and advertisement play a crucial role in the process of reputation management. Corporate societal marketing has a direct effect on brand image for the modern organizations (Singhal et. al, 2017:17). Advertising and corporate image building are significantly associated in modern corporate environment (Linna, 2018:08). Advertising campaigns are managed on the basis of strategic corporate image building principles and practices.

Advertising has a central role to play in developing corporate image and reputation in modern corporate houses (Somya and Mallik, 2019:19). Systematic advertising campaigns are conducted to enhance the brand values and promote modern business. Advertising has become a prominent branding, marketing and corporate function (Kuban, 2020:07). Effective corporate advertising promote the name, create brand awareness and build sound corporate image in modern times.

Advertising is prominently used by the manufacturers and sellers of goods and services to manage the brand and enhance the sale of products. It has become a prominent instrument of brand management in order to capture the consumers' attention and build a long-lasting relationship with them (Mialki, 2021:11). Brand advertising is a form of advertising which helps establish connections and build strong, long-term relationships with consumers

in modern society. Modern companies establish brand identity, credibility, and loyalty with their prospects intellectually and emotionally.

The print media and electronic media have failed as effective instruments of advertising under the changed business circumstances. Digital media are extensively used for the purpose of advertising management in modern society. Modern customers have switched over to online shopping which has gained significance in the age of virtual marketing (Smith, 2021:18). Modern advertisers have invariably followed consumers online. Social media and other digital platforms have provided new dimension to advertising in the context of corporate image building.

Social media are extensively used as effective instruments of advertising, image building and reputation management. Social media marketing strategies are formulated on the basis of scientific research endeavors in modern corporate houses. A succinct strategy would enable the corporate houses to use the social media advertising with a sense of purpose (Barnhart, 2021:02). It is necessary to evaluate the attitude of the target audience, develop social media contents, ensure social presence and build corporate image on the basis of social media marketing strategy.

#### **Review of Literature :**

Scholars have examined the relationship between advertising and corporate image building across the globe. The subject specific related studies conducted by the past researchers include

- David (1987:03), Meenaghan, (1995:09), Melewar and Saunders (1998:10), Miller (2003:12), Van et.al, (2005:22), Shah and D'Souza (2009:16), Ranganatha (2011:13), Ghanbari (2013:04), Ranganatha (2014:14), Spangardt (2016:20), Singhal et. al, (2017:17), Linna (2018:08), Somya and Mallik (2019:19), Kuban (2020:07), Mialki, (2021:11), Smith (2021:18) and Barnhart (2021:02). It is evident from the review of literature that adequate scientific investigations were not carried out on the role of advertising on corporate image building with special reference to Karnataka state. Hence, the present investigation assumes significance in view of the paucity of literature.

#### **Significance of the Study :**

Corporate advertising practically includes 'advocacy' and 'issue' advertising in modern times. The corporate advertising is conducted with a view to promote images of corporate houses. It is a powerful tool for stating and sharing the company's vision and purpose. It is widely used as a means to build corporate image and enhance the economic status of modern corporate houses. Modern service providers primarily depend on advertising to enhance the corporate image through various tools and strategies of corporate advertising.

#### **Objectives of the Study :**

The present investigation was conducted on the basis of the following twin objectives :

- a) To explore the impact of advertising in corporate image building; and

- b) To suggest suitable initiatives for advertising campaigns relating to corporate image building.

#### **Hypothesis :**

*H1. The advertising practices have contributed for the development of corporate image in select corporate houses.*

#### **Conceptual Foundation :**

Linna (2018:08) examined the effects of digital advertising on brand image in Finland. The scholar noted that advertising and corporate image building were significantly associated in corporate houses. The scholar suggested that advertising campaigns should be managed on the basis of strategic corporate image building initiatives. The present study was conducted on the basis of conceptual framework offered by Linna (2018:08).

#### **Research Methodology :**

The present investigation was conducted on the role of advertising in corporate image building in select public and private corporate houses of Karnataka state. The study approached the problem through a combination of conceptual and empirical analyses. The advertising campaigns of Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEM), Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd (KPCL), Grandi Mallikarjuna Rao Group (GMR), Royal Philips Electronics (Philips) and Biocon were evaluated from the point of view of corporate image building. Primary data were collected from 580 respondents associated with the select corporate houses as the customers.

### **Findings of the Study :**

- Corporate advertising is a big business in select corporate houses (100%).
- Advertising has played a major role in the development of corporate houses (96.0%).
- Advertising is an important element of modern marketing communication activity in public sector undertakings (92.67%) and private sector undertakings (94.0%).
- Advertising makes mass marketing possible in public sector undertakings (94.67%) and private sector undertakings (97.33%).
- Advertising has created demand for new products and services in public and private sector undertakings (100%).
- Advertising has reduced monopoly by allowing new products to enter into market in public sector undertakings (90.67%) and private sector undertakings (94.67%).
- Advertising has generated adequate income in the public sector undertakings (84.0%) and private sector undertakings (86.0%).
- Advertising has educated the customers about the use of products and services delivered by public sector undertakings (90.67%) and private sector undertakings (93.33%).
- Advertising has facilitated effective brand management in public sector undertakings (88.0%) and private sector undertakings (92.0%).
- Advertising has enabled the customers to consume the products and services at the most competitive rates in public sector undertakings (92.0%) and private sector undertakings (94.67%).
- Advertising has created a congenial climate for business management in public sector undertakings (89.33%) and private sector undertakings (90.67%).
- Advertising has facilitated greater customer relationship management in public sector undertakings (89.33%) and private sector undertakings (92.0%).
- Advertising has enabled better customer retention in public sector undertakings (89.33%) and private sector undertakings (90.67%).
- Advertising has facilitated constant projection of quality control measures of the organization in public sector undertakings (77.33%) and private sector undertakings (81.33%).
- Advertising has improved the corporate identity in public sector undertakings (82.67%) and private sector undertakings (85.33%).
- Corporate advertising services are designed by the experts to build sound image for the organization in public sector undertakings (85.87%) and private sector undertakings (82.80%).
- Corporate advertising activities are organized to build image for the products and services in public sector undertakings (88.33%) and private sector undertakings (88.0%).

- Corporate advertising strategies have brought about better recognition of the organization in public sector undertakings (78.67%) and private sector undertakings (80.67%).
- Corporate advertising services are delivered to boost the confidence of the customers about the products and services of the organization in public sector undertakings (80.0%) and private sector undertakings (82.33%)
- Corporate advertising services have enhanced the reputation of the organization in public sector undertakings (79.0%) and private sector undertakings (80.0%).
- Corporate advertising services have facilitated effective brand management in public sector undertakings (76.67%) and private sector undertakings (81.36%)
- Corporate advertising services are primarily designed on the basis of image building strategies in public sector undertakings (81.67%) and private sector undertakings (86.0%).
- Corporate advertising services are designed to increase new customers in public sector undertakings (83.67%) and private sector undertakings (82.33%)
- Corporate advertising services are delivered to project the Quality Control Measures of the organization in public sector undertakings (81.33%) and private sector undertakings (87.0%).

#### **Testing of Hypothesis :**

*H1. The advertising practices have contributed for the development of*

*corporate image in select corporate houses.*

The study indicates that advertising practices of select corporate houses have contributed for the development of corporate image. Hence, the hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

#### **Implications of the Study :**

Modern corporate houses should constitute a committee of experts in the field of corporate advertising to explore new avenues of advertising in a competitive business environment. A scientific corporate advertising policy is essential in order to standardize the process of corporate advertising. The corporate advertising process should be enriched in terms of advanced tools, technologies, techniques, strategies and practices. Multi-media applications and strategies should be utilized to boost the status of corporate advertising. Adequate training and orientation programmes should be organized for the benefit of corporate advertising professionals in order to develop their creativity and capacity. Scientific corporate advertising campaigns should be conducted to achieve optimum success in the management of advertising services. Modern corporate houses should utilize multi-media advertising campaigns to build effective corporate image. These campaigns should be considered as a holistic approach to corporate advertising for better corporate image building purposes.

#### **Conclusion :**

Advertising has become an important instrument of brand management and marketing management in the new

millennium. Advertising is a prominent branch of corporate communication in the age of competitive business management. A new branch called corporate advertising has come into existence to create and sustain corporate image which is the basis for effective business management. The corporate houses are responsible for designing advertising campaigns in consultation with specialists in brand management and advertising management. Corporate advertising has become a strategic, forward looking and rewarding in the new business environment. Identification of healthy elements of advertising management and adoption of corporate image building initiatives are absolutely essential to achieve success in business management.

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# “Jokes on Death, War, and Violence : An Analysis within Cultural Frames”

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## **Literature Review :**

We can find humorous narratives on war and the military in almost all genres. There are comic strips like Mort Walker's *Beetle Bailey* that depicts military life with a touch of sarcasm and *Half Hich* by Hank Ketcham that projects the Navy humorously. There are numerous films where war and the military are mocked at. *Buck Privates* and *Dictator* on World Wars, and *Forest Gump* on the Military during the Vietnam war offer humorous depictions of war and armed forces. In television shows like *Don't Call Me Charlie*, *Blackadder* devotes military themes and World War I respectively. Books such as Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1923), *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, and Charles Osgood's *Kilroy Was Here: The Best American Humor from World War II* project amusing experiences in the Military during the wars. When it comes to jokes, one will find jokes on world wars as a genre. But it is uncertain if there is any popular joke cycle focusing on war disasters. However, there are some jokes around the idea of war. Military Jokes/humour is one such cycle that depicts a wide range of circumstances and

characters in the military forces which are exaggerated, ridiculed, and mocked. They are sarcastic. The section specifically focuses on some jokes about war disasters which keep death as the centre. And there are some random jokes where a particular war, country, individual or group is targeted. Death is of course the central idea in those jokes. I have unearthed five such jokes and analysed them here.

## **Methodology and Theoretical Tool :**

Many scholars and philosophers have tried to explain jokes via theories in order to explain the mechanism of jokes. Attardo and Raskin's *Semantic Script-based Theory of Humor/General Theory of Verbal Humor* (1991) and Ritchie's *The Linguistic Analysis of Jokes* (2004) are two major academic works which focus on the subject of jokes. Robert Murphy, a joke critic, lists out certain shifts in the approach to joke analysis. During the 1970s and 80s, jokes were consulted using psycholinguistic and cognitive tools. Then the focus shifted to situations or 'contexts'. Robert Murphy argues that genre-based categorization of jokes is needed to understand how a joke functions. ("Genre Analysis of the 'Simple

Jokes”) 2008. He thinks that every genre in jokes such as simple jokes, question-answer jokes, ethnic jokes have different mechanisms. He has analysed some jokes that fall under the genre, ‘Simple Jokes’.

When it comes to the structure of these jokes, sarcasm is the common element in the jokes. War jokes usually target either a person or country. One must understand why someone is ridiculed to understand the jokes. Hence, it is necessary to know the context, background and history of the subject of the joke. I believe Relevance Theory is appropriate to explain this type of joke.

#### **Relevance Theory :**

According to Francisco Yus Ramos’ Relevance Theory, people look for relevance in every information they get. The attempt to make someone laugh involves a manipulation and prediction of inference-centred interpretive strategies. It argues that comedians or humorists’ prediction strategies are important to create laughter in the audience. At the same time, it is important that the addressee also needs to know the contextual information to be able to get the joke. The theory further explains that usually the joketeller has an intention and he/she seeks effectiveness when the jokes are told. The reader either seeks relevance in the given information and sometimes from the surrounding atmosphere or he uses the already stored information in the brain to assess the information given in a joke that intends to be amusing.

According to Romos, jokes are intentional as they seek humorous effect. There are also unintentional jokes wherein the humorous effect is sought by the

interpretation of the readers though it is not the teller’s intention. Romos also thinks that the first part of joke has possibilities for multiple interpretations but the latter part of the joke comes as a surprise to the reader which emerges as laughter as the latter part creates dissonance with the assumptions arrived at from the former piece of the joke. This latent interpretation is not taken into consideration until the teller presents it humorously in the second part where the reader is made to realize that he or she has been fooled to select the wrong interpretation. Though the critic admits that the surprise switch in the perspective produced by the punch line is important to trigger laughter, he argues that the incongruity can be perceived by the reader only if he/she knows the relevance of the information given in the joke. In other words, the reader has to conclude from its contextual information to make sense of the joke. This is probably the only theory that stresses the involvement of the reader, his understanding and his response which are important to comprehend the given joke.

#### **Analysis of Jokes :**

Relevance theory, which is employed in the analysis of War Disaster Jokes, understands that the teller’s prediction strategy and the reader’s awareness of the context of the joke play a role in the emergence of laughter. Some of the jokes have been analysed below.

#### **Joke 1.**

“During the Russo-Finnish War, a Russian general was marching his army through Finland. As they passed a ridge, he heard a voice call out from the other side :

“One Finn is worth 10 Russians!”

So he takes his 10 best soldiers and sends them over the ridge. After a minute of shooting, there is silence. Then the same voice calls out:

“One Finn is worth 100 Russians!”

He takes his best 100 soldiers and sends them over the ridge. After several minutes of shooting, there is again silence. Then the same voice calls out a third time:

“One Finn is worth 1,000 Russians!”

He sends his best 1,000 soldiers over the ridge. After almost an hour of shooting, one badly wounded Russian comes crawling over, and with his dying breath, tells the general:

“It’s a trap—there are TWO Finns!”  
(Rielephant. “During the Russo-Finnish War....”)

The joke is made based on the Russo-Finnish War which is also known as the First Soviet Finnish war that happened between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1939. In a way, this joke does not require the full background of the war, unlike the previous joke. Even if the name of the war is not mentioned, it would have caused some laughter. But the one who is aware of the history of the war will have a good laugh as he can get the sarcasm in the joke. Hence I feel one should know the background:

Russia started this war by invading Finland on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1939 and ended it with the Masco Peace Treaty. Soviet Russia demanded Finland for a piece of land 32km away from the Finland border in exchange for land somewhere else for security reasons. When Finland refused, the Soviets invaded. Despite greater military force, the Soviet Union army was

severely damaged. Finland fought back courageously and defended for over two months. By then the League of Nations declared the attack illegal and got the Soviets expelled from the organisation. This way, Soviet Russia was embarrassed in both ways. If one looks at the joke in relation to this context one can see why Russia is targeted and ridiculed in the joke.

As mentioned in the joke, the Russian army has outnumbered the army of Finland. The narrative depicts the Russian army as dumb and that is amusing. When their army arrives at a certain point, they hear a voice call from the other side which says, “One Finn is worth 10 Russians! The Soviet army takes this seriously and sends the best 10 soldiers. The silence after a minute of shooting creates curiosity and also ambiguity about the result. Only when we hear another voice call from the Finland side, we get to know that all 10 Russian soldiers are killed. The voice call says, “One Finn is worth 100 Russians!” that causes the Soviet soldiers the same fate. Finally, 1000 soldiers are sent and only one of them returns badly wounded. The ambiguity the narrative creates at this point is if there is only one Finland soldier on the other side or countless. Any number of soldiers who go forward are falling dead. When finally one out of thousand soldiers returns, the readers get on to their toes to hear from him how many are there on the other side. But what they hear is unbelievable.

“It’s a trap—there are TWO Finns!”

The punch line is funny not only because it provides an unpredicted view that contrasts the assumptions of the readers but it also depicts how Finland defeated the mighty army of Russia who

invaded only to get embarrassed. The incongruity that is an essential key for laughter is possible only if the listeners have the relevant background knowledge of the war.

**Joke 2 :**

“Why do people call Americans excessive?”

“It was probably because of WWII.”

“Oh you mean the war where America responded to the destruction of several ships and a harbor and the deaths of little over a thousand by completely flattening two cities and killing hundreds of thousands of people?” (“Completion Jokes”)

The joke involves political sarcasm. Americans are excessive in many things such as drinks, food, sex, expensive home appliances etc. But the context the narrative takes is WWII. Hence, the readers need to know the military history of America concerning WW II to understand the joke. America had remained neutral in the first two years of WW II. Though America was supplying war material to some countries such as Britain, China, and the Soviet Union via Lend-Lees Act, it had not involved in the war directly. There were lots of political and historical reasons that brought the USA into the war. But the immediate trigger was Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor destroying two of their light aircrafts. It was a huge military defeat for America. A few months later, America attacked Tokyo and that was just a psychological victory. Finally, America ended the war by dropping two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two main cities of Japan. The attack destroyed two cities and caused millions of people’s

death which were beyond anyone’s imagination. The joke is made in this context depicting America’s response to Japan’s attack as excessive. Only those who know the background of the joke will find it hilarious. Sarcasm drives this joke.

**Joke 3 :**

“My grandfather destroyed almost a hundred aircrafts in World War Two!

He must have been the worst mechanic in the Luftwaffe.”

(Seefroo. “My Grandfather Destroyed Almost a Hundred Aircraft in World War Two!”)

Death is not a direct player in this joke; it is implicated. To understand it, the listener is required to have some knowledge about war aircrafts which play a major role in the war. Like the first joke, this one too relies on the same technique. The first line, which functions as a set-up, establishes the joke teller’s grandfather as a war hero. The second line which is also the last line serves as a punch line that bombshells the readers. War is directly attributed to patriotism which is one of the powerful feelings in the world. War heroes are always appreciated and respected by their respective countries in all eras. Anybody talking ill of or disrespecting the martyrs or war heroes are considered to be antinational. The point the joke teller makes here is not that destroying a hundred aircraft in WW II is not true. But he ridicules his grandfather projecting him not as a brave fighter pilot but as the worst mechanic. That means the hundred aircrafts he destroyed are not of enemies but those of his own country. This surprising revelation triggers laughter.

## Conclusion :

In order to conclude the analysis, I would like to state that I have consistently found context or relevance of jokes has functioned as a means of incongruity which is the common key factor for laughter in all the jokes that are discussed in the paper. As discussed in the above analysis of War disaster jokes, it is evident how one needs to have the contextual knowledge or information to understand the incongruity in the jokes. The application of the Relevance Theory worked well with these jokes as proved in the analysis.

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# Unveiling Cultural Violence : Analyzing the Impact of Cultural, Racial and Religious Dogmas in *The Stoning of Soraya M* and *Rabbit-Proof Fence*

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## **Introduction :**

Violence has, unfortunately, played a significant role in human history and cultural narratives. Violence refers to the intentional use of physical force or power to cause harm, injury or destruction to oneself, others or property. Violence can be both individual and collective, occurring on personal, interpersonal, societal and even global levels. Culture, in some instances has poisoned human society by incorporating violence as part of its fabric. This occurs when cultural norms, beliefs and practices promote or condone acts of aggression, discrimination and oppression. Cultural violence is a pervasive issue that affects societies worldwide, perpetuating cycles of discrimination, inequality and human suffering. As societies evolved, complex social structures, historical experiences, where wars, invasions have left a lasting impact that shape social attitudes, normalizing aggressive behavior. Individuals, conditioned by their respective cultures are often found accepting and normalizing

violence. Consequently, norms, attitudes and behaviours perpetuating violence get woven in the fabric of some cultural systems.

Literature often reflects the social and cultural realities of a given time. It serves as a medium through which authors can explore and shed light on the various forms of violence present in the society. Cultural violence has become the focal point in the contemporary literature as authors recognize its significance in shaping society and the need to address, challenge and transform the norms and values that perpetuate violence. By voicing these concerns, the authors aim to raise awareness, provoke thought and encourage dialogue about the impact of cultural violence on individuals and communities so that a harmonious society maybe established.

Films, on the other hand, reflect the collective consciousness and interests of society. Violence has long been an

intriguing subject for film makers as it has been deeply ingrained in cultural narratives. Violence is an inherent part of the human experience, and films provide a platform to explore the complexities of human nature, power dynamics and conflicts by using films as a vehicle. The films effectively draw attention to systemic problems, challenge oppressive norms and advocate for change. Similarly, the films *Rabbit -Proof Fence* and *The Stoning of Soraya M* also seek to capture the lived experiences of individuals affected by cultural violence under varied circumstances through the lens of Structural Violence Theory and Social Learning Theory respectively.

#### **Discussion :**

##### ***Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002) :***

*Rabbit-Proof Fence* is a 2002 Australian movie based on the true story of three young Aboriginal girls based on the book by Doris Pilkington Garimara. The film is set in Western Australia during the era of 'Stolen Generations', a period when the Australian government forcibly removed aboriginal children from their families and placed them in institutions or White foster homes to assimilate them into European culture. At the settlement they are subjected to strict discipline, forced labour and attempts were made to erase their cultural identity. The captured girls who were captured would make attempts to escape to reunite with their families. Meanwhile, the Chief Protector of Aborigines determined to capture the girls, brings them back to the settlement. He sees the removal of aboriginal children as a necessary means of assimilation and tries to justify his actions. The film ends with a glimpse of Molly Craig, a real victim, who

successfully reunited with her mother after an incredible ordeal.

In *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, the theme of racial violence and attempt to wipe out the identity of aboriginal people is depicted through several narrative elements. The film portrays the historical context of the 'Stolen Generations'. Firstly, the forced removal of children from their families is shown as a violent act. Government officials, who represent the system, forcibly take away children from their homes, disregarding their emotional well-being and severing their cultural and familial ties. This act of violence is an assault on their identity, as it seeks to separate them from their aboriginal heritage and assimilate them into the dominant white society. The dialogue of Chief Protectorate in the movie "Are we to allow the creation of an unwanted third race?" touches upon the theme of racial identity and the discrimination faced by aboriginals. It implies that the mixed-race aboriginal children were seen as an 'unwanted creation', a product of the union between aboriginal and white population. The idea of 'third race' and their existence was deemed undesirable denying their cultural heritage and identity.

Secondly, the film highlights the oppressive conditions within the government-run settlements. The Moore River Native Settlement, where the girls are taken is portrayed as a dungeon, a place of confinement and control. The strict discipline, labour and above all the attempts to erase their cultural practices are highlighted through a significant act where the aboriginal girls are repeatedly warned to speak in English language instead of their native language.



The film also depicts various attempts of the government officials to indoctrinate them into Christianity. The film shows the missionaries and officials conducting Christian religious services and teaching the children about Christianity. They are given Christian names and they are discouraged to follow their aboriginal practices and beliefs, they are even prohibited. The authorities believe that converting the native children to Christianity and eradicating any traces of their culture would make them more 'civilized' and assimilated into white society. Despite numerous efforts made by the Whites to uproot the aborigine children from their culture, the movie portrays the resistance and resilience of these children in the face of the forced assimilation. Through the resilient acts of the children, the film strongly and convincingly portrays the negative consequences of forced assimilation and the importance of preserving one's cultural heritage and connection to land.

The movie is analyzed based on Structural Violence Theory developed by Johan Galtung. The theory focuses on the systemic and institutional factors that perpetuate violence. It argues that social, economic and political structures can create and maintain conditions that lead to violence, making it appear normal and inevitable within a given society. In the movie, the policy of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families is rooted in the structural violence of colonialism and racial discrimination, which created a system that systematically oppressed and marginalized indigenous people. The state apparatus plays a crucial role in maintaining oppression. Assimilation of aboriginal children into White society

perpetuates the structural violence of cultural erasure resulting in cultural displacement and disruption. Throughout the film, the girls endure physical and emotional hardships on their way back home. This represents the violence and trauma due to the oppressive system they are trapped in. By examining the film through the Structural Violence Theory, one can clearly understand the systemic nature of the harm inflicted upon marginalized communities and the need to challenge these structures to achieve justice and equity.

#### ***The Stoning of Soraya M (2008) :***

*The Stoning of Soraya M* is a powerful drama film based on the true story of an Iranian woman named Soraya Manutchehri, who was stoned to death in 1986. The movie is an adaptation of French-Iranian journalist Freidoune Sahebjam's book of the same name.

*The Stoning of Soraya M* delves into the themes of gender inequality, religious fundamentalism and the abuse of power. The film portrays the life of Soraya, who lives in a small Iranian village. Her husband Ali seeks a divorce from her so that he can marry a younger woman. In order to achieve his goal, Ali falsely accuses Soraya of adultery, a serious crime under Islamic law. Soraya's fate is sealed when the local religious authorities and villagers gather to carry out her punishment through stoning. The story unfolds through the journalist who visits village revealing the injustices and oppression women face in this conservative society.

The Director of the movie, Cyrus Nowrasteh, who is of Iranian descent, wanted to shed light on the practice of

stoning and the oppressive treatment of women in conservative communities, particularly within the context of Iran. By portraying Soraya's story, he hoped to generate awareness about the plight of women in societies where their rights and dignity are disregarded. He highlights that Iran's legal framework as well as societal norms discriminate against women in various ways and this has become a subject of International concern and criticism.

The movie highlights the deeply entrenched gender inequality in Iranian society. Women are depicted as second-class citizens with limited rights. They are subjected to the authority and control of men and their lives are shaped by patriarchal norms and expectations. It is a society where women are not allowed to even smile at other men. This is evident in the movie where Soraya's falsely accuses her of committing adultery by her husband who alleged stating, "They (Soraya and the man who was dragged into the blame) were standing close, whispering. I saw them touch hands and they were smiling." This dialogue reflects a cultural context where women are subjected to unfair scrutiny and oppression. It also highlights the extreme control and suspicion placed on women's behavior and actions. Soraya's husband is using seemingly innocent actions, such as standing close and smiling to accuse her of a serious moral offence and a legal too in their geographical ambit, i.e. adultery. This suggests that even harmless gestures or expressions of happiness can be twisted and used against women. It portrays a society where women are constantly under surveillance and where their actions are heavily scrutinized for any perceived

transgressions. The dialogue reveals the deep-rooted gender inequality and the unequal power dynamics that exist in the society depicted in the film. They are held guilty on numerous baseless moral and ethical code of conduct and face harsher judgements, while men often enjoy more freedom. It highlights the urgent need for social change and the recognition of women's rights and autonomy and free them of the mental, emotional and physical trauma they been witnessing for ages.

The film also depicts how the patriarchal ideology is infused into the younger minds. When Ali tells his sons, "This is a Man's world. Never forget that, boys", it is a clear reinforcement of patriarchal dominance that men are superior and should maintain their dominance over women. This suggests that men hold power, control and authority in society, while women are considered and made subordinate. By teaching his sons this belief, Ali perpetuates the cycle of patriarchal domination from childhood, ensuring the continuation of gender inequity within the family and society.

In *The Stoning of Soraya M*, religious fundamentalism is depicted as powerful force that perpetuates injustice and human rights violations, thereby weakening the culture matrix. The film portrays a society deeply rooted in religious beliefs and practices, specifically Islamic traditions. The central theme of the movie revolves around the misuse of religious principles to justify the stoning of Soraya. One can understand that the religious dogmas can be manipulated and exploited by individuals in positions of power to maintain control and oppress others. The religious leaders and other influential

figures in the village manipulate interpretations of religious texts to suit their patriarchal dominance. They use religious fundamentalism as a tool to suppress women and maintain the existing power structures.

The narrative also serves as a powerful condemnation of the misuse and abuse of power and emphasizes the brutal and dehumanizing nature of stoning, showcasing the violent consequences of unchecked power. Through the character of Ali, the film portrays the abuse of power, the way he uses his position as a man in a patriarchal society to exert control over Soraya's life. The religious leaders in the film also represent violation of power by enforcing strict interpretations of Islamic law, which is used to justify the punishment of Soraya.

Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura can be applied to analyze the movie. This theory suggests that individuals learn behaviors including violence through observation. If violence is consistently portrayed and rewarded in society, individuals are more likely to adopt and accept violent behaviors as a norm. In *The Stoning of Soraya M*, the film illustrates how people can be influenced by observing the consequences of others' actions and conform to social norms, even if they may personally disagree or have doubts. The movie also portrays how the villagers, especially the children, observe the reactions and responses of others to the stoning. They see that those who participate in or support the stoning are praised or validated by the community, reinforcing the idea that such acts are acceptable and expected. The act of stoning suggests that culture of violence

and adherence to oppressive social norms are likely to persist as the younger generation learns and perpetuates these behaviors. The ending scene with the children collecting stones symbolizes the continuation of this social learning process and the perpetuation of violence and oppressive practices within the community.

#### **Conclusion :**

Art forms play a crucial role in contributing to a harmonious culture by projecting reality and unveiling cultural violence. Through various artistic mediums such as films, literature, paintings and music, artists have the power to shed light on the darker aspects of society, exposing issues such as cultural violence and its impact on individuals and communities. By doing so, they initiate conversations, raise awareness and foster a collective understanding necessary for positive change. It helps to reevaluate the cultural norms, values and transformation towards a more harmonious and inclusive society. Notable Iranian activist Shirin Ebadi and Nasrin Sotoudeh have fought for women's rights. Similarly, in Australia and many leaders in the world like Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Bob Morley have stood for peace, contributed and strived for the betterment of the society. Ultimately, creating a future society characterized by balance and harmony, without cultural violence, should be the goal of every individual. Addressing systemic inequalities is paramount in order to eradicate heinous occurrences such as cultural violence. Then only we can lay foundation for a society that values peace, justice and respect for all its members.

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# Anamnesis of Violence into Social Memory and Cultural Functioning in *Paava* *Kadhaigal Anthology*

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## **Introduction :**

In the evolutionary space of time and culture, audiovisual input and output technologies as well as films and films are widely available. Possibly one of the areas with the most influence on contemporary society is the audio visual and literary representations. Comedy, romance and series make us laugh, psychological thrillers let us see the world more clearly, and historical dramas help us comprehend our cultural heritage. Every film, novel and video reflects society and modifies perceptions. The availability of audiovisual inputs and output technologies and films are widely available. The power of audiovisuals, literary works and films have been manifested and exploited politically, socially, and economically throughout history. Leaders such as Adolf Hitler, for example, successfully used novels, biographies and films as propaganda tools during World War II. Facts like these show the raw power of film: An immense power that has even caused revolutions. There are novels and films whose plots give us reasons to rise up every morning and

venture into the world with hope and optimism. They encourage us to conquer personal pains and to impact positively on other people's lives. Being a powerful tool of representation, films and series have gained attention in the recent times. The OTT platforms are extensively used and the series are being watched by people belonging to various age groups. In India, the OTT (Over-the-Top) market has been expanding quickly in recent years. More and more individuals are turning to digital content for their entertainment requirements as high-speed internet and affordable cellphones become more widely available. Throughout the two pandemic years (2020 and 2021) the OTT (or streaming) business dominated press coverage in India. When theatres were mainly shut down and television programmes remained static, OTT emerged as the brand-new and exciting source for high-quality entertainment. The appeal of regional content, rising internet penetration, and rising demand for on-demand entertainment all point to the OTT business in India experiencing tremendous development

over the next few years. The rise of OTT platforms in India can be attributed to several factors, including internet penetration, affordable data plans, the rise in local content, original content, cost-effectiveness, and convenience. As the number of internet users in India continues to grow, and with the rise of local content and affordable data plans, the demand for OTT platforms is expected to grow in the years to come.

The content being represented in the plot and characterization directly impacts the audience as the elements of the entire plot are customized according to the regional, social and spiritual beliefs of the particular geographical areas of India. Though it is viewed by a diverse set of audience the content closely associates itself to the audience due to the customization of the content. The viewer feels the closeness to the content and representation of their identity, beliefs, locality and culture on screen. The impact that these digital contents create have become crucial than the older times as it leads to multiple discussions, political shifts, ideological influence and inculcating inclusivity leading to harmony among diversity. The reach towards spreading inclusivity and awareness regarding evolutionary social changes. Hence the content represented in these visuals are to be crafted meticulously so that it imparts the required and aimed message to the society by the creator rather leaving a shade of negative thought after experiencing the work of art.

#### **Theoretical Framework :**

Memory is the record of the past with inaccuracies and reconstructive. The reconstructive characteristic feature of memory makes it cognitively flexible.

Memory depends on factors such as schemata, social and physical environments forming an autobiographical aspect of it. The perception of memory is altered by social interactions. Thus memory of each person varies yet converge with similarities known as collective memory which is also regarded as the social memory. Social memory is the common elements of a memory component that emerges due to collective identity that remains as a shared memory of the society. Social memory can be regarded as the shared renderings of the incidents of the past, historically, culturally and sociologically. Social memory is a convergent of the varied autobiographical memories of individuals, which defines them as a group. These individuals who possess a common collective social memory are bound by a common factors like geographical connections, religiosity, language, sexual orientations, political affiliations etc. Each component of social memory that emerges as a collective memory is witnessed by the individuals though perceived differently by each individual. Inclusion and exclusion of memories happens due to frequency, prominence and relativity of the events from time to time. Certain social practices have become extinct and several other practices have emerged due to the same factors. Erasing any component of social memory entirely or diminishing its value requires time and suitable conditions that favors the process. Especially if the incident has gained attention of the collective community negatively or positively it would require lot of time and conscious efforts and transition to diminish the prominence of that memory.

### **Violence in paava kadhaigal anthology (sinful tales) :**

*Paava Kadhaigal (Sinful Tales)* is an anthology that consists of four short films which was released by Netflix in 2020. The major themes under which these tales were presented were love, pride and honor. The short films set under the backdrop of Tamil Nadu dealt with different characters and issues that explored the cultural and ideological beliefs of the region. The first episode 'Thangam' deals about the murder of a trans woman 'Sathar' by the entire village to restore the honor of the family and to take revenge on her for helping her sister to elope with a Hindu guy. The violent end of 'Sathar' is shown as a brutal murder by the villagers with the permission of her parents and the story reaches the climax where her sister refuses to visit her home after hearing about the murder of Sathar. However, the legal punishments or justice for his murder or any follow up activity to recognize the act as a brutal one is never shown in the movie.

Similarly, the second episode 'Love Panna Utranum' deals about the honor killing of a young girl named Aadhilakshmi by her own father, which is found by her twin sister Jothilakshmi on her arrival back from her college. In the end the father admits that he commits the act due to the external pressures exerted on him and lives with his daughter Jothilakshmi at France. The honor killing of Aadhilakshmi is never subjected to any legal procedures.

The final episode 'Oor Iravu' the most impactful one, deals about the honor killing of pregnant woman by her father for marrying a guy from the lower caste. The protagonist Sumathi lives with her husband at Bangalore, her father finds her

and invites her home under the pretext of holding a baby shower function for her and eventually mixes poison in her food that proves to be fatal killing the mother and the fetus. Based on a true incident the story reminds on how still the original convicts are not yet punished and are free from being sentenced due to legal loopholes.

### **Negative injection into social memory :**

All these tales have a horrifying end based on restoring so called honor and pride based on the cultural beliefs of the particular portrayed regions of Tamil Nadu. All the four tales are based on real life incidents and has been adapted for cinematic purpose with slight modifications to avoid direct resemblances. This was done as these cases are still under investigation and the right legal decisions have not been conferred to the convicts. The worst part is few of the murders have not been recognized as murders or unnatural death and it has been resolved among the rural governing bodies and the traditional governing methods like the panchayats. Currently after the emergence of certain transgender activism and awareness the society has become more familiar with different sexual orientations and inclusivity. Social media has helped in reaching out to people with first hand narratives of the discriminated class and their needs. This has led to a good collective memory paving way for inclusivity into the social memory of people. The anthology however recalls the murders, discrimination, obscene remarks rendered towards the transgender community binding it in the name of honor certainly leads to a setback in improving a positive social memory about the trans women and trans men. It recalls why the conventional

setup rejected their existence keeping honor as their priority. This definitely has an effect over the population trying to decode and practice inclusivity as they may be reminded of the conventions and beliefs practiced earlier. Similarly, the murder of own daughters by the families in the name of honor killing has appreciably reduced in India due to awareness and measures taken to diminish the horrifying act. But the portrayal of the convicts is not yet punished and how their own families supports the decision to commit these acts and kill their own daughters is absolutely unnecessary information to be induced again into the social memory of the people. This actually kindles the memory of the honor killing act and the justifications rendered by people who commit the act. The justifications behind honor killings further disrupts the social balance that prevails though not entirely and infuses negative memory into a collective social memory of the people.

One appreciable aspect in the anthology is the third episode where the mother of a sexually assaulted kid imagines killing her own kid out of shame and social comments. Later she regrets for even having such thoughts on mind and continues to encourage her daughter to pursue her dreams. Characterization like these may help us overcome social evils with positive social memory rather than revoking the negative social memory regarding the horrifying acts.

The portrayal of abrupt sinful acts in the anthology, *Paava Kadhaigal* and how the convicts are not subjected to any legal punishments may increase the crime rates

once again giving rise to such socially disrupting thoughts in the minds of people. Movies and visual presentations being a crucial tool to influence people's collective social memory, these content may cautiously portray ideologies and try to minimize the infusion of negative elements into the collective social memory of the people. This may have an indirect impact on the behavioral and perceptual memory of the people encouraging the negative elements' dominance over the evolved positive outlook towards these horrifying acts through awareness and inclusivity.

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# Representation of Violence in Literature in the Works of Lawrence Wright: a writer's Effort to Unfurl the buried truth

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## **Introduction :**

Violence arouses from within due to fear, anger, dissatisfied desires, or anything which deeply hurts. Despite being an inappropriate way, sometimes it becomes justified in cases of self-defence and survival. Even the laws of morality favour such violence which intends to save a life. Although the theme of violence in literature is not something distinct, still, its place will always be noteworthy. In mythological stories, fairy tales, science fiction, or in realistic descriptions of terror attacks, violence is either a theme or subtheme and different writers experimented with it to supply us with fine masterpieces in all genres. The depiction of violence in the literature varied widely i.e., from symbolic representations to the minutest details and its treatment was ascertained by the contemporary scenario.

Violence, as a recurring theme in literature, has had a profound impact on the craft and content of literary works. It has influenced literature in several significant ways. From the inner landscape of the human psyche to the outer world, it

finds its expression in varied ways. There is no clear evidence to provide a comprehensive chronological representation of violence in literature; still, we can observe its representation in “**The Iliad**” and “**The Odyssey**” by Homer in the olden times to Medieval Literature: “**Beowulf**” and William Shakespeare’s “**Macbeth**”, “**Hamlet**” and “**Titus Andronicus**” to the Lawrence Wright’s “**Going Clear**”, “**God’s Favorite**”, “**The Looming Tower**”, “**The Terror Years**” etc. in the present time.

**Lawrence Wright (2nd August 1947)** born in the USA, is an author, screenwriter, playwright, and staff writer for The New Yorker magazine. As a staff of The New Yorker, he published several prize-winning articles, including three National Magazine Awards. He is the author of eleven nonfiction books, two fictions, a play, and a few other prose works. His book about the rise of al-Qaeda, “**The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11**” (2006) was globally acclaimed, translated into 25 languages and won numerous awards,

including the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction. His notable works include - **City Children, Country Summer: A Story of Ghetto Children Among The Amish, In the New World: Growing Up with America, Saints and Sinners, Remembering Satan: A Tragic Case of Recovered Memory, Twins: And What They Tell Us About Who We Are, The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11 (Pulitzer prize for general non-fiction 2006), The Terror Years: From Al-Qaeda to Islamic state, God Save Texas: A Journey into the Soul Of the Lone Star State, etc.**

**“The Looming Tower : Al-Qaeda and The Road To 9/11(2006)”** is a non-fiction book by Wright, later adapted into a television miniseries exploring the events leading up to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States. In the case of real-life events, producers and directors may choose to depict violent acts to convey the gravity and impact of the events being portrayed but **“The Looming Tower”** is a series that delves into the history and context of the 9/11 attacks.

**“The Looming Tower”** is primarily focused on the actions of the terrorist group **Al-Qaeda** and the repercussions of their attacks. It aims to strike a balance between an accurate portrayal of historical events and maintaining sensitivity toward the subject matter by humanizing its perpetrators. Rather than depicting Al-Qaeda members as mindless monsters, Wright shows how they were driven by a deeply-held worldview, and were motivated by a desire to defend their faith and culture. At the same time, Wright does not excuse their actions, and he is clear about the horrific nature of the attacks. As a pertinent observer, Wright quotes :

**“Chaos and barbarism, which always threatened to overwhelm the movement, sharply increased as bin Laden took the helm.”**

Here, violence is handled responsibly to inform and educate the audience, focusing on the impact and consequences of these acts rather than glorifying violence. Precisely, **“The Looming Tower”** primarily focuses on the investigation and analysis of events leading up to the attacks rather than gratuitous violence for entertainment purposes and a crucial element of it is his nuanced portrayal which helps readers to see the attacks not simply as an isolated tragedy but as part of a larger historical narrative, one that is still unfolding today.

**“The Terror Years: From Al Qaeda to Islamic State (2016)”** - is not a book but rather a collection of articles published between 2002 and 2016, covering various aspects of terrorism, extremism, and the geopolitical landscape during that time. In ten powerful pieces published, he recalls the path that terror in the Middle East has taken, from the rise of **Al-Qaeda** in the 1990s to the beheadings of reporters and aid workers by **ISIS**. Violence is a central focus which aims to infuse readers with the rise and impact of terrorism in the contemporary era. The book scans the motivations, ideologies, and tactics of extremists and their violent acts to provide a clear vision of the complex nature of terrorism and to explore the root causes of extremist violence that includes social, political, and economic factors along with historical contexts and geopolitical dynamics. It explores how acts of violence have shaped U.S. foreign policy and led to the erosion of civil liberties.

Initial chapters trace the birth of radical jihadism through the 9/11 attacks and the West's poor efforts to stop it. Later, **The Man Behind Laden** deals with the profile of **Ayman Al-Zawahiri** whereas **The Counter-Terrorist** describes **O'Neill**, a disgraced FBI agent whose obsession ended with his death in the **World Trade Center**. **The Agent** portrays the remarkable **Soufan**, a **Lebanese-American** investigating the USS Cole bombings. **The Kingdom of Silence** and **Captured on Film** depicts life under repressive regimes. **The Terror Web** tells the story of the Madrid train bombings; one of the few terrorist attacks. **The Master Plan** shows the evolution of Al-Qaeda after 9/11. **The Spymaster** follows a series of interviews between the author and the former Director of National Intelligence. **The Rebellion Within** focuses on **Sayyid Imam al-Sharif**, formerly a top council to Bin Laden and Islamist Author. **Captives** tell the tale of Gaza under Hamas, Operation Cast Lead, and the capture and eventual exchange of Israeli Army Sergeant Gilad Shalit. **Five Hostages** narrates the heartbreaking tale of the five American journalists and aid workers captured in Syria. In the **epilogue**, Wright contemplates the future of **ISIS**, how terrorist organizations end, and the costs of the age of terror. He predicts with chilling realism that

**“The conflict that the Islamic State has provoked will ultimately bring about its destruction, but not without much more havoc and heartache”.**

In short, *The Terror Years* is the examination of the root causes and factors that contribute to the rise of terrorism.

**The End of October (2020)** is a novel, that eerily depicts a global pandemic and its repercussions. Violence serves as a central element and is prevalent throughout the novel in its various forms such as - biological violence, societal violence, political violence, personal violence, etc.

The protagonist, **Henry Parsons** is a high-ranked CDC (Centre for Disease Control) official and led an international team in the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa in 2014, is inspired by a 19th-century country doctor and botanist (with the same name), who got appointed as an assistant medical officer during the influenza outbreak in London in the 1890s. Henry is also representative of all those frontline health workers who had the courage and ingenuity to risk their own lives for the sake of humanity. Through the mouth of his characters, Wright himself speaks throughout the novel.

**“Disease was more powerful than armies. The disease was more arbitrary than terrorism. Disease was crueler than human imagination. And yet young people like these doctors were willing to stand in the way of the most fatal force that nature has to offer.”**

Violence plays a significant role in shaping the narrative and driving the plot forward and manifested through riots, conflicts, and even acts of terrorism, highlighting the aftermath of violent encounters, and portraying the trauma, fear, and despair experienced by those who are directly or indirectly affected. The book gives prominence to the destructive nature of human aggression and the state of chaos in disastrous circumstances.

### Conclusion :

Lawrence Wright seeks to understand the causes and consequences of violence and to challenge simplistic explanations for its existence. His works encourage us to think critically about the nature of violence, and how we can work to prevent it. The analysis of Wright's works reveals a complex and nuanced representation of violence. He acknowledges that there are rarely simple solutions to such problems as it often stems from a variety of factors, including political, social, and economic conditions. Lawrence Wright's works provide a multifaceted representation of violence. His works highlight the factors that drive violence, as well as the impacts of violence on individuals and communities. It focussed on both issues and the challenges inherent in finding solutions.

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# Literary Texts Generated From Machine Minds With Human Stories : A Transhuman Analysis of Vituperating Authors

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New technologies are developing as the Fourth Industrial Revolution advances, changing many facets of human existence, including literature. The rise of transhumanism, which seeks to improve human capacities through technology, raises concerns about how it may impact literature, particularly in terms of the creation and consumption of literature.

## **Fourth Industrial revolution :**

The present is a moment of transition, technical advancement, and exponential growth, a quantum leap forward in human progress. There is also socioeconomic inequality, climatic change, dehumanisation and unemployment. It all depends on the perspective we use when attempting to explain for the oscillations that have occurred over the previous few decades. There have been four industrial revolutions since the 18th century; whether we regard these revolutions as signs of development or as processes of dehumanisation depends on our view of what progress and being human truly entail.

The history of the industrial revolutions is frequently presented as a tale of development. The first industrial revolution (1760-1840) focused on mechanical production due to the steam engine; the second industrial revolution (1870-1914) brought mass production due to electricity and the assembly line; and the third industrial revolution (later half of the twentieth century) brought the development of information theory, digital computing, and electronics, transitioning from mechanical and electronic technology to digital electronics. According to Brynjolfsson and McAfee, in the first industrial revolution it was steam power that allowed humans “to overcome the limitations of muscle power, human and animal, and generate massive amounts of useful energy at will [...] the first time our progress was driven primarily by technological innovation” (2016, 6–7).

They believe that we have been living in a second machine era since the twenty-first century, in which digital technologies

have increased human brain capacity in the same manner that the first machine age increased physical and mechanical strength. If our muscles were improved in the first machine age, our minds are being improved in the second machine era. Exponential, digital, and combinatorial technologies are emerging. These three characteristics have enabled the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and a global digital network that links the majority of the world's population. At the moment, ambient computing allows computing platforms to blend smoothly into our environment, like when we talk to Apple's Siri or Google Assistant instead of providing active input into a computer.

All of these new technology and scientific advancements have an impact on how we define ourselves, connect with people, and build communication. On the one hand, M2M and IoT establish a network of communication that excludes people. Isn't it true that our ability to express complicated and abstract concepts is what distinguishes us as humans? M2M and IoT, however, do not extend that capability outside ourselves. On the other hand, when we speak to an intelligent assistant like Siri, we are integrating with these technologies. These occurrences would culminate in two distinguishing characteristics that set us different from other animals: our intelligence and personality. Technology is challenging how we identify ourselves and our position in this changing environment.

Contradictions exist in the fourth industrial revolution. On the one hand, as computers grow more sophisticated and people become more reliant on them, our position in the informational world that

surrounds us appears to be dwindling. On the other side, the convergence of the digital, physical and biological dimensions is producing significant improvements in science and technology that are improving humankind-both physically and mentally. The world of the posthuman is a very intriguing topic to study because of these paradoxes.

### **Transhumanism :**

The question of "what makes us human?" has traditionally revolved around identifying the traits that make us fundamentally distinct from-and, implicitly, superior to-the non-human, be it other animal species or machines. This anthropocentric perspective has been used to examine the concept of humanity for a long time.

Transhumanism is a philosophical and cultural movement that advocates for the use of technology to enhance human abilities, such as intelligence, physical ability, and longevity. In recent years, AI algorithms have played an increasingly significant role in the advancement of transhumanistic studies. AI algorithms are now capable of generating text that is indistinguishable from human-written text, a development that has significant implications for transhumanistic studies.

The term transhumanism was coined by Julian Huxley in 1957 and first defined in its current sense by Max More in 1990. Nick Bostrom, one of its (Trans/Post) Humanity and Representation 5 founders, describes it as "a loosely defined movement that [...] promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the opportunities for enhancing the human condition and the human organism opened

up by the advancement of technology” (2005, 3). Transhumanists’ notion of enhancement encompasses “radical extension of human health-span, eradication of disease, elimination of unnecessary suffering, and augmentation of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities” (3) by means of current developments like genetic engineering and IT, and “anticipated future ones, such as molecular nanotechnology and artificial intelligence” (3). In this volume, we will follow Bostrom’s definition of the term ‘transhuman’ as denoting “transitional beings, or moderately enhanced humans, whose capacities would be somewhere between those of unaugmented humans and full-blown posthumans” (5). Bostrom understands the posthuman as “a radically enhanced human”-the furthest degree of transcendence of human limitations that a person can reach-while a transhumanist is, for him, “somebody who accepts transhumanism” (5).

Humans have spent the last few decades attempting to modify human nature in order to overcome all limits. This reveals our desire to become better than we are, to become superior to humans (homo sapiens). Everyone, or at least some people, have a propensity to look for a way past every hurdle and constraint in order to make one’s life happier and better in this world (Hansell and Grassie, 2010: 13). It may be characterised as a movement that argues for the transformation of the human condition by applied reason, particularly through the development and widespread use of technology (Hays, 2019: 1). This movement advocates for research into life-extension projects (becoming immortal), cryonics, molecular nanotechnology, Human Enhancement (HE) projects,

Artificial Intelligence (AI), uploading human consciousness into computers, and Designer Babies (DB) (Samuelson, 2010: 19). Transhumanism’s main goal is to make our bodies live forever.

Transhumanism is thought to be both dehumanising and super humanizing (Fukuyama, 2003: 6 & 8). These differing perspectives on this movement make us wonder what precisely Transhumanism is. Before delving into such a morally charged matter, let us first define the ‘what,’ ‘division,’ ‘when,’ and ‘how’ of this phenomenon known as Transhumanism. Human augmentation is viewed as the guiding principle of Transhumanism. Science and technology are important to Transhumanism and are seen as the two greatest assets of the movement. As a result, the present literature on Transhumanism comprises more than just science and technology, which serve various goals. As a result, we cannot regard transhumanism as a singular movement or the end of an ideology.

To summarise, transhumanism is a movement backed by certain scientists and philosophers who believe there is a solution to the “issues” (as they understand them) of human defects and limits such as death, ageing, and so on. The literature on transhumanism is fairly broad. This movement is heavily funded in order to promote certain technological developments and projects. Currently, this has become the intellectual focus of many scientists and philosophers. In the views of techno-optimists, transhumanism forecasts an optimistic, unmatched, and utopian picture of the future. However, there are some severe ethical issues that must be addressed. We are not denying all technical improvements by addressing

ethical problems. Not all technical advancements are negative. We must understand that when science and technology are placed at the service of human beings, they are priceless resources to encourage the integral development of a person.

#### **Procreation of Transhuman Author :**

A creative developer and artist from Copenhagen, Andreas Refsgaard. He combines algorithms, coding, and machine learning while working in the area between interface design and art to explore the creative potentials of new digital technologies. Artist and creative coder Andreas Refsgaard enables users to explore, engage, and have fun with algorithms and machine learning by integrating inputs and outputs in unusual ways.

An artificial intelligence-generated science fiction book is available for purchase at Booksby.ai, an online bookstore. The artificial intelligence has read a lot of science fiction books during training and has learnt to create new ones that imitate the language, style, and aesthetic of the ones it has read. None of the book-related tales, titles, descriptions, book covers, or reviews on BooksBy.ai were created or authored by humans. Char-rnn-tensorflow was used to create the tales, book titles, descriptions, and reviews using training data from Project Gutenberg and Amazon.com. Progressive Growing of GANs and training photos from Open Library were used to create the book covers. Transparent latent gan was used to generate images of readers reviewing the books. Using training data (book covers and prices) from Amazon.com and ml5js.org regression with feature extractor, a model that

determined pricing for the generated books was created. OpenAI, a nonprofit lab financed by Elon Musk and other digital entrepreneurs. OpenAI subtly worried the literary community by warning that the AI, known as GPT2, was too hazardous to release into the world because it might be used to produce “deepfakes for text.” Will machine learning entities become the next informational weapons, or will they merely drive out the modest midlist novelists?

#### **Collision in ethical and situational grounds :**

A transhuman author is not exactly a novel idea. Human augmentation and enhancement have long been themes in science fiction. But with to recent technological developments, it may soon be possible to create a transhuman author. A transhuman author would be able to acquire and digest enormous quantities of information, write at a previously unheard-of pace, and perhaps even use neurological connections to connect with readers’ emotions.

Depending on what we believe culture to be at its core, we should consider how concerned we should be about such possibilities. At least, the undue excitement around the GPT2 text generator indicates that we have somewhat internalised Silicon Valley’s philistine functionalism, which holds that everything is just data. It is true that everything appears to be data when you have a big data-crunching machine. And because large tech businesses excel at data, the adage that everything is data helps them appear good. Text may also be mathematically encoded by a computer and modified; therefore, text is also data.



Writing is not data, though. As an expressive method, it indicates that you have something to say. A computer programme that is not sentient has nothing to say, other from the fact that it lacks the worldly experience to inform it that flames do not occur underwater. Undoubtedly, training it on a wide variety of formulaic rubbish will give it the ability to rearrange elements and produce more formulaic trash. Everything is fine. Robots won't be able to tell their own stories, though, until they have complex inner lives and are aware of their surroundings. Would we even be able to follow them if they were to do so someday? It's also completely feasible that we wouldn't comprehend a sentient machine's speech if it were to speak.

#### **Conclusion :**

The birth of a transhuman author might fundamentally alter how we understand and produce literature. For instance, the author might create plotlines and character development more quickly than ever before with the help of artificial intelligence. This may promote literary creation and increase readers' access to and affordability of literature. A more knowledgeable and nuanced representation of persons and locations may result from the author's capacity to access and analyse a large quantity of information.

But there are also moral questions raised by the emergence of transhuman authors. What if the author's technology malfunctions or is compromised? What if the author's higher output and accessibility result in the literary market being exploited? The possible repercussions of a transhuman author emphasise the necessity for moral guidelines and legislation to guarantee that technology be utilized

for society's welfare rather than for a select few's financial gain.

The emergence of a transhuman author is only one example of how the Fourth Industrial Revolution and literature are colliding. Literature is becoming increasingly available to people all around the world as a result of the advent of digitization. E-books and audiobooks make distribution simple, while social media gives authors a place to interact with their audience. Self-growth publishing's has also made it possible for a wider variety of voices to be heard in the literary world.

The conventional publishing sector, however, also faces threats from the Fourth Industrial Revolution. There is a decline in the market for physical books as a result of self-publishing and digitization and the industry's power dynamics have changed as a result. As more writers choose to self-publish, established publishers are up against increased competition and have less control over what gets published. To stay up with the shifting face of the literary world, the business must adapt.

The emergence of a transhuman author and the collision of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in literature, in conclusion, demonstrate the potential for technology to fundamentally alter how we understand and produce literature. Although the advantages of a transhuman author are obvious, ethical issues must be taken into mind to make sure that technology is utilised for societal advancement. The publishing industry's shifting environment also emphasises the necessity for flexibility and the need of making sure that many views are heard in the literary community. It is critical to take into account how these developments will

affect literature and society as a whole as the globe experiences the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In conclusion, the conception of man-machine is a difficult and contentious subject that will probably be researched in the years to come. It poses significant issues about the interaction between people and machines as well as the possible effects of AI on society at large.

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# Spousal Sexual Violence Against Ever-Married Women In India : Evidences From NFHS-5 Data

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## **Introduction :**

Gender based violence is considered as a most pervasive, ongoing and grievous issue in all over world. Regardless of rank, class, age, caste, or religion, violence against women permeates nearly every aspect of life in every country. Violence against women considered as most challenging and threatening manifestation of gender based inequity. In every country there is violence against women, which comes down through all barriers of culture, ethnicity, caste, education, class, money, and age. (ICRW, 2004). According to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the Domestic violence is defined as any action that causes harm to, health, life, safety, or well-being or the potential to do so of the victim get endangered. physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, and economic abuse comes under this (Mukhopadhyay, 2022).

Sexual violence is a wider perception that which include rapes, enforced prostitution, sexual harassment, sexual

slavery, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization(Sandra et al., 2013). Sexual violence by the husband to his women is challenging as it hinders the gender equality and it has association with a multitude of adverse mental, physical, and reproductive health outcomes for women and the children in the family(Linos et al., 2013). In South Asia, there is unacceptably high rate of domestic violence faced by married women and 37% women who are married reported that they face physical or sexual violence by their spouse in their lifetime(Dasgupta et al., 2019). Article 14 and 21 of Indian constitution guarantee equal right for women in Indian society. According to World Health Organization (2021), 1 in every 3 women i.e. Nearly 736 million women are prone to physical or sexual violence by their husband or sexually abused by their non-partner. infraction of the basic human right can be called asspousal violence against women which is affected by the power relationship between women and her partner (Bhattacharya, 2015).

**Aim and objective :**

The aim of the present study is to examine the prevalence and spousal sexual violence characteristics and injuries owing to sexual violence by spouse among women who are currently married in India. This research article makes an effort to comprehend the various forms of sexual violence that women experience in one way or another identifies the primary causes of such abuse.

**Data Methodology :**

The most recent the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5, 2019–21) utilized to analyses the data for comprehending spousal sexual violence against ever-married women. India's Demographic Health Survey (DHS), a recurring cross-sectional survey, is called

the NFHS-5. The current study included a representative sample of 62,381 in the ages of 15-49, ever-married women who reported their husband's spousal sexual abuse of an ever-married woman. For assessing the condition of ever-married women who experienced spousal sexual violence, descriptive analyses have been carried out in this study.

**Results and Discussion :**

Spousal sexual violence against currently married women is major concern for the developing nation. This section illustrates the condition of the ever-married women in India who faced sexual violence by their spouse. The outcome of the study gives overview on the situation of Indian married women in the household.

Women characteristics	Sexual violence committed by Husband	Number of women
<b>Age</b>		
18-19	7.1	1475
20-24	5.4	7923
25-29	6.2	10757
30-39	6.7	23128
40-49	6.1	19098
<b>Education</b>		
No schooling	8.4	17887
<5 years complete	8.8	4660
5-7 years complete	6.5	9801
8-9 years complete	5.5	9533
10-11years complete	5.2	8324

12 or more years complete	3.4	12175
<b>Marital status</b>		
Currently married	5.8	58611
Widowed/divorced/separated/deserted	13.4	3771
<b>Number of living children</b>		
0	5.3	5460
1-2	5.6	35518
3-4	7.0	17652
5 +	10.5	3752

**Table 1: Ever-married women experiencing sexual violence by their husband, 2019-20**

Table 1 highlights the characteristics of women and the proportion of ever-married women in the ages of 18 to 49 who have ever been the victim of spousal sexual violence by their husband. According to this table, the age range of married women who have experienced marital sexual abuse by their husband varies. Overall 7.1 percent of younger ever-married women experiencing sexual violence by the spouse in the age category 18-19 and this will decline to 5.4 percent in the age 20-24. Again the reports of sexual violence increased in the age group 30-39. Table also illustrate that spousal sexual violence decline sharply with women's education, women with no education reported higher sexual violence

(8.4%). Women who have completed 12 or more year of schooling experienced 3.4 percent of sexual violence committed by their husband. This indicates that women's education is critical to their own development in the society along with the county's entire development. Women who are married experienced lesser spousal sexual violence (5.8%) than the women who gets divorced or become widowed or separated. Table reports that women with having more living children i.e. 5 plus experienced more sexual violence (10.5%) than the women with having zero children. The main reason is women's education as women with higher children don't know about the family planning and that makes her more vulnerable in the society.

Household characteristics	Spousal sexual Violence committed by Husband (in percentage)	No. of women (n)
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	4.8	19173

Rural	6.9	43028
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	6.2	49365
Muslim	7.3	9993
Christian	4.6	1610
Sikh	3.0	489
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	6.8	615
Jain	0.6	136
Other	6.5	172
<b>Caste or Tribe</b>		
Scheduled caste	7.4	13148
Scheduled tribe	6.7	5520
Other backward class	6.0	26168
Other	5.7	17108
Don't know	6.1	438

**Table 2: Ever-married women experiencing sexual abuse (Violence) by their husband through household characteristics, 2019-20**

This table 2 highlights the sexual violence committed by husband through the household characteristics. According to statistics, women in rural areas (6.9%) experience greater spousal sexual violence than those in urban areas (4.8%). Women in rural area are more vulnerable to spousal violence because of the lack of education among women; lack of awareness, rules and laws doesn't reach to the ground. One of the main causes of this violence is patriarchal society. It is because of that women in urban areas are more literate and aware about the consequences of the violence. Spousal

sexual violence opposed to women varies with religion to religion. It has been reported that Muslim women (7.3%) face more sexual violence than the women in other religion such as Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist (6.8%), Hindu (6.2%), Christian (4.6%), Sikh (3%) etc. The various castes and tribes of India experience the same type of spousal sexual assault. The schedule caste (7.4%) and schedule tribe (6.7%) women had the highest rates of sexual violence committed by their husband. There are 6 % women in other backward class which were abused by their husband in India.

<b>Background characteristics</b>	<b>Sexual violence (In percentage)</b>
<b>Husband's year of schooling</b>	
No education	9.4
<5 years done	8.5
5-7 years done	7.1
8-9 years done	6.8
10-11 years done	4.1
12 or more years done	3.7
Missing	7.7
<b>Husband's alcohol consumption</b>	
No drink	4.0
Drinks/never gets drunk	6.3
Drunk every so often	10.9
Gets drunk very frequently	25.5
<b>Spousal age gap</b>	
Wife older than husband	6.3
Husband-wife same age	3.7
Wife's 1 to 4 years younger than husband	6.4
Wife's 5 to 9 years younger than husband	5.6
Wife's 10+ years younger than husband	5.3
<b>Number of decision in which women participation</b>	
0	9.9
1-2	7.9
3	4.7

**Table 3: Percentage of ever-married women reproductive age group of 18-49 experienced sexual violence by their husband and his background characteristics.**

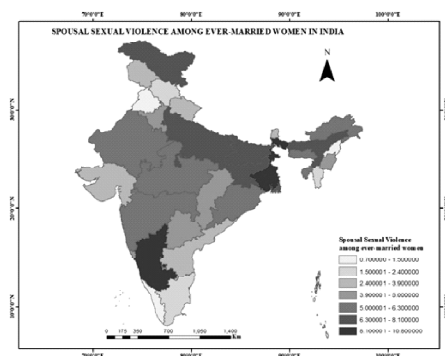
Table 3 highlights the background characteristics and empowerment indicators of the husband which reflects the condition of the women who live in the home. The table shows the relationship between the husband's background characteristics with the sexual violence committed against women. Based on this table the currently women with married whose age between 18-49 experiencing of spousal sexual violence, husband without education commit more sexual violence (9.4%) against their partner and this will goes down with year of schooling goes up. Husband who completed 8-9<sup>th</sup> year of schooling commit less sexual violence (6.8%) than the husband who completed 12 or more year of schooling (3.7%). The frequency of spousal sexual abuse varies according on the husband's alcohol consumption. In comparison to 25.5 percent of women whose husbands drink, only 4% of women whose husbands don't drink reported experiencing less sexual violence.

Spousal sexual violence against women varies with the age differences between spouses and it was found that women who are older than husband faced more sexual violence (6.3%) compared with the women with the same age with husband experienced lesser sexual violence (3.7%). Spousal sexual violence varies with the schooling differences between the spouses. It was found that husband who has more schooling than their partner commit lesser sexual violence (5.9%) compared with the women has more schooling than the husband faced

more sexual violence. If they don't have attended any school they the percentage of violence goes around 9.3%. The women who participate in 3-4 decision experienced less sexual violence (4.7%) by their husband the women with no decision-making (4.7%).

**Spousal sexual violence across the states/UTs, 2019-21 :**

The occurrence of sexual abuse by spouse against her wife varies significantly between states and UTs.. In India, average 6.3 percent women experience spousal sexual violence committed by their husband. From the figure 2, it was found out that woman in states of eastern part of India facing more spousal sexual violence than the other part of the states. In case of rate of spousal sexual violence the state of Karnataka (10.8%) ranks first, West Bengal (9%) is on second number followed by Bihar (8.1%), Ladakh (7.7%) and Delhi (7.2%). States/UTs with the low prevalence of spousal sexual violence are Punjab (0.7%), Lakshadweep (0.8%), Nagaland (0.9%), Andaman & Nicobar Island (1.2 %) and Puducherry (1.2%).



**Figure-1 : Spousal sexual Violence among ever-married women in India, 2019-21**



## Conclusion:

Spousal sexual abuse against women is a complicated, socially and culturally sensitive subject. Spousal sexual violence is a pervasive global health distress and most challenging concern for the developing countries such as India. The present work demonstrates the universality of the spousal sexual abuse among ever-married women in age group of 18-49 in India. Study proves that there were significant relationships among the women's schooling, religion, age, caste and tribe with the spousal sexual violence. The more the husband empower in terms of education, low in alcohol consumption, low in controlling behavior less the sexual violence happens against the women.

The impact on public health is increased by any form of domestic violence, such as physical, sexual, mental etc. Lack of data on the many types of sexual violence makes it challenging to establish appropriate responses and prevention programmes, especially in developing nations. In India, multi-sectorial initiatives such as empowering women and higher education in addition with the empowerment of men in term of education, stringent legislation against domestic abuse, and women's security should be in place at the national and regional levels to prevent this.

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# Portrayal of Violence Through the Perspective of Children in Select Children's Novels

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## **Introduction :**

The genre of Children's Literature encompasses a wide range of works produced for the children and Young Adults. Violence in Literature is a debatable topic and violence in Children's Literature is a complex as well as controversial topic to explore. There has always been a tremendous pressure on exposing the kids to the "right" materials. Since the beginning of the genre of Children's Literature it has become a stigma that any form of literary work be it poetry or stories which are related to children should have a happy ending and all the characters should be portrayed as happy, care-free, gleeful and adventurous.

## **Objectives :**

The major objectives this study aims on covering include

- (i) To study the incentive behind depicting violence in children's Literature. What might have been the real motive for an author to talk about violence in a Children's book.
- (ii) To assess the potential impacts of exposure to violence. Some argue that exposure to violence in literature can

help children develop critical thinking skills and empathy, while others argue that it can have negative effects on children's mental health and behavior.

- (iii) To examine the use of language, symbolism, and narrative techniques in the select children's novels. The usage of words in the novels to indirectly denote something else.

## **Methodology :**

The two novels taken for this study, "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" and "The Bluest Eye" fall under the genre of Children's Literature and both have a child protagonist to talk about complex themes like Holocaust and Racial Discrimination as well as beauty standards of America. Though the novels have different themes and settings, there are a few commonalities that can be observed in both the novels. The novels still differ significantly in terms of their specific narratives, historical contexts, and thematic focuses.

## **Dissecting the Images of Violence and Childhood Innocence :**

In the 2006 novel, "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" by John Boyne, the minute intricacies of violence were

expressed in various scenarios and also through the characters like Bruno, Shmuel, Pavel, Lieutenant Kotler. The unfavorable perspective of the novel “The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas”, on a German family’s experiences during World War II is the source of dispute. The narrative unfolds through the innocent and curious eyes of Bruno, who forms an unlikely friendship with a Jewish boy named Shmuel transcending the boundaries imposed by war and prejudice.

The child protagonist Bruno is a nine-year-old boy who is primarily interested in going on expeditions and adventures. One can observe the childhood personality developmental differences between Bruno and Gretel. When Bruno struggles to understand his circumstances, Gretel connects the dots and is good at recognizing the conflicts around her. This can be seen when Gretel tells Bruno about *Auschwitz* and he hears it as Out-With, and continues to believe it. Thus, the author’s choice of Bruno for the protagonist role is made up on this notice, as the complex themes can be explored with Bruno’s *fragmental perspective*.

#### **Unraveling the Racial Violence in “The Bluest Eye” :**

Toni Morrison’s first novel “The Bluest Eye” with the use of different narrative techniques tells the story of a poor Black lonely little girl Pecola Breedlove, who descends into madness after being emotionally and physically abused on several occasions by the entire community around her and by her family. This 1970 novel explores the themes of gender, race, and identity and raises questions on racial self-loathing, the menace of white beauty standards, and the

loss of one’s self. The novel “The Bluest Eye” also discusses the controversial topics of racism, incest, and child molestation with its usage of a child protagonist. The plot of the novel revolves around the central character Pecola Breedlove with a multi-perspective narrative, allowing the story to be told from the viewpoints of different characters which are majorly children like Claudia MacTeer. Claudia’s revisiting of Pecola’s story’s specifics and her own coming to terms with adult concepts make up a significant portion of the book. The most chapter titles of the novel are extracted from the 1940s Children’s book “Dick and Jane”.

The novel, “The Bluest Eye” explores the experiences and perspectives of several characters, revealing the interconnectedness of their lives and the collective burden of racism, poverty, and unattainable ideals of beauty. This novel depicts violence in both physical as well as psychological form and also talks about domestic violence, racial violence and sexual violence. The *sexual violence* is portrayed predominantly through the child characters like Pecola and Frieda who were both the victims of sexual abuse, Pecola being impregnated by her own father, Cholly Breedlove who is seen as a perpetrator of violence and Frieda being molested by the boarder, Mr. Henry who lives in their house.

The *beauty standards* of the 1940s Ohio can be espied through the credence of Pecola that having Blue Eyes like the Shirley Temple doll will make all her sufferings go away and everyone in her community will accept and love her just how they love and admire the doll. Pecola goes on her quest for obtaining these blue

eyes also shows her childhood innocence as she could not process the fact regarding racial discrimination. Towards the end of the novel, Pecola loses her sanity to the abusive society and becomes a reminder of human cruelty and an emblem of human suffering.

#### **Perspective of a Child as a Tool :**

The narrative style of using a child's perspective might save the writer to touch on the contentious area without going into extreme details of the sensitive topics which were spoken about in the texts. As children often possess a sense of innocence and naivety, they approach the world with curiosity and a lack of preconceived notions, which allows them to observe and question the world around in an unfiltered and genuine manner. Children because of their limited understanding of the complexities of the situations, might struggle to grasp the full extent of societal issues, such as racism or war, but their observations and reactions can provide poignant insights into these larger themes.

The renowned critic in the field of Children's Literature, **Perry Nodelman** with his concept of 'childness' challenges the notion that children's books should solely reflect a simplified or innocent version of reality, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the complexity and diversity of children's experiences. Both the novels discussed in this paper, present their stories through the eyes of child protagonists. This narrative choice allows for a unique and often poignant exploration of complex themes, as the innocence and naivety of the child's perspective contrast with the harsh realities of the world around them.

#### **Conclusion :**

Overall, violence in children's literature is a contentious issue, with both potential benefits and risks. The genre of Children's Literature is basically being used as a tool by the authors to traverse into complex themes or subject matters which were treated as controversial of that particular time period. Moreover, any form of violence be it physical or mental, when told from the perspective of a child will evoke empathy of the readers more than their sympathy. This aids the writer to break free from a controversial setup as the writer would use the aspect of fragmented memory of a child to delicately discuss the sensitive contents. Hence, most part of violence that is being portrayed in the works of Children's Literature are not specifically mentioned for the children to get the exposure of it, rather it is for the convenience of the author to talk about a tendentious subject matter.

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## Sectarian Strife : Causes and Consequences in Elie Wiesel's *Night*

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In the postmodern world religion, sectarianism, fundamentalism, fanaticism and terrorism are certain aspects that get more popularity due to the hidden politics of the hippocratic world. People use religion as a powerful weapon to conquer power and supremacy. Sectarian strife, is such a weapon that is widely utilized by all religions over the world from the ancient days of history. Sectarianism evolved as an important term in the politics of religion which has a direct connection with the fundamental and fanatical aspects of religion. It can easily transform the fanatic groups of religion into terrorist groups, as it spreads an excessive and over enthusiastic emotional exuberance in the guise of religion of which is extremely based on a selfish state of mind. The term sectarianism talks about the excessive attachment of a group towards an ideology, that is religious, political and selfish. History records that the term is more popular in religious context. It is a very conflicting term which can spread the roots of narrow-mindedness

in society. The term is infected by the politics of discrimination, prejudice, malice, and destruction. It influences people religiously, culturally, geographically and even personally by spreading the seeds of hatred and dislike towards one another. The most destructive aspect of the term sectarianism can create the concept of the 'other' in an otherwise socially healthy society. The concept of otherness is very dangerous for people as it can easily demolish the notion of unity. Through the seeds of otherness, the ideas of separation, prejudice, selfishness, narrow-mindedness, deterioration and even hatred are cultivated to reach the goals of terrorism. Sectarianism is a crucial term to be discussed in a hetero religious society. Oxford dictionary defines sectarianism as:

Religious sectarianism- generally speaking- is an ideology which is constituted in a society by certain groups of people who belong to an upper source ideology. Each of these groups (sects) is concerned with general teachings from where they

dissent and particular principles for which they belong and show hatred, prejudice, discrimination, affiliation towards other sects, no matter whether their sect is right or not. (Oxford Dictionary, 2023)

Sectarianism takes multiple forms through varied phases in different regions as it can grow by its own politics. In the most crucial situations nurtured by terrorism and fanaticism, sectarianism assumes the authoritarian form in the name of God and religious laws, to exterminate the enemies or the opponents. Hence, demolition, brutal death and violence created by the struggles and wars of sectarianism are intolerable and uncontrollable that the brutality or vengeance behind such strife may last for centuries. According to Fareed Hameed Al- hindawi, the Professor of Islamic University of Babel :

Sectarianism can be utilised as an umbrella strategy of discrimination in different societal establishments such as religion, politics, sports, culture, linguistics and so many other minor contexts.... Sectarianism can be individually viewed and group who show prejudice towards a sect and nothing is right or at least accepted in all other sects. Such individuals will use strategies of discrimination at all the levels found in the social structure; chief among them is religious establishments. Having employed discrimination, hatred attitudes are revealed showing the objective and of such an ideology. (pp.408)

Sectarian strife can take wide and terrible forms of brutality by exploiting the multiple forms of struggles within single religious identities. Holocaust is one such sectarian strife which spreads beyond the religious boundaries and establishes itself as the most violent form of a brutal massacre.

In the context of Holocaust, the war is between the Hippocratic Nazi rulers and poor Jewish community. The vengeance and hatred take a heinous form that the humanitarian concept itself is murdered. The brutal massacre that happened during the Second World War period in Germany is an exact picture of the highest form of sectarian violence. From the perspectives of the differences in the religious faith, millions of human beings including children were massively killed by throwing live into the furnaces in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. The word Holocaust directly connects to the ancient Greek word 'Shoah' which means 'burnt offering'.

The discrimination against the Jews and the segregation dates back to centuries. The people of the Jewish community are the victims of religious and political vengeance. The vengeance towards them is not only based on the religious discrimination but also several other factors that directly or indirectly create hatred towards them. In case of the Nazi Holocaust attack, a kind of politics misused the name of the religion and faith. The Nazi ruler, Hitler treated Jews as the people to be extinguished from the entire world because they are the reasons for all the evil on earth. The hatred of such political rulers was one of the reasons that the entire Jews were brutally killed by burning alive.

Holocaust is an after effect of the sectarian belief known as antisemitism. It is a kind of religious and racial segregation against the Jews due to their monotheist beliefs. The term, antisemitism was introduced by Wilhelm Marr in 1879. The sectarian violence against the Jews started because of the theological beliefs in the initial stages. Later it became a crucial act



of political authoritarianism which the other religious communities utilized in their own ways. The antisemitic separation is reflected in all fields of life including social, cultural, economic, political, religious spheres. The authoritarian group picturises Jewish community as the root cause behind the death of Jesus Christ. Thus the Jews are labelled as criminals based on the antisemitic myth stab-in-the-back. Later during the Second World War, the Nazi dictator Hitler used the antisemitic conspiracy myth in a transformed way by portraying the Jews as criminals who stabbed the nation behind. He accused the Jews for the failure of Germany in the First World War.

*The Night Trilogy* (1962) a well known collection of three memoirs by Elie Wiesel consists of *Night*(1958), *Day* (1962) and *Dawn* (1961) as three parts of the trilogy. The memoir discusses the cruel attitude of the Nazis towards the Jews and documents the brutal aspects of the fanatical discrimination along with the authoritarian attitude of religious politics that executed a massive homicide. The memoir begins by drawing the attention of the readers to the deep rooted religious faith of the community. Gradually the memoir reveals to the readers the crooked plans of Nazi politics. In the novel Elie Wiesel, describes how distortedly the Jews are expelled from their land and dumped into the Ghettos of violence and massacre. They treat Jews not as human beings but as objects of hatred.

The train with the deportees had crossed the Hungarian border and, once in Polish territory, had been taken over by the Gestapo. The train had stopped. The Jews were ordered to get off and onto waiting trucks. This took place in the Galician forest, near Kolomay. (Wiesel, 1958, p.6)

The violence against the Jews due to the sectarian attitude of the Nazis is purely based on the extermination policy of antisemitism. They spread the notion that Jewish monotheist ideology is the centre of all evils to which the world is subjected. The Nazis want to overcome the situation by mass murder of the monotheist community. With the hidden agenda of deportation they take the Jews from their land and dump into the worst Ghettos in Germany without food and water. This idea of deportation is an easy way for the Nazi soldiers to exploit the community. The entire wealth of the community is snatched away. The deportation leaves the Jews homeless.

In less than three days, German Army vehicles made their appearance on our streets. ANGUISH. German soldiers-with their steel helmets and their death's-head emblem. Still, our first impressions of the Germans were rather reassuring. The officers were billeted in private homes, even in Jewish homes... The optimists were jubilant: "Well? What did we tell you? You wouldn't believe us. There they are, your Germans. What do you say now? Where is their famous cruelty?" (Wiesel, 1958, p. 9-10)

The memoir well explains how cunningly the Nazis execute the brutal antisemitic policy. The life of the Jews in the concentration camps in Auschwitz is the main focus of the memoir. The journey reveals to the readers a ferocious state of sectarian violence. The blood-thirsty Nazi soldiers dump thousands of Jews into the cattle cars without giving any space to breath. They treat the poor, confused and scared Jews as inhuman bitches and put them in to the furnaces.

Suddenly there was a terrible scream: "Jews, look! Look at the fire! Look at the flames!" And as the train stopped, this time we saw flames rising from a tall chimney into a black sky. Mrs. Schächter had fallen silent on her own... Her little boy was still holding her hand. In front of us, those flames. In the air, the smell of burning flesh. It must have been around midnight. We had arrived. In Birkenau. (Wiesel, 1958, p.28)

The Jews in the concentration camps remain speechless. In the memoir Wiesel visualizes his own life with his family in the camp. It is the most tragic part of the sectarian violence that results in the trauma of the Jewish community. Through his life he symbolically picturises the lives of the entire Jewish children in the Nazi concentration camps all over Germany. The stunned and petrified life of each Jew in the camp is so ferocious and terrible. Each day passes by listening to the cries of the poor, helpless and feeble children, women and old men in the burning furnaces. Every day they eat the daily ration of a half loaf of bread by breathing the air which smells the burned flesh of the beloved people.

Total silence in the camp. On the horizon, the sun was setting.

"Caps off!" screamed the Lagerälteste. His voice quivered. As for the rest of us, we were weeping...

He was still alive when I passed him. His tongue was still red, his eyes not yet extinguished...

That night, the soup tasted of corpses. (Wiesel, 1958, p.64-65)

In the camps the victims struggle to survive. Their longing for food and water are purposefully neglected. They tolerate even the hunger and starvation to escape

from the beatings and other brutal punishments from the Nazi soldiers.

A few SS officers wandered through the room, looking for strong men. If vigor was that appreciated, perhaps one should try to appear sturdy? My father thought the opposite. Better not to draw attention... He told us that having been chosen because of his strength, he had been forced to place his own father's body into the furnace. (Wiesel, 1958, p.35)

The attitude of Nazi soldiers towards Jews in the concentration camp was so brutal and devilish that they denied any kind of sympathy for Jews. They established the policy of do or die in the concentration camps without any consideration for age, gender or health.

"Remember," he went on. "Remember it always, let it be graven in your memories. You are in Auschwitz. And Auschwitz is not a convalescent home. It is a concentration camp. Here, you must work. If you don't, you will go straight to the chimney. To the crematorium. Work or crematorium—the choice is yours." (38)

*Night* the memoir is a collected documentation of realities of antisemitic sectarianism, which Nazi government still tries to hide from the entire world. Through the memoir, Elie Wiesel reveals a new face of the sectarian violence in society and politics. According to Violence Theory of Hector Avalos, the Professor of Religious Studies at Iowa State University, there are four different mechanisms which can be grouped as different sects that lead to violence in the religious context. Inscripturation is the first mechanism which talks about the creation of the sacred text. The Sacred space describes the declaration of the sacred space among the surroundings. The

third group privileging stands for the grant of spiritual or divine privileges to certain sects or groups. Finally salvation, the fourth discusses the long term and permanent benefits of following the faith. According to him, people for the authoritarian benefits often fight for attaining the power and privileges to take over the other communities by personally utilizing the concepts of faith and salvation. He pointed out the danger of such acts when the particular sects create conflicting claims in the use of the resources. Avalos describes the reasons for religious violence in his work, *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence* as,

I came to wonder how and why religions can be prone to violence. After much thought and comparison of many religions, I formulated what will be the main elements of my thesis, which I can summarize succinctly as follows: 1) Most violence is due to scarce resources, real or perceived. Whenever people perceive that there is not enough of something they value, conflict may ensue to maintain or acquire that resource. This can range from love in a family to oil on a global scale. 2) When religion causes violence, it often does so because it has created new scarce resources. (Avalos, 2005, p.18)

An in depth analysis of the memoir *Night*, reveals that Elie Wiesel describes violence of struggles among the two religious groups. However, the difference is that the one sect is too meek and submissive due to the social and economical conditions. They try to oppose the other though the brutal Nazi policy is so powerful to establish the third mechanism theory of Hector Avalos. They establish the idea that, like the Aryan concept they are superior to any other race.

By receiving the created supremacy under the names of religion, race, culture and economy they themselves login to a supreme authority where they are the masters of all.

In *Night* Elie Wiesel discloses the vivid picture of hidden brutal realities which lack a true representation in the pages of history. Such brutalities and inhuman supremacies in the name of religion, faith, race and social culture can kill the beliefs around the world. Due to the interference of these groups present all over the world the spirituality of every religion is destroyed. It recreates a new politics of religion known as theocracy. When theocracy mixes with the totalitarian or the fascist face of political dictatorship it takes the weapon of terrorism to fight against the opposition. The memoir *Night* by Elie Wiesel is an example of such a religious political vengeance and rivalry. In the post modern world, the hypocritical sects under the influence of sectarian fundamentalism treats terrorism as an act of sacrifice to uphold the respective religious faith. There is neither a question of unlawfulness nor guilt. The violence is thus glorified as an act of purification necessary for holiness and salvation. Elie Wiesel in the Preface to the memoir reveals this hidden propaganda of the Nazis:

In the early days of their accession to power, the Nazis in Germany set out to build a society in which there simply would be no room for Jews. ... It is obvious that the war which Hitler and his accomplices waged was a war not only against Jewish men, women, and children, but also against Jewish religion, Jewish culture, Jewish tradition, therefore Jewish memory. (Wiesel, 1958, p.10)

Elie Wiesel's memoir proves how dangerous religious sectarianism can be and how it can demolish an entire community by employing the weapons of hatred, narcissism, fundamentalism, nihilism and terrorism.

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# Violence In Sequential Art: Illustration as A Technique Augmenting Un/Healing Effect of Violence

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Comics or Graphic Novel or Sequential Art is a medium that blends both the text and images in its narration and expression of ideas. An enigmatic relationship exists between violence and its depiction in literature. Including comics, violence is mirrored in all forms of popular media. But it is essential to understand the complex dynamics of violence and its connotations as it is indigenous within the universal terrain, than merely censuring its disastrous repercussions. During the 1950s, comics and graphic narratives that regarded as common instrument for entertainment were heavily loaded with violent images, which resulted in the implementation of censorship.

The term 'violence' is derived from Latin *violentia* meaning "vehemence" or "impetuosity" (Wiktionary, n.d.) *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd Ed.) defines violence as "the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on, or cause damage to, persons or property; action or conduct characterized by this; treatment or usage tending to cause bodily injury or forcibly

interfering with personal freedom" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.) Norwegian sociologist and mathematician, Johan Galtung, a pioneer in the disciplinary conceptualisation of 'Peace and Conflict Studies', classifies violence into three forms - Direct violence, Structural violence and Cultural violence. He notes, "Violence to human beings hurt and harm body, mind and spirit" (Johan & Fisher, 2013). Galtung conceptualizes direct violence as physical or psychological, structural violence as institutional, which is based on the existing structure of society and he calls it as 'social injustice'. For Galtung, cultural violence is the conventional beliefs, customs and behavior that are used to validate direct or structural violence. Galtung takes a very different stance to the argument that violence is only physical. Along with the body, the mind and spirit are also affected by violence. The aforementioned types of violence can distinctly be seen in the graphic narratives that are chosen for this study namely, *Letting It Go* by Miriam Katin, *Sarah : The Suppressed Anger of*

*the Pakistani Obedient Daughter* by Ayesha Tariq and *The Sky Is Blue with a Single Cloud* by Kuniko Tsurita.

Comics or Graphic narrative is an amalgamation of narrative and stylistic techniques like Panels, Speech Balloons, Speech Bubbles, Captions, Gutter, Tier, Splash, Spread, Labels, Onomatopoeia, Emanata, Bleed, Chiaroscuro, usage of colours etc. These different techniques and stylistics, used only in sequential art, are more attractive and equally effective in depicting violence. Although comics are read by people of all ages, most comics are aimed at adolescents. The plot of most comics is a battle between good and evil, with good winning in the end. However, the violent struggle between good and evil is portrayed with exuberance. The hero must also be super strong to face the villain with superhuman strength. Modern weapons, machines, extravagant fight scenes are more attractive to children, so they are made colourful and used more. Comics aimed at teenagers and young adults often use violent language and images to appeal to them. In other words, violence has become an integral part of this art.

*Letting It Go* by Miriam Katin, is a graphic memoir, dealing with a survivor of the holocaust who is haunted by violent and traumatic memories and her reaction to her son's decision of moving to Berlin. The holocaust is depicted from the perspectives of a mother and son belonging to two different generations. The Germany rooted in her mind is always at odds with the Germany of reality. The graphic novel is seen as her struggle to renounce the past and accept the present. She is unable to embrace today's Germany because of the trauma she experienced.

Berlin is not only in her memories, but her entire body and mind are engulfed in a negative Berlin that seems to haunt her inexorably (See Fig. 1). Her mind is so traumatized that she is violent enough to rejoice at the news of the destruction of Berlin and Berliners (See Fig. 2, 3 & 4). Although there are no violent, brutal incidents in this narrative, many images depicting her mental anguish are very disturbing to the readers (See Fig. 5). Even though it is a narrative of personal experiences, it has emerged as a collective voice. This narrative shows how institutional violence not only leads to mass carnage, but also physical and mental anguish to those who witness it.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

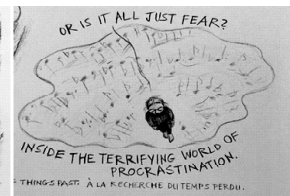


Fig. 5

*Sarah: The Suppressed Anger of the Pakistani Obedient Daughter* by Ayesha Tariq, depicts an 18-year-old Pakistani girl venting her anger against her home and society, who treat her as just an object, a maid and an outsider. In the name of preserving the dignity of the family, Sarah is literally imprisoned in the house. She hides the sexual, psychological and physical abuse she is undergoing, in her mind, realizing that she will not get any

relief even if she tells her parents about it. This action is symbolized by her trying to suppress her mental turmoil by cramming all her anger into a bottle and capping it tightly (See Fig. 6). The image of Sarah and her mother cutting up the bloody meat for Bakra Eid, makes the women's lives seem like those animals sacrificed for the feast (See Fig. 7). The author hints that this scene not only depicts Sara's life but also the life story of many women. Despite the absence of cruelty and bloodshed, the story throws light on the plight of women in Pakistan and the Indian subcontinent, leaving the readers reeling (See Fig. 8 and 9). Here is a depiction of how cultural beliefs, practices, customs lead to the psychological turmoil of a young woman.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Narrative style and techniques play a very important role in Sequential Art. Comics that incorporates language and images has a stronger impact on readers than a work that uses only language as a medium. Colours and sounds used in setting up violent scenes are effective in making the story more violent (See Fig. 10). The usage of shadowy light, black and white, and dark colours are common in violent imageries (See Fig. 11). Just, by drawing the picture of the hands, feet and back, a cartoonist can express the grimness of life (See Fig. 12).



Fig. 10 : Letting It Go by Miriam Katin

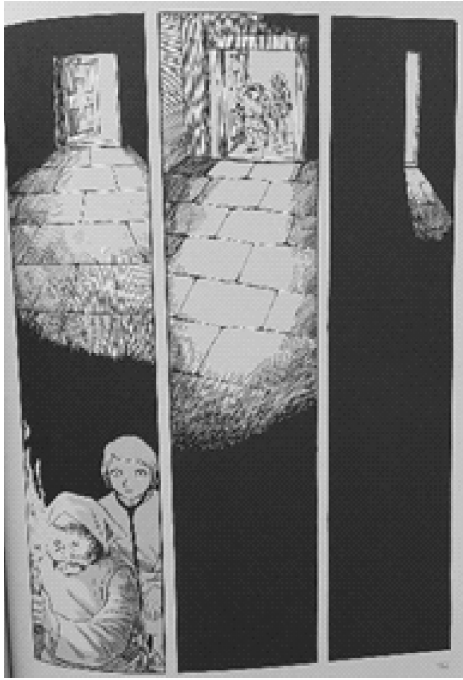


Fig. 11 : A prison's scene from the story, Calamity  
(The Sky is Blue with a Single Cloud by  
Kuniko Tsurita)



Fig. 12 : From the story, Calamity  
(The Sky is Blue with a Single Cloud by  
Kuniko Tsurita)

Although the images depict violence effectively, the harsh words used along with them are also equally violent. The words used here are not only harsh but also emotionless. The usage of text along with illustrations makes comics attract, captivate and aggravate readers much faster than other works.

What are the reasons for the increase in violent imagery in comics? Firstly, this nascent comic industry is trying to find such a fun and entertaining way to market and capture its biggest readership, teenagers. Secondly, in the battle between good and evil, evil is glorified with fights and modern weapons, even though good is portrayed as victorious in the end, to allure its young readers.

Do comics that centre around so many forms of violence serve as therapeutic for their authors to overcome the violence they have experienced, or further imprison them? Some cartoonists have hinted that the medium can be therapeutic in helping them untangle their traumatized minds and break out of the trauma zone. But many have also claimed to have experienced many kinds of mental anguish in bringing out such a work.

What kind of effect can such works have on the reader? As images are more quickly and easily contemplated than words, their impact is equally effective. The answer to the question whether these works remain merely a medium of entertainment or influence the minds and thoughts of the young readers, is a terrible one. Many recent surveys have raised concerns that children who read and watch excessively violent comics and cartoons are exhibiting violent behaviour. Many child experts are also of the opinion that



it is a matter of concern that children celebrate situations like fights and chasing, without reason. Even though some narratives act as a voice for the oppressed by describing the violent incidents around them, many narratives appear to be prejudiced against certain communities, countries, classes, colour, cultures and languages.

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# Representation of State-sponsored Violence and Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) in the Select Texts of Badal Sircar and Edward Bond

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Violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.” (WRVH, 2002: 4)

The enormous position of violence in human affairs since time immemorial can hardly be denied by one engaged in the business of history and politics. According to Professor John Keane the term ‘violence’ is mostly associated with the result of injustice:

The term violence comes to resemble an injustice detector. It measures everything that stands in the way of ‘peace’. Violence is stretched to encompass the personal, the institutional and the cultural and is linked to a questionable ontological account of ‘the satisfaction of human needs’ – ‘survival needs’, ‘well-being needs’, ‘identity, meaning needs’, ‘freedom needs’ – that makes violence indistinguishable from experiences like ‘harm’, ‘misery’, ‘unhappiness’, ‘alienation’, ‘cultural discrimination’, and ‘repression’. (p. 34-35)

WRVH (World Report on Violence and Health) presents a typology of violence, where violence has been distinguished into three sub-types, namely self-directed violence where the perpetrator and the victim are the same person, violence inflicted on someone’s own self like committing suicide or self abuse; interpersonal violence where the violence inflicted on someone by someone else, like domestic violence, child maltreatment, sexual violence, elder abuse etc; collective violence where the violence is inflicted on a particular community/ individual by another community like social, political, economic, cultural, religious violence. (p. 4)

With the advent of the two world wars, the twentieth century theatre witnessed a severe change within the theatrical space across the globe, resulting in several new forms like expressionism, impressionism, political theatre, and experimental theatre along with the development of already established forms like realism or naturalism. While playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter or Tom Stoppard ushered in absurdism in theatre, Antonin

Artaud popularised the 'theatre of cruelty', John Osborne, Kingsley Amis introduced the 'Angry Young Man' movement and dramatists like Bertolt Brecht and his followers pioneered a new form of social drama. While in the European world, theatre went through a series of multiple changes and the playwrights put their sincere effort to give voice to the marginalised, deprived section of the society, depicting the oppression, tyranny and subjugation imposed by the upper-class; the Eastern world was no behind, specially the theatre of Bengal. The IPTA movement and the playwrights like Utpal Dutta, Sambhu Mitra, Bijan Bhattacharya or Badal Sircar invoked a new form of language in the contemporary Bengali theatre, challenging the previous texture and diction of Bengali drama.

This paper endeavours to focus on and analyse the treatment of violence in the plays by two major playwrights of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Edward Bond and Badal Sircar, with a deeper insight into the plays namely *We Come to the River* (1972) by Edward Bond and *Nadite* (2002) by Badal Sircar. Both the texts uncover the gruesome horror of the warfront in post-world war world. Being almost contemporaries by times, born in the chaotic time of the inter-war 'period'; both Sircar and Bond closely witnessed the terrifying predicament of human civilization, the horror of the nuclear war, the grotesque of the World War II and its unalterable effect on humanity.

'Violence' shares the most direct connection with 'power.' Irrespective of the ideology of politics, left or right, all the political theorists have unanimously considered 'violence' as a means of holding power, remembering the world-

famous remark made by the leftist leader Mao Tse Tung : "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" (II: 224). The idea very much reflects Karl Marx's notion of 'State', as State is regarded as the "instrument of oppression" by the ruling class, where violence is the ultimate demonstration of the exercise of 'power' holding its existence through "the instinct of domination." (qtd in Arendt : 35-36).

To understand the State machinery and the implementation of State-sponsored violence it is highly necessary to comprehend and identify with how the State works. According to Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser the State operates through two significant State Apparatuses, namely Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). Althusser identifies that to continue the 'reproduction of means of production' the State needs 'reproduction of labour powers' which is dependent not only on skill or efficiency of the labourers but on the "reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'" (144). According to the Marxist proposition, the two levels that the society is constituted with are : 'base', i.e. economic base and 'super-structure', i.e. Law and order and ideology. While the Repressive State Apparatus constitutes government, administration, army, police, courts, prison etc., functioning 'by violence' or 'repression', the Ideological State Apparatus constitutes several institutions like school, college, church, family, political parties, trade-union, press, radio, television, literature, arts, sports

etc., functioning 'by ideology'. Nevertheless, Althusser shows how both the Apparatuses perform both by 'violence and ideology', as he has remarked:

This is the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly *by repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus.) For example, the Army and the Police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the 'values' they propound externally.

In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus.) Thus Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. (p. 167)

Based on the opera by German composer Hans Werner Henze, *We Come to the River*, a libretto by Edward Bond, the play opens up with a General dictating a report to be sent to the Emperor stating the news of their victory and asks the authority to appoint a "strong governor" to demolish all further "opposition":

**GENERAL. I** – deem it necessary that your majesty appoints a – strong governor to this – province so that all further – opposition is immediately crushed (p. 83).

The irony further intensifies as the Deserter, laments for the days left behind, life peeps through his reminiscence;

however, the soldiers do not seem to enjoy it, rather threaten him to stop this nonsense. Like all other soldiers, they are also nothing but representatives of the State. For centuries, war and the violence associated have been celebrated and glorified as a form of showing supreme courage, starting from all the ancient epics like *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* in classical literature or *Beowulf*, the first epic composed in English. The celebration persisted until from the outset of First World War, a new voice of consciousness emerged with the writings of Wilfred Owen, Sigfred Sasson, Isaac Rosenberg, known as anti-war poets, the ones who first put the effort to raise awareness against war depicting specifically how the State and the ones enjoying the power of authority use war as a machinery to realise their own agenda and ambition:

The State has always been, in fact, the organizer of the war of conquest, the dispenser of its fruits, and the reason for the existence of the dominating groups which profits by its enterprises – the cost of which is borne by the general body of society (Sorel : 161).

And the mass, specially the proletariat is used by the State as the tool to succeed, they are nothing but the 'cannon fodder' as Marx remarked. On the other hand, the 'struggle for existence' results in more violence to realise the 'survival of the fittest', as, while the old woman and her daughter search for the daughter's husband who went for the war, they also take away things from wounded or dead soldiers to make the both ends meet.

The play like other plays by Bond shows how the state rules through ISA and RSA. How it takes a common man and

puts him in uniform and makes him a tool to serve their purpose:

**YOUNG WOMAN**-Then they cut his hair and put him in a uniform. He looked so strange when he came to say goodbye. He stood in the door-way and tried to smile. But he looked so awkward. I cried. (p. 100)

The General who was once celebrated as the harbinger of peace and freedom, the lord 'protector', has now become the gravest enemy of the State once he has started resisting against State-sponsored violence. Even the doctor considers humanity as "symptoms of madness. Anxiety. Depression." (Bond, *We Come to the River* 104). On the other hand, the soldiers start refusing to obey the orders of the authority, but inflicting violence on their own, as it has become their only solace, the performance they have got mastered at:

*The OLD WOMAN jumps into the river with the CHILD. SOLDIERS run up and down the stepping stones and the river banks trying to see her in the river. They point and give staccato shouts.*

THIRD SOLDIER: There she is.

FOURTH SOLDIER. That's the child.

AIDE. Shoot them. (p. 104)

Bond shows that the violence is not restricted in war-front only, nor the hegemony or the greed for power. Even the mad people threaten the General for telling the truth that shatters their make-believe world of illusion:

**MAD PEOPLE** - He destroys our island! You take the river away! Kick him! Hit aim! Throw him in the river! (p. 108)

The second soldier in this play suffers from the paranoia of the crime committed

by him, he is both the executer and victim of the ISA:

**SECOND SOLDIER'S WIFE** - He got out of bed and stared through the window at the empty street. Since they took him away he has been silent. (p. 33)

The last scene of the play goes with parallel narrative, as on one hand, the dead people like the Old Woman and Young Woman and the Deserter create resistance to usher in a better tomorrow for the child, on the other hand, the Mad People create their own opposition. They drown the General - the General gets his punishment after he has gained the true insight, after he has started fighting for humanity, after he has become the rebel; much like the king of *Lear*, the plays end in a pretty Bondesque manner:

**MAD PEOPLE** - Drown him. Drown. Drown. Let the tide carry him out. Wash him away. Hide him under the river...Wash him away (p. 121).

*Nadite*, an adaptation of Edward Bond's *We Come to the River*, originally composed in 1980 and revised in 1992, and first produced in 2002, portrays the brutality of war, the grim reality of state-sponsored violence. Though the primary adaptation began much earlier, Sircar did not consider it presentable and the final production took its form after the Kargil war. In the 'Preface' of *Nadite*, Sircar has paid his due respect to Bond.

The play progresses almost in the same manner of *We Come to the River*. As the General dictates the message of victory to his Assistant, he never fails to be firm in ruling the soldiers:

**GENERAL** - Ask them to stop it. You need to be full ready. There is nothing called triumph, the rebel have not been finished yet (p. 8). (my trans).

The tragic effect of war and violence is aptly reflected in the songs of the village girl where Sircar, through this rural song questions the meaning of 'nation' and thus brings forth the difference between "nation" and "State":

**GIRLS-** You left me for saving the nation  
You left me alone  
Where is your nation?  
Where is my nation? (p. 18) (my trans).

On the other hand, we can see that the soldiers are threatened to be punished for talking during their job, which reminds one the first scene of *Lear* by Edward Bond, where Lear orders to shoot a workman as another worker dies since the axe accidentally falls from the former's hand. Like *We Come to the River* in this play too, an old woman and her daughter search for valuable things among dead and destruction in the backdrop of a war-torn world.

The tragic plight of the mother and the daughter and their pain and anguish finally compels the General to ponder over the futility of War. His sense of authority is gradually replaced by his sense of guilt and remorse for the crime committed by him so far on behalf of the State. Nevertheless, as the General starts inclining towards the cause of humanity, the cause of oppressed, the State tries its best to mask his transformation to prevail the dominance. Despite the General's forbidding, the Governor orders to shoot the Daughter, with the help of the rules made by General during his service to the Emperor:

**GOVERNOR-** This is your order only  
– before the war began. Spy,  
absconding soldiers, looters – all will  
be shot dead (p. 31) (my trans).

"The more the State loses power, the more it comes with greaver oppression" as the General voices on behalf of the victims, the subjugated, the General becomes the immediate enemy of the State – as a reward of serving the State for so long he is commanded to be made blind as soon as he becomes the resistance. The totalitarian State believes that it will attain unquestionable obedience from the people only by the means of inflicting fear, by means of terrorising its citizen:

**SOLDIER-**They are being taken away  
from streets and beaten – in the fort,  
in a cell, in the camp. They are being  
tortured the most. (p. 42) (my trans).

The State never wants its people to come across the truth, rather befools them with the help of ISA. The State wants the people to live in forever illusion, as it helps them to attain their purpose; the mad people are deliberately kept in fantasy so that they never think of revolution. Sircar, like Bond shows the multilayered hegemony, as it is not only restricted within the territory of State, or being exercised by the State only, every human being wants to exercise its power on the weaker one that renders him/her much satisfaction. Hence, when the General tries to bring the Mad People out of their illusion, they consider the General as their enemy, and decide to drown him. Like *We come to the River*, this play too closes with the pathos of the General's death as the Mad Men drown him into the river.

The philosophy behind war and violence is expressed in Sircar's own writing:

War has its own philosophy. We are  
fighting, we are winning in a battle –  
all these feel so good to utter... To win  
by fighting has been incorporated in

our mind with all its glory and romance...Since our very childhood we know that war is pride, war is valour. (Sircar : 247-249). (my trans.)

Almost the same attitude is reflected in the commentary section of Bond's *Lear*:

Our own culture is based on the idea that people are naturally violent. It is used to justify the violence and authoritarianism that saturate our state, although in fact it is the state that provokes violence and authoritarianism...(p. xxvi)

To conclude the discussion on violence one can fairly remember the significant remark by Hannah Arendt, "that every decrease in power is an open invitation to violence" (p. 87) and hence probably the only possible method of reducing violence is to reduce any form of discrimination and inequality.

Bond and Sircar, both being true socialist, consider it as their fundamental responsibility to question the injustice and use their theatre as weapon for resistance against all subjugation. Bond through his gruesome use of violence has unmasked the true facets of the society, for him one of the very basic tenets of our mind is "radical innocence" which is ultimately perished by "social contradictions":

We are born radically innocent, and neither animal nor human; we create our humanness as our minds begin to think our instincts. As we grow our radical innocence becomes embroiled in the social contradictions which turn our cities into armed camps in peace and ruins in war (Bond, *Bond Plays: 6* : 251).

Bond has showcased how the individuals are tempted to be violent by social neuroses, though the neuroses are

often undetectable. In plays like *The Pope's Wedding*, *Saved* and *Early Morning* or *Narrow Road to the Deep North* violence is no less disturbing and Bond's images are neither completely Brechtian, nor temperamentally Artaudian. Violence for Bond was probably an expression of a deep-seated anguish resulting from social and psycho-sexual problems that he witnessed in the contemporary world. Though Sircar has not use crude imageries and sharp dialogues like bond, rather reflects the misery and suffering emerged out of violence and takes refuge more in the pathos, his plays are the reflection of contemporary political violence and state-sponsored terrorism. The mechanisms built by society with the help of its sanctioned institutions or machineries create the opportunist mainstream, that on the other hand legitimise these institutions.

Bond and Sircar have challenged not only these state machineries or state-sponsored violence, but have used theatre to voice for this marginalised section of the society. Choosing political theatre as the means of protest, opposition and confrontation, both Edward Bond and Badal Sircar have addressed the crucial issues like social and political exploitation, class struggle, injustice and oppression inflicted by the state in their own theatrical space establishing the need for resistance and emergence of social consciousness.

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# Victimisation of Rajan and Other Democratic Violations : A Study of Violence During the National Emergency and Contemporary Kerala

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National Emergency (1975-'77), proclaimed as the "lawful suspension of the law" (Prakash, 2018, para. 18), was marked with usurpation of power and violation of constitutional ideas. It was characterized by the censorship of the press, the suspension of judicial independence and fundamental rights. Even though many have penned on how Emergency has scarred sovereignty, this study seeks to delineate its nature and impact in regional and individual dimensions as well as the present situation. This paper aims to analyse how the State worked as a "machine of repression" (Althusser, 1970, State section, para.1) and how it employed abjection by examining the instituted murder of Rajan during Emergency. It will also scrutinise the violent instances of democratic violations in contemporary Kerala.

## **Violence and its Consequences- Textuality and Experientiality :**

Violence is inherent in all systems of administration and democracy is not an exception, "democracies themselves generate the potential for violence - violence that appears ordinary in some instances, and exceptionally vengeful in others" (Chaturvedi, 2012, p.22); Postcolonial India witnessed twenty-one months of terror, from 25 June 1975 to 21 March 1977, when the government unanimously declared National Emergency (Prakash, 2018). The State was criticised for taking such an extreme action and replacing constitutional machinery with "repressive apparatus" (Althusser, 1970, The State Ideological Apparatuses section, para. 5) to 'discipline' the citizens in coercive means. For example, the government amended and used Maintenance

of Internal Security Act (MISA), 1971 rampantly as “anti-people law” (“Reports from the States”, 1978, p. 1660). These kinds of authoritarian interventions will be examined here through the theoretical framework of abjection. Kristeva (1984), in her work *Powers of Horror* discusses ‘abject’ as “the jettisoned object” (p.2). In establishing a hierarchical self, what the State considers as the ‘abject’, “what disturbs identity, system, order” (p.4), becomes crucial.

Following the actions of the Central government, Kerala Government initiated measures to suppress the opposing parties and the youth, the leading voices of resistance. The State misused the indomitable power that came with the Emergency provision to torture everyone who challenged the system, including the Naxalites. Naxalite hunts were intensified following the Kayanna Police Station attack in Calicut on 28 February 1976 by some discontented group. The anti-Naxalite team of the state police immediately set up an interrogation camp at Kakkayam in Calicut and anyone who was suspected to be a Naxalite was brought here and tortured. In this camp later referred to as a ‘Concentration Camp’ of the police department, the major torture method employed was *uruttal*<sup>1</sup> or rolling method (Warrier, 2004). The camp in fact turned out to be an ‘abject space’, for being an unofficial site for enacting both physical and psychological terror “beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable” (Kristeva, 1984, p.1).

It is believed that *uruttal* led to the death of K. Rajan, a B. Tech student at the Regional Engineering College (REC), Calicut. Even though he was arrested as a

Naxalite suspect, neither such an affiliation was proven<sup>2</sup>, nor was his corporeal evidence found after being taken to the camp by the police. The Habeus Corpus writ, Prof. Eachara Warriar. the Government of Kerala, filed on 25 March 1977, was the first in Post-Emergency Kerala (Warier, 2004), and the ‘Missing Case of Rajan’, is one of the infamous cases in the history of Kerala, an ignominy to the projected higher political consciousness of the state and it concretises the terror and deception propagated by the State during Emergency.

The study proceeds through two texts on the victimisation of Rajan - *The Memories of a Father* (2004) written by Rajan’s father, Prof. T. V. Eachara Warriar, and the Malayalam film, *Piravi* (*The Birth*), produced by S. Jayachandran Nair and directed by Shaji N. Karun, released in 1989. The book is dedicated to those who were tortured in Emergency, “The struggle against such brutalities had to begin with Kakkayam camp after the Emergency. I should not leave the new generation to that wooden bench and the rolling” (p.71). The film is loosely based on Rajan case and fictitious names such as Raghu and Raghava Chakyar represent Rajan and Warriar, respectively. *Piravi* won the Best Feature Film Award, Best Director and Best Actor Awards in the National Film Awards of 1989.

Both the works portray waiting as prime motif and manifest the image of an aged father sitting meditatively on an armchair at the verandah waiting for his son. In the memoir, Warriar writes, “I always asked my wife to keep apart a bowl of rice and a plantain leaf for him. He may step in any time. He may be hungry. There

should be rice ready at home for him. Yes, he will come back. Sure, he will” (p.6). Similarly, in the film, when his daughter, Malathy, discourages the father from waiting, he furiously replies, “What? No need to wait? Then why I am his father? Why she is his mother? Why are you, his sister? And telling not to wait” (1:30:08). The father-figure attributes the meaning of his life to the ‘meaningless’ waiting, repeated on a routine basis, as in Samuel Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot*, as an endless pursuit, ultimately, an absurdity.

The memoir and the film adopt different ways to articulate memories about Rajan. The memoir includes pictures of Rajan and tries to actualise Rajan to the readers. Conversely, the film never shows the face of Raghu, and the character is only portrayed as the subject in others’ memories which can be considered as an attempt to combine anonymity and familiarity to create the impression that anyone can be victimised. By the end of the film, the father is depicted to be disillusioned and conversing with an imaginary Raghu (1:39:32). He is portrayed as a fragile old man who fearfully ignores the arrest of Raghu reported in newspaper (0:43:51). The minister and Inspector General are shown to lie to him about his son, and he believes what they told him. When Malathy raises her concern on their response, he says, “lie? For telling lie, do they put uniform and sit there” (1:15:25). His innocence contradicts as well as intensifies the manipulative nature of politics and bureaucracy. As opposed to this, the actual Warriar went on to do everything possible to find his son and seek justice for him until his last breath, “It was an Odyssey from then on...” (p.66). The memoir ends with Warriar’s anguish

for torturing his son, “Why are you making my innocent child stand in the rain even after his death? Let the rain lash inside and drench me” (p.74). Storm is a recurring presence in the film too. *Piravi* begins with a wild wind, prophesying the upcoming storm; the tragic loss of Raghu and the eventual predicament of the family (0:01:54).

Several victims had to live with the firsthand experiences and memories caused by the Emergency camp. Kunnel Krishnan, an *uruttal* survivor of Kakkayam camp says, “When my grandson sits on my thighs, it still pains” (Meethal, 2020, para.14). These instances of brutality continued even after Emergency. As per the data of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), “the number of police custodial deaths in Kerala has witnessed over a hundred per cent rise in 2018-19 from 2017-18” (Kanth, 2020, para.3).

Autopsy report and testimonies reveal that custodial torture resulted in the death of Sree Jithin 2018; the corporeal bruises and injuries indicate him being subjected to *uruttal* (Mathrubhumi, 2022). Prabhavathi amma, mother of Udayakumar, who died in police custody in 2005, asks “Even if someone did commit a crime, the proper way is to ensure that the law takes its course. Who gave them the right to beat him up?” (Balan, 2021). All these victims belong to lower strata of society which exposes the hierarchical attitude of the perpetrators of violence towards vulnerable sections, and the fact that police, when convicted for these cases, get the support of their colleagues and the system, often engage in crimes in the belief that they transcend the law (Balan, 2022).

All these are punctuated by blatant violation of human rights, the repressive functioning of State, and rendering the people as 'abject'. These instances negate narratives on National Emergency that state, "The twenty-one months is sequestered as a thing in itself" (Prakash, 2018, para.2) and the repetitiveness of the incidents challenges the subjective position of citizenship and agency in the democratic society.

### Conclusion :

The National Emergency is a reminder of Rajan and his father's unending legal struggle for justice in Keralites' cultural memory. Institutions of the state are constitutionally obliged to ensure security and justice to all citizens alike. The instances discussed above problematise the very basic values of constitutional system as their modus operandi in specific cases and contexts are concerned, which should de facto serve as a pointer to further mishaps. That way the paper intends to underscore serious concerns in terms of human rights discourse as it discusses how dominant and arrogant acts contradict the foundational values and ethics of the democratic and judicial system. As this study is limited to Kerala, further research can be done focusing on other regions and events associated with the manipulation of power and the subtle manoeuvring at political levels for rigid and ulterior purposes.

### Notes :

1. Policemen would roll a heavy log on the thighs of the victim lying on the bench with so much force and so long that muscles would get separated from the bones, and eventually, the skin would be imprinted on the log. After

this, the victim would be unable to stand or walk and suffer immense pain throughout his life (Meethal, 2020).

2. According to testimonies, Rajan hadalli by- when the Kayanna Police Station attack occurred, he was participating in D-zone inter-college fest (Calicut university) at Farook College (Warrier, 2004).

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# Violence in the Novel : Starry Nights by Shobha De in the Contemporary Indian Society

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## **Introduction :**

Shobha De is a distinguished Indian English author. Both as a journalist and a novelist, she fearlessly explores women's psychology, marriage, violence, social and sexual relationships and other intricate aspects of human existence. Throughout her works, De personifies the challenges faced by countless Indian women, positioning herself among the modern-day female writers who boldly express their thoughts and shed light on the plight of women as victims of the violence in society. Violence is generally understood as the use of physical force or power with the intention to cause harm, damage, or exert control over others. It can manifest in various forms and contexts, and its impact can be both physical and psychological, such as – Physical, Sexual, Domestic, Emotional or Psychological and Verbal Violence.

This paper explores themes of women as victims of contemporary society, marriage, patriarchy, the quest for identity, and the struggle for survival and marginalization, as they manifest in De's novel

“Starry Nights.” It aims to trace the emergence of the “new woman” and investigate the factors that contribute to the transformation in the psyche of Indian women, as they redefine their identities and carve out meaningful paths in their lives.

## **Discussion :**

Shobha De, an acclaimed Indian writer, is renowned for her captivating storytelling and insightful observations on contemporary Indian society. De's novels are characterized by their bold narratives and unflinching portrayals of the human experience. Through her work, she offers a nuanced perspective on the changing landscape of India, capturing the struggles and aspirations of individuals navigating a rapidly transforming society. She works with women from Bombay's upper middle class and the upper class of Bombay. Her work is characterized by a strong focus on modern women's lives and the issues they confront on a daily basis, making the incorporation of a feminist perspective a vital component of her work. It is clear from her stories that she places a heavy

focus on the characters' desire for a sense of meaning in their lives, their sense of self, and their unfulfilled emotional lives.

Shobha De's *Starry Nights*, caused quite a stir in the literary community due to the very candid depiction of sexual assault and exploitation that is depicted. In terms of its core themes, it focuses on issues relating to the subjugation of women, violence perpetrated by males, and societal taboos. "Starry Night" is not just a novel about fame and fortune; it is a poignant exploration of the human spirit, resilience, and the pursuit of happiness. Shobha De's profound insights, combined with her engaging narrative style, create an unforgettable reading experience that lingers long after the final page is turned.

#### **Violence in starry nights :**

In the novel "Starry Nights," violence emerges as a significant and recurring theme. This theme is explored through a diverse range of characters, each of whom has endured various forms of violence throughout the narrative. The author delves into different manifestations of violence, presenting a comprehensive examination of its impact on individuals within the story.

Aasha Rani's experiences in the novel vividly depict the multifaceted nature of violence and its pervasive presence in her life. She carries the indelible marks of physical violence, enduring excruciating pain and enduring the trauma inflicted upon her by Akshay Arora. In a particularly distressing incident, she attended an uninvited party to confront Akshay in front of numerous witnesses, including his wife. Despite her presence being unwelcome, she persisted in expressing her grievances. However, Akshay responded with a deplorable act of physical aggression,

repeatedly slapping her in front of everyone, leaving her physically and emotionally shattered on the floor. During this, not a single person intervened to stop the violence. Despite the party being packed with attendees, including celebrities, producers, and media personnel, everyone seemed to relish the spectacle orchestrated by Akshay. Shockingly, no one stepped in to put an end to the brutality. Instead, they passively watched as she was mercilessly beaten, treating it as a mundane occurrence. This brutal display of physical violence inflicted lasting wounds on her, both in her body and her mind. The beatings and assaults she endured serve as stark reminders of the pain she endured at the hands of Akshay. The public humiliation and the public nature of the assault magnify the psychological impact, leaving her with deep emotional scars.

In yet another horrifying incident of violence, Akshay unleashed his fury upon Aasha Rani inside a vanity van. As the brutal beating ensued, the people on the set could hear the chilling sounds of her screams and the disturbing commotion. However, in a display of apathy, only her mother showed concern and made the effort to open the gate of the vanity van, hoping to rescue her from the clutches of Akshay. Seizing this opportunity, he cunningly manipulated her, convincing her to distance herself from her own mother. This unfortunate turn of events left her isolated and vulnerable, entirely at the mercy of Akshay. The scene depicted a grave lapse of humanity, where the bystanders chose to remain silent, unwilling to intervene and put an end to the violence unfolding before them. The indifference of those present only served to perpetuate her suffering, leaving her to endure the brutal aftermath of Akshay's

aggression while grappling with the profound loneliness imposed upon her by his manipulative tactics.

Sexual violence serves as a distressing theme in the novel, affecting numerous characters within its narrative. The protagonist, Aasha Rani, tragically endures the devastating consequences of sexual violence throughout her life. At age 12, she is thrust into the dark world of the porn industry, where she becomes a victim of sexual exploitation and violation. This early trauma casts a long shadow over her future experiences. At 15, she finds herself entangled with Kishenbhai, who manipulates their relationship for his personal gain. In exchange for advancing her career and producing her film, he exploits her as a lover. He further exposes her to a seedy underbelly of parties and manipulates her into engaging in sexual encounters with influential individuals, using her as a means to establish connections. Tragically, this exploitation becomes normalized in her journey as an actress. She faces the distressing reality that her success in the cutthroat world of Bollywood is often contingent on compromising her dignity and engaging in intimate acts with producers, industry figures, and even co-stars. The novel highlights the systemic power imbalances and pervasive culture of exploitation that perpetuate this distressing norm.

Even after Aasha Rani's marriage, the cycle of sexual violence persists. Gopal Krishnan emerge as new perpetrator, subjecting her to further violation and abuse. His relentless pursuit extends to London, where he introduces her to a world of high society prostitution, compounding her traumatic experiences

and deepening her wounds. The cumulative impact of these relentless acts of sexual exploitation leaves her shattered and grappling with a profound loss of identity. The scars, both physical and psychological, shape her existence, and she struggles to reclaim her sense of self-worth amidst the haunting memories. The novel strives to raise awareness about the pervasive nature of sexual violence and the urgent need for societal change, support, and justice for survivors. By shedding light on her painful journey, the narrative confronts readers with the grim reality of sexual violence and calls for collective action to dismantle the systems that perpetuate such abuse. It emphasizes the importance of creating safe spaces, fostering empathy and empowering survivors to heal and rebuild their lives beyond the traumatic grasp of sexual violence.

In the novel, Sudha, a famous movie star, becomes embroiled in a dangerous situation when she is discovered to have used illicit funds for her film. When she refuses to repay the money, the underworld orchestrates a violent assault on her, resulting in the death of her driver. They pull her out of her van, cover her in oil, and set her on fire while the crowd remains silent out of fear. This incident highlights the people's reluctance to intervene due to their fear of the gangsters. The public's inaction perpetuates violence, driven by self-preservation and a fear of getting involved. Sudha suffers severe burns and faces immense challenges as she copes with the aftermath of the attack, including the psychological impact and societal judgment based on her disfigurement. This violence demonstrates how it can permanently change a person's life physically and mentally.



Emotional violence is vividly portrayed in the character of Aasha Rani. She endures a cycle of psychological abuse, humiliation, manipulation, and relentless criticism, which deeply affects their self-esteem, confidence, and ability to cultivate healthy relationships. She experiences a public humiliation orchestrated by Malini, the wife of Akshay, who resorts to name-calling and derogatory slurs, unjustly blaming Aasha while disregarding Akshay's infidelity. Similarly, Neelum, Jojo's wife, encounters a similar situation where she hired individuals to intimidate Aasha with violence and grave threat, even going so far as to threaten to harm her physically at intimate areas. The instances involving Aasha and Neelum underline the detrimental consequences of emotional violence, highlighting its damaging impact on individuals and their relationships.

#### **Conclusion :**

After examining the many facets of violence depicted by the various characters in Shobha De's *Starry Nights*, violence can never be justified in any way to overcome violence against women. It can be concluded that women must approach their lives with the same courage and equality as men do. They should speak out against any injustice and violence that has been done to them during their marriage. If the so-called institution does not work out for them, they must have the courage to leave on their terms. Instead of putting up with their husband's violence and dominance for an extended period, they might choose to live a life apart.

De's novel depicts women's battle towards a predatory, male-dominated culture in patriarchal society. However, her female character, Aasha, faced many battles within her family and in society. De's in the novel offers little salvation for the women who, in their desperate attempt to avoid male domination, violence and achieve individuality, collide with humiliation and are victimized anyway. Shobha De veered off the beaten path and conducted a thorough examination of the man-woman relationship in marriages. She made informative remarks that would benefit the ordinary Indian woman greatly. For instance, she recommended that there should be no interference from parents in married relationships. That couple should feel safe enough with each other to express themselves emotionally and sexually. She insists on acknowledging the sexual needs, and she advocates equality in terms of household work. At last, she recommends that a woman communicate with her husband early on in the relationship.

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# The Hidden Scars : Violence against Women in Bollywood Movies

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In the late 1910s, India experienced the first motion picture production in the country, with the release of the film “Raja Harish Chandra”. This film was introduced to the public by the deceased filmmaker Dada Saheb Phalke, widely known as the “Father of Indian Cinema”. Despite the fact that the film was a silent one, Phalke was unaware that he was creating an art form whose reverberations would echo around the globe. His initiative helped to propel the careers of many filmmakers in India. Since then, a great deal has changed and Indian filmmakers have achieved success in adapting this ever-evolving craft.

As today, Hindi Cinema, better known as Bollywood, is celebrating its 100+ years, it can be said that it has gone through many transformations. The female lead, in particular, in Bollywood has come in many shapes and forms. From the sacrificial mother, and a damsel in distress, to an independent woman who takes charge of her life; a new wave in the Bollywood movies can be seen. Female filmmakers and producers have taken the lead and we are now seeing more movies

where women are more than just accessories. Even though there are a few exceptions, this started the trend of watching women from a woman’s point of view, rather than the general male’s perspective that we have gotten used to. Women now have more depth, not just good or bad.

## **Violence against Women in Bollywood Movies :**

Presumably, the word ‘violence’ always involves physical wounds, but it is connected with mental suffering as well. So, to restrict the term ‘violence’ to a one- or two-line definition would be absurd as it covers multidimensional perspectives. Violence encompasses a variety of forms of violence, including emotional, domestic, sexual, and physical abuse, as well as threats. This form of violence has been prevalent in Indian society for a considerable period of time, and is still present in many parts of the country.

Violence has always been a magnet for film-makers around the world because it appeals to so many people. As the cinematic world continues to evolve its

themes, plot-lines, and ideas, many Bollywood films have used violence against women to address real-world social issues. In recent years, there have been a number of films released in the Indian film industry that explore the concept of domestic violence, as well as patriarchal oppression.

For example, movies like *Khoon Bhari Maang* (1988), directed by Rakesh Roshan, Mohit Suri's *Humari Adhuri Kahani* (2015), *Secret Superstar* (2017) by Advait Chandan, Anubhav Sinha's *Thappad* (2020) and the recently released *Darlings* (2022) directed by Jasmeet K. Reen, highlighted the reality of an abusive marriage and its effects on an individual. Aniruddha Roy Choudhury's, *Pink* (2016) actively challenges the preconceived notions that society has about independent women. *Bulbbul* (2020) by Clean Slate Films, is about patriarchal violence of child marriages. These Bollywood films perfectly capture the social reality of violence that many women face in their daily lives.

The ways these women are portrayed in the mentioned movies aren't the typical *bechari*. They know how to fight for their rights.

#### **The Hidden Scars :**

Violence is multi-faceted and all the forms of violence are linked to mental anguish. Where the physical scars of violence are visible and the wounds are visible, the psychological trauma suffered by the victims is often overlooked.

When it comes to movies, a director's skill can vary from one subject to another and still be able to convey the meaning she/he wants to convey. Movies are usually a great source of entertainment,

but some movies, if studied carefully, have the hidden meaning behind the things that are left unsaid. Things that are left unsaid can still be understood through gestures and symbols. It can be seen that just like literature; movies have their own techniques and subtleties that define them.

This aim of this paper is to deal with two such Hindi movies, including *English Vinglish* (2012) and *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015), where domestic violence is shown without giving any hint of physical violence in the movies.

#### **English Vinglish (2012) :**

Almost a decade ago, Gauri Shinde presented before us Shashi Godbole (played by the late actress Sri Devi), a middle class female who was married, had two kids. Shashi is shown as an entrepreneur as she makes and delivers *laddoos* (a spherical Indian sweet dish). Shashi is constantly mocked by her husband and her daughter as she cannot speak English. As the movie opens, we see she prepares a cup of tea for herself but gets interrupted twice to attend her mother-in-law and her husband. When Shashi is at home, some of the shots taken of her by the director are from behind the bars of the window, symbolising that she is somewhere trapped in the household chores. We further see that her husband, Satish, does not share the same amount of excitement about her business. Shashi's daughter, Sapna, is also embarrassed by her mother as she speaks to the principal of her convent school in Hindi.

Shashi finds out about the English language teaching class while she is in New York for her niece's wedding. She receives praise for being a "entrepreneur" right from the start of her class. She

practically rebrands Shashi by using the word “entrepreneur” again and over, and it also introduces a new phase in her character growth. This new-found confidence can be evident in Shashi’s powerful dialogue with Laurent, her classmate, as they explore the role of gender in culinary responsibility; Shashi ironically remarks, *Mard khana banaye toh kala hai. Aurat banaye, toh uska farz hai*[01:07:00- 01:07:50] that roughly translates Cooking is an art that men practise. But when a woman cooks, it’s her responsibility.

In one of the film’s scenes, her husband makes fun of her in front of a group of guests by remarking that she “*was born to do laddoos*” [01:4:05 – 01: 46:27]. He tries to convince Shashi that he was praising. His intention was to demean her in front of the guests, firstly by referring to her as an incompetent who could only do laddoos, and secondly by speaking to her in a language that she did not comprehend in order to make her feel demeaned. As he uttered these words, Shashi’s expressions changes from happy to embarrass.

Violence, when committed intentionally or unintentionally against one person in a household, can have a detrimental impact on the mental health of the individual. As a result, domestic violence in this context cannot be physically observed but can only be understood and felt. Gauri Shinde has dealt with the reality of women’s place in domestic and social life in many parts of India, where women are treated as tools or property owned by men.

#### **Dil Dhadakne Do (2015) :**

The multi-starrer film *Dil Dhadakne Do* (DDD), directed by Zoya Akhtar, tells

the story of a typical Indian family. The plot of the film centers around the events that occur within the Mehra household. It illustrates how the traditional distinctions between men and women, as perceived by society, lead to an imbalance in the spheres of influence between men and women.

At the beginning of the film, we are introduced to the dysfunctional Mehra family. Kamal Mehra (Anil Kapoor), a millionaire and a narcissist who never misses a chance to brag about his self made business. Neelam (played by Shefali Shah), his wife, is completely ignored by him and spends all her time socializing with her friends. Mehra family has a daughter and a son, Ayesha (Priyanka Chopra Jonas) and Kabir (Ranveer Singh). Ayesha is married to Manav Sangha (Rahul Bose). Kabir (Ranveer Singh), being the son or the ‘heir’ is forced by his parents to take up the responsibilities of AYKA industries.

Starting with the couple Neelam and Kamal Mehra, it can be seen that there are many differences between them. In the media, they pretend to be the best couple because their whole life revolves around their fear of what other people think about them. The fact that they are going on a cruise with family and friends to celebrate a 30th wedding anniversary at a time when they are on the brink of bankruptcy shows how desperate they are to live up to the standards of the ‘perfect family’. Kamal’s rude behavior towards his wife and his infidelity has given birth to his wife’s insecurities that has triggered her eating disorder. For example, in one of the scenes where she sees him flirt with a girl on the boat, she goes to her room and eats the chocolate cake. It’s like she is literally venting her emotions.

Ayesha is an entrepreneur who sold jewellery to start her own travel company, which landed her in Forbes' top 10 entrepreneurs. Ayesha has to deal with a domineering husband as well as criticism from her mother-in-law, Smita P. Sangha (Zarina Wahab) for talking business over dinner and never staying at home. She interrupts the business conversation that is taking place between Ayesha and Kabir and says,

When I got married, I was so shy in front of my in-laws. Forget talking about business. I would barely be able to say 'yes' or 'no'. But things have changed now! (my tans, DDD, 11:50- 13:30)

In order to be an ideal woman, to be respected by the family, a wife is expected to set aside her aspirations, and should take care of the marital household and the children. Ayesha, who wants divorce from her husband, is expected to embrace motherhood as a solution to the problems between the couple. Both Neelam and Smita cannot comprehend that she is seeking a divorce due to a lack of love for her husband. Both of them are of the opinion that as long as a man can provide a decent standard of living for his family and is not violent, there should be no problem.

Manav, once proudly boasts in front of everyone that he is a progressive man because he has given permission to Ayesha to run her business. Then Sunny Gill (Farhan Akhtar), Ayesha's love interest, backs her. He states that women do not need to be given permission to do what they desire. Sunny inquires Ayesha's husband, as to why Ayesha needs his permission to run her business. Sunny immediately perceives this as a sign of his authority and control over Ayesha and notes that this does not constitute equality.

He states that this proves his point that women have yet to achieve equality.

### **Conclusion :**

Domestic violence or emotional abuse is a form of violence that can be perpetrated by those closest to the victim in a patriarchal culture. In both the movies it can be seen that the husbands be it Satish, Kamal or Manav are violent in psychological and emotional ways. Financial inequality is one of them. Another is the lack of active support seen in Satish and Manav in setting up the businesses of their respective wives. Third is belittling their partners. As we see that, Satish never misses an opportunity to make fun of Shashi's inability to speak English fluently. We also have Kamal, who constantly comments on his wife's eating disorders and weight. As patriarchal men, Satish, Kamal and Manav emotionally abuse their respective wives Shashi, Neelam, and Ayesha and make them feel inferior and repressed. During both the movies, one can clearly see feminist binaries like male vs. female and inferiority vs. superiority.

Movies and culture are interdependent. They both are mirror to society. As Bharti has stated, "Cinema is the medium of culture". With the evolution of female movements in India, the new generations of writers and directors have brought a fresh perspective to the Bollywood movies. They want the audiences to not only watch the movies but also read between the lines of the scenes.

It is difficult to make a single assessment of how female celluloid characters are portrayed in Indian films. Indian women are diverse in terms of religion, caste, class and socio-economic status. They also have

different wants and desires that affect their daily life. Therefore, it is wrong to assume that women are always portrayed in the same way in film. For example, both Shashi and Ayesha are independent women, but they belong to different social classes. Both of them are struggling to gain respect in their families, however, their methods of resolving the issue differ significantly. A female protagonist should be able to challenge established social norms.

The two films discussed in this paper are only two examples of such hidden forms of domestic violence that exist in our society. Where physical harm can be identified and remedied, psychological harm or mental distress can remain hidden. Through the use of such films, the directors have employed a creative approach to depict the domestic violence that most women experience in their daily family life.

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# Gender Violence – Patriarchal or Normative? Decoding Gender-related Violence in the Select Plays of Mahesh Dattani

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## **Introduction:**

*Gender is “violently policed” (Butler, 1999, p. xx).* – Judith Butler

Violence is integral to the socialization of gender but is mostly unrecognized in society. Violence is conceptualized in two ways - as an intense force and as a violation of human rights (Bufacchi, 2005, p. 195). The definition of violence has currently been extended beyond physical injury to psychological and emotional harm (Krug, 2002, p. 5). The concept of gender has also changed considerably over time. Gender is (mis) construed as the social process of categorization of the biological sex difference between men and women. Moreover, it is (mis) used to mean the various psychological behaviours, characteristics, and personality traits supposed to be produced by the biological difference between males and females. After the resurgence of women’s movements, feminist scholars disrupted this essentialist understanding of gender. Having pointed out the distinction between sex and gender, they explain that gender is a socially and culturally

constructed phenomenon while sex is a biological product (Richardson & Robinson, 2020, p. 10). In other words, gender is the social meaning and value attached to the biological sex difference. In her book, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir famously articulates, “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (1956, p. 273). Feminist scholars also criticize the gender division that privileges men over women (Richardson & Robinson, 2020, p. 15). They prominently conceptualize the issues of gender inequality and gender-based violence against women and girls prevalent in patriarchal structures of society. With the concept of “gender-based violence”, feminists generally refer to the issue of male violence against women and girls. They make use of the lens of patriarchy, denoting the system of male dominance and female subordination (Shepherd, 2019, p. 116). They claim that gender violence is the manifestation and mechanism of patriarchal power. Patriarchy exercises gender violence against women and girls to retain its power and control over them in families.

The concept of gender was further developed in the 1990s by Judith Butler, who asserts that gender is performatively enacted (1999, p. 34). It is interminably produced through cultural performances, practices, and discourses. She also dismantles the difference between sex and gender, affirming that both sex and gender are socially and culturally constructed phenomena (p. 46). Sex is regarded as the foundation upon which gender is superimposed. The body is not free from social interpretation but is culturally put into the sex classes of male and female. Moreover, she questions the idea that heterosexuality is 'stable' and 'natural'. She opines that it is the cause and effect of gender performativity (p. 58).

Deconstructing the fixed, coherent, and stable categories and identities of sex, gender, and sexuality, Butler speculates on the notion of normative violence, underlining the violence of gender norms (p. xxi). She defines normative violence as the naturalization and stabilization of a putative norm. According to her, a norm becomes violent and, in turn, legitimizes violence when it is naturalized and portrayed as being natural, objective, ahistorical, and universal instead of being cultural, constructed, and contingent. Normative violence is also defined as the violence of restriction. Butler finds violence in the restrictions imposed on being-when norms tell us what we can and cannot do at the most personal and intimate levels of life and we are not allowed to become what we might be (p. 5). She observes that gender norms are predetermined and explains how gender norms become enforced not just by being enacted once or by one individual, but by being

performed collectively and repeatedly. Gender norms establish a set of actions for individuals and define how everyone should act and behave in a particular way. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler illustrates how the subject is formed through social norms (2004, p. 2). She argues that rules, regulations and norms set out the meanings and limits of physical and social life. Individuals are not allowed to perform anything independently and become the subject of normative violence. Gayle Rubin also declares that gender roles and norms imposed on women are arbitrary and oppressive (Reiter, 1975, p. 157-210).

Mahesh Dattani is one of the most serious and prolific contemporary Indian playwrights writing in English. He is the first Indian English dramatist to win the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for his work, *Final Solutions and Other Plays*. To quote Alyque Padamsee, "At last we have a playwright who gives sixty million English-speaking Indians an identity" (Dattani, 2000, back cover). He is also a theatre artist, director, and dancer. In his plays, he has highlighted numerous invisible social issues in modern Indian urban society. In *Dance Like a Man*, *Tara*, and *Seven Steps Around the Fire*, he has unravelled the issues of gender and violence prevailing in Indian society. The paper primarily focuses on these three plays by Dattani. Several scholars have conducted a feminist study of the texts and unearthed the theme of gender discrimination in the plays. Taking the framework of patriarchy, the researchers have studied how patriarchy sets out certain gender roles and creates gender hierarchy to perpetuate its power and control over the characters and legitimize



the system of male dominance and female subordination. The present research attempts to investigate the question of gender violence in the plays through the lenses of feminist and gender studies. It seeks to examine the prominent causative factors of gender-related violence as reflected in the plays. This study strives to explore whether gender violence is rooted in the patriarchal power structures of society or is naturalized through gender performativity and becomes part of the human experience.

#### **Analysis and Discussion :**

Mahesh Dattani's play *Dance Like a Man* revolves around the life of a middle-class young man named Jairaj, who fails to follow his passion for dancing. Amritlal, the father of Jairaj, does not want his son to be a dancer. Being a rich businessman and the sethji of the town, Amritlal exercises patriarchal dominance and control over the life of Jairaj. He does not permit Jairaj and Ratna to continue dancing at home. He believes that dancing is a woman's profession and that a man cannot establish his career by dancing. He compels his son to be a businessman like him. He also controls Ratna to assist him in moulding the character of Jairaj. In the play, Jairaj is thus forced to abandon his passion for dancing. He bears intense emotional pain and becomes an alcoholic. A feminist reading of the play thus observes that Jairaj undergoes gender violence perpetrated by the patriarchal power structures of society.

A more critical study of the play, however, foregrounds a few questions. For feminist scholars, patriarchy suggests a system of male dominance and female subordination. They formulate the idea of

gender-based violence primarily to divulge the problem of violence against women and girls in society. Besides, patriarchal power is presumed to be maintained by the male members over the female individuals. Why is Jairaj, then, being a male member of the family, subjected to gender-based violence? bell hooks favours the term, "patriarchal violence" instead of terms such as "domestic violence", "male violence", and "gender-based violence," proclaiming that violence is also based on complex power relations, with low-income and less powerful men who belong to specific indigenous or socially excluded ethnic groups being more likely to experience it at the hands of powerful men (2015, p. 61-62). According to her, patriarchal violence, therefore, includes the instances of violence against less powerful and low-income men in the patriarchal power structures of society. Either we can be satisfied with bell hooks's observations mentioned above or we can dig deeper into the question to seek out whether gender-related violence against Jairaj is hastened by something else.

Influenced by the post-structuralist theories of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler deconstructs the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality. She ideates gender as a performative that is fashioned through the repetition of certain acts and practices within a normative heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1999, p. 191). She further proposes the conception of normative violence, suggesting how gender is violently constructed as a norm that again enacts violence (2004, p. 206). In the play, Amritlal believes that dancing is the

profession of a female person. He allows the wife of Jairaj to pursue her passion for dancing but prevents his son from accompanying her. According to him, it is 'abnormal' for a male person to be a dancer by profession. He directs Jairaj to be a 'man' of society and to conform to what is expected of him as a male member of the family: "But there comes a time when you have to do what is expected of you" (Dattani, 2000, p. 415). So, the play represents how Jairaj is restrained by gender norms and is compelled to perform a particular category of gender in a heteronormative society. Amritlal also forbids Jairaj to keep long hair like his guruji because it is against gender norms: "All I'm saying is that normal men don't keep their hair so long" (p. 417). Jairaj is even not permitted to dress like a woman because it will transgress the gender norms predetermined for a male and a female. His father threatens: "If he grows his hair even an inch longer, I will shave his head and throw him on the roads" (p. 418). As Jairaj is not allowed to violate gender norms to pursue his passion for dancing and is humiliated by both his father and his wife as a "spineless boy", he endures deep emotional angst and turns into a drunkard. The play thus discloses that gender-related violence, which victimizes Jairaj, is also normalized through gender performativity in heteronormative structures of society.

Dattani's next play, *Tara* tells the tale of the Siamese twins - Tara and Chandan who are born conjoined and later separated physically and emotionally. The play highlights the gender inequality between men and women in society. The twins are born with three legs. The

majority of the third leg belongs to the female child, Tara. But their patriarchal grandfather manipulates the operation, and the third leg is provided to the male child. It thus portrays the female child as a causality of gender-based violence in patriarchal structures of society. However, the play eventually discovers how Tara and Chandan turn out to be victims of normative gender violence. Chandan is indifferent to business, but his father orders him to come to the office. Chandan's father decides that Chandan will go abroad for higher studies. However, Patel is not concerned regarding the career of Tara. Chandan proposes to his father that Tara can be a "great businesswoman" (p. 328). But Patel does not send her abroad for higher studies. As a girl, she is supposed to support her mother and perform gender normativity. Tara satirizes the gender roles that deprive her of certain rights and opportunities: "The men in the house were deciding on whether they were going to go hunting while the women looked after the cave" (p. 328). Moreover, Patel condemns Chandan for assisting his mother in knitting because he believes a man is not expected to do feminine house chores. Like Jairaj, Chandan is also regulated through gender norms. Thus, the play reflects the ways Tara and Chandan suffer from normative violence occasioned by gender performativity.

Dattani's play, *Seven Steps Around the Fire*, concerns the marginalized position of transgender people, also known as hijras, in Indian society. The story centres around the murder of a transgender woman named Kamla. Uma Rao, a research scholar working on the status of hijras in India, visits a jail to meet

Anarkali, another transgender woman who is falsely accused of being the murderer of her sister, Kamla. Like women, transgender people have no economic independence in a patriarchal society. Anarkali cannot afford money for her bail and requests earnestly that Uma help her to get released from jail. As transgender people do not follow their biological sex identity, they are excluded from society and forced to live as separated people, working either as prostitutes or beggars. Uma exposes the miserable situation of the hijras: “The two events in mainstream Hindu culture where their presence is acceptable - marriage and birth - ironically are the very same privileges denied to them by man and nature” (p. 11). The hijras are not considered human beings. Kamla is murdered, but the police officer is not concerned about it. Instead, the police have incriminated Anarkali, another transgender woman who is the sister of Kamla. Without any evidence, She is beaten several times and behaved inhumanly in jail. Uma Rao’s husband, Suresh Rao, the police superintendent, cautions her about the hijras: “They are all just castrated degenerate men. They fought like dogs every day” (p. 10). It manifests how transgender people are simply dehumanized as animals.

Both Anarkali and Champa know who has murdered their sister, Kamla. However, they are not revealing it to the police because they know very well that the police will not believe them, especially since the criminal is a powerful minister. When Uma entreats them to tell her husband to arrest the genuine suspect, Anarkali discloses the precarious situation of the hijras: “One hijra less in this world

does not matter to your husband” (p. 35). However, they make it clear in the marriage ceremony that Subbu was in a love relationship with Kamla. Subbu loved Kamla and married her secretly. Subbu’s father, who is a minister, did not accept his son marrying a hijra woman. He burned Kamla to death so that his son would forget her and marry another woman. In the marriage ceremony, when Subbu becomes emotional seeing the picture of his secret love marriage with Kamla and is about to commit suicide, his father confesses his guilt for killing Kamla: “It was a mistake. I am sorry, son” (p. 40). However, the minister is not arrested for the loss of the lives of two young people, Kamla and Subbu. Uma Rao has penned down: “The case was hushed up and was not even reported in the newspapers. Champa was right. The police made no arrests. Subbu’s suicide was written off as an accident. The photograph was destroyed” (p. 42). It exposes how patriarchy, which is “characterized by the presence of Suresh, Mr Sharma, the invisible vice-chancellor, and the Deputy Commissioner” (Multani, 2007, p. 148), exerts gender violence against women and transgender persons in society. Although Uma is an educated woman in the play, patriarchy completely dominates her. Uma’s subordination is uncovered while she is talking with Anarkali in jail. Uma confesses, “I don’t have any power” (Dattani, 2000, p. 13). Anarkali is right when she is commenting about Uma: “Maybe you are unhappier than I am” (p. 14). Thus, the feminist study of the text discovers that both women and transgender are “gendered subalterns” (Agarwal, 2015, p. 31) subjected to

physical and psychological violence in the patriarchal power structures of society.

A feminist understanding of the play, *Seven Steps Around the Fire* fails to offer a complete explanation of all issues associated with the question of gender violence against transgenders in the play. Kamla is a transgender woman who loves Subbu. Kamla and Subbu have secretly married each other. Why is Kamla not accepted by Subbu's father as a socially validated spouse? Moreover, why are transgender people regarded as subhuman beings? Butler opines that both sex and gender are culturally and historically constructed, and heterosexuality, which divides people into two gender categories, is considered the standard form of sexuality. Transgenders are "those persons who cross-identify or who live as another gender but who may or may not have undergone hormonal treatments and sex reassignment operations" (Butler, 2004, p. 6). They, therefore, strive to escape from the "system of binary gender" (Chambers, 2019, p. 65) which has been naturalized within the heterosexual spectrum. Gender normativity, however, predefines the meaning of our body and the nature of our sexuality. Kamla, Anarkali, Champa, and all transgender women are presumptively male within the heteronormative frame. As Suresh remarks: "They are all just castrated degenerate men" (Dattani, 2000, p. 10). As Kamla, Anarkali, Champa, and other transgender people do not obey the system of the gender binary that is expected of them, they are unrecognized as human beings and excluded from society. The play, thus, discloses how transgender people suffer psychologically from the violence of exclusion regularised

through heteronormative notions of sex, gender, body, and desire.

### **Findings and Conclusion :**

The paper observes that violence is inseparable from the normalization of gender in society. It unravels that gender-related violence is both patriarchal and normative in form. It is naturalized in simultaneous, overlapping, and complex ways uncovered through different perspectives of feminist and gender studies. Gender violence is the exercise and expression of patriarchal power that victimizes women, girls, and less powerful men. It is also the naturalization and stabilization of gender norms within the heterosexual matrix. Gender norms regulate the lives of individuals like Jairaj, Tara, Chandan, Kamla, Anarkali, and Uma, force them to act in a particular way, and naturalize gender violence against them. The research further reveals that women and girls alone are not victims of gender violence. Men, women, and transgender people are all subjected to the violence of patriarchal power relations and heteronormative practices. Moreover, the paper discloses violence as a part of the human experience of being gendered within patriarchal and heteronormative cultural frames. It concludes that it is urgent to undo gender to eliminate the quotidian experiences of violence normalized in a heteronormative patriarchal society.

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# Gendered Violence and Silence in Partition Narratives : A Study of Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence*

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In *The Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935), Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) first used 'subaltern' a term meaning a person of lower rank as a code for the word 'proletarian.' The term has been appropriated and used by the Subaltern Studies Collective in their attempt to unearth aspects of non-elitist and non-national historiography with an aim to plunge into 'this historiographical contest over the representation of the culture and the politics of the people' (Prakash 1994, 1476). Guha reinforces that.

*"Historical writing of this kind (colonial list and national bourgeoisie historiography) and fails to acknowledge, far less interpret, the contribution made by the people on their own, that is, independently of the elite to the making and development of this nation."*

-Guha (1982,3)

The subaltern studies collective is an attempt to re-work and re-frame subaltern historiography has dealt with the 'politics of the people' which ran 'parallel to the domain of elite politics in which the

principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities or the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of laboring population and the immediate strata in town and country that is, the people' (Guha 1982. 4) The concentrated effort and the elaborate research into aspects of peasant insurgencies and movements, tribal revolts, subaltern consciousness, trade unions and other aspects of subaltern life in colonial India, undertaken by the subaltern studies collective has influenced aspects of literary and anthropological representations of subalterns in Indian English writing. Dipesh Chakrabarty has demonstrated that subaltern studies 'which began as a specific and focused intervention in academic discipline of (Indian) history has achieved a profound effect on postcolonial studies because 'Subaltern Studies can be seen as a postcolonial project of writing history' (Chakrabarty 2000,467). Talking about the influence of Subaltern approaches Khair points out that 'ranging from Rushdie's consciously hybrid ones to novel based in India and

concentrating on the local 'novels as Vikram Seth's *'A Suitable Boy'*, 1993. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, 1997; and even lesser extent Kamala Markandaya's *'Nectar in a Sieve*, 1954' Indian fiction has been evidently impacted by the Subaltern Studies approach in the matters concerning documentation of ritual realities and subaltern resistances. (Khair 2005, 314)

Recent representations of subalternised experiences also dwell upon women's accounts of violence, migration, and trauma in narratives of dislocation of women, especially in narratives of mass migration in South Asia. Violence against women comprises a variety of abuses committed against them throughout their lives. The United Nations defines violence against women as a gender-based abuse that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or distress to women, including threats of these acts, punishment, or disproportionate deprivation of liberty, regardless of whether they occur in public or in private (UNGA, 1993). This statement points out violence as acts that cause or have the potential to cause harm, and this gender-based definition emphasizes that it is rooted in inequality between women and men.

Not only through literary fictionalized writings, even though social commentary, political writing, feminist reflections, including ethnographic and artistic work, as well as an interview and poems have also been read to study the subalternised existence of women. Analyzing this discourse, one can assess the extent and impact of violence and resistance of women in South Asia, especially in context of partition of 1947 and how the

complexity and traumas of violence intersect with sexuality and gender identity, war and armed conflict, transnational activism, socio-cultural and historical dynamics, discrimination of trans women, and third world feminism in general. Reading Urvashi Butalia's *The Other side of Silence*, one can examine the diverse theoretical and contextual accounts/ interviews and personalized monologues of women survivors of partition of Indian sub-continent.

Violence, a complex, self-directed, interpersonal, collective, and structural term, alludes to the workings of the power structure of certain social groups on others. Structural in this context, a term coined by Johan Galtung in 1969, refers to the avoidable constraints that society imposes on individuals and groups, preventing them from obtaining their basic requirements and attaining a standard of living that might otherwise be achievable. These restraints, which may be of a political, socioeconomic, religious, cultural, or legal nature, are typically imposed by institutions with authority over specific subjects (Lee, 2019, p. 123)

Women have always been regarded as the inferior sex or second sex, with no voice of their own, and therefore they have acquired a marginalized status in society. Because of their subalternised status, women in all events in history have been delegated to the margins, less heard, less captured, and their stories and narratives haven't been brought forth. In a similar manner, one can analyze the how the partition of 1947 resulted in the dissolution of the colonial power and led to the formation of two independent nations, India and Pakistan. During the

partition bloodshed and mayhem spread like wildfire, resulting in the separation of families, the orphaning of children, the kidnapping of women, and the massacre of entire trainloads. This form of forced displacement led to the uprooting of one's identity and traditions. This paper will view the greatest migration known to mankind, as a history of violence against women in which religious divide between two communities led to women being used as pawns in the national game of honor.

Keeping this theoretical mindset in mind, this paper will closely analyze the representation of gendered violence against women and how the brutality of violence has impacted their subalternised partition journeys in *The Other Side of Silence* by Urvashi Butalia. The non-fiction work depicts a saga of victimization, forced relocation, and the gruesome destruction of women's bodies and souls. Butalia documents unfiltered oral accounts of gender-based assault against women and the story of her own divided family. The bodies of women came to represent the strength of different communities and their vulnerability exposed the weakness of the male protectors. *"Twelve million people were displaced as a result of Partition. Nearly one million died. Some 75,000 women were raped, kidnapped, abducted, forcibly impregnated by men of the 'other' religion, thousands of families were split apart, homes burnt down and destroyed, villages abandoned. Refugee camps became part of the landscape of most major cities in the north, but, a half century later, there is still no memorial, no memory, no recall, except what is guarded, and now rapidly dying, in*

*families and collective memory."* (Butalia)

Butalia brings forth the idea that women had no agency of their own. Firstly, they were forcibly abducted from their homes and forced to live a false life in the form of sexual slavery while carrying the children of their abductors. If the men failed to protect the women of their community, it threatens their masculinity- *"thus rape is domination by men also domination of men"* (Khan 138). As an aftermath of partition, rehabilitation of women was carried out to return the women to their homelands. The decision to undergo rehabilitation was forced upon them by the authorities to keep up with the facade image of their righteousness. Even after being rehabilitated, they were forced to lead a life of normalcy while their cry for help was ignored again and again. The failure of these survivors to kill themselves has brought shame to their family and community. Due to the social convention of women's sexuality as a symbol of male pride, the women had to pay an unimaginable price as they were sexually assaulted by men of the other community in order to assert their power by humiliating the women and dishonoring their community as a whole. Therefore, the combination of physical violation and physical displacement rendered the subalternised women a site of violence.

According to Lily Mondal in her close analysis of *The Other Side of Silence*,

*"Women were brutalized during the partition, but partition histories do not represent these stories sufficiently. Butalia presents the alternative history during the*



*partition. She tries to fill the blank spots in history. The rudimentary needs of life were denied to women; they had no voice, no shelter and above all no safety... Women's rights were frequently violated in the pretext of protection, honour, or purity. They were brutalized to the extent that they became dumb-struck. They were silenced and treated as scraps. Their sense of belonging and citizenship was permanently contested. The partition history therefore remains difficult to forget."*

Women are coerced into becoming his wives, adopting his religion, and having children for their abusers. Pregnancy in a woman's life is considered a major milestone and the cause for celebration but for these victims of violence it was journey of shame and disgust. Rehabilitating pregnant women after the partition was a challenging problem for the authorities. In refugee camps, forced abortion, also known as "safaya," was practiced as a remedy. It served as a form of purification so that the women could be accepted back into their families. The government authorized funding for widespread abortions to be carried out throughout the country. Additionally, raped women were occasionally not accepted by their families and were forced into prostitution. Women were even killed and labeled martyred to save their honour and chastity. Their breasts were branded, and their bodies and genitalia were tattooed with triumphal slogans or religious symbols. The act of cutting off women's bosoms "*symbolically sever(ed) their role as potential nurturers*" and was a physical display "*to other men that these women were second hand*" (Menon 45). Deepthi

Bahri in her work reinforces Butalia's notion that mutilation and abuse of women's bodies dehumanizes them and leads to a 'social death.' In order to avoid the 'social death' women were beheaded by their own family members, "*I was clinging to him but when my father swung the kirpan perhaps the kirpan got stuck in her dupatta no one can say. It was such a frightening, such a fearful scene. Then my sister, with her own hand she removed her plait and pulled it forward and my father with his own hands moved her dupatta aside and then he swung the kirpan and her head and neck rolled off and fell there far away*" (Butalia 206). Butalia has brought forth various accounts where women willingly gave up their lives due to the fear of rape at the hands of the perpetrators. One such incident happened in Punjab where eighty women jumped into the well to escape physical assault. The inherent fear of being raped led to unaccountable honour killings during the partition of 1947. Butalia through her oral accounts compels the reader to think about the subalternised existence of women during partition and how did the survivors go on after facing such horrors?

In a society so focused on honor and remaining pure it was never accepted of women to talk about their troubles and suffering. Women were expected to play of the virgin girl, obedient wife, and a nurturer for her children. Her identity was only defined by her relationship to the men of the family and once that was severed, she was treated as an outcast by the society. Ritu Menon and Kamla Basin have conducted surveys and interviews with the victims of violence, especially women, as to how they were targeted to

shame and dishonor their respective communities. Basin and Menon, through their work, emphasize the ferocity of violence carried out against women and due to this suffer from shame-fear-dishonor syndrome due to beliefs inculcated in them that women are the epitome of chastity and are supposed to remain pure under all circumstances. Rape and violence against women came across as means of sending a message between both communities. Despite such extreme horrors combined with the subalternised existence of women are again subjected to a virtual death and a forced vow of silence. In *Borders and Boundaries*, the authors recognize how the community and men have tried to construct their identity through the possession of the female body. Their work has helped open our eyes to the gendered history of partition. In conducting their interviews with the common masses, one can see that all communities are victims of their respective government authorities. Thus, the perpetrators were mere puppets, with the government authorities acting as puppet masters. Simona Sarma claims that Butalia is, through her work, “opening the Pandora’s box of emotions” and bringing us a subalternised history of the 1947 partition because Butalia doesn’t see the victims as merely statistics but as victims who have experienced pain and suffering.

*“Talk of the martyrdom of women is almost always accompanied by talk of those women whose lives were saved, at the cost of those which were lost, and although there may not be any direct condemnation, it is clear that those who got away are in some ways seen as being inferior to those who ‘offered’ themselves up to death to save their religion.”*  
(Butalia 165-6)

Men have always justified their actions by holding up traditional Indian epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. According to Shibban Lal Saxena, who shared his views on the importance of rehabilitating women, “for the sake of one woman who was taken away by Ravana the whole nation took up arms and went to war” (Butalia 141). The plight of women during partition can be mirrored with that of Sita from the Indian epic, Ramayana. Just as Sita was abducted by Ravan these women were forcibly taken away from their homes, longing for Ram to come and rescue them from this nightmare which seems to be never ending. During the rehabilitation of women pamphlets were distributed across the nation about how families should accept women back with open arms as when Sita was abducted, she remained pure while being away from Lord Ram. In the eyes of the community, women are typically seen as Devi-like figures and as potential mothers, and any act of violence against them is an act of war against the entire community because a raped or kidnapped mother was unacceptable. Anita Desai has argued that women have been brought with teachings of mythology and how they are required to remain chaste and always worship their husband. So, standing up against abuse would be a form of rebellion and thus, they continue to suffer in silence. Therefore, the notion of women as the motherland has rendered them the primary target with no scope for redemption due to their marginalized status in society. These doubly marginalized victims were faced with the ultimate dilemma of death at the hands of their own kinsmen or rape and mutilation at the hands of others. Thus, rape became a tactic of war to taint other

communities and terrorize them into fear and submission.

Memory played a crucial role in revisiting partition narratives as, “*Selective amnesia and memory are at the root of the relationship between human beings and their history. This book pierces that amnesia, elicits buried memories, and lays the foundations for a more evolved relationship between human beings on this subcontinent and their histories of gendered and communal violence*” (Kavita Punjabi, Telegraph (Calcutta)). Anne Castaing in her work sheds light on the close relationship between emotions and memory and how they transform one’s narrative. Memory comes with its limitations and when one has gone through a traumatic experience, they tend to not revisit it or choose to remember it differently. As the collective memory of partition tends to overshadow the full extent of the human cost of partition, Butalia has done tremendous job in bringing forth that the partition of 1947 which is known as the greatest migration in history is not just a division of land based on religion but a saga of gruesome victimization, violence, forced silence, and suffering on both sides of the border. Urvashi Butalia adopts a sensitive and emotional narrative strategy as the means for a kind of subaltern expression of the history of violence against women. Also, one can say Butalia attempts to give voice to the subaltern, in response to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s fundamental question, “*Can the subaltern speak?*” Furthermore, it sheds light on the politicization of womanhood by looking closely at the silenced and subalternised victim. In conclusion, the paper is able to demonstrate how Urvashi Butalia’s

documentation of interviews has given the subaltern some agency. The ability to record their experiences in writing and orally has given the subaltern some agency.

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# The Graphic Violence in Indian Ott Platforms: A Critical Analysis of Its Representation and Impact

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## **Introduction :**

Over the last few years, Indian OTT platforms have gained immense popularity and have become a major source of entertainment for young people. These platforms offer a diverse range of content, including web series, movies, documentaries and short films. However, one issue that has been a topic of debate is the representation of violence on these platforms. From high-octane action sequences to graphic depictions of physical and sexual violence, OTT platforms have often been criticized for glorifying violence. In this paper, we will critically analyze the representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms and the impact it has on the viewers.

The representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms is not a new phenomenon. However, it has gained significant attention in recent times due to the gritty and raw storytelling that characterizes the industry. OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, ZEE5, and Hotstar have come under scrutiny for their portrayal of violence in shows and

movies. Some of the most popular Indian shows on these platforms, such as Sacred Games, Mirzapur, Pataal Lok, and Bard of Blood, have received both critical acclaim and criticism for their graphic violence. In Sacred Games, the protagonist, Sartaj Singh, is embroiled in a dangerous game of cat and mouse with a ruthless gangster and the show features several scenes of violence, including brutal murders and torture. Similarly, Mirzapur depicts the lawless world of a small town in Uttar Pradesh, where guns and drugs rule the streets, and the show doesn't shy away from showing extreme violence and bloodshed.

These series encompass intense fight sequences, gunfights, and brutal confrontations. The visual techniques employed to depict physical violence often involve realistic choreography, impactful sound effects, and the use of slow-motion shots to emphasize the impact and intensity of the acts. The aim is to create a sense of realism and engage the audience in the visceral experience of violent encounters.

The primary concern with such graphic depictions of violence is the impact it has on the viewers. Research has shown that exposure to violent media content can lead to an increase in aggressive behaviour, desensitization to violence, and decreased empathy towards others. Young viewers, who are particularly vulnerable, may also develop a skewed perception of reality and begin to believe that violence is a solution to their problems.

Additionally, the portrayal of sexual violence on Indian OTT platforms has come under fire for being insensitive and exploitative. Shows like Delhi Crime and Made in Heaven have been accused of using rape and assault as plot device to garner attention. It is portrayed with varying degrees of explicitness, with some shows opting for a more suggestive approach while others portray it in a more graphic manner. The portrayal of sexual violence often raises concerns about its impact on the audience and its potential for triggering or normalizing such behaviour. These representations are often accompanied by sensitive content warnings and disclaimers due to their sensitive nature.

Psychological violence is explored in a nuanced manner in certain shows. It involves the depiction of emotional manipulation, psychological trauma, and mental anguish inflicted upon characters. The visual and narrative techniques employed to depict psychological violence often involve introspective moments, atmospheric cinematography and dialogues that reveal the psychological state of the characters.

It is important to critically engage with the portrayal of violence in Indian OTT platforms. While some argue that the explicit representation of violence is necessary to mirror the reality of society and create impactful narratives, others criticize it for potentially glorifying or normalizing violence. Understanding the intent behind the depiction of violence and analyzing the messages and meanings conveyed through these shows is crucial in evaluating their impact on the audience. Viewers have the choice to watch or not watch these shows, and nobody should be held responsible for the impact it may have on the audience.

Overall, the representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms reflects the socio-political context of the country, exploring various forms of violence through the use of visual and narrative techniques. It is an evolving subject of discussion that demands critical analysis and consideration of its implications on viewers and society as a whole.

#### **Motivations Behind The Portrayal of Violence :**

The motivations behind the portrayal of violence in Indian OTT platforms are influenced by various factors, including artistic choices, the interplay between realism and fiction, and audience preferences driven by market demands.

Filmmakers often make conscious artistic choices when depicting violence. They may aim to create a gritty and realistic portrayal of society, shedding light on social issues and reflecting the harsh realities of life. By presenting violence in a raw and explicit manner, filmmakers

seek to provoke emotional responses and engage viewers in a visceral experience. This approach can be seen as a means to evoke empathy, spark conversations, and raise awareness about societal problems.

However, the interplay between realism and fiction plays a significant role in the portrayal of violence. While some shows strive for authenticity and realism, others employ fictional elements to heighten the dramatic impact. The portrayal of violence may be exaggerated or stylized to enhance the visual aesthetics or intensify the narrative tension. Balancing realism and fiction allows filmmakers to create compelling storytelling experiences that captivate audiences.

The impact of audience preferences and market demands cannot be overlooked. The popularity of shows featuring explicit violence suggests a certain demand for such content. Indian OTT platforms are highly competitive, and there is a need to cater to the tastes and expectations of the audience. Filmmakers and producers may feel compelled to include graphic violence to capture attention, generate buzz, and attract viewership. Market demands influence the creative decisions made regarding the portrayal of violence, as commercial success is often a key consideration.

It is essential to consider the impact of audience preferences and market demands critically. While audience engagement and commercial viability are important, the responsibility lies in ensuring that the portrayal of violence is handled ethically and responsibly. Filmmakers and content creators must

strike a balance between catering to audience preferences and addressing the potential risks of glorifying or normalizing violence. It is crucial to be mindful of the potential influence of media on societal attitudes and behaviours, especially when it comes to sensitive and controversial subjects like violence.

#### **Impact of Violence on the Audience :**

The impact of violence portrayed in Indian OTT platforms on the audience is a subject of interest and concern. Understanding the effects of media violence requires reviewing relevant studies, analyzing potential impacts on viewers' attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions, and considering the role of context and viewer interpretation.

A review of studies on the effects of media violence provides insights into the potential consequences on viewers. Research suggests that exposure to media violence can influence attitudes towards aggression, desensitize individuals to real-life violence, and increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour. Studies have also linked media violence to increased levels of fear, anxiety, and desensitization towards violent acts. Additionally, repeated exposure to violent content may shape viewers' perceptions of social norms and contribute to the normalization of violence in society.

Analyzing the potential effects on viewers' attitudes, behaviours and perceptions is crucial. The portrayal of violence can shape individuals' beliefs about the acceptability and consequences of aggressive behaviour. It may influence their understanding of power dynamics,

social hierarchies, and problem-solving strategies. Media violence can impact viewers differently, depending on factors such as age, gender, personality traits, and prior experiences. Younger audiences and individuals who are more susceptible to media influence may be particularly vulnerable.

The role of context and viewer interpretation should be taken into account when examining the impact of violence. The way violence is depicted, its narrative context, and the overall themes of the show can shape viewers' reactions. Contextual factors, such as the portrayal of consequences, the presence of moral dilemmas, or the exploration of underlying social issues, can affect viewers' perceptions and interpretations of violent content. Additionally, individual differences in interpretation, personal values, and prior knowledge may influence how viewers process and internalize violent portrayals.

It is important to note that the impact of violence on the audience is complex and multifaceted. While research provides valuable insights into potential effects, it is essential to approach these findings with caution. Media violence is only one among many factors that can influence attitudes and behaviours, and individual responses can vary. Other factors, such as real-life experiences, family and social environments, and personal values, also shape how viewers engage with and interpret violent content.

#### **Socio-Political Context and Violence in Indian Ott Platforms :**

The portrayal of violence in Indian OTT platforms is influenced by the socio-

political context in which these shows are produced and consumed. Exploring the socio-political factors that shape the depiction of violence involves examining the impact of globalization, neo-liberalism, right-wing politics, and societal issues.

Globalization has played a significant role in shaping the Indian media landscape, including the OTT industry. The influx of international content and exposure to different cultural perspectives have influenced storytelling techniques and narrative styles. The global market demands and competition have prompted Indian content creators to push boundaries and explore edgier themes, including the depiction of violence, in order to appeal to a wider audience.

Neo-liberalism, characterized by free-market principles and privatization, has had an impact on media production and distribution. The rise of OTT platforms has provided more creative freedom and flexibility to content creators, as they are not bound by traditional censorship regulations. This has allowed for the exploration of controversial and explicit content, including the portrayal of violence, in order to capture attention and cater to audience preferences.

The influence of right-wing politics is another significant factor. Political ideologies and government policies can shape the content landscape. In some cases, right-wing politics may influence the production and distribution of media content, potentially affecting the portrayal of violence. Political and ideological considerations can impact the thematic choices, narrative framing and representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms.



Societal issues also play a role in the portrayal of violence. Indian society is complex and diverse, with a range of social, cultural, and economic issues that influence storytelling. Themes such as caste-based violence, gender-based violence, political unrest, and social inequality are often explored in Indian OTT shows. The depiction of violence in these shows may be reflective of the societal challenges and tensions prevalent in the country.

It is important to critically analyze the portrayal of violence in Indian OTT platforms within the socio-political context. The representation of violence can be a reflection of the broader societal dynamics and the issues that shape Indian society. It is crucial to understand the intentions behind the portrayal of violence and the messages being conveyed.

#### **Critiques and Controversies :**

The representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms has sparked differing viewpoints and controversies. Examining these perspectives involves analyzing critiques related to the glorification and normalization of violence, as well as discussing ethical considerations and societal responsibility.

One of the primary critiques is that the explicit representation of violence in Indian OTT shows can glorify and normalize violent behaviour. Critics argue that excessive violence can desensitize viewers and blur the lines between fiction and reality, potentially leading to the acceptance or imitation of violent acts. They contend that the graphic portrayal of violence may have detrimental effects

on societal values, particularly on impressionable audiences.

On the other hand, proponents of the gritty and raw storytelling style argue that such explicit violence is necessary to mirror the harsh realities of society. They contend that these shows depict violence as it exists, serving as a reflection of the socio-political context and raising awareness about social issues. Advocates assert that the portrayal of violence is a means to engage audiences, spark critical discussions, and prompt introspection.

Ethical considerations are central to the debates surrounding the representation of violence. Content creators and platforms have a responsibility to consider the potential impact of their content on viewers. Questions arise regarding the need to balance creative freedom with responsible storytelling. It is important to ensure that the portrayal of violence is handled in an ethical manner, taking into account the potential consequences and societal implications.

Societal responsibility is another aspect that comes into play. Indian OTT platforms have a wide reach and influence, making it crucial for them to consider the social and cultural impact of the content they produce and promote. Discussions around content regulation, age-appropriate categorization, and content warnings emerge as part of the discourse on maintaining a responsible media environment.

Engaging in critical analysis and discussions about the representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms helps navigate these critiques and controversies. It encourages reflection on the ethical

implications, the potential effects on viewers, and the societal responsibility of content creators and platforms. Striking a balance between creative expression and responsible storytelling is essential in order to address concerns related to the glorification and normalization of violence.

### Conclusion :

In conclusion, the representation of violence in Indian OTT platforms is a complex issue that requires careful consideration. While it may be important to depict the harsh realities of life, it is equally essential to do so in a responsible, sensitive and ethical manner. OTT platforms have a responsibility towards their viewers, and they must consider the impact their content may have on young and impressionable minds. In the end, it is crucial to strike a balance between highlighting social issues and providing entertainment without resorting to exploiting violence. The portrayal of violence on OTT platforms is certainly not going away, but it must be handled with great care.

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## Eco critical Perspectives of Jeyamohan's *Forest (Kaadu)*

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An analysis of a literary work under the light of ecocritical ideas makes us understand how nature is closely related to human life. Ecocriticism has been defined as “the study of literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty xix). While the roots of ecocriticism are found in socio-political theory, theorists and critics alike use close literary analysis to examine a social, political, psychological, philosophical, and ultimately human need for interactions with the environment. Ecocriticism originates from three notable American writers, R.W. Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau, whose works praise nature as a real existence and simultaneously something wild. R.W. Emerson had expressed delight at the impact of nature on his prose narrative. He praises a non-traditional way to deal with the character of understanding nature, which he called “transcendentalism”. This is how ecocriticism emerged from the focused minds of American writers. Ecocriticism was less famous in the UK. Though the American works praise nature in its wholesomeness, the British Eco critics

caution us of ecological dangers emanating from legislative and industrial powers. Indian philosophy is also rich in ecological design since the Vedic period, paying equivalent significance to all living beings. A great number of scholars created ecocritical texts in ancient India. Modern ecocritical points of view are best seen in the work of Nobellaureate Rabindra Nath Tagore who established VishwaVarati (Public Central Library) at Shantiniketan. His *Rakta Krabi* and *Muktadhara* are good examples of ecocritical writings. His sonnets with eco-critical focus include poems such as “The Tame Bird was in a Cage” and “I Plucked you Flower.” In Anita Desai’s novel “Fire on the Mountains,” eco-critical themes are explored they addressing issues such as animal killing, overpopulation, moral decay, and the resulting environmental threat represented by forest fires. Kamala Markandaya’s “Nectar in a Sieve” portrays Nature as both a destroyer and preserver of life, highlighting how industrialisation disrupts the harmonious existence of a labourer. Arundhati Roy’s “The God of Small Things” depicts the exploitation of nature.

Many Tamil epics from ancient history to contemporary Tamil literature have contributed ideas of wisdom about nature and its significance. Tamil literature has a rich history of nature-related works that date back thousands of years. Nature has always been a significant theme in Tamil literary works, reflecting the deep connection between the Tamil people and their environment. There are some notable examples of nature-related works in Tamil literature. The Sangam period (3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE) is considered the golden age of Tamil literature. Many poems from this era revolve around nature, describing landscapes, flora, and fauna. The landscape of Tamil Nadu, with its hills, rivers, and forests, finds vivid representation in works like *Purananuru* and *Kurunthokai*. *Thirukkural*, written by Thiruvalluvar in the 1st century CE, is a renowned Tamil literary work encompassing various life aspects. In the “The Blessing of Rain” chapter, *Thirukkural* explores the relationship between human beings and nature, especially about rain. It emphasises the importance of environmental harmony and the belief in protecting natural resources. *Silappatigaram*, a Tamil epic written by Ilango Adigal in the 5th century CE, tells the story of Kannagi, a woman who seeks justice for her husband’s wrongful execution. The epic vividly portrays the natural beauty of Tamil Nadu, highlighting rivers, mountains, and white tigers. *Thiruvagasam* is a collection of devotional hymns composed by the Manikavasagar, a Tamil saint who lived in the eighth century. These hymns express profound love and devotion to Lord Shiva, often drawing inspiration from nature. They describe the beauty of mountains, rivers, flowers, and birds, symbolically

connecting them to spiritual experiences. Sekizhar, a renowned Tamil poet from the 16th century, composed several nature-centric poems, including “*Periyapuranam*”. Pavananthi Munivar’s “*Nannul*,” celebrates the beauty of nature, particularly the hills, rivers, and forests of Tamil Nadu. It contains intricate metaphors and vivid imagery to capture the essence of the natural world. Modern Tamil literature also encompasses nature-related works. Many poets and writers continue to explore the relationship between humans and nature in their works. Writers like Bharathidasan and Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi have composed poems and essays that reflect on environmental issues and advocate for the preservation of nature. The Tamil literary tradition has consistently celebrated the beauty of the natural world, emphasising the need for harmony between humans and their environment. Even now, Tamil writers concentrate more on the Eco crisis and the environment. The novel *Forest* is a translated version of *Kaadu* written by Jeyamohan in Tamil and translated by Janaki Venkataraman. Jeyamohan entered the world of Tamil literature in the 1990s. Jeyamohan had impacted the Tamil literary landscape as it emerged from the post-modern phase. His best-known and critically acclaimed work is *Vishnupuram*, a deeply layered fantasy set as a quest through various schools of Indian philosophy and mythology. His other well-known novels include *Rubber*, *Pin Thodarum Nizhal* in Kural, *Kanyakumari*, *Kaadu*, *PaniManithan*, *Eazhaam Ulagam*, and *Kotravai*, written in Tamil.

The forest is home to a plethora of creatures and beings, from tiny birds to huge animals, small plants to vast trees,

and many other organisms. All these co-exist in the forest, sharing the place and space, food source, and life. Therefore, in the forest, interdependence is the pattern of life. In this context, human, seen and felt as alien species by wildlife forms, is the truest enemy. The raid undertaken by humans into the forest and animal's region for various gains paves the way to disharmony between animals and humans, leading to various issues like habitat destruction, diversity of organisms, and loss of species. Jeyamohan's *Forest* deals with an enthralling experience of the immensity of forest-based life forms, their habitat, and the threats caused to them by anthropocentric-minded human beings. The forest is the only place where innumerable organisms and species find food and shelter for survival. But man's greed has not left any place untouched on this Earth. At one level, the novel *Forest* describes how young Giridharan, the protagonist, enters the forest to support his uncle's culvert contract work and eventually falls in love with the forest girl named Neeli. Approaching this novel from a regional perspective directs one to explore the manner, dress, dialect, cultural pattern, and traditional beliefs of people living in the forest region of Nedumangadu, the novel's setting. At another level, Jeya Mohan presents the various forest-based life forms, their habitat, and the threats they face. This novel also focuses on the intimate descriptions of people's conversations about their mythical and cultural beliefs, their pattern of life, and predominantly the human interference with Nature. Jeyamohan explicates the vicious nature of human beings in the light of developmental tasks carried out in forest regions. Among that, poaching of

animals is one of the many commonly known destructive activities of human beings that cause threat to wild animals. The novel speaks about human-animal interaction, consequent threats and challenges faced by the wild. Hence, this paper examines how forest wildlife and surroundings are exploited brutally in the context of the novel.

Through this novel *Forest*, Jeyamohan has problematised the environment of various species, especially Mila, a deer variety, and elephants. Entering the forest as a young boy to earn his livelihood through his uncle's culvert contract work, Giridharan passionately encounters various life forms like medicinal plants, flowering trees, fruit trees and wild animals like forest dogs, tigers, deer and monkeys. His excitement knows no limit whenever he watches the movement of animals at close quarters. His keen observation and appreciation of the greenness of the forest is evident in these lines:

I began noticing signs of life everywhere in the forest. Green chameleons; small frogs; a thin green snake that looked like a length of brittle green glass; tree lizard with stripes on their backs. Tiny sparrow sat on the dung piles trying to peck sustenance out of them. A gooseberry tree stood nearby, its branches completely leafless but covered by thousands of tiny green berries. (41)

Mila, a large wild species of deer, is the first to come to Giridharan's notice among the array of wild animals in the forest as he acknowledges, "In fact a mila had been the first wild creature I had encountered upon entering the forest" (11). From this point, his interest in watching wild animals grows strongly and steadily. He meticulously observes every

possible movement of milas in the forest to establish genuine rapport out of sheer curiosity. For any living creature, water and food source are vital for survival. Lawrence Buell, a pioneer in environmental criticism, states, “Without water, no life” (243). Whereas the water source on most occasions gets defiled and becomes insufficient, due to natural and unnatural influences, such miserable circumstances force the deer to drink the defiled water. The author states that “the surface of the water in the pond shifted, sending the underlying moss and weeds upwards” (11). Such unhealthy terrain affects not just mila’s hygiene but its habitat too. Though human beings are naturally anthropocentric in attitude, innocent Giridharan tries to establish “a subtle relationship” (63) with mila, unaware of human beings’ indirectly imposed threat on wild animal. His kindness is witnessed on many occasions. In spite of that one instance, he disgustedly belts stones at the mila while it is quenching its raging thirst from the nearby channel, where the protagonist has an evening walk near the culvert. His grace of power and domineering nature over the animal is well evident from these lines:

“I walked by the old culvert and saw the mila drinking water from the channel. A burning resentment filled me and I threw a stone at the animal, shouting for it to go. It looked once more at me and bent again to drink water. Go! I yelled at it once more and threw another stone at it”. (122)

This typical anthropocentric gesture of human beings directly and indirectly causes a threat to the wild animal and their habitat in many contexts. Greg Garrard agrees with this proposition in his book *Ecocriticism*: “The ultimate concern about

species is that they may become extinct due to human activities” (176). To keep themselves safe from such human interference, wild animals fix a specified time for partially satisfying their essential needs like seeking food sources. Giridharan acknowledges his subjective experience as “mila come to drink water near the culvert every evening at five. Perhaps the reason it came then was because no one was there at the site at the time” (64). Also, another interesting fact is that these wild animals, unlike humans, do not change their habits often. “They are creatures of habit, can’t think of breaking a habit” (345); The animal takes water and grazes only in the place where it is used to, considering the threats it faces from other species. Canadian Writer Yann Martel in his booker-winning novel *Life of Pi*, has seconded the same idea of ‘animal habit’ as “The smallest change can upset them. They want things to be just so the same day after day, month after month” (16).

Change of habitat causes milas to fall into the traps created by the intruders and other wild animals. So, considering the actuality discussed so far, it becomes understandable that a constant barrage of external threats is prevalent everywhere. In another instance, Giridharan cycles to the chief engineer’s house to submit the accounts, where he is deadly shocked at the sight of a deer’s corpse being hung on the branches of a tree: “Outside the courtyard, was a large tree from a branch of which hung the corpse of a spotted deer. A short, dark man flying it with such forces that with each of his knife’s strokes the body of the deer shuddered” (304). Poaching of wild animals, despite the presence of the legal ban laid down by the

Wildlife Protection Act, not just causes a loss of species but spoils the diversity of non-domesticated animals. The freedom of animals lies nowhere but in the attitude of the supreme beings (here, humans) supposedly 'gifted' with a sixth sense.

Another dimension of threat is inflicted by predators like tigers, cheetah and kurukkan, a wild dog. Kuttappan, a wonderful cook who regularly prepares delicious gravy made from animals like treed dogs; wild fowls; or small reptiles (17), shares his first-hand experience about bloody kurukkan as: "Of course! God created kurukkan to eat the mila. It will not let go of even the hooves. Every part of mila is eaten clean. Cursed animals!" (39). The description clearly explicates the threat the mila faces from its predator, kurukkan in the forest. Alongside, the insensitive attitude of exorcists, whose thinking is purely irrelevant and pseudo-scientific, causes severe damage to innocent wildlife forms at a massive rate. Jeyamohan literally describes the act of killing as 'sacrifice' from a regional context:

"A hundred and eight animals and birds and seven humans were then sacrificed to propitiate the Neeli, who was then installed by the force of mantras into a large brass nail" (61).

This shows how animal sacrifice is strongly believed to be the right way to attain salvation by the natives. A clear lack of ecological sense influenced by illiteracy and irrational mythical belief are also reasons for such a threat on species. It has to be noted that when serious-minded environmentalists, activists and research scholars raise their voices against such atrocities in forests, their voice is considered to be "absurd", until it creates some

serious and direct impact on daily life. Also, the voices addressed for these voiceless creatures' struggles are mostly considered unattractive in the political agendas and meetings conducted by officials as it does not fetch any monetary benefit to them. Construction works carried out in forests, like building roads, culverts, and government offices, are another indirect way human being pose a danger to a forest territory. The canal water is considered to be one of the essentials for wild animal's survival. The same is utilised for construction work leaving only dust and debris for the animals which rely on the canal water for their needs. Consequently, this affects the health of birds and animal and their habitat. When Giridharan revisits the forest where he spent his early days, he observes: "The canal was a thin stream and choked with piles of garbage; the embankment was cracked in many places. On both sides of the canal rose the concrete dwellings painted with yellow distemper and with TV antennas crowding the terraces. On the antenna sat crows, but no other bird was visible"(19). Driven by the idea of 'growth', such malevolent violation of forests pushes the animals and birds from their home, and sometimes it leads to the destruction of various organisms, their habitats and natural resources. Garrard argues, "The death of an individual is also death of its kind". (177) Human mind is dominated by a self-centric attitude and unfortunately, those thoughts are instilled or conditioned by previously convinced human minds.

Yann Martel bemoans this predatory human attitude "In a general way we mean how our species' excessive predatoriness has made the entire planet our prey". (29)



The developmental tasks at the cost of forest encroachment are undertaken lightly down the decades, without bothering about the lives of animals, plants, and their habitat. Every act of a human being is a threat to animals. Without understanding the importance of wildlife conservation, people enter the forests, parks, and sanctuaries purely to seek pure entertainment. The fear of birds at the sight of human beings is clearly seen. As the bird sighted me, it rose, surprising me with the length of its wing span. Then, the entire flock of birds rose and was gone. (75) The case is not just for the birds or milas, but even for gigantic creatures like an elephant, which are not left undisturbed. When an animal notices any human, first, it raises its voice to ensure its safety. This is a very common behavioral pattern of an animal. This essential knowledge is not easy to catch for a non-environmentalist like Giridharan. The following quote demonstrates the reaction of an elephant on noticing the two human beings Neeli and Giridharan near the river bank: "Below us, downstream, Ripped Ears, the elephant stood in water, squirting trunk full back bone seemed prominent. When the wind shifted, he seemed to smell us and raise his head and made that muted trumpeting sound". (257) Knowing the threat of their habitat, animals leave the place immediately to safeguard themselves from other animals and humans. It is known to everybody that the area of land covered with pastures serve as a food source for many wild animals like deer, cow, elephants and many others. But what happens sometimes is that inadequate rainfall in forest regions due to human-induced deforestation leads to a poor supply of water and food sources. So, the animal whose regular habit is

disturbed gets its habitat destroyed, and ultimately its health condition deteriorates. Kuttappan talks about the drought-hit situation which once prevailed in the forest in the following lines: "We were going through a drought at the time. There was no grass to feed the hares and the deer, which had all left the area for the greener pastures. Without their usual prey the kurukkans were going hungry...only because they cannot find anything else to eat have they attacked a human". (38) The unpleasant fact becomes apparent that human-induced deforestation causes threat not just to wildlife habitats but also finally returns as a threat to oneself. Perhaps this is why many wild animals like elephants, crocodiles, snakes, and tigers come out of their habitat and attack the people who reside near the forest region. The illegal poaching of most endangered species, like elephants, causes severe damage to diversity. Rather than the natives, people hunt animals for entertainment, especially celebrities, building developers, and contract workers, and Climatic changes are also the other reasons for the loss of species. Over the decades, elephants have been massacred for two reasons. One, they are ruthlessly slaughtered for the ivory trade. Second, they are killed by poachers to demonstrate their masculine power and for the purpose of the elephant's head in the drawing hall to represent their valour in the forest.

The novel *Forest* clearly shows how certain wild animals and their habitats are under threat caused by various factors. American Physicist and Ecologist Barry Commoner said, "Everything is connected to everything else- humans and other species are connected/dependent on a number of other species" (136). All life

forms are, in one way or the other, dependent on other organisms; by scientific bent, nowadays, one is not dependent but rather dominant. Well-informed human beings, through their knowledge, may create and even recreate everything but cannot restore dominant peace alone. So, to conclude, “Let animals live like animals; humans live like humans. That’s my whole philosophy in a sentence” (Adiga, 276).

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# Human Weaponization and Corporeality of Posthuman Violence in *Project Power*

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## **Introduction :**

Posthumanism through its ontological and epistemological embodiment aims at a post anthropocentric system that decenters the human hierarchy and places the relation as a web rather than a linear one. Posthumanism offers a strong critique of humanism to ensure the former does not solely engross with techno-utopianism (Jansen, 2021, 223). The movie *Project Power* directed by Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman tries to unleash the extremities of power exploitation within humans to make it the ultimate evolution of human beings. It peruses how extreme techno-reductionism tends to trail back to re-humanization. Such transhumanist breakthroughs reinstate the question of what it means to be a human. This techno-utopian transition generally tends to elevate the polarities and incongruities. Lived and shared experiences of certain people get taken into consideration and often they tend to chronicle the subjectivities and narrations of the “others”. “Posthumanism sees technology as a trait of the human outfit, but not its

main focus, which would reduce its own theoretical attempt to a form of techno-reductionism” (Ferrando, 2020,39). A form of systemic militarization happens over establishing the hierarchies already laid down.

A shady organisation named Teleios carries out genetic mutations on a group of physically abled men. Art, one among them, passes on the genetic mutation to his daughter, Tracy. She possesses the superpowers in her DNA which prompted Teleios to kidnap her to manipulate her powers. This paper aims at a posthuman intervention and critique of how some transhumanist techno transformation can lead to posthuman violence that can solely undermine the objective of philosophical posthumanism. The paper peruses on how technological advancements in the form of human weaponization can cause posthuman violence as it reestablishes the hierarchy. This article aims at a posthumanist critique of the autonomy wished for due to vested technological enhancements.

### **Radical Transformation and Post 'Human' :**

The intensification of techno orientation often results in transhumanist development and might even lead to a further intensification of humanism. The movie revolves around the premise of consuming a power capsule that immediately leads to body transformation. Radical bio transformation often leads to the delineating subjectivities and often problematises the historical construction of the "human". Critical posthumanism aims at amplification of voices of the humans and non human others that were so far silenced by certain streams (Sands, 2022, 03). *Project Power* is an example of institutionalised relations of power, and self-reflexivity to subject matter (Twine, 2007, 511). A person who consumes the pill gets the power of extreme camouflage. Art himself possesses the qualities of pistol shrimp. Newt acquires the qualities of a lizard where he is able to regrow his body parts on slight damage. "We are talking about permanent power. The next step in human evolution". (Schulman & Joost, 2020, 01:19:28). There is always a constant fight between those with and without superpowers. Tracy, Art's daughter from whom the mutation is carried out is already a posthuman. Tracy is being used as a weapon of posthuman violence. Even after Art almost losing his life, Tracy with her regenerative super powers brings him back to life. This even though seems to be a promising post-humanist enhancement could provide unimaginable powers to those who kept her in constraint. Deriving those capabilities from her could give the manufacturers complete power over the necropolitics.

They could easily wipe off whomever seems undesirable and could easily bring back to life according to their wish of calculated management of life (Foucault 140). The manufacturers instil death in society as they unleash "unbounded social, economic and symbolic violence" (Mbembe, 39) to destroy their bodies and existence.

"A purely technology-centred idea of posthumanization is not enough to escape the humanist paradigm" (Herbrechter 07). Transcending the boundaries might tend to give rise to profound ways of injustice, repressions, discrimination and exploitation (Herbrechter 28). Discourses produce ideological effects based on different regimes of truth. Thus empowered narratives tend to make some dominant and the rest marginalised. Even though technological enhancements can reconfigure, reconceptualise and transcend the boundaries of normative humans, most often it happens selectively. Those with no access to it easily get pushed out to the boundaries. The whole question of whether or not to be genetically modified revolves around multifold ethical implications. Gene editing as propagated mainly through designer baby (Ferrando, 2020, 128) points to how it can further lead to hostility towards lesser abled bodies and a rising competition for survival that may force people to resort to weaponization of their bodies. The power of Eugenics falls upon the affluent white male to decide the favourable characteristics and wipe off the prospectable deleterious genes which might result in persistence of a single race. "The history of negative eugenics is notably tainted with racism, ableism, and

genocide” (Ferrando,2020, 129).

### **Posthuman Violence through Morphological Freedom :**

Autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice are articulated as the key principles of bioethics in *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (1979) by Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress and still continue to be the key factors in establishing bioethics. Autonomy, the single most of contemporary bioethics (Jennings 2009,71) is challenged by critical posthumanism which through the historical construction of the “human” problematizes the various subjectivities (Braidotti, 2019). Critical humanism tries to acknowledge this posthuman violence and the creation of the “ghosts” (Herbrechter 2013, 15). Posthumanism should aim at fostering democratic transhumanism, only then can we ensure equal access to technological enhancements which would otherwise be limited to certain sociopolitical classes and economic power, consequently encoding racial and sexual politics (Hughes, 2004). Radical human transformation changes the composition of the society. The narratives of who cannot afford to take the pill or are not willing to, get completely undermined in the society and eventually get ostracised and wiped off in all respects.

David Pearce defines Paradise engineering as the complete removal of sufferings of homosapiens. This extreme humanistic approach tends to be problematic even though he advocates to include all kinds of animals through genetic engineering to alleviate suffering. This might tend to digress as absolutism as shown through the character Matriarch

in the movie. Radical life extension (Ferrando, 2020, 35) to certain sects of people is aimed through such mutations. The manufacturers aimed for liberal eugenics to get a sociological perspective where they could easily strain out the undesired variants of humans slowly. Best and Kellner believe that a moderate reconstructive posthumanism is vital to rethink the subjectivities and agencies by not completely severing its modern legacy. Posthuman violence mostly contributed by “animalization, cyborgization, biotechnology, robotics and cybernetics bring about an accentuated ‘hauntology’ of the spectralized human” (Herbrechter, 2013, 131). Libertarian morphological freedom creates a social reality through hegemonic discourses to believe the segregation of the society. All those who fall under the category of animals were ripped off all their social and political rights (Kleinhans, 2016, 2).

### **Transhumanist Enhancement and Power Politics :**

Posthumanism enters into the discussion where transhumanism tends to rehumanize the multiple connections established through technological advancements. Robin, the teenage girl is forced into this occupation as she is in dire need of money and she risks her life to be a supplier for those consuming the pills. She becomes a catalyst for extropianism but never reaps any kind of benefit from it. Lack of a legible and reliable system of State force gives more fuel to the people to take over the society by weaponization of their own body. The power of necropolitics eventually falls into their hands. “In the real world, the power goes

to where it always goes, to the people that already have it” (Schulman & Joost, 2020, 57:03). Economic exploitation coupling with transhumanist interventions made it easier to segregate the society into hierarchical rungs. The clinical trials were done and eventually those without the transhumanist interventions would be wiped out and a synthetically manufactured human race of extreme powers would be created. “One day you won’t even need the pill” (Schulman & Joost, 2020, 01:01:18). The continuum of embodiment and subjectivities should push back the extreme weaponization of human bodies that are solely meant for overpowering certain groups of the lesser humanly weaponized bodies.

#### Conclusion :

The realisation that humans are a co-construction with its non-human others is vital for the coexistence and conformity. Every posthumanist discourse must be solicitous to the varying embodiments and branches of rhetorical practices. Refabrication of critique of humanist exploitations and manifestation of life at different levels should give rise to positival multiplicities to hinder certain powerful agencies taking over the existence and narration of the others. Rather than a definite and discrete trajectory, such transhumanist furtherance expedites more concerns such as posthuman violence where some will certainly be ripped off their status as human beings. An endorsement of the social and political rights of the human beings are crucial yet vital to the posthumanist evaluation to prevent the vehement ruthlessness that might be unleashed over the others.

Democratic control of technologies can comprehensively alter the quality of life and technologies can easily transcend the boundaries of humanness. Creation of a new kind of post-human can topple the centrality of human beings. But it might fail to decentralise the hierarchy and instead place a new post-human figure as the centre of the discourse which would again make it a vicious circle of paradigm. Posthumanism can enhance the addressing of power relations within any discourse. A hopeful reconceptualisation of the body and its transformation opposing staunch dualisms is the only way out of the unethical posthuman violence unleashed upon the certain suppressed groups.

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# Traveller's Perceptions and Reflections of Dark Tourism: A Reading of Samanth Subramanian's *This Divided Island : Stories from the Sri Lankan War*

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Dark tourism or sometimes referred to as Thana tourism involves travelling to areas associated with death or disaster. It stems from human beings' inborn curiosity towards anything dark or morbid. Afterlife and mortality are areas humanity has been interested in from time immemorial. Malcolm Foley and John Lennon in a special issue of the International Journal of Heritage Studies, first coined the term dark tourism. They define dark tourism as "tourist interest in recent death, disaster and atrocity borne of a fundamental shift in a way which death, disaster and atrocity are being handled by those who offer associated tourism products" (Lennon & Foley, 2000)

The different activities considered different forms of dark tourism include visiting memorial sites like graveyards; sites of mass death that include battlefields like Waterloo; sites of great tragedy like the Jallianwala Bagh, and sites of genocide like the Holocaust memorial sites and the like. Some view dark tourism

as an unethical practice. Different dark tourists have different aims and functions. Some travel to dark sites for educational purposes others travel for entertainment purposes. A dark tourist could be a history buff or a random backpacker. Though certain sections of people condemn dark tourism for making your whole journey about the death or misery of someone, it can be looked at from another angle as well. Such tourist sites show or are a testimony to the evil human beings are capable of. It could be a site for self-reflection and self-introspection. It could urge people to make the world a better place and take better decisions for the world, especially for the future generation. There is nothing wrong with knowing and being aware of the history of places and what mankind did there. If the tourist is respectful of the casualties caused and is an informed tourist and is paying homage or is there to expand his knowledge, then it is well within the ethical brackets to visit such a place. If the tourist is not sensitive



to the atrocities that have happened at such a site and are not at all informed about the history and when they resort to making fun of such places and the people's behaviour, then it is a problem and would account for bad tourist behaviour.

The commodification of a dark tourist site is another aspect that could be of concern. How a dark tourist site is represented is of utmost importance. A place cannot be left to speak for itself. Ideally, there should be someone who is well-equipped to explain the site to the tourists that are not aware or well-informed. It leaves the tourists to interpretations of their own, which can again become an issue. How one tourist interprets the information they receive through the image of the tourist site portrayed would be different from how another tourist interprets the same. Wrong information carried through the word of mouth of tourists visiting or wrong/ insensitive portrayal of information regarding the sites by the management is ethically wrong. It can be detrimental to the tourist site.

Visiting dark tourist sites for the right reasons is essential. Knowing about the history of a place before visiting there is necessary for fully understanding the nuances of that place and its people. Remembering the sacrifices of people is essential so that the visiting tourists can feel grateful for the life they lead. Life is like two sides of a coin- you will receive bouquets and brickbats. Therefore, it is essential to experience dark episodes along with pleasant ones in life.

This paper attempts to analyse Samanth Subramanian's, *This Divided Island: Stories from the Sri Lankan War*

and understand the aspects of the book that makes it a dark tourism work. Samanth Subramanian travels to Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the civil war that was happening in Sri Lanka for years, which ended in 2009 after the killing of the leader of the Tamil Tiger guerrillas. He meets innumerable people who were affected by the war one way or the other- The Sinhalese, The Tamils, The Muslims- who fought the war and were victims of it as well. Even though the war has officially ended, the island nation is far from free of its clutches.

Sri Lanka's civil war ended in 2009 after twenty-six long years. To eliminate the Tamils, the then president Mahinda Rajapakshe ordered brutal killings all around the country, injuring and murdering many civilians. The brutality meted out was condemned by many international organizations, including the U.N. Samanth Subramanian understood that to know about the aftermath of war; one must understand the situations prevalent in Sri Lanka before the war and how, when and why it started. That is why he travelled extensively through the length and breadth of Sri Lanka, mingled with people of all sects- The Sinhalese, the Tamils, and the Muslims. Each person he met had a story to tell- A story of oppression and injustice. The oppressors- also had their reasons for resorting to taking arms in the first place.

The country was divided based on linguistics. Sinhalese-speaking Buddhists were the majority in the country. The earliest Sinhalese settlers came from the Northern part of India. Then there were Tamils who migrated from the Southern part of India. Then there were Muslims who were considered neither Tamil by the Tamils nor Sinhalese by the Sinhalese.

Samath Subramanian presents the points of view of all kinds of sects. He does not seem to take any side but honestly tries to bring out all perspectives and leaves it to the audience to decide. One thing about Sri Lanka is that it has not completely come out of the war's clutches or aftermaths. "But Sri Lanka still felt tense, and the peace was already curdling into something sour and unhealthy. Old fears continued to throb; old ghosts transmuted into new ones" (Subramanian, 2015, p. 6). It behaved as if it was suddenly purged of the malice of the war. The author compares the case of Sri Lanka to smallpox- the toxins are below the skin, causing boils on the skin at regular intervals. The people have become so accustomed to violence that they find it strange to live peacefully. "It was an abject impossibility to meet anybody who has not lost a friend or a relative in the prachanai" (Subramanian, 2015, p.14). Almost everyone had to deal with personal losses. The people he met had horrifying stories to tell. All conversations he had with the locals, and his Sri Lankan friends eventually ended in talking about the war and its various aspects. Even when he was mistaken as a customer by a prostitute, the conversation suddenly and very organically changed from prostitution to war

Sanjaya made me realise that all I wanted to do was to wander around the island and talk about the one subject that everybody wanted to talk about. The war loomed too close to hand and too enormous for my senses to grasp it properly, like a way that spread away to infinity in every direction. But in conversations, I heard stories of individuals- fantastic or tragic or melancholic or even happy stories, stories that had human proportions, and that could be multiplied in my head to gain a larger truth (Subramanian, 2015, p.16)

Samath Subramanian understood that the people were accustomed to living with violence, and the endless ceasefires, the security checks, and the reports of violence - all seem to have become part of their daily routine. The author even compares the island of Sri Lanka's shape to that of a grenade. It also looked like a teardrop to him. He admits he could not remember when he thought about Sri Lanka without associating it with violence. He started visiting Sri Lanka around 2004 for holidays or as a journalist for reporting. Then he visited two years after the war had ended.

With the end of the war, a rare window opened up- for people to talk about their lives as they had been unable to for almost thirty years.... Two years later, in 2011, I arrived in Sri Lanka in the spirit of a forensics gumshoe visiting an arson site, to examine the ashes and guess at how the fire caught and spread so cataclysmically, but also to see if any embers remained to ignite the blaze all over again. (Subramanian, 2015, p.20)

After the war ended, the majority and the domination of the Sinhalese Buddhists were seen everywhere in the country. The government tried eliminating everything related to Tamil culture, heritage and history. The author has also met and spoken with Tamils working in the government sectors like the army. Their plight was altogether different, and they had to face much discrimination from both the Tamils and the Sinhalese. They did not belong anywhere. The state looks at the Tamils as not native to the land, as they migrated from the southern part of India. The state considers itself officially and unabashedly Buddhist. "The war ingested everything whole, bent everything to its service: religion and politics, history and

geography, fact and mythology. As on the island of Sri Lanka...the war loomed always above us” (Subramanian, 2015, p.31)

Samanth Subramanian narrates a photo from the July 1983 riots in Sri Lanka. While travelling across the country, he came across the photo again. The picture was of a lean Tamil man stripped naked by a mob of Sinhalese people. He was in a sitting position with his head held in his hands in shame and despair. Another youth was seen standing beside him with a smile. The casual nature of the act haunted Subramanian. The police were not doing anything. Some stood without interfering at all; some aided the riots. Being an Indian journalist who has come to write on the war in Sri Lanka, Samanth Subramanian had to tread carefully throughout the country with all sects of people. The Tamils were of the opinion that the Indian government did not do enough to stop the atrocities during the last years of the civil war. The Sinhalese were of the opinion that the Indian government provided aid to the Tigers in terms of arms and training. “I was a bloodless victim of my country’s disastrous foreign policy, and I had to learn very quickly to strike the appropriate note of apology” (Subramanian, 2015, p.47)

The scale of violence was so much that Subramanian began to identify places he was travelling to in Sri Lanka as a site where a Tiger massacre had occurred or the Buddhists were hurt. More than the geography of the place, the author started associating the places with violence that had occurred there years before. It was very sad that now he could only associate Sri Lanka with its war, nothing more. Even after the war has ended, the people are not

peaceful at heart. The common people did not know which version to believe. Should they trust the government, which is saying they did not kill innocent civilians during the last days of the war, or should they pay heed to other stories, especially from international organizations like U. N, that war crimes have happened, that too in large numbers. The peace they restored in their country smells like the blood of innocent people. According to Samanth Subramanian, the people of Sri Lanka lives with this moral dilemma.

Details about the war in Sri Lanka were hugely undocumented. So Subramanian was very particular in his investigations through travel and wanted to bring out the exact picture of it while respecting the people who have died and those who have suffered personal losses. He was very responsible for that. Some people did not want him to reveal names or identities, and he has kept that promise consistently. Even while interviewing people from various communities, he has always been sensitive and respectful. He was careful enough to represent all voices and portrayed them in an unbiased and objective way. The extensive research that Samanth Subramanian did for years by travelling from one corner of Sri Lanka to another proved fruitful in bringing out the exact condition of a nation that is still war-torn at multiple levels, even many years after the war ended.

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# Exploration of Sexuality, Trauma and Violence in the Short Stories of Ismat Chughtai

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Actually Aslam Sahab, I was never told by anyone that I should not write on this particular subject of Lihaf. Neither did I read in any book that one should not write about this...illness (marz)...or... addiction (lat). Maybe my mind is not the brush of Abdurrahman Chughtai, it is instead a cheap sort of camera, whatever it sees, it clicks, and my pen becomes helpless in my hand. (Chughtai, *Kaghazi hai Pairahan*)

Chughtai came from an educated family at the time. The environment, she had at her house of liberal views and tolerance, helped her to delve in the matters which were never tackled before. She grasps the intricacies of a woman's mind which she plainly presents in the world of modernity and nationality. In her memoir, *Leaving Aligarh Once Again*, Chughtai says-

“When I read that the women were the weaker sex and that they were easily corruptible; it had strange impact on me. I felt angrier with myself rather than the society, thinking there must be something lacking in me.” (110)

Though a work of fiction, her stories reveals the shocking state of women and

their clashes with the structures of ideologies that seek to bind them- the dominating structure which provides them the identity only when associated with a man. These ideologies strangle women and breed the concept of “an Ideal Woman”. Chughtai highlights the helplessness of women in the face of overarching social and religious codes and rebels against this ideal type and social customs dismantling the notions of “womanhood” as super imposed by the society which makes the ideas of marriage, family, and honor all the more important concepts to talk about.

Sexuality is passive and invisible in patriarchy. In *zenana*, setting in Muslim household, *pardah* is a custom to hide the physicality of women. Simone de Beauvoir explained the view where women were expected to be subordinate in their households in *The Second Sex*, “... humanity is male and male defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being” (16). She further says “in marriage, a woman becomes the vassal to their male counterpart. He is whole, the circle and she becomes his ‘half’ (Beauvoir, 451).

Through the story *Lihaaf*, which deals with lesbianism and homosexual relationship within an all-woman setting (*zenana*) in a traditional Muslim household, Ismat Chughtai had to face a lot of criticism including an obscenity charge. Bonnie Zimmerman refers to Faderman's definition of lesbianism:

“‘Lesbian’ describes a relationship in which two women’s strongest emotions and affections are directed towards each other ... the two women spend most of their time together and share most aspects of their lives with each other” (81).

The story revolves around the marriage of a good-looking Begum Jaan to a Nawab. After the marriage, Nawab “deposited her in the house with all his other possessions and promptly forgot about her! The young delicate Begum began to wilt with loneliness”(Chughtai,8) and spends most of his time with the “young, fair and slim-waisted boys”. Deprivation of women’s individuality and her basic human need is presented in the story. Here, the protagonist is portrayed as human rather than feminine whose sexuality is important for a contented life. Chughtai exposes the circus of marriage where in the Begum is only used to cover the Nawab’s ‘heterosexuality’ while her cravings and sexual expectancies are left discontented.

In most of Chughtai’s stories, a social setting is presented in which “women are turned into commodities, totally disposable, totally dispensable, to be used and discarded” (Kudchedkar, 5). Such is the depiction of gender- class in *Badan Ki Khushboo* where working of wealth in feudal Muslim family is revealed. A blunt description of lust and power is shown in

the story where poor village girls are employed as maid servants to provide sexual services to the young Nawabs of the family. Elder women of the family provide “healthy maids for their sons”(Chughtai, 212) and maids who miss the mark of attracting and ‘serving’ the Nawabs are refused to stay in the house and when get pregnant, they are sent off to their villages for the ‘repairment’. It presents the abuse of motherhood and the brutal usage of female body and emotions.

“How pathetically the wretches would wail and cry. Like animals they groaned for their young. Breasts filled up with milk, causing intense pain. Often they would burn with high fevers.” (Chughtai,198)

Besides clampdown of female, Chughtai, succulently brings forth the complexity of society and several other issues such as a class based society, the role of other women in domesticating and disciplining girls into accepting social norms etc. She presents the physical facet of society where women are not just the victims but sometime acts as an oppressor too.

Patriarchy is existent in “any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles” (Tyson, 85). It is such a punishing structure that “in every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other” (Tyson, 92). The core feature that embodies patriarchy is the prominence of marriage. Marriage is constructed through and around women characters. They are held on the pedestal of being the epitome of love and sacrifice so they can be identified as the ideal women. This patriarchal setup restricts the mobility of women.

The story *Chauthi Ka Joda* shed light on the social hues of marriage, dowry and other patriarchal notions. It renders the disillusionment and vulnerability of the poor class who is under the mortification of dowry as well. Here, marriage becomes the endpoint for all as Kubra's mother stitches wedding suits for her in the hope of her marriage and as a dowry despite them being poor and struggling to meet their day-to-day needs. It also depicts the exploitation of women in the hands of family and relatives, be it Kubra being dark skinned and not beautiful enough according to the set standards by the society or the narrator being sexually abused by the male cousin. Bi Amma laments the fate of Kubra saying, "Rahat doesn't even look at her because God hasn't given her fair features" (Chughtai, 98).

Hameeda protests about the lewd conduct of Rahat towards her but it is taken as a joke by everybody in the name of fun banter between would be brother-in-law and sister-in-law. The narrator states "Rahat's filthy looks plunged into my heart like arrows" (Chughtai 102). Here, family becomes the perpetrator, as they are the one to hush the sound of exploitation and ignore it, especially females of the house.

The institution of marriage is severely criticized in the story, as it is the only cause of agony in the lives of poor. Hence, becomes the way of having shelter and clothing for women. No importance is given to love in marriage and fulfillment of women desire but treated as a source of fulfillment of basic needs "*roti, kapda aur makan*". The idea of marriage for Kubra is "not a desire but as question of food and clothing. She is the widow's

burden and the burden has to be removed"(Chughtai,107).

The story *Do Haath* is the story of trial and tribulations of the underprivileged and of them always being under the scrutiny of privileged. It shows the juxtaposing hypocrisy of upper caste against lower caste by representing the practicality of their real experiences. It gives voice to the subjective need of poor and marginalized-

"These hands were neither legitimate nor illegitimate; they were only hands, living hands that wash away the filth from the face of this planet, that carry the weight of its aging. These tiny hands, dark and soiled, are illuminating the earth's countenance" (Chughtai, 169).

The said family in the story has entirely different habitus in contrast to the set societal norm of upper class where female chastity is ensured under the strict vigilance by the patriarchy of the household. Being morally apt does not have much use for the poor who have to tussle for the basics.

Sánchez Dueñas states that young women are regarded as "human objects of value for family profit" (21), which brings out the issue of women dehumanized as an object of business transaction. Mehtrani, the mother-in-law of Gori expresses "A daughter-in-law not only warms a son's bed, she also does the work of four people. A well-built stalwart daughter-in-law like this one could not be had for less than four hundred now" (Chughtai,166-167).

Sukriti Paul Kumar writes- "Questioning gender inequalities throughout her life, she accords the women of her stories either the same posture of defiance or she lays bare the

oppressive hypocrisy and pretensions of her society in its treatment of women” (Kumar 13). The story *Chatan*, shows the transformation of women as a domesticated sexual objects in the hands of their husband. The nameless newlywed “*bhabi*” of the narrator underwent physical and emotional exploitation as she came into wedlock “as playful as doe” of merely the age of fifteen gradually transformed into “a complete housewife.” Turned into a procreating machine, she bore four children in quick succession and as a result fills out.

“Her husband found her pleasing just the way she was, untidy and disheveled.... [She] had let herself go and her body slackened like dough left out overnight.” (Chughtai, 47).

The nameless dynamic exploiter of women is a man who is fixed like a rock, but takes young women as his wives, later to cast them off when his thirst of transfiguring them is quenched. He gets attracted towards the neighbor, Shabnam as she “swayed like an intoxicated female serpent” (Chughtai,80). He leaves his wife and children for Shabnam, a slim girl whose “complexion glowed like molten gold” (Chughtai,77). But within a few years of marriage, she is subjected to the same corporeal transformation like her predecessor. Thus, two cycles are encountered and the new same beginning in the end with “*bhaiya*” fascinated by the physical beauty of an Egyptian dancer. “*Bhaiya*’s hungry eyes crawled over her body like scorpions” (Chughtai,89).

Ismat Chughtai brings out the artificial and repulsive face of the society in *Nanhi Ki Nani*, where Tiny’s chastity is violated in the hands of Deputy Sahib, the grandfather of three children. Social and religious hypocrisy is on full display

in the story as Deputy Shaib, a religious man of upper class who performs *namaz* five times a day and provides water vessels to the mosque, executes such sickening and outrageous act in the inner space of household with a child. Thus making his acts seems ironical, false and deceptive.

The idea of “sisterhood” is shattered here as women of village mock her and get a good laugh at Tiny’s expense. They neither sympathize nor comfort her. This shows callous and cruel behavior of the society towards the victim of lower class. She is considered as no more than a sexual object by the men who demonstrate their claim on her as “when a rag is all dirty and greasy, no one minds too much if someone wipes nose on it” (Chughtai, 122).

This paper focuses on the unfair treatment of women compared to men, even where both men and women belong to the same group. Nowshin states, “Not every woman belongs to the upper class or faces the fate of misery, still every single woman has the same tragedy to endure but many of them have similarities” (4). It is necessary to point out that neither all women are innocent victims nor all men are cruel abusers, but, men certainly do enjoy many more privileges than women. Though diverse and of different consequences, the varied situations expounded in the work share the same premise, which states- most of the victims are women. Ismat Chughtai made her readers understand the issue of carnal desires of women, which needs to be fulfilled and understood. She wrote about the subjects still frowned upon, compunctious and offensive in civil society which is usually kept invisible and that in



itself becomes an act of resistance in unveiling the forbidden and ever present veil put up by the patriarchy.

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# Women as the Victims of War :

## A Feminist Exploration of Pat Barker's *The Silence of the Girls*

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Sexual violence against women includes any physical, sexual, or psychological act of brutality inflicted upon the feminine sex. Wartime sexual violence is markedly different from the violence inflicted on the female body in times of peace. While the former entails an attack on the entire social fabric, the latter operates within a limited private domain without the involvement of the community at large. Elizabeth Jean Wood (2010) identifies some of the most common forms of sexual violence against women during armed conflicts. She writes:

In some conflicts, it takes the form of sexual slavery; in others, state agents engage in sexualized torture of persons suspected of collaborating with insurgents; in others, combatants target women of particular groups during ethnic or political cleansing; in still others, individuals engage in sexual violence opportunistically; and in some conflicts, all or nearly all forms of sexual violence occur. (p. 124)

During conflict escalation, armed forces weaponize sexual violence against women for several strategic and tactical

purposes to display their military prowess. Contemporary studies on the potential causes of wartime sexual violence have yielded two major explanations for such war crimes. While the first view considers it as an “opportunistic crime” resulting primarily from the existence of conflict, the second view characterizes it a “weapon of war,” or in other words, “a deliberate collective strategy deployed against civilians for the purpose of war gain or plunder” (Davis and True, 2015, p. 163). In both cases, the female body is used as a site for inflicting pain to impose and maintain control over the enemies. Women are used through various sorts of sexual abuse, torture, and mutilation to convey messages to the oppressed community as well as to their enemies (Leatherman, 2007, p. 59).

Historically speaking, the sexualized brutality against women in the form of capturing or subjugating them as sex slaves during warfare can be traced back to the wars that took place in the Mediterranean region during ancient times. It is evident from the Greek literary sources that warfare in antiquity was

characterised by the process of exercising systemic violence in two primary forms – slaughtering the enemy men and andrapodizing the enemy women and children. The term andrapodize has its roots in the Greek verb *andrapodizein*, which refers to the forceful conversion of war captives into slaves. It follows that premeditated, humiliating sexual assault committed by armed males against women and girl captives was a common goal and practise in ancient warfare, and andrapodizing is recognised as a widespread custom of warfare (Gaca, 2011, p. 80). Homer’s epic, the *Iliad*, which is primarily based on the classical myth of the Trojan War also demonstrates instances of excessive brutality where female bodies are reduced to war booty to extract vengeance from the enemy.

From Homer’s mythical world to the present-day civilised nations, the exploitation of females on the basis of sexuality in warfare is a common practise. The use of the female body as a site of inflicting violence is one of the most alarming social justice concerns, even in the contemporary world, where both the manner and means of warfare have undergone a dramatic transition. Pat Barker’s novel *The Silence of the Girls* (2018) is a war narrative, and like her other war narratives, this novel also reveals her “singular gift for immersing readers in the atmospherics and pathologies of violence” (Barker, 2004, p. 3). The novel is based on the classical myth of the Trojan War and revises Homer’s colossal epic, the *Iliad*, from the perspective of a minor female character, Briseis. By revising the Homeric rendition of a patriarchal myth that exalts war, Barker’s novel gives Briseis an opportunity to speak on behalf

of all the nameless and faceless women who suffer the consequences of war.

Barker’s feminist endeavour is undoubtedly influenced by Adrienne Rich’s strong plea addressed to female writers to revise patriarchal narratives. Rich (1972) defines revision as an “act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (p. 18). For Rich, revision is “more than a chapter in cultural history” and is an “act of survival,” which ultimately leads to the revelation of the true identity of women as they are and not as they have been represented in patriarchal texts (p. 18). Since all the surviving versions of myths are narrated by male authors, female characters suffer marginalisation in terms of their roles and characterisations. Consequently, the female characters in the *Iliad* are “trapped” in a patriarchal myth, and Barker’s feminist revision liberates them from their past identification as muted entities.

In *The Silence of the Girls*, the primary narrator, Briseis, is one among thousands of captive women erased from the account of the Trojan War. It is through the character of Briseis that Barker takes us on a journey to the mythical world of Troy, which is surprisingly similar to our own times in terms of political strife and the disproportionate use of armed forces. In the context of the larger implications of the Trojan War, Briseis’ condition is of minor importance, but if seen from her perspective, she suffers the most from the conflict. Briseis, along with other females, is exposed to the worst forms of sexual violence, like enslavement, which results in mass rapes, forced sexual unions, and unwanted pregnancies.

From the beginning of the novel, Briseis provides an account of the predatory mode of warfare exemplified by the Homeric epic, the *Iliad*. Briseis bears witness to the massacre of Trojan men, including her husband, by the Greek forces as a part of the andrapodizing process by Greek forces. Briseis relates that after killing Trojan men, the aggressive Greek warriors turned their attention to the loot and plunder of the local resources, including women. Women are often seen as a “loot-able” resource in conflicts because the patterns of violence centred on male dominance and control of resources also include the dominance and exploitation of women (Leatherman, 2007, p. 55). During predatory or parasitic warfare, as in the case of the Trojan War, women are considered marketable sex objects and, therefore, are looted in a similar way to other belongings of the enemy territory.

In *The Silence of the Girls* Briseis witnesses the plunder of her city, followed by the forcible removal of the captive girls. She highlights the different forms of sexual violence that the young female captives have to endure while the city is attacked by the Greeks. For them, Trojan women are nothing but bodies to be added to the stock of plundered goods along with other perishable commodities. The gang rape of a slave girl, which Briseis describes in the novel, is a typical example of a war crime against captive women. Raping women in front of their community serves as a tool to humiliate the enemy. Additionally, from an androcentric paradigm, wartime rape is a symbolic act of reinforcing gendered power. Ruth Seifert (1996) considers wartime rape as a means of manifesting and maintaining masculine hegemony over the female body. She provides different models of

wartime rape apart from being a by-product of war. Seifert claims that rapes are an intrinsic part of warfare and usually express the deep-rooted hatred of men for women, which gets manifested during times of crisis (pp. 35-42).

Besides rape, the female captives are also distributed as concubines and are compelled to serve their masters sexually. The novel emphasises the centrality of taking women and girls as captives primarily to fulfil the sexual needs of men who are murderers. The captive women are evaluated physically in terms of beauty and bodily features before being distributed among men. In ancient warfare, the soldiers who carried out the conquests generally kept some of the best captives for their own personal use, while the remaining lot was traded on a market (Gaca, 2011, p. 81). After the preliminary evaluation, Briseis is taken by Achilles as his slave girl. She is accepted by Achilles publicly because of her physical appearance, and he believes she can satisfy his sexual desires. Briseis recalls her painful sexual encounters with Achilles, describing how Achilles uses her body as ruthlessly as he would use his weapon, which is symbolic of how female bodies in general are weaponized during the war.

In addition to being mistreated by Achilles, Briseis endures worse humiliation after being handed over to Agamemnon, whose sole objective is to use Briseis as a “bargaining chip in future negotiations with Achilles” (Barker, 2018, p. 162). Besides serving as sex slaves, the captured women were also forced to do manual labour such as weaving and grinding, thus exploiting them for non-sexual labour too. The young girls are valued only because of their bodies and the usefulness of a body is determined by its attractiveness, the ability to reproduce, and

its productivity as non-sexual labour. During ancient Greek warfare, the conquered female subjects were exploited both “productively and reproductively,” and their “post-conquest status” was determined by their conquerors (Gaca, 2011, p. 78). Consequently, in Barker’s novel, Briseis serves as both a sex slave to Achilles and a non-sex slave to Agamemnon. Barker’s feminist revision clearly mirrors the patriarchal structure of society, where the female body is perceived as a “territory” to be owned and governed by men (Leatherman, 2007, p. 57). She effectively writes about the predicament of the mythical women of Troy, who stand for the thousands of female victims living in the conflict zones like Iran, Afghanistan, and the on-going armed strife in Ukraine.

#### Conclusion :

In *The Silence of the Girls* Briseis’ story shifts the focus from warfare as a phenomenon involving only man-to-man violence to warfare as a destructive activity that brutalises the second sex. It enables us to analyse war and its consequences beyond the sociological and historical prism by highlighting the dark side of female sexual assault. Since war narratives usually adopt a gendered lens, the experiences of women always remain hidden. The mythical women in Homer’s *Iliad* face gender-based violence in many forms. Barker’s *The Silence of the Girls* gives voice to the suffering female voices that are lost amid the toxic masculinity that fuels the Trojan War. The protagonist, Briseis, offers a deviation from this culture of silence maintained around sexual violence. Therefore, Barker’s feminist

revision successfully restores “a voice, a history, or an identity to the erstwhile oppressed” in Homer’s epic (Widdowson, 1999, p. 169).

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# Rediscovering Feminine Issues and Concerns in the Selected Short Stories in *Phoenix Fled* (1953) by Attia Hosain

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## **Introduction:**

The life of women has never been so stable and harmonious since the days of its beginning. There were constant and continuous changes in her status and role in society. Both man and woman are the part of the same society and both play a vital role in the system, but woman is treated as an inferior one in the societies ubiquitously. In ancient India when women were worshipped like goddesses even in that period the example of Sita and Draupadi are found, where *Sita* had to give the *Agni Pariksha* and *Draupadi* had to face the *Cheerharan* in the male-dominated society. These can be considered the pioneer incidents of the suppression of women. Even today Indian society has such patriarchal system where women are considered inferior to man. Even though it is a universal fact that man and woman are different entities and men are physically stronger than women but only physical strength must not be the deciding criteria for somebody's superiority. In *Phoenix Fled*, Attia Hosain explores prominent feminist issues such as child marriage, dowry system, domestic violence, illiteracy,

child labour, mental, and psychological torture etcetera in Muslim households in pre-partitioned India through the chief protagonists of the short stories.

## **Feminine Issues and Concerns in *Phoenix Fled* :**

*Phoenix Fled*, a collection of twelve short stories, captures not only the socio-cultural atmosphere of North India but also the miserable plight of North-Indian women in Muslim households. Being a woman writer, Attia Hosain was able to vocalise the immediacy and poignancy of the predicament of the females through the female protagonists of her short stories. Critics have well noted her skill of drawing characters. As P.P. Mehta quotes:

“All the stories in this collection are well-told stories throwing light on the various facts of Muslim social life. The style is polished and the characters have been described with touching realism.” (Mehta 336)

The stories in *Phoenix Fled* deal with a plethora of themes such as exploitation of women, purdah, socio-cultural conflicts, caste system, and superstitiousness etcetera. However, the present paper will

primarily aim at revealing feminist issues and concerns in the selected four stories.

*Time is Unredeemable* reveals the plight of a married woman Bano who has been living apart from her husband for more than nine years as her husband is living abroad. She is constantly waiting for her husband's homecoming. She is a faithful and loyal wife who has spent many years patiently waiting for her husband. Rather, she waits for her husband's letter year after year to read some words of love, affection, and care, but only short and formal letters were stored for her without any word of romance. Still, she kept herself contented with whatever she got. Bano drew further away in time and space from Arshad; her only consciousness of it was that his infrequent letters took longer to arrive. It shows that the life of such woman become intolerably hard as she has to bear the mental and psychological torture by society and sometimes by one's own family members:

“Endless years of waiting, of living the life of neither a wife nor a widow, pitied by her relatives, wept over by her mother and mother-in-law, had-ridden by her misgivings that Arshad might die (because of ongoing war) or marry again, wrung the spirit out of her.”  
(Hosain 53)

On the day she got the news of Arshad's coming back home she started making preparations of their first moment. She attempts learning English to prove that she is not an ordinary or an illiterate village girl. But, the perpetual delays in his arrival are utterly painful and traumatic for her as they cause restlessness and suspicion regarding her husband's new life there where Bano has no place:

“She was cast into a gloom which was as deep as the heights to which her joy had carried her. She was haunted by the suspicion that he did not wish to return, that he had found a woman.”  
(Hosain 53)

Another feminist issue that is clearly discernible in this story is *Purdah* system that many women found an unwanted and imposed burden on their freedom. When Bano goes shopping she was feeling extremely uncomfortable in the public as well as in the sari shop without *Purdah*:

“...she removed the offending burqa but was glad the closed car hid her from passer-by. (Hosain 57)

Moreover, the story throws light on the trivialities of marital relationship where woman is supposed to wear cosmetics and other ornamentations to woo and coax her husband just like the way Bano does. Bano is still a loyal, dutiful, and affectionate wife. However, the underlying question is does Arshad feel the same way as Bano does after years of separation? The following conversation is an evidence to this:

“I must go now, Bano, to my room. I am tired.”

“Go? To your room? Incredulous surprise forced the words from her; then her heart was submerged in the shame of what people would say when they knew. Because she could not face her thoughts, she felt her mind paralysed.” (Hosain 66)

*The Daughter-in-Law* is another short story that highlights the issues of child marriage, child labour, and violence through the main characters Nasiban and Munni. Nasiban is mother-in-law while Munni, who is barely nine or ten, is the daughter-in-law. Munni becomes an unwanted yet unavoidable burden for

Nasiban as Munni's husband is ill and out of work and her own parents do not want to keep her with them for whole life. They think that after marriage Munni is the sole responsibility of her in-laws and not theirs. Hence, they want money in the form of alimony from Munni's in-laws to keep her at their home.

"The young daughter-in-law is with her mother, and I have to pay five rupees a month for her keep. It is a lot of money, but what can I do? Where can I keep her?" (Hosain 76)

Poverty and child labour are another themes conspicuous in the story. In male-dominated society, women are utterly dependent upon men for everything. Thus, if men are jobless or unemployed, it becomes utterly hard for women to survive and thrive which eventually forces them for doing menial jobs as Nasiban had to do to bear the expenses of her daughter-in-law. Despite being at the age of retirement and leading a peaceful and restful life, she has to work as an *Ayah* (babysitter) at an immensely meagre wages.

"You know, Begum Sahib, I work day and night with no care for sleep or rest. I do not grudge it, but I am old. If I could have someone to help me, make my tea in the morning, bring me my food, press my aching body..." (Hosain 79)

*The Loss* is a story about female illiteracy, poverty, and simplicity through the chief protagonist, a widowed mother, who worked as a foster mother at a Landlord's household. She was the simple daughter of poor farmers who has once owned land themselves. She never forgot that, and the earthborn pride withstood extremes of poverty. She lost her husband

when her son Chand was born and when her mother-in-law said the child was accursed and brought misfortune to the family, her love for it became a protective passion. But who knew that her own dear son would bring her in a state of utter destitution. Chand was a gambler and he lost a big amount in that. In order to compensate, he stole his mother's lifelong savings and kept it a secret unless the police revealed it indirectly.

"I am destitute, a beggar. I am at the mercy of the lowest. What am I now that I should live?" (Hosain 112)

Moreover, the story depicts the illiteracy of village women as they were highly superstitious. When the lost money and jewellery of the old woman was not found, one of the maid servants advised her to:

"Say a prayer over a knife and put it in the Holy Book, and the thief's guts will be cut to shreds. He will bleed to death, I tell you." (Hosain 120)

The last story to be discussed in the present paper is *A Woman and A Child*, a story about a barren and infertile woman struggling to become a mother and insult and humiliation she received from the society. She made incessant efforts to realize her dream but all in vain which resulted in the cultivation of her disbelief in God to fill her lap with a child. A woman without a child was and still is considered to be an inauspicious being. Such a woman is not at all regarded in the society; rather, she is extremely bullied and tortured mentally and psychologically for not procreating an heir of the family and thus resulting in the second marriage of the husband. The woman in the story was supported by her husband but not by her mother-in-law:



“Marry again, my son. Marry again. She has brought us nothing but tortured death.” (Hosain 123)

However, the husband did not obey his mother, for his wife’s passionate conviction that she could and would bear him a child, her tears, her tempers, her accusations, were stronger than his mother’s bullying and pleading. Not giving up hope, she decided to visit a *zenana* hospital. During her journey in a train, she met a woman with a wonderful and lovely child. She immediately got attracted towards the child and developed an unconditional love for it. The mother of the child felt pity for the woman.

“Allah’s ways are strange; He seems to have given you wealth, but denied you the richest of all gifts.” (Hosain 125)

“I have prayed; I have been to every shrine. I have tried wearing holy amulets, and drinking holy water. Sometimes, I think that all the holy water my husband has drunk has thinned his blood.” (Hosain 127)

Emotional void, mental trauma, and social pressure made the life of the barren women utterly intolerable. It paints a pathetic and miserable picture of a childless woman; nevertheless, the child of the other woman who met her in the train was a ray of hope for her. All the love she had stored for her unborn child, she lavished on the child she had seen on the train. It became the only reason for her continued existence while she waited for life to begin within her. She dressed the little one like a doll, bestowed a number of gifts on her, and cooked special food for her. She took that child as her own and could not tolerate even an hour’s distance from her. When the child was taken by her own mother on a distant wedding:

“...she felt the house a shell. Emptiness was around her and within her... If she was to live in silence why should others not share it with her? Why should another have what was hers by all the rights of desire and longing and sacrifice? Would it be easy to say ‘God’s will be done’ when His will left no hope?” (Hosain 134)

The culmination of this void, emptiness, and emotional tumult resulted in a tragedy where the woman ended the life of that innocent child while crushing it too tightly to her breast to let the child breathe.

“I am your amma. Don’t run away from me.”

The child struggled and whimpered

“Amma! Amma! Sh! Sh! Sh! Don’t call her. If she hears you she will come and take you away.”

The child’s struggles ceased. She held the still form tight, and swaying from side to side cried:

“You are mine. You are mine!” Hosain 134-135)

### Conclusion :

In the conclusion, it could be said that the short story collection, *Phoenix Fled*, by Attia Hosain focussed on the secluded life and helpless condition of its female protagonists. Numerous feminist issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, female subjugation under patriarchal social system, lack of education, dowry system, child bride, and gender discrimination and purdah could be extensively found in the stories which highlight the condition of women in pre-partitioned Indian and well as in Muslim households. Attia Hosain’s collection poses questions on customs and beliefs that have remained unchanged and resulted in the confinement

and shackling of women. On one hand, there are elite class women who have the privileges of getting educated without any prohibition, and then, there are women who have been deprived of any of such rights and are bound to be mere passive domestic animals. Hence, it become highly imperative that today's women ought to derive some lesson and inspiration from the stories and pull them out from domestic spheres in order to work for their amelioration by being mentally liberated and getting properly educated.

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# The Trauma of the Mind : Addressing the Wounded Inner Child of the Character Jane in Jane Eyre

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## **Introduction :**

What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance, was the mental battle fought! (p. 18)

The words above are musings by Jane Eyre about her past, namely the red-room episode. Jane discusses the mental injury the incident caused in her after being brutally beaten down by her cousin John Reed. It is fascinating to see that she prefers to discuss her internal suffering rather than the obvious intense physical anguish. The expressions “consternation of soul,” “brain...in tumult,” “darkness,” “dense ignorance,” and “mental battle” lend credence to this claim. Following the physical abuse, she received, her mind has undoubtedly been disrupted, causing her hurt emotions to reflect on her sorrow. The aim of this article is to channel those

feelings by classifying them as acts of physical, verbal, and emotional violence, in order bring out the means that helped the wounded inner child of Jane recover.

## **The Nature of Emotional Violence :**

The child is violated from being true to his or her emotional self in this sort of emotional or mental violence. As a result, the emotional child inside becomes depleted of energy and withdraws. Talking about the depleted child, Wooll says, “Mental abuse is the use of threats, verbal insults, and other subtler tactics to control a person's way of thinking. This form of abuse is especially disturbing because it is tailored to destroy self-esteem and confidence and undermine a personal sense of reality or competence.” The abuser manipulates the victim's thoughts by employing strategies including blaming, humiliating, guilt-tripping, belittling, patronizing, invalidating, etc.

**Blaming :**

Mrs. Reed unfairly blames Jane in order to justify excluding her from the family group. She could only watch from a distance as the children gathered around their mother, Mrs. Reed, appearing to be perfectly content. According to Mrs. Reed, Jane had been excluded from the group due to her less gregarious and non-child-like personality and that she must develop “a more attractive and sprightly manner, - something lighter, franker, more natural” (p. 9). Jane is silenced when she asks what her mistake was and is told not to talk to her elders in that way. Jane observes that she was a discord in Gateshead Hall. She begins to isolate herself from others to escape the pain of exclusion. She selects a book, settles in a location near the window, draws the curtain, and then she enters a double retirement. It serves as her hiding place-both physically from her cruel cousins and metaphorically from her emotional hurt. She is content with this, at least in her own way at the moment. The implication is that in order to cope with the pain of exclusion, Jane’s inner child learns to withdraw, leaving the wound unhealed. This tendency to withdraw eventually becomes a habit as she grows up, making it difficult for her to socialise with others.

**Belittling :**

Another tactic for wounding a child’s fragile emotional defences is to belittle them. By calling Jane insulting names, the Reeds do this to her. They reduce her from the dignity of a human being to that of an animal by calling her names like “rat,” “bad animal,” and “mad cat.” She is further denigrated by being referred to as a “rebel slave”. She is an easy target for the Reed children to attack. Gordon, in

his article, says, “Name-calling is one of the most damaging and painful types of bullying. It leaves victims with negative messages about who they are. It’s also harmful because name-calling attempts to falsely define people” (2022). Jane’s mood is affected by this, which is obvious damage to her sense of self: “My habitual mood of humiliation, self-doubt, forlorn depression, fell damp on the embers of my decaying ire. All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so” (p. 18). It is clear that she starts to judge herself and question if she really is a wicked person. She calls herself “a discord,” “scape-goat”, “a heterogeneous, useless, and a noxious thing”. Not only that, as the children

call Jane names in front of their servants, it controls how the household servants perceive Jane. All the servants except Bessie picture Jane to be a wicked and deceitful child. Indeed, one of the servants Abbott refers to her as “a little toad” and “an underhand little thing”, matching with the children’s choice of words. In such a setting, Jane naturally believes herself to be an ugly child employing naughty tricks.

**Patronizing :**

Additionally, Jane feels patronized by Mrs. Reed, her children, and the servants as they keep reminding her of her orphan hood. Jane states in the first chapter that she is “humbled by the consciousness of my (her) physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed” (p. 9). They try to convince her that she ought to be grateful to be brought up in this house, and it would be good on her part to be humble, agreeable, useful and pleasant to them. Jane is likewise coerced into obedience by John, calling attention to her dependence. Mrs. Reed expects Jane to

remember that she had always been her best friend, and to speak of her and be grateful to her accordingly. These conversations would have sent the wrong message to Jane's inner child, leading it to think she was less than what she actually is. She actually thinks that even if she is yearning to leave Gateshead, she wouldn't be able to go until she was a lady. She has no choice except to submit to the humiliation inflicted upon her, or else she would perish. Although she strives to commit no fault and to fulfill every duty, she is termed "naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon, and from noon to night" (p. 17), sending her inner child the message that she could never be enough.

#### **Invalidating :**

Also, Jane's thoughts and feelings are continually being dismissed, causing the invalidation of her emotions. When she raises concerns about the unfair treatment, she is told to keep quiet; when she yells at John Reed to defend herself, she is accused: "no one had reproved John for wantonly striking me; and because I had turned against him to avert further irrational violence, I was loaded with general opprobrium" (p. 17); when she screams in the red room out of fear of the ghost, she appears to be a precocious actress in her aunt's eyes - Abbot says of it as a naughty trick on purpose to bring all of them there; when she states her disinterest in reading Psalms, she is reproved for having a wicked heart. Talking about this indifference, Carrico says, "If a child grows up in an invalidating environment, they may not learn how to handle stress or manage their emotions. Instead, they might learn how to distrust their emotional responses and

hide their feelings" (2021). Jane learns to hide her feelings when she understood that seeking for someone to defend her is only in vain. She is rendered voiceless at her own suffering.

#### **The Path to Recovery :**

For Jane, any place outside the Gateshead Hall is a safe, non-judgmental environment both for her physical and emotional being. Lowood provides her with a safe place in Helen Burns and Miss Temple, who help to channelise her emotions in a better way. During her initial days in Lowood, Jane seems easily triggered at any unjust happening not only to her, but also to her loved ones. For instance, when Helen is punished by Miss Scatcherd, she is unable to bear it. She finds it disgraceful to be flogged and to be sent to stand in the middle of a room full of people. When she pours these concerns out to Helen, Helen describes her to be a "little untaught girl" (p. 62), for which she replies, "But I feel this, Helen: I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly" (p. 62). This takes the readers back to the red-room episode where her reason cried out "Unjust! - Unjust" (p. 17)! Also, she seems to relive the pain of the same event, the spasm of agony that clutched her heart, when she recounts it to Miss Temple. Jane receives an opportunity to release her pain when she is summoned to visit Mrs. Reed in the sick-bed. This is when she ascends the path which, nine years' age, she had walked down. Though the roof brings back hostile memories to her, she is now grown enough to have her gaping wounds quite healed and her flame of resentment extinguished.

Jane is triggered again as the recollection of childhood's terrors and sorrows revive at the sight of her aunt. But instead of reacting in anger, she quickly orders her emotions, seating herself near Mrs. Reed's bed. Her goal now is not to fight, but to forgive. Even though her aunt was not willing to be reconciled, Jane releases her past hurts by willingly offering her full and free forgiveness. She thus achieves her goal to rectify, forgive, and release the wounds of her past. The final step is to allow the inner child to identify and grieve losses. The major loss Jane had faced during her childhood is lack of companionship with her cousins. This scar is healed when she finds the inmates of the Moor-House to be her cousins. She expresses her joy of this late-found charm of relationship by renovating the Moor-House and making it ready before Diana and Mary could arrive. She finds pleasure in simple activities cleaning down the house and preparing food for them. Thus her inner child finds creative ways to supply for its past losses.

#### **Conclusion :**

“Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul,” says Dave Pelzer, the author of *A child called “it”*. Unfortunately, in the case of Jane, her wings were clipped off in her childhood, leaving her with limited mobility. However,

life provides her with people and places to help her regenerate her wings. Her wings begin to develop again, allowing her to enjoy the world's colours. She takes herself to a point of respect, love, and validation through her self-determination. Furthermore, when her inner child recovers, she begins to make herself valuable to others. Her independence assists her in this regard, and she achieves self-sufficiency by making her life helpful to others. She eventually marries Mr. Rochester, and after ten years, she proudly exclaims, “I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth” (p. 480).

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# Gender, Violence, and Nation : Hindu Masculinity During Colonial Period and Contemporary Situations in India

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## **Brief Introduction of the Documentary :**

Anand Patwardhan, an Indian documentarian, produced the 1995 film *Father, Son, and Holy War* (Pita, Putra, aur Dharmayuddha). The movie begins with an argument on matrilinear and patrilinear societies and talks about the origin of violence from the beginning of human civilizations. It states that earlier man was not aware of the importance of semen in reproduction and power remained mostly in the hands of women but as males became aware of the role of semen in reproduction, patriarchy came into existence. It is not that the matrilinear society was very peaceful and full of love but the evidence of violence became more explicit in patrilinear society. The documentary is divided into two halves, with the first *Trial by Fire* exploring the connection between sexual abuse against women and the brutality of the Hindu Nationalist movement, in the name of building a Hindu Rastra. The second section, titled *Hero Pharmacy*, examines the nature of masculinity in modern urban

India and how it contributes to sexual assault.

## **Violence and Hindu Masculinities - History, Text and Context :**

The critique and discussions of patriarchy, masculinity, and communalism during the colonial era do not suggest that earlier times had more permissive sexual and moral standards; rather, they show how, in response to colonial disruption and possibilities, individuals currently reworked past patriarchal vocabulary and hierarchical norms. Political nationalism and religious reformism both emerged as a result of the desire among followers of many religions to exhibit their cultures and religious ideals as superior to or at the very least comparable to those of the West. By giving meaning to contrasts with Muslims, a broader body of united Hindus was projected, ignoring the numerous conflicts like cast within the community. Publishers under the direction of senior Arya Samaj members waged a vigorous campaign against Muslims and Islam. All of them offered further opportunities for Hindu militant articulation and abstract unities.

These elements might be considered the main contributors to the development of virulent and aggressive masculinities during the colonial era. The first section's title of the documentary alludes to the trial that Hindu god-king Rama put his wife through after saving her from the demonic king Ravana and begins with the anti-Muslim riots that occurred in Bombay when the Babri Masjid was destroyed in December 1992. In the documentary, cameraman overhears several Hindu youngsters telling him that they had loved the murdering and looting, that a list of Muslims had been established in advance, and that some officials were aware of the plot to target Muslims. The connection between the so called nationalist movement and aggressive masculinity is discussed in the movie. In a voice-over, Patwardhan claims that the nationalist movement adopted militant images of Shivaji and Rama as a response to British-Raj prejudices of 'effeminate' Hindus and 'manly' British populations. The documentary goes on to explain how all opponents of Hindutva, including secular leaders and Muslims, were seen as weak and effeminate as a result of the association of Hinduism with violent traditions. The documentary shows a number of public speeches and rallies where Hindu leaders criticize Muslims while using sexist language. Images of Sikhs protesting in support of Khalistan and the Fatwa issued against Salman Rushdie show instances of misogyny and intolerance in other religious communities can also be seen in the documentary. Hinduism began to emphasize its martial side more and more. The fabled history of Hindu manhood, especially that of the courageous and powerful Marathas and Rajputs clashed with the Hindu male that was demilitarized by colonial attempts.

During the early twentieth century some sort of idea related to 'morality' developed and contributed a lot to shaping modern collective Hindu identity. 'Appropriate' and 'civilized' literature replaced literature containing *sringara rasa* or literature depicting erotic love or romantic love. Especially in Hindi literature, *veer rasa*, or literature filled with masculine essence, war, fighting, etc. was embraced a lot. *Veera rasa* became the suitable aesthetics for masculinity, Poets writing in this aesthetics were declared as Nation's Poet. However, commercial print literature posed a significant threat to efforts to free literature of all perceived 'obscenities.' The selling of erotic and semi-pornographic works and the publishing of ads for aphrodisiacs show a rising trend in the market for products that satisfy both male and female sexual fantasies and wants. Various laws related to obscenity were passed in the late 19th and early 20th century but the term obscenity has remained vague.

#### **Muscular and Phallic Representation of Masculinity :**

A certain conception of masculinity and nationalism's political philosophy come together to form muscular nationalism. The notion of a country is driven by a masculinity ideal linked with power, toughness, and physical ability, but it is also paired with the idea and construct of a virtuous woman, creating a gendered binary of a combative man and a chaste woman. The second part of the documentary shows typical masculinity icons and investigates how they relate to sexuality and misogyny. The movie specifically focuses on phallic representations of masculinity; a phallic symbol is



meant to represent male generative powers. Many political figures have been heard equating non-violence and secularism with impotence and weakness. Gandhi's ahimsa model was no longer regarded as a viable one because it was thought to have weakened the Hindu country. Gandhi's method of presenting the idea of gender and masculinity as problems were entirely destroyed by militant Hindu organizations. Against tolerant and peaceful Hindus, an independent militant hero was supported. This decade saw a lot of stories of kidnapping, and the concern for women's chastity and purity encouraged arguments for Hindu men's strength. The protection of women's honor became crucial to the community's virility. The idea of innocence obscured the politics of cultural virginity, elevating men to positions of authority. Further section of the documentary explores the reasons for the appeal of aggressive and violent portrayals of masculinity on television, including those found in Bollywood films and professional wrestling. They utilize young children from different social backgrounds as illustrations of actions that idolize violence. While young male Shiv Sena members from less affluent backgrounds are shown fighting on the streets, upper-class children are depicted mobbing professional wrestler Randy Savage, better known by his ring moniker 'Macho Man.' Off-screen, many young guys can be overheard discussing the prospect of gang-raping a stranger and how 'fun' it was to see rape in films. The All India Hindu Mahasabha's declared goals included enhancing Hindu physical appearance and fostering a sense of self-defense among them by creating military schools and forming volunteer corps. Physical education was made compulsory

for people associated with Hindu Mahasabha. The stories of the novel were torn between nationalist and moral concerns on one hand and pleas for commercial interest, emotional fantasies, entertainment and romance on the other.

French feminist Luce Irigaray has described women as 'this sex which is not one' - the phrase 'one' becomes important here. In many aspects, Irigaray is correct; our society still pushes men to conceive of themselves only in terms of their penises, continues to confuse male sexuality with what we refer to as 'potency,' and does nothing to encourage men to explore their whole bodies. (Bordo, Page 42) This can be seen in the movie also; it documents the incident in which various aphrodisiacs were published that claimed to increase the sexual power of a man and sexual power was equivalent to the power of a man or famously called *mardana takat*. Thus, it can be seen how phallus comes into the center of every discourse around men and masculinity.

#### **Appropriation of Hindu Masculinity in Contemporary Socio-political Situation :**

A process can be found in modern times, where many individuals have masculinized images of Hindu deities like Ram and Hanuman by neglecting their actual deeds in order to suit their own purposes. This section contains some of the well-known images of these gods that have been going around on social media below. I have included an image of Hindu gods and goddesses at an old temple together with an image of the same gods trending on social media, which once again illustrates the anxiety surrounding masculinity and the urge to use violence in the name of the country to further one's own objectives.



*Image Hanuman in ancient Hindu temple Kainchi Dham, Nainital.*



*Violent Image of Ram on social media.*



*Violent Image of Hanuman circulating on Popular media.*



*Image of Ram in ancient Hindu temple, Mandir Bada, Arjuni Chhattisgarh*

We can easily observe the differences between the above depiction; these changes are the product of the aggressive mentality of those who use religious symbols for their own selfish gain, power, retribution, etc. Some segments of society are replacing the traditional depiction of the god-wearing ornamental jewelry with one that depicts him brandishing weapons because they now view it as feminine and unsuitable. One can now hear stories of people appropriating to the point where they even defend violence committed on the auspicious day of Ram Navami. The raucous DJ music has taken the place of the traditional bhajans, which were incredibly meditative and deep. In a piece on it, Brahm Prakash, Indian Scholar, and professor at the Department of Arts and Aesthetics in JNU claims that the sound of Hindutva has changed to a boom boom. “The sound of Hindutva is no longer Om but it is its obverse: BOOM BOOM BOOM. High on hatred, it dances on the rock and plays on the beat. Hindutva has shown that music can lead to silencing the minority and a festival can be a harbinger of hate” (Prakash). An article in Hindustan Times suggests that the auspicious day of

Ramanavami has reported cases of violence from southern states like Telangana to Uttar Pradesh in the North. During these 'celebrations,' members of Hindu farright organizations brandished swords and played obscene music in front of a mosque. Sufi bhajans of Kabir or Bulleh Shah always failed to become part of popular culture. Even the Sanskrit bhajan like *Madhrashtkam* which describes the politeness, and benevolent nature of God is difficult to be heard in contemporary times. These traditional bhajans are no longer part of contemporary popular Hindu culture, in an attempt to present oneself as masculine. The communal tracks, beats, and slogans raised during these 'celebrations' create a toxic environment of hatred. Annett Schirmer, a psychologist, reported at the Society for Neuroscience conference in New Orleans. Rhythmic sound "not only coordinates the behavior of people in a group, but it also coordinates their thinking-the mental processes of individuals in the group become synchronized" (Fields). So, the person taking part in such processions, on listening to these songs containing the lyrics of sexism and communalism feels like owning it. In terms of Walter Benjamin, it can be called the 'aestheticization of politics' which allows masses to express themselves. This kind of aestheticization of politics have become very common in the contemporary political situations of

India which in turn promotes intolerant behavior and violent masculinity.

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# **Biranganas : A Harrowing Journey of Women's War as Depicted in Dr. Nilima Ibrahim's *War Heroines Speak : The Rape of Bangladeshi Women in 1971 War of Independence***

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The categorization of female sexuality based on their lenience to the patriarchal laws as good/bad begins from her early childhood and disrupts her right to be herself. The burden of keeping 'good girl privilege' (Ralston, 2021, p.6) impels her to criticize those women who dismantle the socially constructed 'areas of danger' that she herself fears to go through due to 'whorephobia' (Ralston, 2021, p.6). These norms of gender that are deeply conceptualized by them are exploited by the enemy. Raping the enemy woman is a psychological warfare through which the perpetrator owns her enemy women's womb and questions her men's masculinity. As her body is metaphorical of her nation, he wins the nation through colonizing her body. Silencing/silence, that surrounds sexual atrocities, motivates perpetrators to exploit victim's silence and to induce violence again on the victim. As it is more effective than bombs or shells in destroying the ethnic makeup of the society, nations choose rape as a tactic to

win war over its enemy. The Liberation War of Bangladesh also witnessed a systematic genocidal rape of women, especially Bengali women both by the Pakistani military and by Razakars.

After India's independence in 1947 and the partition of India and Pakistan, there aroused fights between East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan resisted against the repression of the Pakistani government as they were exempted from civil and military service. The denial of the status of a national language to Bengali further accelerated their rage towards the government, which led to the Language Movement of 1952. This otherization, catalyzed by the government's refusal to accept the results of general elections of 1970 in which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected as the President of Pakistan, paved way for a war between East and West Pakistan in March 1971. As it is noted in the preface of the work *War Heroines Speak: The Rape of Bangladeshi Women in 1971 War of Independence*:

The Pakistani army tortured and killed at mass scale; executed leading intellectuals, destroyed infrastructure and assets, and carried out genocidal rape of women in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). These crimes against humanity were planned and executed by Yahya Khan and his generals. It is reported that as many as 3,000,000 Bengalis were killed; more than 1,000 elite intellectuals were executed; and more than half a million women were raped over 9 months. (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.7)

Women other than Bengalis were also raped irrespective of their religion, caste or class. Women of diverse age groups were either killed or taken away as sex slaves and many soldiers claimed that they have left their seeds in the wombs of Bengali women. As the integration of these women to a society that equalizes women's purity with the honour of the family and nation is an onerous task, the Bangladeshi government, after six days of the end of war, in December 1971, publically designated women who are rape survivors of war as 'Birangonas'. The word 'Birangona' that is synonymous with brave and courageous woman was endowed upon them by the State to elevate their status to war heroines. Even Though it was a ceremonious act of the government to honor those women, the act of offering the honor created adverse effects. The honor became stigma in the patriarchal society of Bangladesh that connects female chastity with the honour of the family and nation, which further led to the revictimisation of those war heroines. As per D' Costa (2006, as cited in Islam, 2022) Birangona became synonymous with "barangona" which means prostitute (p.70). Public memory of Biranganas was not supported by oral narratives of them

till 1990s and there is a 'public secrecy' around the rape of women in 1971 Bangladesh. (Mookherjee, 2016)

Dr. Nilima Ibrahim's *Ami Birangona Bolchi*, translated by Dr. Nusrat Rabee as *War Heroines Speak: The Rape of Bangladeshi Women in 1971 War of Independence* addresses the harrowing journey of seven women who are honoured with the title Biranganas. Portaying the state of Biranganas who were raped in the hands of Pakistani army and the local collaborators (Razakars), the author tries to break the silence around the unspeakable history of Biranganas and states that their contribution in building a free nation Bangladesh can never be erased from the public memory of the nation. The Government measures to assimilate them into the normal society through marriage, abortion, adoption of children, providing jobs and through setting up a rehabilitation centre in Dhaka, were resisted by the patriarchal Bangladeshi family. As Susan Brown Miller (1975) observes "many Bengalis did not accept wives or daughters back into the family who had been raped in order to avoid public disgrace" (p.79-80).

Through the narratives of Mrs. Tara Nielsen and Mina, the author delineates how Biranganas were discarded from their own families. Mrs. Tara Nielsen, a Birangana who is introduced in the first chapter of the book, shares her experiences of rejection by the family and community, due to shame fear post rape that impel her to take refuge in the rehabilitation centre and in Holland later. She was kidnapped and raped by her fellow countrymen and was handed over to the Pakistani military later. Even though the new government rewarded her family for her war heroine

status; she was not accepted as her blemishes can't be erased with the government support, in their belief. Instead of accepting her, they added a second storey to their house 'with the price of her stolen dignity and femaleness' (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p. 47) and asked her never to re-enter the house as it will create shame for their family. Like Tara, Mina, another Birangana in the seventh narrative of the work is also a victim of rape who finds comfort within the refugee camp as she is thrown away from her house by her husband. Her husband Hasnat, who opposed her father's pleas to escort him with Mina and children, eloped to Gazipur during the war and hid in the nearby village without saving them, explodes in rage, on her return to home and degrades her to a witch in front of her children. The fear of shame that her family will be compelled to endure if they accommodate her in her home, compels her to take refuge in the rehabilitation center.

The narratives of Rina and Meher Jan address the fear of societal stigmatisation that compelled women to accompany their rapists to Pakistan. The decision of Rina, the daughter of high-ranking official in the Pakistani Government to accompany her rapist to Pakistan post rape, arouses out of her fear of facing her community. As she was compelled to be a sex slave to one of the officers of the Pak army, she was degraded and ridiculed by some Bengali boys as a 'Bengali whore'. This incident made her realise that her pollution can never be erased from the minds of the society. Like Lady Macbeth she laments "If you gave me the most fragrant perfume from Arabia, it would not take away the dullness of my interior" (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.93). Like Rina, Meher Jan decides

to accompany Layek Khan, one of the military officers in the rape camp to Pakistan and marries him, as she states she can't go back to "the terror and violence of her own society" (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.54). Even Though Rina was dissuaded from her decision to migrate to Pakistan by her brother after she was rescued by the Indian army, migration was a survival mechanism for Meher Jan. Like Meher Jan, migration becomes a tool of gaining identity for Mrs. Nielsen. Both Meher Jan (who migrates to Pakistan with her Pakistani husband) and Tara (who migrates to Holland and later becomes Mrs. Tara Nielsen) migrate to save themselves from the realm of anonymity and disrespect in Bangladesh. Through her narrative, Mrs. Nielsen states how her immigration to Holland and her marriage with Mr. Nielsen, a doctor made her acceptable for her once unacceptable family and society.

As families considered marriage as a way of assimilating raped women into the society, they forced them to marry. In the chapter Rina, she narrates the ways in which Aatur, whom she once loved, was forced to marry Rina by her brother. While her brother reads Aatur's reluctant agreement of marrying her as generosity, Rina feels herself embarrassed as a burden for both Aatur and her brother. She thinks: "Am I such a burden to my brother? Was it the wedding of a sister or was it finally the ending of an obligation?" (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.105). His demand for a secret marriage made her call off the wedding and take refuge in her studies. She becomes a welcoming presence before her family and society after her marriage with Nasir, a physician in the army who considers her Birangana status as an honor for him. He states :

By the way I am a freedom fighter and this is also the highest honor for me. Why wouldn't you be proud of what you had to sacrifice? Shame? What shame? Shame is for those people in our country who could not protect our sisters and mothers like you. Some of them actually led them to the enemy. (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.111)

Like Rina's family, Maina's family's efforts to assimilate her in to society through her marriage with Harun, makes her father to approach Harun's father with the request. The embarrassment that her father faces through the proposal and her mother's curses in reaction to the incident, made her leave her home to the comforts of the rehabilitation center. Her life transforms as she gets into a job after her studies and that gives her confidence to assert her identity as that of a proud Birangana. She states: "Yes, it was true I was a Birangona and I had to come back from winning the war. My last victory would be Harun over his father" (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.164).

Families where Biranganas are welcomed as the pride of the family was rare in the post war scenario of Bangladesh where their voice was silenced and their history remained as a 'public secret'. As it is stated in the narrative of Shefali, rape victims were considered as an inauspicious presence in marriage ceremonies. The societal ostracisation that shefali's family underwent due to their acceptance of the rape victim, impels her to take refuge in a job as a typist in Dhaka. Her marriage with the business man Imam elevated her status from an inauspicious object. But her status of a spoilt object again started to haunt her, while Imam began to question her chastity, in response to her criticisms of

his late night parties. He questions her: "You are showing me how to behave with restraint!! Indeed, it's quite befitting that you are giving me a lesson. You are correcting my actions after giving your body as a gift to thousands of men! Wonderful" (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.138).

The lives of Biranganas that are portrayed in the text reveal the hidden desire of them to be acknowledged as hero heroines of the country. As Shefali states in the end of her narrative

My biggest identity to the outside world was that I was a Birangona. I sacrificed my biggest gift, my womanhood, for my country. I am not less fortunate or less sacred than a martyr. They gave their life once- but I sacrificed myself many times. So many people, including my husband, looked down on me. I felt sorry for them, felt pity. One day I would take leave from this earth as a victorious woman. (Ibrahim, 1994/2021, p.144)

Like Shefali, every woman in the narrative criticises the attitude of society where woman's worth is judged on the purity of her body. When men are honored for their sacrifices for the land and even the Rajakars are endowed with high recognitions, why those who are sacrificed their 'biggest gift' are sidelined from the pages of history.

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# Representation of Psychological Violence and Trauma in the Select Poems of Louise Gluck

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## **Introduction :**

One of the major threats to human existence is violence. And with the changing times, we see newer forms of violence coming into practice. In very simple terms, violence means harming other human beings, animals or nature. Violence can cause physical, psychological or perhaps both types of harm. Psychological violence, on the other hand, is different from physical violence, but both can leave a scar on the psyche of the human mind. Psychological violence, also known as moral violence, mental violence, or emotional violence, is a form of violence or abuse against others where no direct physical violence is being deployed. Psychological ill-treatment, therefore, corresponds to acts committed or omitted that are psychologically harmful. The consequences can cause both immediate and long-term damage on a behavioural, cognitive, emotional, psychosomatic, or physical level. While it can happen to anyone some common relationships which are more prone to psychological violence are between romantic partners, a parent

and child, caretaker and dependent, teacher and student, close friends, or within a professional setting. Psychological violence includes verbal abuse, intimidation and terrorization, humiliation and degradation, exploitation, harassment, rejection and withholding of affection, isolation, and excessive control. Psychological violence often leads to trauma, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Louise Gluck was praised for “her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal” by the judges of the Swedish Academy when she won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2020. She is an American poet with a vision to portray human life as it is. Her writings are replete with emotional depth based on the experiences of modern life. She does not shy away from addressing the cruelty and sadness of human existence. She has written on a variety of themes but almost all of her poems have one thing in common, the innate nature of the human being, their emotional complexity and their complicated

lives. Even when she's writing about nature she does not do so in isolation. Her portrayal of human relationships and emotions is brutally honest. Each and every poem has a story to tell and she chooses some of them to simply express how psychological violence leads to trauma.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) defines trauma as the symptoms that occur following exposure to a traumatic event that involves actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence. This exposure could come in the form of experiencing the event, witnessing the event or learning that the event was experienced by a family member or close associate.

*First born* was first published in 1968. It was the first poetry collection by Gluck published when she was just twenty-five. It represents the speaker in a gloomy, even diseased landscape "The crocus spreads like cancer," in "Easter Season," in which she, responds to a world of brutal relationships with bitterness, disappointment, and disgust at how she is treated by lovers, doctors, and family members. A poem about abortion, entitled "The Wound", symbolizes the trauma of a mother. In the second section of the collection, most of the poems deal with psychological violence. In the poem "The Edge", she says that, her husband is bored with this relationship but still she does everything to please her husband. There is no reward for the things she does for him. She feels crippled in that house. The reason for this emotional turmoil becomes evident when she says that her husband only pretends

to love her for the sake of their children. It doesn't seem like a matter of falling out of love rather it seems like a very long relationship that involves emotional manipulation and toxic behavior.

Trauma symptoms may come in the form of intrusive memories, dreams, or flashbacks; avoidance of reminders of the traumatic event; negative thoughts and feelings; or increased alertness or reactivity. Memories associated with trauma are typically explicit, coherent, and difficult to forget. "The Racer's Widow", deals with the trauma of accident and death. The speaker describes how she is haunted by the death of her husband as she says:

"It is not painful to discuss.

His death. I have been primed for this,"

Although she was trained for this separation, she is unable to forget how she saw him die in front of her, she remembers each and every detail of the traumatic event which frequently resurfaces in the form of nightmares. Her body turns to ice when she remembers how tragically her husband died, his body in pieces, even though her husband is no longer alive, she can't be free from his death.

"Phenomenal Survivals of Death in Nantucket" is a poem in four parts, each part narrating a tale of how life survives and persists on this small island. A hurricane destroys everything on the island but still, few people survive. In the third part, we see how they are saved by the doctors. The speaker tells us about the "acres of shining white body in Nantucket" and that she should wear a locket with her lover's hair inside to

remember him. Natural disasters like this leave a very deep scar on one's psychic which can often result in some psychological disorders. Given that subjective experiences differ between individuals, people will react to similar events differently. In other words, not all people who experience a potentially traumatic event will become psychologically traumatized (although they may be distressed and experience suffering). Some people will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after being exposed to a major traumatic event or series of events.

*Ararat* is the fifth poetry collection by Gluck, published in 1990. As Daniel Morris has said "Ararat revises depictions of nature from her first two books, but it is also a work of personal revision and stylistic transformation in how she inscribes nature. In effect tearing down the authorial personae of pyrotechnical stylism so evident in *Firstborn*, Gluck's reticent tone of voice mirrors the speaker's emotional numbness to the point where the trauma of her father's death and the reexperiencing of her sister's death have become "written" into the texture of her work." According to K. R. Eissler, man is the only creature that is aware of death, and this awareness determines his existence. As a result, the death drive is not (innate), and no one desires death. Furthermore, coping with the death of a loved one can be one of the most difficult challenges anyone faces. This can be due to murder, accident, or suicide. Death can be traumatic, and often violent, which can lead to increased distress. "A Fantasy" is a very brutal poem dealing with the trauma of death. The realization that death is inevitable and no one can save us from

death is almost tragic. The misery caused by death is one of the most traumatic experiences anyone has to go through. It becomes evident in the first few lines:

"I'll tell you something: every day people are dying. And that's just the beginning."

The speaker is unable to understand the idea of death and how absurd everything seems when one witnesses the death of a loved one, how to deal with the grief that comes from death, and how easily people forget about the dead because they are forced to go back to their mundane lives. It leaves a scar on the people who are left to carry on with their lives.

Gluck has written tremendously on childhood trauma, some theories suggest childhood trauma can increase one's risk for mental disorders including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance abuse. Childhood adversity is associated with neuroticism during adulthood. In *Ararat*, we find many poems that deal with childhood trauma and psychological violence. "Lost Love" is a poem that deals with the psychological turmoil of an unloved child. The speaker begins the poem by describing how her sister died right after her birth and how it changed her mother because the death of her first child was too painful for her. The speaker feels like her sister's body is like a magnet that draws her mother's heart into the earth. She can feel that her mother is not living with them, she desperately wants to go to her dead child. Because of this traumatic incident either she has become numb and devoid of feelings or she is afraid to love

her second daughter. Her heart has turned very cold maybe because she couldn't heal from that trauma, but her rigidity and indifference would cause her living daughter to feel unloved and ignored. An unloved child does not hate its parents, they start to hate themselves.

In "The Untrustworthy Speaker" we find the speaker says that we shouldn't believe her because her heart has been broken and that is why she can't see anything objectively. She narrates the story of her suffering which has made her so oblivious of her own identity. She doesn't know who she is and that is why she is dangerous. Identity crises and the question of proper character development are often the results of psychological violence and trauma. As the speaker says in the last two lines a wound to the heart is also a wound to the mind.

In "Brown Circle" we see how generational trauma is passed on from one generation to another. Much like traditions, heirlooms, hair color, and secret family recipes get passed down through families, people can also inherit trauma. Generational trauma-known as intergenerational or transgenerational trauma-is a cycle of trauma that passes through families. The trauma that is being carried on by the speaker is reflected in her son. Her mother asked her if she hated family so much, why did she have one but she did not hate family, she hated being a child because a child does not hold any authority, they have no choice of their own. It is quite obvious that she didn't have a good relationship with her mother and that is why she is unable to love her son properly. But she wants to break this generational

trauma and that is why she is ready to forgive her mother.

#### **Conclusion :**

Psychological violence and trauma are very complicated and dynamic themes yet Gluck writes about them with beauty and understanding. Both the collections "Firstborn" and "Ararat" though dealing with different stories showcase similar themes. The poems seem to be connected to one another. The pain and suffering of the poet's life is reflected in her writings. "Ararat" is semi-autobiographical as it draws heavily from the poet's life, the death of her sister and her father left a very deep scar on her psychic. She had a first-hand experience of pain, suffering, death, loss, and trauma. These poems are in a way used to heal from that trauma because, by the end of this collection, we find the poet coming to terms with her grief. The first and last poem of the collection begins with "I was wounded a long time ago", this wound is not caused by physical violence but it was caused by psychological violence. "Firstborn" is mostly fictional with a very dark tone and setting. The consequences of psychological violence, and emotional abuse are evident in these poems. The complexity of relationships between husband and wife, children and parents, siblings, and cousins are used for self-discovery. In order to heal from trauma it is very important to understand and acknowledge them and these poems seem like an attempt to do so.

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# 'Behind the Curtain of Order' - Violence and its Silent Other in Satyajit Ray's Calcutta Trilogy

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Violence is undoubtedly one of the most complex and ambiguous categories that demands a critical inquiry from a philosophical lens. Both the intentional dimension and executional dimension play a significant role in constituting the category of violence. However, Mark Vorobej (2016) has proposed, a 'HAVIN' criteria in order to conceptualize violence:

1. Harm
2. Agency
3. Victimhood
4. Instrumentality
5. Normativity

The dimension of 'harm', he explains, analyses violence in relation to 'the infliction of harm of injury'. (5) It tries to look at different types and notions of 'harm' and how it can be related to the category of violence. The second and third dimension talks about 'identity' of both the perpetrators and victims of violence. It tries to look at how identity plays a role in the infliction as well as experience of violence. The third dimension, Vorobej (2016) argues, harks back to Arendt, who argues that it is impossible to exercise

violence without making use of 'instruments'. (p. 5) Thus this dimension tries to look if 'any conceptual constraints need to be placed on the means by which violence occurs; or, more specifically, on the instruments that perpetrators may use in inflicting harm upon victims.' (p. 5) This dimension also questions if violence can transcend the exercise of physical force. And Vorobej (2016) also adds that this dimension, also contrary to Arendt asks 'is it possible for violence to occur either without a perpetrator, or without some kind of a victim?' (p. 5) The last dimension looks at violence from a post-ethical perspective, as Vorobej says that it is usually seen in a 'highly negative normative (or, evaluative) light.' (p. 5) Thus the last dimension tries to transcend the boundaries of the normative approaches to violence.

Again, C.A.J. Coady (1986) has discussed about three different types of 'violence', the first type is what he calls 'restricted', that is 'typically those which concentrate on positive interpersonal acts of force usually involving the infliction of physical injury', the second type is what

he calls 'wide', that is those type of acts that 'include(e) within the extension of the term 'violence' a great range of social injustices and inequalities' and the third type what he calls 'legitimet' that 'makes explicit reference to the illegality, illegitimacy or wrongfulness of the acts it classifies as acts of violence.' (Coady, 1986, p. 4, Wyckoff, 2013, p. 338) While the third definition is not significantly different from the first two, it involves the notion of 'violation' meaning that this act of violence does include some form of 'violation, or harm, or wrong.' (Wyckoff, 2013, p. 338) Wyckoff (2013) opines that in the Legitimet sense, violence seems to be a violation of 'a right or a moral claim.' (p. 339) What can be derived from these diverse definitions of violence is that, while in the narrow sense it involves physicality or physical expression, as a category, the spectrum of violence is spread way beyond the realm of physicality. Following Coady's taxonomy, Wyckoff (2013) propounds four possible types of violence: firstly, 'those that are restricted and legitimet', secondly 'those that are restricted and non-legitimet', thirdly, 'those that are wide and legitimet', and lastly 'those that are wide and non-legitimet.' (p. 339) As a result, one needs to track the ways through which violence is expressed in different situations. While physicality remains the most basic site for violence, its spectral dimension is hard to ignore.

However, the legitimet definition of violence (that holds violation as an integral part) also indicates that under normal(ized) conditions, no society allows for an exercise of violence, especially physical violence. Thus, violence is expressed only as a form of 'violation'.

This indicates, in a way, that the outcome of violence is by definition exceptional and not part of the 'norm'(al). Given this condition, one needs to look how violence is initially 'repressed'. Repression is defined as "the operation by which the subject repels and keeps at a distance from consciousness representations (thoughts, images, memories) that are disagreeable because they are incompatible with the ego." (Rabin, 2013, para. 1) For Freud, however these repressed wishes are never 'destroyed in the unconscious' but 'forever re-emerging in the form of what are generically called derivatives of the unconscious.' (Rabain, 2013, para. 4) Freud (1939a [1934-38]), infact says: "What is forgotten is not extinguished but only 'repressed'; its memory-traces are present in all their freshness, but isolated by 'anticathexes'.... they are unconscious-inaccessible to consciousness" (p. 94). Thus, the process of the 'return of the repressed' can be defined as "the process whereby repressed elements, preserved in the unconscious, tend to reappear, in consciousness or in behavior, in the shape of secondary and more or less unrecognizable "derivatives of the unconscious." (Rabain, 2013, para. 1) Resultantly, when the physicality of violence is repressed, its return is seen in a spectral form. This 'other' of violence, seemingly silent and spectral, does have the power to make occasional returns, in diverse forms.

Satyajit Ray has, throughout his career tried to stay away from inculcating physical violence in his movies as well as writings. He writes in the author's note to his Feluda collection that his stories 'have to be kept 'clean'. (Ray vii) One can easily infer that this need for cleanliness and order is, for Ray an 'instrument' to control

physical violence. While, one may argue that Feluda stories were written for children, which can justify his call for 'cleanliness' but if one looks at his film and literary creations, it becomes clear that they hardly showcase physical violence. Yet violence returns in his works in spectral and silent forms. His Calcutta Trilogy can be considered as a significant study of violence.

Ray's Calcutta Trilogy comprises three films: *Pratidwandi* (The Adversary) (1970), *Seemabaddha* (Company Limited) (1971) and *Jana Aranya* (The Middleman) (1976). All of these three films under Ray's Calcutta Trilogy document the turbulent and extremely 'violent' 1970s in the city. The 70s in Calcutta are marked by Naxalite uprisings. Anwesa Sengupta writes:

The Naxalite movement started in the summer of 1967 in northern Bengal and within a couple of years it spread across the entire province. A confrontation between the peasants and the landlords, followed by a clash between the peasants and the police, turned into a radical political movement that would dictate the politics of West Bengal for almost an entire decade. (Sengupta)

One can see that violence at this time was two-sided, on one hand rebels were taking recourse to violence against the state, while, simultaneously, the state was exercising violence against the rebels as well. It was under this backdrop, the Calcutta Trilogy was made.

*Pratidwandi* (The Adversary) recounts the travails of Siddhartha, who is compelled to quit studies after his father's death and look for jobs, at a time marked by massive unemployment. In this movie one sees the violence arising out

of unemployment and corruption. The movie features a bomb blast in a cinema hall which the protagonist visits. Yet when he comes out of the hall, he seems calm. This indicates how people have normalized violence. Harking back to the 'legitimist' dimension of violence, one might categorize it as violation of the right of an audience. Yet, Siddhartha's reaction seems to be an ironical questioning of the very idea of 'violation', thereby questioning the very normalcy of the time he is living in. The state's efforts to maintain stability (by repressing the violence of a turbulent time) seems to get dismantled by the bomb blasting, but only for a few seconds. Siddhartha is angry, disgusted with everything, yet he deliberately represses it. He seems to suppress the anger boiling inside him till the climax of the movie, where he loses his cool and gets violent. It is at this moment 'the silent other' of a repressed violence, which was under control throughout the movie, chooses to raise its voice.

The next movie *Seemabaddha* (Company Limited) features Shyamal, a young executive climbing up the corporate ladder, only to see himself morally degenerated into corruption, and falling in the eyes of his sister-in-law, Tutul, who used to admire him once. In this movie, violence is done through the instrument of economy. The fake strike at the factory, that Shyamal organizes to save his reputation indicates how money can regulate the very intensity of violence. This form of regulation, too, problematizes the very idea of 'violation', in the legitimist sense of violence.

*Jana Aranya* (The Middleman) recounts how Somnath, after many unsuccessful attempts at getting an



employment, turns out to be a 'middleman' in business, at the cost of his honesty. This movie showcases Somnath, towards the end, compelled to use his friend Sukumar's sister's body for his own financial advantages, to get an order. However, as a residue of his former honest and ethical self, he requests her to leave, but she refuses and agrees, in a way to be 'violated'. The movie shows a gendered dimension of violence i.e. violence on the female body, which again, problematizes the idea of 'violation' itself.

On the narrative level, one can notice that fit Ray, it becomes necessary to bridle a total outburst of violence, in order to record a full-fledged story, with its beginning, middle and end. Yet, at the very heart of its linearity, lies disruption. As an example, one can see that it is the strike in *Seemabaddha (Company Limited)* that makes the story complete. Thus, the controlled violence, also finds its outlet in various crucial phases of the movie. Thus, repressed violence and its silent other turn out to be a lens through which the audience can see the turbulent 70s in Kolkata.

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# Unravelling the Gloomy Side of Glamour : Exploring Sexualized Violence in Shobhaa De's *Starry Nights* and Shashi Tharoor's *Show Business*

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Sexualized violence is a form of abuse in which sex or sexual actions are used to subjugate, control or dominate another person. Sexual violence can take many forms, including sexual harassment, assaults, and rape. The film industry is widely recognised for the high incidence of sexualized violence, frequently perpetrated by those in positions of influence. One reason for this is the industry's fierce power dynamics, in which eager actors, actresses, and other professionals aspire to work. The novels *Starry Nights* (De, 1992) by Shobhaa De and *Show Business* (Tharoor, 1994) by Shashi Tharoor each offer a unique perspective through which it is possible to explore sexualised violence in the film industry as these two deal with the film world and its experiences. The glamour and grandeur of the film world have the potential to hide the abuse and exploitation that occurs behind the scenes. The most pertinent forms of sexualised violence are seen in the forms of the sexualization and objectification of women's bodies, the casting couch, and the male gaze.

Objectification of women refers to women who are often reduced to their physical appearance and sexual appeal. The sexual objectification of women and the negative repercussions accompanying it are the subjects of a significant corpus of research in academic circles. (Calogero et al., 2011; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Szymanski et al., 2010) Objectification theory proposes that women are socialised, through the portrayals of women's bodies in the media and their interactions with other people, to regard themselves as things whose worth is contingent on their outward appearance. (Moradi & Huang, 2008) People tend to attribute less generous qualities to sexualized women, such as lesser levels of competence, intelligence, agency, self-respect, and morality; also, watching sexualized women can lead to increased levels of self-objectification. (Daniels & Zurbriggen, 2016; Glick et al., 2005; Halliwell et al., 2011) In *Starry Nights*, Aasha Rani's value is frequently judged based on her physical appeal. This is because she is continuously scrutinized

and compared to other women working in the profession. “Kishenbhai did not like dark girls. He’d always gone for ‘doodh-ke~jaisi- gori’ women himself.” (De, 1992, p. 3) The whole novel dwells on objectifying the heroine, proving that Aasha Rani internalises the whole objectification process. “She wore a flesh-coloured bra and nearly-invisible beige bikini panties underneath. Her tights were spangled Lycra, clinging to her legs.” (p.9) She never realises that objectification is a form of violence carried out by the powerful at the cost of her bodily integrity. Towards the end of the novel, she is made to realise that she is nothing but the identification of the body. The industry is unforgiving for getting old, which is a natural process. “The market has changed. People want young chidiyas, not married women with children.” (p.256) The objectification of the body is the only source of survival in the film industry standards.

Maya, the protagonist of *Show Business*, is also subjected to objectification as she is subjected to unwelcome sexual advances and comments about her attractiveness. “For years her breasts have been Abha’s trade mark, like Monroe’s legs or Bardot’s derrière, though she has never been called upon to reveal as much of her assets as either.” (Tharoor, 1994, p.11). Internalisation of the objectification makes the sexualised violence an acceptable one. “She does it well, she has practiced all the moves, and she is known to be willing to oblige the producer anytime he wants a special favour. Nothing unusual about that-hell, they all are equally willing,” (p. 54-55).

‘Casting Couch’ is another form of sexualised violence in the film industry.

Aspiring actors and actresses are often pressured into sexual actions with influential persons in exchange for career progress in the film industry. Numerous works talk about the casting couch’s existence and validate the sexualised violence in the film industry. (Bose, 2006; Dean, 2008; Kammeyer, 2008).

De very figuratively explains the situation in which Casting Couch is the only medium through which women will be able to make an entry into the film industry. This leads to an endless loop of other forms of sexualised violence graphically explained in the novel. “He had pulled her roughly onto the bed and said ‘Kapdeyuttaro.’ She had looked slightly puzzled as her Hindi had still been at a rudimentary stage. Seeing her hesitate he snarled, ‘Saali Hindi, soonanahi? Behave like fucking virgins these bitches!’” (De, 1992, p. 37) Tharoor too, captures this form of sexualised violence. He cross compares the situation with the ordinary lives of the poor, where offering sexual favour forms the basis for survival “Someone gets a part by sleeping with the producer; in the end what matters is that she has the part, the film is made, perhaps it’s a hit, and then she’s getting offers of lots of other parts she doesn’t have to earn on her back.” (Tharoor, 1994, p. 17) The severe form of sexualised violence in the glamour industry is shocking. It forms a pattern to tell that to shine in public, endure everything in private. “You’ve heard all the stories about how much these women suffer, only the thought of their starving babies keeping them on the bed while the raunchy paunchy producer heaves and pants over them.” (p. 51)

Laura Mulvey (Mulvey, 1989) coined the term ‘Male Gaze’ to describe how the

female body is sexualised for the viewing pleasure of straight males. How camera angle shows the female body objectifies the female body. This is a form of sexualised violence in a slight sense, where female bodies are objectified for viewing pleasure. (Lehman, 2013; López Ramírez, 2021; Oliver, 2017; Oxenhandler & Sobchack, 1993; Peberdy d, 2012) Analysing the gaze theory gives more point of view of subject-object relationships, the subjectivity of female bodies (Manlove, 2007). Both novels look at female bodies from male eyes. Bodily figure descriptions of women tend to dissect women into consumed objects for the sake of male subjects. Though 'Male Gaze' is intended for the movie's audience, the select novels pin upon the point that scopophilia begins in the life of an actress much before the movie is shot. Aspiring female characters are subjected to sexual violence in the form of scopophilia in the acting studio itself.

"This bitch is no different. I knew her when she first came to Bombay. Her name was Rosy. Arrey, she would sleep with anything that moved, even the spot-boy... just so she could bum a beedi. And look at her today! I tell myself, "Don't care about these sluts." (De, 1992, p. 30)

The illustration of the objectification and critical gaze are defining characteristics of scopophilia. It uses abusive language and reinforces negative stereotypes while portraying an offensive and humiliating depiction of a female actress. To undermine the actress's current level of accomplishment and standing in society, the speaker investigates the performer's background. The speaker emphasizes the performer's modest beginnings and promiscuous behaviour. It emphasises the problematic features of scopophilia by stressing how

it reinforces bad judgements, objectification and the devaluation of individuals based on their perceived or actual sexual behaviour in the past. The implication is that women's bodies should be traded for professional benefit. This exchange shows how women's bodies and autonomy are objectified and used for one's own gain." In Akshay Arora's make-up room, parting her legs. She thinks he'll recommend her for his next film. High hopes! He is not such a fool, yaar. He will sleep even with a eunuch if he has nobody else! This rundi should realize that." (Tharoor, 1994, p. 31) The actress is derisively called a "rundi," a slang term for a sex worker. This reinforces the devaluation and objectification of her body because the name "rundi" relates to a sex worker. The flippant statement made suggests that Arora does not exercise discretion in his sexual interactions and is open to having sexual relations with anyone to further his interests.

Film's glamour hides its nasty underside of sexualized violence. Female objectification, the casting couch, and the male gaze are surprisingly common forms of violence in the industry. In *Starry Nights* and *Show Business*, the heroines are adored by the public in contrast with those who endured sexualized violence to become famous. Investigating the novels reveals this inconsistency. These fascinating narratives reveal the terrible realities many women in the film business face.

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# Violence and Cinema : Unfolding Goopy - Bagha's Adventures

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There is nothing called a “good dictator.” Any authoritarian rule that overshadows the basic humanitarian ground and fundamental rights, is always a pertinent tyrannical force. One of the characteristics of any hegemony is ‘violence,’ a state always operates, directly or indirectly, its violent attitudes to uphold its autocratic forces. Louis Althusser explained the ‘state’ as an operator of autocratic and violent mediums to establish and fulfill its dictatorial profits. As civilization progressed, the concept of violence also changed in multiple ways; it can be physical violence, psychological violence, violence on memory, state sponsored violence, and even spreading and justifying violence through media.

Violence found a place in film, literature and other art forms as well, very obviously. But portraying violence in film and criticising it, at the same time in a fluent manner, is one of the hard tasks that few directors have been able to do so far. Needless to say, Satyajit Ray skilfully showed the multiple types and concepts of violence in his many films and also the repercussions of it in a society, from a critical point of view. The Oscar winning

director, Ray, in his Goopy Bagha movie trilogy, excels in portraying the art of projecting violence through the lens of film media. The trilogy consists of three films, respectively, *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1969) - written by Upendrakishore Ray Chowdhury, *Hirak Rajar Deshe* (1980) - here the story is also written by Satyajit Ray, and *Goopy Bagha Phire Elo* (1991) - story by Satyajit Ray and directed by Sandip Ray. Satyajit Ray through all these three films opines the idea of anti-war sentiment, dystopian society under a hegemonic rule and the necessity of resistance.

Satyajit Ray brilliantly crafted all the three films where he mocked the dictatorship and portrayed it in a satirical way. In the first film, *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*, an anti-war film per se, we first get introduced to the protagonist duo- Goopy and Bagha. Goopy and Bagha are the manifestation of goodness and righteousness, who become more than just a common human being and great to some extent with the course of the films. Although they even found themselves in moral dilemmas, sometimes, they eventually empowered the goodness and democratic values of a society. The main

intention of this paper is to understand how Ray showed the violent nature of any hegemonic rule and how it can affect a society, kingdom, or a whole nation.

Louis Althusser first described state apparatuses in his 1969 essay, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.' where he mentioned how the bourgeoisie maintains its power structure in a capitalist society by using repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus to dominate and oppress the proletariat. On one hand, the repressive forces are like the army or police who act mostly in a physically violent way and on the other hand, the ideological apparatuses are like the institutions; government, court, etc who act on to ideologically manipulate and force the common mass. These agencies function through violence by imposing punishment or privation at some point to enforce power.

It is prominent enough to trace the state apparatuses in the trilogy. In *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*, the evil and manipulated state of Halla always up to take a fight with their neighbouring state, and also forces its starved military to take part into it. A kingdom where the people are starving, including the army, the idea of war is ironical. Halla initiates war against Shundi, but Goopy and Bagha intervene and stop the war just by feeding the Halla armies sweets. An image of a failed warmonger state that oppresses its citizens and compels its armies to fight battles is being portrayed here. We can get a more extreme scenario in the second film, *Hirak Rajar Deshe*, where the raja or king terrorises the whole state with his tyrannical operations. He forces the common, poor citizens to pay high tax, puts them into concentration camps, and

physically and mentally abuses them. The king exploits the labourers and farmers to function in an utmost totalitarian hegemonic society where he benefits from the labours of the working class and enjoys a capitalist regime. The third film shows the views of state apparatuses in a different point of view. Here, it's not a king but a greedy, lusty distracted sage who misuses his spiritual power to achieve personal materialistic gain. He is afraid of his life, so he even mistreats little children. He is an ideal image of a demon submerged into narcissism and capitalist gain.

The idea of a state and its base and superstructure as explained in marxist theory can be reflected through Ray's lens. We can critically observe all the actions of the dictator king as a part of a state machinery that creates a superstructure where the common mass don't have a voice and the violence is normalized, internalized and consented. He portrayed how the societies or the power-positioned people manipulate the working class and common mass and make benefit out of them. The 'superstructure' or all the institutions of the society ultimately depend upon the 'base.'

Each film within the trilogy is a distinct narrative with its unique plot and underlying message. However, the recurring theme of hypnosis weaves a common thread throughout, unifying them in their exploration of manipulation and control. In '*Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*,' the evil minister hypnotizes the king of Halla, influencing him to make decisions that prove detrimental to his kingdom and people. By subjecting the king to manipulation, the minister seizes control and advances his agenda. In the next film,

'*Hirak Rajar Deshe*,' the common masses are subjected to indoctrination orchestrated by the state. Here, the king utilizes a brainwashing device, the *mogoj dholai jonro*, to manipulate and subdue the people, ensuring their obedience and conformity within his oppressive regime. Finally, in '*Goopy Bagha Phire Elo*,' a sinister-sage kidnaps and subjugates fourteen-year-old boys as part of his plan to attain immortality. He preys upon their innocence and vulnerability, employing psychological manipulation to gain power over them and execute his evil intentions.

Using mind control as a metaphorical device, Satyajit Ray explores social and political issues, offering a critique of the abuse of authority and emphasising the importance of individual autonomy and agency. Political brainwashing aims to foster unwavering loyalty and support for the ruler. Those in positions of authority have power and enormous influence over public opinion and how reality is perceived by exercising control over the information and prevalent narratives. It aims to shape public opinion, perpetuate authority, and inhibit independent thought by restricting access to information. It silences criticism and creates an environment where opposing ideas are censored or ridiculed. Loyalty to the ruling party or leader may become unquestionable in such an environment, making it difficult for the status quo to be challenged or for competing ideas to acquire hold. This instils a false sense of awareness in the populace. This refers to situations when people or social groups have views or ideologies that counter their class interests. Marxist theorists contend that false consciousness develops when the subordinate classes' perception and comprehension of social reality are

distorted by the prevailing ideology of a society that has been created by the ruling class. The ruling class is in charge of the means of production and controls both the economy and politics. In order to further their own objectives, they additionally impact the prevalent ideology. False consciousness develops when people of socially disadvantaged groups adopt and internalize the prevailing ideology and believe it to be natural and advantageous even when it may actually be detrimental to their own interests. It is a process that upholds the current power structures and fosters social inequality.

This encompasses the notion of power politics and knowledge production contributed by Foucault. According to the theories of Foucault, power operates through a variety of institutions, discourses and social practices and can be both oppressive and constructive. He indicates that power is a dynamic force that penetrates society rather than a static substance held by individuals or groups. It functions by influencing and controlling people's thoughts, behaviours, and identities through networks of power interaction. One example of how power works to manipulate and mould people's perceptions of reality is the hypnotic manipulation of memory. The idea that authority is exercised through institutions, discourses, and social practices is consistent with Foucault's theory of "power-knowledge." We witness a pervasive censorship that suppresses any form of discourse opposing the ruling class. It becomes evident that power extends beyond mere repression; it is intimately entwined with the production of knowledge. In the court of Hirak Raja, we observe that his words hold tremendous



authority. The ruler's pronouncements become the ultimate decider, even capable of bending rules to suit his whims. The manipulation of memory through hypnosis can be seen as a mechanism by which certain knowledge is controlled and individuals' understanding of the past is distorted or erased. One such case is when a farmer and a labourer complain to the monarch and ask for justice for their problems. However, the monarch punishes them in a way that affects their memory rather than responding to their complaints. As a result, the very people who had previously shown displeasure with the king's authority are now ardent admirers who chant his name and blindly obey his orders. Further supporting Foucault's view of power as diffuse and functioning through a variety of channels is the inclusion of power imbalances and the altering of information and public discourse. Upper class have the ability to build narratives and manage information, affecting public opinion and upholding their domination. This emphasises how crucial it is to critically evaluate the discourses and practises that exercise power while also acknowledging the possibility of resistance and subversion against repressive power structures. We can also say that it serves as a cautionary tale, urging viewers to critically examine the influence of power and the potential consequences of distorted memory in maintaining authority and suppressing dissent.

One of the most effective methods to continue exploitation is to keep people unaware of their rights and to suppress revolutionary thoughts. People can be persuaded to become subservient followers rather than active participants in their own

liberation by restricting access to information, critical thinking and independent thought. The education system is extremely important in determining a person's world view, values, and beliefs. Education turns into an instrument for indoctrination rather than empowerment when it is created to encourage conformity and discourage critical thought. The ruling class can create obedient followers who lack the ability to critically analyse or stand up for their rights by controlling the curriculum and stifling oppositional viewpoints. The monarch in the second film bans the schools and burns the books. In the film, the banning of school symbolises a conscious attempt to abolish formal education. The administration attempts to deny children and teenagers access to education by closing schools. A potent emblem of the repression of knowledge and ideas is the act of burning books. It represents the regime's intention to obliterate opposing perspectives, histories, and knowledge. In order to eliminate any potential sources of inspiration, resistance, or revolutionary ideas, the governing figure destroys literature. It strengthens the grip on knowledge and makes sure that only the dominant ideology is accepted. The portrayal of such extreme actions serves as a critique of authoritarian governments that stifle free thought and the pursuit of knowledge.

To strengthen this discourse of unparalleled power, several symbols are used. The most important one being the king himself. He is elevated to the level of divinity and whatever he preaches becomes the universal truth. The objective of creating a cult personality is to promote the ruler as charismatic, unflinching, or even

godlike. An enormous statue of the tyrant was built by Hiraak Raja himself in the second film as a constant reminder of his powers. In order to foster a sense of devotion and everlasting loyalty among their followers, this is frequently accomplished through intensive promotion and manipulation of their public image. The leader is shown as a unique, larger-than-life character with great traits and skills. Their reputation is meticulously cultivated and spread using a variety of channels, such as propaganda, media censorship, and public gatherings. This representation is intended to surround the leader with a sense of power, mystique, and reverence, giving them the impression of being virtually untouchable and above blame. As dissent or criticism is often defined as a betrayal, critical thinking and independent analysis of the leader's actions and policies may be discouraged or suppressed. Making the leader appear to be a unique and a crucial persona makes it simpler to defend the concentration of power in their hands. They could be given an abundance of power and control over several facets of government, which frequently causes erosion in democratic institutions and checks on authority to deteriorate. Gramscian ideas depict that all these factors compel the common population to consent to the violence happening to them and justify it. The same people who are tortured are heard chanting '*hirak er raja bhogoban*' or 'the king is god.'

The unhindered operation of the power structure depends on a well-organized apparatus supported by technology. This guarantees the machinery's smooth running. In the aforementioned film trilogy, occult power

is used in the last project along with science and technology to control the common people. Despite being fiction, these films are applicable to all societies. The essay on "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse" by Stuart Hall clarifies how everyone is impacted by this cycle. There are limited choices when it comes to the content we consume since it is selected and managed by people in positions of authority, who also shape the prevailing narratives. The state uses its authority to restrict people's freedom of expression and action while continuously monitoring their movements. The idea is influenced by Michel Foucault's panopticon, which describes how a society is controlled by internalising the constant scrutiny by the state. Even in the absence of ongoing surveillance, power structures can be maintained by the possibility of observation at any time. In these films, the monarchy's military apparatus constantly monitors the populace. The issue is not significantly different today, but it is more urgent. The capacity and reach of surveillance have substantially increased due to technological improvements. Modern surveillance technologies, such as CCTV cameras, facial recognition software, digital tracking, and data mining, provide more chances for keeping an eye on both specific people and entire populations. This unsettling situation is reminiscent of George Orwell's classic 1984, in which the entire populace is under the government's rigorous control. Power, technology, and surveillance are coming together in a way that has serious repercussions for civil liberties, personal freedom, and privacy. To traverse these complications and protect the rights of individuals within society, it necessitates

careful thinking, ethical considerations, and transparency.

In all these three films, resistance has always been a constant opposition against the state-powers. Ray skillfully articulated the presence of violence in the films along with the alternative force of Goopy - Bagha accompanied by the good powers such as the King of Shundi, Udayan Pandit, and a little kid named Vikram, who are critical manifestation of resistance against the evil power and its violence. It's also crucial to understand how the same pattern of hegemony and dominance is still relevant in our contemporary society; we can get a view of modern-day geopolitics, where many nations' main goal is to empower their militant power instead of focusing on their hunger index or overall well-being of the citizens. The state creates and implements an apparatus where the declaration of violence is the primary goal.

Even though each film of this trilogy depicts violence, lust for power, and other malign qualities, the films are never dystopic in nature. Moreover, these all are part of children's literature, and Ray never displaced his shift from that intention. Although with subtlety, he constantly critiques the society. All the films end with a promising note and a hope to change society. The Goopy Bagha Trilogy, through Satyajit Ray's lens, is indeed revolutionary, inspiring and timeless.

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# Violence and Crime against Women in J M Coetzee's *Disgrace*

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## **The Definition of Violence and Crime against Women :**

The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”.

The crime against women can be defined as “acts of rape (including gang rape, infant rape and corrective rape) trafficking, wrongful confinement, dowry extortion, acid attack, honour killing, assault, kidnapping, harassment at work place, sex for economic gain including prostitution, and other illegal and immoral acts are acts of crime against women.”

## **The Condition of Women (including infants and girls) in South Africa :**

South Africa has been considered ‘the rape capital of the world’ for reporting staggeringly high number rape cases in the world. According to the research conducted by WHO on the behalf of the United Nations Interagency working

group on violence against women across 161 countries and states between 2000-2018, 1 in 3 or 30% of women in African region are subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partners or non-partner’s sexual violence. The danger of sexual violence is the chances of infected with STDs like HIV/AIDS. One in four of women who are sexually abused above the age of 25 years has the chances of infection.

South Africa also reported the highest number of child and infant rape cases in the world due prevalence of virgin cleansing myth. The main reason for this is the belief among people that having sex with virgin will cure them of AIDS. In October 2001, a nine-month-old infant was raped by HIV-positive man and in February 2002, an eight-month-old infant was gang raped by four men. The injuries were so serious that both the infants had to undergo extensive reconstructive surgery. The Parliament of South Africa enacted Criminal Law Amendment act, 2007 to review and amend all the laws dealing sexual offences and strengthening them. These two cases had great impact

on the prosecution to deal with rape perpetrators just like December 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder case, popularly known as Nirbhaya case. But again in 2018 another eight-month-old infant was raped in South Africa and created nightmare in the mind of the people. Pumla Dineo Gqola, an academician and author, opined that 'rape and sexual assault is a South African nightmare'. It is estimated that 41% of the rape victims between 2015 and 2018 were children.

Another kind of violence that makes women vulnerable in South Africa is the corrective rape of lesbians. People still believe that raping a lesbian will convert her to heterosexuality. One such high profile case is gang rape and murder of Eudy Simelane, a member of South African football team and LGBT activist, in 2008. Many instances sexual abuse and harassment of adolescents and minors are reported to occur in schools and colleges by teachers and other students in empty classroom, dormitories and bathrooms. But these cases are not handed over to the police for investigation, instead they were dealt internally by the educational institutions as these incidents bring ill repute and parents may not send their children to these institutions. They also use political pressure to hush up sexual abuses in the educational institutions. This kind of attitude will create barriers for girl children to seek education. The literacy rate of women in South Africa is 92.17% (a decrease of 6.87% between 2010 and 2021).

The main reason for the violence and crime against women, girls and infants is

the culture of patriarchy. The patriarchy reduces women to secondary and subaltern position denying them equality in all spheres of life. The sexual, physical and mental abuse of women is part of South African culture. The South African government feels that since patriarchal culture is the foundation of South African culture, the dismantling culture of patriarchy will result in the collapse of South African culture. This is relevant to almost all the countries as violence and crime against women is closely related with culture, religion and ethnicity and politics; and unless we separate and deal with them individually, we will not be able to address violence and crime against women appropriately. Because of this grim scenario, the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, declared in 2019 that 'violence and crime against women is a national crisis.'

#### **Violence and Crime against Women in Coetzee's Disgrace :**

The novel Disgrace gives the realistic picture of suffering of women in post-apartheid South Africa after 1999. It deals with issues like prostitution, rape, corrective rape, denial of basic needs and rights to women, suffering of women after rape like depression, stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, unwanted pregnancy, physical and psychological well-being and other important issues. Women working in the field of prostitution undergo physical, psychological and sexual violence and they also face economic exploitation. Most of them work to earn extra income to look after their family. Soraya, a black Muslim woman, being poor has to work as prostitute for additional income albeit she dislikes it. She was given 400 Rands

for a session of 90 minutes but half of the money goes to the escort agency which gets her clients: 'For a ninety-minute session he pays her R400, of which half goes to Discreet Escorts. It is a pity...in a sense they own Soraya too' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 2). When Soraya stops visiting David Lurie, he pays a detective agency to get her real name, phone number and address and like a predator calls her to be told not to 'harass her.' She undergoes psychological suffering and traumatic experience: 'You are harassing me in my own house. I demand you will never phone me here again, never' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 10).

David Lurie seduces one of his students who studies in the romantic course. Like a typical representative of patriarchal society, he thinks woman as a sexual object and are there to be consumed by men: 'Because a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it' (Coetzee, 2008, p.16). Again, Lurie goes to the flat of Melanie and forcefully indulges in sex with her: 'Words heavy as club's thud into the delicate whorl of her ear. 'No, not now!' She says struggling' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 25). Later she stops attending Lurie's class and then decides to give up her education to find a job. One of main reasons for drop out of women students from education is sexual violence and harassment by the teachers and other students. This creates a barrier for women to seek higher education: 'She wants to give up her education and get a job' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 36). Hence, the literacy rate of women in South Africa has gone down in the last decade by 6.87%.

An enquiry committee was set up when Melanie Isaacs, one of his romantic course students, lodges a complaint of harassment and predatory behaviour; and university for falsifying her grade even though she did not attend classes and write test. The enquiry committee is more sympathetic towards the perpetrator rather than the victim: 'David, I want to tell you, you have all my sympathy. Really' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 42). The committee set up by the University can only make a recommendation and this recommendation can be challenged and it would delay the delivery of justice. Nowhere in his statement David expresses real remorse or repentance for his act and even does not read Melanie's statement. He just says he accepts guilty and tells them to pass the judgement: 'I am sure the committee have better things to do with their time... I plead guilty to both the charges. Pass sentence, and let us get on with our lives' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 48). Throughout the novel, even after gang rape of his daughter, he does not feel real remorse for what he did. Even when he goes to meet Isaacs towards the end of the novel to apologize, there is no remorse, he just comes to his knees and touches his head to the ground.

Lucy, the lesbian daughter of David Lurie, was gang raped by three men (two men and a boy) on the pretext of using the telephone. She is the symbol of independent woman. Her dress, dogs, astrology books and the gardening make the statement of independence. They also kill dogs and set David Lurie on fire in the toilet. Lucy's suffering is the embodiment of suffering of women of crimes such as rape, gang rape corrective,

violence, possibility of infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in South Africa: 'There is a risk of pregnancy', he presses on. 'There is a risk of venereal infection. There is a risk of HIV. Shouldn't she see a gynaecologist as well?' (Coetzee, 2008, p.106) One in four women, who are sexually abused, have the possibility of infected with HIV/AIDS. The lesbians in South Africa face a dangerous environment as corrective rapes are reported from certain part of the country. It is believed that raping lesbians will convert them to heterosexuality. This is another reason for the rape of Lucy, a lesbian, and violence against women.

After the gang rape, Lucy undergoes psychological suffering like stress, sleeplessness, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, lack of hunger- stops eating food, remains inside the room unlike her true character: 'Rape, god of chaos and mixture, violator of seclusions. Raping a lesbian worse than raping a virgin: a more of a blow' (Coetzee, 2008, p.105). The sexual violence was a big blow to her confidence. There is a radical change in her behaviour after the incident: 'She is lying with her face turned to the wall. He sits beside her, touches her cheek. It is wet with tears' (Coetzee, 2008, p.105). She stops going to Saturday market, stops working in the farm and also stops taking care of the dogs. Lurie recalls from his memory how a woman was raped for a week: 'Two old ladies locked in the lavatory/ They were there from Monday to Saturday/ Nobody knew they were there. Locked in the lavatory while daughter was used' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 109) Just like he was locked in the lavatory and Lucy was used.

Female foeticide and female infanticide are the earliest and ruthless expression of crime against women in the patriarchal society. It is very rampant in African and South Asian countries including South Africa and India. A woman is considered a burden to the family and any money spent on her is nothing but waste. The society is obsessed with baby boy and prejudiced against baby girl. This has resulted in the female foeticide and infanticide bringing down male-female sex ratio to the lowest level in the recent years. Petrus, a black man, is obsessed with baby boy and dislikes baby girls: 'We are praying for a boy' says Petrus. He pauses. 'A girl is expensive.' He rubs thumb and forefinger together. 'Always money, money, money' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 130) But most of the women, whether it is dowry case or domestic violence or rape or gang rape or foeticide et al. do not report the case to the police. When Lurie repeatedly tells Lucy lodge a police complaint of rape, this is how she responds: 'Don't shout at me, David. This is my life. I am the one who has to live here. What happened is my business, mine alone, not yours' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 133). This is one of the reasons for increase in crime and violence against women.

After attack and rape, Lucy goes into the shell depressed, lonely, always dreadful of another attack. That's the reason she did not complain to police about rape as it would result in dire consequences. She might be attacked once again, it may be rape and murder the next time. For Lucy the place, South Africa, 'the darkest country,' is very dangerous and she has to live there in future as well.

Even after many days she can't understand why she was attacked though she has not any wrong to them: 'It was done with such personal hatred. That was what stunned me more than anything. The rest was ... expected. But why did they waste me so? I had never set eyes on them' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 156). David Lurie suggests Lucy to get out of the place selling her land as it is no longer safe for her. But Lucy is not ready to go away from Eastern Cape albeit she knows that they will attack her again. It was so devastating that she is mentally dead: 'I am a dead person and I do not know what will bring me back to my life. All I know is I can't go away' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 161).

Lucy becomes pregnant after the rape but she is not ready to go for abortion as she is against it. She is ready to keep the baby. The baby will remind her of the heinous crime time and again as long as she is alive but she won't abort the baby: 'But I am not having an abortion. That is something I am not prepared to go through with again' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 198). As Lucy said earlier rape is like a killing, aborting a foetus is also like murdering and she is not ready for it. There is also a reference to previous abortion. Lurie thinks that she might have been violated/raped before but he was not told about it. This shows violence on women is very common thing and most of the time it is not reported to the police. Even though one of the rapists comes and lives near Lucy's house and there might be possibility of another attack and another rape, she is not ready to report to the police. This really puzzles Lurie: 'Lucy, your situation is becoming ridiculous,

worse than ridiculous, sinister' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 201).

Lucy, later, agrees to marry Petrus, a black man with two wives and defender of one of the rapists of Lucy, Pollux, for protection. Otherwise, she is very sure that, there will be another attack on her. This is how patriarchal societies force women to bow down and accept men's rules. The lonely women like Lucy are soft prey for attackers, hence they are left with no choice to become subservient to men. She is ready even to become his third wife or concubine and ready give her child to him and live an undignified, humiliating life: 'With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity. Like a dog' (Coetzee, 2008, p. 205). In nutshell women are subjugated, subordinated, objectified, marginalized, denied of basic human needs and rights to lead a respectful life: the wretched of the earth.

#### **Causes for Violence and Crime against Women :**

There are many causes for the crime and violence against women in South Africa. The violence and crime against women are prevalent in almost all countries. The causes are:

- Low level of education is the main cause for the violence and crime against women.
- The existence of patriarchal society is a threat for safety of women. There are many practices in the society which are detrimental for the safety of women.
- The families where the men of the family are addicted alcohol experience more violence against women than that of non-alcoholic families.



- If the children are exposed to violence in the very early age, there is likelihood that they will be violent later on.
- Harmful masculine behaviour in the families where there are multiple partners cause violence.
- As women still are not main part paid job employment, they are still the mercy of men and their cruel behaviour.

#### **Consequences of Violence and Crime against Women :**

The violence and crime against women result in physical as well as psychological suffering of women.

- Violence and crime lead to fatal outcomes such as physical injuries, homicide and suicide.
- It leads to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, unwanted babies out of rape as in the case of Lucy in Disgrace, gynecological problems, sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS et al.
- It leads to psychological issues like depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, sleeplessness, anxiety disorder, stress and suicidal attempts.
- It leads to health issues like headache, limited mobility, pain syndrome, poor overall health et al.
- Sexual violence during the early childhood affects overall physical and psychological well-being in later stage of life.

#### **Prevention of Violence and Crime against Women :**

The violence and crime against women are a global phenomenon and it can be prevented by taking following steps.

- If we educate the people in the matters concerning the safety of women in the society- at home, schools and colleges and working places- we can prevent crime against women.
- If we bring awareness in the people to respect opinions, rights, likes, dislikes and needs of women in the society.
- By enabling the women economically by giving job opportunities will make them confident and once they are confident, they will face problems without fear and lead a better life.
- Even if violence and crime taking place in the society, the timely actions like assisting them in physical and mental injuries, providing them counselling will create a healthy environment and help them to recover from such attacks.
- If we work towards prevention of child and adolescent abuse in schools and colleges by setting up anti-ragging cell and women harassment prevention cell. If they are protected at early age by proper guidance, they will take care of themselves at later stage in their life.

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# Re-imagining Environment: Exploring the Aesthetics of Ecofeminism in Raj Kamal Jha's *If You Are Afraid of Heights*

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## **Introduction :**

The comprehensive understanding and interaction between the human being and their environment makes this planet a better place to live in. When this relationship is disrupted, it leads to disbalance and degradation of it. Over-exploitation of environmental resources has become a great threat to both human and nature. In the name of industrialization, capitalization, globalization, and modernization, there has been massive economic exploitation and due to this, it is the marginalized sector which has suffered the most: women, poor, tribals or adivasis are doubly victimized. "This crisis has given way to many studies, philosophies and theories to solve environmental problems", says Sangita Patil (Patil 11). The emergence of environmental studies as an academic discipline started in the 1950s. Subsequently, it has given birth to a new concept emerging as a different theoretical field in recent years that sees a critical connection between women and nature. "Ecofeminism, a multidisciplinary intellectual and political movement in the 1980s, is an amalgamation of environmental

studies and feminism", says Sangita Patil (Patil 01). This women-led activism explores and discusses the ambivalent relationship between the women, environment and space. Other related fields like 'ecocriticism' fail to do justice with the issues of gender and environment in sufficient depth. Ecofeminism argues about the connection between the oppression of both women and nature by the hands of capitalist patriarchy. An Indian physicist and environmental activist Vandana Shiva pens down her observation as :

Precisely because more growth in maldevelopment has meant less sustenance of life and life-support systems, it is now imperative to recover the feminine principle as the basis for development which conserves and is ecological. Feminism as ecology, ecology as the revival of Prakriti, the source of life, become the decentred powers of political and economic transformation and restructuring (Shiva 43).

In India, there seems to be a natural alliance of women with nature and the way they regulate environmental movements.

India has already seen many powerful women-led environmental activism in the 1970s popularly known as Chipko movement. In addition to these heroic women, there are other masses of women who are fighting for an environmental cause directly or indirectly.

### ***If You Are Afraid of Heights: A Textual Study :***

Published in 2003, *If You Are Afraid of Heights* is Raj Kamal Jha's second novel, and the narrative of this novel explains itself from the very opening line: "Look at the picture on the cover; there's a child, a girl in a red dress; there's a bird, a crow in a blue white sky. And then there are a few things you cannot see" (1). The novel is divided into three parts: *Of Heights*, *You Are Afraid* and *If*. Interestingly, each part opens with "Once upon a time..." the conventional story-telling technique. The novel has three separate stories which initially seem to be unrelated but are linked together at the end of the novel. The novel set in the city of Calcutta (now Kolkata) is the amalgamation of dream and reality. The narrator introduces its readers not only to the city but also the time and space in which the people are residing there. The use of magic realism in the novel creates shifts in time and place. The first part of the novel introduces us to the city and how a young couple named Amir and Rima accidentally meet each other. The second part is about a female reporter named Mala who is in search of the evidence of the murder of a eleven or twelve year-old girl. The third section is about a girl who comes to know about the series of suicides happening in her neighbourhood and is afraid if her parents would also take their lives. It is narrated in a magic realist mode and the

nexus between realism and fantasy is at the centre of the novel. Magic-realism employed in the novel is represented through the characters Rima and Amir or Mala and Alam. They are seen as doppelgangers as their names and personalities are just opposite of each other. In a personal interview Jha clearly affirms to the fact by saying:

You are very right. In a way each is a reflection of the other. I believe a part of us is a reflection of the other. So, when I am sitting with you, answering these questions, I am not the same person discussing a story with a reporter of *The Indian Express*. I think we are all reflections of others (Jha).

Jha has used the contrastive lifestyle of Rima and Amir in order to depict the ever-widening gap between the two classes (rich and poor) in Indian society. Accidental meeting of Amir and Rima turns out to be a self-realization as Amir comes face to face with the existing gap between him and Rima. The novel is set in a city (seems to be Calcutta [now Kolkata] in every way), having a special building called "Paradise Park". The narrator gives an elaborate description of this building comparing it with the other tall buildings in the city. It is not that Paradise park is the only tall building in the city but it is the tallest of all. Because of the ever increasing population and the greed of every possible comfort has given rise to many environmental and social problems. The erection of the Paradise Park right at the centre of the maidan (the only open space in the city) is one such example. The narrator mentions:

Newspapers called the Maidan the dying city's last lung, until one day, which is around the time our story begins, real-estate agents pulled up in

small, white Korean cars, got out with a cellphone in one hand, a cigarette in the other, wearing white trousers and white T-shirts....

Whom they bought the land from, whom they paid, how much in cheque how much in cash, nobody knows because most of the transactions were, to use a common phrase, under the table.

The Maidan was what's called a protected area under the City Preservation Act of 1972. But like all laws across the world, it had loopholes so tiny you didn't even know they were there until you met lawyers with trained eyes and nimble fingers who could squeeze an entire herd of elephants through if only you gave them enough money (20).

The violation of laws in the name of development and exploitation of nature in an unprecedented manner is synonymous with the inequality, violence, injustice and exploitation women face in the patriarchal Indian society. In the second part of the novel, Mala comes to know about the body of a girl, "eleven or twelve years of age" found lying at the bottom of a canal (137). Sadly, the people are not only unaware of the murder but also of the coming up of the canal in which her body was thrown. The narrator says:

Why and how the canal came to be here, no one knows. Some say that long ago this was imagined as a stream running around the town, brimming with clean, fresh water with trees on either side where people would come and rest in the evening, sometimes paddle in brightly coloured boats. But nothing of that sort happened, now this is a little more than a ditch, very long and wide, littered with dead leaves, overgrown grass, sprawling patches of water hyacinth, shards of metal, twisted and bent, bicycle rims, rusted chairs

which have served their purpose, the daily refuse of houses (138-39).

Nobody seems to be affected by the murder of this young girl and even her parents don't care because at least they don't have a mouth to feed. As Mala goes deeper into the investigation, she feels that this could be a case of rape and murder. While investigating, she comes to know about a superstitious belief, a consciously gendered, patriarchal activity. The policeman says: "These things happen in north India, where some think that if you have sex with a child, you get cured of your disease" (204). This line truly suggests that it is not only devaluation or derecognition of nature's bounty that has led to exploitation to both women and nature. There are certain thoughts and beliefs which are intimately related to such oppressions. Similarly, the third part of the novel also depicts how the damage caused to the environment not only leads to physical destabilisation but also acts as a weapon leading to self-destruction. The unusual sight of people killing themselves in the neighbourhood creates anxiety and fear in the narrator's mind. She is afraid that like other people, her parents are also going to kill themselves. Ultimately, a friend of hers comes for her rescue and she is able to regain her cognitive strength. According to Raj Kamal Jha:

We are a growing country. For example, a city like Bombay is building its metro in 2023 when London and New York have built it 100 years ago. So, I think we have to understand that India is a growing country with aspirations. There will be more houses built, there will be more malls, there will be more schools, there will be more colleges, there will be more metros. However, it has to be sustainable because we have to learn

the lessons that others have not. The good thing is that, finally, the environment is being talked about by our political leaders. The day an election is won and lost on pollution or climate change may not come but certainly more voters are now demanding answers on what needs to be done to improve the quality of the air they breathe or the water they drink (Jha).

#### **Conclusion :**

The crisis born out of industrialization, modernization, commercialization and globalization draw our attention to the patriarchal violence done both to women and nature. Indian English novels add a new dimension to the ecofeminist discourse by critiquing the patriarchal attitude, women not only as sufferers but also as saviours of the environmental crisis. The yoking together

of the problems of feminism and environment have given birth to ecofeminism. The struggle for preserving nature and society by fighting against the oppression of women and the environment is the key feature of this women-led environmental activism. By engaging with the issues of gender and environment, the writers could transform the thinking of their readers and envision a better future for all lives, both human and non-human.

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# Innocent Narrations: Cannibalism, Felo-de-se and Mortality in Khasi Oral Tales

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## **Introduction :**

Oral literature serves as a repository of cultural heritage, preserving the beliefs, traditions, and narratives of a community. The oral literature of the Khasi community encompasses various genres and forms of expression, including folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, and songs. These oral narratives and poetic compositions serve multiple purposes, such as entertainment, education, moral instruction, and the preservation of cultural identity. They are often performed and shared during community gatherings, festivals, rituals, and everyday life, maintaining a vital connection between past and present. The oral literature of the Khasi community continues to be passed down through oral transmission, although the advent of writing and formal education has led to efforts to document and preserve these literary traditions in written form. Scholars, researchers, and cultural enthusiasts have recognized the value and significance of Khasi oral literature, documenting and studying these narratives to gain a deeper understanding of Khasi culture, history, and the worldview of its people.

## **Violence in Literature :**

Violence has always been an underlying motif by writers since the dawn of literature. One sees this in ancient works such as The Ramayana, Beowulf, The Iliad, and The Odyssey and ancient Greek mythologies often describe extreme violence and grotesque forms of death. Though there are no realistic grounds to believe them; however, stories of Zeus and his battle against Cronos and battles of other mythological Gods against demons, have great aesthetic value as mythological stories, this is because of their use of violence as an extreme method of dramatization, which leaves its readers in awe. Folklores from different cultures also employ violence, in cautionary tales where characters that ignore warnings and break social norms, often are met with a range of consequences including injuries or death. The purpose of such tales is to warn the listener of danger and is told as children's stories over the generations. However, this ancient use of the acts of violence, whose main purpose was to only portrayed heroic acts or spread moral and religious ideals, has evolved to a point where its complexity is as indefinite as its definition.

During the English renaissance period there was a huge in demand for tragedies filled with violent and gruesome actions. Hence writers such as Marlowe, Shakespeare, Webster and others who belong to this period, took notice of this and went on to write a number of plays, all filled with many acts of violence. In his *English Literature: Its History and Its Significance*, William J. Long describes Marlowe's writings as, "Though all his plays abound in violence, no doubt reflecting many of the violent scenes in which he lived, he develops his mighty line and depicts great scenes in magnificent bursts of poetry, such as the stage had never before" (Long 133). Hence violence in literature not only became a representation of expressions of rage or desperation. But also became a means by which an individual can reach or achieved their desires, however brutal or cruel their methods may be. Hence various acts of violence were employed by every member of society, be it noblemen or commoners, magistrates, thieves or priests. It could be defensive or offensive. It could be tidy or horrendous. It could follow established code of conduct (such as duels or challenges) or provocatively defy all. Violence in its most basic form flooded English literature.

#### **Violence and Mortality in Khasi Oral Narratives :**

Violence and mortality in oral literature serve as vehicles for exploring the human condition, cultural values, and societal dynamics. Violence is a recurring theme in many forms of literature, including oral literature. Oral literature encompasses a wide range of storytelling traditions, such as myths, legends, epics, folktales, and even some forms of poetry, that have been passed down through

generations orally rather than through written texts. These oral traditions often reflect the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they originated, and violence is often present in these narratives.

One reason violence appears in oral literature is because it is a fundamental aspect of human experience. Violence has been a part of human history and society since ancient times, and oral literature often reflects the struggles, conflicts, and triumphs of human existence. Through tales of violence, oral literature can explore themes such as power, justice, revenge, heroism, and the consequences of one's actions and "Some oral narratives utilize violence and mortality as a means of social commentary, critiquing power structures, societal norms, or oppressive systems. These stories shed light on social injustice and the consequences of violence within a community" (Mphahlele 128).

Moreover, violence in oral literature can also have symbolic or metaphorical meanings. It may represent deeper human desires, fears, or the struggle between good and evil and similarly "Violence and mortality in oral literature play a role in cultural transmission, passing down historical events, moral lessons, and communal values to future generations. These narratives contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage" (Dundes 42). For example, the slaying of a monster in a myth or epic could symbolize the triumph of virtue over chaos or the conquest of internal demons. It's worth noting that violence in oral literature is not always depicted explicitly or graphically. Since oral literature relies on spoken word and performance, storytellers often adapt their narratives to suit the audience and



the cultural norms of their community. This means that violence can be portrayed through vivid descriptions, poetic language, or suggestive imagery, rather than explicit details.

The narrative of *U Kwai*, *U Tympew*, and *U Dumasla* is a story of misery that, according to the Khasis, led to the invention of these indigenous usages that every Khasi household possesses. The Khasis revere the *Kwai* (betel nut) and *Tympew* (betel leaves), which are found throughout India and the world. The Khasis also have a word that means ingesting betel nut and leaves at the door of good, suggesting that the individual is no longer alive. The consumption of betel nut and leave, like many other origins, has a story among the Khasis, and the practise that came from the story is being practised today.

There lived two people who adored each other in the village of Rangjyrwit. One is a wealthy man named Nik Mahajon, and the other is a poor man named Shing. The word 'mahajon' is used in a variety of contexts throughout India, each with its own meaning. Shing lives with his wife Lak and they both suffer from poverty. They forage from the dirt on a daily basis. As previously stated, Nik Mahajon is wealthy and adored his friend. He gave him as much as he could without upsetting Shing's ego. Shing is seldom left wanting when he sees Nik; he is always properly fed. Shing was overwhelmed by this gesture of compassion because he could never repay it. He asked Nik to lunch with him in his home, even if it was "Ja-tahmluh" (Elias 51), which means rice with salt. Nik did not want to disturb him, but he consented since he was afraid of offending him if he refused his request.

Shing and his wife were overjoyed to see him. While the guys talked, Lak, like a responsible wife, began preparing the supper. As Shing arrives to instruct his wife to get the meal, his wife informs him, with a heavy heart, that there is not even one grain of rice. This upset Shing. When his friend decided to pay him a visit, he found himself with none to share. He asked his wife if she could go around the area and fetch some rice. She returned home bearing nothing because her entire neighbourhood had met a similar fate. Nik, alone in the room was feeling eerie. He left to the kitchen to investigate and was baffled to see the two bodies. He searched for a reason as to why would the couple take such a drastic action and found his answer in the boiling water at the fireplace. He was overflowing with guilt and devastation that he too took his own life with the same dagger and lied next to them, dead. Shing was so affected by grief that he no longer desired to live the dreadful existence. He seized a dagger hanging on the wall, stabbed himself, and died. His wife, who comprehended every frown he had ever had, followed in his footsteps because she believed she no longer had the desire to live.

Nik, who was alone in the room, was feeling uneasy. He went into the kitchen to check and was astounded to see two bodies. He looked for a reason why the pair would do such a terrible thing and found it in the boiling water by the fireplace. He was so consumed with remorse and despair that he took his own life with the same dagger and died next to them. At the crack of dawn, a fleeing robber from the neighbouring village arrived at Shing's house and found that it was open and easily entered. He went into

the house's interior and waited until morning. He slept off because he was afraid of being caught. When daylight came, he opened his eyes to find three bodies lying cold on the floor. He realised then that his fate was sealed. People will conclude he killed the three if he leaves. He then followed in the footsteps of the other three and died when he stabbed himself, "When people realized the sad event, they begged God to give them a simpler way of welcoming friends. The ancient Khasis have compared these persons to the things they used most, namely the betel nut, leaf, lime and tobacco" (Barnes 54, 55). Betel nut represents Nik Mahajon, leaf and lime represent Shing and Lak, and tobacco, inserted at the corner of the mouth, indicates the burglar hidden in plain sight. The use of betel nut and leaf brought about a sense of equality between the rich and the poor. Both groups provide it, and it is recognised as a legitimate type of respect, etiquette, and manners.

Violence in oral literature can take various forms. It may also include battles between heroes and monsters, conflicts between different tribes or communities, feuds between rival families, or even personal struggles within individuals and so "Oral narratives depicting violence and mortality can serve as a means of commemoration, preserving the memory of significant events or honouring individuals who have lost their lives. They contribute to collective identity and historical consciousness" (Caruth 98). These violent episodes often serve as pivotal moments in the narratives, driving the plot forward and creating tension and excitement for the audience.

### **Cannibalism in Noh Ka Likai :**

Cannibalism in oral literature encompasses a wide range of cultural, symbolic, and psychological interpretations. Whether representing cultural identity, morality, fears, or psychological struggles, the presence of cannibalistic motifs in oral literature underscores the enduring power of this theme in shaping and reflecting human experience.

In African oral traditions, cannibalistic themes often symbolize the blurring of boundaries between humans and animals or serve as cautionary tales about the consequences of immoral actions. According to Mbiti, "Cannibalistic stories found in African oral literature can be seen as metaphors for the loss of humanity and the transgression of moral boundaries" (Mbiti 53). Native American folklore includes stories of cannibalistic spirits or creatures that embody the fears and dangers associated with cannibalism. Erdoes and Ortiz assert that "Cannibalism in Native American oral narratives is often used as a metaphor for spiritual and moral corruption, representing the destructive power of greed and gluttony" (Erdoes and Ortiz 235). In Pacific Island cultures, cannibalistic narratives may represent power struggles, ritual practices, or the preservation of cultural identity in the face of colonization. Kirch explains that "Cannibalism in Pacific Island oral traditions is often associated with rituals of conquest, asserting dominance over enemies, or resisting external threats to cultural integrity" (Kirch 112). Cannibalistic tales in oral literature often serve as moral lessons, delineating acceptable behavior and reinforcing cultural norms. Abrahams argues that "Cannibalism in oral literature functions as a moral allegory, reminding

individuals of the consequences of immoral actions and the importance of upholding cultural values” (Abrahams 153).

“Noh Ka Likai,” which translates as “Likai’s Leap,” is a narrative about a woman named Likai and her tragic fate. It is a legend centred on the themes of family and death. There is also a hint of society’s attitude towards women. Likai marries a good man and has a daughter in the story. Sadly, her husband dies while the child is just two months old. She finds work as a forge in Mawmluh and travels back and forth to make ends meet. Despite having to work so hard, she was content with her daughter and continued to enjoy her company for two years. And, according to tradition, remarrying was typical among the Khasis, and in this particular legend, the community was convinced by both Likai and the child. The man she marries turns out to be the polar opposite of the marriage’s aim. He grew envious of the child who is adored by both the neighbourhood and Likai herself. This component of the mythology suggests that girl children are adored equally in comparison to other tribes. Likai’s spouse does not work; instead, he relaxes and drinks with his friends while Likai toils at the blacksmith’s. Women can be observed working in small-scale industries. One day, the husband, drunk, hallucinates and develops feelings of hatred and revenge. The legend takes a vile turn when the husband murders and cooks the child. He left after regaining his senses and succumbing to fear and shame. When Likai returned home in the evening, she called for her daughter but was met by stillness. She decided to take a short break and satisfy her hunger with what she thought was a delicious supper provided by her husband

before hunting for her child, believing she was playing around the area. She takes the *shangkawai*, a traditional jar used for betel nut, to *phler-ktien*, meaning to rinse one’s mouth, and grows frightened to see a pair of hands in it. When she examined closer, she realised what had happened and couldn’t believe it. She screams and sobs, ripping her hair and clothes. People rushed to the house, but they had no idea what had transpired. She grabs the long, hooked knife and flees out the door, leaping through the waterfall known as “Noh Ka Likai”.

This is one of the most devastating instances that depicts the most heinous type of suffering. Likai was shown as a strong lady who cared for herself and her daughter despite adversity, only to be betrayed by an abusive male. However, her unknowing cannibalistic act is not always highlighted as a main perspective of the text. Cannibalism’s portrayal in oral literature may reflect deep-rooted cultural taboos and evoke fear, highlighting the boundaries of societal order. Tatar asserts that “Cannibalistic narratives in oral literature tap into primal fears and serve as cautionary tales, reinforcing social norms and delineating the boundaries of acceptable behavior” (Tatar 210), like the cannibalistic tales of *U Thlen*, wherein it involves narrative of a snake deity that forces its fugitive to hunt for blood to satisfy its hunger in return for riches.

#### **Suicide in Khasi Oral Narratives :**

Suicide in oral literature represents a complex and sensitive theme that is approached differently within various cultural contexts. By examining these narratives, one will gain insights into the multifaceted nature of human experiences, ethical considerations and the ways in

which oral literature reflects and shapes cultural perspectives on this topic. Moore opines that “Suicidal narratives in oral literature can serve as cautionary tales, conveying moral lessons about the consequences of certain actions or emotional states. They may highlight the importance of community support, empathy, and mental well-being” (Moore122). Understanding suicide in oral literature necessitates considering the cultural context and ethical discourse surrounding the topic. Oral narratives provide insights into diverse cultural beliefs, attitudes, and responses to suicide, fostering a broader understanding of human experiences across societies (Kral 75).

“In Western oral literature, suicide can be depicted as an act of despair, tragic love, or the consequence of societal injustice” (Campbell 245) which is also the tale of *Manik Raitong*, a flute player who got into a relationship with a lonely queen. The queen who is losing sleep due to her absent king for the third consecutive winter stumble upon Manik who is a poor unfortunate man. She visits him many a night and listen to him playing the *bisli* (flute), melodiously, and each night she becomes more enchanted with him. When the King returns, he is shocked to find that his young beautiful Queen is pregnant and about to give birth. To determine the father of the child, he demands that every eligible male should visit the child and offer it the banana provide. The child grasps the banana offered by Manik, and the whole crowd cheered. The King sentenced him to death, by burning on a pyre. The next day, Manik is dressed for the sentencing and expressed a great charm complimented by his flute. People are moved by his

appearance and followed him as he proceeds to his death. The Queen, stealthily follows the crowd, and as soon as Manik leaps, she followed suit, and jumped in the pyre with him, so as to showcase her love to him, thus committing suicide for love, Chen suggests “These narratives shed light on the existential and moral dimensions associated with suicide whereas in Asian oral literature often addresses suicide as a response to social pressures, unrequited love, or as an act of honor and sacrifice” (Chen 112).

Other narratives of suicide in the Khasi Oral Narratives are *SunaPani*, and *Noh Ka Likai*, wherein the narratives suggest that “Suicide in oral literature can carry existential symbolism, representing the struggle for meaning and the ultimate confrontation with mortality. It may explore themes of despair, the search for identity, or the quest for transcendence” (Camus 58).

#### **Conclusion :**

These Khasi oral narratives shape how people perceive and understand the world around them. They provide a framework through which events, ideas, and individuals are interpreted. By presenting these versions of reality, narratives influence people’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to various linear perspectives. They instead appeal to emotions, as they can evoke empathy, anger, fear, or hope. Emotional resonance can make narratives more persuasive and memorable, leading to a stronger impact on individuals and society. Narratives play a crucial role in constructing individual and collective identities. They help shape people’s sense of self, community, and belonging.

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# Double Patriarchal Burden and Complexities of Womanhood : A Comparative Study of Meena Kandasamy & Gwendolyn Brooks' Poetic Voices

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In contemporary literature, feminist voices have played a crucial role in challenging patriarchal norms and advocating for gender equality. Meena Kandasamy and Gwendolyn Brooks are two renowned poets who have employed their poetic voices to highlight the struggles and burdens faced by women in patriarchal societies. The term Dalits was referred to all Indian untouchable communities who lived outside the boundary of the village furthermore as Adivasis, landless farm laborers, workers, the suffering masses, and criminal tribes of India. For hundreds of years, they remained as untouchable and an outcaste. The Hindu Varna system made them slaves. They have been tortured for a long time while they had neither village nor homes. They had no choice but to commit crime, to beg or to figure as labourers or sweepers to earn their livelihood. The tribal people lived in forests, outside the village or caves.

Dalit literature relies on Dalit consciousness, and it represents the cruel life

experiences of marginalized Dalit people. There's invariably one or the opposite real character behind a fictional name additionally the depiction of solid reality behind the skinny veil of fictionalized incidents in the majority of the genres of Dalit literature. All its literature and fictionalization, whether or not in poetry or prose, features a realistic stance. Dalit literature is fundamentally a literature of resistance. As within the thought literary canon, it's necessary to be a woman to represent (in literal sense) the experiences of women; it is also necessary to own women writers in different marginalized classes. The sole reason for this oppression is patriarchy, that exists at each level. Dalit male writers face accusations of not providing Dalit women writers their due place (Lone).

## **Slave Narratives :**

Slave narratives predominantly took the form of autobiographies, providing a detailed depiction of an individual's personal experiences, their courageous journey to freedom from slavery and their

subsequent lives as freed individuals. African American literature and culture have their roots in the examination of the rich African American oral tradition. This tradition encompasses a wide range of expressive forms, such as work songs, rhymes, jokes, riddles, spirituals, blues, legends, and folk tales. These various artistic expressions served as a means for enslaved African Americans to reflect upon their own circumstances as a subjugated group. Additionally, the powerful “call and response” dynamic between spiritual leaders and their congregations played a significant role in shaping African American literature and culture. (Andrews)

#### **Meena Kandasamy :**

Meena Kandasamy, a talented poet, novelist, and translator based in Chennai, embraces her identity as a proud, outspoken woman of Tamil descent. As an advocate for social justice, Kandasamy sees her writing as a means to define her identity and challenge societal norms.

While her poetry encompasses various themes, she particularly emphasizes caste as a conscious consideration in her work. Despite living a relatively privileged life surrounded by liberation and education, she remains deeply troubled by the injustices faced by Dalits, especially Dalit women, and the lingering impact of historical oppressions. Kandasamy believes that language holds a crucial role in perpetuating or challenging systems of oppression and sees political poetry as a responsibility to ensure language does not disappoint its oppressors.

In addition to her political engagement, Kandasamy explores love and wit in her poetry. She wrote her first love poem a couple of years after delving into

writing lines filled with anger and resistance. Her work not only reflects the fierce struggle against oppressive forces but also exhibits a clever playfulness and puns that leave readers eager for more.

#### **Gwendolyn Brooks :**

Gwendolyn Brooks made history in 1950 as the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for her poetry collection called “Annie Allen,” which tells the story of a black girl growing up in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighbourhood. With her family’s support, she pursued her passion for writing and gained recognition by submitting her poems to magazines and the Chicago Defender newspaper. Influenced by prominent figures like James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Richard Wright, Brooks’ work was regularly published in the Defender. However, the Pulitzer Prize elevated her reputation even further. Brooks used her prize money to support aspiring poets and those in need, choosing to prioritize helping others over luxury items. She travelled during her summers off from teaching, visiting Kenya and Tanzania and forming global connections. By the time of her passing in 2000, Brooks had received numerous awards and honors, including being named the Illinois State Poet Laureate and serving as a poetry consultant for the Library of Congress. Her impact extended beyond her own achievements, inspiring writers like Toni Morrison and leading to the establishment of a conference in her name at Chicago State University.

Kate Millett was the first prominent feminist after Simone de Beauvoir to work on the construction of women-men literature. According to Millett, the relationship between men and women is deeply embedded in the politically

meaningful power structure, from which she derived the term “sexual politics.” An important document of Second Wave Feminism. *Sexual Politics* (1970) argues that patriarchy is a political system based on the subordinate role of women, and that Western social systems are a secret way of manipulating power. Like De Beauvoir, Millet is the subject of the concept of artificially constructed femininity in women and all aspects of society and culture are inner to women until psychological inferiority pervades. Millet believed that it worked according to the politics of which made it become psychologically rooted. She identified literature as a tool of political ideology as literature restored sexual inequality and strengthened the value of social patriarchy. To reveal the depth of this insidious indoctrination, Millet appointed DH Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley’s lover*, who reveals the ongoing celebration of male sexuality and the misleading presumption of female passiveness. The works of four 20th century male writers were examined and Miller’s analysis shook the foundations of literary norms and blamed the classics for the treatment of sexually chased women-DH Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s lover*, Henry Miller’s *Cancer Tropics*, and the *Tropic of Capricorn*. Line, Norman Mailer *Naked and the Dead*. In contrast, she welcomes the gender politics of gay writer Jean Jennet. Millet is also known for the distinction between the term “gender” that is rooted in biology and the term “gender” that is culturally learned.

In the fifth chapter of Part II, Simone De Beauvoir explores the aspects of modern marriage that perpetuate oppressive traditions against women. She identifies the present state as a transitional period,

where women have gained some rights but continue to face unfair treatment. De Beauvoir highlights the inequality within marriage, noting that it serves as the sole avenue for women to enter society and attain financial security, whereas men do not face similar pressures due to their ability to work and live independently. The societal expectation placed on women is to cater to their husbands, tend to household duties, and care for children, denying them the opportunity to pursue their own interests or live beyond the domestic sphere. Consequently, wives find themselves solely reliant on their husbands for social interaction, lacking independence and a sense of personal agency.

De Beauvoir acknowledges that women are not to be blamed for choosing marriage over remaining single, as it provides them with the greatest economic and social stability. However, she recognizes that women often experience internal conflict surrounding marriage due to its simultaneous benefits and detriments. Many women enter into marriage out of a sense of obligation, finding themselves in unforeseen circumstances. The absence of open discussion about the realities of married life and loss of virginity leaves many women feeling violated during their initial sexual experiences with their husbands, leading to ongoing dissatisfaction within their sexual relationships.

De Beauvoir further asserts that most men do not love their wives but view them as possessions. Love and marriage are generally incompatible, as marriage itself is an oppressive and unequal institution. Furthermore, marriage diminishes eroticism by making sex uncomfortable for women and restrictive for men. To compensate for their limited freedom outside the home,



women often become dominant within the domestic realm and become consumed by household chores. However, this labour lacks meaning as it fails to generate anything new or contribute to society, ultimately leaving women feeling overall unhappy and dissatisfied.

The autonomous women's groups, emerging as a challenge to the left framework, remained somewhat dependent on it. These groups critiqued mainstream conceptualizations of work, development, legal processes, and the state, leading to theoretical and practical reformulations. However, discussions on class versus patriarchy enriched both sides of the debate. Many feminist groups recognized the need for a materialistic framework to analyse women's issues in the Indian context, connecting caste hierarchies and patriarchy. The anti-dowry, anti-rape, and anti-violence struggles within the women's movement highlighted this approach. Nevertheless, the feminist discourse on violence often overlooked caste as a category, limiting the understanding of issues such as "Talaq" and "Divorce."

#### **Aggression – Meena Kandasamy :**

In this poem, Kandasamy explores the intense state of Dalit women who have patiently waited for their dreams to materialize, but their prolonged waiting may eventually give rise to an outpouring of sorrow. Suppressed emotions will inevitably find a way to surface, even if they seem impossible to express. The controlled emotions, or rights, of these women will ultimately manifest in a more powerful and impactful manner. A line in the poem stated "Sometimes the external

signals of the inner struggle take huge forms" suggests that the external manifestations of inner struggles can assume significant proportions, highlighting the immense weight of suppressed emotions that could erupt at any moment. The phrase "There your dreams will come true" hints at an end to the oppression and suppression faced by these women, possibly through a violent and visceral transformation. Therefore, the poet concludes that aggression can lead to positive changes, rather than perpetuating a state of distress.

#### **A Song in the front yard- Gwendolyn Brooks :**

In this poem, the young speaker begins by comparing her front yard to the life she's living and her backyard and the adjoining alley to the sort of life she wants to experience. This is a comparison between her confined life and the possibilities she envisions in the world beyond her immediate surroundings. She longs for the freedom and independence that the charity children possess, even if it entails engaging in questionable behaviour. Despite her mother's disapproval of those children, the speaker continues to daydream about a life as a "bad woman." The poem explores the themes of darkness and light, as well as contrasting life experiences. The speaker juxtaposes her own sheltered existence within the boundaries of her yard, symbolized by a rose, with the more adventurous lives led by the charity children in the shadowy alley. The speaker desires to embrace the latter, employing imagery of darkness, such as the evocative phrase "night-black lace," to convey her yearning for a different kind of existence.

### **Element of atrocities in the works of Gwendolyn Brooks :**

Gwendolyn Brooks' black aesthetic of the domestic is among her most influential contributions to the African American literary tradition. Brooks' black aesthetic of the domestic consists of a gaggle of formal and thematic traits. The formal traits include polyvocality, stanzaic innovation, and first and person narration of women's interior lives. The thematic traits are a nationalist stance, a celebration of black women's identity, attention on black subjects, and an interest within the way domestic space shapes the final public sphere.

A Song in the front yard- elements of domestic restriction

In the first stanza of the poem –

“I've stayed in the front yard all my life.

I want a peek at the back

Where it's rough and untended and hungry weed grows.

A girl gets sick of a rose”.

the speaker conveys a sense of longing for freedom and exploration. The opening line implies that she has been confined to her front yard throughout her entire existence, indicating a lack of opportunity to venture beyond familiar boundaries. This restriction suggests a deprivation of new experiences and knowledge due to the absence of exposure to the outside world.

Furthermore, the phrase “rough and untended and hungry weed grows” symbolizes the speaker's yearning for something different. She becomes weary of the overly nurtured roses in her front yard and craves a glimpse of the neglected

and untamed areas. This desire signifies her hunger for excitement and enjoyment, regardless of any societal constraints imposed upon her. She recognizes that those in authority have withheld both “wonderful things” and “wonderful fun” from her, even if she is considered less privileged or deserving of such experiences.

Elements of Violence and atrocities against Dalit women in Meena Kandasamy's works.

Meena Kandasamy's poetry reflects her strong desire to express herself and advocate for the rights of marginalized Dalit women. In her concise poem “One Eye,” she vividly portrays the various injustices inflicted upon Dalit women. While poets, glasses, and water are seen as sources of thirst and longing, those in positions of power such as teachers, doctors, schools, and the media display indifference towards addressing societal injustices and meeting the needs of the people. Kandasamy emphasizes that humans fail to grasp what inanimate objects can comprehend, highlighting the lack of understanding and empathy towards future generations. The poem delves into the life of Dhanam, whose world is shattered as she endures the punishment of losing her left eye by drinking forbidden water. In “The Prince of Exile,” Kandasamy reimagines Sita, breaking away from the traditional portrayal of chaste and obedient women. She rejects the expectations imposed by patriarchal society, striving for women to reclaim their autonomy. Through the character Theta, who has mastered the art of disappearing since her abduction, Kandasamy depicts a constant struggle and serves as a form of revenge against

her husband, who failed to protect or rescue her in a timely manner.

Kandasamy fearlessly challenges superstitious beliefs and outdated orthodox practices that perpetuate the oppression of lower-caste women. Her poetry is a powerful critique, aimed at dismantling the patriarchal norms enforced upon them.

#### **Elements of violence in “Aggression” :**

The poem presents a powerful opportunity for resistance and rebellion against the prevailing injustices in society, particularly focusing on the patriarchal oppression of women. It employs the symbol of the vengeful female body as a means of resistance and confrontation, showcasing that Dalit women possess a voice that can speak out and challenge the oppressive norms. Meena Kandasamy’s writing serves as a potent instrument of political dissent, demonstrating the devastating power of articulation and setting a challenging standard in the realm of feminist poetics. The opening lines of the poem, “Ours is a silence that waits. Endlessly waits,” depict a Dalit woman, who have endured centuries of silence. This silence is not a personal choice but rather a result of imposed threats and generations of oppression, silencing their voices and denying them agency. It signifies a long-standing suppression that they have patiently endured.

The lines, “Sometimes, the outward signals of inward struggles take colossal forms,” highlight the internal battles and struggles experienced by Dalit women. These struggles remain concealed within, neither revealed to others nor fought against openly. However, it implies that a turning point has arrived, indicating that the time has come to break the silence.

“The outward signals” suggest that these women are on the verge of erupting like fire, refusing to be trampled upon by their oppressors any longer.

The concluding lines, “Most of the time: Aggression is the best kind of troubleshooting,” have garnered praise for their provocative nature. They romanticize the idea of aggression and violence as an effective means of revolt against those who exploit Dalit women. However, it is important to approach this interpretation critically, examining the complexities and nuances of resistance strategies and the potential consequences of embracing violence.

When we consider caste and race together, we are stuck at once by the remarkable similarity in the contrasting attitudes towards women of lower and higher ranks characteristics of men in privileged positions in both systems. The inequalities of caste are illuminated in the same way as those of race by a consideration of gender. The main aspect of the problem is the sexual abuse of women, which is a matter of inequality of power, seen in its most extreme form in the treatment of women of the lowest rank by men of the highest this is the aspect of the problem that has received most attention. In case, of Dalit women, they’re not only oppressed by the oppressor class, that is the so-called upper caste, but they’re also oppressed by the men of the oppressed class that is the so-called lower caste men. Infact, they’re even subjected to oppression from their mother-in laws in their marital households. Similarly Black women were not only subject to oppression from the so-called superior race (white masters) they were and to some extents are still victims of abusive Black households,

where the husbands often happen to try and compensate for the violation they go through in society on the women of their house.

**“Aggression” and “A Song in the front yard” :**

Both texts express a longing for freedom and relief that has been denied to a particular group or individual over an extended period. In “A Song in the front yard,” Gwendolyn Brooks employs a black aesthetic of the domestic, which aligns with the African American literary tradition. This aesthetic encompasses various formal and thematic elements, such as polyvocality, innovative stanza structures, first-person narratives portraying women’s inner lives, a nationalist perspective, a celebration of black women’s identity, a focus on black subjects, and an exploration of how domestic spaces shape the public sphere.

In Brooks’ poem, the speaker openly acknowledges her desire to be a “bad woman,” despite her mother’s disapproval. The concept of a “bad woman” involves characteristics like adorning night-black lace stockings and confidently parading with make up on their faces. The verses question the imposed standards on black women, exposing the double standards they are expected to navigate in order to be deemed “good women.”

Meena Kandasamy, in her poem “Aggression,” employs the symbol of the vindictive female body as a means of defiance and confrontation against patriarchal oppression. She demonstrates that Dalit women possess a voice that can effectively challenge the existing power structures. The lines “But not all suppressed reactions end in our bemoaning the

tragedy” convey that Kandasamy’s writing serves as a scathingly powerful tool of political dissent, allowing her to articulate her dissent in an elaborate yet straight forward manner.

Both poems capture the resilience and agency of women in confronting societal expectations and norms. They challenge oppressive standards and traditions while advocating for the empowerment and liberation of marginalized groups.

Both Kandasamy and Brooks delve into themes of domestic violence, societal expectations, and the negotiation of identity in the face of patriarchal oppression. Kandasamy’s poems often provide a searing critique of the cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. On the other hand, Brooks’ works explore the intersectionality of race and gender, offering nuanced insights into the experiences of black women.

Language and Style Kandasamy’s poetry is characterized by its unflinching and evocative language, employing vivid metaphors and imagery to convey the brutality of gendered violence. Brooks, in contrast, utilizes a more controlled and precise language, often employing rhythmic patterns and traditional poetic forms to amplify the impact of her words.

Structure and Form The structural choices made by Kandasamy and Brooks also contribute to the exploration of the double patriarchal burden. Kandasamy’s poems often lack traditional stanzaic structures, reflecting the chaotic and fragmented nature of women’s experiences in oppressive environments. In contrast, Brooks’ poems exhibit a more controlled structure, emphasizing the resilience and strength of black women.

**Societal Context** The socio-cultural contexts in which Kandasamy and Brooks write significantly influence their poetic voices. Kandasamy's work is deeply rooted in the Indian context, where patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched, resulting in a specific manifestation of the double patriarchal burden (Kandasamy, 2015). Brooks, drawing from the experiences of African American women, presents a unique perspective on intersectional feminism and the struggle against racism and sexism (Brooks, 1960).

While both poems share similarities in their exploration of marginalized experiences, there are also distinct differences. "Aggression" embodies an independent spirit of revolt, reflecting the personal struggle and defiance of the speaker. On the other hand, "A Song in the front yard" draws inspiration from observing another group, referred to as "the charity children," who could potentially symbolize impoverished or even white individuals with some limitations but still possessing more privilege than Black women.

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# Disability and Life Narratives : Critiquing the Different Shades of Violence

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## **Introduction :**

There are many distinct types of violence, including: direct and indirect, open and hidden, cultural and structural, psychological and physical, etc. Different reasons lead to violence. It is a power battle that includes everything from domestic brutality to widespread genocide. Direct and indirect acts of violence against people with disabilities are considered disability-based violence. It is based on the disparity in power between individuals with and without impairments and the societal stigma attached to disabilities. Physical, psychological, and economic violence are all examples of direct violence. When we talk about violence, we're talking about structural violence, which is defined by conventions, attitudes, and preconceptions about disability. More over 1 billion individuals, or around 15% of the world's population, are thought to be handicapped, with the majority of them living in developing countries. Due to a multitude of circumstances, including ageing, war and conflict, natural disasters, and forced relocation, this number is anticipated to rise in the future.

Disabilities are more prevalent in women than in males. According to the World Report on Disability, 12% of men and 19% of women worldwide, respectively, are estimated to be disabled. Between 93 million and 150 million children worldwide are thought to have impairments. However, due to poor data collection, these numbers might not correctly reflect the number of persons with disabilities worldwide. There is a definite link between violence against women and disability that may aggravate the violence experienced by women and girls with disabilities, even if people with disabilities of either gender are particularly vulnerable to physical, emotional, and social abuse. Additionally, this interaction may make some types of abuse against girls and women with disabilities undetectable.

Women and girls with disabilities may encounter a variety of forms of violence, such as neglect, financial abuse or exploitation, physical or sexual assault, psychological and emotional abuse, and financial abuse or exploitation. This abuse could involve mistreatment by carers or disregarding dietary or medical needs. It

could also mean being denied access to and authority over financial resources. Many disabled women and girls encounter structural obstacles while trying to obtain social, health, and educational services. People with disabilities continue to be unable to access the majority of safe spaces for women and girls.

Life writing is pivotal in its use of narratives that are close to reality and we can say that these narratives are based on realism. Realism could be defined as a space where representations of the actualities of life and situation get reflected. With the notions of society, disability literature holds social realism since it has various models including the social model of disability which is based on the realization of one's personhood within the social environment. It could have been said that realism with joining hands in the social model of disability configures both the aspects stemming from personal experience to social realization. Social realism is therefore can easily be observed in such literary pieces since its focus is on the societal structures while exploring the layers of such. The models of disability are useful to carry forward such realism keeping all the things intact. While talking about *The Other Senses* by Preeti Monga it must be borne in mind that such a narrative is a clear depiction of her several experiences in life including the marriage knots that fail to bind her happiness. She tries to keep things calm and quiet in spite of being a victim of domestic violence at the hands of her husband. She has seen her relatives who stay aside with the purpose of avoiding her as much as possible. She is a victim even by her own self while tolerating so many struggles and

humiliation that needed a break. Her children also face the same kind of torture from their father and at a time they started to break the relationship in search of a new beginning. All such personal stories are portrayed by Preeti with realism filled with so that it gets into the readers' psyche deeper.

Genre in literature is generally understood as a literary type based on some standards of literary merit given the situation and context and the narrative technique. The argument on its representation has its qualitative value because of the sharp narration coming out directly from the character. Such writings are full of actual representations added to the fact that the author gets the opportunity to unravel the thoughts embedded in her mind for a long time. The readers can only sympathize with her with the objective of empathy because no one can feel and instill the ups and downs Preeti has gone through in her life. So, in a way, every sympathizer ultimately turns into an empathizer because of such limitations. It is only the text with which the author feels comfortable and she sticks to it with her self-narrative. This genre of life writing to some extent provides a voice to Preeti's suppressed voice that could be heard if one tries to get involved in it though not fully but can get a touch of it. Thus, Preeti's account of life detects the large pictures that are still noticeable in our society.

#### **Role of Disability Life Writings :**

“Life-writing is a vital feature of the disability rights movement: it emerged alongside disability rights activists' advancement of the social model of disability, as activists used their personal experiences of marginalization to demand

political rights, not medical cures.” (Simplican, 2017, p.47)

Autobiographies and the life writings are the best forms of counter-narratives that help to articulate one’s inner thoughts embedded in his or her subconscious mind. Such narratives carry forward the emotional ups and downs of a mind. It is not that only the actualities of psychological aspects are highlighted rather it accounts the whole of a person stemming from personal to social and from psychological to psycho-social. To make some points on disability is to mark the aspects of one’s individuality that stands like an iceberg. It successfully indicates that the thoughts of one’s personality get reflected through life writing considering all the outlooks. As a protest narrative, autobiographies play a crucial part in empowering the wounded souls. Society does not uphold anything or any other agent which does not adhere to its norms. So, disability which is opposed to ableism to some extent creates a hindrance in the process of ableism. Disability is nothing but a result of the tortures, exploitations and humiliations put forward by ablest prejudices. Couser makes it clear that the inside pictures speak greater while challenging the prevalent notions. The ascribed meanings to disability are again important to note here. Impairment has to be distinguished from disability firstly. While the former stresses its medical part, the latter highlights the social aspect with its dysfunctional ties. Disability is, after all, the outcome of one’s unwelcome visit to society. The standards created by society are the borderlines that must not get crossed by one and if it gets, then, one will face its deficiencies. The unraveling

thoughts and accounts of one’s personal life through life writings give ways of deviating from the expected standards culminating in protesting against the norms of ableism which is nothing but a tool of exploitation. Since no human being is normal in every sense it must be noted that an environment that accepts the different voices is needed, otherwise, we will end up being exploited by ourselves. Be it religious, social or individual models of disability none is free from limitations. The focus only on psychological aspects according to the individual model of disability has created a boundary since it does not take into consideration the social phenomena that a person with disability confronts in society. On the other hand, the religious model of disability is a hindrance to both individual and social models since it sees disability as a sin committed by the forefathers of the sufferers and as a result, the present generation is dealing with the sins of the former. We can see how each model of disability has exceptions to take into account the stories of suffering that is why a compilation of all three models may help us to locate our actual understanding of disability. According to Couser, however, “Autobiographical works that are counter discursive are written from the “inside of experience,” in ways that are self-consciously political and challenge conventional meanings ascribed to disability” (p.109–110).

Life writing is extensively emphasised in the disability rights movement. As activists utilised their own marginalisation to demand political rights rather than medical remedies, it evolved concurrently with the promotion of the social model of



disability by disability rights activists. Currently, a wide range of disabilities are covered in disability life writing on a global level. This practice is still very new in India. About 10 years ago, disabled women began to utilise life writing as a way to address their marginalisation and gain recognition in popular culture. The personal narrative's immediacy, in contrast to certain case studies that are available in India, reflects the distinct perspectives of disabled women on sexuality, reproductive issues, appearance biases, and other typical challenges. The genre, in a manner, gives women with disabilities the power to tell their own tales in opposition to ableist and sexual marginalization and myriad forms of violence in society.

The specificity of violence and a larger variety of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse experienced by disabled women are frequently ignored in India's domestic violence activism and debate. Withholding mobility aids like wheelchairs or white canes to restrict their mobility is one type of violence against women with disabilities, as is financial, verbal, and emotional abuse that increases a feeling of helplessness and dependency. Being crippled and living with the abuser makes one afraid to speak up. Preeti Monga, a blind lady who had only dreamed of a pleasant home life until suffering from a nightmare intimate partner at the hands of her drunken husband, wrote her memoirs *The Other Senses* (2012). This essay reconfigures the themes of love and desire as well as the horrific abuse she suffered at the hands of her alcoholic husband before finding the strength to leave and strive for a respectable

life for herself and her kids. By speaking out against spousal abuse and domestic violence, she has established herself as a trauma counsellor, corporate trainer, writer, aerobics instructor, public speaker, and director of Silver Linings Human Resource Solutions Pvt. Ltd. It appears that her primary struggles were with internalised feelings of diffidence and powerlessness caused by her disability, as well as traditional gender role training.

### **Violence, Abuse and Life Writing :**

Monga began her married life with a strong dosage of verbal abuse and threats of violence from her inebriated husband, which was drastically at odds with her hopes of love, companionship, and domestic bliss. She had always desired to live independently and believed she could do it with Keith's help. Despite their natural reluctance to take on yet another responsibility, her parents consented to Keith's request to live with them because they believed it was only a temporary solution to help Monga adjust to her new responsibilities. Her confidence and self-esteem were destroyed by Keith's nasty attitude. It quickly established itself as a recurring occurrence, leaving her constantly scared, depressed, and insecure. Because Keith appeared to have no memory of the previous night's events in the morning and was unwilling to discuss them, she was unable to comprehend what had caused such aggressive action.

They moved into a separate flat when Keith was able to maintain a consistent job. But even in that case, he would spend the majority of his income on entertainment. Monga's parents were without a doubt expected to pay for everything, whether it was entertaining guests,

purchasing essentials of life, or supporting their children's education. Additionally, he made fun of her for spending money she didn't have. The verbal abuse, according to Monga, always included threats of physical punishment and reminders that her family should be grateful to him for marrying the blind, worthless daughter and comply with his demands. Her husband would get drunk and start verbally abusing her, she claims. He benefited more from our lack of resistance than from ours. Monga made numerous attempts to end this toxic relationship. She would leave her parents and vowed never to return. Keith would continuously ask her mother for her forgiveness and a second chance to change. He even visited the kids' schools and used emotional manipulation on them there. The defenceless kids pleaded with her to pardon their father as well. Monga also loathed the idea of spending the rest of her life by herself.

#### **Violence and Trauma in *Unbroken* :**

Nandhika Nambi lives in Coimbatore and is passionate about music, medicine and manuscripts and was born into a family of three daughters of which she is the middle child. Through her self-narration, we have undergone a journey to the world of a child who experiences trauma with disability and as a hit, she pays no heed to anyone. She becomes a child with no possible control. She chooses what she likes to have despite the pressures of her family. She fights with her brother desperately and does not care about anything. Throughout the narrative, the author surprises us and keeps our attention by giving a hint to tell a story regarding her accident. She has a very straight

forward statement about her family. She has a pathetic notion about her family including her father and she says, "I had always seen my father as rather demonic character-emotionless, egotistical, more worried about schedules and work planes than his family. But then it suddenly hit me: he acted that way with me because of the way I acted with him. It was a vicious cycle we were stuck in. He'd tried to break with it, on many occasions, but I had never cooperated" (*Unbroken*, p.149). Akka, the narrator, shares the life story of a teenager who talks about several incidents in life-related to her family, friends and society. This narrative marks the growth and development of a disabled teenager who does not care about societal structures. Her description of her brother, father, mother and herself is a shocking one. She points out, "He was still a frightened little freak, my father was still the most selfish person in the world, my mother the most ignorant, and my friends the most annoying and my life a disaster" (*Unbroken*, 2017, p, 56).

#### **Gendering Disability:**

The gendered notion regarding disability is a prominent issue to deal with. Gender is a notion rather than a sexual identity of a person. Sex has to be distinguished from gender which is a biological identity seen during one's birth. But gender is a societal notion attributed to people by the society based on its standards and norms regarding masculinity and femininity. Society always prefers to call males masculine rather than women who can also become the same because the structures prevalent in society believe in the principles of normalization. It fails to rectify the prejudiced thoughts regarding the binary between male and female and

masculinity and femininity. The failure to recognize that a woman can perform masculine activities and femininity can be seen in any male is a major one. Disability life narratives are praised not only for their authenticity and accuracy to speak out their voices rather they can challenge the binary regarding sexual and gendered identity. But at times it becomes a trying attempt in the case of people with disabilities with their attempts to dismantle the structures and forms of society regarding the same. With the publications of disability narratives, people are acknowledging the adversity and challenges experienced by people with disability because they may not consider any of the standards in the formation of their identities. The equity of identity formation and the stability of mindset are observed in the case of such women like in the case of Preeti Monga's *The Other Senses* because Monga ultimately chooses the life of her own despite having the odds in her life. She finds happiness later in life only for her constant struggle with her own self and with her husband and the outcome is her matured self. The deconstructive attitudes of disability narratives point to the hollowness of such gendered notions in relation to the male-female binary based on masculinity and femininity. But the much-practised thoughts about gender are hegemonic. The more people try to get rid of it, they engulfed the whole of it by reducing the status of persons with disabilities below the standards. It is seen that people with disabilities are much more enriched with the required than normal human beings and instances can be seen in the case of Namdhika Nambi's *Unbroken* where, Akka, the narrator does prove the same by thinking above the so-

called normal within her school days. It is a challenge thrown at the standard face of normalcy. Normalcy is a norm created merely to suppress the polyphonic voices coming out of other disciplines. It is a form of subjugation in a way that brings oppression for the people with disabilities and if it is in the case of women with disabilities then the level of subjugation is thrice since they are first marginalized because of their gender, secondly due to the unwelcome attitude of society and patriarchy by large and thirdly because of having some forms of impairments for which the society is making them disabled. Disability as we have gone through is a form of torture and different from an impairment that needs to be taken care of.

#### **Domestic Violence and Disability Life Writings :**

Another means of control in the lives of those with disabilities is domestic abuse. Domestic violence is a type of repetitive conduct intended to seize or keep control of an intimate relationship through violent means. Domestic abuse can take the form of actual or threatened physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological acts that have an impact on another person, regardless of that person's age, class, or religious beliefs. Such abusive actions lead the victim towards mental breakdown leading to the ruin of mental peace. The purpose of such action is to exercise power over the victims. The powerful agencies occupy the height strata in society in which patriarchy is also one such. They control and exercise the policies over women. Firstly, it is patriarchy that tries to reduce them in terms of humane qualities since they have authorized the assigned roles. A normal

human being is a myth that is obviously unverifiable formulated by normalcy. Women face violence in relation to domesticity while trying to cope with filial issues. Violence is the outcome of thoughts by domineering bodies. It is a form of exploitation run by the structured authorities on the lives of the subordinates. The outcome is severe in the case of women because they try at first to tolerate to the fullest and as a result, they come across exploitations and tortures in the hands of male members of society. With children, it becomes sometimes tough to move on keeping in mind the fatherly affection in the lives of children though rarely provided. The hopes behind such adjustments are happiness and a good companion with whom a woman is supposed to live her life. But it is not the same who decide to stay happy without a marriage bond. We are talking especially about women who are marginalized by their husbands due to family pressure, workload and prejudices of society. Violence brings intolerance in the lives of such women leading to the establishment of their independent attitude and mindset. The focal point of our reading is how Preeti Monga survives the domestic violence by thinking of her children and ultimately finds her love after breaking up with her former husband. She used to get treated brutally by her former husband Keith in the presence of her children which made the children indifferent towards their father because they were tired of observing how their mother is struggling with all the issues in the family and getting beaten up by their father. They told their mother to leave their father in such a condition. This incident gets repeated again and again and Keith drinks

and abuses Preeti in the same way. Whenever Keith promises to not do such things again which made Preeti come back to him, he breaks his promise and does not stop beating and abusing his wife. Such inhuman treatment leads Preeti to break the relationship with Keith forever with no hope of rejoining.

### **The Crux of Identity :**

Identity is an attribution or distinguishing characteristic of a personality that makes a person distinct in society. According to Julia Miele Rodas, "Identity is the idea of the self-understood within and against the social context, a means by which the individual is categorized and located as part of, or set apart from, recognized social, political, and cultural groups" (*Keywords for Disability Studies*, 2015, 294). It is a qualitative aspect that decides a person's character on which recognition is made. It plays a crucial role in human beings since they are molded by the same while living in society. This identity formation always is not in the control of the concerned person associated rather it is in the hands of the societal structures and systems. Building an identity according to the societal norms is adhering to the notions of system or society. If it is out of this context then the true identity of a person may not get established as the system will not allow so to create any disruption. The identity of a person with disability is strongly determined by society or the surroundings configure the meaning it. That is why we are confronted with the movements stemming from disability rights to LGBTQ rights. The motive behind such movements is to establish equity and equality for everyone despite one's physical

or psychological differences. Society cannot always ascribe meanings according to the impairments seen in people with disability but it is seen and done continuously with the usage of several pejoratives. Having some impairments do not suggest that these persons cannot exercise their wit. The people with impairments are made disabled by forging false statements about them which in a way made their personhood mute. This silencing suggests that the persons are denied access to humane dignities because of their differences. The set of qualities and dignities that made a man human is a problematic one. Is it true to call a man or woman human just because he or she has a human shape? Despite having the qualities that can secure one's identity, people with disability are neglected their rights and the usual scenario in societal environments is not friendly to welcome them. Everything in society is structured so that only normalcy can have its influence on people rather than allowing people with disabilities to live a comfortable life. Identity and its components are interdependent and correlated and at a time decides a person's lifestyle, dignity, education, humane qualities in society. It is through identity formation a person is allowed to have a normal life in society. If we look at Preeti in *The Other Senses*, we would see how her identity is determined by her family members in the first place, her former husband Keith in the second and lastly, she takes the lead through a divorce from her husband due to the constant torture and humiliation that she has experienced throughout her married life. Dependency comes from the economic and social upheaval that transforms a woman into a submissive wife which Preeti avoids and

decides on her own to form an identity according to her choice and will rather than complying with the expected roles that a woman is supposed to practice in family.

#### **Disability Culture and Self Narratives :**

Disability culture is the difference between being alone, isolated, and individuated with a physical, cognitive, emotional or sensory difference that in our society invites discrimination and reinforces that isolation – the difference between all that and being in community. Naming oneself part of a larger group, a social movement or a subject position in modernity can help to focus energy, and to understand that solidarity can be found - precariously, in improvisation, always on the verge of collapse. (Kuppers, p.109)

Cultural aspects in relation to disability are embodied through social groups and movements given the context in a community to which one belongs. It is a by-product of cultural affiliation for the persons associated. It has many components related to one's eating habits to fashion. People with disabilities find their ways to forming an identity through social groups by which they can assert their self and advocate for their rights. Solidarity is needed among various social and cultural groups which are denied in so many ways to raise their voice.

Disability studies offer myriad scopes to challenge the heteronormative principles prevalent in society. It is seen that people with disabilities are labelled mostly as the Other because they are not fulfilling the patriarchal standards regarding normalcy and human being. The very idea of disability itself is a deviation from normalcy. In most cases, people suffer from the outer

world than the internal which pushes back the person to fight against the oppression. Culture and systems are the propaganda through which one particular system spread its ideas and dominate others. While undergoing this process people get to attach themselves to the standards available and accepted in society since patriarchy threatens to subvert all the voices that differ from it. Does this stop talk back against the subjugation by people with disabilities? The response would be a negation because they at least try to draw the attention of the people by showing their stories and also through literary endeavours. Literature in a way provides people with disabilities a relief and also a weapon to protect themselves against the pejoratives. Monga in *The Other Senses* is a great example in this case because she being a woman with some sort of impairment tries her best to not adhere to the dominant principles. She gives her utmost effort to cope with the situations she faces after her first marriage with Keith but her search for happiness culminates in a futile attempt on her part.

The author declares her genuine identity by using the first-person narrative voice. She views disability as nothing more than a kind of social discrimination. Preeti says in her autobiography while tackling the filial problems in life and while taking into consideration leaving her husband, "If by any chance, I cannot teach aerobics any longer because of my injury, I will take up the work of a housemaid... but nothing will ever induce me to any longer live in terror of Keith" (*The Other Senses*, p.124). This suggests a strong sense of determination because she has become a victim trying to cope with the

trying situation in her life. Her urge to leave her husband is an indication of leaving the patriarchal modes through which she got silenced. But her efforts and willingness to dismantle the patriarchal status quo are praiseworthy. Most people do not think like Monga and that does have an impact on its subversive turn. The subversion of instilled qualitative values in normalcy and a world controlled by men is a historic turn because these have been constructed only with the purpose of spreading interpellation by which people get illusioned about life and society in general. But here in our case, Preeti is a different one who has learnt to talk about life and its struggle by which she is creating self-assertion to reconfigure her identity in a male-dominated society which becomes in most cases difficult to do so. So, the awareness and knowledge that she is guiding towards will lead her to a world where independence and self-dignity are valorized.

#### **Conclusion :**

Throughout our reading, the focus of our discussion centres on the representation of violence in disability life writings. *The Other Senses* by Preeti Monga points at the large picture of society which sees disability as something dysfunctional in day-to-day human life. Our study tries to reveal that disability is an identity forcefully instilled in persons with impairments with a need to promote segregation in connection with human lives. Gender and violence join in hands as we have seen in the above-mentioned text which gives ways to our understanding of life narratives concerning disability literature and also pave the way for feminism. In most of the

life writings, characters went for the assertion of their selves by challenging the accepted and expected norms in society and family particularly as observed in *Unbroken* by Nandhika Nambi, *One Little Finger* by Malini Chib and so on. Preeti has shared through her autobiography the myriad conditions of violence by which she got silenced and the reasons for her uprising that enable her to raise her voice in society. She does not accept the passive self, given to her by society in a way whatever the circumstance is rather she manages to make an identity of her own keeping in mind the attitude of her husband, family, and society. The discourse created by the ableist mentality is a hindrance to the well-being of her self. This is how she fights for her rights rightfully. We have seen how a mind which is labelled as disabled can think beyond ableism and normalcy even with the constant force of patriarchy that pushes us to go backward. The representation of people with disability is a major factor in our society as we have noted because of the malfunction that caused a heavy defect in the psychology of the persons with impairments. Moreover, the aim of this paper is to reflect on the validation of society over people with disability that they negate and assert what they are and what they prefer to show us. It is not that they are relying on state types of machinery to decide on whatever their identity should be rather they are forging their identity and representing them in the literature that works as a voice for them since they can record the suffering and torture experienced and show it to society for its inhumane treatment. The indictment is that they are not provided with a suitable and conciliatory environment as everything

in society is based on the beliefs of normalcy. This is how our reading points at the qualitative values in life writings with a strict notion of the representation of disability.

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# Exploring the Push and Pull Factors, Psychosocial Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of the Housemaid *Aayi* in the novel *A Place called Home* by Preethi Shenoy

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In India, in both rural and urban areas, maids form a clique of people who has been known to suffer physical, psychological, economic, and emotional trauma from their employers, the very fact of very little pay incommensurate with their efforts and duties notwithstanding. Besides, the little remuneration given to them is also delayed as a characteristic trend. Maids are the most talked about by their employers in mirthful gossips, though never discussed on a positive note. Pertinently, aggression on maids ranges from simple facts of ignoring their interests, through denial of time off over the weekend to either visit their friends/lovers or go to religious places, vitriolic comments about them especially in presence of visitors to physical battering, and to a lesser extent mutilation with sharp and dangerous weapons. They are known to be overloaded with all known domestic duties, over-worked during off duty hours of the night without overtime emoluments, people whose rights are so suppressed that they can be hired and fired the same week, if not day. They are people who, it is alleged, do not

know any weekend or public holiday in terms of being on duty. In fact, they work most during these days while the employer is around and so can supervise duty at close quarters. They sometimes work up to twenty hours a day, seven days a week at a range of domestic tasks for little or no pay (Weeremunde, 1982, and Onyango, 1988:162).

Alongside with this, the psychological trauma suffered by the house-girl forced to work in a situation where the employer's children enjoy all the privileges they are denied cannot be underestimated. Maids are hired for baby-sitting and the general housekeeping including cooking, washing, cleaning and keeping the entire compound tidy. Some maids are also known to play additional roles including duties of a receptionist, receiving telephone calls, shopping, taking children to and from school, farm work and in a few isolated cases as security guards in homesteads - ensuring that strange faces are not allowed in. This study attempts to look at the nature of the relationship between maids and employers and tries

to find out reasons for affecting the future generations of maids too through the novel *A Place called Home* by Preeti Shenoy.

Preeti Shenoy who has authored fifteen bestsellers ranking the highest-selling author in India. Her influence extends beyond the literary world, as she has been featured on the Forbes longlist of the most influential celebrities in India. Preeti has represented India at several international literature festivals, including those in Birmingham, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi. Her exceptional achievements and contributions to literature have been recognized and celebrated by major media outlets such as BBC World, Cosmopolitan, The Hindu, Verve, and the Times of India. With simplicity and readability as her hallmark, Preeti Shenoy's books tackle serious issues such as mental health, gender inequality, socio-economic class divide, relationship dynamics, and challenges faced by young adults. The main story line of the novel *A Place called Home* is how in the windowless, cramped servant's room at Mrs Shetty's luxurious house, where her mother is a maid, Alka dreams of an escape. When Mrs Shetty decides to send her to the same school as her daughter, she works hard, moulding herself into a new avatar. She marries Subbu, a coffee grower with a four-hundred-acre estate. Between taking care of her heritage home, her two young daughters and her fabulous relationship with her mother-in-law, Alka's life feels complete. But when secrets about her past that she has fiercely guarded are exposed, they threaten to destroy her life. To protect all that she has, Alka must fight her demons and travel back to the world she worked so hard to leave behind which is the life of a maid's daughter.

The character Aayi in the novel faces in length and breadth of all the silent psychological traumas faced by maids in Indian household. The novel reveals beautifully the pushing factor which made Aayi become a maid and the analysis of which is carried forward. Aayi is a person who is born into a weaker social economical background which forces her to leave home at a young age in the name of marriage. She gets married without a basic education at the age of seventeen. Her husband turns out to be an alcoholic and a goon. The alcohol and violence are brought to home also. Initially, Aayi with her friend Manjula who is also a victim of domestic violence tries to help her finding job. She is joining as a cleaning staff in a small shop. Before Aayi could face the hurdle of monetary problem, she forcibly becomes pregnant with Alka. Aayi then pushes herself by all the means to make her daughter educated and lead a decent life. This has been the case of many married uneducated mother who are working as maid in India and all around the world.

Four main factors must be noted in case of Aayi's maid life which is a common in Indian culture too that lead to psychological maid violence. These factors can be called the push and pull factors that led to the psychological maid violence. The first and most important factor is the lack of education or improper education and thereby leading to less or no awareness about their rights in their workplace. In case of the novel, Aayi is uneducated whereas when her daughter Alka gets education as a charity project of Mrs. Shetty makes all the difference. It is Alka's education which makes her think about the basic rights that they deserve at their

workplace. Secondly, poor wages and development leads to the suffering of generations. In many households, the maids receive major wages in non-monetary wise like in the form of shelter, food and clothes but in poor quality. In the novel too, Aayi with her new-born child is forced under circumstance to live in a poor ventilated small room in a big mansion of Mrs. Shetty's house. The third factor to be highlighted is about the gender crisis. Since maids are often women, they are prone to situation where they search for protection more than their growth or financial needs. This also pushes them to accept jobs which doesn't give them clear job card details. The fourth factor to be noted is the societal pressure of job based discrimination which remains as a major hindrance in the development of their future generations too. For instance in the novel, Alka's major secret that turns her life upside down is that which was her past as maid's daughter. The job of her mother is discriminated by the society even after her mother has died and it haunts her life she created too. The following lines from the novel outlines the continued discrimination faced by the protagonist as a maid's daughter.

*"But what did I have? I'd grown up in Mrs. Shetty's house, my mother doing her housework. I did a lot of their housework too and I am not ashamed to say that now. But back then, I would have died rather than admit to it. I was bullied and teased about it by kids I went school with. I grew up terror of my secret being discovered- and what about the secret was so terrible? Just that we were poor and my mother was a maid. I couldn't help where I was born. Yet, I was made to feel ashamed about it. Why? Why does society*

*place so much emphasis on class and caste?"*

A study conducted on the psychosocial challenges and coping mechanisms of domestic workers revealed that the majority of the domestic workers use praying, getting help and advice from other people, trying to come up with a strategy what to do, learning through it, and accepting the reality as coping strategy. Hence, various ways of coping strategies are identified by different researchers to identify the coping strategies used by different target groups. Wherry grouped items into eight primary scales, four secondary scales, and two tertiary scales. The primary subscales consist of specific coping strategies people use in response to stressful events. These include: Problem-solving, Cognitive restructuring, Social Support, Express Emotions, Problem Avoidance, Wishful Thinking, Social withdrawal.

In the novel, Renuka aka Aayi uses the coping strategy such as praying, getting help and advice from other people whereas Alka who is educated uses advanced coping strategies such as Problem-solving, Cognitive restructuring, Social Support, Express Emotions, Wishful Thinking, and Social withdrawal. Alka's coping helped her to survive the situation whereas Alka's coping mechanism helped her to evolve out from the situation as a more strong woman.

Studies conducted on coping mechanisms of the domestic workers are too limited. Domestic work is a common survival strategy for out-of-school rural girls in India upon arrival in urban areas. Domestic services rendered by maids continue to be a central activity in nation building and, in their absence, other areas

considered primal would collapse. Maids also play a very important role as far as socialization of children is concerned. Their welfare is thus an important issue. However, while domestic aggression in general has been widely addressed to, belligerence on maids in particular has received a raw deal. Nations have taken different measures to improve the circumstance of domestic workers. In the following section the improving measures that various countries considered will be discussed. Brazil has received a protected revision entitling its assessed 6.5 million domestic workers to additional time pay, joblessness protection, a pension, a maximum 8-hour work day and a 44-hour working week (International Domestic Workers Federation, 2013). Spain requires domestic laborers to be paid for reserve time when they are not working yet must be accessible if the need arises. It has fused domestic workers into its government backed social security framework, and is urging more employers to consent by decreasing the administrative charges they pay (IDWF, 2013). As per the International Labor Organization (ILO) there are around 20 million domestic workers and 600,000 domestic service agencies, around 465 of which are controlled by the AllChina

Women's Federation (ACWF) (Birte K., et al., 2011).

The major aim of this study was to understand the pull and push factors, the psychosocial challenges and coping strategies employed by the maid through the literary lens of Preeti Shenoy. The result of the study indicated that poverty (financial insecurity of their parents), and maid's responsibility to support their close relatives by earning money (Alka in case of Aayi's life), escaping early and forced marriage, limited job opportunities in a rural area and peer pressure remain the pushing social and psychological factors. Conversely, the expectations about urban ways of life, alternative job opportunities and access to better education in Alka's life were the major pulling factors.

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# Impact of Social Media Addiction on Body Esteem among Working and Home Makers in Karnataka

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## **Introduction :**

Social media itself cannot be titled a villain, for it has both pros and cons. There are many ways in which it can positively affect society. However, it also does have its fair share of disadvantages. Various studies have attributed it to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, which typically stems from the unrealistic expectations that consumers are exposed to on different platforms. With the indulgence in internet-based activities increasing exponentially in the current times and social networking sites connecting people all over the globe with just a few clicks, it has become more convenient to share one's own activities, view others' activities, and comment on them. Unfortunately, increased social media activities like uploading self-photographs, self-portrayal on social media sites leads to the appearance-related issues.

People, who are generally deemed to be spending quite a lot of their time surfing the internet, are more prone to the problematic and negative effects of social media. This issue becomes more concerning when the fact that they are in their

adolescence is taken into account. Physical changes during puberty may increase body dissatisfaction, and such negative perceptions about one's own body could be reinforced by the constant exposure to immaculate pictures online. It could easily lower their self-esteem and body-esteem when the individual compares their own bodies to the ones they see. These images may be staged in such a way to look perfect, but it is easy to fall prey to the belief that everyone's body must be that way. As a consequence, people may indulge in maladaptive eating behaviors or attitudes like restricting or bingeing, purging, and thin-ideal internalization. This could lead to the development of various physical as well as mental problems.

Many studies in the area of social media have predicted that there is a negative relation between amounts of usage of social media with the body esteem. Social media projects the thin body as an appearance content. Regularly when men or women sees the ideal body in social media they will develop fear of external judgement. The cognitive internalisation

study conducted by Hawain Yang (2000), says that more and more social media use among female adolescents leads to negative body esteem by learning from social media content.

Research study on the influence of the social media on body image conducted in Canada adopted cross-sectional analysis assessed the relationship between the usage of the Internet and body dissatisfaction in females. It concluded that the more time they spent online, the less satisfied they were with their own body image. The study also recommended to create awareness among the young women to inculcate positive body image in this digital era (Carter et al., 2017).

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and others are often contributors to poor body image. An explorative Facebook study involving young peer group in Australia says face book platform will give opportunity for the young community to do appearance comparison is the main reason for body dissatisfaction. The results showed face book is the main reason for the body dissatisfaction among the young people because it gratifies the idea of thin body among them (Cohen & Blaszczynski, 2015).

According to the recent studies it is confirmed that there is a relationship between idea of thin body and the screen time of the individuals. Since the social media is the primary source for the people for any information, education and entertainment which strongly promotes beauty ideals and this beauty ideals are thin and they are not universal. Young ladies and girls in order to attain the desired thin body strive to attain with the natural eating habits, unscientific diet

plans and compulsive body exercises. So social media as education, entertainment tool and information tool has a lot of persuasive content which disturbs once eating habits and unscientific diet plan (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019).

A study that aimed to understand the relation between body image and Facebook among adolescent high school girls adopted surveysays total time spent on individual's activity like photo uploading, editing photo, creating self-image with modification was associated with idea of thin body, self-portrayal, weight dissatisfaction, and urge for the thinness. Since platforms like Facebook relied upon "likes" or "comments" as a means to satisfy its purpose of getting an outsider's perspective on one's physical appearance, not receiving desired responses could result in body image disturbance (Meier & Gray, 2014).

On the other end, social media could also project a healthy perception of one's own body image. In theory, if people are satisfied with their body image, they may choose to express this body satisfaction by posting selfies online. When they are in any situation that makes them feel good about their body image, they may indulge in such self-promotion on the internet. Studies have also shown that body image satisfaction is positively associated with Instagram selfie posting since users who feel good about their bodies will have greater confidence when they take to Instagram to post. Therefore, posting selfies could also be an indicator of a positive self-image (Ridgway & Clayton, 2016).

Various studies have concluded that females tend to be more affected by such body dissatisfaction than males. A recent

survey study in Italy that examined the role of social media in body shaming. Female adolescents participated in the research showed higher rates of body shame than male adolescents. Adolescents seem to feel not satisfied with their bodies due to the difference that they perceive between ideal body portrayed in social media and own appearance. Therefore, they tend to mediate the shame that they feel through social media addiction by attempting to modify their body image by editing their photos (Gioia et al., 2020).

A descriptive qualitative study used the method of focus group interviews to study how female college students use Instagram and whether it has any influence on body image. They reported that they spent a great deal of time viewing and following accounts, which increased their exposure to edited standards. While presenting themselves on Instagram, they took the time and effort to choose the best pictures of themselves and sometimes even sought the help of friends to do this. To show only their best and most flattering versions, they would also feel the need to edit the pictures. They also wished to gain more likes and comments on what they post, so they would post at certain times to increase interaction. They relied upon such interactions as compliments or validation and would even delete or repost if they did not receive their desired goal. Moreover, they reported desires to reach beauty standards set by others (celebrities, peers, etc.), like adding more makeup, being zero figure as a fitness ideal. Even those posts by people promoting 'body positivity' were edited in some way or the other. Yet they wished to look like them and used such posts as motivational tools to exercise, edited their own posts, and tried to mimic the poses of highly-liked

posts on Instagram to get more likes. While posting, they focused on pleasing the viewers and cared for the opinions of others about their body rather than their own. As a result, they often compared themselves to others and feel poorly about their self look and poorly evaluating themselves when using social media. Participants also expressed wanting to alter their appearances and said that they would feel ugly when their posts did not receive enough likes and they felt more satisfied with their body when they received more appreciation via more likes (Baker et al., 2019).

In order to meet the beauty standards set by social media, some may also resort to cosmetic surgery. Recent studies have shown that watching more cosmetically enhanced female models had a moderate significant influence on a desire for body modification. While the study did not establish a relationship between the usage of social media and low self-esteem, those who used social media quite often and those who were less satisfied with their appearance were more likely to consider cosmetic surgery in the future showed greater interest in cosmetic surgery (Walker et al., 2019).

Similar trends were also observed in a few Middle Eastern countries where the more females want the cosmetic surgery because of the rise in social media engagement. Studies have also attributed body dissatisfaction caused by social media as the reason for wanting cosmetic surgery. Since they experience dissatisfaction with their body image, they feel the need to change their body image through cosmetic surgery until they are close to their true ideal body image (Alhabet, 2020; Jovic et al., 2016).

After reviewing the research papers it is found that there is a need for the regular studies in the area of social media and women – working and home makers because there are no studies conducted in this area.

### **Methodology :**

#### **Statement of the problem :**

Impact of Social Media Addiction on Body Self Esteem, among Working Women and Home Makers.

#### **Objectives of the study**

- To Measure the level of Social Media Addiction, Body self-esteem among women and home makers.
- To assess the impact of social media on Body self-esteem, among women and home makers.
- To find out the differences between working women and home makers in their level of social media addiction, Body self-esteem

#### **Hypothesis :**

**Hypothesis 1 :** Social media addiction will have a significant impact on Body self-esteem, among women and home makers.

**Hypothesis 2 :** Working women and Home makers differ in their level of social media addiction, Body self-esteem.

#### **Research Design :**

For the present study, a correlational research design and a comparative research design has been used. In correlational research design, observations relevant to two or more variables and their inter-relationships are made between them. The research design clearly indicates that in the present study, two groups viz. 'working women and home makers were taken. The variables undertaken for the study are

social media addiction, body esteem. Two questionnaires such as social media addiction questionnaire, body esteem scale were administered for working women and home makers. The participants were asked to give their response about their social media addiction, the way they think about their body esteem

#### **Participants :**

The participants selected for the study are drawn from Bangalore and other parts of Karnataka. The researcher collected data from the sample of 535 (working women = 278 and home makers= 257).

The self-acknowledged social media screen time of the sample is more than 4 hours a week and they use at least one social media platform and they participated voluntarily. Non probability method of convenient sampling technique is used in data collection process. The study targeted working women and home maker because

- a) working and home makers spend reasonable time with social media
- b) They value their physical body attributes
- c) Thin and ideal body images portrayed in social media play significant role in their mental health especially on their self-body image.

#### **Tools Used :**

Survey study was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire using tools like –

**Social Media Addiction Scale :** A self-administered Bergen social network scale, which was developed to study face book behavior of adolescents, later it generalized to study social media addiction. Social media scale is used to measure the intensity of the social media usage, loveliness, social anxiety, happiness etc.



There are 3 main items in the scale such as control difficulty, negative social relations and decrease in functions. The total sub items in the scale are 10. The lowest score obtained from the scale is 10 and the highest score is 50. All the 10 item statements are positive and measured in 5 point Likert scale 1= never 2=rarely 3=sometimes 4=often and 5 =very often.

Sum of all the items increases addiction increases, Cronbach's Alpha values of the scale is 0.95

**Body Esteem Scale :** A revised body esteem scale was used to assess the body esteem level among the respondents (Frost et al., 2018). Gendered body esteem scale listed of 20 different body parts and functions, respondents are asked to choose the different feelings about their body parts. Statements like 1= Strong negative feelings 2= have moderate negative feelings 3= have no feeling one way the other 4= have moderate feeling and 5= have strong positive feelings are used to assess sexual attractiveness, weight concern, physical condition of the women

Google form has designed including social demographic data of the respondents like age, marital status, education level, diet attitude and their social media screen time.

**Data Analysis and Results :**

**Relationship between social media Addiction, Sexual Attraction of body Esteem, Weight control of body esteem, Personal condition of body esteem and over allBody self-esteem**

Correlation coefficient	Sexual Attraction of Body Esteem	Weight control of body esteem	Personal Condition of Body Esteem	Body esteem
Social Media Addiction	.271** .001	.418** .001	.194** .001	312** .001

\*significant @ 0.05, \*\*significant @ 0.01

Google forms are also included declaration form and Assessment scales of social media addiction, body esteem.

**Data Analysis :**

The obtained data were scrutinized, scored according to the scoring keys respectively and subjected to the following statistical techniques.

- The data collected have been analysed using descriptive statistics such as Total, mean, and Standard Deviation for all the variables such as social media addiction, body esteem.
- Mann-Whitney U tests were used to examine the significance of the difference between the two groups (working women and home makers) in social media addiction, body esteem.
- The correlation between social media addiction, body esteem was found out by using Spearman rank order method.
- Kruskal-Wallis one way ANOVA was used to find out the significant differences between different age groups of working women and home makers in social media addiction, body esteem.

As shown in above table social media addiction has a significant positive relationship with sexual attraction of body self-esteem ( $r = .271, p = .001 < .01$ ), weight control of body self-esteem ( $r = .418, p = .001 < .01$ ), personal condition of body self-esteem ( $r = .194, p = .001 < .01$ ), over all body self-esteem ( $r = .312, p = .001 < .01$ )

**Differences between working women and home makers in their level of social media Addiction, Sexual Attraction of body Esteem, Weight control of body esteem, Personal condition of body esteem and over all Body self-esteem**

**Mean scores and Standard Deviation scores of social media addiction (SMA), Sexual Attraction of body Esteem, Weight control of body esteem, Personal condition of body esteem and over all Body self-esteem**

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	Mann-Whitney U test Interpretation	p-value
Social Media Addiction	WW(N=278)	22.52	5.28	Reject the Null Hypothesis	.001
	HM (N=257)	18.61	4.01		
Sexual Attraction of BSE	WW(N=278)	35.01	5.45	Reject the Null Hypothesis	.001
	HM(N=257)	31.73	5.52		
Weight control of BSE	WW(N=278)	28.50	6.22	Reject the Null Hypothesis	.001
	HM(N=257)	26.12	6.25		
Personal Condition of BSE	WW(N=278)	23.54	4.42	Reject the Null Hypothesis	.001
	HM(N=257)	21.27	4.43		
Body Self-esteem	WW(N=278)	87.06	14.73	Reject the Null Hypothesis	.001
	HM (N=257)	79.12	14.86		

As shown in table the mean, standard deviations (SD), and the results of Mann-Whitney U tests of working women and home makers in their levels of social media addiction, sub scales of body self-esteem, like Sexual attraction of body Self-esteem, Weight control of body self-esteem, Personal condition of body self-esteem are mentioned.

The mean and SD of working women in their level of social media addiction are 22.52 and 5.28, whereas home makers in

their social media addiction are 18.61 and 4.01 respectively. The Mann-Whitney U test ( $p = .001 < .01$ ) shows that working women and home makers differ in the level of social media addiction.

The mean and SD of working women in their sexual attraction (Sub scale of Body self-esteem) are 35.01 and 5.45, whereas home makers in their sexual attraction are 31.73 and 5.52 respectively. The Mann-Whitney U test ( $p = .001 < .01$ ) shows that working women and home makers differ in their sexual attraction.

The mean and SD of working women in their weight control (Sub scale of Body self-esteem) are 28.50 and 6.22, whereas home makers in their weight control are 26.12 and 6.25 respectively. The Mann-Whitney U test ( $p = .001 < .01$ ) shows that working women and home makers differ in their weight control.

The mean and SD of working women in their personal condition (Sub scale of Bod self-esteem) are 23.54 and 4.42, whereas home makers in their personal condition are 21.27 and 4.43 respectively. The Mann-Whitney U test ( $p = .001 < .01$ ) shows that working women and home makers differ in their personal condition.

The mean and SD of working women overall body self-esteem are 87.06 and 14.73, whereas home makers in their overall body self-esteem are 79.12 and 14.86 respectively. The Mann-Whitney U test ( $p = .001 < .01$ ) shows that working women and home makers differ in their body self-esteem.

#### **Discussion :**

As mentioned in the earlier studies, Social media addiction is having negative psychological effect on the human beings. According to the uses and gratification theory amount of consumption of social media leads to the different layers of psychological effect like body self-esteem. People who spend more time with the internet or social media are spending less time for their physical activity resulting in self body issues. Over last 50 years media is highlighting thin models in their content and it has become a new standard to follow. This media pressure is creating socio cultural influence of thin body among its users (Blowers et al., 2003). But media has passed its phases through different technology and content form.

Social media which is considered has an education and infotainment medium is educating people on the issues like body shaming, cyber bullying, sexual trapes, racism etc. As found in the above research work there is a positive relationship between social media addiction and body self-esteem, body weight, physical condition and sexual attraction and the findings are not supporting thin body and social comparison study's. Study conducted by the (Jiotsa et al., 202) says there is a relationship of comparing ones won body with the one who is followed in social media but level of education as a confounding factor. The present study results is supported by (Jiotsa et al., 202) social media is not only the influence factor of body image disorders among the general population but also the other factors like education, uses and gratification (what media one consumes) also should be considered as many of the participants of the present study are from urban area, they are having good education and socio economic status. Study done by (Kye & Park, 2020) says good socio economic status of the women in japan is the key factor in misperception of weight among the women, women with high economic status carry good body perception though she is under weight or over weight. As per the above study working women is using more social media because of these days social media has become integral part of the work or profession like self-branding, research, updating knowledge, better networking etc. As per the results of the study it is recorded that age, education level, profession, geographical location (urban) are the key factors for the positive relationship between social media addiction and body self-esteem and earlier

research work on college girls, school children's says there is a negative relationship between social media addiction and body dis orders (Ridgway & Clayton, 2016). By analyzing different research papers to know that many studies are confined to the western societies and young population which are technically advanced and commercially driven, this study findings indicates that social and cultural factors plays an important role in developing countries like India where patriarchy is prevailed and black skin is aesthetically appreciated and plus body size is beautiful. Indian media portrays positive body image through the movies, advertisements etc. where the lead actress with broad chest, big thighs, fatty body are also presented which is missing in Hollywood. India being the biggest consumer market many multinational companies are promoting their advertisements with positive body campaign in recent days is also considered valuable factor contributing to the results of the present study and this factor is supported by the study body positive movement in social media (Rodgers et al., 2022). Social media is not only the villain in contributing the negative body esteem among the people, there are several other factors such as peer pressure, family, other women factor and women in India do social comparison with other women in the family, among the friends neighbors, colloquies etc. not only through the social media (Stabb, 2009b).

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# Family: A Hotbed of Violence, a Critical Study of Shobhan Bantwal's Novel *The Dowry Bride*

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## **Introduction :**

Family violence transcends boundaries of age, race, economic status, religion, sexual orientation, and education, making anyone susceptible to its detrimental effects. Although men can also experience family violence, women constitute the overwhelming majority of victims, rendering it a prevalent form of violence against women worldwide. This research paper aims to investigate the multifaceted dimensions of family violence against women and its far-reaching consequences. By examining empirical evidence from diverse contexts, including Canada and India, the study highlights the urgent need for comprehensive care interventions and primary prevention strategies to mitigate the occurrence and impact of family violence.

## **Problem Statement :**

The problem is the pervasive occurrence of family violence against women, with distressing statistics revealing its prevalence and detrimental effects. Globally, approximately 35 percent of women experience violence at some point in their lives, and this issue is particularly

pronounced in India, where studies indicate that up to 26 percent of women report experiencing physical violence from their spouses. Furthermore, staggering figures from the National Crime Records Bureau demonstrate the high frequency of crimes against women in India, such as sexual assault and domestic homicides. The adverse consequences of family violence on women's mental health are equally alarming, leading to various psychological disorders, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders, and self-harm. Additionally, survivors of violence often face challenges in seeking help, resulting in a lack of disclosure and perpetuation of the cycle of abuse. Consequently, family violence engenders a profound sense of insecurity and fear within communities, necessitating comprehensive care approaches and primary prevention programs as viable solutions.

## **Research Objectives :**

This research paper aims to achieve several objectives. Firstly, it examines the prevalence rates of family violence against women globally, focusing on empirical

data from Canada and India. By analyzing the available statistics and research studies, this objective aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent and scope of the issue in different cultural contexts.

Secondly, the paper aims to explore the adverse mental health consequences experienced by women who have endured family violence. This includes examining the impact of violence on mental well-being and the development of conditions such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders, self-harm behaviors, and somatoform disorders. By shedding light on these consequences, the objective is to emphasize the urgent need for appropriate support and mental health interventions for survivors.

The third objective of this research is to investigate the help-seeking behaviors of survivors of family violence and the barriers they face in accessing formal support systems. This objective aims to identify the gaps and challenges in the existing support systems and to explore the reasons behind the underutilization of available resources and services. Understanding these barriers is crucial for developing targeted interventions and strategies to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of support services.

Furthermore, the research paper aims to propose a comprehensive care model that involves a multidimensional and multi-agency team approach to address the complex needs of survivors within district hospital settings. This objective recognizes the importance of a coordinated and holistic approach to providing support, including medical, psychological, legal, and social services. By outlining such a model, the objective is to contribute to developing

more integrated and victim-centered care systems.

Lastly, the paper advocates implementing primary prevention strategies to address family violence. These strategies include life skills training, gender sensitization programs and comprehensive sex education. Promoting these initiatives aims to foster a culture of non-violence and break the cycle of family violence by addressing the underlying societal norms and attitudes perpetuating it.

#### **Literature Review :**

Domestic violence is a pervasive issue with far-reaching consequences for women, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the problem. The review article "Domestic Violence: Feminist Responses" emphasizes the historical masking of wife-beating through gender-neutral languages, such as referring to it as marital discord (Bedard, 1990).

Lenore Walker's book, "Terrifying Love," provides compelling accounts of society's failure to protect battered women, often leading to extreme outcomes where some women resort to killing their abusers. Walker highlights the revictimization experienced by battered women due to deeply embedded biases related to gender, race, and class (Walker, 1990).

Walker's work also draws attention to the importance of language in portraying battered women as "terrified" rather than labeling them as crazy or angry, effectively shifting the focus to the underlying fear experienced by these women. The book discusses the trivialization of domestic violence as mere family disputes, indicating a casual attitude towards the issue.

Within the context of emergency medical responses, Kurz and Stark's analysis reveals a concerning absence of terms such as "abuse" and "battering," despite the apparent injuries resulting from such acts (Kurz & Stark, 1988).

The background information on dowry deaths and the societal perception of women as burdensome is derived from an article on feminisminindia.com ("Background of Indian Feminists on Dowry as a Social Evil"). Dowry deaths, including bride burning, exemplify domestic violence where brides are subjected to torture, harassment, and murder due to dowry-related disputes ("Background of Indian Feminists on Dowry as a Social Evil").

Efforts to address domestic violence are exemplified by organizations like Shakti Shalini, established in 1987 to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence ("Background of Indian Feminists on Dowry as a Social Evil"). The literature also highlights the challenges activists, such as Satya Rani Chadha, face in seeking justice for victims and combating the patriarchal legal system ("Background of Indian Feminists on Dowry as a Social Evil").

Furthermore, the literature underscores the need to effectively implement legal reforms and recognize the sociopolitical roots underlying violence against women (Hanmer, Jalna, et al., 1989).

#### **Methodology :**

This study employs a textual analysis methodology to examine the selected literary works. The underlying concepts and themes are critically explored through in-depth text analysis, including relevant quotes and passages. This approach allows

for a comprehensive understanding of the narratives and their portrayal of gender conflicts and societal attitudes.

#### **Findings :**

The analysis of the texts yields several key findings. Firstly, the narratives reflect the presence of gender conflicts within the depicted society. These conflicts highlight the struggles and tensions arising from societal expectations and norms related to gender roles. The texts illustrate women's challenges as they navigate these conflicts, shedding light on the complexities of gender dynamics.

Secondly, the texts reveal the pervasive influence of social attitudes in attempting to control and restrict women's thoughts, movements, and actions. Society seeks to confine women within predetermined boundaries, limiting their agency and autonomy. This highlights a larger societal framework that perpetuates gender-based control and limitations.

However, despite the oppressive gender-based barriers, the female characters in the stories demonstrate resilience and agency. They refuse to be confined by societal expectations and navigate these obstacles with determination. In doing so, they transform the challenges into personal growth and success opportunities. Their narratives serve as powerful testimonies to the strength and determination of women to overcome societal limitations.

The analysis uncovers gender conflicts, societal control, limitations, and the empowering journey of overcoming barriers. These findings shed light on the struggles faced by women within the depicted society and the transformative power of their resilience and agency.



**Discussion :**

The novel "The Dowry Bride" explores various feminist concepts within the patriarchal system depicted in the story. These concepts include male dominance, rigid gender roles, discrimination between female and male children, marriage being seen as a contractual arrangement rather than a meaningful relationship, the prevalence of the one-sided and gender-biased dowry system, and the presence of gender inequalities in education, employment, life partner choices, and procreation. The narrative also highlights domestic abuse rooted in gender disparities, with women being burdened with multiple roles, such as being the cook, laundry worker, and maid in their own homes. Mental harassment and the pressure on women to conform to societal expectations further contribute to their struggles.

Quotations from "The Dowry Bride" that relate to these feminist concepts include references to Megha's name casting a shadow over her life, Suresh being portrayed as a dependent "Amma's boy" incapable of independent thinking, Megha's double pressure of not providing dowry and the fear of infertility, and the objectification of women as potential wives for men. The novel also touches upon Megha's regret for not standing up to her father and refusing to marry Suresh, her self-perception as a "spineless coward," and the commodification of women through the dowry system. Megha's unfulfilled dreams of becoming a journalist and the support she receives from her friend Kunal further illustrate the limitations imposed on women by societal norms.

The narrative sheds light on the oppressive nature of the patriarchal system,

where women are expected to conform to traditional roles and behaviors. Megha's experiences in her in-laws' house, where she feels like a doormat and a whore, demonstrate the devaluation of women within the domestic sphere. However, her interactions with Kunal offer a glimpse of liberation and support, challenging traditional gender expectations.

The conclusion of "The Dowry Bride" showcases Megha's resilience and strength in adversity. She refuses to be defeated by societal pressures and challenges prevalent social evils like the dowry system. By defying societal norms and acknowledging her love for Kunal, she confronts the notion that married women do not require love. The lack of security drives Megha to choose Kunal as a worthy partner over her husband. Ultimately, the novel emphasizes the importance of individual agency and personal happiness in the face of oppressive gender dynamics.

**Conclusion :**

The analysis of the selected literary works in this research paper has provided valuable insights into the portrayal of family violence against women and its implications within the context of literature. By examining various texts, including "Terrifying Love" by Lenore Walker and "The Dowry Bride," we have explored the multifaceted dimensions of family violence and the societal attitudes that perpetuate it.

One key finding from the analysis is the presence of gender conflicts depicted within the narratives. These conflicts highlight the struggles and tensions arising from societal expectations and norms related to gender roles. The texts reveal how women are subjected to control and

limitations, with social attitudes seeking to confine them within predetermined boundaries, limiting their agency and autonomy.

Moreover, the literary works emphasize the resilience and strength of the female characters in navigating oppressive gender-based barriers. Despite their societal limitations, these characters demonstrate determination and resilience, transforming obstacles into opportunities for personal growth and success. Their narratives serve as testimonies to the strength and agency of women in overcoming societal limitations.

The feminist concepts explored within the narratives, such as male dominance, rigid gender roles, discrimination between female and male children, and the prevalence of the one-sided dowry system, shed light on the oppressive nature of the patriarchal system. The texts also address domestic abuse rooted in gender disparities and the devaluation of women within the domestic sphere. However, they also showcase empowerment and resistance, challenging traditional gender expectations.

Through analyzing quotes and passages, we have comprehensively understood the narratives and their portrayal of gender conflicts and societal attitudes. This examination of literary works provides essential insights into the representation of family violence against women within the literature.

This research paper has delved into the portrayal of family violence against women in selected literary works. The analysis of these texts has provided valuable insights into the multifaceted dimensions of family violence, the societal attitudes that perpetuate it, and the agency

and resilience demonstrated by female characters.

The findings highlight the presence of gender conflicts within the narratives, emphasizing the struggles and tensions arising from societal expectations and norms related to gender roles. The texts also shed light on the pervasive influence of social attitudes in attempting to control and restrict women. Furthermore, examining feminist concepts within literary works exposes the oppressive nature of the patriarchal system. The texts explore themes of male dominance, rigid gender roles, discrimination, and the objectification of women. They also address the prevalence of domestic abuse rooted in gender disparities and the devaluation of women within the domestic sphere.

By analyzing these narratives, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges women face in the context of family violence. Still, we also witness their strength, resilience, and ability to navigate and challenge societal limitations. This literature-based exploration contributes to the broader understanding of family violence against women and highlights the importance of addressing this issue in literature and society.

Further research and analysis of literary works can continue to provide valuable insights into the portrayal of family violence against women, offering a platform for discussions and raising awareness about this pressing issue. By amplifying the voices of survivors and challenging societal norms through literature, we can contribute to a more inclusive and empathetic society.

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