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## **About the Journal .....**

Literary Explorer (ISSN 0973 0524) is an annual literary journal, published by the Department of English , Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli, TN, S. India. It looks forward to publishing quality work by teachers and research scholars who are motivated to write well - researched articles, book reviews and also interviews with renowned writers. Articles submitted for publication are reviewed and selected by a panel of experts in the field of English Language and Literature.

The writing should adhere to the 9<sup>th</sup> Edition MLA Handbook specifications, and should be between 1500 and 2500 words. It must be original and should not have been previously published in any other magazine or journal. It shall be checked for plagiarism on the Turnitin software before acceptance.

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## Editorial

It is yet another accomplishment in the annals of our department publishing a fresh array of critical views through the new edition of *Literary Explorer*. The compilation comprises articles which explicate the recent and upcoming literary critical trends such like Green Imagination, Posthumanism, Exile Testimonio, Religious Ecology, and sundry dimensions of feminist reflections conceptualized in multifarious contexts, all penned out in inimitable original styles, which renders the reading refreshing and relevant.

We, the Editorial committee, feel privileged that the articles came from budding research scholars of various institutions across the country, and they have brought forth thought-provoking but refractive trajectories of much-discussed ideologies, such like, Feminism, Postcolonialism and Postmodernism through their essays. To quote a few prominent ones, the essay, “Posthuman Mercenary and Terrorism....” names dominance of androids in the posthuman era as a threat, and a terrorism against human consciousness; the article, “Green Thoughts in Amitav Gosh's *The Hungry Tide* traces how the plot which is set in the early decades of the twentieth century and woven round the complex relationship between humans and animals, drives home the message\_ the imminent need for eco-consciousness; and, “A Study of Religious Ecology in Terry Tempest Williams' *When Women were Birds: Fifty Four Variations on Voice*“ unravels the symbolic dimensions of Religious Ecology as seen in the novel as they highlight the author's brave attempt at rescuing religion from failing in the face of modernism.

An appreciable good collection of articles on marginal writings find an equally important place in the issue Feminist, Dalit and Disability Literatures inclusive, and they are worth studying for research students, especially since they are required to focus on various axes of the psychological undercurrent, both individual and collective. There are a couple of two very interesting reads, “Digital India and Empowered Girls: The Role of Technology in Advancing Feminism in India“, which talks about the new directions Women's Studies has taken in the digital India of the recent times, and “A Study of Language through Linguistic Competency“ demonstrates how only intensive reading can help improve linguistic competency.

We owe much to all those who were responsible for the prompt publication of the issue. The timely provision of financial aid from the Management helped us to bring out the journal on time. We record our heartfelt thanks to Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, College Governing Board and Bishop, Trichy-Tanjore Diocese, and Dr. J. Princy Merlin, the Principal of the College. Our thanks and indebtedness are due very specially to Dr. Joseph Dorairaj, Dr. Joseph Albert, Dr. R. Roopkumar Balasingh, Dr. U. Sumathy and Dr. Subathini Ramesh for readily accepting to serve as Advisors on the Editorial Board of the journal. Their fund of experience and expertise are sure to help the department and the journal alike take bold strides in research.

The journal is a ground where we appreciate and cherish the sharing of resources and oneness, working together as a department. The Editorial Committee, especially Dr. K. Shanthi, Mr. Edwin Moses and Dr. Aarthi Priya deserve my special appreciation and thanks for their help in meticulous proofreading and their invaluable advice in typesetting and bookmaking which made it possible to finish the work in time. My profuse thanks to Ms. Vimala who was of immense support and help to the team, typesetting the articles, and carrying out the corrections promptly. I also thank and appreciate CSI Goodnews Press, Tiruchirappalli for printing this edition almost error free and bringing to out in a pleasing new form this year.

**S. Sobana**  
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## Green Thoughts in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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### Abstract

Some of the most important environmental issues of the day are resource depletion, pollution, environmental deterioration, and climate change. Amitav Ghosh has highlighted our natural environment and people from his perspective in an eco-centric world. He examines how the protagonist and nature connect in his book *The Hungry Tide* while also describing the locale. Despite all of the challenges they face, their complete dependence on nature is shown. Ghosh attempts to reconstruct the earliest civilizations of modern man in order to educate people about the primordial culture of coexistence. *The Hungry Tide* is a well-known ecological novel that tells a modern tale of dislocations, disjunctions, and destabilization. Amitav Ghosh also analyzes the intricate interactions between humans and animals in the eco system of the archipelago.

**Key Words:** Environmental deterioration, ecological, environmental crisis, dislocations, disjunctions, destabilization, eco-centric, ecosystem, biodiversity

Environment is changing more quickly, yet the human race is failing to grasp its significance. Nothing can be done to lead a healthy life without a healthy environment. Climate change, pollution, environmental deterioration, and resource depletion are some of the most vital environmental problems today. Writers are crucial in helping readers understand the world from a variety of perspectives. Amitav Ghosh is an acclaimed writer, who exposes the epic themes of travel and diaspora, history and memory, political struggle and communal violence, love and loss, and also he continuously transcending the traditional lines between anthropology and art. His fictional world based on real-life events and characters from Indian eco-critical philosophy. He attempts to re-create a modern India based on environmental ideology. He explores topics such as humanism and environmentalism, especially when they come into conflict. He was awarded the

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Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 for his book *The Shadow Lines* and the Padma Shri in 2007 for his services to literature and education. He is the youngest and the only Indian English writer to get the Jnanpith Award. It is the highest literary honour in India. In his work, Amitav Ghosh has brought attention to the climate disaster the world is currently experiencing and has warned everyone of the errors done in the past and the lessons not learned. Former Governor of West Bengal Gopalkrishna Gandhi praised Amitav Ghosh as the “philosopher of the environment” and “sailor among novelists”.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* examines the complicated Man-Animal relationship in the archipelago's eco system as well as the resettlement of refugees in the forest reserves of Marchjhapri and Sundarban. The ongoing conflict between people and the environment in the Sundarbans, West Bengal's tidelands, India, and Bangladesh, is the main subject of this novel. It is a contemporary story of dislocations, disjunctions and destabilization, it has been well acknowledged as an ecological novel. In *The Hungry Tide* Amitav Ghosh examines how environment is represented, how humans treat the non-human and explores possible solutions for the environmental crisis.

A literary theme is the main idea or underlying meaning a writer explores in a novel, short story or other literary work. The theme of a story can be conveyed using characters, setting, dialogue, plot or a combination of all of these elements. Sundarbans is an integral part of the plot for many of Amitav Ghosh books. *The Hungry Tide* is a contemporary story of dislocations, disjunctions and destabilization, it has been well acknowledged as an ecological novel.

In an eco-centric world, Amitav Ghosh has presented our natural environment and humankind from his point of view. In the book *The Hungry Tide*, he describes the area and discusses how the protagonist and nature interact. Despite all of the difficulties they encounter, their utter dependency on nature is underscored. In order to inform people about the prehistoric culture of coexistence, Ghosh makes an effort to reconstruct the early civilizations of modern man. The goal is to shock the reader, but also to educate them on the worth of such ideals and to inspire them to take action with their bodies and minds to protect them. His goal is to influence society in a way that will ensure the long-term existence of the cosmos.

*The Hungry Tide* is mostly a study of the Sundarbans, an extraordinary and enormous archipelago that is home to thousands of species, both human and animal, and has been recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve. Based on Ghosh's responses to the Sahara India Pariwar, an

industrial house's proposal to construct a massive tourism project in the area, in his essay "Folly in the Sundarbans," (2004) he subsequently authored the fictional work in which he makes a case for the world's richest mangrove forests in the delta. The Sundarbans, which serve as the book's physical setting, are continually flowing as they create and destroy new territory, signifying the always fluctuating nature of life in the delta. Its story is as expansive as the river's shifting tides. Three of its main characters' lives, caught in the current of existence, reveal the mysterious depths of the human spirit, which are unaffected by the struggle for survival of the fittest between nature and man. In terms of subject/object relations of opposing power paradigms, the roles of humans and non-humans are inevitably switched other. Combining nonfictional Nature writing, which is typically understood to be writing about the natural world and anything which frequently makes heavy use of scientific data and facts regarding the natural world such as the one where The rivers of the delta that Ghosh describes as:

They number in the thousands, these islands; some are immense and some no larger than sandbars; some have lasted through recorded history while others were washed into being just a year or two ago. . . The rivers' channels are spread across the land like a fine- mesh net, creating a terrain where the boundaries between land and water are always mutating, always unpredictable. Some of these channels are mighty waterways, so wideacross that one shore is invisible from the other; others are no more than two or threekilometers long and only a few hundred meters across . . . when these channels, it is often in clusters of four, five or even six: at theseconfluences, the water stretches to the far edges of the landscape and the forest indles into a distant rumour of land echoingback from the horizon. (*The Hungry Tide* 6-7)

The way Ghosh describes the Sundarbans in *The Hungry Tide*:

There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as faras three hundred kilometers inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later. . When the tides create new land, overnight mangroves begin to gestate, and if the conditions are right they can spread so fast as to cover anew island within a few short years. A mangrove forest is a universe

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unto itself . . . Mangrove leaves are tough and leathery, the branches gnarled foliage often impassably dense. Visibility is short and the air still and fetid . . . Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles. (*The Hungry Tide* 7-8)

Amitav Ghosh raises several issues related to life and existence on this delta with its diverse ecosystem in which both man, animal, and other beings strive for their own eco-space in an effort to find their means of survival by providing a graphic description of the hostile and shifting nature of the Sundarbans. The ecosystem is home to Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphins, crocodiles, deers, etc., despite salinity sounding the death knell for several rare species. On the other hand, we are told about the problems of daily life from the perspective of nonhuman animals, including the most powerful species, the tiger, who must contend with humans. The description is very evident of his message:

It is a struggle for every living thing that is at odds both with Nature and with other creatures at the same time. In this area of the delta, the waters of the river and the sea did not mix; rather, they interpenetrated one another, connecting hundreds of distinct ecological niches. Streams of freshwater ran down the bottoms of certain channels, resulting in differences in salinity and turbidity. These micro-environments had their own flow patterns and were similar to floating balloons in the water. Each balloon had a floating bio-dome that contained endemic plants and animals. The Sundarbans is the only mangrove forest in the world where tigers can be found, and this tiger reserve has the greatest tiger population in the entire world. As numerous studies have demonstrated, this gorgeous animal's conservation has received special privileges over the region's impoverished inhabitants.

According to Ghosh's account in his book, S'Daniel Hamilton, a Scot, who had acquired ten thousand acres of the tide region from the British, is where the history of human settlement in the Sundarbans starts. The only inhabitants of these islands at first were tigers, crocodiles, sharks, and leopards; there were no people or embankments. Since the 1920s, when the first settlers began to come, people have been flowing into the tidal country from all across Bangladesh and India. Following the 1942 famine, the entire region was destroyed, and disaster and starvation were a way of life. This has been pointed out as:

They learnt that after decades of settlement, the land had still not been wholly leached of its salt. The soil bore poor crop sand could not be farmed all year round. Hunger drove them to

hunting and fishing, and the results were often disastrous, thousands risked death in order to collect meager quantities of honey, wax, firewood, and the sour fruit of the kewra tree. No day seemed to pass without news of someone being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile. (*The Hungry Tide*, 79).

Every year, due to storms, tidal waves, human growth, and global warming, over 200 metres of the coastline vegetation are lost. The entire region is rapidly disappearing, home to approximately 500 native species of reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals, including the Royal Bengal tiger. In such a situation, Nirmal, social activists, and Kanai's aunt and uncle found the non-profit organisation Badabon Development Trust to aid the underprivileged by giving access to essential services like power, water for drinking, education, and healthcare. With the intention of writing a book about the tide country, Nirmal keeps a notebook in which he notes the location, the people, the history, and the environment. Nirmal notices that there are no longer any birds, fish, or millions of swarming crabs, and that the sea is gradually reclaiming the land. He also documents the events at Morichjhapi, where the settlers were compelled to leave the trees and go to the main land. According to Amitav Ghosh, Kusum describes how the police besieged Morichjhapi and its residents, who had been malnourished by the government, in order to prevent them from fleeing the island.

It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say our lives, our existence, was worth less than dirt or dust. This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by people all around the world . . . this whole world has become a place of animals, and our fault, our crime was that we were just human being, trying to live as human beings always have, from the water and the soil. No human being could think this a crime unless they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived-by fishing, by clearing land and by planting the soil. (*The Hungry Tide* 261-262)

Ghosh presents a case for the indigenous people who were evicted from their homes to make room for more tigers since they were seen as a direct threat to the lands, forests, and reserve areas. These peoples had to contend with other

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strong people in addition to the unpredictable and dangerous natural environment, including storms, tigers, and crocodiles. The narrative also serves an ethical and pedagogical purpose by emphasising the need for people to act responsibly in their interactions with others and their environment. It aims to control their behaviour and attitudes in order to instill ecological and social values in how they interact with the natural world and other living things on a daily basis, preserving their very life in the face of uncertainty.

Consequently, protecting endangered species within the environment shouldn't come at the expense of the locals' livelihoods who are living in poverty. One of India's most valuable natural resources and rarest environmental treasure troves is the Sunderbans, which must be preserved and maintained for future generations. The ecological issues in the Sundarbans should be addressed with specific policies and actions.

Environmental issues include pollution, overpopulation, waste disposal, climate change, global warming, the greenhouse effect, etc. Various environment protection programmes are being practiced at the individual organizational and government levels with the aim of establishing a balance between man and the environment. The conservation movement campaigns against genetically engineered foods, global warming and endangered species also advocates for the preservation of any biologically significant natural regions.

In *The Hungry Tide* Amitav Ghosh examines how environment is represented, how humans treats the non-human and explores possible solutions for environmental crisis. He frequently examine the struggle between man and nature in the backdrop of the Sunderbans in Bangladesh and India. The conflicts between the locals and the aquatic and wild life of the Sunderbans are reflected in the book. Sunderbans is a very powerful landscape. It has opened the eyes of Amitav Ghosh to write about the climate change in *The Hungry Tide*. Mangroves are decreasing, animal and plant species are going extinct, and the islands are no longer there. Crabs are the most important species in the Sunderbans; they provide oxygen to the entire mangrove forest and have been declining in population over time. Crabs' entire sandbanks would be visible in the distance. The mud banks used to become red from crabs, but that no longer occurs. The drastic reduction in the bird population in the Sunderbans is shocking. The fisherman complains that it is very challenging to catch a fish. A dead zone is also developing in the Gulf of Bengal where the Sunderbans spill out.

Millions of people depend on the Bay of Bengal, thus its disappearance would be a calamity of unimaginable proportions. And it is taking place as a result of widespread usage of agricultural fertilizers. Human activity is to blame for our fragile ecosystem since it not only overuses the resources that are available but also causes massive pollution as a result of using and extracting those resources. In addition to creating an enormous loss of biodiversity, the imbalance has also contributed to climate change, one of the largest risks to human survival. Mankind has been cautioned by Amitav Ghosh not to exploit the natural world. It is very important to consider the health of the ecosystem as well as human health.

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## Celebration of Indigenoussness in Sheela Tomy's *Valli*

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### Abstract

The Paniyas, an indigenous group from Wayanad, are the focus of Sheela Tomy's first Malayalam book, *Valli*. *Valli* is a term with many meanings in Malayalam. It connotes a piece of land, a creeper, a young lady, and daily earnings. The novel, which Jayashree Kalathil translated into English, eloquently conveys the *adivasi* people's daily experiences of discrimination, exploitation, and the people's resistance to the Jenmis, the migrant landlords, who have a colonial mentality. The main characters of this 400-page book are teachers of a government school Thomichhan and his wife Sara, who move to Wayanad in quest of a calm home. The book follows their lives. For four generations, they have led the *adivasi* people in inspiring movement for their liberation and empowerment. The forest has a bigger impact on the plot than the human characters do.

**Key Words :** Indigenous Literature, Tribal Literature, Wayanad tribe, Paniyar tribe, tribal resistance, environment

Sheela Tomy's debut Malayalam novel, *Valli* is a powerful narrative of the lived experiences of the Paniya tribe living in Wayanad. The history of Paniyars is a fine example of exploitation, discrimination, violence, marginalization and agency-backed terrorism against the tribe. The novel traces four generations of people who live in the imaginary place located in the Western Ghats called Kalluvayal. Lowland immigrants, landlords with colonial ideals, and the *adivasi* people are among the characters. The work offers a lot of potential for an ecofeminist interpretation because of certain elements of the story and character the typical delineation of the connection between ecofeminism and indigenous lifestyles is evident in the narration. The ecofeminism theory draws parallels between the exploitation and subversion of women in society and the destruction of the environment by the prevailing capitalistic forces.

*Valli* provides a story that is organized as the letters and journal entries of Susan, Sara and Thommichan's daughter. To flee the hostility of Sara's family over her marriage to Thommichan, Sara and Thommichan take refuge in Kalluvayal,

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buried in the Western Ghats, at the beginning of the novel. The pair receives the assistance they need from Peter, Thommichan's friend, to begin their careers as government school instructors. Thommichan, his companion Peter, and his classmate Padmanabhan all witnessed years of persecution, exploitation, and the perils of bonded labor. The despotic landlord Anjlikunnil Ivanchan and his son Luca, who serve as icons of power, human avarice, and colonial attitude, are merciless and indifferent throughout the book. Sheela Tomy projects the forest as one of the characters with a heart and soul. Sometimes, characters equate the physical forest with the subconscious forest called mind. Susan writes in her diary, justifying her writing about her life, 'The Book of Forest... I began to write for the forest that is on fire, for the people who have no voice, for the language that has no script...' (11) The *Adivasi* characters are a manifestation of holistic living holding a deep respect for the forest, animals, river and the land. They recognise that they are all equal participants in the larger web of life. In Thommichan's words, "our indigenous people, the *Adivasis*, were also nature's guards, They never poisoned the waterways to catch fish, and yet their bamboo baskets brimmed with vaala, kuruva, ... They only took just enough honey and left the rest for the bees..." (7) The tribal living emphasizes the balance between the human and natural world. This ideology challenges the dominant western outlook that perceives the environment as a commodity to be used. Characters like Ivanchan, Luca, Kariyachan represent the dominant colonial mindset who exert their dominance over the forest looting every resource of the soil.

The *Adivasi* woman character, Kali, is referred as 'the daughter of the forest' (46) She is viewed as a mad woman who "speaks the language of the forest and the one who knows no fear" (47) Her fearless nightly visit to the burial ground, her audacity to stay put when the elephant herds emerge from the forest highlights her oneness with the natural elements. In a subtle way, Kali is a symbol of the forest. Later in the novel, when Kali is ravaged by the lust of the landlord Luca, we are reminded the similar way in which the forest is ravaged by the same greed and lust of men. This brings to the fore the ecofeminist elements wherein the women and forest are equated. Both are interconnected in sharing the oppression and exploitation of patriarchy. In the words of Lori Gruen, "Ecofeminism is a movement that recognises the connection between the oppression of women and the degradation of the environment and seeks to address these issues through a shared sense of responsibility and respect for all life." The physical and mental violence caused against both the parties emphasizes the political, social, and cultural dominance of men who consider them as a commodity to be utilized for capitalistic purposes. Kali's

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dying song in Paniya language which translates as, 'Protect the forest, children... Protect the streams, children' (194) resonates with core belief of the indigenous living to be the guardians of nature and the truth that women feel a deep connection with the forest. Similar to the life of Kali, branded as lunatic, banished from her home by her family, who chased all her life by the malevolent forces, the forest is pillaged by the same lecherous creatures.

The Adivasi character called Pembli, the tribal healer whose knowledge about the herbs and medicinal plant comes in great demand when Kalluvayal becomes a commercial tourist spot is a fine example of how these niche sophisticated knowledge is only viewed by the outside world as a resource to be utilized for commercial purposes: "Forests are not only places where indigenous peoples live; they are also important sources of knowledge, cultural identity, and spirituality. Indigenous peoples have developed complex and sophisticated knowledge systems that enable them to sustainably manage and use forest resources. This knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation and is an integral part of their cultural heritage" (Reyes Garcia et al., 2013). This reiterates the dominant group's ideology to exploit every resource of the forest land whether human, animal, plant or soil. In Padmanabhan, words, "There must come a time when each of us is able to hear the forest weep, a time when the language of the forest and the humans will become one,....In that time, the forest will bloom to the sound of human laughter...", (147) The last chapters of the novel recount the furious floods of 2018 that submerged many parts of Kerala and Wayanad was no exception to this nature's fury. The people who had a stronghold in their class, race, and status, "who had not time to even to smile at each other, (were) holding hands and sharing their sorrows, huddling against each other."(391) The words. "Was the flood washing away the sins of the land?" (391) enumerates the nature's judgment on the sins committed by the humanity. The Adivasis' belief that every girl child is an imprint of the Veda Princess who chose the Wayanad forest as her abode is another proof that the Paniya tribe valued their women as well as their abode, the forest. Sheela Tomy, in her note recounts, "As a land, (Wayanad) its cultural history, environment and geography are different from the rest of Kerala...Most importantly, it was a land that belonged to indigenous tribes, the Adivasis, who lived a life in harmony with the forest and its creatures" (395). This resonates a perspective that is deeply relevant to the theory of ecofeminism wherein the indigenous living of the Paniya tribe reflects a deep connection with the natural world and maintaining a balance and harmony with it.

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Storytelling is an integral part of indigenous living. Stories prevalent in the tribal communities endorse and authenticate the community's history and their relationship with nature. According to Dr. Robin Kimmerer, "Indigenous storytelling traditions serve as a powerful means of transmitting knowledge, preserving culture, and fostering community cohesion. Through stories, indigenous peoples share their histories, values, and beliefs, and establish a sense of connection and continuity with the natural world, ancestors, and future generations." Every tribe has its unique storytelling tradition to make sense of the natural world and to transmit the same knowledge to the younger generation making them become aware of the responsibilities towards the same nature.

The stories that are deep rooted in the Paniya tribe explain the history, their relationship with nature and most importantly, the matriarchal aspect of their religion. The novel distinctly brings out the stories that form the foundation for the Paniya lived experience. The mythical, sacred, religious stories that sustain the Paniya living in the harsh world safeguard their culture, rituals, and tradition. Susan, the central character through whose letters and diary we see the Kalluvayal world, writes, "A childhood spent in Kalluvayal, amidst forest people and the forest myths more astonishing than fairy tales, listening to the stories of river, mist and earth, to the secrets of the forest in which truth and lies, history and imagination, beliefs and superstitions mingled inseparably together." (11)

The novel begins with the mythical story of Unniyachi, the devadasi, a dancing concubine of Wayanad who was killed by the ruler, Iravivarman. The Adivasis believe that she is the 'primal goddess, the aboriginal mother, (who) lives on in each female child born in the village.' (4) The story narrates how Unniyachi who hails from Tamizhagam travels to Wayanad in search of better prospects, falls in love with a Dravidian guard called Azhagan. She travels to Thirumarathoor, a village known for trade and a people of mixed race. Today, the doomed love and the tragic death of Unniyachi is rendered by the dancers of the Chetty community in the Shiva temple of Thovarimala.

Another story about the beginnings of the Wayanad tribe is the story of Veda princess narrated by Padmanabhan to the children of Kadoram school. The story begins in the Sangam period when Wayanad was part of Ezhimala kingdom. The prince of Kumbala who was lost in the thick woods of Wayanad chances upon the Veda princess. The two fall in love against the wishes of her father, King Vedarajan. The King called the prince an outsider who 'lacked purity of the forest.' However, the Veda princess was adamant, and the King relented. The wedding was

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arranged in an extravagant manner. What awaited was betrayal and treachery. The Kumbala King had surrounded the fortress and had set a trap for King Vedarajan. He was killed mercilessly. The Veda people fled in groups, escaping the Kshatriya intruders. Dark caverns in the deep forest welcomed them, gave them shelter. 'As time passed, they were marked down in history as uncivilized, black-skins. These rightful owners of the earth.' (164) The goddess in the dilapidated shrine beyond the burial ground in Kalluvayal was the was believed to be the Veda princess who took shelter in the forest. The Adivasis celebrate Villichittam every year on the day of Ashtami in the month of Kumbham. They strongly believe that the Veda princess 'who had chosen to make the thick forest where saints of yore used to meditate her residence, was reincarnated in every girl born in the community.' (165) Both the stories highlight the female centeredness of the Paniya living. The manifestation of these mythical, historical, sacred lineage in every girl in the tribe emphasize the femiocentrism of their community. Another story teller in the novel, Salomi's interpretation of the legendary Seethadevi's life rings with the same women centeredness of tribal life. 'Seethadevi was an Adivasi girl who had come down the hills with woven baskets, and Raman a prince who fell in love with her. ....Seetha, the abandoned...She had the forest where she could blossom and unfurl....(126). As Winona LaDuke has argued, "In indigenous cultures, women are often the keepers of the stories, the historians, and the spiritual leaders. The feminine principle is central to tribal living, and women are revered for their wisdom, creativity, and resilience. Their history and traditions are passed down from generation to generation through storytelling, ceremony, and ritual, ensuring the continuity of their cultural heritage".

In *Valli*, Sheela Tomy has retained the Paniya language whenever the Adivasi characters speak. As a conscious political choice, the author has maintained their 'gothrabhasha' instead of making them speak in Malayalam. According to Reyhner, "Language is an indispensable part of the revolution in indigenous literature, as it is through language that indigenous writers are able to assert their cultural identities and challenge colonial representations of their cultures." The central character, Thommichan along with his friends, Padmanabhan and Peter start a school called Kadoram school for the tribal children to reach out to Adivasi children who are made to feel like an outsider in the Government run schools. This was their effort to "recapture the language of the forest. ...let them learn to speak their language and sing their songs without feeling ashamed, ..." (140).

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The revolt that the novel begins with the protests organized by Varghese to fight for more wages for the Adivasi people who are hired on lease as labourers by the landowning farmers and jenmis. They work for 'vallipani' which is a piece of coarse cloth for the Valliyoorkaavu festival, seven and a half seers of rice, five rupees as bond money and a couple of meals a year. The whole Adivasi family must work for a daily wage of two seers of rice. The intellectual migrant characters enlighten the indigenous people about their slavery. Their call for action and protests ends in a series of arrests and eventually die. However, the intellectual uprising in the Kadoram school causes a stir with questions like, "How did we become slaves? How did the festival ground at Valliyoorkamma's temple become the market to trade us?" (143). The realization that their tribal identity was the premise on which the entitled landlords bought and sold them "like cattle, like tools" (143). The burning question, "Which god gave you the right to enslave us? (144) speaks about the enlightenment of their identity as a bonded slave to the jenmis. Padmanabhan's historical explanation of the changing political and religious scenario in Wayanad and the eventual subjugation of the tribal groups such as Paanan, Parayan, Channan, Villavan, Uzhuvan and Parathan who coexisted peacefully, by the arrival of Brahminism speaks about the systematic enslavement of these tribal groups. "Pollution, purity, untouchability – all these were created so that their land could be taken over, the right to knowledge denied so that they could be oppressed and we all know for whose benefit these beliefs and customs were invented". (168)

The revolution sustains for four generations with ups and downs. The landed class burn down the Paniya settlement for the uprising. The schoolteacher, Padmanabhan, wrongfully accused and tortured by the Police and Peter's mysterious disappearance into the forest while escaping the clutches of the authorities highlight the silencing the voices of dissent. Yet, the awakening continues and the fervour of revolution and the desire for transformation wakes up the spirit in every Paniya working in the fields. The protest song,

For a piece of yam, a knot of tobacco  
You can't scam us any more  
Not for valli, not for paddy  
You can't work us any more  
Ours this, ours alone

highlights how the revolution inspires the Adivasis to reclaim their rights as the original owners of the land and the realization that they were systematically exploited

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by the dominant agency. According to Heble, "Protests have always been an important aspect of indigenous resistance and activism, and this is reflected in indigenous literature. Indigenous writers often use their work as a means of protesting against colonialism, racism, and other forms of oppression that their communities face."

Indigenous writings challenge the dominant narratives and assert their right to voice their lived experience and therefore establish their place on par with the dominant literary canon. Indigenous literature aims to subvert the cultural hegemony of the dominant class and express their cultural identities and perspectives through the written word, through which they promote greater appreciation and respect for indigenous culture and tradition. Their narratives are also a means of preserving and revitalizing their script less languages and invoking a sense of deep respect for the knowledge, history and their way of life. Sheela Tomy's *Valli*, is a compelling narrative of the decolonising and emancipation of the Paniya tribe of Wayanad.

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## Exile Testimonio in Rudhramoorthy Cheran's *The Second Sunrise*

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### Abstract

Politics and emerging ideologies are related with culture and they have also influenced both Literature and Criticism. Politics, Culture, History and Ideology, which are intimately related with one another, have formed an independent area of research and have radically transformed critical thought. This combination has immensely influenced the creation of a new branch of Literary Criticism, amounting to culture as a conflict of human interaction. The idea of 'conflict' is the key factor in the theoretical discourses. Through the praxis of conflict, the contextualization of these theories becomes relevant. Exile Testimonio show that the victims too have voices and due to the politics their voices have been muted. They are even denied the basic recognition that they are human. Exile Testimonios showcase the grim picture: victims once they lose their roots and he/she is rendered homeless, the person is forced to embark on a journey in different routes. The natives' physical space and the construction of the hegemonic structures becomes oppressive. It is hardly surprising that Dr. Rudhramoorthy Cheran's childhood experiences in Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka, during the Civil War and exposure to State Terrorism on a large scale would inform his poetry. Poetically, Cheran is deeply concerned with issues of internal monopolization and nationality. His anthology, *A Second Sunrise*, details the destruction of historical records. Thousands of Tamils were killed in the ensuing massacres. Cheran was harassed by both sides since he refused to join either of the competing militant groups there. Dark histories are claimed to be hinted at in Cheran's poetry, which act as societal documentaries. The study will showcase the victims of exile thus defined in his poetry.

**Key Words:** Politics, Conflict, Internal Monopolization, Hegemonic structures.

Cheran, who is an exile from both Nostalgia and Memory, draws on both, in order to foreground the sense of alienation and preserve the memories and traditions of his birthplace. According to Cornel West,

The New Cultural Politics of difference consists of creative responses to the precise circumstances of our Present Moment especially those of Marginalized first world agents who shun degraded self-representations, articulating instead their sense of the flow of history in the light of the contemporary terrors, anxieties, and fears of highly Commercialized and Capitalistic Cultures (3).

True, Cheran's poetry is to historicize, contextualize, problematize, and pluralize by highlighting the provisional, variable, tentative, and unstable. Recently, a distinct niche in the decanonized literary spectrum has been occupied by the writers of Exile Testimonio, which explores the broader framework of the Politics of Cultural Difference. It is evident from Cheran's poems that Exile Testimonio highlights the study of anthropology as a significant historical trend. Manipulation of power and exploitation of community, space, and time are replacing the homespace established by geography, culture, and ethnicity.

Focault's idea of the Specific Intellectual, who takes up fights related to particular issues and situations, needs to be linked with Gramsci's idea of the engaged intellectual, who ties his or her work to larger social concerns that profoundly project how people live, work, and survive. The political landscape of Sri Lanka has been influenced by the Tamil diaspora, which has provided both financial and ideological backing to the armed campaign for an independent Tamil state. Twenty years have passed during which Sri Lanka has been mired in a civil war, interrupted only briefly on many occasions. In early 2002, the state and the LTTE signed an indefinite ceasefire, marking the beginning of what has since proven to be the most promising lull in the conflict. While the immediate relevance of the question of Tamil Diaspora's support for insurgency may be diminished by such a peace, the broader issue of Tamil Diaspora Political Practice will remain important for the study of the Tamil Diaspora, the historiography of the Sri Lankan Conflict, and perhaps the study of other diasporas as well. The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has its roots in the north-eastern corner of the island once known as Ceylon.

While Sri Lanka's total population of about 19 million is diverse along ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional lines, the north-eastern Tamils have grown to see themselves as, and has been seen by others as, a separate society. The

history of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora needs to be understood in the larger framework of the political conflict in Sri Lanka. As time went on following Sri Lanka's independence, tensions between the Tamil and Sinhala-speaking communities on the island grew. The Sinhalese saw the Tamils as a privileged minority, while the Tamils felt discriminated against by the Sinhalese-dominated government. Multiple incidences of anti-Tamil violence that resulted in numerous deaths fueled growing concerns among Tamils that Sri Lanka could not facilitate and guarantee their physical safety. Both the Diaspora-Homeland nexus and the Intradiaspora linkages of Sri Lankan Tamils have been strengthened via political discourse and practice. The civil war in Sri Lanka has increased the intensity, length, and impact of this politicization.

There has been a politicization of key pre-migration experiences that have moulded the political identity of Tamils in the diaspora. Almost all Tamil migrants and refugees living in Sri Lanka have first and experience with state-sanctioned discrimination, as well as the indirect discrimination that is typically felt by Sinhalese. It is important to remember that many more recent migrants who survived the Sri Lankan Civil War also faced violence or persecution at the hands of government troops. Many Tamils' self-perceptions as members of the diaspora are shaped by their sense of estrangement from the Sri Lankan nation-state. Several factors have contributed to the emergence of exile Testimonio writing. Slavery and captivity, conquest and settlement, the hunt for better opportunities, and forced exile are all explored in literary histories for the possible points of origin.

It is true, as Chelva Kanaganayakam reports, "Refugee is Born, who lives in a country too amorphous to be favoured with a name but which, for the sake of convenience, we may label as one delivered out of the womb of Sublime Hope, a country whose language is imbued with the rhetoric of future visions". (4) Exile Testimonio writings foregrounds the fact that there is a dislocation from the Nation state or Geographical Location of Origin and Relocation in one or more nation states, territories or countries which is evident in Cheran's Poetry. It is also to be noted that Exile Testimonio writings delves into memories and nostalgia of the Past Homelands:

When you are oppressed,  
You see the blood of tears.  
When You are the Oppressor,  
You see the tears of blood. (WAVSI 1-4)

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Cheran's poetry presents the concept of home as an unstable place, demonstrating how identities are not static but rather constantly shifting, and drawing its feeling of rootedness from a variety of cultural backgrounds. At first glance, it could seem as though one's identity was destined to either revert back to its cultural roots or be completely assimilated into a new culture through a fusion that is theoretically possible due to the supposed transferability and comparability of cultural norms. According to Homi Bhabha, the migrant culture of the "in-between" dramatizes exactly the activity of Cultural Untranslatability because it is stuck between a Nativist Traditionalism and a Postcolonial Metropolitan assimilations. At the borders and thresholds where subjectivities are shifting, epistemologies are being questioned, and homogeneity is being replaced by heterogeneity, the world of capital and universalistic assumptions is being undermined by interpenetration and reversals of different cultures. Words like "exile," "diaspora," "migration," "dislocation," "deracination," and "displacement" are frequently employed as metaphors for not only lost direction but also the disintegration of one's ideology and the very sense of self as evident in :

This poem has no end  
this song has no completion  
this desire has no fulfillment  
All memories refuse to be destroyed  
all land refuses to yield  
every face refuses to stay. (TPHNE 1-6)

Through Cheran, *Exile Testimonio* highlights the reality that being an exile, whether forced or choice, often results in profound identity uncertainty, problems of identification with old and new cultures, and estrangement from homelands. *Exile Testimonio* writing is rife with identification consciousness and the challenge of adjusting to a new culture. Memory, familiarity, strangeness, integration, change, permanence, belonging, and embedding are the seven elements utilized to probe the mind and establish its identity. One might infer, thanks to Cheran, that the *Exile Testimonio* is distinguished by a division between the public and private spheres and the public and private worlds. The past is honoured and preserved in this way. The social world is shaped by factors such as race, community, origin, and language. Conjugation of the multiple pasts that coexist in the present is what constitutes the 'Self' that emerges. Self is the deepest layer, the 'core' self, constituted through cognitive processes, reflection, memory, exploration, and exposure, while Identity is the outer layer related to skin colour, socio economic status, nationality, and other

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superficial indicators. One of the elements that makes it up is the act of choosing. Oftentimes, the motivation behind a Exile Testimonio Traveler's visit to their Home Country or Childhood Home is a desire to feel whole, as seen in:

Impermanence and Ceaseless wandering  
cast their own seductive light.  
What can I send now  
but this poem, only in hope  
of the sweetness of a solitude  
untouched by bitterness. (TPHNE 11-16)

The textualization or portrayal of Consciousness in a text is what this term "text" refers to. Through his poetry Cheran expresses a range of emotions related to this consciousness, such as alienation, loss, exploitation, racism, homesickness, a desire to blend cultures, anger, and resistance. Home, belonging, and identity are all mined in Exile Testimonio as topics of contention and interrogation. According to Cheran's poetry, the Exile Testimonio is the language of location, the site where homelessness arises from "the everyday and the unexpecte" living. Even in the midst of intense separation from it, Cheran insists, "Home" is a location with which every individual remains intimate in his poetry. A sense of "belonging" is what the poet would mean when he / she says this. Space is used not only to probe and question, but also to critique the subjugating and suffocating Power Structures that exist inside through a peculiar process of inclusion and exclusion. Cheran's poetry relies heavily on the reader's ability to remember details. Cheran, who is in a Displaced Position, uses Nostalgia and Memory to overcome their alienation and maintain the outlines of their First Home. Memory, the emotional conduit to Cheran's homeland, is built on the three pillars of language, culture, and history :

Someone walks past:  
he must be the very last man to smile.  
Even if I were to hide my sorrowing heart  
and call out,  
no one will come.  
Can anyone hear my voice? (ASOPL 7-12)

Memories can serve as bridges between the present and the past. By piecing together various recollections, the mind might also conjure the Primal Home, a place of blessing. Cheran's Exile Testimonio writing highlights not only the intellectual's role and the importance of education to the development of a

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democratic society, but also the need for intellectuals to abandon the language of critique in favour of a language of transformation and optimism. That is the only foundation upon which the fight against racism, class structures, sexism, and other forms of oppression can acquire steam. This change is unavoidable and necessary because it shows that literary writers and critics are collaborating with other cultural activists to establish languages and provide critical spaces that create new possibilities for a convergence of many social forces. Cheran's poetry makes use of the theoretical framework of exile testimonio to rethink and re-experience democracy as a struggle over values, practices, social relations, and subject positions that broaden the terms of human capacities and possibilities as a foundation for a compassionate social order.

The subject matter of Exile Testimonio is primarily political. There is a power imbalance in the connection. Cheran is correct in his assessment that the third component is motion or displacement. It has been called a "transition." From the sound of Cheran's beautiful sentences, it is clear that he is missing his house, his country, or even his motherland. Exile Testimonio is the actuality of the intellectualization of homelessness and rootlessness. Because Exile Testimonio texts focus on a particular person at a particular moment in a particular place, personal experiences take on a strongly communal quality, transforming them from singular to universal. Through Cheran, one can see that not only fictional homelands but also adopted countries have this feature. A closer study is required at the condition of isolation. Cheran maintains that while identity is central to the concept of Self, the two are not interchangeable. According to some, Self is the most fundamental level of being, whereas 'Identity' refers to the outermost layer and includes things like skin tone, socioeconomic status, and nationality.

The historical moment, together with the ideas of liminality and in-betweenness, appear metaphorical, as they are symptomatic of transitions. It is safe to say that Exile Testimonio experiences homesickness and cultural dislocation after moving to a prestigious and prosperous new country. Exile Testimonio writers who have experienced this kind of trauma have a broader worldview and a more expansive opportunity to develop a more nuanced mental picture of their home country:

Don't open your mouth today.  
Be silent  
Just for today.  
Will there be a time, soon,  
When each truth that out of our mouths

is rewarded by a bullet?

If not, then why this tragedy? (IATOB 1-7)

Household metaphors, symbols, images, and memories are the bedrock upon which everything of life is built. Without this, the Exile Testimonios would not have gained attraction, and the secrets of their past would remain concealed forever. Culture and tradition make up the very fabric of who we are. Literature, as presented by Cheran, is presented as the best hope for the Exile Testimonios, which will connect History and Literature and prevent the recording of historical forgeries. Exile Testimonio places great emphasis on the importance of geography and a sense of place. Cheran's poetry relies heavily on memory as its strategy. History is also a vital aspect of the Exile Testimonio. Authentic first-person accounts written by exile individuals assist spark aesthetic evaluation, navigate cultural constructs, and give rise to a fresh sense of self.

It is not a recent phenomenon that Sri Lankans are writing in English. Notably, its Literary Landscape has fostered the development of a remarkable variety of writers. The theoretical discourses surrounding exile testimonio have only recently been formed. The Testimonio of the Exile is a prominent theme in Cheran's literature. The loss of home, the difficulty of bridging two cultures, and the fear of not truly belonging anywhere at all contribute to the vast body of exile testimonio.

Cheran has related personal situations that had left a lasting and painful impression on him. His poetry have a mournful, but not weak, tone. He documents life-stories that are typically erased from history and demonstrates how terrorism and chaos frighten people's lives. Thus, Cheran's experience of being an outsider while growing up, as well as his feelings of loss and dislocation, inform Cheran's literary journey back home. What makes this work so extraordinary is how it bridges the gap between the personal and the political and the metaphorical. Cheran's poetry can be read in a variety of ways, from naivete to experience, and from home to exile. Disparities in society frequently have their origins in painful history.

Self-discovery, acceptance, knowledge, and self-definition are all part of the Exile Testimonio. Cheran's poems serve as an illustration of this concept. Exile Testimonios and Testimonialistas are exposed to other worldviews and lifestyles. Having spent time in Canada, far from his native country, Cheran has come to appreciate the precarious nature of his own identity, which he portrays through his protagonist. Cultural shifts are the consequence of outside influences, while cultural transformation occurs as a result of persistent, mild pressure that is internally rather than externally motivated. Results from a cultural shift tend to be more stable and

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long-lived. There is a close relationship between transformation and the culture in which it takes place. When a new cultural behavior is adopted, or "adapted to," change occurs. The rate of change and transformation can be thought of as the adaptation time. The term "transformation" is used to describe the process of becoming acclimated to a new culture that lasts a significant amount of time, whereas the term "change" is used to describe a process that lasts less than a year.

Cheran's poetry is a constant reminder that novelty, radiance, and the unknown command attention. The relocation and subsequent changes take place based on a number of factors. People need to have faith that it exists before it can undergo any kind of modification or transition, but this is a problem because otherwise they would not be able to detect even the most slight shifts in the cultural aura that have pervaded their consciousnesses for ages. Unsurprisingly, this is something that has been evolving consistently without much notice. Incorporation into the New World will undoubtedly proceed by incorporating Exile Testimonio group positions, as seen by the adoption of Cultural Practices and food that Cheran expresses through Literary Mode. There are two types of relationships that can be found in diasporic testimonial literature: the first is the relationship to the motherland, which gives rise to nostalgia and reminiscences, and the second is the relationship forged with the new land, the changes in the homeland, and the people, which can lead to conflict and split personalities. These are plentiful in the writings of Exile Testimonio. All of them showcase the feelings of alienation, exile, loneliness, cultural clashes, the impression of rejection by the host community, and the difficulty of trying to assimilate, with occasional descriptions of "back home" that become romanticized expressions of nostalgia and longing. Artistic depictions of Sri Lanka tend to portray and exalt the country because of the immense stress which permeates the mind of the country's pain. Cheran, even though he is mentally imprisoned by the past and has trouble remembering things, his zeal for expression is undeniable. The core trauma accounted for by the loss of identity and the longing for the native terrain causes the Diasporic Testimonio Personage to emerge before the literary scenario as the rock of creative output. No skill can be honed without first being tested, and that testing can only come in the form of pain. Experiencing pain is a necessary precursor to maturing spiritually and gaining life-changing insight. The Exile Testimonio is thus taking a beating as people leave their homes. A person's personality should not be used destructively, but rather to build and create in accordance with enlightening principles.

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## Reinterpreting the Goddess: Exploring the Inter-semiotics between the Sacred Feminine and Postmodern Culture in *The Da Vinci Code*

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### Abstract

In Dan Brown's magnum opus, *The Da Vinci Code*, a compelling exploration of inter-semiotic discourse unfurls by delving into the intricate confluence between the sacred feminine and postmodern culture. By drawing upon an array of esoteric symbology and rich historical allusions, Brown masterfully weaves a tapestry of intellectual intrigue, inviting readers to discern the profound connections underpinning the perennial ideograms of femininity and their coalescence with the ethos of contemporary society. At the core of Brown's enigmatic narrative lies an exegesis of the sacrosanct feminine, epitomized by the veneration of the enigmatic figures of Gods and Goddesses. By imbuing them with enigmatic allure, he reveals the ancient worship of divinities, linking them to nature, their balanced duality, fertility, and the mysteries of creation. Through his protagonist, Robert Langdon, Brown unravels the arcane symbolism of the Sacred Feminine hidden in art and historical texts, its postulating esoteric continuation of this sacred legacy, and how it is obfuscated within the labyrinthine corridors of the myth. Inextricably interwoven with the sacral feminine is the postmodern backdrop. Here Brown ingeniously juxtaposes the traditional and the contemporary, establishing a dialogic exchange between the bygone era of religious dogmas and the liberating emancipation of the postmodern consciousness. By successfully bequeathing an opulent symposium of semiotic intrigue and by unveiling the sanctified essence of femininity and enmeshing it within the contemporary realm of postmodern thought, Brown's oeuvre stands as a testament to the enduring, transformative power of the goddess archetype and its profound reverberations in the tapestry of human culture.

**Key Words:** Inter-semiotics, Sacred feminine, Postmodern culture, *The Da Vinci Code*

The Vicissitudes of myths and legends are ubiquitous and they flow deep within the sinews of mankind. These myths, legends, and their recurring vicissitudes are sovereign and consummate to the extent that their incorporeality is arbitrary for the stupendous spread of religion and its overtones of redemption, atonement, sacrifice, prayer, and worship. These Divine iterations are however suspended in the state of an incessant and unabated state of ambiguity. This enigmatic duality equivocally represents the conflicting state of human morality and rectitude and also elucidates the perpetual state of mortal peccadillos and transgressions. Man's nature to evade the throes of pain and inherit eternal bliss justifies and ensures the presence of an unwavering faith. This tenacious faith is the substantial foundation for all religions and their recurring denominations around the globe. Myths and Legends united by this faith are further strengthened by various religious intricacies and determinisms. These religious inevitabilities include rituals, ceremonies, pilgrimages, sacrifices, offerings, superstitions, moral and ethical platitudes, and crucially the various myriads of symbolisms and Icons. The ageless intrigue behind these religious iconographical representations and their inter-semiotic corroboration with the postmodern world can be validated by the magnetic and vindicative myth of the Sacred Feminine.

The inter-semiotics of the Sacred Feminine looms large in humankind's existing temperament. This disposition between the Sacred Feminine and Postmodernism can be encountered in the famed and popular rendition; *The Da Vinci Code*. This rendition is one of the greatest compendiums of the acclaimed and esteemed Dan Brown, one of the distinguished writers and savant of American Fiction. He is best known for his works such as *Angels and Demons*, *Origin*, and *The Lost Symbol*. Dan Brown, the acclaimed contemporary novelist, has garnered both fervent admirers and sharp critics in the realm of literature. He is known and celebrated for his skilful blending of historical, mythical, and religious themes into gripping narratives, Brown has carved a niche for himself as a purveyor of intellectual intrigue, his unparalleled talent for crafting thrilling plotlines, intertwined with enigmatic symbols and hidden truths, continues to captivate readers and ignite discussions within scholarly circles. The paper based on *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown attempts a semiotic inquiry into the Transhistorical significance of the Sacred Feminine and its subversive impact on Postmodern Culture, it probes the Nexus of Ancient Iconography, Deconstructed Narratives, and Societal Paradigms in a Reappraisal of Gender Dynamics and Normative Constructs.

Postmodernism and its axioms have garnered and anchored attention through its captivating ordeals and vivacious maxims. Linda Hutcheon in her rendition, *The Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* directly states that “the term postmodernism itself. I point to this simple verbal fact in order to begin “theorizing” the cultural enterprise to which we seem to have given such a provocative label” (Hutcheon 3). Here Hutcheon, one of the celebrated scholars of postmodernism remarks that the theory of Postmodernism claims in theorizing or developing ideas, possibilities, or probabilities from the established grand narratives of humankind. She terms these grand narratives as provocative labels. She says that these Provocative labels are to be challenged and also explains how these labels are abused, challenged, and subverted through the notion of Postmodernism. She says that “Postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges—be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography” (Hutcheon 3). Thus, Hutcheon explains how the theory of postmodernism challenges the established ideas, facts, and implications that integrate and synergises the world together in globality and universality. This distinctive trait of Postmodernism can be tenably justified, scrutinised, and compared through the myth of the Sacred Feminine.

The congregation between the inter-semiotic precepts of the Sacred Feminine and the aphorisms of the challenged and subverted labels of Postmodernism leads and encourages the confluence of tales, myths, and culture. The latter can be verified through the resolute narrative of *The Da Vinci Code*. The novel follows the events encompassing the protagonists Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu who attempt to decipher cryptic clues that lead them to uncover the hidden secret of the Holy Grail. which is believed to be the symbol of the Sacred Feminine, its myth, and its historical significance. They incur the wrath of those seeking to suppress the truth as they unravel the secret's connection to a secretive society called the Priory of Sion.

The plot takes them on a thrilling adventure through historical locations, religious symbols, and art masterpieces. In the end, they must decide whether to reveal the truth to the world, challenge established beliefs that could instantly alter the course of synchronised thought or collective human consciousness, or protect the sacred knowledge for future generations. This challenging enterprise of breaking the flow of established harmonised beliefs of congruent worldviews in an inter-semiotic fashion showcases the mythical influence and power of the Sacred

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Feminine. The Sacrosanct Feminine can be defined as a mythological and religious archetype that represents the association of divine fertility with nurturing qualities. It symbolizes the essential cosmic balance alongside the Sacred Masculine, emphasizing the significance of female deities, goddesses, and maternal figures in various cultural and spiritual traditions. The concept encompasses a profound reverence for women's roles and their interconnectedness with nature, spirituality, and the divine, influencing artistic, literary, and philosophical expressions throughout history with its diverse mythological manifestations. It is characterised by various symbols such as the Pentacle, the moon, the spiral, Ying, and Yang, the lotus, the apple, etc. Its significant characteristic features delineate the significance of spirituality, the abundance of fertility, the inevitability of devotion and worship, and finally the glorification of balance, proportion, and divine harmony. As Hutcheon elucidates on how the provocative ideals of the world affect the notions of science, architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, etc. The Myth of the Sacred Feminine similarly represents, affects, and concurs influences in the latter areas or disciplines. In regard to arithmetic and science, the Sacred Feminine plays an important role in the formulation of PHI. The Divine Proportion, the Golden Ratio or PHI is a numeric value of 1.618 that is quintessential and exemplifies the mathematical or the proportionate balance of human existence.

Brown stresses that the mathematical qualities of PHI juxtapose the balance of nature, which is fundamental and incontrovertible to the mythical maxims of the Sacred Feminine. Brown says, "Despite PHI's mystical mathematical origins, Langdon explained, the truly mind-boggling aspect of PHI was its role as the fundamental building block of nature" (Brown 94). He also remarks, "Plants, animals, and even human beings all possessed dimensional properties adhered with eerie exactitude to the ratio of PHI to 1 (Brown 94). He also clarifies how early scientists believe in the evidence of PHI and how it is justified in the modern characteristics of various flora, fauna, and microorganisms; "PHI must have been preordained by the creator of the universe. Early scientists heralded one-point-six-one-eight as the *Divine Proportion*" (Brown 94). Brown argues that the Sacred Feminine and its symbolic embodiments, particularly the Pentacle or Pentagram, the semiotic expression of the Greek Goddess Venus also hinges upon the essentiality of PHI and its constituent elements, given their inherent capacity to establish a state of balanced proportion; "If you draw a Pentagram, the lines automatically divide themselves into segments according to the Divine Proportion" (Brown 96). He also says, "For this reason, the five-pointed star has always been the symbol of beauty and perfection associated with the goddess and the Sacred Feminine." (Brown 96).

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Upon meticulous scrutiny of PHI's pervasive presence within mathematical expositions, it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge its concurrent influence and profound ramifications evident within the purview of biological sciences and its nomenclature. Brown remarks on how the term hermaphrodite represents the proportionate balance of the Sacred Feminine; "*hermaphrodite* and its ties to Hermes and Aphrodite (Brown 120).

Similarly, the Sacred Feminine exerts a profound influence over Art and Literature, endowing them with evocative expressions that resonate deeply with its mythological exemplifications. Literature is exhaustive with the evidence of the Sacred Feminine, this evidence looms large in the works of literary giants such as in the poems of William Shakespeare, Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* are filled with the symbols of the Sacred Feminine. For Instance, William Shakespeare in his famed poem *Let me not to the marriage of true minds* provides an allusion to the Pole Star or the Polaris, where celestial luminaries or stars are profound symbols of the Sacred Feminine; "It is the star to every wand' ring bark" (Shakespeare 613). Correspondingly, Alexander Pope's opulent oeuvre *The Rape of the Lock* also exemplifies the facets of the Sacred Feminine through Belinda's resplendent beauty of the Sacred Feminine; "Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike, And, like the sun, they shine on all alike (Pope 20). In regard to Art, there is no better example than the glorious Leonardo Da Vinci and his magnum opus *Mona Lisa*. Brown illuminates how this globally celebrated piece of Art is an androgynous unification of the Sacred Feminine; "Not only does the face of Mona Lisa look androgynous, but her name is an anagram of the divine union of male and female" (Brown 121). He rationalises the androgyny of Mona Lisa through the androgynous unity of God Amon and Goddess Isis in Egyptian Mythology; ""So we have themale god, Amon". He wrote it down. "And the female goddess, Isis, whose ancient pictogram was once called L'ISA." Langdon finished writing and stepped back from the projector. AMON L'ISA" (Brown 121). Brown thereby unveils the clandestine presence of the Sacred Feminine behind the nomenclature and canvas of the Mona Lisa. Similar overtones and allusions to androgyny can be found in Da Vinci's works such as *The Virgin of the Rocks*, *Adoration of the Magi*, *Ginerva de Benci*, and *The Annunciation*.

Identical Tenets of the Sacred Feminine correlatively exist in various architectures around the globe. The neutrois balance of the Scared Feminine for instance can be encountered in the Pantheon of Rome. Dan Brown in his *Angels and Demons* articulates the pantheistic appeal of the Sacred Feminine and its verdant ramifications of fertility in the Roman Pantheon; "Pantheon, it got its name from the

original religion practiced there – Pantheism – the worship of all gods, specifically the pagan gods of Mother Earth” (Brown 253). Brown also talks about the divine balance that commemorates the Sacred Feminine; “Pantheon's main chamber was a tribute to Gaea – the goddess of the Earth. The proportions were so exact that a giant spherical globe could fit perfectly inside the building with less than a millimeter to spare” (Brown 255).

With regard to entertainment and television, indications of the Sacred Feminine are exhaustive in the film renderings of Walt Disney; “It was no mistake that Disney retold tales like *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White* – all which dealt with the incarceration of the Sacred Feminine” (Brown 262). Brown justifies the latter through the fairy tale of *Snow White* and her fall from the divine grace; “Snow White – a princess who fell from grace after partaking of a poisoned apple- was a clear allusion to the downfall of Eve in the Garden of Eden” (Brown 262). He rationalises his argument by alluding to other renditions such as *The Little Mermaid* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Thus, these inter-semiotic representations of the Sacred Feminine in the areas of Science, Maths, Literature, Art, Architecture, and Entertainment demolish the notion of singularity and exclusivity that every myth is unique in nature and thereby reinforces Linda Hutcheon's post-modernistic concept of Idealistic Provocation. Brown vindicates and examines the occurrence of this inter-semiotic and post-modernistic penetration of the Sacred Feminine through the concepts of Replication and “Transmogrification” (Brown 232). While Replication refers to the reproduction and recreation under the premises of influence, attraction, or captivation, Brown legitimises the concept of replication and how it strengthens the inter-semiotic relativities across religions and myths; “Replication. Repeating a symbol is the simplest way to strengthen its meaning” (Brown 38). Brown fortifies his claim on replication by Celestial semiotics of planet Venus; “Early religion was based on the divine order of Nature. The goddess Venus and the planet Venus were one and the same. The goddess had a place in the nighttime sky and was known by many names -Venus the Eastern Star, Ishtar, Astarte- all of them powerful female concepts with ties to Nature and Mother Earth” (Brown 36).

Ergo, Brown substantiates his claim of how replication strengthens the inter-semiotic dispersal of the Sacred Feminine. Transmogrification refers to the transfer, transformation, and exchange of semiotics from one thing to another. Brown exemplifies Transmogrification through the transformational interplay of religious semiotics; “Egyptian sun disks became the halos of Catholic saints. Pictograms of Isis nursing her miraculously conceived son Horus became the

blueprint for our modern images of the Virgin Mary nursing Baby Jesus" (Brown 232). Brown thus expounds on how the notion of Transmogrification facilitates the transformation of semiotic expression within the myths of the Sacred Feminine. However, in the Postmodern realm, the inter-semiotic strengthening of Replication and transformational Transmogrification could be misjudged, manipulated, and clichéd. Brown uncovers the clichéd predicament of the Pentacle, the symbolic representation of Venus and the Sacred Feminine as a victim of Postmodern inter-semiosis; "*Thank you, Hollywood*. The five-pointedstar is now a cliché in Satanic serial killer films" (Brown 37). He also provides examples of other clichéd victimisations of symbols through postmodern inter-semiosis; "Poseidon's trident became the devil's pitchfork, the wise crone's pointed hat became the symbol of the witch, and Venus's pentacle became a sign of the devil" (Brown 37). He explains more like this. "The ancients envisioned their world in two halves-masculine and feminine. Their Gods and Goddesses worked to keep a balance of power. Yin and yang. When male and female were balanced, there was harmony in the world. When they were unbalanced, there was chaos" (Brown 36).

In essence, Brown here explicates the rudimentary core of the Sacred Feminine, and how it strives to institute order out of chaos, to formulate a reverberation of spiritual respect, reverence, and grace. The spontaneous exchange of iconoclasm of the Sacred Feminine and the encompassing nature of its inter-semiotic and transnational versatility is driven strongly by divine faith, fertility, and reverence, which is representative of its impeccable balance.

While the Postmodern lapse concerning inter-semiotic unintelligibility affirms the peerless equidistance of the Sacred Feminine, the junction of its tales and myths in literature and culture exists in regard to the confluence of Faith, commitment, and conviction. Faith moves mountains, and mountains of Faith moves the World! As one endeavours to unravel the myriad manifestations of Faith, one is beckoned to confront the perennial paradoxes of the human condition and the metaphysical yearning that endows life with purpose, depth, and unfathomable profundity. For Faith alone sees the invisible, believes in the incredible, and receives the impossible.

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## Spirit of *Rasquachismo* in Select Disability Poems

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### Abstract

Disability or Crip Poetry made its mark in the later part of the twentieth century as a result of Disability Rights Movement. Influenced by the “protest” literature produced by the racial and women rights movements, the across the globe me Disability Rights Movement paved way for the Disability literature that voiced out for the marginalized and self-represented the disabled. Disability Poetry, soon became a crucial literary genre that criticizes ableist notion, stereotypes, and misrepresentation. It has become a trailblazer of disability literature by yielding a poetic approach to bodily impairments. The *Rasquachismo* Theory developed by Tomas Ybarra-Frausto enunciate the perspectives of the underrepresented population. It encourages empowerment and resistance through subverting the societal norms. This paper discusses how by documenting the experience of disability in their poems, Jim Ferris, Ellen Bass, Jillian Weise, Ashley Centers, and Cheryl Marie Wade have embraced the spirit of *Rasquachismo*. The purpose of this paper is to explore the themes of disability poems such as vulnerability of the human body, challenging negative stereotypes and claiming the disability as one's identity. The paper also endeavors to expound the importance of constructing a subjective identity of a disabled person and its impact in the society.

**Key Words:** Disability, *Rasquachismo*, Disability Poetry, and Subversion Disability.

Disability present since the time of the beginnings of the history of humanity, has been perceived in various lights, by different cultures across the world. Evidences exist that people with physical disabilities such as spina bifida and congenital hip dislocation survived and were taken care of by their loved ones in the hunter-gather community during early civilizations. Though they did not live up to the normal life expectancy, a few disabled survived adulthood, even without any

adaptive tools or aids. In ancient Greece, structures like stone ramps were made for impaired individuals in temples and in several cultures, the disabled were appointed as God's servants and were assigned religious work. In the East, disability was believed to be divine punishment for having sinned in the previous life. In the Middle Ages, however, alms houses were established to take care of the elderly and disabled who were unable to be independent.

The concept of "l'homme moyen" or 'the average man' entered the European culture in the nineteenth century. Quetelet, a French statistician formulated a concept of an abstract human by consolidating the most common human attributes found in a given country. With this 'average man,' the concept of 'deviance' entered the human minds. This, along with Charles Darwin's 'Theory of Evolution' and Galton's 'Eugenics', made people view disability as inferior and the disabled as burden to their families and society. The Industrial revolution, in the 1800's, for its part, demanded only able-bodied workers, thus relegating the disabled to struggle for their livelihood.

Disability was viewed to be a personal problem and until 1950s nobody paid any attention to disabilities and its accompanying problems. The 1970's saw the wake of Disability Rights Movement when people with disabilities came together to fight for their rights. This movement marks the shift from Medical Model (where disability is a bodily condition that needs to be fixed) to Social Model (where it is society that limits the functioning of the disabled through its inaccessible architecture, derogatory stereotypes, and lack of support). The Social Model of Disability was a term coined by Mike Oliver in 1983, and this model was adopted by disability scholars worldwide. This shift in the viewing lens resulted in the discussion of marginalization, oppression of the disabled and addressing negative portrayal of them in literature and media. This, in tandem witnessed an array of works in different genres on disability, ensuing Disability Studies in academia.

Disability studies is an interdisciplinary field that challenges the dominant discourses on disability and addresses it as a political and cultural phenomenon. Disability studies, "Seeking to broaden the understanding of disability, to better understand the experience of disability in society, and to contribute to social change for people with disabilities, the field challenges the idea of normal abnormal binary and suggests that a range of human variations are normal" (Rice). Disability Rights Movement also encouraged a lot of disabled writers to voice out for themselves in various forms like poetry, essays, fiction, and life-writings. Disability poetry emerged as a distinct genre, only recently. Though there were quite a few disabled poets in the

1960's, they hid their identity and never addressed disability issues. A.J. Baird, a Medieval scholar was the first one to compile an anthology of disability poems, *Towards Solomon's Mountain*. Disability poetry gradually picked its pace through several poets like Floyd Skloot, Kenny Fries, Stephen Kuusisto and Jim Ferris, who carefully rejected the supercrip treatment, the disabled were bestowed with. Kenny Fries, whose poems not only claimed disability but also highlighted social constructs that didn't favor the disabled, published an anthology, *Staring Back*. This collection has become a manifesto for Disability Literature. Jim Ferris is a poet who worked hard on formulating Disability Poetry and Aesthetics. He states that "Disability poetry can be recognized by several characteristics: a challenge to stereotypes and an insistence on self- definition; foregrounding of the perspective of people with disabilities; an emphasis on embodiment, especially atypical embodiment; and alternative techniques and poetics" (*A Short History of Disability Poetry*). Since the publication of Baird's anthology in 1986, Disability Poetry has evolved into a genre. New poets bring out their disability experience in unique ways through various contests and magazines dedicated for disability cause. The poems discussed in this paper offer such distinctive viewpoints.

"Rasquachismo is a theory developed by a Chicano scholar Tomas Ybarra-Fraust to describe an underdog perspective, a view from los de abajo (from below) in working class Chicano communities which uses elements of hybridization, juxtaposition, and integration as a means of empowerment and resistance." (*What Does Rasquachismo Means*). The word Rasquachismo derived its origin from a Spanish word, *rasquache*, which means 'no value'. Rasquachismo is an art movement that assigns value to the objects that were considered useless historically. These conventionally marginalized objects and practices when brought to the center, subverts the accepted notions of norms and standards. For Ybarra-Frausto, this concept indicates a form of resistance embracing new strategies of shift in the mainstream narrative. This spirit of Rasquachismo is observed in Disability poetry as well. Disability poetry, with its exclusive themes and structures, tries to rewrite the values that defined the disability so far. The poems destigmatize, deconstruct, and denounce the delusions about disability. Disability poems exhibit different themes – from enlightening the public on impairment to asserting disability as one's own identity. This paper, thus tries to analyze the disability poems, in the light of *Rasquachismo* spirit, that offers new perspectives by the disabled who are marginalized for so long in the history.

Disability poetics, though adopted by several poets, was given a clear definition by jim Ferris. In "Crip Poetry, or How I Learned to Love the Limp", Ferris defines Disability or Crip poetry thus:

Poetry that seeks to explore and validate the lived experience of moving through the world with a disability. sometimes referred to as crip poetry, disability poetry embodies a disability consciousness; it is informed by and contributes to disability culture. That is a serviceable definition. But here is what I left out: the possibility, the edgy potential, the openness and even likelihood of transformation. (Ferris)

One of the important attributes of disability poetry is making the disability experience, that was kept hidden for so long, visible. The poets began discussing their bodily impairment, the pain, and the insensitivity of the non-disabled towards their disablement. In her *French Chocolates*, Ellen Bass discusses how, from a very early age people are taught, "If you have your health, you have everything" "A Cup of Poetry", but she reminds the non-disabled, the reality of life that is capable of robbing one's happiness in several ways like partner's infidelity and losing job. When describing pain, Bass uses similes that could be related by non-disabled people as well.

But for the ill, for you with nerves that fire,  
Like a rusted-out burner on an old barbecue,  
With bones brittle as spun sugar,  
with migraine hammering like a blacksmith ("Bass" 13-16)

However, the painful experiences of disability are not the central theme of this poem, rather the attitude of the nondisabled is criticized. The poem continues as such:

... may you be spared from friends who say,  
God doesn't give you more than you can handle  
And asks what gifts being sick has brought you ("Bass" 18-20)

Disability poetry mainly fights this ignorance and insensitivity of people who refuse to learn about disability. The poets criticize the offered pity and "talk back the so called 'normal people' that disability is a bodily condition that needs medical assistance and demands an equal treatment. One of the recurring themes in disability poetry is countering non-disabled people's beliefs, stereotypes, demands and discrimination against them. Petra Kuppers states in her "Performing Determinism: Disability Culture Poetry": "it is not my body or mind that's the problem, it is these steps, this sign, your stare your words" (91). This thought is resonated in many disability poems. Ashley Centers, in her poem, *Human*, chides this society that, in the process of fixing her disability through prayers, medicines and pity, it forgets

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that she is a human, in the first place. She argues that if she is made in the image of God, she does not need to be fixed. Misrepresented in literature for so long, the disabled poets through their works express how they despise the treatment they receive. Center's poem clearly vocalized her resentment, thus:

Poor soul, she is diminished by her disability  
Diminished by my disability?  
The only thing I'm diminished by  
Is your inability to understand  
That before anything else I am human. ("Centers" 21-25)

Disability poetry, in its essence reflects the page spirit of Rasquachismo, where the marginalized encounter the narratives spun around their lives. If being disabled brings a set of barriers, becoming a 'disabled poet' invites even more. Disabled poets, when they write on other themes, were interrogated, forced to claim the disabled identity, and were made to announce their disability because they 'owe' it to the reader. Jillian Weise, in her poem, *Nondisabled Demands* observes the social norm that when a poem is not written by "ten fingers, ten toes/ with sight and hearing and balance" (Academy of American Poets), the poet must "come out and say it" (Academy of American Poets). This attitude of the nondisabled to reinforce the disabled identity of poets pronounces the supercrip idea which the disabled scholars endeavor to dismiss. *Poems with Disabilities* by Jim Ferris throws light on the civil rights law of people with disabilities that "requires to make reasonable accommodation" ("Poems with Disabilities") for the nondisabled. The poem uses the metaphor of disability poem in a poetry book to expound the condition of disabled in this ableist world. He focuses on the fact that disability, rather than a limitation, is a part of diverse world we live in and by heeding to its potentialities, we invite, "changes, the world tilts/ a little, angle of vision/ jumps, focus/ shifts" ("Poems with Disabilities"). Just as in the Rasquachismo movement where the underdog perspective can subvert the ideals dictated, the disabled can reverse the construction of disability embodiment.

Rasquachismo also denotes one's acceptance of cultural identity and asserts it through art. Disability poems reflect the journey towards acceptance and claiming their identity. Ferris in his poem, *Enough*, looks back on the days when he pretended to walk like 'everybody else'. He insisted himself to be seen as a regular kid, standing out for his wit and intelligence and not for his walk. Cheryl Marie Wade's celebrated poem, *I Am Not One of The*, denies the classifications bestowed by the ableist world and embraces her identity as a disabled with pride. She brings society and the government to cynosure by stating, "I'm an epitaph for a million/ imperfect

babies left untreated" (*Exploring Disability*). Her acceptance and the understanding of the power of disabled is beautifully recorded in her poem as such:

I'm the Evil Eye

I'm the first cell divided I'm mud that talks

I'm Eve I'm Kali

I'm the mountain that never Moves

I've been forever I'll be here forever ("Wade" 12-17)

It is fascinating how the poet beautifully subverted the negative metaphors and images assigned to the disabled for centuries into powerful identities. By accepting the identity of disability and by claiming it through writings, disabled poets create a new world where the disabled and non-disabled are treated equally. This rasquachismo effect to the nondisabled reminds bodily imperfections and human vulnerability; demands equality and dignity, envisioning a world that embraces plurality and unordinary.

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## A Study of Language through Linguistic Competency

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### Abstract

Linguistic Competency is a semantic ability to use language in an effective way and it demands a good command of language and its usages. This paper focuses on the usage of words, expressions, and phrases and how they are handled proficiently by academicians to attain Linguistic Competency. This paper also stresses the importance of dictionaries and newspapers used as two windows in linguistic enrichment. Intensive reading will help improve the competency and this paper would like to suggest some books to improve Linguistic Competency.

**Key Words:** Plain English, Broken English, Tabula rasa, Competency, Performance, Euphemism, and Intentional Fallacy.

“It takes whole life to learn any language perfectly” (67 Ruskin). Reading a newspaper is a forced restraint and an unpalatable habit, precisely speaking, during undergraduate days. Even leafing through a single page is a ticklish task for the idle eyes of students who cordially hate the habit that has fruitlessly been invested in newspapers, especially, *the Hindu*, a daily, known for vocabulary and grandiose linguistic constructions. Initially, they start buying it to humour their loathing spirits and try hard to conciliate the impeccability of English usage. Many professors advise them personally on the importance of newspaper in the hope of honing communication skills and show their decayed notebook repleting with many moth-eaten leaves from which students can feel many of their professors' sleepless nights spent fruitfully and advisedly.

The teachers are the real masters who practise what they teach as the village school master did in “The Deserted Village”, a beautiful poem by Oliver Goldsmith. The students can remember the great professors and their balmy words inside the classrooms. The positive words fill the entire classroom and revitalise the benumbed spirits. A stony silence is ensued between half a smile and half a laugh during their literary fireworks. To put in simple words, the teachers sway, by their teaching skills, the motion of students' hearts who listen to the class with rapt attention.

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Art is endless and life is fleeting. The habit of reading newspaper is an acquired taste; it can be picked up gradually. Students learn this timeless philosophy from their great teachers who sow the seed of learning into the barren minds. After achieving consistent practice in the art of reading, the students grow fond of reading *The Hindu* regularly. They find it difficult to finish a paragraph in a page at a stretch. They make acquaintance of unfamiliar words and phrases while perusing the newspaper with diligent effort. They cannot make head or tails of the words used in the newspaper despite their consistent practice. Their mental energy runs out of juice because the practice is exhausting and painstaking. During this intellectual exercise, they grasp so many words from different news articles with the help of dictionaries but, unfortunately, they slip from their fragile memory. They try to bring them back but they are too relentless to yield. But the quote by Alfred Tennyson lingers on their mind “to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield” (Abrams 234).

Any student of literature must follow the conviction to his/her heart's core and start teaching the words which they learn from various newspapers. “If you want to obtain proficiency in language you must teach it” (Ascham 45). Laying all the pungent comments and hearty compliments aside, students must burn the midnight oil and leave no stone unturned in this regard. Soon after, their attention shifts from newspaper to literature and they change the modus operandi too. Reading alone does not come in handy so they ought to get into the habit of using a diary on which they conscientiously note down the new words grafted from various literary sources and make sure of themselves that they do not want to become a copycat who imitates words and phrases without understanding. They wish to make an everlasting relationship with words, and hence they willingly fall in love with a method called 'Internalisation' which comprises rereading, revisiting, redefining, remembering, reviewing, recalling, reproducing, and retelling. These will help them remember the words quickly and effectively.

Vocabulary building is a cerebral exercise where 'competency' is transformed into 'performance'. If you have the faculty of transforming passive vocabulary (which are stubborn) into active vocabulary, you will become a proficient wordsmith. You must take hold of contexts and ideas embedded in texts and words. Don't let the words choose their contexts forcefully, on the contrary, let the contexts choose the words naturally. If the chosen word is incongruous, the context will not give the desired meaning. Bearing this idea, students must spot the contextual meaning in their literary sources. Figuring out the contextual meaning from a web of semantic confusions is the very fabric of linguistic architecture sealed closely inside

the text. They have to play a sedulous ape and take inspiration from Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, George Orwell, and Somerset Maugham who are the real masters of the English language.

Newspaper and dictionary make a happy pair complementing each other. Nowadays, they are given little importance by students whose focus is only on fluency rather than accuracy. In the past, teachers held a common opinion that dictionary was not a reference book, on the contrary, it was a text book that should be used in classrooms like other textbooks. Thanks to G.B. Shaw for writing an essay, "Spoken English Broken English" where he makes bold affirmation that even an English man cannot speak his mother tongue impeccably because English Spoken is entirely different from written English. He brushes aside the term Fluent English and embraces Plain English which has been spoken by a large number of people in the world. Fluent English is not Standard English conversed by the British. Many people hold a chimera about Fluent English which they consider the best English but it is not so. If a person talks fluently, it means, he or she speaks continuously and not flawlessly. The real language is a language that is spoken by the common people as stated by William Wordsworth. Linguistic Competency guides you to get along with the common conversations exchanged among people.

Communicative Competency is one of the abiding faculties endowed with human beings pertaining to their language domain. This competency helps people think out of the box and propels them to widen their epistemological horizons. This shuns literal translation that takes place in conscious mind. When you devote a span of time to immerse in a dictionary (doing away with mugging up words), this competency will be enhanced and boosted. This will help you build vocabulary storehouse in your mind which stands you in good stead when you stumble upon words. This will trigger your brain cells to think nimbly and act promptly. But any language spoken by people embraces Linguistic Competency along with Communicative Competency.

"Tabula rasa" (Locke 156) is a term used by John Locke. This means the childhood memories will be deeply registered in budding minds and the same can't be eradicated easily. A child's mind, like a clean slate, has everlasting memory. Any 90's kids can remember the incoherent chorus of first friends, faltering alphabet, confusing mathematics, carefree childhood days, joyful Sundays, painful Mondays, Parle G, Shakthiman, progress report and so on. Language plays a spinal role in bringing back the treasured memories. It gives many avenues to think and act. People forget Mathematics and Science taught in the class but it is very difficult to

erase Tamil and English from their memories because both are language inbred in their subconscious mind. So, learning a language is different from learning about the language.

“It is the slaver kills, and not the bite” (Pope 123). Alexander Pope remarked about 300 years ago about the use of polite words which have become a growing custom cultivated by the educated people. It is a universal truth that human communication is born out of cries based on the sounds uttered by birds and animals. The primitive people babble, cry, and at last they speak. Followed by gestures, they use crude and half- conceived words to express their emotions. Even Hermes, the first messenger of God, uses plain words to interpret God's message to the native people. Many decades later, the crudeness has slowly been changed and people start using the right words based on their dialects. In this case, linguistic shifts brought by many makers of the English language tremendously help people choose the right words to match their contexts aptly. With the advent of language progression, the history of the English language is replete with Euphemism, a term expressing polite words. Thus, the word 'death' has multiple versions: “kick the bucket”, “go to Maker”, “pay the debt of nature”, “attain divinity”, “join the majority”, “bite the dust”, “depart this life”, “breathe his/her last”, and “someone is no more”. Linguistic Competency encourages students to use the supreme art of Euphemism in their writing and speaking.

*Reader's Digest* is one of the magazines that alters the way of linguistic perceptions implied by people. To sharpen linguistic competency, one must choose the right prepositions because they are alluringly deceptive. Once, an angry husband penned a wrathful letter to his wife stating her incorrigible mistakes which he could hardly tolerate. His letter expressed, 'I completely mad on you and I can't put up with your disobedience nowadays'. His wife's joy couldn't be traced by words for she construed the note given by her husband as a positive one. She sent a prompt reply to her husband and showered a thousand thanks because 'mad on' means 'you are crazy about somebody or you love somebody heartily'. The husband should have used 'mad at' in place of the phrase 'mad on'. If you misplace a preposition unwittingly, it will throw mud on your face. The desired meaning will be a debacle, if you fail to grasp the competency.

Reading classics is a great boon. The classics are a storehouse where one can derive indefatigable literary and linguistic pleasure. They are filled with meaningful expressions which will come in handy for a beginner. One must shun the age- old adage that classics are old and outdated but they are, in real, antique and still shine their spleen brilliantly. An individual must spend time with the works of

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Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Dr Johnson, William Wordsworth, Thomas Hardy and Jane Austen, who will help him/ her achieve the excellence of linguistic competency. Recently, a Facebook enthusiast murmurs a rumour about the origin of the word 'unfriend' on the internet. He states that the word 'unfriend' is coined by Facebook since it has been a feature incorporated in Facebook. People believe that this word is new and a dime a dozen on Facebook, a social media app where most of the cultured apes mispend their valuable time lavishly. If you want to jilt jerry-built friends on Facebook, you can unfriend them so that they will no longer be your friend and their communication will be curbed. To unfold an open secret about the word, it is coined by wise Shakespeare. Don't labour under any delusions that an old word does not give the right meaning but it does. Classical writers inspire to master the art of Linguistic Competency by and large.

George Orwell, one of the best writers, stresses the importance of Plain English spoken by the vulgar people. Vulgar here means native. To imbibe linguistic competency, one must hinge on plain English. Plain English is a simple English which eschews grand vocabulary and bombastic words. It is like hitting the nail on the head rather than beating around the bush. The same idea is refrigerated by Sir Ernest Gowers in his *The Complete Plain Words*. He advises students and scholars, "do not impress your audience with your words" (Gowers 123). You must cherry-pick polite and familiar words when you drop sentences with someone. The best communication according to him, is to be conveyed easily and understood promptly. A good dictionary guides you to use appropriate words based on the contexts and it will develop the competency.

A common belief says, don't refer to dictionaries frequently when you fail to arrive at a meaning of a particular word or phrase, instead, try to grasp the context sharply with the help of words. If you succeed in finding out the contextual meaning, you can understand the used words effortlessly without consulting a dictionary. Yes, true, the contextual meaning is quintessence. But it does not give you the fruit of success all the time. For instance, the word 'dinner' is attached to a particular time, night. According to a popular belief, dinner is the meal usually taken by people at night. If you look into an unabridged dictionary, dinner means the principal meal of the day and it can be taken at any point of time in a day irrespective of timings. 'I have had a sumptuous dinner with my uncle this morning' is an example from the Reader's Digest. The change of contextual meaning is determined by the placement of judicious word according to its usage.

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Without consulting dictionaries, glossaries, and footnotes, one will not be able to understand Shakespeare or Milton. It is very difficult to match the words with their contexts. For example, in the phrase 'she is a nice girl', the word 'nice' had a plenty of statement interpretations in Shakespeare's time. "Nice" those days meant cunning, beautiful, sharp, brilliant, and good. The same word has been evolved and has attained many polysemous changes during many language shifts. So, one must understand the origin of the word and adopt it according to the context. If one fails to understand the Elizabethan English, he or she would not achieve the intended meaning of Shakespeare. Linguistic competency dispels the confusion and encourages students to comprehend the buried meanings inside a work of art.

The very first line of the novel *Emma* runs thus: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, rich and..." (Austen 07 ). The author of the novel is Jane Austen, a Victorian novelist whose words are so ingenious and clever. People laugh at Jane for using the adjective 'handsome' as an epithet for a woman. Many conventional grammarians frown at the usage of this sort and they assume that Jane has committed a linguistic *faux pas*. People have a delusion that 'beautiful' is always attached to women whereas 'handsome', men. The word 'handsome' also means *buxom* and it can also be used for a woman who has a stout physical frame. The usage of words will educate one to comprehend the contexts, mostly foreign and alien to us. Reading against the grain always makes a room for better understanding which is unexamined in a text or work.

'The new shoe bites me' is an infantile expression tendered by people in every walk of life. If one takes the literal meaning of the word 'bite', the sentence will be a sheer absurd. No shoe has teeth to bite or nibble at one's heel. Many researches are done by people to figure out the apt word for 'shoe biting', but the venture has proved to a wild- goose chase. Many days later, a new discovery was made on the phrase, 'a pinch of salt'. One can browse the word in a dictionary and chance upon a linguistic serendipity. The word 'pinch' also means 'a discomfort feeling when one wears a new shoe. Thus, dictionaries give not only the desired meaning but also the unexplored meaning. The apt word for bite is 'pinch'. A sound knowledge of polysecremies of a word is vital.

The usage of words needs to be encouraged among students as well as teachers. Learning a new word is like swallowing a tasty meal. The meal of language should properly be digested. Linguistic competency will help people digest the usage of English. It is futile to enjoy the language without cognizing the usage of words. The words 'ache' and 'pain' are hardly distinguishable. Pain is severe, intense, and acute.

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Ache is less painful but chronic. During the pandemic, everyone was vaccinated against Covid-19. When someone receives a hypodermic needle into his arm, he feels a sudden pain on the surface of his arm, which is so intense but quickly disappears it is pain. After two days, when he will have a bothering pain inside his arm, it is ache. Tooth ache, head ache, stomach ache, and back ache are examples of ache.

A man goes to a restaurant with his cronies to have breakfast. The restaurant is choked with people who make hustle and bustle and wage a war with food. The tired waiter of the restaurant cools the customers' heels for a long time. To while away the time, the man gazes at the interior design of the air-conditioned room which is par excellence. Suddenly, his eyes catch a glimpse of a notice board with the following words 'kitchen, no admission'. He is bemused for a while; the word 'admission' is generally used in academic institutions. 'Admissions open, free admission, and admissions are on' are the common phrases used there. Admission is a vacant place to be filled by someone; hence, the word 'admission' should be used only for people. The term admission must be replaced with 'no admittance' here. 'No admittance' means, the entry of physical presence is prohibited. The semantic difference should be understood to master linguistic proficiency.

Meaning is a cultural heritage gathered in a linguistic storehouse and the key to open the house is language. Some meanings can be understood quickly but some are tough to understand. In order to comprehend the embedded meanings buried in texts, one must break off semantic confusions embroiled in texts for they are determined by different interpretations derived from signs, symbols, and images camouflaged in verbal and non-verbal communications. John Keats explains this linguistic serendipity as, "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter" (Abrams 456). It is mere child's play to grasp 'literal meanings' but it is very hard to understand 'metaphorical meanings' hidden inherently in writing as well as in speaking. Linguistic Competency will be the elixir to tackle the semantic confusions. It sheds the confusions occurred in interpretations and sharpens the accuracy of English expressions without mangling the beauty of the language

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## A Feminist Reading of Kavita Kane's *Saraswathi's Gift*

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### Abstract

*Saraswathi's Gift* is a novel written by Kavita Kane, an acclaimed Indian author known for her unique storytelling and exploration of mythological characters. In this book, Kane delves into the life of Saraswathi, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, and arts.

**Key Words** : Self -discovery, resilience, matriarchal empowerment, cultural preservation.

The introduction of *Saraswathi's Gift* sets the stage for a captivating journey into the divine world of Saraswathi. Kane introduces us to the protagonist, Saraswathi, who is revered as the epitome of wisdom and creativity in Hindu mythology. She is portrayed as a powerful goddess with immense knowledge and artistic abilities. Kane skillfully weaves together mythology and fiction to present an intriguing narrative that explores Saraswathi's struggles, desires, and triumphs. Through her vivid descriptions and rich character development, Kane brings Saraswathi to life on the pages of her book.

The introduction also provides a glimpse into the themes that will be explored throughout the novel. It touches upon the challenges faced by women in ancient times, their quest for identity and recognition in a patriarchal society, and their constant battle against societal norms. Kavita Kane's introduction to *Saraswathi's Gift* promises readers an enchanting tale filled with mythology, feminism, and self-discovery. It invites us to delve deeper into the world of Saraswathi and witness her extraordinary journey unfold.

A feminist reading of *Saraswathi's Gift* would focus on the themes of gender inequality, patriarchal norms, and the empowerment of women. In the story, Saraswathi is a young girl who possesses a unique gift for playing the veena, a

traditional Indian musical instrument. However, her talent is initially dismissed by her father and brother due to their belief that women should not engage in such activities. This reflects the patriarchal norms prevalent in many societies, where women are often discouraged from pursuing their passions or talents.

A feminist reading would highlight how Saraswathi's journey challenges these gendered expectations. Despite facing resistance from her family and society, she persists in pursuing her passion for music. This determination showcases her agency and resilience in the face of societal constraints. Furthermore, *Saraswathi's Gift* can be seen as a metaphor for female empowerment. By embracing her talent and refusing to conform to societal expectations, Saraswathi breaks free from traditional gender roles and asserts her individuality. Her music becomes a means of self-expression and liberation from the confines imposed on women.

The story also highlights the importance of support systems for women. Saraswathi finds encouragement from her grandmother, who recognizes her talent and encourages her to pursue it despite societal disapproval. This emphasizes the significance of female solidarity and mentorship in challenging patriarchal norms. A feminist reading of *Saraswathi's Gift* would celebrate Saraswathi's defiance against gendered expectations, highlighting the importance of empowering women to pursue their passions and talents freely. It would also underscore the need for an environment that can enable women to challenge societal norms and achieve self-fulfillment.

*Saraswathi's Gift* can be analyzed in several ways. Before analyzing her gift, it is important to understand where her passion lies. This could be anything from music, art, literature, or any other creative pursuit. Once her passion is understood clearly it would be better to analyze how her gift helps prioritize it. *Saraswathi's Gift* could be a physical object or a skill/talent that she possesses. For example, considering music, her gift is playing a musical instrument and having an exceptional singing voice. When her passion for writing is obscured her gift is exceptional storytelling abilities and a natural talent for words.

Whatever the nature of the gift, it should help enhance Saraswathi's skills and abilities in her chosen field. It should give her an advantage over others and allow her to excel in what she loves doing. One aspect of prioritizing passion is managing time effectively and staying focused on the chosen pursuit. *Saraswathi's Gift* should enable her to do this by providing tools or resources that help streamline her work process and eliminate distractions.

Pursuing one's passion often comes with challenges and obstacles along the way. *Saraswati's Gift* should equip her with the necessary tools or qualities to overcome these obstacles effectively. This could include resilience, determination, problem-solving skills, or any other attribute that helps navigate through difficulties. Prioritizing one's passion often means making choices and sacrifices in other areas of life. *Saraswati's Gift* should help her strike a balance between pursuing her passion and fulfilling other responsibilities or commitments she may have.

Finally, *Saraswati's Gift* should contribute to the long-term sustainability of her passion. It should not be a temporary boost but rather something that can be nurtured and developed over time, allowing her to continue prioritizing her passion in the future. By analyzing these aspects, one can gain a better understanding of how *Saraswati's Gift* helps prioritize her passion and enables her to excel in her chosen field. *Saraswati's gift*, in Hindu mythology, refers to the goddess Saraswathi's bestowing of knowledge, wisdom, and artistic abilities upon individuals. While the concept of *Saraswati's Gift* may have originated in ancient times, its relevance to today's society remains significant.

In today's knowledge-based economy, education and knowledge are highly valued. *Saraswati's Gift* symbolizes the importance of education and continuous learning. It reminds us that acquiring knowledge is essential for personal growth, professional success, and societal progress. Saraswathi is also associated with creativity and artistic expression. In today's society, creativity plays a crucial role in various fields such as art, design, music, literature, technology, and innovation. *Saraswati's Gift* encourages individuals to explore their creative potential and contribute to the cultural enrichment of society.

Saraswathi is often depicted as a female deity who embodies wisdom and knowledge. In a world striving for gender equality and women empowerment, the relevance of *Saraswati's Gift* becomes even more pronounced. It serves as a reminder that women possess immense intellectual capabilities and deserve equal opportunities to pursue education and excel in various domains. The concept of *Saraswati's Gift* emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning rather than limiting education to formal schooling or to specific stages of life. In today's fast-paced world with rapidly evolving technologies and industries, continuous learning has become essential for adapting to change, staying relevant in one's profession, and embracing new opportunities.

Saraswathi is considered the patron goddess of arts, culture, music, literature, and language. In an era where globalization has led to cultural homogenization in many aspects of life, preserving diverse cultural traditions becomes crucial for maintaining societal richness. *Saraswathi's Gift* reminds us of the significance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. *Saraswathi's Gift* holds relevance in today's society by emphasizing the importance of education, knowledge, creativity, empowerment, lifelong learning, and cultural preservation. It serves as a reminder to value these aspects and strive for their integration into our personal lives and societal structures.

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## A Study of Religious Ecology in Terry Tempest Williams' *When Women Were Birds: Fifty-Four Variations on Voice*

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### Abstract

The paper explores the role of religious ecology and environmental ethics in achieving ecological sustainability, using Terry Tempest Williams' work *When Women Were Birds: Fifty-Four Variations on Voice* as a lens. It argues that religious ecology, involving dialogue between faith systems, genders, and disciplines, is crucial for sustainable solutions. The text illustrates Williams' eco-ethical consciousness, emphasizing the need to integrate cultural, ethical, and religious worldviews into environmental studies. The paper delves into the symbolic dimensions of religious ecology, discussing the elemental aspects of orientation, grounding, nurturing, and transforming. Williams' perspective aligns with the resurgence of religious ecologies, challenging the notion of religion's decline in the face of modernization.

**Key Words:** Religious Ecology, Environmental Ethics, Ecological sustainability, Terry Tempest Williams, Symbolic consciousness, Elemental dimensions, Eco-ethical consciousness

The role of religion in climate change abatement has been a significant discussion in academic, theological and environmental circles for over three decades. Environmental concern has made its slow yet steady impact on various walks of life and despite rapid modernization and the artificial aura that is added to every phenomenon of life. Though a plethora of initiatives have been taken across the globe to instill eco-consciousness, all these well-meaning efforts lack a missing piece, without which a sustainable and ecologically balanced planet is a far-fetched dream. This paper argues that religious ecology and environmental ethics, the lacunae in the puzzle of ecological sustainability, should be the fulcrum on which

sustainable solutions should be proposed to make the Earth a common household and a safe haven for every integral component of the web of life, thus ensuring the ontological continuity between the human and non-human world. In order to explicate this idea from literature, the text *When Women Were Birds: Fifty-Four Variations on Voice* has been chosen in accordance with the eco-ethical consciousness of its author Terry Tempest Williams. Religious ecology encourages a dialogue between faith systems, cultures, genders and various disciplines like science, technology, policy and ethics and the creative niche of Terry Tempest Williams falls in line with this conglomerated understanding of the reality of life.

John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, a key proponent of religious ecology discuss the contrasting characteristics of religion in their book *Ecology and Religion* (2014). The questioning of anthropocentric ethics in religion and the prioritization of divine-human relations brings to light the orthodox and progressive dimensions of faith systems across the globe. The contradictory phenomenon of religion which includes its fundamentalism, dogmatism, exclusivity, and patriarchy should be understood from the context of its adaptive nature that is responsive to the appeal of equality, inclusivity and a call for love in action.

We need to acknowledge the problems and the promise of religions as their perspectives and values are integrated into the academic field of environmental studies and the public force of environmentalism. Within academia it is becoming clear that cultural, ethical, and religious world views must be included in the study of environmental issues. This is because historically religions have had ecological dimensions in the ways they ground human communities in the rhythms of nature. This is what we are calling religious ecology. An understanding of the roles of religious ecologies is resurfacing with some intensity in an era when religions were thought to be diminishing with the rise of secularization. (Tucker 18)

The limitations and hierarchical nature of religions was seen to be reason behind the declining popularity of faith, especially after the advent of modernism. It was expected that religion will die a slow death and eventually God was declared dead. The persistence of religious institutions and belief systems despite the aforesaid claims are deeply tied to the symbolic and ethical systems that are wired into the archetypal sensibilities of the Earth community. The response to the divine through the Earth has been manifested in myriad means and the flavor of each culture and geography adds on to the unique ways of forming one's own religious ecology.

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Terry Tempest Williams perceives the Earth from a sacramental perspective. While describing the dry foothills of the Wasatch Mountains, Williams adds a cosmological dimension to this landscape and describes this place as her personal universe that is laden with its inherent truth. The relativism that is attuned to the quest for truth from an empirical point of view cannot surmise the clarity that spiritual experiences carry. The landscape before her was the stark reality she meditated on and it was a form of truth that could be seen, felt, experienced and revered, unlike the indoor religious doctrine that is limiting in many senses. Outdoor religion was an exciting enterprise, writes Williams, as she observes Rufous-sided towhees, Lazuli buntings, Blue-gray gnatcatchers and other avians that help her winged spirit soar high. The lilt of the hermit thrush and its mellifluous trill that reverberates through the verdant cathedrals of birch and pine make her vesper at the woods truly meaningful. Williams records another glorious phenomenon in the Serpentine Canyon at the Colorado River, Utah. The peculiar maroon ring of algae that formed around one of the dry pools turned orange the moment she touched it with her friend and biologist Laura Kamala. On rubbing it again gently, the color gleamed with more vibrance. Williams replaces this visual entreaty with her own spectrum of experience, as she reflected on the carotene, live and gliding through her fingers.

Acknowledging the emotional dimension of perceiving the Earth in all its glory is an important tenet of religious ecology. The observation Williams makes about trees, birds and landscape transcends the empirical and scientific gauging and places an intrinsic value to the antiquity and value of the Earth. Steve Pacala, an ecology and evolutionary biologist at Princeton University states that the study of nature involves three phases. Observing nature is followed by cherishing it, followed by the conceptualization of the study. This three step process, according to him is the less trodden trail that leads to creative scientific discovery. The fulcrum of this aesthetic approach is an inspiration that values the intrinsic beauty and order of the non-human world. Williams carefully observes, fondly cherishes and deftly conceptualizes the splendor of the Earth in her travelogues and memoirs. Her accounts assert that that Earth has its own value and does not exist for the sole purpose of meeting the needs of mankind. Further, Williams establishes an ontological bonding between the human and non-human world at a spiritual plane. She focuses on the dependence of human beings on the Earth, especially its elemental dimensions namely orienting, grounding, nurturing and transforming. The symbolic meaning these terms hold bespeaks the soul of religious ecology. An understanding of the elemental dimensions of religious ecology has its genesis in the symbolic meaning abounding in religions and culture. Clifford Geertz made the following inference about religion.

"...a world view replete with symbols and an ethos of behavior that creates coherent ways of living. He defined religion as: "(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [individuals] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." Geertz saw the symbol systems of religion evoked symbolic knowing, thus opening the world to interpretation and meaning. Just as Geertz understood that symbols transmitted in cultural practices have a profound effect on human consciousness in shaping worldviews, so also symbols give expression to empirical knowing, Symbolic knowledge is also used in mathematics and science to communicate and interpret concepts. Greek philosopher and the mathematician Pythagoras brought together symbol systems that are now considered separate ways of knowing in science and religion. Such symbolic ways of knowing emerge out of earlier linguistic and conceptual faculties of human (Tucker 31)

This rich symbolic consciousness that pervades the psyche of human beings attunes symbolic significance to the elements of earth, air, fire and water. Thus a basic definition of the elemental dimensions would be as follows: Orientation refers to the predisposition of mankind to turn towards celestial bodies, the sky and air to acknowledge the creative force in the cosmos. Grounding means the relationship to the landscape, and this bond establishes a sense of community with the Earth, the dwelling place, the *oikos*. Nurturing pertains to the Earth's fecundity and the nurturing attribute that sustains life. Transforming is relegated to the relationship with the cosmological self that with the symbolism of powerful forces like fire that can destroy, heal and transform.

Human life that is sustained by these elements, returns back to it and thus, the human body is bound back to the Earth after life. This ecological sense of understanding the reality of life has a deeper connotation while considering the etymological meaning of the word religion which can be traced back to the Latin word *religio*, which means an obligation, an union or reverence. Religious ecology is a renaissance in ecological studies as it seeks to redefine and bind back the

strained bond between the Earth and mankind. Piety binds God and humanity with reverence expressed through symbols, customs and practices that involve earth, air, fire and water. Creation is not merely at the backdrop, but is a quintessential part of the cosmic interplay between the Creator and all that is in the Earth.

Orientation refers to the cosmic dimension of religious ecology. Every religion and culture has its distinct way of perceiving how the world was created and some religions like Buddhism infer creation as a phenomenon sans God. Western cosmology which was initially theocentric is gradually evolving from its anthropocentric phase to the ecocentric phase. Williams writes about the Navajo Pantheon in the American Southwest where geography defined their genealogy. The phenomenon of creation was explicated from a mythical perspective and volcanic mountains, rocks, plants and animals were given a cosmological meaning that is spiritual. The feminine dimension of cosmology surfaces in many cultures and religions as women like Eve, Isis, Demeter, the *saptamatrikas* or the seven mothers, Gaia and the Changing woman form an integral part of the creation stories. These stories have a strong ecological voice and evoke a sense of place and personal identity. The truth of the interdependence of life surfaces through these stories that orient mankind to a cosmological reality that binds the creator and the created. Orientation creates a sense of belonging to the landscape and this is referred to as 'grounding' in religious ecology.

Sacred spaces constitute an integral part in religious worship and practice. These places instill a sense of community and the customary practices carried out in these communal, sacred spaces leads to a reflective experience of an inward and outward journey. Every religion has its sacred space which is characterized by diverse landscape. The idea of pilgrimage signifies reverence and rebinding at many levels including the ethical, spiritual, cultural and ecological dimensions. The sacred space Williams delves on, in a vast majority of her works in the Redrock wilderness of Utah. The spiritual value of the desertscape in all its simplicity and glorious magnitude is explicated with utmost grace and passion in the travelogues and memoirs of Williams. Times of solitude in the wilderness helped her distinguish and appreciate the intrinsic value and inherent dignity of everything beyond the boundaries of human civilization. "At the heart of my emerging voice was the belief that nature held the secret to harmony and unity, not just outside us, but inside us, no separation" (Williams, 56). Encounter with the divine that leads to a deeper reflection of truth can be evinced in the encounter Abraham had with God in Mount Moriah and the significance of Pothigai Hills, in relation to the Kailasa Hills in Hindu mythology. Pothigai Hills or Agasthiyar Mountain is a hill range in the Western

Ghats in South India. This place is home to the Todas and other Dravidian tribes. The creation myths prevalent here assert their commitment to the landscape and the deity who is the protector and sustainer. The responsibility of protection and sustenance of these sacred spaces are passed on from one generation to the other as a divine inheritance. The Earth is a sacred space of spiritual nurturing.

Elements like food and water that nurture physically are powerful symbolisms that are integrated into rituals and customs across the world. The Eucharist is a perfect exemplar of the nurturing dimension of religious ecology. The bread and wine which are the gifts of the soil signify a deeper meaning of oneness and union with the divine. *Pongal* is a festival celebrated in South India. This harvest festival is a celebration of gratitude to the Sun God for natural resources and a bountiful yield of rice, sugarcane, turmeric, vegetables and other crops. This four-day long celebration includes a day called *Maattu Pongal* which is day to celebrate cows and other livestock for their role in agriculture and kinship. This point of convergence of nature and culture seasoned by rich nourishment is entailed by a sense of responsibility to protect, respect and nurture what nurtures mankind.

The final elemental dimension that is woven into the fabric of life is transformation and this paradigm is signified by fire, water and other forces of nature that can create, destroy and heal. Fire is a pivotal element in the worship and rituals of many religions and cultures. It signifies the presence of the divine, and has also been perceived as an element that facilitates interaction with the divine. Moses encountered God in the burning bush and this event finds significance in Islam, Christianity and Judaism. This encounter created a vision in Moses to deliver the people of Israel, destroyed his doubt and fear and eventually resulted in healing of the sore of slavery. From a relational dimension, fire and water are seen as elements that purge and mold strong relationships. The *Saptapadi* is a wedding ritual in India where the Hindu bride and groom walk around the fire of *vivahahomam* seven times exchanging vows and praying. Terry Tempest Williams recollects the beautiful wedding blessing her mother gave to keep her home and married life thrilling, vital and interesting. In a relationship, people should complement each other, not consume each other, she writes, echoing the wise and unwise use of fire. It is important for individuals to uphold her uniqueness and equipoise in a marriage. The nature of intimacy and a loving relationship is discretion and respect for each other's concerns.

The non-fictional works of Terry Tempest Williams reveal of deep sense of religious ecology and further reading of her works will promulgate further understanding of the principles of religious ecology and ecospirituality. Religious

ecology is an important strand that weaves together the web of life and the sixth sense of mankind. A conscious understanding of religious ecology as a part of worship will unleash an understanding of mankind's role and responsibility in conserving the fabric of life. A realization of the imprint of the creator in the created should be extended to interpersonal and human-Earth relationships to ensure peace and reworking, reforming and rekindling this fire. This is the key objective of religious ecology.

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## Feminine Masquerade: The Obscured Aspect of Gender Malice in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*

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### Abstract

Margaret Atwood has impudently voiced out the positioning of women in society through her proficiency in writing. One of her renowned works *Lady Oracle* highlights gender disparity and differences. Judith Butler's view on gender stereotypes goes parallel with the characters in the novel. The question is whether the performance of a gender constitutes their characteristics or whether the norms of society take an upper hand in deciding the role of gender. This paper alludes to finding out the aspects in which women were forced to succumb due to gender discrepancy.

The female body is alleged to be perfected by values and modifications of society, it is perceived as a reproductive, sensual and even treated as a commodity (Isabelle 2015). Woman has lost control over her body, it is highly conditioned majorly by men. The Western influence has affected the very thoughts of the human mind in bringing out perfection in the way they look. Role of the gender is completely constricted by norms of the society, the roles of men and women constituted by society steadily lead to the feminist school of thought. The subverting quality of men has made them superior whereas the female gender emerges from a sense of lack, a sense of absence. In order to be represented as a subject, one should be acknowledged as a subject, women are given the least position and demanded more. The aspect of the feminine Masquerade can be traced out in the works of Margaret Atwood.

Atwood has impudently enunciated the suppression of feminine identity and also regarding feminine "Masterquade" in her renowned work *Lady Oracle* that focuses primarily on the gender disparity and differences. Through her fictional characters, Atwood states the possibility that women try their best to fix themselves

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in a society regulated by men. Women become objectified and are culturally tamed to look presentable before the dominated gender. She carefully picks her protagonists who undergo the pressure of being and becoming “Woman”.

Atwood's impactful prose fiction considers the physical, social, and economic circumstances of women. It is apparent from her choice of themes that she contemplates human behavior, favors feminism, and revolts against materialism. Her feminity emphasizes on characters and the plot, Her renowned works are, *Edible Women* (1969), *Surfacing* (1972), *Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Cat's Eye* (1988), *Life Before Man* (1979), *Bodily Harm* (1981), *Blind Assassin* (2006), *Testaments* (2019), *Alias Grace* (1996), *Penelopiad* (2005), *The Heart Goes Last* (2015) etc. Judith Butler's view on gender stereotypes goes parallel with the ideas of Atwood and tends to unveil the idea that, women were tamed to become the “Other”. She stated that, “The Body has its invariably public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine. Given over from the start to the world of others, bearing their imprint, forced within the crucible of social life, the body is only later, and with some uncertainty, that to which I claim as my own. (Butler 2004).

*Lady Oracle* brings to the forefront three major ideas, primarily it highlights the gender dissimilarities. Joan Foster, the protagonist and a typist by profession, has writhed gender predispositions right from the beginning of her nuptial life. Subconsciously she was petrified of losing before her husband, arthur. Every time she had to attest herself best and had to wait for his approval, that added to her burdened life even more. Escapism was her only way out, she was trying to escape from her chaotic life, this was her only relief. “ I couldn't let Arthur go on controlling my life, especially at such distance” ( 24). Even when she had to live away from him, the very thought of him kept haunting her, she says, “It was fear, mostly (33).

Furthermore, there is a constant quest for identity throughout the novel, her plight to discover herself was highly challenging. Joan Riviere in *Womanliness as a Masquerade*, introduced the term feminine “Masquerade” other theorists like Luce Iringray, Amelia Jones, Laura Mulvey and Mary Anne Doane have contributed their ideas to the same. Doane has stated that “ the masquerade in flaunting feminity, hold it at a distance womanliness is a mask which can be worn or removed” (Doane 1982). Atwood's fiction *Lady Oracle* blurb states that, “From fat girl to thin, from red hair to mud brown, from London to Toronto, from Polish count to radical husband, from writer of romances to distinguished poet- Joan Foster is utterly confused by her life of multiple identities. She decides to escape to an Italian hill town to take stack of her life...”

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Joan had to switch her identity constantly because she was not satisfied easily with the people around her, in one or the other way she was enforced to tune in with the society. She alleged that she had to sway everyone to live a respectable life. Joan decided to change her entire identity to which she is not to do away with her practicality. Her complicated affiliations with her husband, her roommate and with couple of strangers, who later become close with her, made things worse for her. She could not handle this kind of pressure and decided to fake her own death.

Atwood has intoned against concepts regarding the perfection of the feminine physique and gallantly defies social concepts of perfecting the body to be accepted as a respectful individual in society. Women had to be pretentious to exhibit their true womanliness, they masked themselves to “become what they were expected to be. Iringray states that it is “ An alienated or false version of femininity arising among the women's awareness of the man's desire for her to be his other, Masquerade permits women to experience desire not in her own right but as the man's desire” (Iringray 1985). She voices out this state of functioning, and state of being through the voice of Joan Foster that,

...But if I described myself as charming and skinny, they would find the whole thing pathetic and grossly unfair. I knew this even when I was ten. If Desdemona was fat who would care whether or not Othello strangled her? Why is it that the girls Nazis torture on the covers of the Sleazier men's magazines are always good-looking? The effect would be quite different if they were overweight. Themen would quite different if they are over weight. The men would find it hilarious instead of immoral or sexually titillating. However, Plump unattractive women are just as likely to be tortured as thin ones... (52)

all along, women in most fairy tale stories and fiction, who played the part of the protagonist, are constantly depicted with corporal features that are perfect in nature. One good example from the Disney series is *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Ariel is rendered and presented before the reader as a stunning woman! On the other hand, Ursula has short hair, hard voice, plume figure and her horrible make up became an icon of unwomanliness, characteristics of a villain and not a lady. Body goes through the process of becoming, unbecoming and rebecoming, where the identity become a fabricated process. Atwood tries to bring out the corporeality in *Lady Oracle* stating that the body is the embedded quality in nature. The embedded embodiment is the inside version of self, that reflects the outer being and alters the extended embodiment. The factors that affect the physicality of women is brought

into the extended embodiment, where the influence of the culture, the norms of the gender and the pressure of accomplishing what is expected from a women do impact them in a broader sense. Joan Foster states that, "... whereas that of woman is of the body. what is a mystery but a thing which is remaining hidden? It is more easy to uncover the body than it is in the mind. For this reason, bald man is not looked upon as an unnatural horror, but a bald woman is (166).

The patriarchal influence over the petit decisions taken by women impact the whole performance. Joan foster had to work under pressure, she had to hide her passion for typing from her husband because she knew that he will never approve her talent. She began pursuing her passion in his absence. Butler claims that gender is a mere act and it undergoes repetition, the repetition of act becomes ritualized, then it results in the illusion of stability. According to her, gender becomes a construct, difference in the gender is understood in the biological sense and it cannot be predetermined by the social structures. When restrained by the societal norms, it loses its individuality and uniqueness, moreover gender cannot be imposed, rather it could be understood.

Joan Foster was commodified right from the beginning of her relationship, her own desires were subdued by the opinion of the others. Judith Butler's idea of reification reflects the nuances of the real trouble in the gender, when a particular thing is commodified and treated as a mere product diminishing the actual functionality and originality it is termed to be reification. Women are reified and are forced to succumb to the existing regulations. Butler interprets the perception of body as site, activity and play and continues to convince the readers that the body is constantly conditioned. It gradually inculcates, transforms, transmutes and alters to what it is expected to become. One unique process that it undergoes is metamorphosis, the change. One has to undergo the changes to become a utility or their presence would not matter at all.

Butler argues that this is all a play, in other words she is affirming that the whole thing, regarding the gender roles are ingeniously crafted staged and it is also practiced. What could be done and what could not be done is examined by the physical, emotional and socially stability of an individual, which rationally cannot be justified beforehand. When the gender roles are fixed with boundaries, it is naturally subjected to very phenomenon of conquest. Every act of naturalization is an act of internalization, gender is based on the performances, it is about doing something or its doing an activity. This is understood in the lens of feminine "Masquerade", the pretending consciousness of women to become a commodified product for men,

where more importance is given to diet and fashioning. This eventually becomes the requiring criterion to be regarded as attractive and enthralling. 'Numerous industries – diet, food, style, cosmetic surgery, pharmaceutical and media – represent bodies as being about performance, fabrication and display and make women think that their bodies are sites for (re)construction and improvement. Collectively that leaves one with sense that our bodies' capacities are limited only by our purse and determination. (Orbach 2009).

Fragmented ideas such as feminine roles, feminine Masquerade, reification could be traced out in the various works of Atwood; especially, her fiction *Lady Oracle* stands apart as it unveils the quest and the longing of becoming the 'Other'. Atwood stalwartly underlines the aspect of feminine subjugation in the bases of ethnic medians, acclimatizing cognizance and the needful, body shaming and compulsory notion of being a woman.

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## Cultural Hegemony in George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*

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### Abstract

*The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (1971) is a play that expresses the plight of a young Canadian named Rita Joe, who leaves her reservation and comes to the city of Vancouver with constructive hopes and aspirations. George Ryga, the Canadian playwright has used the play as a tool to portray the struggles faced by the native Canadians. This paper aims to show how cultural hegemony plays a crucial role in marginalising Rita and making her feel alienated. Cultural hegemony refers to the domination or influence of people in power. Cultural hegemony is the concept developed by an Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci out of Karl Marx's theory, the theory puts forth the idea of dominant ideologies followed in a society reflect the beliefs and interests of the ruling class people. In *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, cultural hegemony destructs the life of Rita through various socio- political factors like marginalisation, status quo, cultural assimilation and colonisation. George Ryga is often considered as a controversial playwright because his plays express the unjust happenings in the Canadian society, and most probably his works oppose the power and domination of the white settlers. The life of Rita and her family members is ruined and spoiled by the people in power. *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* is the reflection of lives of native Canadian women who are abused and subjugated by the white people in power. This paper aims to show how cultural hegemony can make the indigenous people of a nation to lose their identity and culture.

**Key Words:** Cultural hegemony, Status quo, Cultural assimilation, Power, Marginalisation.

*The question of hegemony is always the question of a new cultural order.*

(Stuart Hall)

George Ryga is a Canadian playwright, novelist, actor and short story writer, his works explore the experience of indigenous people in Canada. Denial of basic rights, poverty, violence against women, unemployment, poor economic

status, and unequal access to basic resources are the major conflicts in his works. His works reflect the plight faced by the indigenous people in Canada. The play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* is about a young woman named Rita, who leaves her reservation and comes to the city of Vancouver with hopes and aspiration, but unfortunately Rita is misunderstood and degraded in the city. Rita is tried for vagrancy and prostitution, false blame is placed on Rita, she is put in prison, and at last a group of murderers kill Rita. White people's prejudiced opinions on indigenous people are the major reason for the devastation of Rita's life. Cultural hegemony is the major cause for the execution and alienation of the native or the indigenous people. Cultural hegemony is a concept developed by an Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, which refers to domination of people with power and wealth, it allows a group of people in power to overrule the minority and influence their thoughts and emotions. In *The Ecstasy of Rita*, the dominance of white people's rule leads to the subjugation of the native people and this aspect ruins Rita's life.

Canadian Whites' ignorance towards the native Canadians is because the white people consider themselves to be superior and they establish the fact of themselves being the rule makers and the rule breakers. In *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, white people have their own standards of judging people and they make sure that their ideas, norms, values and expectations are followed by the native Canadians, and this concept of cultural hegemony makes the indigenous people to lose their identity.

Cultural Hegemony uses institutions such as religion and education to reproduce or reframe the social structure of a country, in the play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, religion and education are used as major tools to influence the ideologies of the native people. Indigenous people most probably accept the policies of the white settlers, but when one or two from the indigenous community oppose the ruling class or people in power, they are crushed down. Rita is a bold girl who strongly stood for her culture and tradition, she refused to melt herself into the melting pot, and this action of Rita is not accepted by the white people, and this bold attitude of Rita towards the white people ruins her life.

Cultural hegemony is reflected in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* through several socio political factors like Cultural Assimilation, Status Quo, Marginalisation, and Colonisation. Cultural assimilation is a process through which individuals or a group of people belonging to different cultures are absorbed into the dominant culture. Miss Donohue, Rita's school teacher is a white woman; she pressures Rita to get absorbed into the dominant culture. Miss Donohue says, "You put copper and tin into

melting pot and out comes bronze...it's the same with people" (Ryga 66). Miss Donohue blames Rita for expressing her own ideas and thoughts, she denies individual freedom for Rita. Miss Donohue also accuses Rita for her disobedience and lack of moral conduct. Rita is discriminated by her teacher in terms of her culture and ethnicity. Miss Donohue uses harsh words towards Rita, she says, "Arguing ... always trying to upset me and in grade four...I saw it then... pawing the ground for men like a bitch" (Ryga 66-67). Miss Donohue again and again falsely accuses Rita for her denial to assimilate into culture of the white people. The Magistrate is a white man and he fails to hear the words of Rita. He never tries to understand Rita, he blames Rita for being extraordinary, implying she addresses only to her traditional culture. He also insists on the fact that the one's freedom is based on the laws framed by the people in power. The real freedom is not the freedom enjoyed by the native people, but the freedom with so many restrictions formulated by the white Canadians. Rita is denied of her freedom of speech and expression, she is not ready to get absorbed into the lifestyle of the oppressor.

The next factor is status quo, it means the existing order of things; present customs, practices and power relations. In *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, Ryga has shown how people in authority, the dominant suppress the people of low social strata the minority community. Jaime Paul Rita's friend, also resists dominance or supremacy of white people. Paul ridicules Rita's father, David Joe by terming him an Indian or native Canadian liked by the white man David Joe's nature of accepting various aspects of colonization and the ideology of the ruling class is the main reason behind Jaime Paul's ridiculing comment. People in power white Canadians, and they try to make them to do anything according to their wishes. Rita's life and her destiny is decided by the people in power and this aspect represents the negative side of cultural hegemony.

The most prominent factor of cultural hegemony is marginalisation. Marginalisation means to treat a group of people to be insignificant moving them to periphery. In *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, Rita is marginalised in various places and circumstances by different people. Rita Joe is arrested by two policemen, she is falsely accused and she is brought to the court. The white Magistrate asks, "Who is she? Can she speak English?" (Ryga 16). The Magistrate is not ready to accept the nativity of Rita, he never tries to listen to Rita; when Rita tries to express her sorrows and the reason behind the false accusation, no one in the court pays attention to her. Magistrate's impatience towards Rita repeatedly pulls her back in the proceedings of the court as documentary evidences drawn from multiple disciplines makes the accusation even more stronger. Rita Joe's criminality constitutes a denial of her own voice and her protesting nature cannot bear the stamp of the official code of law.

In the work place, Rita is marginalised by her white boss. Rita's boss tries to corner her and he falsely accuses Rita of stealing money from the workplace. When Rita voices her protest against the institution of religion and again she is marginalised by Father Andrew. Rita recalls her uncle's story about the spread of the Christianity among the native Canadian tribes. European colonizers used religion as a driving force to establish their rule in Canada, later they gave the Bible to the native Canadians and confiscated their land. Cultural hegemony uses religion and education as the most important elements to establish their domineering notions, and this aspect is predominant in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*.

Father Andrew tries his level best in converting Rita to Christianity. He meets Rita in the prison and offers consolation, saying, "I worry about you... I baptized you..." (Ryga 83). These lines prove how he uses religion as a weapon to establish his culture and values among the indigenous people. Rita retaliates to Father Andrew, and she mocks at him. "You go to Hell... Go tell your God... when you see him... Tell him about Rita Joe an' what they done to her! Tell him about yourself too... That you are not very good enough for me... Tell him that!" (Ryga 47). Rita is bold enough to reject the theological concept of sin, redemption, and suffering. Father Andrew tries to persuade Rita by putting forth the idea that religion can bring peace and solace, but Rita never accepts it. Rita despises the institutionalized discourses which marginalises her and erases her identity.

Marginalisation takes place in the social centre, Mr. Homer is an English man who runs a charity centre for the native Indians. He pretends as if he tries to help the indigenous people, but in reality he tries to infantilize them. He aims to fascinate them, and make them accept the culture of the white people. His aim is to make indigenous people get boiled down into the melting pot. Mr Homer uses the suffering of the indigenous people to achieve his goals and aspirations. In the court, during the trial he falsifies the image of Rita by accusing her that she came to slap him when in reality she didn't want to. Like Miss Donohue, he blames Rita in the court. The bitter reality is that no one is ready to support or to voice against the injustice that happened to Rita.

Colonisation acts as another important attribute of cultural hegemony. Mostly people who exercise control over the indigenous people are the colonizers. Colonizers have their own stereotypes and prejudices against the indigenous people. Rita Joe expresses her pain of being not understood by the magistrate because of his prejudiced opinions. The Magistrate asks Rita, what she wants from him, but Rita never says anything, Rita has already decided that conveying her problems or her point of view to the Magistrate is pointless.

In numerous circumstances, cultural hegemony is seen in its various forms both directly and indirectly in ruining Rita's life. Ryga's vision in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* expects that the white people be broad minded and allow the indigenous people to lead a happy and peaceful life. Ryga strongly states that indigenous people must be treated as human beings and they should receive all the basic rights. Cultural hegemony has the power to fool the marginalised or the minority group of a society or country, and this can snatch one's individual freedom and it benefits only the people of the ruling class. It eradicates humanism, but humanism is a key mantra to establish unity and accept people as they are. This paper puts forth the idea of accepting everyone's culture, and establishing the salad bowl society replacing the melting pot society.

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## Exploring Stylistic Nuances in Literary and Musical Artistry

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### Abstract

This research paper delves into the intricate world of comparative stylistic analysis by juxtaposing the contemporary song “Runaway” by Aurora with select poems of Emily Dickinson. Texts chosen for analysis explore the theme of transcendence and escape. While Aurora’s song may focus on escaping the mundane or seeking freedom, Dickinson’s poems delve into the idea of transcending life into the afterlife. Through a comprehensive examination of linguistic features, structural elements, and thematic nuances, the study aims to unravel the distinct stylistic choices employed by these two artists across different temporal and artistic contexts. By exploring the convergence and divergence of their literary techniques, this analysis seeks to illuminate the evolving nature of poetic expression and the enduring threads that connect different forms of artistic communication.

Stylistics, as a field of study, unveils the intricate tapestry of language and artistic expression within various texts, providing a lens through which a researcher can dissect and appreciate the nuances that shape meaning and evoke emotions. This analytical approach extends beyond the traditional realm of literature, encompassing the rich terrain of songwriting. In this comparative study, the researcher will delve into the stylistic elements embedded in the poems “Because I could not stop for Death” and “I heard a Fly buzz – when I died” by Emily Dickinson, a luminary poet of the 19th century, and the ethereal lyric to “Runaway” a song by Aurora, a contemporary songwriter with a penchant for atmospheric storytelling.

Stylistics, at its core, examines the choices artists make in language and form, unravelling the layers that contribute to the overall aesthetic experience. By applying stylistic analysis, one can gain insights into the deliberate selection of words, structures, and devices that authors employ to convey meaning, evoke emotions, and establish a unique voice. Beyond literature, this branch of linguistics extends its hold to analyse diverse forms of artistic expression, including lyric writing.

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Emily Dickinson, a recluse poet from the 19th century, left an indelible mark on American literature with her enigmatic verses. Her poems, often characterized by brevity and depth, explore themes of love, mortality, and the human spirit. This study will uncover how her stylistic choices contribute to the timeless resonance of her works. In tandem, it will explore the realm of contemporary music with Aurora, a Norwegian singer-songwriter celebrated for her haunting vocals and atmospheric compositions. Focused on the song "Runaway" the analysis transcends the traditional boundaries of literary texts seeking to draw attention to Aurora's unique stylistic signature, inviting parallels and distinctions with the poetic artistry of Emily Dickinson.

By bridging the realms of literature and music through stylistic analysis, this study endeavours to elucidate the common threads that weave through different forms of artistic expression, offering a nuanced understanding of the timeless power inherent in language. A comparative stylistic analysis of the select texts will be conducted to shed light on the respects in which the two artists converge and diverge. It would subsequently seek to emphasise the point that albeit the difference in medium of expression, language works to seek attention to itself, and literariness is not just limited to use in literature. Similar to literature, other media which could include journalistic writing, advertisement copywriting, even everyday expression used by any avid user of language is bound to contain elements that are fundamentally regarded to be exclusive to poetry. This also reiterates the notion that linguistic utterances are always characterised by metaphors, irrespective of the genre.

Drawing attention to points of convergence, the analysis reveals commonalities that are oft overlooked. The first device that is observed to be common to the texts is extended metaphor. The entire poem "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" is an extended metaphor for the journey from life to death. Death is personified as a courteous chauffeur, as follows, "Because I Could Not Stop for Death. He kindly stopped for me" (1-2) and the carriage ride represents the passage of life. Dickinson here employs the metaphor of a carriage journey as an allegory for life and death. While Aurora's metaphorical 'runaway' journey, explores themes of escape and transcendence, which can be detected in the lines "And I was runnin' far away / Would I run off the world someday? / Nobody knows, nobody knows" (9-11).

Examining imagery and symbolism it is noted that vivid imagery and symbolism are prevalent in chosen texts. Dickinson uses visual and symbolic elements like the setting sun and the fly, notice how visual imagery is prevalent, with descriptions of passing by a school, fields, and the setting sun in the following lines

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We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess – in the Ring –  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
We passed the Setting Sun –  
Or rather – He passed Us – (9-13)

These images create a vivid backdrop for the metaphoric journey. The setting sun and the passing of the school symbolize the stages of life. The house at the end, 'A Swelling of the Ground,' symbolizes the final resting place.

While Aurora crafts atmospheric imagery of 'dancing in the rain,' 'painting a picture,' 'climbing a tree' among others to convey emotional states and the desire for escape through the lines,

And I was dancing in the rain  
I felt alive and I can't complain  
But no, take me home  
Take me home where I belong  
got no other place to go (27-31)

On a thematic plane, both writers introduce an underlying tension and disruption. In Dickinson's poems, tension arises from the contrast between expectations of death and the intrusion of the ordinary (the fly)

I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –  
The Stillness in the Room  
Was like the Stillness in the Air –  
Between the Heaves of Storm – (1-4)

The poem begins with an unsettling image of a fly buzzing at the moment of the speaker's death, disrupting the traditional peacefulness associated with dying. Dickinson contrasts the stillness in the room with the buzzing fly, creating a tension between the expected calm of death and the intrusion of the ordinary. The fly serves as a symbol of the mundane and the inevitable intrusion of the ordinary into the extraordinary moment of death. The failing windows symbolize the closing of the sensory experience.

In Aurora's lyric, the tension is created through the mysterious face vanishing from the hands of the narrator.

I was listening to the ocean  
I saw a face in the sand  
But when I picked it up  
Then it vanished away from my hands, down(1-4)

The face in the sand serves as a metaphor, potentially symbolizing elusive or transient moments. The disappearance of the face when picked up may signify the fleeting nature of certain experiences or memories.

Divergences are seen where Dickinson's poems often evoke a contemplative and reflective tone, examining profound themes with a sense of inevitability, Aurora's lyric tends to create an ethereal atmosphere, focusing on emotions and experiences associated with the desire for escape. With respect to narrative structure, Dickinson's poems follow a more traditional narrative structure, unfolding as a journey with a beginning, middle, and end. On the contrary, Aurora's adopts a more abstract and nonlinear narrative structure, weaving an emotional tapestry rather than a linear storyline.

In addition, Dickinson's poems exhibit a structured rhyme and meter, contributing to a measured and deliberate cadence. On the other hand, Aurora's lyric employs a more fluid and atmospheric rhythm, with variations in tempo and a less rigid rhyme scheme. Likewise, even when the select texts have the underlying theme of transcendence and escape, Dickinson explores themes of life, death, and the afterlife with a focus on the human condition, but Aurora centres on themes of escape, longing, and the transient nature of experiences.

As a way of linguistic inquiry conducting such comparative stylistic analyses unveil the distinct voices of revered poets and contemporary songwriters and underscore the timeless power of language and melody to evoke emotions and provoke contemplation. This exploration transcends the boundaries of literature and music, revealing the interconnectedness of diverse forms of artistic expression. Together, these differences and similarities offer a rich tapestry for a comparative stylistic analysis, showcasing the versatility of stylistic elements across different forms of artistic expression. Such linguistic studies open portals to understanding the universal themes that resonate across cultures and epochs, fostering a deeper appreciation for the profound impact that both literature and music hold on the human soul.

Standing at the intersection of poetic verses and melodic refrains, through this stylistic analysis the research paper reaffirms the enduring beauty that emerges when language aids in the process of transcending the boundaries of time and form.

Through the lens of stylistics, one embarks on a perpetual exploration of the boundless wonders that art, in its myriad forms, continues to unveil to the ever curious and receptive human spirit.

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## Theme of Liberation and Freedom in Lord Byron's "The Prisoner of Chillon" and Bharathiyar's "Liberation - Little Sparrow" - A Comparative Study

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### Abstract

Comparative Literature aids us to transcend beyond boundaries and erase the borderlines while studying the literary works, so one could get to know the best of not only two worlds (literature) but many. The paper aims to do the same by comparing Lord Byron, one of the younger Romantic poets who is applauded for his uniqueness, with Bharathiyar, the modern Tamil poet who is considered as one of the greatest Tamil poets of all time. It is an attempt at understanding the usage of themes of liberation and freedom handled by Byron and Bharathiyar in the poems "The Prisoner of Chillon" and "Liberation and Little Sparrow" respectively, using thematology. Thematology, a method in comparative literature, studies themes present in two or more works.

**Key Words :** Comparative literature; Thematology; Themes of Liberty and Freedom.

"Comparative literature involves the study of texts across cultures, that it is interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space", defines Susan Bassnett in her work *Comparative Literature A Critical Introduction* (Bassnett 1). Comparative literature is the study in which one can transcend the geographical and cultural border and view the literary works of the world under one roof, which is why Johann Wolfgang Goethe termed it as 'Weltliteratur' meaning World Literature. Thematology, a component of comparative literature, is the study of themes present in two or more works.

Harry Levine, an American critic, coined the word 'Thematology' or 'Thematics'. It studies the literary works of different authors of different literary circles by concerning the theme present in it ("Thematology in Comparative Literature"). Likewise, this study aims to compare the two poems *The Prisoner of Chillon and Liberation - Little Sparrow* by Lord Byron and Bharathiyar respectively, by relating the themes of Liberation and Freedom present in it.

The French Revolution inspired people to a large extent. The Romantic poets particularly were greatly influenced by the French Revolution. Not only the celebration of nature was prevalent with them, but the republican and democratic ideas were also present in their poetical works. In *English Poetry of the Romantic Period*, J. R. Watson says, "The Romantic poet's interest in nature and in dreams is balanced by an equally strong interest in the social and political state of the world around them, and in the effect of this upon themselves as human beings" (Watson, 67). While explaining about Lord Byron, he says, "he is a crusader and a hero, a fighter in the cause of truth and justice," (Watson, 192). It is evident that Byron advocates against the errors of all human institutions. This is greatly evident in the poem *The Prisoner of Chillon* which the paper aims to study, in which Byron drew the picture of a prisoner named Bonnivard who was imprisoned for the tenets of his father. Byron tried to picture Bonnivard who lost everything, from his brothers to his youth, and the man who could not enjoy his freedom (Watson, 205). Byron was against the bondage of an innocent man and also the late judgement of releasing him after the prisoner got fed up with the world by being in the jail all his life and did not know what to do with his freedom.

Bharathiyar is acclaimed for his poetry of independence, at a time in which some of the other Tamil poets were writing eulogises to praise their patrons to gain money. Bharathiyar not only opposed but refrained himself from doing so. He wrote poems about patriotism that contained fierce poetic lines that gathered the Indian people together and inspired them to fight against the British by inducing their patriotic feelings. He became the voice which vehemently tried to eradicate social evils like casteism, and superstitions (Viswanathan, 333-34). This paper studies his poem, *Liberation - Little Sparrow*, which denotes Bharathiyar's eagerness to live in free India as a little sparrow.

### **The Hopeless and the Hopeful Freedom**

The theme of freedom and liberation is handled differently by both Byron and Bharathiyar. Bonnivard the sorrowful man in the poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*, imprisoned because of the ideologies of his father; the government had burnt his father at stake. He lost three brothers before and lost the other three in the jail right before his eyes. Having been in prison for long years, he forgot the outer world completely. So he could not know what to do with his new freedom: "At last men came to set me free: I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where; It was at length the same to me, Fetter'd or fetterless to be," (369-373).

This shows the hopelessness that Bonnivard felt about freedom, which Byron highlighted in the poem. But in contrast to that, in Bharathiyar's poem *Liberation - Little Sparrow*, he wants the Indian citizens to be as free as a little sparrow after the Indian Independence. After freedom, one can go wherever they want to go and whatever they want to do like a sparrow which flies towards all eight directions and stays happy with their family. "Converse felicity with the she- sparrow, in exultation;/ Free of affliction, build a nest/ Nurture the hatchling that emerges from the egg and rejoice,/ First feed the youngling, engulf in love" (7-10).

This showcases Bharathiyar's hopeful dream of the state of India after Independence. Byron points out the hopeless freedom of Bonnivard whereas Bharathiyar anticipates the hopeful freedom of India. It indicates the different usage of the same theme of freedom and liberation by those two poets.

### **Results of the Bondage**

In "The Prisoner of Chillon" Bonnivard was imprisoned with his brothers, as people who loved to be trodden, they couldn't stay in the same place for a long time, which killed the two brothers and took the soulfulness from Bonnivard. For which, he became numb, silent and lifeless (Hall, 119). The bondage destroyed the soul of Bonnivard completely. He did not even know what to do with his freedom, when he heard about his release: "There were no stars, no earth, no time,/ No check, no change, no good, no crime/ But silence, and a stirless breath/ ... /Blind boundless, mute, and motionless!" (245-248).

Here bondage crumbles the life and soul of Bonnivard. But, in Bharathiyar's "Liberation - Little Sparrow", he paints a positive picture of India after independence. India was under the rule of British colonialism when the poem was written, Bharathiyar wants the Indian people to break out of their bondages, and come out of their colonised mindset and fight for freedom and as a result they can be free as little sparrows. "Stay Liberated/ Like this little sparrow/ In eight directions, it flies and roams" (1-3).

### **The Symbol of Bird**

As poets of the Romantic age, either young or old, everyone celebrated nature, wrote poetry about nature and used images of nature in their poems. The bird as an image and symbol was quite often found in Romantic poetry, for example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his famous ballad "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", used Albatross, the sea bird, which was considered as a good omen to the sailors. Whereas, John Keats wrote a poem on the singing bird, Nightingale called, "Ode to the Nightingale". Likewise, Lord Byron in this poem, used the symbol of a bird. While

Bonnivard was in the prison, he heard the song of the bird, which came near his cell and sang a melody. "A lovely bird, with azure wings,/And song that said a thousand thing and seemed to say them all for me!" (lines 266-268). This bird's song made him come back to life, he even thought that the bird was his brother's soul from heaven, but as the bird flew away, he went back to his bloomy self. The bird's song is the temporary relief and a hope which Bonnivard had in the prison, but he failed to sustain that within himself forever. "For he would never thus have flown—/And left me twice so doubly lone,—/Lone as the corpse within its shroud," (lines 291-293). The bird's song and Bonnivard's reaction to it, is a natural phenomenon which were the subjects of the investigation in thematology mentioned by S. S. Prawer in the chapter "Themes and Prefigurations" in *Comparative Literary Studies* (Prawer, 99). In Liberation - "Little Sparrow" poem by Bharathiyar, the title itself mentions the bird. In this poem, Bharathiyar compares the sparrow with that of an Indian after independence. Here, the sparrow is the Indian who will fly in eight directions, who will be happy with his partner and his offspring, who will sing songs freely and live a happy life after the liberation from colonial rule. In "Prisoner of Chillon", the bird denotes the partial freedom or liberation to Bonnivard in years of solitude, unlike in Liberation - Little Sparrow, the bird indicates the Indian's life of complete freedom and liberation from the long bondage of colonial rule.

### **On a Comparative Plane:**

By studying these two poems, it is found that the same theme of liberation is handled differently by two different poets of two different literatures. In "Prisoner of Chillon", by describing the imprisonment life of Bonnivard, Byron managed to bring hopelessness of Bonnivard towards freedom and liberation. The years of bondage damaged the man, which means the lifeless and soul - crushed Bonnivard, could only gain a temporary relief through his encounter with the bird. On the other hand, in *Liberation - Little Sparrow*, through comparing the little sparrow with that of an Indian after independence, Bharathiyar highlights the hopeful freedom life of Indians after independence. The colonial bondage caused the Indians to burst out and fight for their freedom and the symbol of little sparrow is the Indian who enjoys his long - awaited freedom after British rule. While Byron emphasised the theme of freedom and liberation from Bonnivard's perspective that is "hopeless", 'lifeless' and 'destroyed by bondage', Bharathiyar brought out the theme of freedom and liberation from the perspective of an Indian who yearns for freedom and his life after independence from the colonial rule. As mentioned earlier, comparative literature erases boundaries and brings out the best of two or more literature. This paper attempted to do a comparative study of Lord Byron, the younger romantic from

English Literature and Bharathiyar, the modern poet from Tamil Literature, through which the paper aims to aid both the literary circles and make them get introduced to the experts from others under one roof.

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## Posthuman Mercenary and Terrorism in *Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw*

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### Abstract

Terrorism is one of the main threats that the nations of the world encounter and counter strikes to wipe it off completely. It is the intentional, unlawful, annihilating functions of an organized group or an individual with the purpose to meet their demands and ideologies against any government or organization resulting in the killing of innocent people. The world has witnessed various levels and developments of terrorism over time in history. Right from bombings and open gunfire on civilians in public places, the murdering of political leaders, hijacking flights to the 9/11 attack, terrorists and terrorism have come into a new phase after all the counter measures taken by the anti-terrorism forces of different countries. As new technologies are developed, computers and artificial intelligence start to dominate the twenty-first century, terrorism has also had a transmogrifying evolution into 'Posthuman Terrorism'. It is one of the predominant themes in science fiction literature, movies, and TV series in the twenty-first century. In this paper, the researcher tries to place and highlight posthuman terrorism under the genre of 'Posthuman Gothic' which interconnects modern gothic with posthuman ideologies and the possibility of transhumanist-posthuman 'other' and also the evolution of gothic posthuman androids with consciousness to be a threat for the human identity, survival, and existence in the movie, *Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw* (2019).

**Key Words:** Posthuman, Gothic, Cyborg, Transhumanism, Mind uploading, Transfer Consciousness, Posthuman Other, Terrorism

*Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw* (2019) is one of the action movies in the Fast and Furious series. Tracing back the development of this movie series' plot structure from its first part, *The Fast and the Furious* released in 2001, it started with a simple plot involving crime, action, illegal rash street racing, drugs, and high-speed heists. Now, it has moved on to a posthuman level plot with world-ending consequences by technology and its negative uses in *Fast and Furious Presetns:*

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*Hobbs and Shaw*. In the movie, Luke Hobbs is an ex-DSS (Diplomatic Security Service) law enforcement agent and Deckard Shaw is a former British army officer who has turned into a high-class thief and mercenary. It is around these two characters the plot revolves. The two opposing characters were put together to work on and solve a situation to save millions of lives on Earth. Along with them joins Hattie Shaw, sister of Deckard Shaw, who happens to be an MI6 agent or Secret Intelligence Service agent of the United Kingdom.

When the movie begins the audience could find Hattie along with her team mates engaged in an operation to retrieve a deadly virus that has the ability, if spread, to kill almost the entire population of the world. There is another private mercenary team of a transhumanist terrorist organization named "Eteon" which also tried to steal the virus, a bio-threat that could alter humanity forever. This mission of Eteon is to secure the virus which promises to improve humanity by merging capable humans with machines. Eteon's team is led by Brixton, a posthuman mercenary, a transhumanist-posthuman, with enhanced physical capacities and bodily modifications with the help of advanced technologies. Using these kinds of bio-engineered humans with the purpose of destroying weak humans to create a half-human and half-machine hybrid or cyborg is a kind of posthuman terrorism that can be seen in the movie. It is a form of terrorism that goes beyond human boundaries and capabilities with advanced transhumanist mercenaries and technologies with intentional, unlawful, and annihilating aim against the human race.

Posthuman terrorism intermixes posthuman ideologies with terrorism. It highlights how posthuman technologies are wrongly or negatively used for terrorist activities like bombing, killing, and threatening of humanity. That is what can be seen in the movie. Eteon is a terrorist organization, which gives cybernetic implants to its mercenaries, builds head-up displays into their eyes, has biometric weapons, and is led by a shadowy figure. We hear only the mechanical radio voice of Eteon's head all through the movie. Although the identity of the leader or the voice is theorised to be the father of Hobbs, who left Hobbs and his brothers when they were children and came back when they were adults only to make use of them for his unlawful activities and whom Hobbs turned him to police later. There are also possibilities that the voice can also be an artificial intelligence taking up the world. So, in this movie terrorism has moved onto the posthuman level. It involves bioengineered humans doing unlawful and terrorist activities which is a threat to the very human existence and survival.

In the movie, the researcher finds Brixton as the first product of this posthuman terrorism. He was already killed by Deckard Shaw in the previous *Fast and Furious* movie. He has been brought back to life by Eteon with the help of advanced technologies. His consciousness has been retrieved from his dead body and uploaded into a synthetic built artificial body. This process of uploading or transferring human consciousness into an artificial body to bring back the human alive or into a more advanced form is called 'Mind Uploading'. Mind Uploading is one of the characteristics of Transhumanism which tries to enhance human bodily abilities, capabilities, and life even to the extent of immortality.

Transhumanism is one of the emerging critical posthuman theories which propound that technology can help human beings to transcend their biological, physical, and intellectual limitations. The term 'Transhumanism' was first coined by Julian Huxley in his book, *New Bottles for New Wine*. He writes: "The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself – not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way, but in its entirety, as humanity. We need a name for this new belief. Perhaps transhumanism will serve: man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature" (Huxley, 17). Later, the meaning of transhumanism changed with the other transhumanist theorists like Fereidoun M. Esfandairy, Natasha Vita-More, and Robert Ettinger and their works. Now, at present, The World Transhumanist Association (WTA) defines transhumanism as "the intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities" (Transhumanism - Humanity+n.d.). So, it can be understood that transhumanism affirms the radical transformation of human beings' biological and intellectual capabilities and social conditions with the help of technology. It aims to enhance human characteristics, identity, and life from a very basic level that brings about a life form with completely different characteristics to be called as the posthuman. This posthuman can also be called a Transhumanist-posthuman. This is the type of Posthuman the researcher identifies in Brixton in the movie. But transhumanism is a techno-utopian discourse that tries to enhance and uplift human biological, social, and environmental conditions. Here, in the movie, Brixton can be seen as the negative result of transhumanism. It shows how men can use advanced technologies for the individual and collective benefits of a particular group. In the movie, Brixton is dead but brought back to life. He has superpowers beyond human abilities so that he accesses advanced technologies.

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He is stronger, quicker, and faster than Hobbs and Shaw in the movie. He has an artificial body, cybernetic implants, and biometric weapons, built-up displays in his eyes which help him to calculate his enemy's weakness, power, speed, and probable attack. At a point in time, it was impossible for Hobbs and Shaw to defeat him until they found out that they have to work together to fight this one Superhuman, a transhumanist-posthuman.

So, it should be understood that posthuman is not just a by-product of Posthumanist critical theory alone. We can also find posthuman under Transhumanist critical theory. In fact, posthuman can be classified into three types: Posthuman, Transhumanist-Posthuman, and Post-human. The first posthuman the researcher has mentioned is the evolutionary posthuman of the critical posthumanism which Rosi Braidotti discusses in her book, *The Posthuman*. This posthuman can be a human evolving into a posthuman, a machine becoming posthuman, an animal becoming posthuman and even Earth becoming posthuman. The posthuman here may replace 'the human' rather than one for a radically, biologically, physically enhanced human. The second type of posthuman is the transhumanist-posthuman that the researcher has discussed in the previous paragraph. The third type of posthuman is medical and scientific experiments like zombies, vampires, android robots with consciousness and artificial intelligence.

The researcher identifies a completely new form of terrorism as Posthuman Terrorism in the movie. The objective of the terrorist mission is to steal a virus which, if spread, would kill all human beings and after their death, Eteon will make the better human beings into transhumanist-posthuman beings by implanting artificial limbs, armor or even uploading their minds or consciousness into a synthetic body with a view of creating a posthuman future for human beings. Eteon believes that it tries to create this technologically advanced Posthuman future for the betterment and immortality of humanity. But, as every terrorist organization has this kind of pseudo, false ideology at its root, it is Eteon's mistaken terrorist ideology. Eteon firmly believing in this ideology is even ready to completely annihilate the human race, i.e. its old trace and identity from Earth.

Finally, posthuman terrorism can be brought under the genre "Posthuman Gothic". Posthuman Gothic is one of the recent emerging areas of research in the twenty-first century. It explores the different ways in which posthuman thought interconnects with gothic themes, characteristics, and settings. It is concerned with humanity's anxiety over our technological and biomedical experiments and their capability to alter our perceptions of what it means to be a human. It also revolves

around human beings' fear of becoming the 'Posthuman Other'. Furthermore, it explores the scientific and technological developments on cyborgs, android robots, Frankensteinian creatures, vampires, zombies, and bioengineered transhumans in a gothic environment which gives a scary, possible posthuman future. This posthuman future may or may not include the human in it or alter the human identity. This is exactly what the researcher sees in the movie. Michael Sean Bolton in his research article titled "Monstrous Machinery: Defining Posthuman Gothic" writes:

Sources of fear in the Posthuman Gothic are not solely external, but also internal . . . In Posthuman Gothic works, the terror of the threat from outside integrates with the horror of the threat from inside. While a sense of terror arises from the external fear of being transformed into a machine-creature, a sense of horror emerges from the internal dread that the technological other already inhabits the human subject, that the subject is betrayed from within. The monstrosity of these interfaces has as much to do with the human component as with the technological. (Bolton 05)

Next, Anya Heise-Von der Lippe in her article "Posthuman Gothic" defines and discusses Posthuman Gothic. She writes:

Humanity's relationship with uncanny machineries and man-made monstrous others is a key element of the Gothic mode, which has long been fascinated with the more liminal states and involvements of the human. Posthuman Gothic texts shift these concerns (and fears) towards questions of (human) identity constructions. By aestheticizing the uncanniness of the automation – the almost-but-not-quite human cyborg or the abject, biotech human- animal hybrid – posthuman Gothic texts not only draw attention to the many ways in which these processes can and will go wrong, but they also highlight the instability and ultimate unsustainability of our most basic ontological category- the human – along with the essential ethical and epistemological paradigms we derive from it. (Lippe Ch. 15)

So, the very alteration of the human body that alters the human identity with uncanny machines through technology is seen as the gothic within the posthuman gothic genre. Brixton, a human-machine hybrid, is a technologically enhanced gothic posthuman who kills other humans in the movie. The posthuman gothic happens in two ways in the movie. First, is when Brixton as a posthuman mercenary kills other

humans. Second is when Eteon plans to wipe out the entire humanity, i.e. all the less abled humans, and enhance and alter the remaining abled humans with advanced technologies into posthumans or transhumanist posthumans.

The researcher finds posthuman characters like Brixton and his team in a gothic plot and ambiance. The gothic here is 'New Gothicism' which is the present gothic that can be seen in everyday life. The Gothicism of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe is a backward-looking genre with a pseudo-medieval setting which creates a macabre effect with terrorizing, horrifying, haunting incidents. Whereas New Gothicism is a present-day Gothicism that can create all these terrorizing, horrifying, haunting incidents in everyday settings as we can see in the movie. The movie terrorizes us with the idea of virus spreading, horrifies us about the impending peril or danger for humanity's existence, and haunts us with the terrorist activities, fights, and probable raising of technologically advanced transhumanist-posthumans replacing human beings or the human race.

The researcher identifies Brixton as a posthuman mercenary and finds the elements of posthuman terrorism in the movie. The researcher places posthuman terrorism under the genre posthuman gothic and interprets the movie. Also, the researcher finds the interconnections of modern gothic and posthuman ideologies and the possibility of transhumanist-Posthuman 'other' and also the evolution of gothic-posthuman like Brixton to be a threat to the human identity, survival, and existence in the movie, *Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw*(2019).

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# The Fragility of Innocence: An Analysis of Loss of Civilization and Power in William Golding's *Lord of The Flies*

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## Abstract

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is a thought-provoking novel that explores the loss of civilization and power. Set on a deserted island, the story follows a group of boys who are left to fend for themselves after a plane crash. Initially, the boys attempt to establish a system of rules and order, but as time goes on, their primal instincts begin to take over, leading to chaos and violence. This paper, entitled "The Fragility of Innocence: An Analysis of Loss of Civilization and Power in William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*," undertakes a comprehensive exploration of the intricate dynamics among innocence, authority, and societal order as depicted in Golding's seminal novel. Through a meticulous examination of these thematic elements, this study unveils the profound metamorphosis experienced by the group as they grapple with their descent into a state of primordial chaos. The research underscores the precarious and delicate nature of innocence when confronted with the coercive force of authority and the omnipresent spectre of fear, thereby illuminating the enduring pertinence of Golding's literary work in the ongoing discourse on the complexities of human nature and society.

**Key Words:** Civilization, Power, Innocence, Fragility, Society, Order

## Introduction

William Golding's magnum opus, *The Lord of the Flies*, is a timeless exploration of the precarious nature of innocence and the unravelling of civilization in the face of innate human darkness. Published in 1954, this novel has left an indelible mark on the literary landscape by delving into the harrowing transformation of a group of British boys stranded on a remote island. Notably, *The Lord of the Flies* draws inspiration from R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*. Although not in direct parallel, Golding's narrative carries undertones of response and critique to the idealized portrayal of British boys' island existence presented by Ballantyne in 1858. Golding's work serves as a stark departure from Ballantyne's optimism, plumbing

the depths of human nature when stripped of societal constraints. It compels readers to confront the latent propensity for savagery that resides within individuals, fostering profound inquiries into the interplay between civilization and chaos. Moreover, this paper integrates concepts from notable thinkers such as William Ophuls, Carl Jung and Robert Greene. By weaving these philosophical and psychological threads into the analysis, it offers a comprehensive examination of Golding's masterpiece. The analysis aims to dissect the intricacies of innocence, the corrosive influence of power, the erosion of societal norms, and the pervasive presence of fear within the narrative.

Through this exploration, the study enhances the understanding of Golding's narrative, not only as a departure from the romanticism of *The Coral Island* but also as a reflection of the intellectual influences and inspirations that have shaped the narrative's depth and complexity.

Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* thus remains a poignant and enduring discourse on the vulnerability of innocence when confronted with the seductive allure of authority and the haunting spectre of fear, challenging readers to contemplate the multifaceted nuances of human nature and society.

### **The Innocence of Children**

The boys stranded on the island at the beginning are innocent and naïve, having been raised in a civilized society. They believe in the inherent goodness of humanity and trust in the authority of adults. This belief in the inherent goodness of humanity is reflected in Ralph, the protagonist, who embodies this innocence with his fair hair and clear eyes symbolizing his purity. Initially, the boys attempt to maintain order and follow the rules of their former society, establishing a system of democracy and organization. They hold meetings, elect Ralph as their leader, and create rules such as the conch shell being used as a symbol of authority. The boys' initial efforts to create a civilized society reflect their innocence and their belief that society is inherently good. However, as time passes, the boys begin to lose their innocence and become more savage. The constraints of civilization and authority fade away, and the boys are left to their primal instincts. They begin to hunt, engage in violence, and turn against each other. This descent into savagery shows the loss of innocence and the inherent darkness within humanity. The contrast between the boys' initial innocence and their eventual descent into savagery highlights the theme of the novel, showcases the inherent evil in human nature. The boys' loss of innocence is a powerful commentary on the nature of society and the human condition, showing that even those who are raised in a civilized society are capable of great evil.

One example of a line that reflects the innocence of the children in the novel is:

The fair boy began to trot along the beach, jumping over the little waves, the fat boy followed him, [...] and then stood bawling, his head bowed, searching with the miserable intensity of smitten inquiry in his eyes (Chapter 1).

This passage shows the boys at the beginning of the novel engaging in childlike behaviour, such as running and playing. The "miserable intensity of smitten inquiry" in the fat boy's eyes also reflects their naivety and innocence, as they have not yet been confronted with the harsh realities of their situation.

### **The Influence of Power**

As time passes, the boys' innocence is corrupted by their thirst for power, and Ralph's leadership is challenged by Jack, who represents the desire for dominance and control. Jack's obsession with hunting and killing, as well as his manipulative tactics, gradually erode the boys' moral principles. Initially, the boys are committed to maintaining order and working towards rescue, but as Jack's influence grows, their priorities begin to shift. The pursuit of power leads to a breakdown of the boys' moral code, and they become more interested in satisfying their immediate desires and impulses than in maintaining order and working towards the rescue. The conflict between Ralph and Jack highlights the dangers of unchecked ambition and the corrupting influence of power. Jack's desire for dominance and control leads him to become increasingly violent and savage, and he manipulates the other boys to gain power and influence. The boys' descent into savagery is a direct result of their pursuit of power, and the breakdown of their moral code is a reflection of the corrupting influence of power. The novel shows how power can lead individuals to prioritize their interests over the greater good and how it can be used to justify even the most heinous acts.

A line that reflects the influence of power in the novel is: "The chief [Ralph] was sitting there, naked to the waist, his face blocked out in white and red. The tribe lay in a semicircle before him. The newly beaten and untied Wilfred was sniffing in the background" (Chapter 11). This passage shows Ralph's physical transformation into a domineering leader as he attempts to maintain his power and control over the other boys. The use of colour imagery, such as the white and red on Ralph's face, highlights the contrast between his former innocence and his current state of power and violence. Additionally, the fact that the tribe is "laying in a semicircle before him"

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shows Ralph's dominance and authority over the other boys, who have become subservient to his leadership. The inclusion of the newly beaten and untied Wilfred also highlights the violent and abusive tactics that Ralph has used to maintain his power, further emphasizing the corrupting influence of power in the novel.

Robert Greene's work, *The 48 Laws of Power*, also explores the corrupting influence of power on individuals and the dangers of unchecked ambition. Like *Lord of the Flies*, it highlights how power can lead individuals to prioritize their interests over the greater good and how it can be used to justify even the most heinous acts. In both works, the pursuit of power is shown to be a slippery slope, with individuals becoming increasingly ruthless and manipulative in their quest for dominance. The concept of Machiavellianism is prevalent in both works, with characters in *Lord of the Flies* and individuals in *The 48 Laws of Power* using deceit, manipulation, and aggression to achieve their goals. Furthermore, both works emphasize the importance of maintaining control and dominance over others. In "Lord of the Flies," Jack's desire for dominance and control leads him to become increasingly violent and savage, while Ralph's attempts to maintain his leadership position result in him resorting to similar tactics. Similarly, in *The 48 Laws of Power*, individuals are encouraged to maintain their power and control at all costs, often at the expense of others. This ruthless pursuit of power is shown to be a dangerous and destructive force, with individuals becoming increasingly isolated and paranoid as they become more powerful.

### The Loss of Civilization

The lines from William Ophuls' book "Immoderate Greatness," "*The society's* original vigour, virtue, and morale have been entirely effaced. Rotten to the core, the society awaits collapse, with only the date remaining to be determined." It speaks to the idea that societies, over time, can become corrupt and decayed to the point of collapse. In the context of *Lord of the Flies*, this idea is reflected in the loss of civilization that the boys experience. At the beginning of the novel, the boys are part of a civilized society, with rules, norms, and a sense of order. However, as time passes, their innocence is drowned in their thirst for power, and they become more and more savage, losing their respect for the rules and norms of society.

They discard their clothes, paint their faces, and engage in primitive rituals, completely abandoning their sense of civilization. The quote suggests that the original vigour, virtue, and morale of the society have been entirely effaced, or erased, in the boys' case. They have become rotten to the core, with their morality and civility eroded to the point of collapse. The only thing remaining is the date of

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their collapse, as it is inevitable given the direction they are headed. Thus, the quote from Ophuls' book emphasizes the idea that societies can become corrupted and decay over time, leading to their eventual collapse.

Simon, the voice of reason in the novel, recognizes the importance of civilization and the need for rules and order. He acknowledges the existence of a "beast" but realizes that it may not be a physical creature, but rather the innate evil within itself. He tries to convince the other boys to maintain their sense of civility and morality, but they dismiss him and continue down their path towards savagery. Simon's discovery of the truth behind the beast is related to Carl Jung's definition of the beast as a representation of the dark, primal aspects of the human psyche. Jung believed that the beast represents the "shadow" side of the human personality, which is made up of repressed emotions, desires, and impulses. Simon's encounter with the *Lord of the Flies* represents his confrontation with the beast within himself and the other boys. In this scene, the pig's head on a stick, which represents the beast, speaks to Simon, telling him that it is a part of him and all the other boys. Jung's ideas about the beast are reflected in Simon's realization that the beast is not a physical creature but rather a manifestation of the boys' inner darkness. This is expressed in Simon's famous quote: "Maybe there is a beast...maybe it's only us." Jung himself wrote, "Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is." This idea is reflected in the novel through the boys' gradual descent into savagery, as they become more and more disconnected from their sense of morality and civilization.

The boys' loss of civilization is ultimately a reflection of the darkness within human nature. It demonstrates the fragility of society and the ease with which individuals can be swayed towards violence and destruction. The novel suggests that without the constraints of civilization, individuals are capable of unspeakable acts of cruelty and violence.

### The Role of Fear

The role of fear in the loss of innocence is a central theme. The boys' fear of the unknown, the beast on the island, and their mortality is the driving force behind their descent into savagery. Fear causes the boys to behave violently and to form alliances for protection, leading to the breakdown of order and the abandonment of their previous innocence. The boys' fear is further fuelled by their imaginations, which make them see the island as a hostile and terrifying place. This is evident in the boys' discussions of the beast and their reactions to the island's natural phenomena, such as the storm that destroys the signal fire. As the boys' fear

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intensifies, their moral sense becomes overwhelmed, and they abandon their previous sense of order and civility. This is evident in their increasing violence and their disregard for the rules and norms of society. The boys become increasingly focused on their survival, willing to engage in any behaviour that will ensure their safety, regardless of the consequences. The role of fear in the loss of innocence is a common theme in literature and psychology. The psychologist Abraham Maslow, for example, identified safety and security as basic human needs that must be met before higher needs can be pursued. Fear, therefore, plays a crucial role in determining our behaviour and the decisions we make. In *Lord of the Flies*, fear drives the boys to abandon their innocence and become increasingly savage. The novel suggests that fear is a powerful force that can overwhelm our moral sense and lead us to engage in destructive behaviour.

The lines from the novel, "The thing is – fear can't hurt you any more than a dream. There aren't any beasts to be afraid of on this island", illustrate the boys' fear of the unknown and the "beast" on the island. The fear causes them to become irrational and make decisions based on their emotions rather than reason. It leads to the breakdown of their moral code and the loss of their innocence, as they become increasingly savage in their attempts to protect themselves. The fear ultimately drives the boys to engage in violent behaviour, as they struggle to survive on the island.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, *Lord of the Flies* serves as a stark reminder of the fragility of human civilization and the ease with which it can crumble when the constraints of society are removed. Golding's exploration of power, civilization, and fear illustrates how quickly innocence can be lost and morality abandoned when left to our primal instincts. The boys' descent into savagery and violence on the island highlights the importance of societal norms and values in shaping human behaviour and preserving innocence. Moreover, the novel emphasizes the destructive nature of unchecked power, as demonstrated by Jack's obsessive desire for control and dominance. His disregard for the rules and his willingness to engage in violent behaviour leads to the breakdown of order and morality, ultimately resulting in tragedy. Golding's work also underscores the importance of maintaining order and morality in society. Without these values, humanity risks losing its humanity, devolving into chaos and violence. The novel serves as a warning against the dangers of allowing unchecked power and the importance of preserving civilization to prevent the decay of moral values.

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## Digital India and Empowered Girls: The Role of Technology in Advancing Feminism in India

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### Abstract

As teenage girls harness social media to challenge sexism and sexual violence, feminism is now staged as 'cool' in mainstream media where it glows with a new luminosity and exerts elasticity that seemingly enables celebratory media fascination towards this social movement. Popular culture abounds with the notion that teenage girls are the vanguard of a 'new wave', announcing them as the 'new faces' of feminism. Young women's non-identification as feminists has often been misread through a lens of political apathy and rejection of feminism.

Over recent years, young feminist activism started receiving prominence in the mainstream media heralding the initiatives of schoolgirls fighting sexual inequality, violence and injustice. As Lisa Jones writes, "We are smartass girls with a sense of entitlement, who avail ourselves of the goods of two continents, delight in our sexual bravura, and live womanism as pleasure, not academic mandate" (Karlyn par. 24). Their activism plays an important role in the social media significantly increasing the visibility and social momentum of a postfeminist culture. Despite their high use of digital media, very little research has explored digital feminism with young women. This paper draws attention to how Indian teenage girls evolve as young feminist activists and harness digital media challenging sexism and sexual discrimination.

**Key Words:** young feminists, feminism, digital media, gender equality, sexism

Technology has now become an essential 'biopower' in Michel Foucault's terms of modern liberal and neo-liberal cultures that influence public beliefs by controlling their social, economic and political circumstances. The new generation grew up using technology as the unquestioned mediator extending grounds for education as well as activism. As a result of digital intermediation, the fourth wave feminism emerged with an online initiative called the *'Everyday Sexism Project'*

launched by the British feminist writer Laura Bates in 2012. Ever since, Indian feminists borrow largely from Western ideas especially on social media in order to advance their practices and agendas, the new wave has a huge impact encouraging tens of thousands of women to write and talk about discrimination, sexual harassment and body shaming they experience on a daily basis. Cyber-feminism acts as a crucial step dictating cultural practices and enforcing feminism among the teenagers. In "Neither Cyborg Nor Goddess: the (Im)Possibilities of Cyber-feminism", Stacy Gillis defines cyber-feminism as "a philosophy which acknowledges, firstly, that there are differences in power between men and women specifically in the digital discourse: and secondly, that Cyber-Feminists want to change that situation"(p.185). Cyber-feminism is a silent tool that recognizes the way technology and digital media create a feminist discourse calling out women to celebrate and acknowledge its benefits. Drawing on Judith Butler's concept of performativity, these consistent repetitive acts of Cyber-feminism create a sense of belonging and forms communities among women around the globe expanding women empowerment across ages. This space built by the women community gives a new opportunity and motivation for the teenage girls to interact freely on various platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tiktok, Threads, Twitter, Tublr, Reddit, Buzzfeed, etc.

Cyber-feminism gained prominence in India in 2012 Nirbhaya case triggering both the mainstream media and social media inspiring a series of feminist campaigns. The protests paved new paths reaching a large number of people within minutes of opening up an interactive space letting easy access to participate through online blogs, petitions and articles. The success of Delhibraveheart protest under the 'Nirbhaya movement led to various other online protests like LahuKaLagaan hashtag against period tax, the, WhyLoiter hashtag, PadsAgainstSexism, WeWillGoOut, HappytoBleed, AintNoCinderella and MeToo movement forcing the government to revise and amend rape laws, marital rape and punishments for offences like stalking, voyeurism and acid attacks. The anger and agitation of young feminists found its perfect manifestation through these online campaigns. The working of cyber feminism is different from previous waves because of its openness and collaboration with other movements like LGBT+. In an interview with Sachin Bhola, Samhita Mukhopadhyay, the Teen Vogue's new executive editor said the teenagers today are very interested in "gender expression, gender nonconformity, and trans visibility" (2018).

She said the major misconception of people about teenagers is

That they only care about selfies. That they're vain. And they're always texting and on their phones, which they are, but so are we. People of all ages are on their phone all the time. And that they're not engaged politically. We're now dealing with the youngest group of millennials and, if anything, we're into Gen Z. Millennials are criticised the same way, yet they are out here changing the world. They are some of the most innovative people in the economy; they're leaders in political movements. There's so much exciting stuff happening, and I think the same is true [for teenagers]. Now they're educated and they have social media and they're ready to take on those powers. (2018)

Nell Stromquist calls digital activism a “*microstructure of power*” (Kim and Ringrose 50) which helps in breaking down false binary of online and offline spheres and making meaningful interactions. Writing and storytelling are powerful rhetorical tools for girls to experience expression of their thoughts, self affirmation and catharsis. Selfie culture and posting images online can “empower the users to exercise free speech, practice self-religion, express spiritual purity, improve literacy skills, and form strong interpersonal connections” (Senft and Baym p.1593). By sharing photographs and celebrating appearances that do not conform to the conventional standards of beauty, these social platforms become sites for formations of multiple female subjectivities and a space for bonding with other women. Such aesthetic choices of self representations help them in reclaiming themselves from the male gaze and mark a subjective performance challenging the authority of patriarchy and erasing the boundaries between the person and the audience. So, these online engagements are critical for young feminists to take control over the forces of society and shape their identities. The hashtag culture offers a connective space for wider discussion with confidence building, friendship and feminist politics. Young feminists have successfully introduced and mobilized new spaces for networked technologies that encompass a new community to share their experiences of sexism, racism, homophobia and misogyny.

Teenage girls find social networks as a world full of possibilities. It is a brave new world for discovering themselves as girls, feminists and victims of gender violence. Social media gives them a space to talk about things they cannot otherwise share with their family. The option of anonymity, the lack of censorship and easy access makes internet an emancipator and revolutionary space for girls to

speak out and raise issues creating a new consciousness. Social media is opening up spheres to the teenage girls for political participation and online voting. The peer groups in schools strengthen with the introduction of blogging and social media posting by expanding the traditional feminist enclave. By sharing stories, they create an alternative public sphere to raise their feminist consciousness. Kath Albury and Paul Byron points out that 'by separating social media as an area of non-pedagogy, educational institutions are greatly delimiting the potential for the teenage girls to engage in informal learning that promote their general awareness about activism'.

To answer the question, 'Can digital feminism drive changes in India?' One has to look at the 2009 Pink Chaddi Campaign initiated by Nisha Susan on Facebook against the Hindu right-wing group Sri Ram Sene's attack on women in a pub in Mangalore. A group of women launched a Facebook group calling themselves, "Consortium of Pub-going, Loose and Forward Women" and almost 30,000 women joined in a week. The campaign was a great success protesting against discrimination done by Sri Ram Sene. The discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Registry of Citizens (NRC) fueled nationwide protests in the month of December, 2019 and many college students were brutally beaten up by the police during their protests. The videos of police attacking the Muslim students of Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi went viral on social media creating more public visibility and the LikeAGirl campaign in the name of Ayesha Renna as the face of Indian student protests will always be remembered. The very recent Indian wrestlers protest against the then president of the Wrestling Federation of India, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on sexually harassing female wrestlers was highlighted under the MeToo movement. Also the hashtags IStandWithWrestlers and Istandwithmychampion gained significant traction supporting the wrestlers. The 2017 young girls protest against the militants in Kashmir Valley for killing innocent civilians has been fanned by the social media and described as the new trend of teenage aggression. Access to digital technology has given a democratic space and voice to the young girls who are otherwise called 'apathetic' and 'apolitical'. It is high time to herald these achievements like the public once hailed the women suffrage movements in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Popular culture is another deep influential driver of change. 'Power to Empower' is the tagline of Digital India. Advertising, movies and music have the power to break stereotypes and create new culture. In her work *Don't be Miss Congeniality*, Amrita Dutta evaluates two popular works, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's movie *Pink* and Chetan Bhagat's novel *One Indian Girl* and comments about how feminist ideas and its organized movements established a social reform

in our country. Popular culture acts as a natural site for empowerment and identity formation for the teenage girls providing an infinite storehouse of images and narratives for contesting, rewriting and recoding. The thematic shift on women's agency in movies as observed in movies like *No One Killed Jessica* (2011), *Gulab Gang* (2014), *Parched* (2016), *Kahani* (2012), *Mary Kom* (2014), *Mardaani* (2014), *English Vinglish* (2012), *The Dirty Picture* (2011), *Angry Indian Goddesses* (2015), *Queen* (2014), *Margarita with a Straw* (2015), *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2017) and *Thappad* (2020) enable the young girls to reject the familiar codes of femininity. These movies address head on issues of women representation, power struggles and sexism without directly mentioning feminism. These new girl heroes are well aware of their culture, from the ancient institutions to the popular one rather than feeding into stereotypical tropes, influencing the new generation to rewrite old narratives. Women centric movies are the new trend in Indian cinema. Though it took over eighty years to embrace this new normal, recent films and advertisements aid in creating an evolutionary cultural narrative embedding into the young generation.

According to Crystal Kim “. . . despite the ostensible neoliberalized depoliticization of contemporary society, through digital politics 'a renewed and collectivized feminism has re-entered political and civic life' and is increasingly present in schools” (47). Whether or not we have arrived at the fourth wave, the internet has increasingly become the key site of feminist activism in India today. Under a feminist poststructuralist approach, it is clear that the attempts of young feminists to make sense of digital feminism as an agentic practice is complicated and constrained. Teen activists are often sidelined as self-identified feminists who create their own cultural theories often lacking proper understanding of the feminist movements. Also, Cyber-feminism is criticized for its opinion based approach and lack of adequate research. It is true that the school girls' engagement with feminism is remarkably under-researched and mostly facilitated by smartphone technology. And their online feminist activities like reposting, petition making, blogging, etc are mostly not considered as real feminism. When girls take up a feminist identity, it shatters the traditional discourses on youth collapsing the discipline, passivity and good girl femininity. Similarly, the fear of being judged by more experienced feminists can limit their online participation on important topics. These girls also confront age-based discriminations to political activism. An important allegation leveled against young feminists and queer activists is that they are trying to imitate the West in thought and in action. According to the “Internet in Rural India” report by Internet and Mobile Association of India, the internet penetration in rural India remains 6.7% which is very low. This inequality in the internet usage can make digital media more elitist and exclusive.

The sexualized violence in online spaces including threats, trolls, abusive comments, dishonor, shame and disgrace calling them names like “militant feminist” or “feminazi” could often be very triggering and disappointing forcing them to withdraw from engaging in any online debates or political commentary. These kind of online harassments have a hidden agenda to maintain the online space as a male dominated space free from anti-patriarchal and feminist interventions. Gender trolling is one of the modern weapons of patriarchs to control, threaten and silence women. Gendered cyber hate or bullying can inflict psychological distress instilling a fear in the victims. For these reasons, often parents and elders restrain girls from using social media claiming that it is not safe for women. But things are changing. A recent example being the Kiss of Love campaign, a non violent protest against increasing moral policing in Kerala was mobilized through online and offline modes. An event held in Kochi on 2 November, 2014 as part of this campaign became a grand celebration of public expression of love challenging the patriarchal control over women and homophobia. In the year 2020, thousands of women including several actors put up posts against moral policing and body shaming with the message 'women have legs'. It was part of a protest against the social bullying faced by an 18 year old actor Anaswara Rajan for wearing shorts in a photo posted online. The latest incident that happened at Angamali in Kerala in a KSRTC bus where a man tried to expose himself to a young woman went viral on social media. Though the victim was bullied and harassed by online patriarchs for posting the video she recorder questioning the man's behaviour, five more girls who faced similar experiences with him came to light with the help of her post. Apart from getting justice to the victim, the video of hers was a true inspiration for other girls who travel alone in public transport.

Being a feminist especially at a young age is a constant struggle with the mainstream patriarchy. There are thousands of young feminist activists on Instagram who have found a new aesthetic and political standpoint to challenge the patriarchal and neo-liberal ideas and it is the need of the hour to redefine the efficacy and influence of Indian digital feminism among the young girls. One must interrogate and learn the dissident strategies employed by these young activists to usher a better future for Indian feminism. Anita Harris has adopted Dana Boyd's notion of 'counterpublic' to distinguish the online spaces of these young activists as not merely sites for agitation and spreading toxicity but for politicizing personal experiences and being part of a fluid digital feminist community. She comments that what we require now is an openness to learn and understand more about these micro-political activism and unconventional feminist acts. A paradigmatic shift is mandatory from

the part of educational institutions that positions social media as a space of risk and danger to one friendly space treating it as a tool for learning and engaging about civic rights and social justice. Each generation of activists have their own theories, perspectives and methods shared by the myriad influence of experiences they have encountered. Therefore, constructing a binary between online and offline feminism would be a mistake. Like the Foucauldian notion of discourse being both enabling and constraining, young girls must be left to embrace their status as active learners with permission to make mistakes as part of becoming feminists.

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