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*Editor*

*Ravinder Kumar*

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*From the Editorial Desk*

*This is an attempt to explore the hidden capacity of writing in each individual. This journal will give directions to the educated young scholars of our fraternity to share their academic venture with us. We l publish research articles in our Journal of humanities (ISSN 2320-9216). This will be available in on-line version only. We will be happy to receive your research articles.*

*Further, it gives me immense pleasure to share that our international academicians not only will review articles but they will assist also in writing the same. Secondly, we have started a monthly magazine for sharing your poems, essays and any of writings that show your interest in literary activities will all be published online.*

*One of the main objectives of AJH (Alchemist Journal of Humanities) is to share research in different areas. Since multiculturalism and global changes are in the practices; it becomes challenging to examine how the expectations of Universities can be met. There are following areas of expressions in the Journal.*

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*Regards*  
**Ravinder Kumar**

## **Untranslatability: A Study of Metaphorical, Cultural & Structural Translation of Manto by Khalid Hasan**

Ravinder Kumar\*

### **Abstract**

Translation is one of the important ways of communication, because it introduces many cultures to us. Many a time, the picture unveils the curtain of wrong notion of a culture because of lacking of different expressions in the Targeted Language. M.B. Dagut reveals flaws of translation in figures of speech. He explained three types of metaphors that become hindrances in translation. In the present article, two types of aspects have been discussed - Cultural Untranslatability and Structural Untranslatability. And these aspects have been studied in the backdrop of Khalid Hasan's translated work of Manto.

**Key Words:** Source Language, Targeted Language, Cultural Untranslatability, Structural Untranslatability

### **Introduction**

Stories are the mirrors of society and these are indicators to measure as to how much a writer has been sensitive in his writings. Every now and then, writers emerge from society to plate untouched emotions in front of us. These are the feelings which we do feel but seldom express in words as the way a writer expresses in stories. Saadat Hasan Manto is one of such names who was born in village, Samrala of Punjab, on 11 May 1912, and died in Lahore, Pakistan on 18 January 1955. He was not even forty three when he died. It is a considerable question as to how one should read Manto in today's context. Manto did many experiments in his writings on man-woman relationship; these are all equally fit concurrently in today's society. In "A Wet Afternoon", Manto delineated an experience of a teenager through Masood. Masood is learning from his house. The whole story is told by the metaphors used by Manto in his stories. Reading Manto is an elevated experience. And this "experience" expresses deeply the story of partition between India and Pakistan. Therefore, the Stories of Manto can be compared with the sculpture of a beautiful naked woman which is covered by a transparent white cloth and this statue is transmitting sparks in twilight vision. Now, it is spectator's valuation to which, the preference would be given— either to art or obscenity. The human relationships have been placed through mirror transparency to the society by Saadat Hasan (1912-1955) in his short span of life. That is why he was liked by some intellectuals only. The way Manto has personified flesh in his "A Wet Afetrnoon" can be felt only. The flesh has been used by him in "A Wet Afetrnoon" as carrier to



boost energy and to give warm feelings, “When he had seen the vapour rising from the freshly slaughtered sheep, he had experienced a strange pleasure..., experienced a certain warmth rise in his body” (Khalid,3). This is a scene from “A Wet Afternoon” which brings strange feelings to our mind. On the other hand, Masood matures his experiences through the warmth of flesh. When on his return to home, he shares it with his mother then his sister interrupts him to do some favor for her: “It was warm... come with me first, my back is hurting badly...I will lie on the bed and you press the sore areas with your feet” (Khalid, 5). It is a matchless comparison between human-flesh and flesh of sheep. Kalsoom, Masood’s sister might have understood “physical teen age-experiences” before him. Masood occasionally, presses her sore areas of her body. “It was not first time he had pressed Kalsoom’s legs but never before had he felt his way. His mind kept going back to butcher’s shop with those misty vapours” (Khalid, 7). Manto has used flesh as a metaphor with great sensitivity that can be controversial in society. Narang discusses the subject matter of literature – any literature- Manto linked it up with the two most basic needs— he calls them hungers of human life (Bhalla,72). Manto has not only used idiomatic language to define untold stories between man and woman but he made literature lively also through the metaphors used aptly to fit in the construction of plot naturally. *Boo*, it is a complete experiment itself. It is perfectly significant in the context of using metaphors. “Her odor was not artificial like perfume: it was strong like the physical union between man and woman that is both sacred and eternal” (Khalid, 68). Narrating a story through the word like *Boo*, is a great literary excellence. This kind of real-sheath can only be made by Manto only.

### **Metaphors: Untranslatable Figures of Speech**

It is to be understood that to translate metaphors is difficult to some extent. It is because of writing a language in its contextualized form. In reality it is to incarnate a new style while translating metaphors from Source language (SL) to Targeted Language (TL) and one bad translator does badly exploit a language. Asaduddin says “a bad and irresponsible translator can do great damage to a writer, falsifying his image and distorting the true import and spirit of his works” (Bhalla, 160). M.B. Dagut did extensive study on this aspect of translatability of metaphors in his article published by Babel (1976). He explained three types of metaphors in his article. Dagut concluded that metaphors are unique in nature and cannot be completely translated into TL. “It can be “reproduced” in some way (Dagut 1976: 21-3). In “Thanda Gosht” Hasan translated it as “Colder Than Ice.” Asaduddin emphasizes the aspect of untranslatability “The

story ends with phrase colder than ice” (Bhalla, 163). Khalid seems helpless to translate the context in which Manto described the story. This failure to evoke the feeling can be seen easily by those who are familiar with both languages. When a native reader of a source language reads the translated version of that text, he feels somewhere disappointed. It is not wrong to say that the translated text seems unable to move the reader.

### **Cultural & Emotional Aspect of Translation**

One of the major problems in translating the original text is to translate the emotional aspect of the original text. When it is tried to prove that “emotions are the spirit of the literature”, sometimes the same purpose gets defeated in case of literature in translation. It appears a major problem in the works of translation. As we know, translation is a special type of communication which creates a kind of parallel text in TL. This paper would examine the absolute limits of text beyond which, the text cannot be translated from SL. The life style, dresses, and other cultural items described in SL are generally found missing in TL. In Khalid’s translation of Manto, words- like - गोश्त, सा,गा,मा,जर्मीदार, टोबाटेकसिंह, जोबोलेसोनिहालसतश्रीअकाल, दुरफिटेमुंह, ठंडागोश्त, एक-दमकंडम, किरपान,बू - are to be kept as examples of ‘untranslatability’. Khalid tried his level best to translate various aspects of cultural-background, but, he seems to have failed on the aspect of cultural-portability of sense. Khalid has translated works of Manto but there is a wide gap between original and translated versions because of cultural, contextual, and linguistic untranslatability. For example, in “A Wet Afternoon”, गोश्त(Flesh) has been used as metaphor. The word ‘गोश्त’ brings the feelings that cannot be replaced by the word *flesh*. The word ‘गोश्त’ brings a kind of sensation which cannot be aroused by the word *flesh*. In TL, the word *flesh* has many contextualized meanings which may have not carried the impact in the context of “A Wet Afternoon”. “गोश्त” is one of the important metaphors used in this story. No doubt, the words like *flesh* and *Misty*- arouse emotions and feelings in the minds of readers but the perception drawn by the readers is different in nature. The feelings aroused through the TL (English) may take a native to the cold-storage where *flesh of sheep* is hanging. He will not imagine “butcher carrying a huge basket on his head” (Khalid,3). “A Wet Afternoon” can be understood only by a person who has experienced by a village life. There is one more example of lexical untranslatability in the line “*upper the gur-gur the annexe the mung the dal of Guruji da Khalsa*

and Gurujikifateh...(Ibid,13).Here, the words have no intended meaning in English. One can exploit ambiguous words for creating numerous effects. The important thing here is intentionality of meaning of soul of the context. But when a native of TL reads it, he will have to go for reference. Here it is a case of lexical-untranslatability. In *Wet Afternoon*, the relationship of “गोश्त” with *Masood* is an integral part in the story which gets reflected in the sentence “Flesh under his feet rippled from side to side” (Ibid, 7). Manto has made the theme of relationship between “गोश्त” with *Masood* central at various levels.

### **Untranslatability on Structural Aspect**

There occur some grammatical hindrances in translation which are syntactically relevant to the original text. Here are some examples like, टोबाटेकसिंह (TobaTekSingh) , ठंडागोश्त (ColderThanIce),बू (odor). It seems difficult to share a common association in languages by two different human beings. In contemporary linguistics, it is assumed that no two human beings can produce the same sentence structures in different languages. Asaduddin asserts in his article that “the translator’s misplaced zeal should not lead him to add information for local colour or exotic appeal.” (Bhalla, 171)

### **Conclusion**

Khalid’s Translation is a work of artistic excellence to introduce Manto on international level. Though this paper discussed the untranslatability of Khalid’s work on Manto on cultural, structural and metaphorical levels, we can’t ignore the value of translation from cultural point of view. Translator has to shoulder the responsibility of ‘cultural-portability’ while attempting translation. It becomes more challenging when the issue is related to regional cultural language. Khalid’s work is of great importance in the field of research to highlight the marginalised writers. Here, there arises the need to say that there are some technical issues in untranslatability where translation gets defeated, may be on cultural, structural and metaphorical levels.

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## A Study of Teacher's perception with special reference to English as a second Language

Mohammed Sajid\*

**Abstract**---English language is one of the most widely used languages around the globe. The international acceptability of English makes the language very unique in the world. People with a different native language like to learn English as a second or foreign language. On the one hand its uniqueness is concerned about the language itself while on the other hand the uniqueness refers to the ways of teaching it as a global language. As far as English language teaching is concerned, some issues are crucial to be considered like: What is the role of culture in teaching English language. What is the impact of local, native teachers in English language teaching? What is the role of English-speaking countries in producing teaching aids to the teaching of English language?

**Keywords**-L1(mother tongue)& L2(target language), Native speaker, globalization, TESEP

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Importance of English in India

In pursuance of my research "level of perception of teachers about English language teaching in India" out of 100 teachers who participated 94 percent of those were the non-native teachers of English and all of them teach English at tertiary level. The majority held either a B.A (52%) as their highest degree, of an M.A degree (42%) while the remaining 6% had a doctoral degree. I tried to explore the dynamics of English as a global language. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents viewed English as a door to better employment and higher social status. In addition, English was seen as a requirement imposed by the globalization era. So it is considered important predominantly for instrumental reasons and this is at odds with one of the characteristics of an international language, namely it should serve for people to share with others their ideas and cultures (McKay 2002: 12). The classroom does not represent an isolated world, as what goes on in it is always dependent on wider contextual factors. Classroom practice is interconnected with the socio-cultural reality in the Environment around it. This is especially true in **TESEP** settings, where external forces play a major role in determining pedagogical practices. In the specific case of this study, therefore, it

was important to find out; first of all, what were the teachers' perceptions about the role of English in India. Three reasons for studying English that were indicated as important more often than the others were 'to communicate with people from other countries' (67%), 'to get a better job' (65%) and 'globalization era' (55%). The first and the third reasons suggest an acknowledgement of the status of English in the world.

In India it is widely known that foreign companies pay higher salaries than local or state companies and one of the conditions to be employed in foreign companies is precisely a good command of English. As Graddol (1997) notes, Jobs in the new enterprises may be better paid and more attractive than those in the public sector of a developing necessity. English qualifications may become an entry necessity, or have perceived value in access to jobs – even if the job itself does not require English. (Graddol 1997:32)

## II. MATERIALS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

The data analysis indicates that maximum respondents expressed a marked preference for materials from English-speaking countries, in particular for teaching pronunciation and listening skill.

The analysis of the data revealed a multi-faceted picture. Essentially, the teachers' beliefs varied considerably depending on the language skill considered. For pronunciation and speaking skills, for example, a high preference for native speakers was expressed. This reflected a commonly held belief, according to which people from Inner Circle countries (Countries in which English is the first or the dominant language: Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United States) invariably speak 'perfect' and 'standard' English. For other skills, however, native speakers were considered less suitable, most notably for the teaching of grammar and reading.

The data indicates that native speaker's actual presence in schools and universities was generally found lower than the teachers' beliefs.

## III. THE USE OF L1 & L2 DURING TEACHING IN THE CLASSROOM

Towards the use of the students' mother tongue in English language teaching there was a slightly ambivalent attitude. Most teachers agreed that the use of L1 had potential benefits but strangely all the teachers who were observed (with the sole exception of a Canadian teacher) did make some use of Hindi in class and on those occasions the students generally responded

favourably, especially when theoretical notions were introduced for the first time. Side by side many teachers felt unsure as to how much mother tongue it was appropriate to use and they generally felt that its use should be kept to a minimum so as not to forego opportunities for the students to be exposed to English. Many respondents found it difficult to draw the line between the use and the abuse of the students' mother tongue. These uncertainties are understandable, and reflect well the metaphorical representations of the use of the mother tongue described by Luke Prodromou: some of them are positive and some negative. The issue is made even more complex by the fact that occasionally some teachers may choose to use the L1 simply out of convenience because they do not feel confident enough about their own command of English. For some teachers, therefore, admitting to the use of the L1 may be the equivalent to revealing poor language proficiency.

#### IV. THE ISSUES OF CULTURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

The link between language and culture is universally agreed on, and the data analysis confirms that this is the case among the teachers who participated in this study. However, since a number of schools in India offer extracurricular activities related to cultural events of English-speaking countries, the teachers were asked to express their beliefs about these and in this case the data was much less uniform. The respondents were less persuaded that students needed to actually practice cultural events of English-speaking cultures. Interestingly, as many as one third of them were unsure about this point.

In addition, although the majority of respondents expressed the belief that English language teaching should be accompanied by the teaching of the culture(s) of English-speaking countries, many of them found it useful to relate such cultural content to the students' culture. The classroom observations evinced that the students responded positively when topics were presented cross-culturally rather than from an Anglo-centric perspective only.

Some respondents felt the need to contextualize English language teaching to the local reality, the place where the students will be more likely to use English.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In general, the findings indicated that the majority of the respondents saw English as belonging to English-speaking countries and related its importance to instrumental considerations, which were in turn linked to requirements imposed by the globalization era. As a result, issues mentioned above were present in the teachers' belief system only partly. The picture that

emerged was a complex and variegated one, especially when the teachers' beliefs were compared to their classroom practice.

The finding clearly demonstrates that the perception of teachers is entirely different than expected. They believe that English language has something to do with the countries in which English is used as a native language. They also responded that the language is extremely important in establishing communication worldwide.

But it is found that majority of teachers believe that only those countries may provide 'absolute' English teaching in which English is being used as a resident language. They also remarked that the teaching material produced by these countries is superior to the material that is produced in India. Apart from this perception, they believe that the culture of these countries play prominent role in English language teaching in terms of making correct pronunciation. One of their surprising observations is that native speakers of the countries in which English is being used, may prove to be good English language teachers. Often the perception of teachers is contradictory to their classroom practice. The usage of learner's native language is found to be problematic in classroom teaching.

#### VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Firstly, future studies could use a broader sample population from universities in all areas of India to make it possible to observe any differences between urban, rural and remote areas, where teachers do not have many opportunities to keep up to date with the latest trends in English language teaching.

Secondly, having an adequate amount of time available, actual classroom practice may be given more prominence, so that it may be possible to ascertain with more confidence the extent to which teachers' beliefs are reflected in classroom practice.

Thirdly, the potential of the use of the students' mother tongue in the classroom clearly needs further exploration. This is because virtually all literature on communicative language teaching has advocated L2-only methods for decades and is therefore partly responsible for the uneasiness which many teachers, experienced and inexperienced, feel about permitting the use of the L1 in the classroom. Finally, it might be interesting to find out about the students' beliefs with regard to the global role of English. After all, they are the ones who will be most affected by any development in language teaching methodologies and it is only fair that they have a say about the way they are taught as well as what they are taught.



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## **Improving EFL Teacher Training**

Dr. Melouk Mohamed\*

### **1. Introduction**

In any teaching-learning situation success depends on giving proper consideration to both human elements, such as the role of the teacher, the nature of the learners, and also to non-human elements like the textbook, the syllabus, the number of hours allotted to the subject study and the like. With the education reform, teaching foreign languages is the core of many debates and the agenda of almost all discussions. Thus, many questions on the subject are posed, but the true questions are hardly raised like the ones concerning the teacher, his qualifications and his training. Let us make no mistake about it, any tentative reform, and whatever its actions are, could not be achieved without prior action of teachers ; they are the cornerstone and the secret of any successful educational system, for they contribute to a large extent in the achievement of all objectives. Therefore, priority should be given to teachers - how to prepare them to changes, innovations and reforms that are likely to happen.

### **2. Problem Identification**

The present communication aims at pointing at the educational policy of training. First, the suppression of « I.T.E » and « Ecoles Normales » has left a gap in the field of training ; second, the social peace requirements have imposed temporary solutions for real problems, such as heavy recruitment of graduate students which has shown its limits and that has led in one way or another to a deficit of a pedagogical character and later professional in addition to the reduction of the training practice duration and the insufficient mastery of needs planning.

### **3. The Present Training context**

With the suppression of « I.T. E » and « Ecoles Normales » most universities, to some extent, have taken in charge the training of teachers. I would consider a very important problem concerning the EFL (PES) in some Algerian universities. I do not mean to assess their training because, and I must apologize for that, no assessment tools, nor was scientific evaluation of the curriculum used. However, teaching in a secondary school for two decades, supervising trainees,

being a member of the “CAPES” commission may help to have more or less objective evaluation of the EFL teacher training. The diagnosis is unfortunately severe and negative.

The training sessions and the great deal of conversation with the trainees have revealed some deficiencies in their initial training. The article will look into the two types of training the university is supposed to provide in order to produce teachers of EFL ready to face their pupils in the secondary school classrooms. We will attempt to detect the deficiencies and the causes that have engendered them.

#### **4. The Pedagogical/Professional Training**

This is done or supposed to be done in a form of some theoretical modules such as: TEFL, Psycho-pedagogy, and Psycho-linguistics, and training period (of about five weeks) in a secondary school in the third term of the fourth year. Most of the students do not see the difference between these modules because they deal with some theoretical aspects of teaching/learning process and some of the well-known approaches to language teaching, but this remains abstract and the trainees cannot figure out their application in real classroom.

The pedagogical training in secondary schools planned by the Algerian official texts has been unfortunately either cancelled in some parts of the country or neglected. First it is done in a very short period (4 to 5 weeks) -. Second, the trainees are supposed to be supervised by their university teachers, inspectors and trainers in the secondary school. Yet it is this period where the gap between the university and the secondary school should be bridged, that it is widening, because the university teachers do not follow their students in the schools, inspectors are not even informed of the operation and the trainees go to any available teacher because the “Direction of Education” does not do its job.

#### **5. The Teacher Training**

Teacher training should focus its attention on classroom practice, and should have as its primary goal the improvement of teacher’s practical efforts to bring about effective learning on the part of learners. Experiences have shown that teacher development should be fostered not only in in-service training but also in initial training. The teacher training involves giving novice and experienced teachers alike readymade answers as opposed to allowing them to discover their own alternatives (Lucas, 1988:42).

For **Freeman (1989:39)**, he defines training as a strategy for direct intervention by the collaborator in the teacher's teaching. The intervention is focused on specific outcomes achieved through a sequence of steps within a specific period of time. It is based on the assumption that through mastery of discrete skills teachers will be effective in the classroom.

However, for **Davis and Plumb (1988:40)**, training entails a "pre-planned" agenda set by the workplace or syllabus as opposed to an "impromptu flexible agenda set by groups", "needs of workplace" as opposed to "personal needs" "qualification" as opposed to career development and "standardization" as opposed to "innovation".

### **6. A Suggested Plan for the Future Training**

The rapid changes happening in the world and our society are urging our educational system to quickly change, if not, it will be obsolete and non-efficient because as Rivers said:

*“ With the passing of time, new situations arise for a nation and its people, or for a district and its school, and these establish priorities of objectives of the teachers of other languages who must be constantly aware of such changes if their teaching is to be appropriate to ,the generation before them.” (Rivers, 1981:7-8)*

For our university, the changes are occurring quickly and at a larger scale; the new situations are imposing urgent objectives for the teaching of English. So the mission of the Department of English should be clearly stated and not wrongly interpreted as limited to the production of teachers of English for secondary schools.

From clearly stated objectives, the curriculum and the assignment methods will be reformed to train efficiently motivated students willing to become teachers of English in the Algerian schools and other university departments.

The training for a "licence" could be planned in two stages: the first stage would be a two-year study which would re-enforce the linguistic competence acquired at the secondary school level; the students would develop their linguistic skills and be introduced to ESP in case they leave the department of English for another one to prepare for other careers like: journalism, management, tourism etc...

In the light of these training principles, and in addition to the theoretical lectures in "TEFL" and Psycho-pedagogy I believe that weekly sessions should be devoted for training practice

not only to co-ordinate and associate theory with practice, but discover the classroom reality as well :some discipline problems, lack of basic equipments and audio-visual teaching aids and the like. As far as the time allotment is concerned, four hours a week could be sufficient, but right from the beginning of the academic year. The training practice could be planned as follows:

### **6.1. The Observation Stage**

In this stage trainees passively undergo a period of conditioning during which the “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of classroom practice are inculcated, a stage that obviously involves classroom visits. The student teachers are asked to produce elaborate step-by-step rigid plans –or a number of questions to answer. Special meetings between the trainees and the trainer are advisable to discuss the observed lessons. The observation stage lasts for about a month, duration sufficient enough for trainees to attend the different phases of a teaching unit– Listening, Reading, Language Manipulation and Writing.

### **6.2. The Demonstration Stage**

The trainees are rarely given a chance to perform and try out before the blocked training period. The demonstration stage is a vital element to imitate some ritual teaching behaviour. Discussion sessions are always necessary to assess trainees’ performances; it is preferable to have such sessions right after the lesson practice for adjustments, additions and refinements.

### **6.3. The Blocked/Long practice Stage**

A stage that lasts for about four weeks, and in which student teachers do not study at the university but respect the trainer’s time table. They are supposed to plan classroom tasks and/or activities appropriate to learners and with respect to the teaching programmes and objectives and apply them in a genuine leaning context. This is the vital stage of the training process, the pivot on which all else hinges –without application there is no training.

## **7. The Trainer**

There is no doubt that the role of the trainer in such operation is of a paramount importance, therefore the choice should be based on rigorous criteria. These teachers should be experienced, skilful and competent enough to ensure the training practice. The inspector general of English , for instance , may provide a list of trainers able to offer their experience

and help for trainees . The trainer should focus on the trainee as a person. Like pupils, the trainee teachers have individual needs, strengths, weaknesses, varying degrees of knowledge and experience. His role as a facilitator is indispensable, he remains a full partner in the education process; he should co-ordinate with trainees in lesson planning. He has to demonstrate his patience and understanding to trainees, and encourage them by pointing out the good points, and suggesting other alternatives for less successful ones .He can help improve or eliminate certain behaviours\_ lack of confidence, shyness, anxiety or an air of superiority which has negative effect of reducing rapport between the teacher and learners.The trainer teacher needs to be put at the heart the training process; he is the sole agent of effective behavioural improvement because he helps the trainees to be independent decision maker at all times.

### **8. Conclusion**

The heart of any successful learning programme is the informed classroom teacher. Human being is the instrument and the finality of any development. The educational system has to aim at developing mental operations that are: observation, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. We are in the twenty first century; our school should be, then, oriented towards the future. And if educating, instructing, socializing and preparing the child to acquire knowledge and a qualification constitute the essential duties of today's school, we wonder how we can achieve these goals without adequate training for teachers.

All societies, nowadays, are entering the Internationalization Era that urges future teachers, who should have to guide our children and develop their learning desires, to have a high knowledge level and competence. Tomorrow's world relies on the real mastery and the well use of «learning»; the grey matter constitutes the plain and true richness of any country. The training practice should provide the future teacher with so many qualities that can be reflected in the teaching process, and the rapport with learners. It is said that the power of the teacher can change the world, and good teachers are not born they are made.

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## **Imperialism through Conspiracy in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"**

**Manoj Manuel , Sumita Grewal, Zayana Al Hinai\***

### **Abstract**

Present paper is an analysis on the dark truth and theme, 'Imperialism' which was implemented through skillfully constructed conspiracy during the African Colonial era in Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'. Conrad was successful in unfolding the brutal reality of imperialism under the disguise of economic development and civilization in Congo, Africa. He exposes the avarice and rapacity of the Europeans, through the main character of the novel, Kurtz. He is depicted as the personification of deception and brutality. This research examines how the Europeans employed various strategies of conspiracy to imperialize a nation and reveals the agonizing story of western destructive power.

Key words: Hypocrisy, Cruelty, Greed

### **Introduction**

Imperialism is the policy of taking control of one country by another country through martial, political or economic dominance. The word imperialism is derived from the word 'empire'. It is an intrinsic part of colonization as the imperialist powers conspire against the native people and influence the language, culture, social and economic aspects of that particular area or country negatively. A number of European countries like the U.K., France, Spain and Portugal colonized many parts of Asia, Africa and South America in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It all started in the beginning of eighteenth century when industrial



revolution initiated in most of the European countries which led to a tremendous increase in the demand for raw materials. This demand for raw materials forced them to explore the world in search of cheap raw material and labor which resulted in their conspiracy to colonize Asian countries particularly for raw material and African countries for slave labor. Imperialism became the most popular policy followed by most of the European countries by the end of nineteenth century.

After acquiring the control and power by conspiring against the indigenous people, colonizers and imperialists take a supreme position and treat the native people and resources as profit making machines. As Richard Twiss has rightly said, “the real aim of colonialism was to control the people’s wealth, what they produced, how they produced it, the control was introduced and managed to deconstruct the people’s sense of self and replace it with that of the colonizer. This would occur when a people’s perception of themselves and their world was overthrown.” The major motive of the imperialists was to take control of the raw materials of that colony and safeguard it from other competitors. The indigenous population was treated brutally by the imperialists. The natural resources including the flora and fauna were also devastated and used for the economic advancement of the imperialistic countries. In contrast to their deeds, all the imperialistic powers tried to justify their excessive control over these colonies in the name of educating and improving the lives of so called ‘dark skinned’. As Edward W. Said has rightly commented, “Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate.”

Joseph Conrad’s ‘Heart of Darkness’ is a fine example of imperialism through conspiracy in the context of Congo. It is a true description of the poor state and ill treatment of native people in the hands of self-proclaimed “Civilized people”. Conrad himself toured Congo as a sailor and

he is speaking his experience through Marlow. Marlow's description of the dark continent is subconsciously influenced by Conrad's own experiences in Congo. There are many themes in "Heart of Darkness" but this article will focus particularly on the theme of conspiracy as a part of imperialism as this book is considered to be the bible for scholars who desire to study imperialism in fiction. There are all the elements of conspiracy like cruelty, greed, hypocrisy and racial discrimination which are abundantly present in the book. All these aspects will be looked at closely in the light of imperialism and colonialism in this article.

### **Cruelty and Brutality**

Conrad clearly reveals the immoral acts, brutality and savagery done by Europeans to the Congolese. They were severely beaten by Europeans just to stir fear in the hearts of the natives and they became victims of unbearable exploitation and sufferings. One example is about the incidence of a native, thought to have caused fire and had to undergo violent and severe beatings though nobody knew or was sure that the poor African was the victim. Marlow personified as Conrad in this book states, "a nigger was being beaten nearby. They said he had caused fire in some way; be that it may, he was screeching most horribly." (Conrad, 36)

The natives were treated not even like slaves but worse than slaves of America as they were at least well fed by the slave -owners and hence they were healthy. However, these poor workers were let to starve to death once they fell sick.

Marlow commented:" 'They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now— nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest.'"(25)

Starvation here is an extreme immoral component of European conspirators that they used it as a tool for causing more sufferings to the indigenous inhabitants of Congo. Surprisingly, though they were uncivilized and on the frontier of starvation, these poor and hungry Africans had moral values more than the Europeans who usurped their power and almost everything in their land under the pretext of “the noble cause”. The natives were referred as “cannibals “by the Europeans, but in fact they never revolted against the Europeans even at the face of death due to hunger. Marlow himself was astonished and pointed out:” Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn’t go for us—they were thirty to five—and have a good tuck-in for once, amazes me now when I think of it.” (67)

Besides extreme hunger, the natives were forced into labor with a useless salary and they were treated like beasts. They worked with iron collars around their necks \_” each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking.”(23)

Moreover, Joseph Conrad uses the character of Kurtz in the novel as a symbol of barbarity imposed on the natives. Kurtz treated the Congolese mercilessly as many imperialists did in many regions of Africa. One of the cruelest events that is narrated in the novel is about the terror and killing of the Africans by Kurtz who were against him. He surrounded his hut with their skulls and intentionally turned their faces to cause more terror among the natives. The peak of his cruelty is reflected through the recommendation he made about the future guidance of the natives which says “Exterminate all the brutes.” (83).

So, we can say that the well-crafted conspiracy of pretending to guide the indigenous people with a religion to follow and a civilized life, Europeans led them to starve, vandalize and murder the inhabitants of Congo.

## **Greed and power**

Greed is the primary reason behind the colonization of many nations in Africa. In fact, the hearts of the Europeans are full of darkness with the greed of ivory and other resources of Congo ‘It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness’. (8) This was Marlow’s opinion about the looting of the African nations. People with greed would even resort to murdering the people who oppose and they forget to show mercy towards the unarmed. Kurtz, the main character of the novel, is the employee of a Belgium company to trade ivory in Congo. Of course, ivory trade is the most significant part of the colonial project in Congo at that time. Gradually, he becomes so powerful by doing so many unscrupulous deeds that he is able to dominate all the inhabitants. He is depicted as the representative of the Europeans whose hearts are filled with greed and in the disguise of helping the natives, their resources are looted or robbed. We can notice that Kurtz became so engrossed with this darkness of greed, that in the end he gives his life for the ivory trade. His greed was so much that they didn’t really have any concern about the condition of the natives but would use them for obtaining maximum profit. He exploited them until ‘they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away’ (25) He was so concerned about the profit share of the ivory he had collected. Marlow recollects what Kurtz told him:

“This lot of ivory now is really mine. The Company did not pay for it. I collected it myself at a very great personal risk. I am afraid they will try to claim it as theirs though. H’m. It is a difficult case. What do you think I ought to do—resist? Eh? I want no more than justice.’ (123-124)

Kurtz became greedier to achieve his dream of acquiring more wealth. He was never content with the amount of ivory he collected and he is a true portrayal of a society gripped with power and greed.

### **Hypocrisy**

Hypocrisy and conspiracy are an integral part of imperialism. These were intensively followed by colonizers especially the European men in the book to show the outer world that instead of exploiting the natural resources of the colony, they were trying to educate and improve the lives of native people. It was their tool to justify their cruel and brutal activities. It was in this pursuit to show their benevolence, the company decided to call Kurtz back to illustrate its disagreement with his brutal ways. They tried to create an impression of being compassionate and concerned about the unfortunate living conditions of native people. It is quite evident to see how Marlow's aunt believed that he is going to Africa to give light and knowledge to those under-privileged people.

“Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle. There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all the hambug, got carried off her feet. She talked about weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways.” (17)

The sole motive of Marlow's company was to attain maximum profits by selling ivory. The employees were a part of the conspiracy to exploit the people as well as animals to maximize their profits. It was a sheer quest for money and profits. Their indifference to the sufferings caused by them on the native people show the darkness hidden in their hearts. Africans were

treated as mere objects by the fair skinned people as Marlow himself refers to Hellsman as a piece of machinery.

### **Racial Discrimination**

Another area of conspiracy the Europeans used efficiently is the way in which they handled their attitude towards the Africans. The superiority of Europeans, according to them, wasn't just in their appearance, but in every sphere of life, such as civilization, education, health etc. Europeans came to the land of Congo with the masks of providing better standard of life and civilization, but, unmasked the vices of racism, racial discrimination and segregation among the people during the African Colonial era. Europeans of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were, undeniably racist when compared to the modern and today's people in Europe. So, it is understood that a writer from their community would definitely show many glimpses of racial discrimination in a work of art. Europeans considered Africa as 'dark continent' with people who don't have any religious beliefs or with any particular civilization. Being written during the African colonial era, 'Heart of Darkness' depicts racism, directed from the Europeans towards the Africans as part of a plot to imperialize the country.

Signs of racial discrimination can be observed at various instances throughout the novel. The description of African men's faces as 'grotesque masks' at the beginning of the novel, of course, as part of their willful scheme, is a way of matching them with the ugly and unpleasant things Marlow sees in Congo.( Achebe)

“They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks—these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast.” (Conrad 20)

Conrad mostly addressed the natives as savages, and described them as animals who were forced to do hard labor. He referred them using derogatory language such as black fellows, savages, niggers, and ‘them ‘and thereby treating them as just objects. “They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages”. (23) ‘black shapes crouched’, ‘they were nothing earthly now— nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation’. (25) These references are explicit examples of how the natives are treated in the novel. Marlow, the protagonist, with intended conspiracy, never compares the people of Congo equal or similar to the Europeans. At times we can observe the comparison made with animals rather than human beings, especially when he talked about the fireman, a ‘savage’ and ‘an improved specimen’; “He was there below me, and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs.’ (59) In this way his racist attitude and expressions continue at various parts of the novel. It can be pointed out that Joseph Conrad’s novel, ‘Heart of Darkness’ is a reflection of the racist attitude of the colonizers as part of their imperialistic conspiracy of that period of time.

### **Conclusion**

Marlow the protagonist describes different components of conspiracy in the novel like cruelty, hypocrisy, greed and racism as explained above through the characters of Kurtz and other Europeans. The inhuman devastation of the Africans and the brutal treatment of the natives by Kurtz by using his power are some of the imperialistic ways in which the Europeans exploited the Congo people. It is not just the cruel deeds but their audacity to even eliminate or kill the people shows how greedy and insatiable they were in plundering the nation. All these deeds were done under the pretext of educating and civilizing the indigenous people of Congo but they ended up committing illegal and immoral acts that “real civilized” people wouldn’t do. Malcolm X wisely commented about “Imperialism as Western interests: imperialism, exploitation, racism

and other negative-isms.” Joseph Conrad authenticates Malcolm X’s quote in his novel ‘Heart of Darkness’ through the character of Marlow for Europeans had these evil approaches as tools of their conspiracy. It is a pity to realize that all the "white" characters except for Marlow in this novel are indeed more "black" than the natives because of their inhuman and immoral acts.

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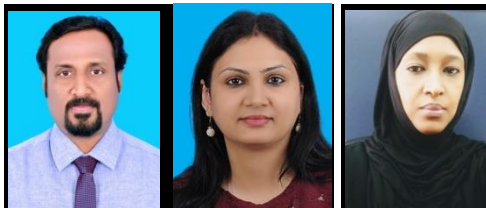
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## Teaching Competency-Based Approach : The roles of learners in Middle Schools

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### Introduction

Since its independence, Algeria has witnessed various methodological approaches which have often been taken whole, or with minimal modification, into contexts where English is being learned as a foreign language. Grammar Translation, Audiolingualism and/or Structural Approach have been based on the presentation and practice of grammatical structures and, essentially, a grammar-based syllabus. In the 1980's, came Communicative Language Teaching with a radical shift away from using the traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary to describe language to an analysis of the communicative meanings that learners would need in order to express themselves and to understand effectively. Implemented some years ago, Competency-Based Approach attempts to focus on the content knowledge learners will acquire and the cognitive skills they will master.

However, to move steadily towards the concept of a learning society, more innovation, resourcefulness and flexibility are expected in the way formal education and training programmes are organized so as to maximize learning access and outcomes. Schools and training institutions will need to become learning communities—places of knowledge sharing and socialization which fosters living and working together; above all, places where individuals learn how to learn. The creation of such an environment will in turn require sometimes significant adaptations in the roles of learners.

### 2. The roles of the learner

The roles entrusted to learners make them as interactive as possible. This time they can interact, listen to each other, react to what is said and negotiate meaning. The learners should be given the opportunity to:

**2.1. Develop knowledge and understand the topic(s):** for any topic, pupils have prior knowledge that provides a foundation for new learning. Teachers assess, value this knowledge,

and build pupils' motivation by gaining knowledge of their interests and experiences to make instruction meaningful.

**2.2. Collect, analyse and organise information:** learners need to research understand, make connections, see relevancies, draw conclusions and present information for others to use. That's why the 4 areas of basic English skills (reading-writing-listening-speaking) are essential. Here, learners should have the capacity to locate information, sift and sort information in order to select what is required and present it in a useful way and evaluate both the information itself and the sources and methods used to obtain it.

**2.3. Communicate ideas and information:** (through either listing the ideas or note taking): listening, speaking and writing are relevant skills here. Here, learners should have the capacity to communicate effectively with others using the range of spoken, written, graphic and other non-verbal means of expression.

**2.4. Work with others in teams:** relevant to the increasing of group work activities of communicating ideas, knowledge...Here, we are moving from somehow chalk to talk activities. Brown (1994) believes that group work is "*central to maintaining linguistic interaction in the classroom*" (Brown, 1994:173). According to Long (1989) there are five major benefits of group work which include: increasing the quantity of language practice, increasing the quality of student talk, helping to individualize instruction, improving the affective climate in the classroom, and helping motivate learners because of the previous four reasons (Long, 1989: 9). With these benefits in mind we developed most of our activities around group work..

**2.5. Solve problems:** This can be given at a higher level. Students are encouraged to develop an inquiring approach and to be able to arrive at a logical conclusion. So; the role of the teacher is to help learners see the problem and assist with techniques or strategies for it. Problem solving is not a teaching strategy but an intellectual behaviour that facilitates learning. In order to insure that this process is effective pupils should complete an entire cycle which includes a step-by-step process: recognising, identifying, and understanding problems; proposing solutions, testing solutions, and arriving at tentative conclusions; and evaluating solutions. Reading, interpreting and predicting can be the key skills.

### 3- Conclusion:

As the programme is based on socio-constructivism, the learner should go through a process of personal appropriation, questioning his own convictions. This leads the learner to revise his prior knowledge and its scope to compare his own representations with those of his classmates, to search for information and validate it through consulting various sources of documentation and people in possession of information. In doing so, the learner will appeal to cognitive, affective and motivational strategies in order to set a balance between his previous knowledge and his newly acquired knowledge. The reflection of the learner will operate on his own learning processes, assure the quality of his acquisition and facilitate his retention.

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## Demystifying Theatre: Badal Sircar

Alpna Saini\*

The working people -the factory workers, the peasants, the landless laborers- will have to make and perform their own plays. We have deprived them not only of food, clothing, shelter, and education, but also of self-confidence. Here we can also help by demystification, by assuring them that theatre is not the monopoly of the educated. (“A Letter from Badal Sircar”)

Thus writes Badal Sircar in a letter to Richard Schechner, probing the reasons and purpose of the emergence of his kind of theatre, popularly known as the third theatre. The theatre as he believes is not the dominion of the intellectual class, it is for everyone and ought to reach everyone, it needs demystifying: precisely what the third theatre aimed to achieve - an opening up to include people irrespective of class, gender and language.

Badal Sircar (1925-2011) has created a genuine people’s theatre known as the third theatre, a theatre supported and created by people and not merely performed by them. Transcending the limits and limitations of the traditional and folk theatres, the third theatre is a four-way flow of influences – actor to actor, audience to actor, actor to audience and audience to audience. *Procession*, *Bhoma* and *Stale News* are the plays based on this conception of theatre. Through his plays, Sircar suggests constructive action aimed at social change.

But this kind of theatre was not the kind Sircar began his theatrical journey with. It emerged out of his long experience of writing, directing and acting in plays ranging from the comedies of the early period and the angsty, reactionary plays of the later phase.

His foray into playwriting began with satirical/comic plays: *Solution X* (1956), *Baropisima* (1959), *Sanibar* (1959), *Kabikahini* (1964) which Sircar wrote while working as an engineer in a town near Calcutta where he established a rehearsal club with his colleagues to stage plays of various dramatists and later started writing his own plays. Although Sircar clarifies in the letter, “I wrote some plays because I am a man of the theatre, not because I am a writer”. These plays were written for the proscenium stage.

In the next phase of his playwriting career, Sircar wrote existential, reactionary and anxious plays beginning with *Ebong Indrajit* (1963). This phase saw Sircar moving from England to France and then to Nigeria where he wrote a few major plays of his career including *Baki Itihaas* (1965), *Tringsha Satabdi* (1966) and *Pagla Ghoda* (1967). These plays were written for the proscenium but they also possess a few attributes of his

later *Aanganmancha* style. For example the four major characters Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit of the play *Ebong Indrajit* are conceived to emerge from among the members of the audience. In 1967 Sircar formed his theatre group Satabdi and started producing and directing plays modelled on the proscenium theatre. With a long experience of productions, he became aware of the constraints of proscenium theatre, the major ones being their inability to reach wider audience, lack of direct communication with the audience, failure to attract economically weaker section and rural viewers and the unaffordably high cost of production. In 1972 Sircar visited USA and there he met the likes of Richard Schechner and Julian Beck who were the proponents of Brechtian style of theatre. These encounters influenced him in the development of his style of theatre. Group rehearsals and discussions with Julian Beck and Judith Malina also helped him envision his idea of third theatre.

There exist several theories as to why Sircar moved from the proscenium to the *Aanganmancha* and then finally to the outdoor theatre which became popular as free theatre or later as third theatre. Sircar himself mentions various reasons for this shift in his book *The Third Theatre* and various other writings. He explains in his letter to Schechner:

The immediate reason was that of communication - we wanted to break down the barriers and come closer to the spectators, to take full advantage of direct communication that theatre as a live-show offers. We wanted to share with our audience the experience of joint human action. But in taking that course we also found our theatre outside the clutches of money. We could establish a free theatre, performing in public parks, slums, factories, villages, wherever the people are, depending on voluntary donations from the people for the little expenses we needed. We stopped using sets, spotlights, costly costumes, make-up - not as a matter of principle, but because we realized that they are not essentials, even if sometimes necessary. We concentrated on the essentials - the human body and the human mind. Our theatre became a flexible, portable and inexpensive -almost free- theatre.

Theatre critic Bim Mason attributes the advent of outdoor theatre or minimal theatre the world over to several factors:

The emergence of new areas of artistic activity does not happen in a vacuum. The growth of outdoor theatre in the last few years demonstrates that there was a need which it fulfils and a role that may become increasingly important in the future. This rapid development is part of the result of two great changes during the twentieth century. The first is the 'democratisation' of art, as a result of political and economic changes since the First

World War, and the second the enormous transformation of the performing arts brought about by the communication technologies of film, television and video. (8-9)

He blames the problem of the economy and the attraction of new technologies as they are more effective at replicating illusion that requires little imagination. As a result, traditional theatre cannot compete with them and is forced to step away from naturalism.

In this kind of theatre, following Brecht, the audience is prevented from lapsing into the illusion that the actors are real characters. It also assimilates elements from Grotowski's Poor Theatre of doing away with elaborate sets and costumes and it projects the actor as the foremost feature onstage. But Sircar gave a new direction to this kind of theatre movement in India incorporating elements from Brechtian and Grotowskian theatre along with some innovations of his own. Subhendu Sarkar explains the various techniques of Sircar's theatre in the following words:

There is no linear story that steadily mounts up to the climax. . . . the episodic plot, minimum use of props, actors directly addressing the audience, the role of Stage Managers in carrying the plot forward, an actor appearing in two or more roles (xvi)

Sircar used the elements of this kind of theatre in his production of *Sagina Mahato* (1971): seating the audience on three sides of the acting space and imaginative use of actors' bodies. But in *Gondi* (1978), Sircar's adaptation of *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, this technique touched unprecedented heights. As Sircar remarks:

First performance of *Gondi*—an adaptation I made of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. We felt good. We enjoyed preparing it—only fifteen performers taking care of forty roles; hut, stream, door, trees, bridge made of human bodies. (“A Letter from Badal Sircar”)

Through this play, Sircar attempted to bring a revolutionary change in the thematics and technique of the Indian theatre as he felt that the folk theatre lacked the relevance, subtlety and progress desired by the working class of India while the urban proscenium theatre was “money-bound and city-bound”. The third theatre emerged out of this void that had distanced the working class and rural India from contemporary theatre, and not out of any desire to experiment in form - as Sircar writes in a letter:

Historically there appears to be a need for a third theatre in our country -a flexible, portable, free theatre as a theatre of change, and that is what we are trying to build. This theatre is not an experimentation in form.

The outcome of this kind of theatre achieved the desired flexibility, intimacy with the audience, portability, cost reduction and progressive thematic. His Surendranath Park performances were a success and people from all walks of life began to associate with his theatre. Sircar performed his

plays in public halls, in fields, in parks and gardens. Aparna Dharwadker remarks about his unique style:

Echoing Walter Benjamin's classic formulation of the relation between art and the modes of mechanical reproduction, Sircar also theorizes theatre in specific contradistinction to film and other mass-cultural forms. Collectively, these recent and competing theories of form, content, and presentation constitute a self-reflexive discursive field that has no precedent in Indian theatre. (70)

He describes in *The Third Theatre* the idea and practical elucidation of his method. He rejects the naturalistic theatre and the proscenium but he emphasizes the intimacy of overall experience - "the appeal of an art form is principally, if not solely, through emotion, and not through intellect" (*Changing Language* 26). Satabdi performed *Spartacus* in a hall as well as in Surendranath Park in 1972. Sircar first directed his plays *Michhil* and *Bhoma* for village shows in 1974 and 1976 respectively. The latter was penned and produced collectively with the villagers.

Body language is an important component of his plays. Often the stage equipment can be created by the mere application of body language. Thus this kind of theatre becomes portable and can be performed anywhere. Moreover, this was 'free' theatre. No ticket was required to see it, and the production was quite inexpensive. And it offered progressive, free ideas to its spectators as Sudhanva Deshpande remarks:

What this theatre did require, though, was imagination. Too much of what goes in the name of 'street theatre' (particularly today, when the NGOs have appropriated the form to a great extent) is patronising, artistically weak, imaginatively barren and plain boring. Sircar's theatre was never barren, intellectually or aesthetically.

Eventually Sircar severed ties with the left front and felt disillusioned with the ground reality of the party but he claimed to be a Marxist to his last days. He continued writing and producing people's theatre, propagating awareness about social injustice, the downside of nuclear warfare and several other subjects. The left responded his social criticism severely and banned his outdoor performance for a brief period but he continued producing his kind of progressive theatre. Sadanand Menon remarks about the reaction of the left front:

What they refused to acknowledge was that Sircar and his Satabdi group represented the cleanest example within modern Indian theatre of a group relentlessly questioning its own politics and, in the process, persuading its audiences also into intense self-reflexivity. What the flagwavers of the organised Left failed to see was that while they themselves picked up issues that concerned a narrow bandwidth in India called the "proletariat", Sircar was speaking about a much more capacious bandwidth called the "poor".

He also conducted several workshops in the techniques he had explored. He influenced several playwrights, theatre directors and film directors in his time and continues to do so even today. Menon records Sircar's influence on contemporary theatre in the following words:

In 30 years he would have easily conducted over 300 long and short workshops and catalysed the work of a large roll-call of prominent theatre personalities – from Heisnam Kanhailal in Manipur to Prasanna in Karnataka; from Probir Guha in Bengal to Madeeha Gauhar in Pakistan. . . . but there is no evidence yet that Third Theatre poses a challenge to the proscenium. For all of Sircar's ideas and exemplary effort in giving shape to them, it remains a fringe phenomenon in contemporary Indian theatre.

Although his kind of selfless and unprofitable theatre has only a few followers, yet Sircar's influence reflects not only in the free street theatre but also in the proscenium productions and films through a doing away with realistic sets, the lighting and stage effects. Bim Mason explains the transformation that has overhauled theatre today:

In the theatre musicians were no longer hidden in the orchestra pit but began to be placed onstage in the manner of Asian theatre. Nowadays they are frequently included in the main action. The mechanics of changing costumes, putting on masks and creating stage effects can now be done in front of the audience. It is the ingenuity of creating pictures out of simple objects and physical skills that audiences appreciate more than the completeness of the illusion. There is a more direct and honest relationship with the audience. (10)

Although theatre faces great competition from more popular and accessible media of television and film, yet it has the great advantage of proximity to and interaction with the audience. It ensures that the theatrical skills of performers are better realized and have enormous impact on the audience. The prospect of active interaction lays stress on the extempore proficiency and the persona of the actor. If theatre envisages any intention to bring about change, a certain level of interactive action is a must. And for any interaction, a democratisation, an unravelling or a kind of demystification is the first step. And to achieve this purpose the theatre must come to the people rather than expecting people to come to it. This is what Sircar's theatre achieved. The proponents and followers of his third theatre continue to cherish and propagate his legacy.



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**“The World is No Longer Just Black and White”: Understanding the ‘trishankus’ of South Africa in Reference to Athol Fugard’s “Blood Knot”**

**Dr. Neha Arora\***

“I who am poisoned with the blood of both,

Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?

I who have cursed

The drunken officer of British rule, how choose

Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?

Betray them both, or give back what they give?

How can I face such slaughter and be cool?

How can I turn from Africa and live?

In the above lines, Dennis Brutus attempts to capture the dilemma and mental conflict of a mulatto. The poem, ‘A Far Cry From Africa’ is about those ‘coloured’, ‘hybrid’, ‘mixed-race’ people who are branded as ‘outsiders’ for life-term, never amalgamated in the mainstream. The colour of their skin puts them on the periphery, leaving them in the labyrinth of certain unanswered questions. The theme of ‘coloured’ people was common with many South African writers from the mid of the twentieth century to its last decade. Even after the political scene changed in the country, i.e in the post-apartheid era too, the past haunts the people and the writers still are preoccupied with the theme of racial segregation. The contemporary politics was solely responsible for the same subject recurring in the literature of that period. Athol Fugard’s “Blood Knot” is one such piece of South African literature that **deals** with the issue of ‘coloured’ people, how the ‘blood knot’ between the two brothers gets affected due to the colour of their skin, as if only

‘colour’ determines the fate of man. The protagonists struggle to understand how both can be so similar and so divided at the same time. In Indian context, we can extend the same to the ‘caste’ factor that becomes the ultimate determinant of a person’s destiny. Even before a person is born, his/her ‘caste’ decides his fortune. And an untouchable born out of the union of a low-caste woman and a high-caste man is always treated as an ‘outcaste’, never assimilated, compelled to live a fragmented life.

“The Blood Knot” (1961) was re-written as “Blood Knot” in 1987. Fugard admitted it to be the first play in which he discovered his voice. He wrote it while working as a stage manager for South Africa’s National Theatre Organization. It was his first international success with Zakes Mokae and Fugard playing the two roles in 1961 in Johannesburg. The ‘knot’ in the play is the common blood of the two characters. Both are **ethnically black but one is ‘light skinned’ and could pass for white. Both represent South Africa; both are the two halves of the common whole. If Zachariah is physically exhausted, Morris remains mentally worn out with the burden of guilt. From the blood shared by the two brothers, Fugard moves on to a more universal theme of human bonding.**

Morris and Zachariah, although living together, are moving towards a grim and uncertain future. The shared yet unshared or partially shared childhood has different memories for both. Zach is the ‘dark-skinned’ labourer and Morris is the ‘light skinned’ thinker but they both are the two halves of the same self. Fugard willingly sacrificed the characters for symbolism and in this play too, he employs symbolism in abundance to drive home his point. Zach and Morris are not just two individuals, two brothers of different ‘colour’, they represent the two races in South Africa that can co-exist without any acrimony but the Laws of the state create unnecessary barriers among people. Fugard’s aim is at drawing attention to these futile practices which separate people and affect universal brotherhood. He is a white South African playwright whose aim is to create a humane future without succumbing to violence. In an interview he said, “My plays are a series of burning focuses on light relationships”.

Before moving further, it is imperative to first define the word ‘coloured’. Can it be simply described as ‘mixed race’, ‘half-breed’, ‘half-caste’, ‘mulatto’ etc? Do these terms

so easily capture the pain of being a wandering, unacceptable island? To quote Gavin Lewis, this labelling of the people as 'coloured' is 'an attempt by the white supremacist state to divide blacks and to preserve white "racial purity" by treating Coloureds as a separate, coherent, and homogeneous "race" apart from both Africans and whites with a few more privileges than the former and much fewer than the latter'. The 'coloured' people are never integrated completely by either of the two communities. They are always segregated from and discriminated against the whites, compelled to live an instable, fluid life, divided self and ambivalent condition; caught between the two bloods, they are always marginalised. The sense of 'unbelongingness' engulfs them. They feel isolated, dislocated, displaced.

A glimpse of the social-cultural-political background of South Africa is essential to have a clear image and understanding of the literature of the region. The excess of racial discrimination made it impossible for the South African writers to write without talking politics. The Apartheid regime created an atmosphere of despair and humiliation and 'Race' became the most important factor; not just the lives of the people but the literature of the country too became race-centred. The issue of racial segregation was so rampant that although living in the post-apartheid era, the writers are meditating on the relationship between the past and the present but in no way are they ready to relinquish the past to amnesia. In the rest of Africa, literature was initiated by Africans who turned to writing in order to oppose colonialism, South African literature was initially associated with white writers of English descent trying to establish a literary culture. The cultural geography of the that time South Africa was important as it was dominated by a three-way political competition between Africans, the British and Afrikaners (settlers of Dutch descent in the region) and each of these group constructed a distinct literature important in the struggle for South Africa.

Certain key political conflicts such as the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902), the establishment of the apartheid state (1948) and the Soweto uprising (1976) were responsible to a large extent for the unrest in the state for almost four and a half decades. With the coming of Nationalist Party to power in 1948, the apartheid state was established. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define 'apartheid' as 'the policy initiated by the Nationalist Government after 1948....a means of institutionalizing and preserving white

supremacy' (*Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 17). Also certain laws were framed that had severe implications in the long-term: The Group Areas Act restricted people to live in terms of their race; the Immorality Act forbade inter-racial sexual relationship and marriage; the Population Registration Act mandated classification of people into racial categories; the Mixed Amenities Act codified racial segregation in public facilities; the Suppression of Communism Act directed at all forms of radical opposition to the state; with the use of Pass Laws, the non-whites were supposed to carry a pass that identified them, and if not stamped, their access to white area was restricted and the Bantu Education Act in 1959 mandated the teaching of texts that reinforced the government's stereotyped notions of the races. Due to the latter, writers such as Es'kia (Ezekiel) Mphahlele, Dennis Brutus, Alex la Guma and Dan Jacobson were forced into exile or were imprisoned. In 1960s almost wholesale banning of writers were imposed.

With the aggravation of the racial situation, writers tended to share a common project: the use of literature to protest against apartheid, ranging from Peter Abraham's stark realism in *Mine Boy* (1946) to Allon Paton's lyrical and elegiac prose *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948). This changed the character of South African literature. Of the poets of 1950s and 1960s, Dennis Brutus has been most associated with the literature of protest against apartheid. He was born in Rhodesia of South African "coloured" parents. His 'Letters to Martha' (1968), written as letters to his sister-in-law, is his most influential collection of poetry. J.M.Coetzee is regarded as South Africa's most acclaimed novelist and has been awarded the Booker Prize twice – *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) and *Disgrace* (1999). His four novels – *In the Heart of the Country* (1974), *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), *Age of Iron* (1990) and *Disgrace* (1999) deal, directly/indirectly with the ethics of living in an apartheid/post-apartheid state. Nadine Gordimer, the only South African to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature, (1991) is a prolific writer of short stories, novels, essays and political commentary. She calls herself a "white African", and minutely observes and interprets the South African society. In her 1973 work of literary criticism, *The Black Interpreters*, she indicates her own identification as an African writer, suggesting that African writing is defined by "the experience of having been shaped, mentally and spiritually, by Africa rather than anywhere else in the world" and not merely by skin colour. Her initial works like the collection of short stories, *Face to Face* (1949)

and her first novel, *the Lying Days* (1953), she explores the complex issues of the repercussions of apartheid on black and white South Africans. She calls the responsibility of the writer “the essential gesture” i.e the white writer should raise the consciousness of people “who have not woken up”. Her earlier novels deal with the unequal relationship between the blacks and the whites due to apartheid, the latter novels deal with the process of recovering from the “disease” of apartheid. In her novel, *My Son’s Story*, she describes the ‘coloured’ people on the fringes:

“As some lordly wild animal marks the boundaries of his hunting and mating ground which no other may cross, it was as if the municipality left some warning odour, scent of immutable authority, where the Saturday people were not to transgress. And they read the scent; they recognized it always, it had always been there...” (MSS, 12)

Athol Fugard is the witness to both the eras – the apartheid and the post-apartheid. **In *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard*, Albert Wertheim contends that “Fugard’s plays have been milestones and signposts of apartheid’s devastating progress, its demise, and the future that is unfolding in its wake”.** He is the most acclaimed voice of drama from South Africa. His oeuvre comprises twenty five plays, four film scripts and two novels. **He was a founding member of the Serpent Players between the late 1950s and early 1970s and was also instrumental in the establishment of an interracial politically committed alternative theatre in South Africa during the apartheid years.** In collaboration of his actress wife, Sheila Meiring, he founded The Circle Players, for which Fugard wrote his first play, *Klaas and the Devil* (1956). Working as a clerk at the Native Commissioner’s Court, Johannesburg, Fugard felt disgusted with the practice of injustices in the court. The Court dealt with black persons charged with violations of the Pass Laws that restricted their movements in apartheid South Africa, and gave a European judge the option of applying Native or Common law. Hence, **with his dramas, he dared to tackle the issues of apartheid. The setting of most of his plays is Port Elizabeth part of South Africa, and his characters are usually two or three marginalized characters linked by the bond of love, friendship, blood etc, struggling to survive in the difficult circumstances. Post-apartheid, like Gordimer, Fugard has turned his attention to the problems of the new South Africa.**

Through each of his drama, he attempted to create an awareness of equality among the people. He wrote profusely on the issues of the coloured/miscegenates who are 'unwanted, unacceptable' by the society. They were primarily an outcome of the inter-marriage between the Khoi-Khoi community and the slaves from East Indies and East Africa. The Immorality Act barred the relationship between the blacks and the whites and thus began racial discrimination from 1910 onwards. Many people of the mixed racial origins disliked the word 'coloured'. These people led a worse life, always marginalized as white man's 'rubbish', the intermediate life. Fugard's "Boesman and Lena" projects the physical and psychological problems of the victims of the 'apartheid' rule. Placing these two South African nobodies on stage and using them as his protagonists, Fugard made a political statement. With works like "Nongogo" (1977), "Hello and Goodbye" (1966) and "People Are Living There" (1969) he portrayed the experiences of common black people in apartheid era of South Africa. In his "Sizwe Bansi is Dead" and "The Island" he comes up most emphatically on apartheid. The former hinges on a black man's desire to survive in the Group Areas Act, the latter focuses on the courage and sacrifices of black political activists in apartheid South Africa.

"Klaas and the Devil" (1956), "No-Good Friday" (1958), "Nongogo" (1959), "The Blood Knot" (1961), later revised and entitled "Blood Knot" (1987), "Hello and Goodbye" (1965), "Master Harold...and the Boys" (1982), "The Road to Mecca" (1984), "My Children! My Africa!" (1989), "My Life" (1992), "Playland" (1993), "Sorrows and Rejoicings" (2001), "Exits and Entrances" (2004) are some of his famous plays where his favourite theme of anti-apartheid recurs.

**As per Mel Gussow's 1982 report of Athol Fugard's profile, the playwright's personal life provides the source to "The Blood Knot". He quotes from Fugard's diary entries:**

"My father was dying, my daughter was unborn—and I was writing my play into the face of nothing.... It is a congenial environment for my writing." The inspiration for the play was [Fugard's] relationship with his brother, Royal. "The dominant element in my consciousness as I wrote the play was that it gave me an opportunity to deal with a very complicated emotional relationship with my brother," Fugard says. "In the crude

categories of a very stupid educational system, I was regarded as bright and my brother was regarded as slow. He was three years older, but I caught up with him in school and then went on to leave him behind. I passed my exams and he failed—and that created emotional complications.”

Athol Fugard’s “The Blood Knot” deals with the lives of two brothers, Zachariah, the ‘dark-skinned’ and Morris, the ‘light-skinned’. The setting of the play is significant. All the actions take place in ‘a one-room shack in the “non-white location” of Korsten, Port Elizabeth’ (“Blood Knot”, 2). In this crude and savage setting where the walls are ‘a patchwork of scraps of corrugated iron’ (2), we also find ‘a few books (including a Bible) and an alarm-clock’ (2) on a shelf over one of the two beds, indicating the presence of the ‘whites’. Using only two characters on the stage is a deliberate move on the part of the dramatist; it heightens their plight and sense of loneliness. They are cut off from the society but are also not together with each other. In the tiny one-room, they are living isolated lives; neither of the two comprehends the agony of the other. What is that that separates the two brothers, bonded by blood? Is it only due to the different fathers? Ironically the pain of both is aggravated with having a common mother. How, despite being born from the same womb, their lives were carved out in an entirely different manner? And why? It is these metaphysical questions that are raised by Fugard in “Blood Knot” and compels the readers to think seriously.

Fugard has blended two themes in his play. No where do we find only the theme of post colonialism dominant, rather he has intertwined it quite interestingly with the issue of apartheid. We cannot confine ourselves only to the condition of Zachariah, a black man’s plight and how he is ill-treated by the ‘whites’ without thinking about Morris, who is ‘punished’ to live a life of a *trishanku*. For no fault, he is forced to have fractured/fissured identity, makes him a no where man, a wandering island. It does, indirectly, through the conversation between the two brothers, tells the readers/audience about the colonizers’ attitude and behaviour with the black, simultaneously, the play also talks much about the half-castes/bastard children or the ‘coloured’ people. The suffering of neither of the two is less by any means.

Can we say Fugard depicts a reverse situation in his play in showing Morris ‘caged’ in a room, waiting for Zach to come back from work and mechanically preparing hot water



for Zach's feet? A white man serving a black? Had this play written in resistance to colonization, the interpretation would have been acceptable but Fugard enlarges the scope and discusses one of the serious issues of the contemporary South Africa, i.e apartheid. Zachariah and Morris, although are brothers by blood, but the presence of their father's blood dilutes the relationship. We experience an emotional distance between the two – 'their meeting is without words' (3).

The two brothers are in a 'knot' yet we sense a kind of detachment between the two, although the geographical distance is diminished by Morris returning to his 'motherland', the emotional distance due to their different 'fatherland' still remained. Although it is almost one year of Morris's return, Zachariah is still in two minds about Morris, but his suspicion is not unfounded. The lengthy discussion on 'salt/s' in the very beginning subtly focuses upon the betrayal by the whites. When the play begins, Morris readies the hot water for cleaning and soothing Zachariah's feet when the latter returns after the day-long tedious job of standing at the park gate. He also adds some salt in it but the salt he uses that day is different from that he was using before. Zachariah detects the 'different stuff' and although both the salts are 'white' in colour, yet he is concerned for the 'smell' of both the salts. According to him 'the old smells sweeter' (5) whereas for Morris 'it's the healing properties' (4) that matter. On Morris' telling that because the old salt was not only ineffective but expensive too, Zachariah gets infuriated – "I do the bloody work – all day long – in the sun. Not him. It's my stinking feet that got the hardnesses. But he goes and makes my profit" (5). If one goes deep into the meaning, one can see that the two 'salts' can be the 'whites' who colonized Africa and also the light-skinned Morris. Both the salts are 'white' in appearance but they differ much in price and healing properties. While the 'old' stuff was profit-oriented, the 'new' aims at healing the wounds. Morris tries to convince Zach for the new one, symbolically dissuading him in believing that all 'light-skin' people are their enemies. Although Morris too is on the lighter shade in complexion, it does not necessarily be concluded that he is like the other 'whites' in the temperament and attitude too. He tries to win Zach's confidence reiterating that 'I'm on your side, they're on theirs' (6). Morris tries to apply balm on Zach's wounds but the latter's wounds are perennially afresh, beyond healing. As for Morris, the irony is while the 'whites' see only the 'black' blood in Morris, to the natives, he has just 'white' blood

flowing in his veins – neither of the two recognizes him. He himself does not know where actually his loyalty lies. The ‘coloured’ people are never integrated in either of the two communities. Likewise Morris too is perpetually worried – the natives do not show any sign of accepting him and the whites also kick him out. He is living in a dilemma – trying to win back Zach’s trust and through him, of all his people.

With the coming back of Morris, Zachariah’s old ‘black’ friend Minnie too stopped visiting him, who he remembers and misses much. In praying to God, to ‘please bring back Minnie’ (16), he is not just expecting his friend to be back, rather herein lies the deep poignant yearning for the old times to be back. The distrust shown by the blacks to Morris is apparent. They view him as one of the agents of the whites who has come there to plunder their land and by Zachariah accepting him in his house, Zach too is doubted upon by his people and even treated as a traitor.

Morris has clear plans about ‘their’ future, of owning ‘a small two-man farm’ (9). As he feels imprisoned and a stranger among the natives, he wants to escape far with Zach to some secure place. But Zachariah is unable to figure out the reason behind Morris’ ‘dream’ and in his outburst, ‘But I was in here ten years without plans and never needed them’ (12), he actually tears apart the ‘missionary/civilizing’ garb of the whites.

‘Home’ is used as a metaphor for South Africa by Fugard in all his works. It stands for a place where one can find safe refuge, solace for the disturbed soul and not just a shelter for the wearied body. If in “Master Harold...and the Boys”, it is a tea house for Hally, in “A Lesson for Aloes” it is a comfortable house for Piet and Gladys, for Zachariah and Morris it is a one-room shack. In the words of Fugard himself, “You can’t explain it...you can only say it. It’s where you finally belong and where you have to go back to. It’s where you’re *owed*. Home is a very deep transaction.” (“No Place like Home”, Maichael Paller).

Morris: You see...(Pause) there was all those years, when I was away.

Zachariah: Why did you come back?

Morris: I was passing this way.

Zachariah: So why did you stay?

Morris: We are brothers, remember. (16)

Morris seems to be living in a perpetual mental conflict. While among the whites, he questioned himself and felt like a betrayer, like Judas. He admits of having tried adopting the white culture as he got their skin colour by nature but there was something that always stopped him. And that something he later realizes was the blood of the black mother in his veins that reminded him of his loyalty to his motherland, the biological mother and the half- brother and this is the reason why he came back: 'I no longer wanted it. That's why I came back...So what was stopping me? You. There was always you. What sort of thing was that to do to your own flesh and blood brother? Anywhere, any place or road, there was always you, Zach. So I came back. I'm no Judas. Gentle Jesus, I'm no Judas' (57).

The last section of Scene I is quite significant. Some serious conversation between the two brothers focus upon their past and their parentage, throws light on the issue of emotional distance between the two and the non-acceptance of Morris by Zachariah and by the natives in general. Fugard also makes the play metaphysical by implicitly drawing symbols from the story of Cain and Abel. Morris feels guilty of having 'murdered' his brother. Full of remorse, he compares himself with Cain, who murdered his own brother Abel and was punished to wander on earth without any penitence. Morris compares his crime to be so grave and heinous that he will not find solace anywhere: 'And he said, what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength, a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth' (17). Morris returned with the aim of expiating for the wrongs he has done to Zach. He knows that until he does so, his heart will not be at rest. His offence is unpardonable due to which peace is eluding him. He, being hybrid, himself suffers and is in no way responsible for

the inhumanities done by the whites to the blacks, but since in his veins runs the white blood too, he cannot keep himself aloof from being the culprit. His suffering is two-fold – being half white, he feels of having sinned against all the blacks and hence not acceptable, and being half black, he is inferior/subaltern for the whites, again not welcomed. He is a river flowing between the two banks, but neither of the two can he call his. His soliloquy in the end of Scene I is very heart-rending wherein he laments of not being recognised by ‘his’ people, the blacks when he comes back. He was even afraid of knocking at the door of Zach’s house: ‘Will I be welcomed? Be forgiven?’ (17). When he wraps himself in Zach’s old coat, he actually wants to wrap himself ‘in the smell of him’ (17), that is, to dismantle all the boundaries between them. He considers himself more black than white. He feels a sense of incompleteness and in exasperation he utters ‘I wish that old washerwoman had bruised me too at birth. I wish I was as...’ (44). At this crucial moment, the alarm goes off, leaving his sentence half-uttered, his desire unfulfilled, his life fragmented. He is living a life in utter dilemma – he just has the light skin of the whites but deep beneath the skin, the whiteness is missing. Zach fails to understand that ‘The clothes will help, but only help. They don’t maketh the white man. It’s that white something inside you, that special meaning and manner of whiteness...this whiteness of theirs is not just in the skin...’ (53). But ironically this in-depth feeling of ‘whiteness’ actually foregrounds the ‘darkness’ within. Morris too knows that had it been just the complexion, he would have easily passed the test, but in his attitude towards the blacks, in his humanitarian approach, he differs from them. Here Fugard echoes Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* reminding the readers of the dark hearts within the white skin.

Zach makes Ethel Lange, a white woman his pen-pal. When her being ‘white’ is discovered by Morris when he sees her snapshot, he suggests Zach to put an end to their relationship. Moreover Ethel’s brother was a policeman. Zach once again fails to understand Morris’s fear, but Morris had better cognizance of where this friendship between a Black man and a White woman will take them too. Zach was after all a ‘*mombatti*’ (candle) like Arundhati Roy’s Velutha (in *The God of Small Things*) and will not be able to stand against the ‘*laltain*’ (lamp). He tries to warn Zach too saying ‘you’re playing with fire’ (33). Even to dream of a white girl is a ‘crime’. Zach knows that because he is a black, he is ill-treated by the whites at the park gates, but the volcano

within him erupted: 'The whole, rotten, stinking lot is all because I'm black! Black days, black ways, black things. They're me.'(44). But he is proud of his 'blackness'. It is here that Fugard juxtaposes the past of the two brothers. With the mention of the word 'playing', Zach and Morris both go back into reverie when they discuss their respective image of their 'mother':

Zachariah: But then I never had much to play with.

Morris: Didn't you?

Zachariah: Don't you remember? You got the toys.

Morris: Did I?

Zachariah: *Ja*. Like that top, Morrie. I have always remembered that brown stinkwood top. She gave me her old cotton-reels to play with, but it was n't the same, I wanted a top.

Morris: Who? Who gave me the top?

Zachariah: Mother.

Morris: Mother!

Zachariah: *Ja*. She said she only had one. There was always only one.

Zachariah has the complaint that Morris was always the privileged child among the two and this resentment in him keeps him at a distance with Morris. But situation was grimmer for the latter for even if Zachariah did not get the preferential treatment by their mother (as per his opinion), at least he was fortunate enough to have got the mother, as for Morris in the name of their mother's image was 'just a touch of sadness' (33). Talking about their mother Zachariah sings a song which apparently talks about Morris and apartheid people like him:

'My skin is black

The soap is blue,

But the washing comes out white.

I took a man

On a Friday night;

Now I'm washing a baby too.

Just a little bit black,

And a little bit white,

He's a Capie through and through.' (34)

If Zach has suffered the pain of being the left-out child, Morris's predicament is no less in magnitude. Even though he got the best of the toys in his childhood, his life itself became a toy for everyone to play with. Morris, the thinker, has a better experience of life since he has a taste of both the communities. He understands well the practical problems from which Zach is quite oblivious. In the last section of Scene II, he struggles to make Zach understand what he had suffered.

In Scene IV, once again Zach is made aware of his existence by Morris, either directly or indirectly. Morris reminds him of his blackness and forbids him in going further in his relationship with Ethel, but the real metaphysical moment comes when without Morris uttering a word, Zach realises who he is? He notices for the first time that Morris is 'on the light side' (45), this reminds him that he is not like Morris: 'But after a whole life I only seen myself properly tonight. You helped me'. (45)

Use of symbols is immense in the play. The brothers have the same mother but different fathers. The 'mother' can be interpreted as the biological black mother and also the motherland, Africa and the two half-brothers as the two races in the country. Taking the black woman as an object of sexual gratification by the white man was a common practice then and the children born out of such relationships were labelled 'bastards', 'coloured'; their hybrid condition never allowed them to be accepted by either of the two communities; like wandering islands, they belonged to both the worlds, yet belonged to neither of the two. Morris too has a similar experience and he represents the 'coloured' race of South Africa who were produced when the 'motherland' was 'raped/plundered' by the whites. Here I am reminded of an Indian Marathi Dalit writer, Sharankumar Limbale

who too has a fractured identity. Born out of the union of a dalit mother and an upper caste father, disowned by both, he labels the union of his parents as ‘rape’ and he being the product of that rape, is branded illegitimate for life-term. His father lived in a mansion and his mother in a hut, he himself was on the road, wandering in search of his roots. After having lived in the white community for some time, Morris finally decides to return, not sure of his acceptance here as well. He tries to adopt and adapt himself in the white culture but the black blood in his veins always created hindrance in him becoming completely ‘white’. But his condition is far worse as he does not feel secure even among the blacks. He is in quest of his identity, where actually his roots lie? To which place does he actually belong? Hence this play should be read with greater depth as the two themes are very intricately dovetailed.

Ethel Lange symbolises the whites, the intruders who came to disrupt the peace and divide the people. Fugard indirectly comments upon the process of colonization, how the colonizers take advantage of the naive natives and enslaved them in the garb of civilizing them. It is only later that the natives realize of the betrayal which eventually creates a rift between the two communities. In Scene IV, Morris is disturbed and feels deceived when Zach does not tell him about another letter of Ethel: ‘This is how brotherhood gets wrecked...in secrecy. It’s the hidden things that hurt and do the harm.’ (38) Here Fugard, in talking about the two brothers, actually cites the reason as to how and why relationships turn sour among people.

Scene VI is short but significant. We have just one soliloquy by Zach and for the first time we see him talking to himself, or rather talking to his ‘mother’. In a failed attempt he tries to fit himself in the new clothes that he bought for Morris. In the conversation with his mother, he gives words to the thought that always disturbed him: ‘Whose mother were you really? At the bottom of your heart, where your blood is red with pain, whom did you really love?’ (58). The stage instructions show his mother troubled with this question because for a mother, her children are always beautiful, she is always unbiased in her love for them, it is merely the self-constructed difference that make the children feel left-out/ignored. The same meaning could be extended to mother being motherland here and the two brothers as people of different races. Also, again drawing back to the Biblical

imagery, 'mother' could also refer to Eve who was 'tempted' by Devil (whites).

Fugard also touches 'I am Black. Black is Beautiful' motto of Negritude. Why should a black feel ashamed or inferior because of his complexion? Zach ends his conversation with his mother saying 'I got beauty too...haven't I?' (59). He is expressing his gratitude to his mother for giving him life, at the same time, this reverence can be for the motherland too to which he conveys his gratefulness and swears undying fidelity.

When Morris says that 'Rolling stones gather no moss' (18) is his motto, he believes that an end to the past acrimonious feelings can be put for everyone to live in harmony. Fugard's aim always is to clear the mist of distrust and to extend the hands of friendship and mutual understanding. Just because the whites treated the blacks with inhumanity, the blacks developed a general tendency of either detesting all the whites or expressing respect out of fear. Fugard does not propagate violence; rather he is in favour of amicably resolving the issues. Hence throughout the play, through Morris, he emphasized the significance of talking/ negotiation/discussion as 'talking helps...You find the answers to things' (14). Putting Zach and Morris in a tiny room is done intentionally by Fugard reiterating the fact that if two racially different people can live together, is it impossible to eradicate the man-made barriers and live amiably? The theme of universal brotherhood and the futility of racial discrimination is well captured by Fugard in the following lines and are befitting for the conclusion of this paper:

"No smell doth stink as sweet as labour

'Tis joyous times when man and man

Do work and sweat in common toil,

When all the world's my neighbour" (7)



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## Poetry as Cultural and Cognitive base for ELT in Post Modern Scenario

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### ABSTRACT

Poetry as a genre came from the ancient people of any language of the world when they were in their nascent state. It expressed the live voice of memory, and the culture of the people. In the era of globalization multiple theories are being explored in enhancing ELT. Recent studies have already shown the intimate relationship between language and culture. English as a foreign or second language creates a barrier in the cognitive process of L2 learners. My paper attempts to highlight how poetry can be explored as a culture and cognitive base in language teaching without effacing the creative process. In postmodern time there is fragmentation of experiences with the import of ELT theories and exotic culture. Poetry functions as a cognitive base and a dialogue with the instincts. Its essence is pluralism and brings un-fragmented experience. Hence poetry needs to be redefined and to be created as a huge magnifying glass not only as a means of learning syntax and structure, but the structure of the world, which is otherwise a common culture.

Key Terms: CLT, Globalization, Post modernism, Meme-machine

**Introduction:** Poetry is a time tested art derived with the existence of language as a form and people expressed their feelings and emotions through it. The rules of life and the culture of a race, community and the world at large are bound in poetic expressions. Poetry functions as a magnetic wand to give shape to different raw words or combination of words to make fine expressions in any language. Different layers of meanings such as connotative, denotative, pragmatic, cultural or political etc. are created as a process of signification. The basic function of ELT is to provide skills of LSRW (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) among the students. There are several approaches and techniques in ELT yet, all fall short of the optimum level of output and skills.

**Language, Culture and Globalization:** Language is bounded by geographical territory, and within a relationship that holds language, territory and the identity of the individual citizen to be isomorphic with one another. According to Bakhtin, identifying a language presupposes a boundary and a historical development in as much as language and culture are inseparable (Hosseini). The act of writing or communicating in a second language often demand the student to reflect beyond their situated position altogether. Through imaginative use of the second language, the learners are permitted to reposition themselves in different spaces and social structures from which they are excluded. The construction of a poem or the narrative is the process through which the students are permitted to articulate national or cultural moorings. Thus, the act of second language writing becomes what Bhabha terms ‘the process of symbolic interaction’ (39). Again, the acquisition and use of language is inseparable from the students’ everyday negotiations with their chosen speech community, its physical surroundings, its symbols, its flora and fauna. Further, the consequences of globalization as defined by Homi Bhabha are fundamentally dual in nature: “A double process entailing the homogenization of culture across national borders and, at the same time, the formation of new cultural hybridities, or broader concepts of human interaction which are essentially hybrid forms” (31). Teaching selected poems of current writers around the world along with some canonical works of the past masters in our curriculum can enhance symbolic interaction toward the homogenization of culture while tackling with hybridities. Hybridization is to be celebrated as a way of life as all our cultures are in fact hybridized. Globalization has celebrated it, yet as an off shoot of post modernism it’s based on anti- foundationalism. “Postmodernism celebrates difference; a taste for alterity and excess, an endorsement of plurality and a feel for surface” (Harth: 16) It has made our experience fragmented. People around the world are now into a post identity, fluid situation. The mode of media representation of violence and terror, fashion and fast food, *mashala-news* and the ‘mantra’ of market economy in the name of growth, competence etc. for making it consumerist society are given monolithic labeling, thus reducing the space of human potential, and habitat to work on. The mode of experience cast on is a packaged experience, a truth claims against our collective desires of pluralism. But the reality of poetry is incorrigibly plural. The ELT classrooms, here in India are replete with such trends and fashions. No one ever cares what we actually teach and what effects they have on the students’ psyche. The Poetry as a genre here, in this context, needs to be created and recreated for effective language teaching bringing back our unfragmented experience. Poetry is to be created against the diluted truth -claims of modern

time. The task is to undo the violent, fragmented truth-claims against the co existence of different truth-claims.

**Problems of Language teaching:** Indian education system suffers from an out-of-date pedagogy. Teachers dominate the class-rooms in a chalk-and-talk lecture followed by exam-oriented system of instructions. In this regard Nunn states that, “Paulo Freire (1970), a Brazilian radical educationist powerfully described that the teacher acts as a narrator who infuses knowledge into 'receptacles' (students) through a parrot-like imitative process”. ELT classes are mostly conducted through grammar-translation method that runs through translation, repetition, memorization, recitation, and reproduction. ELT can not be a mode of imparting technical knowledge, rules of grammar and structures underlying a text. Conceptualization and comprehension form the integral part of language competence. The second language learners commonly face the difficulty in expressing their thoughts and emotions in the target language, and the reason is obvious-the lack of cognitive orientation. In today’s globalization era English as an international language requires to be taught and learnt to adjust to diverse intercultural communication situations. To become competent in a language necessitates linguistic competence, be it phonological, grammatical or lexical, often in relation to particular speech communities. Of late the focus has been shifted to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

**Communicative Language Teaching:** An important notion of ‘communicative competence’ is appropriateness. But the fact is that the results facilitated by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are falling short of expectations in the real world context in most parts of the world. The CLT does not have the potential to develop all aspects of communicative competencies of students. In practice, it fails to develop all round competence. In the process of chasing the syllabus we end up in selective rote-learning. The learner centered approach (LCA) is only a theoretical matter in most of the schools and colleges including the mushroom growth of private engineering colleges in this country. The teachers are both handicapped by the systemic fault and ill equipped with adequate knowledge and expertise of the role of a facilitator.

**Emerging Trends:** In India the emerging writers and poets of Indian writing in English (IWE) are now using local landscape, flora and fauna in their creative expressions. Thus new metaphors have come up voicing the Indian psyche. Some writers like Jumpha Lahiri, Salman Rushdi etc.

are deliberately code-mixing, and using local words in English to give it a cosmopolitan colour. Since language and culture are integral to each other, the ELT in India has to be in a way so that English as a global language appears to be local. Here, lies the expertise of the teachers of English and poetry as a genre needs exploration toward language competence. There is no need to belittle its potential as sometimes the question arises: how relevant is poetry in today's time or whether it is redundant. Poetry has its own epistemology to present knowledge of the world. The poet has to sensitize the language use in poetry.

**Use of Poetry:** The students' ability to communicate in a second language can be enhanced through the development of innate imaginative and creative competences creating a space for the learners what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has termed 'permission to speak'(Mattix) by posing them the challenge of creating meaning-making texts, short narratives, poems and other genres entailing individuation and personal writing. Poetry as a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion should be selected, created and presented for the comprehension of the underlying ideas, layers of meaning, lexical competence, stress and the rhythm. The metaphors and symbolism which create aesthetic pleasure, cultural attitude and ethos help the students internalize the second language as a cognitive base of language use. The role of a teacher as a facilitator is important in engaging the students of varying potential of language- skills in groups, and providing them task based practice in a learner- centered classroom.

Kellem's consideration of 'transactional theory' (12) as linked to the Reader-Response approach may be worth following for teaching poetry. It explains that a reciprocal reaction occurs between the reader and the text. Reading is an event that involves nonlinear transaction between the text and the reader and meaning is created by an individual with his/her unique emotional response, back-ground knowledge, and ideological moorings. Hence, a poem at the initial phase in the undergraduate level may be highlighted to demarcate complete sentences; words may be categorized for different semantic levels of meaning; and grammatical portion may be discussed. In the next phase it may be left to the students to encounters a poem without attempting to describe what the text means. Meaning is an event that is generated through the participation between the reader and the text and in the process the students get exposed to the language cognitively with multiple points of views to form their own final judgment on it.

Hanauer (297) in this context considers poetry reading suitable for task-based learning because it is a real-world activity that challenges learners in the same way as a language learning task. It encourages them to consider meaning; gives them a communication problem to solve; and involves the completion of a task. Poetry focuses on the `literariness` of the language and it increases learners` understanding and appreciation of language in general. Hanauer suggested that by exploring the unusual forms of poetic language, learners gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities of language use. He concludes that poetry reading is `a process in which language learners extend their understanding of the potential range of uses and meanings of an existing linguistic structure` (Hanauer: 319).

**Conclusion:** The use of poetry in ELT is indispensable. The role of teachers as facilitators needs close attention. Task-based poetry session can widen the cognitive base among the students. The language of poetry must not be utilitarian or ulterior. It is for a total communication of the language, its culture and the nuances of varied potentialities of all human beings of our planet leading to communion. Thus, poetry becomes knowledge sharing and a `meme –machine` creating and recreating culture.

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## **Elements of Mystery, Expectation, Disappointment and Confusion in E.M.Forster's 'A Passage to India.'**

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### **Abstract**

Present paper is an extensive study on themes such as mystery, confusion, expectations and disappointments, which aren't much focused by many, in E.M.Forster's, 'A Passage to India'.The novel explores the many rights and wrongs of the English and the doubts which were developed among the people of both races as they were trying to treat each other equal. However, it isn't true about all the characters in the novel.It illustrateshow interracial rivalry and misunderstandings emerge when different races and cultures are forced to associate with each other. The implications of these rifts have anintense impact on both the colonized and the colonizer. This research examines the results of such developments on the characters of the novel in particular and the novel as a whole.

Key words: Mystery, Expectation, Disappointment, Confusion

### **Introduction**

India's spiritual, geographical and political importance is unquestionable as it links the east with the west, the soul with the Omnipotent and Imperialism with Orientalism.Almost all the European Imperialistic powers wanted to conquer India and declare the sub- continent as their colony. But ultimately British got an upper hand over the other European nations. The English entered India in the disguise of merchants as East India Company but with their crafty maneuvering, they succeeded in colonizing India. With its rich heritage and abundant



availability of spices, silk and wealth, India was considered the jewel in the British crown.

After the mutiny of 1857, East India Company was abolished and the control of India was taken by the Queen herself and a Governor General was appointed as the head of Indian Colony. The introduction of English culture, rules and regulations led to the collapse of the traditional structure of Indian society and succeeded by Western class system. It ultimately led to the emergence of intensified sense of nationalism among the strong middle class of India. Indians were treated as inferiors to the English people and were only given blue-collar jobs. They were not considered for privileged positions and prohibited from entering certain areas. It is when the Indians were getting united against British rule to gain the power of their own country. But the British played the religious card skillfully to regain their control over Indian territory. Before the British rule, the Hindus and Muslims were living in harmony and somehow accepted the presence of each other in the country. But astute English made them each other's adversaries and used this enmity for their own gains. English used the 'Divide and Rule' policy and introduced the two nations theory which caused the partition of the country and led to the merciless killings of more than a million Indians.

E. M. Forster's depiction of India is full of mystique, doubts and confusion just like his other country men who were ruling India at that time. The English were never able to understand the soul and charm of India. To them, it was a land of opportunity and immeasurable profits. Forster himself spent some time as the private secretary to Tukoji Rao, Maharaja of Dewas in India. It is where he learnt about the class system, spiritualism and charisma of India. He also observed the deviousness of British and their excellence in controlling the Indian people. Forster's portrayal of India is the perspective with which many Englishmen

see India. There is nothing prominent or striking about it. He unconditionally gave a superior position to the English and did not consider the Indian nationalism worth mentioning in his book. As Edward W. Said rightly states in his book 'Culture and Imperialism', "Of course Forster was a novelist, not a political officer or theorist or prophet. Yet he found a way to use the mechanism of the novel to elaborate on the already existing structure of attitude and references without changing it. The structure permitted one to feel affection for and even intimacy with some Indians and India generally, but made one see Indian politics as the charge of the British, and culturally refused a privilege to Indian nationalism." (195). So, we need to look at the novel with the perspective of a man who lived among Indians as an observer and trying to interpret India from within as an outsider. Forster also focused on the hostile relationship between the Hindus and Muslims as one of the main aspects in 'A Passage to India'. Forster wanted to explore India but it was way out of his intellect to understand and led to his disappointment which is clearly visible in this novel. His own uncertainties and disappointments are depicted through the characters of Adela and Mrs. Moore in the novel. Being Imperialism and mistreatment of Indians as the main themes, there are several other noteworthy themes present in the novel. The article aims to explore the themes of mystery, confusion, expectations and disappointments in the context of British Raj in India.

### **Confusion and Mysteries**

Confusion or puzzlement is evident surrounding certain events and individuals in the book which keeps the reader's interest alive. Adela visits India to wed Ronny as they have known each other in London which leads to their shared enthusiasm for turning out to be life accomplices. Initially it appears that they have incredible preference for one another yet Adela is by all accounts moved to uncertainty as she spends time with Ronny in India. She is confronted with the truth of her union with Ronny. "In front, like a shutter, fell a vision of her married life. " clarifies her wavering. (28) Ronny likes her and is looking forward to spend his life with her yet

discovers her free soul irritable and endeavors to sort of control her and restricts her dealings with Indians which is obvious when he comments “Well ... I’m the sun-dried bureaucrat, no doubt; still, I don’t like to see an English girl left smoking with two Indians.” (43) Adela soon realizes she is not interested in a life offered by Ronny and at a certain point her reasonable choice is passed on to Ronny with “I’ve finally decided we are not going to be married, my dear boy.”(46) In a short while, she is indecisive again about what she said and tells him “Ronny, I should like to take back what I said on the Maidan.”(51) Amidst all the turmoil, they get engaged but Adela is fighting the demon of bafflement throughout. Their relationship shows obscurity as Adela’s emotions oscillate between compelled by solemn obligation contemplations to fondness to unresolved feelings towards Ronny. She appears to be distant in her relationship: she can't decide on their future together. Their bewilderment towards their relationship keeps them jumping from one decision to other without the true commitment of love.

Misunderstanding and assumptions can cause turbulence in friendship and Dr. Aziz justifies this through incident revolving around Mr. Fielding. The comradeship between Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding at one point is altered when Dr. Aziz is informed by Hamidullah that Mr. Fielding has a personal connection with Adela, which sets off the fire of scorn Dr. Aziz held for Adela and he feels deceived and overwhelmed. The gossip was “When Miss Quested stopped in the College, Fielding used to visit her ... rather too late in the evening, the servants say.” (144), this formed the base for mistrust among the two. Following this, Mr. Fielding leaves India to visit London and Dr. Aziz is under the presumption that he is going to meet Adela. Mr. Fielding keeps in touch with him about his marriage and writes numerous letters, however, Dr. Aziz's conviction leaves him frustrated into not reading them completely and throwing them away. He judges his friend Mr. Fielding, without knowing the facts and remained in a state of perplexity.

“The causes of every human action, Tolstoy thought, were so manifold, so complex, and so deeply hidden in unconscious motivations that it is impossible to know why anything ever happened.( Adler &Doren,160). Mystery is woven into the story of ‘A Passage to India’ which piques the interest as the events unfold. Enigma surrounds the accusation made by Adela towards Dr. Aziz in Marabar caves. Adela seems friendly to Dr. Aziz initially and is enthusiastic to visit the caves with him and Mrs. Moore. Situation leaves Dr.Aziz and Adela alone to explore the caves only with a local guide. During their tour Adela slips into a cave and after that she leaves abruptly only to complain that Aziz had made insulting advances. Dr.Aziz is arrested and imprisoned and accused of misconduct. Throughout, after the incident Adela maintains the story of being the victim to deceiving Indian doctor. There is obscurity in the statement as at the final moment in the court as she declares: “I’m afraid I have made a mistake.”.... “Dr. Aziz never followed me into the cave.” ...“I withdraw everything. (122) With these statements, Dr. Aziz flies to his freedom leaving a doubt as to what compelled Adela towards the unfair blame she imposed on Dr. Aziz. Adela’s physical and mental status after the cave incident indicates something had happened but she is unable to understand and convey her thoughts due to her lack of stability. Various theories surround what would have happened to Adela leaving readers clueless: justifying their own answers about this secret.

Mystery also baffles the reader about the silence of Mrs. Moore regarding Dr. Aziz’s honesty.Dr. Aziz is accused of insulting Adela with physical advances in the caves .Despite the fact that Mrs. Moore was absent around then, she appears to have a total faith in Aziz. At one point, after the incident when she was having a conversation with Ronny, she communicates her considerations directly to him. “Of course he is innocent,” (110) We can also presume safely by the way Mrs. Moore’s character is portrayed that she is able to assert temperament of people around her easily. She could have given her statement in the court during the trial to support Dr.

Aziz. Her words would be held in high regard as she was English and mother of Ronny who was the city magistrate. However, after a strong stance on Dr. Aziz's innocence, she just leaves India mystifying the circumstance of her silence. The vagueness and puzzlement are more enhanced as she dies at the sea taking her thoughts with her.

### **Expectations and Disappointment**

The theme of expectations and their subsequent disappointment is obvious throughout the novel. Many characters in 'A Passage to India' are really unhappy as they were disappointed in different circumstances mainly due to their high expectations. Initially, the two most important English female characters in the novel, Mrs. Moore and Adela had come to visit India and they looked forward to see "the real India" as more fascinating because passing through Egypt, the voyage was immensely picturesque, but after reaching Bombay, they weren't as happy as they had expected. Adela states: "... she too was disappointed at the dullness of their new life. They had made such a romantic voyage across the Mediterranean and through the sands of Egypt to the harbour of Bombay, to find only a gridiron of bungalows at the end of it"(16). This explains that they hoped India to be amusing, but it disappointed them with its dullness. Moreover, after reaching India, Mrs. Moore never explored India as she wished.

The Bridge Party was also very disappointing for both Adela and Mrs. Moore as they expected to develop good relationship with Indians and hoped that English people would treat Indians fairly. On the other hand, most of the English people in the club were indifferent to Indians. Adela was shocked and mentioned that: "This party to-day makes me so angry and miserable. I think my countrymen out here must be mad. Fancy inviting guests and not treating them properly!" (27) The peak of disappointment can be observed in the peculiar story of the Marabar expedition. Dr Aziz, another prominent character in the novel is an exceptional

native who is willing to befriend some of the Anglo –Indians like Mrs. Moore and Mr. Fielding, the principal of the college in Chandrapore. Dr Aziz offered Mrs. Moore and Adela to visit the Marabar Caves with the hope of building a strong relationship as he really liked Mrs. Moore since they met in the mosque. He went against the advice and warning of his friends and overcame all barriers of moral and culture and made it happen by hook or crook. He mentioned that "this picnic is nothing to do with English or Indian; it is an expedition of friends" (86) and in doing all these he expected the expedition to extend a good friendship with the Anglo-Indians. However, it was not only Aziz who was disappointed after the event, but his loyal friend Mr. Fielding, Mrs. Moore and most of the natives of India due to false accusations by Adela.

Subsequently, the trial of Dr. Aziz in the court was a tremendous deception predominantly to English people who hoped to avenge Aziz through Adela. Yet, in the court she felt guilty of lying and she was brave enough to tell the truth that disappointed the British audience except for Fielding. Eventually, she expected some sort of empathy from the Indians, however, they wanted her to pay a fine of "20000 rupees" as a compensation as court expense, which of course was a shock for Adela. Fielding was also disappointed as he hoped Aziz to forgive her and "he couldn't bear to think of the queer honest girl losing her money and possibly her young man too "(133) as Ronny broke the engagement as well. Consequently, she was torn apart between her own British people who renounced her on one side, and on the other side the natives were offended by her and she was left alone in the foreign land of India far from her home. Adela had only Fielding as a friend and protector until she returned to England.

The theme of expectations and disappointment is also strongly depicted in the friendship between the two loyal friends, Fielding and Aziz. After returning to England, Fielding expected this friendship to continue as he wrote many letters to Aziz, but the latter never replied as he thought that Fielding had taken the compensation money from Adela just to marry her.

Therefore, it is quite apparent that E.M.Forster's characters are filled with expectations which led them to be disappointed in many aspects.

### **Conclusion**

A Passage to India calls upon the readers to contemplate profoundly upon a myriad of conflicts with the religious, socio cultural and even political perceptions. Those conflicts arise primarily from encounters between the British and the native Indians. There is a fundamental problem whether Indian natives and British representatives could strike a genuine friendship with one another. Of course, there is an unpretentious attempt by a few English characters who don't have imperialistic attitude to develop good relationships with Indians, yet the deal wasn't negotiated successfully. In fact, the novel reveals the necessity to look beyond the racial stereotypes of cultural beliefs and religion. Forster acknowledges his limitations as an outsider and perhaps that is why instead of attempting to present a whole and coherent image of India, he tries to focus on certain aspects of the Indian culture. Edward.W.Said justifies this point in his book 'Culture and Imperialism' where he states, 'A Passage to India is at a loss, partly because Forster's commitment to the novel form exposes him to difficulties in India he cannot deal with. Like Conrad's Africa, India is a locale frequently described as unapprehensible and too large' (201). In addition to all these, the events in the novel prove the absence of clarity in certain incidents possibly due to the lack of transparency in the relationship between the characters. The author touches upon all types of issues which caused the failure of most personal relationships such as that between the Indians and Anglo-Indian bureaucrats, among the several communal groups, among the natives themselves and also among the English people.

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**BOOK REVIEW****MISSIONARIES, REBELLION AND PROTO-NATIONALISM**

JAMES LONG OF BENGAL 1814-87

- NUTAN MARIAN TIGGA

(Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Geoffrey Oddie's "Missionaries, rebellion and Proto-Nationalism James long of Bengal 1814-87" is a biographical sketch of a protestant missionary of Ireland, James long, who dedicated his life to Bengal, "his first love and the country of his adoption." (Page179). The book was first published in the year 1999 by Curzon Press, whereas this particular piece of work was published by the India Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK) and Printed at Alliance Enterprises in Delhi.

The author of the book, Geoffrey Oddie at present, is the senior lecturer in the University of Sydney. He has written extensively on religion and social developments in nineteenth and early twentieth century India. Some of the works are "Social protest in India: British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reforms, 1850-1900" and "Popular Religion, Elites and Reform: Hook Swinging and its Prohibition in Colonial India, 1800-1894".

The importance of studying James Long does not only lie in the fact that he had valuable views on an enormous range of topics but also in his deep and active involvement with government officials, Indian elite and with many other classes in the Indian population. This study provides the reader with significant insights into some of the complexities of European and Indian society in Bengal during the period of Long's residence in India. Long is best remembered with regard to Indigo Planting Controversy. His concern does not cease here. He is also well recognised for his passionate contributions to the development of Bengali vernacular education, vernacular literature, historical studies and sociology.

After a brief sketch of the author, the book and its significance, it is but necessary to review this piece of work. Having read the book, it seemed as if a circle of life is drawn. The book

has a linear narrative with few necessary disjunctures with regard to time towards the end, but it is well balanced by a sense of continuity with respect to space. The ability of the author to portray a space at two different time period in not more than one sentence captures the attention of the reader.

The book also presents an interesting way of understanding time and space through numbers. The precision with which numbers are used here is remarkable. The numbers are not mere constant but careful studies into these numbers add clarity to the ever social and economic changing trends.

The book also provides certain glimpse of the further picture in the narrative, keeping the reader is suspense. This makes the reader curious about the pages yet to be turned. The book patronises Long's passionate beliefs and values yet it does not fail to register his critical stands.

The flow of the narrative is yet another significant point of discussion. The momentum of the narrative increases from chapter five, "the indigenous Churches and the Problems of Growth, 1850-1861". The chapters preceding somewhere lack the force and the rigour. The change in the momentum may be understood with respect to the history of that period. It must be remembered that the "Sepoy Mutiny" of 1857 did play an important role in the propagation of Christianity. Long was convinced that vernacular education was mainly necessary so that the masses could read the Bible and understand and appreciate religious truth. Thus, it is the unique ability of the author that does not allow the overarching history of Mutiny to overshadow the biography of James Long.

On one hand where the biography remains unaffected by the larger historical events, the book takes notice of the most ignored population of the society-the tribes. It is very important to mention this because this book shows a much unbiased portrayal of tribes. It is small yet a strong statement reflecting that the "others" can always learn from the much neglected tribal population.

This biographical sketch is not free from disturbing strokes. The author poses a certain bulk of questions that jerks the flow of the narration, which may discomfort the reader. It triggers

the mind to critically think over these issues.

Long's missionary work, along with other missionaries would clash with the government officials. A clash between the missionaries and the officials, over the "indigo plantation controversy" brought dire consequences on James Long for translating and publishing a Bengali drama, "Nil Darpan" or "Mirror of Indigo". He was sentenced "a fine of 1,000 rupees and one month's imprisonment in the Common jail of Calcutta." (Page 123) 3

A very interesting picture is drawn about the idea of punishment from the prison life of James Long. The notion of crime, punishment and justice during that particular time and the limited amount of space and "freedom" granted during the period of imprisonment offers a very different insight to the reader. Long faced a lot of personal challenges after his prison term, yet his achievements are worth

appreciating. His vision of organising social science societies, continued emphasis on the importance of vernacular education as well as encouraging the Bengal Government to adopt "Circular School system" mirrors his distinctive style. This very uniqueness had rarely been criticised by other missionaries.

Further towards the end, one finds Long making frequent visits to Russia. The latent motive remains unclear in the book even though what manifests the first few visits was the medical treatment of James long.

James Long died in April 1887 and yet the book does not end here. The author offers an opportunity to reflect on Long's work and vision related to general movements of thought and development in the period between 1840 and 1887. But what struck me was Long's attitude to Indian Christianity. He deeply believed in a two-way process between East and West. He felt that he was not in India to supplant Hinduism or Islam with British religion but with the Oriental Christ. The final years of James long and the time beyond has been sketched and painted through different perspectives which give an interesting edge to this book.

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