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(Affiliated To Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati)

One Day National Conference

On

Humanism in Indian English Literature

24th February 2018



Principal

G.S. Meshram

Chief Editor

Prof. Virag Gawande

Editors

Dr. Suresh B. Bijawe

Organized By

Department Of English

Bharatiya Mahavidyalaya, Morshi Dist. Amravati

In Collaboration With

Aadhar Social Research & Development Training Institute, Amravati



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28) Rootlessness and Crisis of Identity in Works of Booker Winner	
Dr. Vinita Virgandham, Bhivapur.	 100
.....	
29) Humanism in Mulk Raj Anand's The Untouchable	
Ms. S. S. Joshi, Morshi	 104
.....	
30) The Humanism of Mulk Raj Anand The Artist as Humanist	
Dr. Suresh B. Bijawe, Morshi	 107
.....	
31) Plight of Female Protagonist Kamala in Vijay Tendulkar's	
Dr. Kiran S.Khandare, Patur, Dist. Akola	 110

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Editor Dr.Bapu G.Gholap

Rootlessness and Crisis of Identity in Works of Booker Winner Indian Women Writers

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Abstract

There are several reasons for the Indian fictional women writers have gaining prominence in the field of literature. It is primarily as a writer of realism that they have given expression to the theme of rootlessness and the crisis of identity through their literary writings. All such writings have close relationship with personal life.

The two novels considered in this discourse, *The God of Small Things* and *The Inheritance of Loss* have gradually been subsumed in a theoretical discourse on nation, nationalism and postcoloniality. It is a literary response to a series of real life situations that have been cleverly fictionalized through allusions disguised as well as direct. We find them identifying themselves with the Indian sub-continent. In style and themes of their works we find history and politics of India along with its complex socio-cultural scene. They have concentrated on projecting the kind of fuller historical truth that incorporates the social and historical reality of the times as interacting with, and affecting, the life of the individual.

Arundhati Roy succeeds in "unveiling the repulsive reality enveloped in a mask of respectability" found not only in Kerala but almost in every village of India. Kiran Desai reveals the pangs of displacement,

homelessness, unbelongingness and nostalgia for home and home land suffered by most of the diaspora in the transnational land with Indians at the forefront. The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is set partly in India and partly in the U.S.A. explores the consequences of the introduction of a western element into a non western country. It is the story of Indian village life and people's attempts to grapple with modernity side by side with the stories of illegal immigrants in a modern centre of globalized economy and politics.

Key Words: Exploitation, Suffering, Tyranny, Displacement, Prejudices.

In 1997 Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* took the literary world by storm. It is a story of a family residing in the small village in Kerala. The novel brings to life the quiet, sleepy village of Aymanam in Kerala. Roy has taken the creative writer's liberty to change the name. She had spent formative years of her life in this village and recreates a fascinating picture of the village in her novel. The life and destiny of three generations of Syrian Christian family depicted is rooted in the specific culture, society and politics of Kerala. *The God of Small Things* makes an attack on the patriarchal notions of Kerala's touchable society; the high caste Syrian Christians and the high caste Hindus. The problems of patriarchal domination and female subalternity are rooted in the geo-cultural reality of this village. The male chauvinist and wife beater Pappachi is the oldest character in the novel. He has a difficult time coping up with his retirement. His wife Mammachi is managing pickle business and it was not dignified for an ex-government official like Pappachi. His frustration turns into jealousy towards his exceptionally talented enterprising wife. (Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things* (New Delhi: India Ink, 1997), Pg.50). He believes that "college education was unnecessary expense for a girl. So his daughter Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with them (GST, 38).

Chacko, his son, the self proclaimed Marxist is "just spoiled, princeling, playing Comrade! Comrade! An Oxford avtaar of the old Zamindar mentality- a landlord forcing his attention on women who depended on him for their livelihood(GST, 65). Even Comrade Pillai, the next candidate for the Kottayam bye elections is not free of male chauvinism. Major characters in the novel possess are quite different from what they exhibit. Pappachi, an imperial entomologist, donates money to orphanages and leprosy clinics and works hard to be acknowledged as a generous moral man but is violent with his wife and children. Chacko's exploitation came in the form of his libertine relationship with the female workers at the factory and of having deprived his sister, Ammu, a share in the family property. The theme of exploitation and suffering is vividly dealt with through the lives of Baby Kochamma, Mammachi, Ammu and Rahel. The efficient Mammachi, handling the entire business is very often the target to her husband's frustration. She suffers in silence. She considers the regular beatings to be the inevitable fate of a woman. Probably these patriarchal norms were internalized in her as we find that she is quite cruel in her behavior towards the workers and insensitive to her daughter Ammu's desires. On learning her affair with Velutha, she turns violent: "Her tolerance of Men's needs as far as her son is concerned, became the fuel for her unmanageable fury at her daughter" (GST, 258). She is thoroughly upset to visualize her daughter coupling with a filthy coolie, a paravan. She felt that Ammu Has "defiled generations of breeding" (GST, 258). Yet ironically, she does not object to her son's affairs with the working women of the factory. Similarly Arundhati Roy has voiced the status of a girl through Baby Kochamma. Illuminating the tyrannies of the social structure that women are gripped in, she says," a married daughter had no position in her parents' home. As for a divorced daughter... she

has no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from an inter community love marriage she chose to remain quivering silent on the subject" (GST, 32). She is responsible in increasing Ammu's suffering. Once again we find that the novelist has succeeded in establishing that these so called high caste women have internalized the obnoxious patriarchal norms. The unfulfilled love of Baby Kochamma rendered her heartless in her treatment of Ammu. She resents Ammu for she saw her quarrelling with fate that Baby Kochamma had graciously accepted. Ammu is the worst sufferer in the novel having been deprived of education and imprisoned in Ayemenem. She gets married and finds that her husband is an alcoholic who beats her everyday and acted as a pimp for his boss. She divorces him to return to her house in Ayemenem, unwelcomed. But her actual agony lay in transgressing the law which ironically others had transgressed too but it was overlooked. "The laws that lay down who should be loved, how and how much" (GST, 258). The violation turned out to be fatal for Ammu and her untouchable lover. Velutha's technical expertise and newly acquired religious status as a converted Christian could not serve as a substitute or grant him immunization from being a victim in a casteist society. They get killed by social tyranny.

The next novel *The Inheritance of Loss* draws on Kiran Desai's own experience of leaving India. Even though Kiran Desai's imagination is has judicious mix of the Eastern and the Western elements, India and Indians remain at the heart of her novel. The story unfolds against the background of Gorkhaland movement that rocked West Bengal and altered the political map of the Darjeeling hills. In India, depicted in the novel, people suffer utmost poverty and privation. For the reasons like poverty, mal-development and lack of opportunities there are people who want to leave the country. But many of them find it difficult to

be happy and successful in the West. The cook's son, Biju, is a representative of these Indians whom happiness eludes both at home and abroad. To people like Biju, who are fascinated by the West and blinded by the glare of American affluence. For him India is backward, underdeveloped and uncivilized country. The Indians in the novel are shown to have the cringing habit "to undergo any kind of humiliation to get into the States" (Kiran Desai, *The Loss of Inheritance* (New Delhi, Penguin), 2006, Pg.184). All these are detractors believe, facets of a myth. The novels gives peep into the psychic space of the characters and by showing the plight of illegal migrants from the third world countries because of "no papers" and living under the constant fear of deportation, shifting from one job and place to another like Biju. These aspirants are young people who left their homes in search of better job prospects and with a desire to create home away from home by grasping the green card by marrying even 'the disabled and mentally retarded' green card holders. Kiran Desai reveals the pangs of displacement, homelessness, unbelongingness and nostalgia for home and home land suffered by most of the diaspora in the transnational land with Indians at the forefront. Referring to the concept of homely feeling in diaspora psyche, Vijay Mishra remarks that diasporas connect themselves with the ideas of home and the homeland against which other lands are foreign and carry their homeland in the form of a series of objects and fragments of narratives and memories in their heads or in their suitcases and struggle hard to preserve them in other lands and cultures (New Lamps or Old': *Diasporas Migrancy Border*, from *Interrogating Post Colonialism: Theory, Text and Context* ed. Harish Trivedi and Meenakshi Mukherjee (1996 rpt. 2000, IIAS Shimla, Pg.67-68).

Some of the Indian migrant characters in the text are shown creating 'home' in their living and psychic space with religious symbols

such as "Ganesh brought all the way from home despite its weight, for decoration plus luck in money and exams"(LOI, 49). While living in the new country the hatreds and prejudices for other communities and religions nurtured in their home lands too remain a part of the complex formation of their psyche. Some of them want to visit their homeland, meet their relatives, take rest and return with fresh memories, but some of them especially the illegal are not able to return. They die on the alien land only with the old photographs of families and fading memories of home a parents lurking in their minds. For some of them like Mr. Kakkar, the owner of an Indian restaurant and a travel agent, 'home' is not a 'mythical place of desire'. His father, living in India, has been asking him to not to come back to India. Some of them like Saeed Saeed from Zanzibar, Biju's fellow illegal co-worker in a bakery, though outwardly do not lament or feel the pangs of the loss of the homeland and adapt themselves very well to the requirements of the American system but in their heart of hearts, they are very rigid about the religious identity of their clan and community and also nourish and confess a feeling of hatred and revenge for the land of adoption. Some more sensitive like Biju are unable to cope with the existential miseries of America. They refuse to lead fake versions of life and on feeling home sick and concerned about their filial responsibility, return home with a dream and desire to lead a peaceful and comfortable life with money saved.

But in their own homeland is shown passing through a turmoil and their parents themselves are feeling displaced in their own country as is presented happening in Kalimpong in India and through the fate met by Biju and his father (LOI, 279). In the parallel scenario created in the text in the post independent India in Klimpong in mid 1980s, Desai has revealed how in the wake of the activities of GNLF's demand for Gorkhaland, the homes of the people belonging to other states of India and

especially from West Bengal and Bihar, who are considered outsiders here, are being raided and ransacked by the police and GNLf activities. The big orchard belonging to Bengali sisters Noni and Lola is illegally encroached and when Lola goes to complain to the village Pradhan, a Gorkha activist, she is insulted. She laments over the decision of her dead husband who had sold his entire property in Calcutta to build a home here. Father Booty who has been living in Kalimpong for the past forty five years has established a dairy and has helped development of dairy system in nearby villages, too is ordered to leave immediately for his country when found of living illegally without required papers. But actually he never felt the need to apply for papers as he always considered this place his home. He feels the pain of exile, cries bitterly while leaving this place. Biju's father, who is an Indian from Uttar Pradesh and has lived half of his life in Kalimpong, also starts feeling displaced and realizes that "where he had existed in what seemed a sweetness of crabbiness was showing him now that he had been wrong. He wasn't wanted in Kalimpong and he didn't belong" (LOI, 36).

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai talks about human dignity and loss of it by the protagonist of the novel, Jemunabhai Patel from Piphit, Gujarat. The novel has a vast canvas. It encompasses issues, such as shadow class immigrants aspiring for green card in America and consequently returning to India penniless, pitiable and demented like the cook's son, Biju and the other friends of Biju leading a waif's life. This problem is linked with the disruptive and debilitating impact of post colonialism on the psychic life and social attitudes of the resident Indians. Against the background of globalization, multiculturalism, modernization, terrorism and insurgency Kiran has evoked Jemubhai's life. As a parallel to Biju's life in USA, Kiran Desai depicts the life of Jemubhai in Cambridge. In his craze for excellence in colonial

rule, he ill treats his wife, ignores his relatives, indulges in the cynical exercise of power and degrades himself as a human being. Mr. Jemubhai a judge had left home at the age of 20, for Liverpool to Cambridge, in 1939. His father did not have had enough money to send his son to Cambridge to pass his ICS, but he manages to do that by choosing for his son a fabulously rich man's daughter, though a dark and ugly. "During the marriage she was fourteen years old and he had yet to examine her face." (LOI,168). After his return from England taking his ICS degree, Jemubhai fails to lead a meaningful life. His first union with his wife which is most beautiful moment of one's life shows him to be selfish and monstrous figure. This moment turns into an episode of hatred towards his wife: "he did not like his wife's face, searched for his hatred, found beauty and dismissed it. Once it had been a terrifying beckoning thing that had made his heart turn into water. An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (LOI, 172). As the plot progresses we find that he never speaks and looks in her direction, she was uncared for, her freedom is useless, her husband disregarded his duty. He hates her bum. He calls her lazy, side as a buffalo. He even hates tinkle-tonk of her bangles, and orders her to remove "those trinkets off" (LOI, 172).

Thus we see that the text of the novel through many situations, experiences and ambivalent stands of different characters highlights the tense, chaotic, antagonistic and shifting worlds. The subtext of novel further problematizes and raises more issues for the consideration of the readers not only about the precarious, disgraced and displaced lives and existence, shifting positions and identities of the Diasporas but also about the concepts of home, homeland and belongingness in the changing historic-political and existential situations both in home and abroad. "It can be said that Kiran Desai has shown her characters leading the lives

of physical, psychological, emotional, ancestral and political dislocation- both abroad and home and has also raised the problem of home, homeland, diaspora and belongingness by treating these from multiple angles" (Tejinder Kaur, A Study of Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss, Four Indian Novelists, Ed. R.K.Dhawan, (New Delhi, Prestige Books, pg.139)

Thus we find that the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai are directly or indirectly concern with problems of India and Indians whether they are within the boundaries of their motherland or of their compatriots residing outside. Arundhati Roy's mega novel God of Small Things is a picture of socio-political milieu of Kerala during the Sixties. Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss takes us to the exotic world that is India. The different facets of Indian Society which include caste and class division, discrimination between male and female, corrupt politicians and criminals, exploitation of have nots by the haves are the aspects that are quiet vividly and with minute details presented in the novels of two booker prize winner Indian Women Writers.

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Humanism in Mulk Raj Anand's The Untouchable

Ms. S. S. Joshi

Bharatiya Mahavidyalaya, Morshi

Mulk Raj Anand is an ideal humanist and a literary artist of high caliber. He takes up individuals of different statuses and ages, places them in different environments and studies their 'body-soul drama' and 'desire-images'. Of the Indian English Fiction writers Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao form a 'remarkable triad', whom William Walsh labels as the 'Big Three' (quoted in Murthy p.5)

Humanism is an affirmative philosophy which raises questions about the way we look at the nature of human beings and the treatment of problems. As a concept it evolved in the early part of the sixteenth century during the European Renaissance. Humanism as a word has different meanings attributed to it. This accounts for the evolution of different kinds of Humanism such as Renaissance Humanism, Academic Humanism, Catholic Humanism, Naturalistic Humanism etc. Modern day Humanism or Contemporary Humanism draws many essential humanist values from Renaissance Humanism such as its insistence on getting away from religious control of knowledge, its intellectual vitality' and its emphasis on 'man's enjoying to the full of his life in this world.

Some of the crucial tenets of Contemporary Humanism are the rejection of supernatural and religious authority, bettering the human conditions and setting up the welfare of mankind as the supreme goal.

Mulk Raj Anand won world-wide acclaim