

OSMANIA JOURNAL
OF
ENGLISH STUDIES

Journal of English Language and Literature
(A peer-reviewed / refereed journal)
ISSN: 0474-8107

Chief Editor
B. Vijaya

Editors
Parimala Kulkarni
K. M. Praveena
Saveen Souda



Department of English
Osmania University
Hyderabad 500 007
2023

Chief Editor
Prof. B. Vijaya
Professor & Head
Department of English, Osmania University

Editors
Prof. Parimala Kulkarni
Professor of English &
Chairperson, Board of Studies
Department of English, Osmania University

Prof. K. M. Praveena
Professor of English, Osmania University

Prof. Saveen Souda
Professor of English, Osmania University

Editorial Committee

Dr. K. W. Christopher
Associate Professor of English
Osmania University

Dr. Konda Nageswara Rao
Assistant Professor of English
Osmania University

Dr. Melissa Helen
Associate Professor of English
Osmania University

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju
Assistant Professor of English
Osmania University

Dr. J. Madhavi
Associate Professor of English
Osmania University

Dr. B. Ashok
Assistant Professor of English
Osmania University

Mr. C. Venkat Subba Rao
Associate Professor of English
Osmania University

Dr. M. Nivedita
Assistant Professor of English
Osmania University

Editorial

Osmania Journal of English Studies is a peer reviewed/refereed journal published by the Department of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India. Started in 1961, *OJES* published both general and special numbers. *OJES* has brought out special issues on Shakespeare (1964), American Literature (1966), Indian Writing in English (1972), Indian Poetry in English (1977), Sarojini Naidu (1980), VS Naipaul (1982), DH Lawrence (1985), Chinua Achebe (2010), and English Language Studies (2016).

OJES, since its inception, has been open to contemporary debates in literary studies. The Journal offers a forum for critical engagement with issues of academic and intellectual concern in the broad fields of literature and language studies. Over the years, literary studies in the world as well as in India have undergone a transformation engaging with different disciplines and areas considered “non- literary”. *OJES 2023* reflects this change and contains articles covering Film, Politics, Cultural Studies, Dalit Studies, Women’s Movements and Aboriginal Literature.

We hope that scholars and researchers working in various areas will find this issue engaging and interesting.

Editors

OSMANIA JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Journal of English Language and Literature

(A peer-reviewed / refereed journal)

Chief Editor
Prof. B. Vijaya

Editors
Prof. Parimala Kulkarni
Prof. K. M. Praveena
Prof. Saveen Souda

2023

C O N T E N T S

1.	Country and Identity in Aboriginal Literature	Kieran Dolin	1
2.	Raymond Williams and Postcolonialism	K. W. Christopher	17
3.	Resilience and Rebellion: Unveiling Narratives of Women in the Telangana Armed Struggle	Shugufta Shaheen & Sajaudeen Chapparban	33
4.	Dalit Life Narratives: Echoes of Religious Repercussions	B. Deepa Jyothi & Anuradha Tamme	57
5.	Perils of Sectarianism: A Note on Githa Hariharan's <i>In Times of Siege</i>	K.V.Ramana Chary	68
6.	Re-understanding the Diversity of India: An Insightful Study of Jawaharlal Nehru's <i>The Discovery of India</i>	Konda Nageswara Rao	78
7.	Assert for Independence: <i>Zohra</i>	B. Ashok	90
8.	Impact of the Linguistic Intelligence on Learners' Professional Success	J.Madhavi	96
9.	The New Formula of Hindi Cinema: An Analysis of Karan Johar's <i>Rocky aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani</i>	Mrudula Lakkaraju	114
10.	Trends in English Language Teaching: Retrospect and Prospect	Sheela Rani Simon	130
11.	Notes on Contributors		156

Country and Identity in Aboriginal Literature

Kieran Dolin

University of Western Australia

“I firmly believe that words have a special effect on people.”

- Alf Taylor

Abstract

This paper presents an outline of Aboriginal literature in Australia through the framework of settler-colonialism. Beginning with a brief historical account of relations between Indigenous peoples and the Australian state, it draws on the work of First Nations critics to identify key aims and concerns, especially Jeanine Leane’s thesis that such literature is a “decolonial act.” It focuses first on life writing and identity, and secondly on representations of the deep bond between First Nations peoples and their traditional lands.

Introduction

This essay offers an introductory account of First Nations literature in Australia, one of the most exciting and challenging strands of Australian literature today. As a non-Indigenous scholar of Anglo-Celtic parentage, I acknowledge that I approach Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writing from the perspective of an “outsider” to its cultures of origin (Leane 34). In this situation, it is important to reflect on the assumptions one brings to the act of critical reading, and to inform oneself about the aims and self-understandings of the writers and cultural production-

-ns under review. Indigenous writer and academic Jeanine Leane, of the Wiradjuri nation of western New South Wales, argues that such literature “operates as a decolonial act” (33). There has emerged, over the past decade, a project to decolonise Australian literary studies, in which the contextualised study of First Nations literature and history is an important part (McMahon). A key element in that project is the emergence of a body of critical writing by Indigenous scholars and critics, with which I engage here. This essay hopes to contribute to decolonial critique through a respectful contextual account of the “cultural interface” that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writing (Leane 33).

Contextual outline

Archaeological research indicates that Aboriginal peoples have lived in the lands now known as Australia for 65,000 years, making them the oldest continuous living cultures on earth. A significant part of the cultures they developed were bodies of story that were handed down across the generations orally, and performed in dance, music and song. Many of these stories tell of the creation of the world, including the land, people and all life forms, by the ancestral beings, and of their giving of law to all living entities (Kwaymullina 11). Legal scholars Larissa Behrendt and Loretta Kelly, of the Eualeyai/Kamilaroi and Gumbaynggirr/Dungutti nations respectively, stress the centrality of land to Aboriginal life:

Aboriginal religions often teach that we are born of the land, and that when we die, our spirit returns to it. During

our life on earth, we are required to look after our home country and protect it. The link is spiritual and custodial, not proprietary. Country is central to the identity of an Aboriginal person, providing physical, cultural and spiritual nourishment. (1)

The depth and dimensions of this relationship with land, or “Country” as it is commonly called, are difficult to translate into English, as a leading anthropologist noted in 1968 (Stanner 206). However, as I understand it from my research, two key aspects of this belief system are that all life – land, animals, plants, humans – is interconnected, and that a people and their law and culture are autochthonous, that is, they are drawn from the Country on which their ancestors lived, and which gives them their identity.

British colonisers arriving in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries failed to understand the complexity and richness of these cultures, using their own Eurocentric theories of cultural evolution to categorise the Indigenous societies as ‘primitive.’ They especially failed to recognise the organised systems of land use and seasonal movements of the peoples, or to discern their systems of law and social control. On the basis of these beliefs, they declared the continent a land belonging to no-one, effectively erasing the original inhabitants and owners of the land, and founding their colony upon the mere act of settlement, rather than conquest or treaty (Banner). The chief goal of Australian colonisation was (and remains) the acquisition of land, as Patrick Wolfe has shown. In Australia, as in other settler

colonies, land was the means of economic advancement, and the settlers make a new home, achieving their goal through the displacement and replacement of Aboriginal people, whether by violence, forced removal to missions or other white-run institutions, or failing to recognise their rights as fellow human beings. Settler colonialism is “a structure” which persists in the present (Wolfe 96). Despite the formative role of Australian scholars such as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in postcolonial studies, Australia should not be regarded as a postcolonial society (Leane 29). Major institutions of state and society remain those inherited from Britain and the descendants of settlers and more recent immigrants control the economic and political systems.

Central to this order is the structural marginalisation of Aboriginal people in national life. In the first half of the twentieth century those in settled areas they were made to live on missions or reserves, their lives controlled under a bureaucratic regime of “protection” that denied them the most basic rights. That policy was replaced in the 1950s by one of “assimilation,” which allowed for Aboriginal peoples’ incorporation into mainstream white society on condition that they adopt white ways and renounce their own cultures and relationships. Indicative of this marginality was the fact that Aboriginal people were not counted in the national census until 1967. The 1960s saw concerted Aboriginal activism, including the first lawsuit seeking land rights, which was unsuccessful, and the use of literary forms of expression. In 1972 a

group of First Nations protesters established a “tent embassy” on the lawn opposite Parliament House, drawing attention to the impoverished living conditions of their people, and simultaneously declaring the continuance of Aboriginal sovereignty. Since 1972, the main policy goal of Australian governments has been Aboriginal “self-determination,” though the label is misleading in that, despite some provision for consultation with Aboriginal peoples, control of decision-making has remained with the settler state and its agencies.

Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 3.3% of the total population, but they comprise 30% of those in prison (Australian Bureau of Statistics). As the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a proposal for constitutional and cultural reform drafted by First Nations leaders in 2017 noted, such statistics reveal the “structure nature of the problem [and] the torment of [their] powerlessness.” Its concrete proposal for a First Nations Voice to Parliament, which would be consulted on any laws affecting Indigenous people, was rejected by Australian voters in May 2024. While there have been moves to promote social justice in Australian society in the last sixty years, such as by outlawing racial discrimination and recognising land rights and native title, they frequently meet with resistance. The traditional history told of a land peacefully settled. The emergence in the 1980s of historical studies describing the extent of frontier violence, identifying massacres that had been absent from the historical record, was controversial as it crossed over from the academic domain into the

mass media, the conflict between proponents and deniers becoming known here as the ‘History Wars.’ A similar strategy of denial occurred in response to a 1997 Human Rights Commission report on the systematic removal of mixed-race children from their families, a policy in operation from the 1910s to the 1970s (Australian Human Rights Commission). Eventually, in 2007, the Australian government offered an apology to these people and their families. Despite this long process of reflection and reconciliation, vastly disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children are still placed in out-of-home care today. (For a book-length account of factors and events summarised here see Broome.)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Literature

Although the campaign for a constitutionally enshrined “Voice to Parliament” was unsuccessful, First Nations literature can be considered an unfolding collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander “voices,” seeking to influence public understanding and counter denialism. Indigenous peoples were quick to take up the technology of alphabetic writing in the quest to improve their condition and assert their rights (Van Toorn). The earliest writings were letters to the authorities seeking redress or acknowledgment of rights (Heiss and Minter). The first published book written by an Aboriginal author was David Unaipon’s *Native Legends* in 1929. The first collection of poems by an Aboriginal writer, Oodgeroo Noonuccal’s (previously known as Kath Walker) *We*

are Going, was published in 1964. The first play was produced in 1971, Kevin Gilbert's *The Cherry Pickers*. Both Oodgeroo and Gilbert became influential and outspoken advocates for justice and exemplars for younger writers over their long careers (Sareen). In the 1980s, the experience of dispossession began to be consistently explored in literary genres, especially plays, poetry and life writing. Since that time, and particularly since the recognition of native title in 1992, Aboriginal writing has flourished.

Before going into detail about forms and subjects, it is worthwhile pausing to consider the principal aims and functions that Aboriginal scholars have identified for such writing. First, it provides a form of testimony about events and experiences, challenging dominant images and stereotypes of Aboriginality (Heiss). Secondly, storytelling is known to have a healing potential for those who have been rendered voiceless by trauma, whether through writing or through readers encountering experiences they have been unable to put into words (Atkinson; Hamilton). Thirdly, such writing generally has a political aim, by providing vivid accounts of injustices, of prompting change and advancing the emancipation of First Nations peoples (Whittaker ix; Baker and Worby). These factors often work in tandem, rather than operating as discrete aims. This is exemplified in Alf Taylor's *God, the Devil and Me* (2021), which as well as witnessing to the sustained deprivations and cruelties of his childhood in an orphanage run by

Spanish monks includes a blistering lampoon of the Bible and the hypocritical travesty of Christianity that he experienced. A quotation from this memoir appears as the epigraph to this paper. The passage in full reads:

I firmly believe that words have a special effect on people – through music, storytelling, in a conversation, poetry, public speaking, politics, reading, and as an Aboriginal, through our Dreamtime stories, which I, as a child, never did get to hear. Words can be hurtful, pleasant, angry, lovable, and consoling. To me as a child, words were always fascinating, especially in books, comics, children’s picture books and anything that was readable to a small child. It amazed me how the great writers from the past could produce words from their minds, and create beautiful and soothing pictures, which I was forever emotionally involved in. (2)

Taylor juxtaposes this recognition of the powers of the written word and the readerly imagination with the routine denigrations of the children’s Aboriginal identity by their supposed guardians and educators. *God, the Devil and Me* critiques the constructions of Aboriginality offered by church and state authorities using a racy vernacular English that expresses the resistance of the adult author and his child self.

Aboriginal literature takes many forms. I shall discuss a notable genre of dispossession before turning to forms of writing Country. Through life writing, First Nations people taken from their

families and homelands under the child removal policy reached a large public. As in *God, the Devil and Me*, these stories narrate harrowing stories of abuse and neglect in state institutions or church missions where they were punished if they spoke their own traditional languages, received rudimentary educations, and were trained to be domestic servants or farm labourers for white families. A famous example is Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987), which sold 25,000 copies in Australia, and was published also in the UK, the United States, and in India (Freeman; Sharrad). Another, *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* (1996), by Nugi Garimara (Doris Pilkington), was adapted into an internationally successful film, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. Anne Brewster has shown how Aboriginal life writing often shifts away from the individualism of western autobiographies, which focus on a successful protagonist, to collective or family stories, incorporate biography as well as autobiography, and other forms of "textual hybridisation" (xxi). One such hybrid text, Ali Cobby Eckermann's *Too Afraid to Cry* (2012), states on its dedication page: 'this is a poetic memoir/ a story of healing/ not burdened by blame.' In its page layout this statement is set out as a three-line poem, inviting a slow reading of the traumatic story, both the direct prose recollections and the intense poems that are interspersed through the narrative, and speak of her true family, and the Aboriginal world to which the writer has now returned.

It is not surprising that land or "Country" is a significant force in Aboriginal Literature in Australia, due to the deep connection

between members of the various First Nations and their traditional homelands. Whether a text is set in urban or bush areas, place is a living presence in the narrative. “Country” denotes a spiritual tie which is experienced not as an abstract idea but as a deeply felt relationship, involving a sense of belonging to the land, rather than of the land belonging to the person. It creates obligations of caring for the land, not simply treating it as a resource. In the words of Ambelin Kwaymullina, a writer and lawyer of the Palyku nation of the north-west of Western Australia: “Country ... gives us life, and teaches us how to live” (Kwaymullina13). A close relationship exists between culture and land in that every place has a story of its creation, so Country is filled with traditional stories of lore and law handed down orally over thousands of years.

Since the 1980s there have been notable attempts to communicate this traditional vision of land and life to a broader Australian audience through written texts. Bill Neidjie, an elder of the Gagudju people of Northern Territory, published three collections of narratives and reflections, *Kakadu Man* (1986), *Story About Feeling* (1989), and *Old Man’s Story* (2015). These collaborative texts contain transcriptions of his spoken words, colour photographs of Gagudju Country, and traditional artworks. Neidjie was instrumental in arranging for the lands to be leased to the Australian government as a National Park, thus preserving it from unwanted development. *Story About Feeling* lays out an integrated vision that challenges white Australian (and Western) scientific assumptions about the separation of human beings from

the rest of the natural world that we can analyse and master. In this different ontology a deep kinship between all living things, which produces an ethic of care and equality:

Listen carefully this, you can hear me.

I'm telling you because earth just like mother
and father or brother of you.

That tree same thing.

Your body, my body I suppose,

I'm same as you ... anyone.

Tree working when you sleeping and dream. (3)

Critic Philip Morrissey, of the Kalkadoon people of north Queensland, argues that Neidjie's choice of Kriol as the narrative language of this book "is neither ethno-centric, imperialising not objectifying in its mode," and therefore supports the philosophy he is articulating (Morrissey 6).

In twenty-first century, writing, Country has become a key literary subject for First Nations writers. It figures in quests to return home, or reacquire control of land, such as Melissa Lucashenko's novels, *Mullumbimby* (2013) and *Too Much Lip* (2020), Tara June Winch's *The Yield* (2018) and Kim Scott's *Taboo* (2017). These texts frequently incorporate words from the author's (and characters') Indigenous language into their English narration and dialogue. A breakthrough text centred on writing Country in a form that draws on the traditional oral storytelling style is Alexis Wright's 2007 novel, *Carpentaria*. Using a

heightened version of the vernacular diction of her home region, near the Gulf of Carpentaria from which the novel is named, it blends Aboriginal cosmology with political satire. Wright tells the story of a group of ordinary Aboriginal people living in poverty on the fringe of a town in their own traditional country which is under threat from a proposed mine. Their traditional stories affirm and equip them in their quest to protect their land and identity. In poetry, First Nations poets frequently assert the joys of their traditional embodied knowledge of Country against dominant Western discourses. Charmaine Papertalk Green's "Honey to Lips Bottlebrush" demonstrates this through the beautiful and delicious flowers of the bottlebrush plant:

Young teachings perched on Walkaway hill

Space reclaiming decolonising respacing

Bottlebrush explosive red inviting eyes

Honey to lips or bush cordial sweet (in Whittaker 82).

In its environment this Indigenous plant offers nourishment and delight, but also resistance to the settler-colonial domination of space, as does the poem.

This brief account of First Nations writing and the settler-colonial context which it seeks to transform has highlighted its awareness of the complex effects of language and the necessity of Aboriginal voices, and argued for its integral concern with land and identity.

Works Cited

Atkinson, Judy. *Trauma Trails, Recreating Songlines: The Transgenerational Effects of Trauma in Indigenous Australia*. Spinifex Press, 2002.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples"
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples>

Australian Human Rights Commission. *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*. Australian Government Publication Service, 1997. <https://bth.humanrights.gov.au/the-report/bringing-them-home-report>

Baker, Ali Gumillya and Gus Worby. "Aboriginality after Mabo." *A Companion to Australian Literature Since 1900*, edited by, Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer, Camden House, 2007, pp. 17-40.

Banner, Stuart. *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska*. Harvard University Press, 2007, chapter 1.

Behrendt, Larissa and Loretta Kelly. *Resolving Indigenous Disputes: Land Conflict and Beyond*. Federation Press, 2008.

-
- Brewster, Anne. *Reading Aboriginal Women's Life Stories*. Sydney University Press, 2015.
- Broome, Richard. *Aboriginal Australians: A History Since 1788*. 4th ed. Allen and Unwin, 2010.
- Eckermann, Ali Cobby. *Too Afraid to Cry*. Ilura Press, 2012; Navayana Publishing, 2021.
- Freeman, Robyn. "Black and White: In Search of an "Apt" Response to Indigenous Writing." *TEXT* 14.2 (2010) <http://www.textjournal.com.au/oct10/freeman.htm>
- Hamilton, Fiona. "The Heart of the Matter: Creating Meaning in Health and Medicine through Writing." *Medicine, Health and the Arts: Approaches to the Medical Humanities*, edited by, Victoria Bates, Alan Bleakley and Sam Goodman. Routledge, 2013, pp. 145-162.
- Heiss, Anita. "Writing Aboriginality: Authors on 'Being Aboriginal.'" *A Companion to Australian Literature Since 1900*, edited by, Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer, Camden House, 2007, pp. 41-60.
- Heiss, Anita and Peter Minter. *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Aboriginal Literature*. Allen and Unwin, 2008.
- Kwaymullina, Ambelin. "Introduction: A Land of Many Countries." *Heartsick for Country: Stories of Love, Spirit and Creation*, edited by Sally Morgan, Tjalamina Mia and Blaze Kwaymullina, Fremantle Press, 2008, pp. 9-22.

-
- Leane, Jeanine. "Presencing: Writing in the Decolonial Space." *The Cambridge Companion to the Australian Novel*, edited by Nicholas Birns and Louis Klee, Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 25-38.
- McMahon, Elizabeth. "Decolonizing Literary Pedagogies in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand." *Decolonizing the English Literary Curriculum*, edited by Ato Quayson and Ankhi Mukherjee, Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 80-108.
- Morrissey, Philip. "Bill Neidjie's *Story About Feeling*: Notes on its Themes and Philosophy." *JASAL: Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 15.2 (2015), 1-11.
- Neidjie, Bill. *Story About Feeling*. Magabala Books, 1989.
- Sareen, Santosh K. "Of Dreamtime and Dream-Tracks: Revisiting Australian Indigenous Identity Construction with Reference to Select Poems by Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Kevin Gilbert." in *From Canon to Covid: Transforming English Literary Studies in India. Essays in Honour of GJV Prasad*, ed. Angelie Multani et al. (Routledge, 2024), 156-164.
- Sharrad, Paul. "Seen Through Other Eyes: Australian Literature in India." *JASAL: Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 10 (2010), 1-15.

Stanner, W. E. H. "After the Dreaming." *The Dreaming and Other Essays*. Black Inc, 2009, 172-224.

Uluru Statement from the Heart. 2017.

<https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>

Van Toorn, Penny. *Writing Never Arrives Naked: Early Aboriginal Cultures of Writing in Australia*. Aboriginal Studies Press, 2006.

Whittaker, Alison, ed. *Fire Front: First Nations Poetry and Power Today*. University of Queensland Press, 2020.

Wolfe, Patrick. "Nation and MiscegeNation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era." *Social Analysis* 36 (1994), 93-152.

Raymond Williams and Postcolonialism

K.W. Christopher

Osmania University

Abstract

Raymond Williams' work on culture has been acknowledged as foundational; however his focus on Britain is seen by some as a serious limitation. Broadly, one can discern two chief charges levelled against Williams. Firstly the idea of "common culture" is faulted as ethnocentric, excluding the "other" (Gilroy 51). Secondly his "neglect" of empire as a constitutive element of culture is viewed by some postcolonialists as symptomatic of the British Marxist's and the New Left's preoccupation with the economic, rather than the cultural (prominently Edward Said and Gauri Viswanathan). This paper attempts to look at Williams' understanding of identity, nationalism and culture in the context of both these critiques, and argues that Williams' work not only presciently engages with many of the issues raised by postcolonial critics but it also points to the limitations of their culturalist /multiculturalist and identitarian approaches. The problematic of race, identity and multiculturalism vis -a -vis Dalit experience in Britain is another frame of this paper.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, empire, postcolonialism, caste, race, culture

Culture has become a key term in recent years across disciplinary boundaries. Vivek Chibber in *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* writes about the “cultural turn” and the emergence of postcolonialism and its expansion into other disciplines after the decline of Marxism (2). Class, capitalism central to Marxist theory came to be replaced by culture. As Eagleton observes: “Postcolonialism has been on the whole rather stronger on identity than on the International Monetary Fund, more fascinated by marginality than by markets” (25).

Culture became an important category, as in Arjun Appaduarai and Homi Bhabha, decentering the economic in understanding globalization.

It would not be an overstatement to say that the preoccupation of the privileged South Asian postcolonialists and their guilt stricken “western” acolytes with eurocentrism and colonialism has indeed forced them into a time warp. Colonialism in such an articulation becomes the starting point for any analysis of a range issues - poverty, malnutrition, disease/epidemics, sexuality, religious and ethnic violence. Zizek in his arguments on “Hegelian Wound” points out the problems with some such postcolonial positions (135). Colonialism in postcolonialism becomes the root of all evil - *radix malorum est* colonialism. Most South Asian postcolonialists who enjoy a privileged location (Mishra “Caste, Privilege, and Postcolonialism”) with cultural as well as social capital deflect the question of caste and instead

represent themselves as victims of colonialism marginalized in Western discourses as well the academia and spokespersons and saviours of the “subaltern” thus elaborating a variation of the “white man’s burden.”

It could be further argued that the persistent theme of postcolonialism is to trace the causes for the present condition of former colonies to their colonial past. Zizek’s observations capture this aspect of postcolonialism. Ngugi’s radical argument of “decolonizing the mind” has subsequently gathered reactionary postcolonial and far right inflections. The idea of an “originary” preceding the “colonizing” by the “other” - resulting in “amnesia” (Devy 10) and “loss” of “self” (Nandy 1989) – is a very attractive proposition not only for the anti-colonial projects but to reactionary, exceptionalist and supremacist agendas as well.

Raymond Williams’ study of culture beginning from *Culture and Society* is so widely documented and acknowledged that it would be tautological to restate. Out of his prolific work *The Country and the City* figures frequently in postcolonial discussions as a seminal text where Williams explores the country-city relationship, the questions of identity, location, dislocation, movement, communities and the exploitative nature of capitalist production. One can find affinities between Williams and the redoubtable Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the city and lived experience . Earlier works such as *Culture and Society* and *Long Revolution* too evince an engagement with these concerns in however, as Said puts it, “underdeveloped” or “peripheral” fashion

they appear (77). Some of his later essays in *Towards 2000* deal with these questions with greater intensity. Identity and community figure in his novels. At the beginning of *The Country and the City* Williams explains clearly the focus of his work and its implications for global studies, the centrality of imperialism in English culture:

For practical reasons I take most of my examples from English writing, though my interests go much wider. It ought in case to be clear that the English experience is especially significant, in that one of the decisive transformations, in the relations between country and city, occurred there very early and with a thoroughness which is still some ways unapproached. (2)

Williams analyses how the country - city binary, the pastoral traditions masked the exploitative nature of capitalism-agrarian as well as industrial. The 17th c country house poems, Williams argues, while celebrating nature masked the exploitative relationships. In Williams' analysis the country/city model of exploitative relationship culminates in imperialism and neo colonialism. Williams' study begins with England and takes a global perspective including "distant lands" that are transformed into the "rural areas of industrial Britain." Towards the end of his analysis Williams observes:

Much of the real history of city and country within England itself is from an early date a history of the extension of a dominant model of capitalist development to

include other regions of the world...Thus one of the last models of the ‘city and country’ is the system we now know as imperialism (280).

Williams consistently recognized imperialism as a constitutive element of English culture. In *The Long Revolution* he wrote about the “uses” of empire for creative writers, locating imagination in a historical and spatial context: “The use of the Empire is similar but more complex...But the Empire was a more universally available escape route: black sheep could be lost in it; ruined or misunderstood heroes could go out and return with fortunes” (66). Thus, empire serves the dual function of providing “magic solutions” (66) to aesthetic as well as social problems.

Though not a postcolonialist himself, Edward Said is a foundational figure in the emergence of postcolonial thought. Said’s position vis-a-vis postcolonialism reminds one of Lenin’s remark about G. B. Shaw as “A good man fallen among Fabians” (qtd. in Scherbina 90).

Said finds Williams’ work on English culture very important and useful because of its focus on 19th c Britain – a period when Britain came to be the imperial center. Acknowledging his debt to Williams, Said finds *The Country and the City* to be a very “useful text” which could serve as a model for reading Western culture in terms of imperialism. In his “Williams Memorial Lecture” he asks:

How does Williams’ work in and about England help us to address some of the related aesthetic, political and cultural

problematics that we can find in locales and far less English and European than Williams’? (82)

Though he acknowledges and greatly values Williams’ influence, he sees his preoccupation with England as evidence of his Anglo centrism (Eurocentricism?). In *Culture and Imperialism* he says: “Williams is a great critic, whose work I admire and have learned much from, but I sense a limitation in his feeling that English literature is mainly about England” (14). This “limitation” Said argues, can be seen in other Marxist scholars like Gordon Lewis and V.G. Kiernan whom he admires but complains: “none of them has been anywhere as influential as they should have been in changing our ways of looking at the canonical works of the nineteenth century and twentieth century European culture” (70). Said laments their neglect of culture-empire relationship and how it “support, elaborate and consolidate the practice of empire” (14). Said’s analysis of Williams’ work with regards to empire is picked up by the postcolonial chorus. Said observes:

The most outstanding case is that of Raymond Williams himself whose *Culture and Society* does not deal with imperial experience at all...The few tantalizing pages in *The Country and the City* that touch on culture and imperialism are peripheral to the book’s main idea (77)

In his conversation with Williams (*Politics of Modernism* 196) Said talks about *Politics and Letters* where Williams “is taken to task about not discussing the relationship” of culture and empire (196). Said finds Williams’ discussion of culture to be

exclusive - “our” vs. “theirs” - and in his usual fashion goes onto privilege the position of the exile and the immigrant who is “outside” and never “of it” though “in it” (193). This motif runs in postcolonial thought which indicts western liberal multiculturalism. What is ironical is that Said expects Williams to have done a study of empire which he does not because his concerns are so different just as Said’s concerns were limited to the representation of the Arab and not the many other communities in the geography he studies in *Orientalism*. R. Radhakrishnan while respecting Williams’ role as a thinker and “organic intellectual” foregrounds his privileged location as a first world intellectual (135).

Said’s celebrated disciple Gauri Vishwanathan finds fault with British Marxists like Eagleton, Chris Baldick, Doyle and Sinfield who use the “national and imperial as interchangeable” (191). However she quickly adds, “But we would have to go back to Raymond Williams to trace the genealogy of a critical approach that consistently and exclusively studies the formation of metropolitan culture from within its own boundaries” (191).

Viswanathan argument needs to be quoted at length:

his cultural analysis is seriously inhibited by the framework of economic determinism within which that reading is produced ... Williams's scattered comments on empire in *The Long Revolution* and *Culture and Society* suggest that Britain had achieved dominance through the power of a fully formed cultural and institutional system

whose values were simply transplanted to the colonies. That system is subsequently identified as the "national" culture, but *it partakes little of the contingencies of the colonial situation it confronts*, and it remains *hermetically sealed* from the continually changing *political imperatives of empire*. What is quite striking is that Williams, while appearing eager to break away from the weaknesses of Marxian theory (and indeed *he does come uncannily close* to proposing a method of analysis of nineteenth-century culture that would have to incorporate empire to be complete), remains peculiarly *reticent in pursuing imperialism* as that *single crucial factor* that would invalidate *totalizing descriptions of any kind* and favor *process over system*.... Instead, what has *the potential to be a liberating methodological insight* and a *critical tool* for resetting the boundaries of cultural study across societies *remains curiously undeveloped* by Williams in his own critical practice. (195 emphasis added)

Vishwanathan's quarrel with Williams is about his "economic determinism", for not exploring the relationship between "national culture" and colonialism; how that culture is not only "exported" but shaped by imperialism. However, *The Country and the City* draws attention to the relation between domestic national culture in formation, and the role played by the colonies in that process. Williams says:

In *Wuthering Heights*, in *Great Expectations*, in *Alton Locke* and in many other novels of the period there is a way out from the struggle within English society to these distant lands; a way out that is not only the escape to a new land but as in some of the real history an acquisition of fortune to return and re-enter the struggle at a higher point ... The lands of the Empire were an idyllic retreat, an escape from debt or shame, or an opportunity for making a fortune. (281)

Williams describes the East-West division as a historical event which postcolonialism tends to characterize as timeless. Williams' argument counters this postcolonial tendency to essentialize East - West binary as permanent dating back to ancient Greeks. In *Orientalism* Said invokes Aeschylus' *The Persians* as an evidence of West's representation of the "Orient". Williams says:

The contrast between 'East' and 'West' is very old, but it has repeatedly changed its content. Its earliest European form comes from the division of the Roman Empire, from the third century. This was followed by the division of the Christian churches, from the eleventh century. Yet these internal divisions were superseded by contrasts between 'the West' as a Christian civilization and an 'East' defined either as Islam or as the civilizations beyond it from India to China. Western and Eastern (or 'Oriental') worlds were

commonly defined in this way from the sixteenth century
(*Towards 2000* 155)

Paul Gilroy's critique of Williams' engagement with race and imagined nation is very pointed. He also points to the "ethnocentric" aspect of British Cultural Studies "which, in spite of itself tends towards a morbid celebration of England and Englishness from which blacks are systematically excluded" (12). Gilroy takes issue with Williams' analysis of the immigrants and "rooted settlements" and his insistence on social identity as a product of "long experience" (51). According to Gilroy Williams' understanding of the significance of race in the nationalist imagination is flawed and does not account for the "exclusion of certain groups from the imagined community of the nation" (52). Williams' understanding of race and difference according to Gilroy is no different from the position of the Right (51). Gilroy accuses Williams of his "refusal to examine the concept of racism which has its own historic relationship with ideologies of Englishness, Britishness and national belonging" (53).

Williams argues that identity cannot be a mere legal category but is shaped through "long experience" and "sustained social relationships" (195) and "to reduce social identity to formal legal definitions, at the level of the state, is to collude in the alienated superficialities of 'the nation' which are limited functional terms of the modern ruling class" (195).

Gilroy misreads William's arguments for diverse identities which form over a period of time in history (194). Identity as

Williams argues cannot be reduced to “legal definitions at the level of the state” (195). Williams emphasizes the complex and varied processes of diverse people arriving, settling integrating and forming communities in Britain to counter all forms of exclusivist claims. Williams makes a distinction between “real” and “artificial processes” by which settlements and integrations happen:

But it should be equally obvious that this long and *unfinished process* cannot reasonably be repressed by versions of a national history and a patriotic heritage which deliberately exclude its complexities and in doing so reject its many surviving and diverse identities...It is here that there is now a major problem in the most recent immigrations of *more visibly different peoples*. When these interact with the most recent *selective forms of identity*...the angry confusions and prejudices are obvious. At the same time many generations of formerly diverse peoples have experienced and adapted to a differently *rooted though overlapping social identity*, and as at all earlier stages of relative integration are at best deeply uncertain of, at worst openly hostile to, new coming other peoples. This is the phenomenon now crudely interpreted as ‘racism’. It is not that there is no actual racism: it flows without difficulty from the most recent selective forms, as it flowed also, in modern times, against the Irish and the Jews. But it is a profound misunderstanding to refer all the

social and cultural tensions of the arrival of new peoples to these ideological forms. (149)

What is interesting is Williams' problematizing of both "civic" and "ethnic" nationalisms.

The celebrated thinker and doyen of African American studies Cornel West points to Williams' limitations:

though Williams provides indispensable analytical tools and historical sensibilities for reflections on empire, race, color, gender, and sexual orientation, the relative silences in his work on these issues bear the stamp of his own intellectual and existential formation, and his later attempts to accent a Welsh nationalist identity within his socialist project bear this out (xii).

Race and ethnicity were ideological categories according to Williams and he considered them not important to his Marxist politics. Henry Louis Gates tells us of his "astonishment" at Williams' not mentioning to him while at Cambridge in the 70s about Stuart Hall being black (Jamaican). When Gates brought up this incident much later when he met Hall: "Somehow, he didn't seem surprised. I think there was a sense in Williams, whom I enormously respected, that if we don't talk about it, "it" doesn't exist" (xi).

Identity, according to Williams, is not absolute, it is shaped and to a large extent by a social bonding that is always local. People talk in terms of the place they come from a village or town

or city; particular valleys or mountains” (137) akin to Lefebvre’s “lived space” which is a lived formation that is historical and real (39). Compared to this the idea of a nation is not in the lived experience of people, to that extent it is a construct (cf Anderson’s “imagined community”)

“These powerful feelings of local bondings” cautions Williams, are used by the state to exercise power and tend to morph into ideology.

Williams demonstrates how late capitalism “is the main source of all the contemporary confusions about peoples and nations and their necessary loyalties and bonds” (*Towards 2000* 184). In the context of capitalist international market where frontiers are not acknowledged the concept of nation becomes quite problematic. One could think of Guattari and Deleuze’s concept of “deterritorialization”. Williams makes his point clearly:

A socialist position on social identity certainly rejects, absolutely, the divisive ideologies of ‘race’ and ‘nation’, as a ruling class functionally employs them. But it rejects them in favour of lived and formed identities either of a settled kind, if available, or of a possible kind, where dislocation and relocation require new formation. (190)

Williams rejects the privileging of the migrant/minority and the diasporic as postcolonialism does. In a similar fashion Aijaz Ahmad examines the location and the class configuration of South Asian intellectuals, ignoring caste though (12). In contrast to the mobility of the privileged migrants, Williams argues, the majority

of the world population is still rooted in their places and their existence is made difficult by the global economy, that has facilitated the migrant (206). Williams observes:

Many minority liberals and socialists and especially those who, by nature of their work or formation, are themselves nationally and internationally mobile, have little experience of those rooted settlements from which, though now under exceptionally severe complications and pressures, most people still derive their communal identities. (*Towards 2000* 207)

The arguments about the problematic engagement of British Left and Cultural Studies with empire, difference, race, identity and minorities conveniently ignore the question of caste in diaspora. The pressures of multiculturalism in liberal democracies in the West in general and Britain in particular make it difficult to engage with caste discrimination. The “globalization of domestic politics” (Rai 226) and caste in South Asian diaspora (Ghuman) brings new challenges to Cultural Studies and necessitates a rethinking of postcolonial studies.

Works Cited:

Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. Verso, 1992.

Devy, G. *After Amnesia: Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism*. Orient Longman, 1995.

-
- Eagleton, Terry. "Postcolonialism and 'postcolonialism.'" *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol.1, no.1, 1998, pp. 24-26
- Gates, Henry Louis. "Foreword." *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*, by Stuart Hall, Harvard, 2017.
- Ghuman, Paul A, Singh. *British Untouchables: A Study of Dalit Identity and Education*. Ashgate, 2011
- Gilroy, Paul. *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. Routledge, 1992
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell, 1991.
- Mishra, Shubranshu. "Caste, Privilege, and Postcolonialism: Reflections on Decolonizing the Curriculum". www.e-ir.info/2020/09/15/caste-privilege-and-postcolonialism-reflections-on-decolonising-the-curriculum/
- Nandy, Ashish. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. Oxford, 1989.
- Prendergast, Christopher. editor. *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams*. University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Rai, Rajesh. "Transnational Religious Political Movements: Negotiating Hindutva in the Diaspora." *The Politics of Religion in South Asia*, edited by Ishtiaq Ahamed, Routledge, 2011, pp. 225-241.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage, 1993.

---. "Narrative Geography and Interpretation". *New Left Review*, vol.1, No.180, March/April 1990, pp. 81-97

Scherbina, Vladimir. *Lenin and the Problems of Literature*. Progress Publishers, 1974.

Viswanathan, Gauri. "Raymond Williams and British Colonialism." *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams*, edited by Christopher Prendergast, University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp. 188-210.

West, Cornel. "In Memoriam: The Legacy of Raymond Williams." *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams*, edited by Christopher Prendergast, University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp. ix-xii.

Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution*. Chatto and Windus, 1961.

---. *The Country and the City*. Chatto and Windus, 1973.

---. *Towards 2000*. Penguin, 1985.

---. *Politics of Modernism*. Verso, 1989.

Zizek, Slavoj. *Absolute Recoil*. Verso, 2015, pp. 117-157.

Resilience and Rebellion: Unveiling Narratives of Women in the Telangana Armed Struggle

Shugufta Shaheen

Maulanan Azad National Urdu University

Sajaudeen Nijamodeen Chapparban

Central University of Gujarat

Abstract

Elaine Showalter's gynocriticism emphasizes amplifying women's voices in literature, challenging male-dominated narratives. The anthology *We Were Making History* (1989) by *Stree Shakti Sanghatana* presents women's stories from the Telangana Armed Struggle, showcasing their resilience and agency. Compiled from oral narratives, the anthology reveals challenges women faced, including patriarchal oppression, societal constraints, and revolutionary movement complexities. Themes include patriarchy and feudalism, disillusionment, and gender dynamics. Women's diverse roles, from combatants to cultural activists, are highlighted, despite facing neglect and marginalization. The anthology exposes hierarchical divisions, gender biases, and power struggles, even in egalitarian spaces. It serves as a reminder of overlooked narratives, emphasizing the need to amplify marginalized voices and recognize women's legacy of resistance. This work re-evaluates historical perspectives, underscoring the importance of amplifying women's voices and experiences.

Keywords: Gynocriticism, Women's Experiences, Telangana Armed Struggle, Patriarchy, Liberation, Social Critique.

Shugufta Shaheen, Department of English, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. E-mail: shugufta.shaheen@yahoo.com

Sajaudeen Nijamodeen Chapparban, Centre for Diaspora Studies, Central University of Gujarat. E-mail: shujaudeen09@gmail.com

Gynocriticism, as introduced by Elaine Showalter, underscores the need to amplify women's voices and experiences in literature, challenging the historical dominance of male narratives. In the context of the Telangana Armed Struggle, women's participation and contributions have often been marginalized or silenced, relegating their stories to the periphery of history. However, the anthology *We Were Making History: Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle* (1989) by *Stree Shakti Sanghatana* disrupts this narrative hegemony by presenting a collection of narratives that illuminate the personal journeys, struggles, and triumphs of women during this tumultuous period. The anthology, a translation of oral narratives compiled by the *Stree Shakti Sanghatana*, serves as a testament to the resilience and agency of women who defied societal norms and actively engaged in the armed struggle. Through interviews, recordings, and transcriptions, these narratives reveal the multifaceted challenges faced by women, from patriarchal oppression and societal constraints to the complexities within the revolutionary movement itself. Central themes that emerge from these narratives include the intersection of patriarchy and feudalism as oppressive forces, the disillusionment and betrayal experienced by women post-struggle, and the intricate dynamics of gender and power within revolutionary movements. The paper traces women's roles which encompassed a wide spectrum, from combatants and medical practitioners to cultural activists and organizers, showcasing their diverse contributions and capabilities. It also underscores the fact

that despite their invaluable contributions, these women faced neglect, exploitation, and marginalization within the movement and society at large. The anthology sheds light on the hierarchical divisions, gender biases, and power struggles that persisted even in ostensibly egalitarian spaces. This paper also highlights how *We Were Making History* serves as a poignant reminder of the overlooked narratives and untold stories of women who played a pivotal role in shaping history. It calls for a re-evaluation of historical perspectives, emphasizing the importance of amplifying marginalized voices and recognizing the enduring legacy of women's resilience and resistance in the face of adversity.

Gynocriticism marks a movement in literature introduced by Elaine Showalter in her seminal work *Towards a Feminist Poetics* which attempts to highlight women's experiences, writings, language etc. History has been understood to be after all 'His' story i.e., written from a male perspective and recording male experiences. Women were and are a part of history but their presence is forced to be peripheral while men take centre stage. In cases where women experiences were vital it is the male who took upon himself to present a second-hand experience of the women's 'perspective. It is difficult to presume that women were incapable of writing, speaking or sharing their experience. There may have been at least few women who could hold their own in a male dominant field. The reason for their exclusion ranges from societal factors, patriarchal society, lack of educational opportunities, inhibitions, family pressures to name a few. It could be argued that

if women had been given the right encouragement, opportunity and the society had been more inclusive and accommodative women surely would have made a mark long before.

Literature on women and by women flourished in different parts of India in many languages. It basically dealt with a search for identity and highlighted their traumatic predicament with an aim to restore their dignity. It also captures their experience and provides a realistic and authentic insight into their lives.

The focus of this paper is to highlight the personal experiences of women who participated in the Armed Telangana Struggle compiled in an anthology, *We Were Making History: Life Histories of women in Telangana Armed Struggle* (1989). This anthology is a translation of oral narratives in Telugu transcribed and edited by the *Stree Shakti Sanghata*, which comprised of women writers and editors. The title of the Telugu text is *Manaku Teliyani Mana Charitra* which was first published in 1986 by the *Stree Shakti Sanghatna* and revised in 2002. The anthology is an attempt to give voice to and record lost histories made silent because of the lack of an initiative to hear them. These histories have been documented through interviews, recordings, transcription of oral narratives and translations. Approaching these lost voices was also problematic for the editors as they had no information about the whereabouts of these women except a few.

Testimony is an eyewitness account of their subjective experience and a mirror to the socio-cultural situation during the struggle. It depicts their life journey, emotions and political

consciousness. P. Sundarayya in his *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons* (1972) observes:

Women played an important role in the Telangana struggle. They actively participated in the land movement, in agricultural labour wage struggles, in seizure of landlords' grain, against the "Briggs' Plan" of evacuating the koya, chenchu and lambadi people from their hamlets in the forest areas, or from their scattered hamlets in the plains. They were with their husbands and brothers, fighting the Razakars and Nizam police and later against the Congress Razakars and Nehru's armies and the police. They had joined the military and political squads and underwent all the difficulties and joys of life in the forests and hills and in the fields in rain and in sun. They acted as couriers, as political agitators, and in new centres, as organisers of people's movements and mass organisations. (233)

The anthology *We Were Making History: Life Histories of Women in Telangana Armed Struggle* (1989) comprises of 16 narratives and chronicles the social history of Telangana from the women's perspective. Patriarchy and feudalism were regarded as their joint oppressors. These narratives document problems resulting from being denied education to forced marriage, treatment by comrades and the police, sexual exploitation and fighting on par with men in the armed struggle.

The title is a statement of realization and an expression of their achievement which was not acknowledged or recognized.

The women sharing their experiences in this anthology belonged to and represented all strata of society. They included peasants, the middle class and landlords representing different castes and religions. It was a unique movement in the sense that these women were for the first time participating in a resistance movement under one umbrella and brought about a realization that no matter which class, caste or religion one belonged to, the problems of women are universal. Mangat Sajneet writes:

In the princely state of Hyderabad, people belonged to three broad linguistic identities—Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. The Telugu-speaking Telangana region constituted over fifty per cent of the state (including the capital, Hyderabad). With the Nizam, Mir Sir Osman Ali, and Muslim elites at the top of the state's exploitative hierarchy, caste-Hindu zamindars (landlords) and money-lenders physically and sexually exploited agricultural labourers, perpetuated vetti (bondage), charged exorbitant interest on cash and grain loans, and forcibly evicted small-landowners. Lower-caste and Dalit-Bahujan women formed a large section of the six-million strong agricultural labour force and were slated to not benefit from India's Independence...The Telangana Peoples' Struggle (also known as the Telangana Peasants' Struggle or the Telangana Armed Struggle) was an anti-feudal and anti-caste movement against the Nizam of Hyderabad's oppressive regime, and later that of Independent India. In many ways, it was inherently feminist—with numerous women leaders advocating for socio-

political reform not limited to caste justice, labour protection and women's freedom. (Mangat 2021)

This struggle is also referred to as The People's Struggle and was a mass movement supported by the Communist party and the Andhra Maha Sabha. Most women admit that they were driven to participate in the struggle after experiencing physical and sexual violence at the hands of the land-owning men. The comrades are depicted as equally ruthless and oppressive and unleashing their patriarchal ideology even though women were participating as equals in the movement. Their issues were dismissed and not taken seriously. Women had to give up their children for adoption if she was to be a part of the movement as there was no space for women with small children in the movement. The women's narratives are actually a critique of societal attitude which relegate women to nurturing and reproductive functions. D. Ravishankar writes:

One of the most popular leaders of the movement was Chityala Ailamma popularly known as Chakali Ailamma. She fought for the rights of the labour class particularly women to cultivate their own land rejecting the supremacy of the upper castes. Her defiance of Razakars inspired hundreds of women to join the armed struggle. By the end of 1940's women's participation in the urban and the rural areas picked up momentum. One of such living legendary women leaders is Mallu Swarajyam. She was known as iron lady of Telangana who fought against the landlords. Also, she is sister of revolutionary leader Bhimreddy Narasimhareddy, who is a

famous Telangana warrior and parliamentarian from Nalgonda district. Born in 1931 in Kothagudem of Tungaturti Mandal in Suryapeta District. Swarajyam, took part in the Telangana armed struggle along with her brother and displayed supreme bravery. She was inspiration to many women at a time when it was considered a sin for women to step out of the house. She went around villages and enlightened the people through her songs and lectures. She also brought awareness among the tribals in Warangal, Karimnagar and Adilabad districts during the armed struggle. Razakars burnt her house in 1947-48 and announced a prize money of Rs 40000 on her head if anyone informs about her whereabouts. At this point she went underground.

Recently her statue was also erected in honour and remembrance of her courage and boldness in Chitkull village of Sanga Reddy District in 2022. In this anthology, Chityala Ailamma is credited as a pioneer of the Telangana Armed Struggle, known for her defiant actions against landlord's henchmen who were destroying crops. In her words, "Listen, let me tell you, the musclemen with their stout sticks had all arrived. Isaka Naligadu, the clerk, Abba Salim, and that Guttalam Ramreddy - they wrought havoc, turned everything upside down. We had put up cattle sheds. They tore them down. We ploughed and worked the land, but they ran roughshod over our labor. (33)

The frustration at the end of the Armed Struggle is evident when she says,

They didn't give me the land in my name. They distributed it all. They didn't give it; may their bellies burn! They didn't give it, what does it yield? They gave four bags of paddy. How will I live on four bags of paddy? We wandered house to house begging... There was a blanket the landlord had given us; we took that blanket around to the field where the harvest lay, collecting handfuls of grain. We lived eating that... I was so proud of the Sangham. They said the Sangham meant that the poor would be equal and their kingdom would come. Now it is the ones who have eaten who keep eating. Do they feed the poor? May his belly burn, he keeps eating. Do the poor get anything? We fought in the struggle. So what? Are the people who struggled here? They're gone! They are all dead, the ones who struggled... (42).

However, there is also a sense of pride in herself and her achievements in the words that she uses to begin and end her narrative. The movement if nothing succeeded in helping her establish her identity and assign significance to her existence beyond that of a wife, and a mother apart from making her realize her capability as an equal and human.

My name is Chityala Ailamma. We are known as the people from Chityala. My husband was nobody... my sons, they too are nobody. Wherever it is and whatever it is, it is my name that is heard first. They keep coming, always, the

people from the Sangham. It seems everyone says - one should work like Ailamma... that's what they say. (33)

The members of the movement were highly insecure and were intolerant of women who were educated and professional. Regalla Acchamamba's narrative shows that she was a medical practitioner and her comrades tarnished her reputation by spreading rumours of her having an affair with someone which resulted in her being expelled from the party. It is obvious that gender came before the party manifesto.

Regalla Acchamamba says,

"We (the women) were trained to use guns. Then a doctor came and trained us. His name was Ramdas, I think. In that training camp, Swarajyam, Lalitha and Laxmi were also there with me. We were taught to clean and bandage wounds, and give injections. I was given a doctor's responsibility. We were all given different responsibilities. One was sent to the Area Committee, another as an, ordinary member, yet another was a Joint Secretary and so on. During the movement my job was dressing wounds, giving injections and medicines. I had no weapons". (161)

Women contributed to the movement in various capacities, utilizing their skills and talents. Kamamma, for instance, utilized her singing and storytelling abilities to inspire and motivate others. She mentions a fellow comrade, Venkatamma, who served as their squad commander and was known for carrying hand grenades and actively participating in guerrilla attacks. Kamamma reflects on

the diverse roles they had to assume based on the situation, "In the cultural squad... Shantamma and I used to work together. In the hospital center, I worked with Mohan Rao's wife, Acchamamba. In the Area Committee center, Swarajyam and I worked together." (52).

This showcases the multiplicity of roles women undertook, from cultural activities to medical responsibilities and operational duties. Despite facing challenges and stereotypes, women like Acchamamba, Kamalamma, and Venkatamma played integral roles in the Telangana Armed Struggle, demonstrating their resilience, adaptability, and commitment to the cause. The reason that motivated these women to join the movement was the pursuit of a dream of a better life. A life based on equality and dignity. These women braved the family objections and chose a different life for themselves but like in their personal life were disillusioned by a replay and repetition of the same in their public domain. Dayani Priyamvada summarizes it in these words.

There was a criticism about the party saying that there were no principals, no morals there. When we stepped out, braving all this, we did so in the faith that there was a good future, a fine society coming in which all of us would live really well. We dreamt that in families there would be no such thing as women bending before men. We dreamt that we would live so freely and happily. But repression came so soon that we never had time to question whether the equality was therein the party itself! (71).

This disillusionment is reiterated by Sugunna:

He said to me, ‘Amma, what do you want to do? Even we have nothing to do! Go and stay at home! ‘I was so shocked, ‘what! They’ve used us so long and now they say “go stay at home. “How could they even understand what the situation was like at home? How could one even tell them? What suffering! What mental torture! I had left my studies, left the people who looked after me so well and come back to serve this party. Sundrayya also said the same thing. I was really upset. That was my first taste of suffering. At home it was like that and in the party, it was like this. (93)

She expresses shock and frustration, realizing that despite their sacrifices and contributions, they were being side-lined and disregarded. This experience, both at home and within the party, became a source of mental anguish and suffering for these women, highlighting the stark contrast between their aspirations for equality and the harsh realities they encountered. These narratives reflect the complex interplay between personal dreams and societal expectations, revealing the challenges and contradictions faced by women who sought to challenge traditional norms and pave the way for a more equitable and just society.

A general perception that can be surmised is that it is not so much the central power that was brutal but the self-proclaimed messiahs of justice who unleashed a reign of terror. This comes through very clearly in S. Suguna’s statement, “Nehru wanted the Nizam to join the Union. The Nizam was not such a bad fellow,

but that Kasim Razvi and Liaqat Ali were the ones who were responsible (for all the trouble)” (91).

Suguna admits that they joined the movement knowing fully well the stakes were high. This dare devil attitude and courageous outlook towards life did not deter them from taking the easier way out using their gender as an excuse. They were equal to facing the dangers on par with men.

They used to often tease me saying that I had a young daughter and they would threaten to kill her to get information from me. But I was never frightened. In those days being arrested or killed was an ordinary fact of life (89).

Hierarchy, it appears, was not confined to the class system. Manikonda Suryavathi shares the hierarchical division practiced by the class system which percolated down the other strata and found space among women too.

After we came into the Party, we had the idea that we should start Mahila Sanghams because there were bourgeois Mahila Sanghams then. Educated women used to start clubs and not allow ordinary women to join. So, we wanted to start Sanghams for the women who were agricultural labourers or poor peasants in the villages. In 1936 they started the Krishna Jilla Mahila Sangham. Katragadda Hanumayamma and Chandra Savithramma were in that. I was not there. I didn't know much about it. After I joined, Nagalla Rajeshwaramma was taken into that Committee (145).

Communism instilled in women a different vision of what it means to be a woman and encouraged them to take up education. Every woman was supposed to read Maxim Gorky's *Mother*, newspapers and Russian literature which made them understand the meaning of a nation, the status of women and also the necessity of women's equal participation and representation in these movements. The women contributed by giving their service in areas they were equipped in. Progressive Movement further motivated them towards their cause. The movement was not so much as liberating themselves from the cruel atrocities and bonded labour and slavery but as much as of women liberating themselves from the shackles of the traditional restrictive bonds of society. The women learned to become resolute in spite of facing disappointment and came to understand social oppression, gender-based issues and became courageous enough to raise their voice against them. The movement shaped their personality and helped them to evolve into holistic personalities. These narratives also depict the neglect and treatment meted out to them by society and their own comrades after the struggle.

Another interesting point to note about the idea and the efforts that have gone in the compilation of these narratives is the fact that it was a result of a group of women who genuinely felt that these voices which have equally participated in the movement must be given their due and their contributions and sacrifices highlighted not only to honour their efforts even though belatedly but also to inspire other women to take up a cause. As Saidamma comments,

“No one came to ask us what did you suffer? Like you ask now.... What was your loss? What happened? I tell you -no one till now.” (62). This statement echoes their disheartenment at being used and discarded without appreciation once they had served their purpose.

Kondapalli Koteshwaramma acknowledges the Communist party for altering profession and caste-based abuses and replacing them by class-based ones: “Thanks to the Communist party we developed a culture. Abuses based on caste, like ‘you dead barber’, ‘you dead washerman’, ‘you madiga corpse’ and so on, all these we dropped by telling people off. The new abuse was “petit-bourgeois!” (127). She highlights the role played by women in the movement and her anguish at being neglected and side-lined by the Party despite their efforts:

What did women do? Actually, there is no history without women is there? Right from the past till today, there is no history without women. After all, women are not just half, they are the larger part of the population. For the movement to grow, it is women who are necessary. Women have a very significant role. But the role of men gets enhanced. The reason for that is the antagonism women have faced for generations. The role of women has not become evident, but they have been very useful to the Communist Party. They were days when we took comrades and hid them. Men get caught easily but women won't be suspected so easily ... We used to hide weapons in our bedrolls. We hid information in the bed of old women. That is how the information got distributed across the State. (134)

Manikonda Suryavathi narrates the training that was given to acclimatize them both physically as well as linguistically in order to get absorbed as one of them so as to achieve their goals:

As we were moving among the people, we should be of the people, not be extravagant or different. Our dress and language should mingle with theirs and we should not be fashionable. It would be difficult to communicate if we were not with them. So, this was part of what we were taught in our lessons, to dress and speak so as to mingle with the people...Even though we were just fifteen or sixteen years old we never even wore flowers in our hair. We were to be as simple as possible. If we wore flowers and went to meetings people may say we are fashionable like prostitutes. (146)

The movement triggered fissures in marital relationship as the male ego asserted itself even here. Suryavathi gives the instance of a couple Nagella Rajeshwaramma and Janakiramaiah who came close to divorce when the wife began to become more popular than her husband resulting in insecurity and bitterness. "These old gossips (men) who sit on the doorstep would say, 'Look here! What's all this? Your wife has gone far above you and has earned a name.' So, there was trouble between them. It came to a separation and the point of divorce. Then she stayed home for a couple of years and did not go out to do any work" (148).

Pesara Sattemma recounts the various labor tasks they were compelled to perform as bonded laborers, "We were to do vetti in those days. The landlord got it done; the village officials got it

done. Chilli was pounded; grain was pounded; the madigas had to stay in front of the big house to guard it" (222-223). She expresses her anger, shock, and sense of betrayal at the hands of the Union, as their ordeal continued despite a change in perpetrators:

Can you imagine how they beat us after the Union came? Before the Union Army came, they said that the Muslims would just butcher us. But what big things the Union Army do? Once the Union army came in a lorry. They rounded up everyone and thrashed them every single person they saw. Although the people must have thought this, no one dared ask them why they were beating up the people whom they had come to help. (226)

This sentiment is echoed by Mallu Swarajyam, albeit in a different context where the landlords replace the Nizam and become the focus of their frustration and anger. These narratives highlight the harsh realities faced by laborers, the disillusionment with the entities meant to protect them, and the cyclical nature of oppression despite changes in power dynamics. The slogans of that era like, “we must be free of the Nizam’s rule’, ‘the domination of these rulers should go’, ‘Urdu should not be imposed on us’, ‘Telugu should get its rightful prominence’” (232) reflected a cultural and socio-political movement, advocating for freedom from Nizam rule, opposing the dominance of rulers, rejecting the imposition of Urdu, and demanding rightful prominence for Telugu. Initially, it was a cultural movement, but as it reached villages, it evolved into an anti-landlord campaign.

Songs were sung depicting exploitation by moneylenders and demanding increased wages, highlighting discrepancies between labor laws and actual practices.

Women from diverse religious backgrounds and social strata participated in the movement, each contributing in their unique way. Jamal Unnisa Baji, representing an educated Muslim family, shares her experience, “We were labelled kaffirs very early... A Brahmin boy used to come to teach Razia English. The family objected. Our relatives boycotted us. Very few girls were educated in those days. My mother always supported us” (172). Her account reveals the challenges faced by educated Muslim women in accessing education and the societal backlash they encountered. It also underscores the support provided by family members, particularly mothers, in pursuing education and participating in the movement despite societal pressures and prejudices.

Mallu Swarajyam, belonging to a zamindar family, reflects on the sense of direction and initiative that women of her time possessed, yet acknowledges the disparities in concessions between women of higher classes and others:

In those days, women came forward, we had an aim, we were filled with enthusiasm. We felt firmly that we were equal to the men. That was so important. That was a time when there was purdah, when they used to oppress women terribly - there is no need to say anything about the life of ordinary women. If we consider the family circumstances, because ours was a zamindar family, some degree of freedom and a degree of

respect was given to us. But the situation outside was very ugly... Men had total authority over women. Whether they beat them or abused them, women had to just lie still. (230)

She recounts how women took upon themselves the task of involving women in the struggle to free them from the atrocities. She acknowledges that the activities and mandate of the Party also inspired them to ensure participation of women in the struggle.

So, women had to be brought out of this condition. And we felt that there was direction, a path in what these people were saying, and we took up the responsibility. We would sit together and discuss this. We believed there was no other way. If women were to earn equal rights, then they must be part of the struggle. We felt this was possible only through the struggle... Not only that: I feel that the party took a far greater interest in the question of women in those days than it does today. To bring women out, to rid them of socially oppressive customs, they carried on a campaign at the same time. (230-231)

Her narrative highlights the agency and determination of women in challenging societal norms and actively participating in movements for equality and liberation. Swarajyam identifies the central problem and is one of the few women to offer a solution to resolve it:

Now the chief issue is dowry. There is a state of no protection. We cannot trust any human being. It is an acute stage. I feel property rights are very important. To eliminate dowry, one

needs regular property rights for women. We should campaign against dowry and property rights. (250)

Swarajyam is also very grounded and vocal about the whole situation. She vociferously objects to the fact that they were discarded by the Party and were directed to resume the life they had led before they had joined the Party. Though she acknowledges that men too were disbanded once the Party decided to shift gear, she feels that men had better prospects compared to women as women did not get as ready an acceptance if they wanted to get back in the fold and were stigmatized unlike men.

What are we to do with women, was the question. When the struggle was over, they decided that the unmarried women should go and marry, the married ones should go back to their families! The men should study law. We didn't have a say at all. Till then we had never thought of families or children or of holding on to them! They said it was not possible for us to become Party Commanders or Area Organizers. So, they asked us to 'set ourselves right' and we felt very upset. This was a mistake in the turn that the struggle took. The armed struggle had changed. So, they kept the cadre they needed to carry on the legal movement. What that movement was to be, had yet to be decided and carried out. So, it was not as if they | asked only the women to go. The men also had the option to go. But there was no other possibility for us. There were opportunities, for the men to study and work in society. But what did we women have? On the whole it was as if we were

cast out on society. In a struggle you don't see how many people are sacrificed. You only see what the movement needs. Women are just suppressed more. That is their usefulness. So, after the struggle they said, 'go back to your village and marry.' Marry whom? Which fellow would have the guts to marry these women? It was a serious issue then. Many men, who married in the Party went home and married ordinary housewives again. In each one's life right up to the end there was some kind of problem or the other. (253)

Her words echo the systemic discrimination and gender biases that persist, illustrating how women's contributions and aspirations are often undervalued and overlooked, leading to profound disillusionment and a sense of being cast aside by society. She very boldly questions the high handedness and decisions taken by their leaders as there were no hierarchies in the struggle. Swarajyam emerges as one of the few women who refuse to succumb to the injustices, failures and exploitation, instead choosing to look forward to shaping a better and improved future:

They are the leaders - but do they hold all the rights? They are the *Karthas* (subjects) of the movement! Why do you make them responsible for our lives as well? I can't agree to that. Who were the subjects in that movement - the people, history, we? How could they create a situation where they could 'set right' the women and get them back into their country roles? They couldn't do it. They used us to the extent they could in the movement. If social circumstances had improved and

economic conditions had changed, our situation would also change - that was the feeling. They did not take an interest and try to develop the context. We must make them recognize our right to fight. What have we decided to say about the future? That's also a question, isn't it?" (253-254)

Her words reflect a deep sense of agency and a call for recognition of women's rights within the movement and society at large. She challenges the notion that women should be relegated to traditional roles or be held accountable for decisions beyond their control. Instead, she advocates empowerment, recognition, and a proactive stance in shaping their own future.

Conclusion

The study delving into the narratives of women involved in the Telangana Armed Struggle presents a critical reflection on the complexities and challenges faced by women in revolutionary movements. It sheds light on the often-overlooked contributions, sacrifices, and agency of women who were integral to historical struggles for liberation. It also reveals the multifaceted experiences of women from diverse backgrounds and social strata, highlighting their roles as active participants, leaders, and visionaries within the movement. It uncovers the systemic inequalities, gender biases, and societal expectations that women confronted both during the struggle and in its aftermath.

Through detailed narratives and insightful analysis, the paper underscores the need for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of revolutionary movements, one that recognizes

and amplifies the voices of women who have long been marginalized and overlooked in historical narratives. This paper serves as a compelling call to action, urging scholars, activists, and policymakers to re-evaluate and reframe the understanding of history, ensuring that the invaluable contributions and experiences of women in liberation movements are not only acknowledged but also are central to the collective memory and discourse. Though this anthology is a collection of the narratives of 16 women, it can be seen as being representative of countless women who have not been heard. It is an outlet for women whose stories about their life and its experience crisscross each other and are weaved together with a shared pain and pride. The book concludes: “Constantly with us was the feeling that this was all out of our own lives—that we had been there before ourselves. We matched incidents in their lives with those in ours: oh, she’s like you or X or Y, we’d comment. Gradually these stories became a part of our own mythology. It was only as we struggled through this editing that we realized that an analysis could follow at any time but that their voices had to be heard” (280-281).

Work Cited:

Mangat, Sajneet. “Women and Armed Revolution: The Telangana Peoples’ Struggle (1946-51).” *Feminism in India*, 3 June 2021, feminisminindia.com/2020/08/12/women-armed-revolution-telangana-peoples-struggle/.

- P. Sundarayya. *Telengana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*. Publisher: Desraj Chadha, on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), 49 Lake Place, Calcutta-29. 1972.
- Ravishankar, D. "Telangana Armed Struggle Day: Meet the 'Iron Lady of Telangana.'" *The Hans India*, The Hans India, 16 Sept. 2021, www.thehansindia.com/featured/womenia/telangana-armed-struggle-day-meet-the-iron-lady-of-telangana-706845.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Towards a Feminist Poetics." *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, edited by Elaine Showalter, Pantheon Books, 1985.
- Stree Shakti Sanghatana. *We Were Making History: Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle*. Zed Books, 1989.

Dalit Life Narratives: Echoes of Religious Repercussions

Dr. B. Deepa Jyothi

Kakatiya University

Anuradha Tamme

Kakatiya University

Abstract

The present paper examines the intricate influence of religion and its effects on marginalized communities through a detailed examination of selected Dalit life narratives. It draws primarily from autobiographical narratives such as Yashika Dutt's *Coming Out as Dalit*, Satyanarayana's *My Father Balaiah*, Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, and Bhanwar Meghwanshi's *I Could Not Be Hindu*. The study adopts a thematic approach and utilizes Ambedkarite perspective and also Dalit aesthetics. It focuses on how the authors have effectively dealt with the intricate challenges of discrimination and marginalization based on religion. Furthermore, it examines the various strategies employed by the writers to confront religious dominance and suppression and affirm their own identity and rights. The results emphasize the tenacity of Dalit communities and emphasize the continuous fight for social justice and equality in modern Indian society.

Key Words: Religious marginalization, Ambedkarite perspective, Dalit Aesthetics, Life Narratives, Anti-oppressive strategies

Introduction

Caste is a deeply entrenched social hierarchy, has a significant influence on various aspects of Indian society ceaselessly permeating religious dynamics and transcending geographical borders. The present paper studies the fluidity and complexity of caste-based religious humiliation as depicted in Dalit life narratives. The paper focuses on the experiences of Yashika Dutt's *Coming Out as Dalit*, Y. B. Satyanarayana's *My Father Balaiah*, Bhanwar Meghwanshi's *I Could Not Be Hindu* and Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life*. All these writers have confronted religion-based discrimination and religious marginalization. The paper aims to illuminate the intricate strategies employed by Dalits to combat religious hegemonic institutions and oppression, as well as to claim their identity and rights.

Religious conversions and Dalit experiences:

To challenge religious abuses and discriminations, Dalits have employed different strategies to deal with caste humiliation, such as religious conversions, hiding caste identity through Sanskritization, mythological narratives, and embracing rational ideology. Dr B. R. Ambedkar explains the impact of caste on Dalits through his *Autobiographical Notes*; if one is an 'Untouchable' person in the Hindu religion, he is 'Untouchable' in the Islamic religion too (25). The statement is relevant even in the twenty-first century, as evidenced by the lives of Bama and Bhanwar Meghwanshi's autobiographies.

Bama's life narrative, *Karukku*, unveils the status quo of the converted Dalits into Christianity. She claims that upper-caste Christians have introduced the practice of untouchability into the Christian religion (108). Furthermore, the upper castes have strengthened the social hierarchy rooted in caste, which has resulted in their substantial economic advantage and the attainment of positions in contrast to the disadvantaged Dalits. She discloses it through her statement, "It is only the upper-caste Christians who enjoy the benefits and comforts of the Church . . . if Dalits become priests or nuns, they are pushed aside and marginalized first of all" (69). It demonstrates the strong influence of caste on Christianity in India and the marginalization of Dalits.

A similar context is reflected in Sikhism. According to Surinder Jodhka, Dalits' economic status improved through religious conversions (Sikhism). She writes that the Dalits enhanced their material wealth and progressed, and the practice of untouchability was minimized in rural Punjab (1822). Contrary to her statement, a Punjabi Dalit, Madhopuri mentions the existence of religious prejudices in Sikhism through his life narrative, *Changaiah Rukh*. He demonstrates the practice of untouchability even in Sikhism where Dalit converts are denied access to common drinking wells. He also exposes the existence of religious hierarchy within Dalit Sikh communities. The complexity of the discriminatory practice is evident through Madhopuri's father's statement, "Ramdassias! ...they act superior to us (Mazhabis)! At

one time they drew water from our wells, but now they have their separate well!" (61).

According to Ronki Ram, Dalits who follow Sikhism are often treated as neither Hindus nor Sikhs. They are referred to as the "Dalit Sikhs," which concretizes the existence of the caste-based, religious division within the Sikh religion. Hence, religious conversions are no longer a liberating means of eradicating caste stigma. As a result, in response to the current circumstances, Dalits of the twenty-first century are employing novel approaches that align with their socio-religious status quo.

Hiding Caste through Sanskritisation:

Sanskritization is a strategy employed by Dalits to hide their "inferior" caste status, thereby circumventing social discrimination. The autobiographies of Yashica Dutt and Y.B. Satyanarayana detail their adoption of Sanskritization as an approach to escape themselves from the negative connotations associated with their caste identities. Yashica Dutt's *Coming Out as a Dalit: A Memoir*, represents the consciousness about caste, the trauma undergone by Dalit children. Her parents decide not to reveal their caste to escape from caste manacles. Through concealing caste and pretending to be an upper caste became one of the strategies to escape caste atrocities and also to attain qualitative education. She says that "Dalit families who are better off, adopt this performance of being upper caste is necessary to blend in" (26). Thus, it reveals that most of the middle-class Dalit

families disguised themselves as upper caste to overcome the lower caste stigma and religious oppression.

Similarly, Y. B. Satyanarayana's autobiography, *My Father Balaiah*, demonstrates how his family has Sanskritised over a decade to escape from caste stereotypes and discrimination and to find rental houses in urban areas. The memoir depicts the transformation of Dalit culture into Brahmanic cultural practices throughout a decade. They start practicing the artistic traditions of the upper castes to survive in cities and to get access to rental houses. Their communal celebrations, such as Pochamma and Kanakadurga, were deemed inferior and associated with the cultural traditions of lower castes. They opted to cease commemorating these feasts in favor of Brahmanic celebrations like Dussehra Durgadevi Navaratri puja, Satyanarayana swamy, Tulasi puja, and Venkateshwara Swamy puja customs. Despite these changes, they had to conceal their caste in their new rented homes. As Ronki Ram observes economic improvement cannot change the social identity of a low-caste person. Hence, Dalits desperately use other caste names to escape caste inferiority and humiliation (347). For instance, Y.B. Satyanarayana, notwithstanding his erudition and status as a lecturer, felt compelled to conceal his caste to find house for rent.

However, unlike Satyanarayana and Yashica, some Dalits have utilized the process of Sanskritization to oppose the imposition of limitations on Dalits over their ability to engage in specific Brahmanic traditions. For example, Dalits were denied entry into

the temple and certain religion-cultural practices. Hence, as a resistance, Dalits such as Mahars have purposefully and publicly practiced Brahmanic traditions as a strategy to assert themselves against Brahmanic hegemony without hiding their caste identity and inferiority complex. In contemporary times, in some areas, Dalits are still subjected to punishment for entering into a temple. Thus, Dalits adopted Hindu practices as a means of defiance.

Mythological Narratives

Manoranjan Byapari's memoir is *Interrogating My Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit*. It narrates his traumatic religious humiliations since his childhood, being a Dalit and a refugee. The author asserts that the strength of caste consciousness is so powerful that individuals disregard their religious beliefs and ideologies. For instance, he was beaten severely at the workplace despite being a skilled cook only because of his caste. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in his essay "The Forms of Capital", discussed the concept of 'embodied cultural capital' and claimed that community history and family have a significant influence on a person. Manoranjan Byapari was influenced by his ancestral historical narratives. He decided to challenge religious discrimination by employing writing as a medium to give voice to his argument by taking reference from his Nama Shudra community's oral narrative, which fuelled his spirit of revolt.

Byapari faced the dreadful conditions and hardships caused by religion and caste traditions. Raj Kumar recognizes that Dalit writing may serve to express the aspirations and objectives of

marginalized Dalits who were previously unseen, disregarded, and voiceless inside the caste system. As a result, the initial cohort of educated Dalits began to analyse their social standing and acknowledge their shared identity and traditions. In contemporary times, promoting reading and developing Dalit consciousness have significantly enhanced the process of freeing the mind from conventional societal standards. Further, Byapari, in a conversation with Sarangi, has shared his intention of writing an autobiography to motivate his community people:

The life that I have lived must be shared with many. I have come back from the jaws of death many times. Recently, again, I was fighting death, and I had a strong feeling that my life story must be documented in print, or else it will be lost with me. People need to know that someone survived in such horrid conditions. My writings represent all those people who continue to live in such inhuman circumstances. (Sarangi)

Thus, Byapari takes upon himself to effectively and consistently address religious offenses by demonstrating his experience and unveiling the strategies of revolt by embracing his community's identity and culture.

Rational ideology

Waman Nimbalkar in *Dalit Literature: Nature and Role*, described how Ambedkar's writings have impacted the marginalised: "Dr. Ambedkar with radiant fire in his writings, speeches, and action vowed to dispel the darkness and brighten their lives" (56). It is reflected through Bhanwar Meghwanshi's

autobiography, *I Could Not Be Hindu: The Story of a Dalit in the RSS*. The memoir delineates the pervasive influence of caste within Hindu religious organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). Despite his devout dedication and active participation in RSS activities, Meghwanshi faces ostracism and discrimination due to his lower caste status. Meghwanshi completely internalized Hindu mythology and learned Sanskrit and palm reading. He entirely devoted his life to the religious service [Ram]. He embraced and lived in a Sanskritised way of life. Every day, he prays and attends RSS programs, which is his daily routine. Despite his father's warnings regarding the exploitative nature of the religious impostors, he used to work with the Sakha. Further, he devoutly adhered to Hinduism and became a dedicated member of the RSS and attained the role of district office head in Bhilwara. He was involved in the Ram Rath Yatra riots and subsequently faced imprisonment.

However, the RSS demonstrates its duplicity by practising untouchability in their refusal to accept meals from his home. He goes into severe depression and even attempts suicide because of religious disparities. His story serves as a poignant reminder of the limitations of Sanskritization and religious conversion as a means of transcending caste barriers. Later, he tried to embrace Christianity and Islam but ultimately discovered a prevalence of caste-based discrimination. Following that, he began reading Ambedkar's works and becomes profoundly influenced. Recording his impressions, he says,

Ambedkar's writings sowed the seeds of progressive thinking in me. A Dalit perspective helped me understand my personal, individual struggle against the Sangh (RSS) as a collective, social justice and dignity. Then, I read Kabir, Periyar, and Phule. (115)

Thus, with the spirit of revolt, despite bridling under the dehumanized experiences every day, he realized the need to fight to attain human equality irrespective of caste one was born into. Thus, he collaborated with those who shared his radical ideology. In spite of the oppression, Meghwanshi could rebuild his life and worked towards raising the consciousness among his fellow caste victims.

Conclusion:

The discourse on religious repercussions in Dalit lives in Indian society continues to evolve, extending its influence beyond traditional boundaries into non-Hindu religions and transcending geographical borders. Hence, Dalit authors are exploring various strategies. On one hand, Yashica Dutt and Y.B. Satyanarayana have attempted to conceal their caste identity through Sanskritization. On the other hand, Bama and Madhopuri have chosen religious conversions, revealing the enduring presence of religious humiliation. Finally, Meghwanshi and Byapary have embraced Ambedkar's legacy and his propagation of rational ideologies to resist religious prejudices. Additionally, they both have boldly embraced their identities and confronted religion-based injustices through strategies like writing and socio-political

activism. It demonstrates a proactive stance in reclaiming their communities' dignity, identity, and rights. In light of this, there is a pressing need for transformative measures within Hinduism to foster inclusivity and to mitigate the perpetuation of religion-based discrimination. It is imperative to acknowledge that the study primarily focuses on Dalit life narratives translated into English, thereby highlighting the necessity for future research endeavours to incorporate vernacular narratives. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay between caste, religion, and identity in contemporary Indian society can be achieved, thus paving the way for more effective strategies to combat caste atrocities and promote social cohesion.

Works Cited

- Allport, Gordon Willard. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Doubleday, 1958.
- Brueck, Laura R. *Writing Resistance: The Rhetorical Imagination of Hindi Dalit Literature*. University of Columbia Press, 2014.
- Byapari, Manoranjan. *Interrogating My Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit*. Translated by Sipra Mukherjee, Sage, 2018.
- Dutt, Yashica. *Coming Out as Dalit: A Memoir*. Aleph Books, 2019.

-
- Guha, Ranajit. "The Small Voice of History." *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Vol. 9), edited by Amin S and Chakrabarty D, Oxford University Press 1996, pp. 1-12.
- Ghandy, Kobad. *Fractured Freedom: A Prison Memoir*. Roli Books, 2021.
- Gupta, Charu. "Intimate Desires: Dalit Women and Religious Conversions in Colonial India." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2014, pp. 661–687. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43553340. Accessed 22 Apr. 2021.
- Bama. *Sangati*. Translated by Lakshmi Holmstrom, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Jaffrelot, Christopher. *Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste*, Permanent Black, 2005.
- Jodhka, Surinder S. "Caste and untouchability in rural Punjab." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2002, pp 1813-1823.
- Chinnaiah, Jangam. *Dalits and The Making of Modern India*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Singh, I.P. "Caste in a Sikh Village." *Caste among Non-Hindus in India*, edited by H. Singh, National Publishing House, 1977, pp 66-83
- Kumar, Raj. *Dalit Literature and Criticism*. Orient Black swan, 2019.

Perils of Sectarianism: A Note on Githa Hariharan's *In Times Of Siege*

K. V. Ramana Chary
Telangana University

*“Goodwill toward all beings is the true religion;
cherish in your heart boundless goodwill to all that lives.”*

-Lord Buddha

Githa Hariharan's *In Times of Siege* (2003), set in New Delhi in between 31st August and 15th October 2000, is not only a commentary on the political situation in India built up during the previous years but also a response to the textbook controversy initiated by the BJP which involved the re-writing of textbooks with a Hindutva perspective and how menacing a religion can be in wrong hands. The central theme of the novel revolves around History professor, Shiv Murthy's lesson on Basava, a twelfth century poet and social reformer who craved for a creative and courageous experiment where a society seeks to exclude no one. His lesson traces the life of Basava and his radical ideas, struggle against caste divisions and his disappearance. Basava's disappearance from history resembles the narrative of Shiv's father, who was committed to nationalism and secular values.

K. V. Ramana Chary, Department of English, Telangana University. E-mail:
Korupoju.ramana@gmail.com

Under the guise of Hindutva, a group called the *Itihas Suraksha Manch* accuses Shiv of distorting history, historical figures and presenting Basava as one opposed to against caste divisions. The dire consequences of social violence and sectarianism seem to be the reasons behind the disappearance of Basava and Shiv father. For Shiv, Basava and his father are concerned with issues of truth, social equality and cultural diversity. Githa Hariharan portrays Basava not as a poet but rather as an Indian icon, a collective cultural inheritance and uses him as a reminder of a diverse past by emphasizing his dissent and questioning of certain Hindu principles besides focusing on his egalitarian and humanitarian side.

The novel is woven around history where Githa Hariharan takes up the real-life instance from Karnataka. Some years ago, a play written on Basava by H.S. Shiva Prakash was attacked by Hindu fundamentalists. Shiva Prakash has his reincarnation as Shiv Murthy, a mild-mannered Professor at Kasturba Gandhi Open University (KGU) who is caught up in a controversy over his B.A. history module (lesson) on 12th century poet and social reformer – Basavanna. The voice and opinion of Prof. Shiv are virtually under siege of the Hindu watchdog group called ‘Itihas Suraksha Manch’. They find fault with Shiv for distorting Indian medieval history and demanded an apology for that. Shiv tries to derive emotional support from his father’s teaching that courage, anger and passion are essential to uphold one’s doctrine. His father was a

freedom fighter, but for him the freedom movement didn't end in 1947. He felt the burdens of the new world and the travails of a free India set heavy on his shoulders. Adhering to his father's teaching, Shiv would like to write a lesson that weeds out stereotypes and makes realistic assessment. Shiv recollects his father saying: "If you want to get hold of something and learn all about it, *know* it, it doesn't matter whether that something is in the past or present. All that matters is that you are free-thinking. That you have moral courage" (Hariharan 40).

Meena, a sociology student of Kamala Nehru University (KNU), is the daughter of Shiv's old friend Sumathi. Shiv takes her, in the capacity of her local guardian, to his house for a few days stay as she has broken her leg in an accident. She is studying about the women who were affected by anti-Sikh riots after Indira Gandhi's assassination. Being an activist, she attends meetings and talks of causes and street theatre, 'gender' and 'courting arrest' with the ease of a veteran. Meena's activist and like-minded friends, Amar, Jyothi and Manjar visit her time and again. Meanwhile, Shiv receives a call from a man who introduces himself as a reporter of a newspaper called *Current* asking him about his lesson in B.A. history. The man seems to think that Shiv has gone on leave because of the protests against something that he had written. But the truth is that Shiv applies for leave to devote more time and care to Meena who lies bedridden at his residence.

In the Department, the division among the staff is clearly seen as Left and Right wings. Dr. Arya leads the Right wing whereas the Left is led by Dr. Menon and other professors. It is believed that Dr. Arya had played a crucial role (behind the curtain), so some crazy group gets hold of the lesson. They object to the fact that Shiv doesn't make the heroes heroic enough and that he makes the villains too villainous besides claiming that the lesson distorts history. And it seems that he doesn't sing enough of a paean to the glory of Hindu kingdoms and he makes too much of caste divisions among Hindus. Dr. Sharma, Head of the Department of History asks Shiv to act swiftly to stop the controversy over his lesson. He fears that his consensus approach may be demolished by some course expert who is, 'too controversial' or 'dominating' or 'given to extreme ideas' (Hariharan 49). He tells Shiv that a full apology or retraction from him will be the best and the department may have to send instructions to all its study centers to discontinue use of the booklet that contains Shiv's module. Shiv is disheartened as his attempt to bring out the complexity of history is suppressed with threats and intimidation. The Head doesn't want to listen to Shiv's explanations and claims that Shiv has implied that Basavanna's city, Kalyana, was not a model Hindu kingdom and exaggerated the problem of caste and temple priests. He adds that Shiv has not made it clear enough that Basavanna was much more than an

ordinary human being and also there are people who consider him divine.

The course booklet with the “offending” lesson is on Shiv’s desk. This is the lesson he doesn’t need to re-read to refresh his memory because it is one of the few lessons, he has written in his teaching career that was informed by genuine interest and historical curiosity. Basava had advocated an egalitarian philosophy of social reform and is plagued by questions and feels the need to examine, think and criticize everything that is traditional and sanctioned. He gathers around him a unique congregation of mystics and social revolutionaries who attempt a creative and courageous experiment – not women, not the lowest and the most polluting castes. All sections of the society are part of the brief burst of Kalyana’s glory and all are equal in that they are Veerashaivas – warriors of Shiva. And the warriors have made poetry, the poetry that chases prose and searches passionately for the many faces of truth. And this poetry which is their scripture is called *vachana* and is in Kannada, not in exalted and excluding Sanskrit. The *vachanas* are created, spoken and sung in people’s language, in words that are no strangers to poor homes or dirty streets. Basava and many of his followers take on the caste system, the iron net that gripped society so firmly and reduced the common man and woman to hopeless captives. Throngs of these ordinary men and women take part in Basava’s egalitarian dream and it has gained momentum with a large following. Resultantly,

the people become a movement and the movement swells, surges and threaten to swallow social conventions and religious rituals. The king, Bijjala, an old friend of Basava is under tremendous pressure from the pillars of society mainly upper caste merchants and Brahmins. As a result, the relationship between the king and Basava gets soured. It worsens when a marriage is arranged between two children of the Veerashaiva couples – the bride to be is Brahmin and the bridegroom to be is the son of a cobbler. The marriage becomes a catalyst and it generated a shock that charged all of Kalyana city. The traditionalists are enraged by Basava's challenge to their monopoly of god and power and the afterlife. So, they condemn the marriage as the first blow against all things known, familiar and normal. A society based on caste yields to the pressures of the elite and the King Bijjala sentences the fathers of the bride and bridegroom and the young untouchable bridegroom to a special death. Basava's call for non-violence is not heard; the city is burned and the king is assassinated allegedly by two of Basava's young followers. Not long after King's death, Basava dies under mysterious circumstances. There is a popular legend that the river – the waters of the meeting rivers – take him into their all-embracing arms. Viewing Basava's iconoclasm, M.K. Naik writes that the higher castes resent Basava and, "the resentment reaches its peak when one of Basavanna's Brahmin disciples gives his daughter in marriage to an untouchable and the culprits are severely punished" (203). Though Veerashaivism

would live on, its great moment for social change faded: “What began as a critique of the status quo would be absorbed, bit by bit, into the sponge-like body of tradition and convention” (Hariharan 63). However, Basava and his companions have left a legacy consisting of vigorous and modern thought, poetry of tremendous beauty and depth and the images that couple the radical and mystical. Most of all Basava’s passionate questions would remain relevant even today more than eight hundred years later. Shiv considers Basava’s legacy, a legacy he is now heir to in a sudden and unexpected way: “Basava’s dream broke up a long time ago; it no longer stands. But it was there. It lived. His movement for equality, for democracy, must be remembered” (Hariharan 63).

Meanwhile, the *Itihas Suraksha Manch* issues a statement calling for, “an end to tampering with our precious and glorious Indian history” (Hariharan 76). The *Manch* also quotes several historians including retired professor Shri A.A. Atre, who supports their claim that Basava was not against Brahmins. Atre tells reporters in Pune that, “the saint Basava may have died in broken and disillusioned exile” (Hariharan 76). Things become worse and it seems that it is a fight between Shiv and the fundamentalists. Influenced by the fundamentalists, the University authorities ban Shiv’s booklets along with the real and the troublesome Basava and allow a sanitized Basava to remain as a ‘saint-singer’, a singer with a saintly face. The decision to withdraw a lesson on the medieval reformer Basava by the

university sparks a sharp criticism in academic circles. A large number of academics including eminent historians deplore the action and condemn the university's failure to take a firm stand against a blatant intellectual censorship which can lead to further targeting of secular historians. The controversy about Shiv's lesson on Basava passes through many dramatic twists and turns. Now, Shiv is placed at the centre of a battle between the moderates who deplore intellectual censorship and the fundamentalists who are intent on foisting one language, one religion and one nation on all regardless of their respective views. They presumably consider Shiv as a sort of innocuous and vulnerable victim who may readily give in to their pressure and threat tactics. But to their surprise, Shiv refuses to the machinations of the Hindu fascists. In his resolve to oppose intellectual censorship, Shiv is aided by students of KNU mobilized by Meena and her friends. Shiv finds himself strongly supported as Meena and her friends, Amar and Jyoti organize a protest rally against the fascist moves of the *Manch*. The rally helps defuse the crisis of menace generated by the *Manch* and its activists. Shiv becomes a celebrity though controversial and his lesson on Basava gains popularity. But ironically the meeting of the faculty in the Department of History fails to yield any positive direction; instead it ends on an ugly note with Arya pouncing at Shiv's neck. The ugly scene exposes Arya's extremist, uncouth and violent behavior besides showing the

extent of moral degeneration in academicians like Arya caught with fundamentalist forces.

Shiv's memory of his father, who was a freedom fighter and who disappeared into obscurity, questions the value and relevance of freedom of an individual in India. His father felt: "What kind of country poisons the minds of children, of its youth? And did we fight for freedom so we could divide this teeming, hungry house forever?" (Hariharan 159-60).

Thus, the novel brings into focus the issues of fundamentalism, intellectual censorship and opportunism of academic administrators. Commenting on the ideological battle, Madhuparna Mitra feels: "Hariharan obviously wanted to draw attention to what essentially amounts to thought policing, to dramatize the chilling implications of political control over intellectual freedom" (141). Shiv who is portrayed as a common man content in his daily life and used to avoid confrontation and finally emerges as a hero. Through him Hariharan portrays how even the cautious and the silent raise their voices during the times of siege.

Works Cited

Hariharan, Githa. *In Times of Siege*. Penguin India, 2003.

Mitra, Madhuparna. "Whose History is It Anyway? The Politics of Hindu Nationalism in Githa Hariharan's *In Times of*

Siege.” South Asian Review, 30.2, Oct-Nov, 2009, pp. 133-152.

Naik, M. K. *Twentieth Century Indian English Fiction*. Pencraft International, 2004.

Re-understanding the Diversity of India: An Insightful Study of Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*

Konda Nageswara Rao

Osmania University

Abstract

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first prime minister of independent India and he played a pivotal role in the freedom movement. His *The Discovery of India* is a great reflection of the originality of Indian culture. India is one of the largest democratic countries in the world. It is known for the rich diversity that encompasses the multiple spheres like geographical, cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity. The term "Indian culture" has a very unique meaning which is a melting pot of many cultures and life styles from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Each language of the country represents a unique cultural heritage and contributes to India's vibrant tapestry of diversity. In the recent days, the Indian culture has been portrayed as the homogeneous culture and misinterpretation is attributed to the diversity. In this background, the present study is an attempt to understand the beauty of the diversity of India in the changing times. The proposed paper tries to examine the cultural diversity, democratic ethos and secular fabric of the country in detail. It also touches upon the spirit of the fundamental principles of the country through the selected text.

Key words: Heterogeneity, plurality, quest, literary reflection, Secularism

Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* is a unique text in the Indian sub-continent. The book was written during 1942-45 when Nehru was in Ahmednagar Fort Prison and was published in the year 1946. The book is a reflection of Nehru's understanding of India. Nehru wrote it in his 50s, so that it could be assessed as the most powerful thought process of the matured politician. After reading it, one can understand how a statesman could become a secular humanist and how a nationalist could become a modern writer. Undoubtedly, Nehru's vision and in-depth knowledge of India's past is outstanding. The present article tries to re-discover India in the context of postcolonial dialectics.

The Discovery of India is a literary reflection of Nehru's broader understanding of India's past. The writer highlights the diversity of the country, the set of democratic values and the democratic fabric of this country to a great extent. The content of the text discusses the multiple layers of the Indian society in which Nehru begins the deliberations from very ancient history to the modern colonial British rule. He looks at the Indian history through the rationalist spectacles in order to promote the scientific temper and the critical understanding of the country among the readers.

Nehru's extensive knowledge in understanding the origin, the growth and development of Indus valley civilization and its gradual development up to the British Raj. The text recollects the saga of a country from the beginning to the modern rule. Though the book was written during his imprisonment, it was not confined

to his experiences in the Quit India Movement. He utilized the time to understand the country better and his finest thoughts; critical views helped him in reinventing the Indian history, philosophy and the multicultural ethos of the country. He mentions the names of some of the national leaders who helped him intellectually while writing the book during the prison life. Among them are Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Govind Ballabh Pant, and Narendra Devaand Asaf Ali.

To understand India and its past, it is the most appropriate choice to read *The Discovery of India*. Nehru's broader views, cultural understanding, treating the ancient history made this book as an important source of the history since Indus valley civilisation. It highlights how diversity of the country makes colourful view from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. It also tries to uphold the secular fabric and democratic ethos of the country in a detailed way.

The Discovery of India consists of ten chapters. The chapter one is about Ahmednagar Fort and the tenth chapter again the same title namely Ahmednagar Fort. The book contains 581 pages including preface and Index and it was published by the oxford university press. The interesting thing about this book is that it was dedicated to Nehru's colleagues and co-prisoners in the Ahmednagar Fort prison camp from 9th August 1942 to 28th March 1945. Nehru thanked the co-prisoners and eleven companions for their constructive thoughts and sharing their impressions about the various facets of Indian history in the preface of the book.

The preface of *The Discovery of India* is a gist of the writer's thoughts. The author clearly mentioned how he has understood the India's past history to the present day. He was so grateful to his companions for their intellectual discourse during the imprisonment. The preface upholds the spirit of the book in detail. It is noted that a good writer must be sensitive and unbiased while evaluating the past history. In the context, Nehru's efforts are fruitful in highlighting the rationalistic treatment of the history and building a bridge from the past to present. Nehru said: "I have felt tempted to add and revise, but I have resisted the temptation"(9).

Chapter one of the book begins with "It is more than twenty months since we were brought here" (13). To begin the work, Nehru has not taken up the traditional invocation to the muses, but he began writing the text by using the literary zeal. He says "The New moon, a shimmering crescent in the darkening sky, greeted us on our arrival here" (13). One side it is the clear reflection of the flow of thoughts and the other side highlighting the secular values that are to be mentioned. Nehru mentioned about the famine in the opening pages of the text and he expressed the deep sense of sorrow and he said of death "But here death had no purpose, no logic, no necessity: it was the result of man's incompetence and callousness" (14). The purpose of human life has been discussed in a literary way and interpreted the situation could be noticed here. The vision of Nehru about the democratic spirit was crystal clear and he strongly stood against the Fascism and Nazism. He mentions "I remember how I reacted to Fascism

and Nazism in their early days and not I only, but many in India” (18). Throughout his life, he stood for the noble values like liberty, equality and fraternity and he was very much admired the socialism of Soviet Union.

Chapter two titled ‘Badenweiler, Lausanne’ deals with the series of things when he was released from the mountain Jail of Almora. He explained the emotional attachment with his wife kamala by taking the various real experiences and Nehru had a strong empathy in understanding the human relationships. He said “The problem of human relationships, how fundamental it is, and how often ignored in our fierce arguments” (44).

Chapter three namely “The Quest” which is called the panorama of India’s past. It is an extensive and an in-depth expression of the flow of thoughts which touches upon the childhood impressions to the adult days of the writer. And this chapter critically examines the understanding of Nehru’s thoughts on India’s past, Nationalism and Internationalism, the strengths and weakness of the country, the concept of variety and unity of India, and how Nehru considers the general elections, the culture of the masks and the two lives.

The third chapter consists of twenty pages and gives a glance of the man of letters who is a budding intellectual of the country. Nehru was a dedicated patriot. He was able to understand the past, present and the future of the country with a great vision. He said “India was in my blood and there was much in her that instinctively thrilled me” (50). He understood the ancient history

after having read the native sources and foreign historians. He stated that India had great contacts with all neighbouring countries since ages. He writes that, apart from the historical understanding, there was a sense of aesthetic perception towards the natural boundaries of the country. He says “I wandered over the Himalayas, which are closely connected with old myth and legend and which have influenced so much our thought and literature”. Nehru’s views on Nationalism and Internationalism are thought provoking though he mentioned his reaction to nationalism was an emotional one. He was trying to identify the notions of nationalism and Internationalism in the light of the Anti-colonial movements. As the writer, Nehru was aware of the impact of time and place on the social movements.

As a faithful soldier of the country, Nehru was identifying the strengths and weakness of the country. He emphasizes on the technical progress of the country and also focuses upon how the technical progress becomes the spirit of science, which leads to the development of the nation in all the spheres of the human life. And Nehru was aware of the human history and how it determines the future course of action. He said “No people, no races remain unchanged continually they are mixing with others and slowly changing, they may appear to die almost and then rise again” (55). Nehru’s idea of comparative Hypothesis of the country with other European countries is remarkable.

Chapter four titled “The Discovery of India” in which the author highlights the core ideas of the book. To examine the past

glory of the country, he started the argument with the Indus valley civilization which was invented at Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh and at Harappa in the western Punjab. The writer has used the first-person narrative to give the visual impact of the Indus valley civilization. Nehru was very progressive in understanding the social, cultural and political spheres of the human life and the technical advancements of the Harappan civilization. He says, "It was surprisingly enough a predominantly secular civilization and the religious element, though present, did not dominate the scene" (70). Apart from the value system, the people of Indus Valley have maintained the trade relations with contemporary civilizations. The author had taken the first hand sources of Sir John Marshall and acknowledged the contribution of Sir John Marshall for the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.

Nehru came to a conclusion that the glorious Indus Valley civilization was ended due to the unknown catastrophe. And the author has a clear perspective about the migrations of Aryans about a thousand years later after the period of Harappa civilization. To understand the 'Hinduism', Nehru raised a good number of connotations and etymological considerations. He tried to exemplify the transformation of the term from 'the Sindhu' to 'the Hindu', as well as Indus to India. He comments that "the use of the word 'Hindu' in connection with a particular religion is of very late occurrence" (74).

The author tries to expose the negative side of the advent of Aryans to India and he does not hesitate to discuss the problem of

the coming of Aryans into India. He explains how the mobilization of the Aryans created new problems like race, gender and caste which affect the Indian life so profoundly. The author had a rational view point in analyzing the role played by the Aryans in India. He states “the Aryans not only divided society into four main groups but also divided the individual’s life into four parts” (86). As a social scientist the author has made a scientific study to understand the social structure of Indian society. To continue the arguments, Nehru had taken up a balanced approach while dealing with the *Upanishads*. He asserted “the Upanishads are instinct with a spirit of if inquiry, of mental adventure, of a passion for finding out the truth about the things” (89). There have been many discussions for a long time about the spirit of the *Upanishads*. Nehru was of right opinion about their epigrammatic expressions. He states “there are many ambiguities in the Upanishads and different interpretations have been made” (89).

In the twenty first century, the political and literary scenes have changed under the impact of new thoughts, new ideologies, education, increasing social hegemony, re-understanding of the diversity have inspired the reading of the texts like *The Discovery of India* in order to uphold the noble values and the secular fabric, religious tolerance and democratic ethos of this country. And the need of the hour today is to protect the cultural diversity, social harmony and the progressive mindset with an open mind. The other question that arises is what is the proper understanding of the past history of India? Does ‘the Hindutva’ concept protect the

fabric nature of the multi layers of cultural diversity of the country? In the changing dynamics of the country, it is appropriate to recollect Gayatri Chakravathi Spivak's well known formulation "Can the subaltern speak?" which discusses the need of reorientation in understanding the voice of the marginalized sections of the society. To answer such questions, re-understanding *The Discovery of India* is the most suitable text. Nehru prepared the text by combining the political activism, nationalism, the past history of India and the cultural diversity through his writings and he uses the pen for the literary reflections of the country from the past to present day.

Nehru, as a writer, made a significant remark on the epics like *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. Though it is very difficult to date the epics, the essence of the texts was remodified in the pre-Buddhist period and a notable amount of additions and deletions were made in the later period. In the light of the epics, the author examined the food habits of the people. Adding a point to this, he said, "In the Mahabharata, there are references to beef or veal being offered to honoured guests" (118) and the core principle of the *Gita* has been interpreted by the author and he said "the message of *Gita* is not sectarian or addressed to any particular school of thought" (110). Both Buddhism and Jainism revolted against the dogmatic traditions of the Hinduism. Both the religions emphasized on the non-violence and peaceful life. Nehru adds "Both Jainism and Buddhism were breakaways from the Vedic religion and its offshoots" (119).

Chapter five titled “Through the Ages” in which the author opens the discussion from Nationalism and Imperialism under the Guptas and contemporary political and social situation of South India. And also deals with the foreign relations of India and it is believed that the Aryan language had originated from Sanskrit language. But by the time of Buddha, he used Prakrit as he wanted to share his thoughts to the masses. As a result of the choice of language, many disciples of Buddha came from the lower communities. It was one of the tremendous steps taken up by Buddha during his life time.

Chapter six and seven of *The Discovery of India* deals with the various new problems like the mixing of Arab culture with India, the origin, the growth of mixed culture, the beautiful blend of Indo-Islamic cultures and the major outlines of the Mughal administrators. And the other hand it also provides an over view about the consolidation of the British rule and the upsurge of the freedom movement in India. It makes a comprehensive study to understand the transition period in the national movement.

Chapter eight discusses the last phase of the freedom movement. The emergence of Gandhi as an absolute leader and how the freedom movement has been touched the common people under the leadership of Gandhi. In continuation of eighth chapter, the ninth chapter deals with the social and especially political conditions of the country in pre and post second world war. It also highlights the contribution of the national leaders and their selfless

vision towards the country and finally it gives a clear statement of the Quit India Movement.

Chapter ten which is the last Chapter in the book again takes the readers back to Ahmednagar Fort. Nehru's modern approach to old problems shows his commitment and the vision for the country. He quotes many eminent people by maintaining the balance between the body and the mind. And he said "we have therefore to function in line with the highest ideals of the age we live in" (558). Thus, Nehru has spent five months to complete the writing and wrote a thousand hand written pages with variety of thoughts. He said "for five months I have travelled in the past and peeped into the future" (562). After having read *The Discovery of India*, one notices that Nehru had used prison life for the productive purpose of writing. It was a quite transformative period in his life and when he came out of prison, he emerged as a committed patriot having introspected and reflected on various aspects of the country. It is interesting here to note that the thoughts of Nehru are very convincing and won the hearts of the majority sections of the society. After the publication of the book, his popularity reached across the globe. Probably the present text played a crucial role in making Nehru the freedom fighter, a visionary leader of the country and the first Prime Minister of Independent India. Nehru sounds like a true socialist in his staunch belief in Marxism and the broader understanding of the art and life. As Nehru quoted the lines of Robert Frost, "Many miles to go before I sleep", he has made the readers to realize the true history

of the country through the selected book. Thus, *The Discovery of India* has become a wonderful encyclopaedia on Indian history and culture.

Work Cited:

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Discovery of India*. Oxford University Press, 1985.

Assert for Independence: Zohra
Bandla Ashok
Osmania University

“Zohra is convincing and charming, and thanks to her the book is not only an interesting document but a creative achievement.”

-E.M. Forster

In the back drop of the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial, Indian literature has been emerging from the indigenous languages as well as in English to show the local and global scenarios. Indian English writers have been trying to meet the expectations of the local and global readers.

The women writers transcended the boundaries of gender, caste and religion to articulate their thought-provoking ideas to establish and enlighten the society. One among the women writers of Indian English literature Zeenath Futehally emerged from the Muslim family to show the strength of the women in literature against the male centred literature. It is a great turning point to Indian English writing to visualise the un-touched identities of the Indian society - women, family and society. For women, gender, caste, religion, education, employment and motherhood are back bone to their individual identity.

As the society influences men and women but women have to suppress, exploit and forgo their individuality because they are not born, they are made as Jean Paul Sartre said. Women are treated as the second sex. The social construction of male and female but sex is biology, because of biological attribution the women are treated as inferior and men as superior. It is there in the family and society but literature of their own discloses by women writers to know their insider's voices against the male centred constructions.

Zohra reflects the contemporary society in terms of gender, religion and education. Though she is a Muslim woman she never underestimated herself and religion to become a creative writer. As she had the education and the influence of the British literature, she herself trespassed the boundaries of the religion and gender to articulate the women of traditional and modern society. The one dead, the other yet unborn as a creative Muslim woman writer. It is nothing but wandering between two worlds. The literary world of the creative writer reminds not only individuality but also commitments of the family.

The readers of any country or religion should feel sense, feeling tone and intention of life and literature. As it reminds the closed attachment of the writer's life with literature. The Bangle sellers' by Sarojini Naidu, retorted *Zohra*, and continued.

Tinkling, luminous, tender and clear

Like her bridal-laughter and bridal –tear. (142)

The humour, irony and criticism of literature reflect in *Zohra's* conversation with her husband Bashir, her bother in-law Hamid

and with her members of her family and friends. It is not the record of the chronology, perhaps it is the creativity of Zeenath's literary orientation. Happiness is more like the fragrance that emanates from within; as the poet Ghalib says:

Its true eye doth not perceive the pierced heart;

O, thou sceptic, canst thou see the blossom's fragrance with
thine eyes? (154)

Zohra reflects the society, history and creativity in literature with life and life with literature. As the writer describes the role of family, parents and children and their marriage are very close to our contemporary society. As Zohra located in multiple places such as Hyderabad, Bombay and Paris.

Zohra's conversations in student life with friends, parents and with other men shows her emotional, intellectual and argumentative with her psychological, historical and literary idiosyncrasies. No matter of any topic Zohra never compromises to discuss on politics, psychology and history and human relations between husband, wife and other men who ever drawn Zohra to break her marital relationship with her husband Basher and her brother in-law Hamid, Siraj and the foreign man in Paris. Zohra always competent not to lose her temper to overcome the challenges of a traditional and a modern woman, her psychology always a game changer even with her husband too. As she raises herself from the reality to romance but never compromises to go away from reality to break the relationship with her husband. Zohra, in her life she is never and ever an opportunist to tore

herself between the life and romance to meet the expectations of others. One world, a world of dignity and decorum, scents and sherbets, Nawabs and nautch girls was dying. Into it was breaking another world with different values, vital iconoclastic, antinomian. Zohra belonged physically to the former and spiritually to the latter and was crushed between both. A moving story, simply sensitively and, in places, poignantly told in the time of 14th August, 1950, New Delhi.

Zohra is an ideal, uncompromised and unmatched Indian Muslim women to bring the literary world with reality. “Weep only for those who are dying to live” (254). Hamid knew they were Zohra’s words. There are many instances between Hamid and Zohra to make and break their relationship to go away from the reality. But both of them controls to come back to reality of the roles of the family relations. At the same time, they crack jokes on each other but with controlled relations, similarly with Siraj and the foreigner Zohra herself overcomes the fantasy of temporary temptations of the men and women relations. Zohra pushes herself front and back but never consoles herself with any kind of circumstances, it shows that the third world women is an ideal to herself and the other in the society and in the literary world no matter of challenges and issues like gender, culture and religion to submit herself for others to judge.

Religion versus Religion

The entire world has been working on religion. No country is not exceptional from the religion because of God and religion the

identity of people will be decided to have their lively hood and social status. As Karl Marx said religion is a voice of voiceless and opium of the masses. To divide and unite religion is the back bone to all the countries. No history is exceptional from the bitter consequences of religion and its function in all the fields.

Zohra is emerged from the religion to transform the society beyond the religion to have the humanism among the people. In *Zohra*, Zeenath Futehally contextualizes the harmful nature of religion between Zohra's husband Basheer and her brother-in-law Hamid's discussion on religion is extremely harmful to hate each other because of religion though they are own brothers of the same family but they never accept each other's opinion over religion. Here the writer's in-depth knowledge of religion describes the harmful nature of religion to divide the people in the family and in society.

Politics versus Religion

People have been interlinked their lives to live with politics and religion for their survival to ignore the facts of religion and politics. People have become opportunists to run their social, political, economic and cultural spheres for their development no matter of harmful nature of religion and politics of any age. As Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said, "Religion is monster it creeps where ever we go". No one is exceptional is to go beyond the religion to think as a human being to construct the egalitarian society on the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity. Even Mahatma Gandhi too had the politics of religion among the people to divide and rule.

Britishers have come as traders not to become rulers to rule India. India has been ruled for two hundred years by Britishers to become rulers to rule because of religion the power to rule became a cake walk for British to divide and rule the people.

Religion versus Education and Hegemony:

Education and hegemony have been becoming powerful to make someone to become powerless to born and someone to powerful in the society. In India because of religion and caste, education was not accessed by the marginal people, similarly the hegemony also has been there in some people's hands to divide and rule the people.

Zohra by Zeenath Futehally is the document of multiple aspects to know about the role gender, religion and education to divide and rule the people rather than unite for the liberty, equality and fraternity. It is not only the history of India; it is the close attachment with the literature and the people to know about themselves.

Works Cited

Futehally, Zeenath. *Zohra*. Oxford UP, 1952.

Futehally, Zeenath. *Zohra*, edited by Rumana Futehally, Denby, Oxford UP, 2004.

Impact of the Linguistic Intelligence on Learners' Professional Success

J. Madhavi

Osmania University

Abstract

Linguistic intelligence, as outlined in Gardner's theory, focuses on an individual's skill in language-related activities. This intelligence goes beyond simply understanding vocabulary and grammar and includes a natural talent for recognising the nuances of language, mastering complex syntax, and using language effectively for communication. Linguistic intelligence is fundamental to the process of learning a language. This article delves into vocabulary development as a component of linguistic intelligence. Individuals with a strong linguistic aptitude broaden their vocabulary, integrating new words into their daily conversations. With this skill, individuals can clearly and eloquently convey their ideas, enhancing their communication and self-expression. Mastering effective communication is crucial in personal and professional settings, and linguistic intelligence provides the necessary skills for success in this area. Through written or spoken communication, linguistic intelligence enables individuals to effectively express their ideas with clarity and persuasion. Mastering this skill is crucial in areas like public speaking, diplomacy, education, and journalism, where the impact of language is immense. This article focuses on the importance of linguistic intelligence and its crucial role in achieving professional success.

Keywords: word-power, professional success, linguistic intelligence, public speaking, linguistic aptitude.

Introduction

The English language plays a crucial role in our interconnected world, serving as a vital tool for communication across different parts of the globe. It has a significant impact in educational institutions and the business realm, enabling efficient communication in these areas. The multitude of languages found in various countries can occasionally present obstacles to clear communication, underscoring the importance of a shared language. English, being widely recognised on a global scale, is the perfect option. According to F.G. French (1963), the widespread use of English as a global language can be attributed to historical factors and the rapid advancement of various fields, including manufacturing, science, technology, and international trade. The rapid advancement of travel and the diminishing of geographical barriers have greatly contributed to the increased interdependence among nations. English has emerged as the cornerstone of global communication, unparalleled in its widespread use and impact. English is widely spoken and understood by a large number of people around the world in today's era. It acts as a universal tool for both verbal dialogue and written correspondence in numerous parts of the globe. Its widespread usage surpasses that of any other language, making it the universal language of our interconnected world. English is widely spoken by millions of people around the world, highlighting its significant role as a national language.

An in-depth comprehension of the English language opens up a world of exquisite literary works. The presence of outstanding literary works in English highlights the importance of understanding this universal language. Proficiency in English is highly beneficial for students as it enables them to seamlessly integrate into foreign countries and gain access to a wealth of specialised knowledge and literary treasures. Expanding the reach of world literature to a broader audience, its translation into English is a valuable endeavour.

The global reach of the English language goes far beyond its use in literature. It acts as a channel for sharing daily happenings from different parts of the world. English provides valuable insights into global developments, making it the preferred language for international relations, commerce, education, technology, travel, banking, medicine, and industry. The significance of English in global communication is so notable that it is commonly known as the language spoken worldwide.

English is widely spoken by people from diverse cultural backgrounds, making it a common language for global communication. Having a strong command of the English language allows individuals to forge meaningful connections with people from various backgrounds, fostering political, public, intellectual, cultural, and economic exchanges on a global scale. English is widely recognised as the language of global business, international diplomacy, and a rich source of ideas and cultures from around the world.

English plays a crucial role as a bridge language, both within India and internationally. In a country as linguistically diverse as India, where different languages are spoken in various regions, English serves as a common language that brings people together. It is the universal language that enables effective communication between individuals who are far apart. English plays a vital role in fostering trade relations between India and other nations, allowing traders from various parts of the world to communicate effortlessly. Furthermore, in the operation of state administration, English plays a crucial role in establishing effective communication channels between the central government and various states, thus ensuring the seamless maintenance of law and order. Jawaharlal Nehru acknowledged the importance of this linguistic connection, emphasising its superiority over other forms of association or economic ties. He highlighted the power of the English language in fostering the exchange of ideas, surpassing the limitations of other European languages. Ultimately, the English language plays a crucial role in fostering unity among nations due to its extensive global usage.

Furthermore, English provides a valuable perspective on international events and issues. Nehru accurately described it as our main gateway to the modern world, allowing us to stay informed about external events and advancements. Prof. F.G. French (1963) emphasised the power of language, noting that individuals who possess a grasp of English can forge global connections from the comfort of their own homes. English offers

us a valuable window into the broader world, keeping us up to date on global events.

English is widely regarded as a language that boasts a vast collection of literature, making it a valuable resource for scholars and enthusiasts alike. As per the United Nations, approximately half of the world's celebrated literary works are written in English. It offers a wide range of encyclopaedias, dictionaries, world books, and regional literature. According to Crystal's observations in 2003, a considerable number of research articles in the fields of linguistics and computer science are published in English. This is particularly true for academic journals that have a global readership. The realm of knowledge, which includes disciplines such as medicine and machinery, primarily showcases the most recent publications in the English language. English language resources, including significant books, journals, and periodicals, contribute to its reputation as a valuable source of knowledge and information.

Need for Proficiency in English language

Having a strong command of the English language has become increasingly important in today's competitive job market. It can greatly enhance your chances of landing well-paying jobs and earning higher salaries. Strong English communication skills are highly sought after by multinational companies and international corporations. Fluency in English is a crucial requirement in today's global job market, especially for those seeking positions in foreign

countries. Its importance in the professional sphere cannot be overstated.

There is no denying the global significance of the English language. English is widely spoken in countries such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The global reach of English highlights its significance as a means of international communication. In addition to its practical use in communication, the English language provides access to specialised knowledge in a wide range of disciplines, such as humanities, science, and technology. It is a treasure trove of knowledge, providing a plethora of information and valuable insights. English plays a crucial role in higher education, often serving as a significant language used in libraries. Fluency in English is often a requirement for obtaining a degree in various academic settings, particularly at the master's level. As a result, having a strong command of the English language is not just a valuable skill, but also a gateway to various educational and career prospects.

Having a strong grasp of linguistic intelligence is crucial for ESL learners as it allows them to effectively understand English grammar, vocabulary, and syntax (Armstrong 2009). Acquiring this knowledge helps to cultivate a robust lexicon, improve the understanding of written material, and foster adeptness in written expression. It equips ESL learners with the skills to confidently and effectively communicate in spoken and written English,

enabling them to excel academically and actively participate in English-speaking settings.

Linguistic Intelligence for an ESL Learner

One of the eight intelligences initially proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983, linguistic intelligence continues to be a fundamental concept in the field of cognitive psychology. Gardner, a renowned developmental behaviourist and Harvard psychologist, brought forth the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) to the educational community. This theory gained significant attention among individuals in the academic, professional, and educational fields. It suggests that a singular concept of intelligence is inadequate for fully evaluating an individual's abilities and constraints.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences suggests that individuals have diverse areas of competence, encompassing different domains. According to Gardner (2011), there are eight different types of intelligences that have been identified, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist.

Understanding and effectively communicating through speech and writing is a key aspect of this theory, focusing on an individual's capacity to comprehend both verbal and written language. From a practical standpoint, it pertains to an individual's ability to effectively utilise written and verbal communication to accomplish particular objectives. Verbal linguistic intelligence, often associated with a strong command of language, encompasses

skills in reading, writing, and speaking (Qian 2002, p.520). The MI theory proposed by Gardner has significantly influenced the field of education and cognitive psychology, resulting in extensive research, publications, and discussions on the topic of multiple intelligences. This theory presents a fresh perspective on intelligence, questioning the conventional belief that it is a fixed characteristic. Instead, it acknowledges the wide range of cognitive abilities that humans possess.

Strategies for Acquiring Linguistic Intelligence

Every facet of linguistic intelligence is complemented by specific educational strategies.

Individuals with a strong linguistic aptitude stand out due to their proficiency in language-related activities, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They possess a deep understanding of language intricacies, including grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. To enhance this aspect of intelligence, educators can create an immersive, language-rich environment. This involves promoting a diverse range of reading materials to expose students to different writing styles and perspectives, which in turn fosters analytical thinking. Exploring literary devices, themes, and authorial intent in texts can further enhance students' comprehension and appreciation of language nuances.

Language proficiency in these individuals is notable, as they have a natural ability to grasp and remember new vocabulary, expressions, and languages, quickly integrating them into their

communication. Vocabulary expansion activities are therefore crucial in educational settings. Regular introduction of new vocabulary, coupled with explanations and encouragement to use these words in sentences, can significantly enhance linguistic learning. Fun activities, like word games and challenges, along with exposure to different languages, help develop a greater appreciation for language diversity.

A strong inclination towards reading and writing is another characteristic of those with high linguistic intelligence. They enjoy a wide range of written materials and often engage in creative writing. To nurture this passion, establishing a classroom library with a variety of books allows students to follow their interests. Assignments that encourage creative expression, such as writing short stories, poems, and personal narratives, not only foster a love for writing but also provide a sense of achievement. Offering opportunities for peer feedback and publication can further motivate students.

Excellent communication skills are key to individuals with linguistic intelligence, enabling them to effectively articulate ideas and thoughts both verbally and in writing. Educators can improve students' communication skills by fostering engaging classroom discussions on various topics, encouraging the sharing of viewpoints, and conducting constructive debates. Feedback on written and verbal assignments helps refine these skills, while opportunities for public speaking, like class presentations, boost confidence in verbal expression.

Encouraging participation in meaningful conversations, debates, and discussions enhances verbal communication skills and nurtures linguistic intelligence. Lessons designed to foster student interaction, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, are beneficial. An inclusive and supportive classroom atmosphere encourages the free exchange of ideas, further promoting active communication.

Showing the practical applications of language in real-life situations can also inspire a passion for language learning. Activities like writing letters or E-mails to pen pals or analysing real-world examples of language usage in media make language learning more relevant and engaging. Moreover, vocabulary-building exercises, such as word maps and flashcards, integrated into the curriculum help students expand their linguistic skills. Thematic vocabulary lists related to classroom topics encourage students to actively use new words in their assignments, reinforcing their learning. Through these educational strategies, educators can cultivate linguistic intelligence in students, enabling them to develop robust language skills, a passion for language-related activities, and effective communication abilities in academic and real-world contexts.

Advantages of Acquiring Linguistic Intelligence

According to Howard Gardner, linguistic intelligence involves four sensitivities and four key aspects that contribute to an individual's language proficiency. The sensitivities encompass various aspects of language, such as phonological, syntactical,

semantic, and pragmatic sensitivities. Understanding phonological sensitivity involves the skill of recognising and manipulating spoken sounds, while syntactical sensitivity focuses on comprehending and using grammatical rules. An in-depth grasp of word meanings and nuances, along with the skilful use of language in social situations, are essential for effective communication.

Furthermore, linguistic intelligence encompasses four key aspects: rhetoric, mnemonic techniques, explanation, and metalinguistic awareness. Language is skilfully employed in rhetoric to effectively persuade, as seen in debates and public speaking. Language can be used to enhance memory and improve recall. Effective communication is essential in the process of imparting knowledge and facilitating learning. Developing metalinguistic awareness enables individuals to engage in thoughtful reflection and discussion about language, facilitating a deeper understanding and analysis of linguistic concepts. This skill is an integral part of Blooms Taxonomy, contributing to language comprehension and analysis. Collectively, these sensitivities and aspects create a holistic framework for grasping the intricacies of linguistic intelligence and its diverse impact on human communication and cognition.

Here are some advantages of developing linguistic intelligence:

In the journey of language acquisition for ESL learners, grasping the nuances of a new language such as English is foundational. This process is deeply rooted in understanding the

structural elements of language—grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. Those with a pronounced aptitude for language find themselves at a significant advantage, navigating with ease the complexities of English grammar, verb tenses, sentence construction, and word usage. Mastery over these fundamental concepts is pivotal for crafting well-structured sentences and for the effective conveyance of ideas, both in speech and writing.

A robust and diverse vocabulary is essential for meaningful language communication. ESL learners blessed with strong linguistic intelligence stand out for their capacity to absorb and retain new vocabulary and expressions, gradually building a vast lexicon. This skill is indispensable for expressing thoughts, emotions, and experiences with precision, and it plays a critical role in enhancing both reading comprehension and writing abilities. By enabling learners to engage with a wide array of texts and resources, a rich vocabulary lays the groundwork for successful interaction in the English language.

Reading comprehension skills are equally crucial, allowing learners to understand and interpret written materials ranging from textbooks and literature to news articles and everyday texts. The ability to dissect complex sentences, grasp idiomatic expressions, and appreciate literary devices underscores the role of linguistic intelligence in academic achievement and confidence in English-speaking environments. It opens doors to valuable information and fosters active participation in the community.

Writing proficiency in English hinges on the learner's linguistic intelligence. Those with a strong linguistic foundation excel at parsing sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar, enabling them to produce coherent, grammatically sound texts. This skill set not only facilitates academic success but also enhances professional communication and personal expression. Furthermore, linguistic intelligence empowers learners to explore creative writing, from poetry to storytelling, offering avenues for self-expression and creativity.

Mastering effective communication is a key milestone in language acquisition. ESL learners with well-developed linguistic intelligence are adept at articulating their thoughts, ideas, and feelings across various platforms, including conversations, presentations, and written documents. Strong communication skills are essential for academic excellence, thriving in social and professional arenas, and overcoming language barriers. Such skills help establish meaningful connections and ensure active participation in English-speaking communities.

To address these facets of language learning, a researcher conducted two specific activities in an English language classroom with a sample of ten undergraduates from one college, aiming to bolster their speaking and writing skills. Through this focused approach, the activities were designed not only to improve specific linguistic competencies but also to foster a holistic development in language proficiency, enabling learners to navigate the complexities of English with greater confidence and skill.

Speaking Skill Activity: "Elevate Your Skills"

Objective: To enhance verbal linguistic intelligence by articulating personal skills and aspirations succinctly and persuasively.

Activity Summary: In this classroom activity, students were tasked with creating and delivering a brief and persuasive speech designed to introduce themselves and highlight their unique skills and professional aspirations. The goal was to mimic a scenario where they have a short elevator ride to impress a potential employer or mentor.

Execution: Each student prepared a 1-minute pitch that articulated their strengths, professional interests, and how these align with their career goals.

Students were encouraged to use persuasive language, clear articulation, and confident delivery to make their pitch compelling.

The class was divided into small groups, and each student delivered their content to their group members, receiving constructive feedback on their verbal communication skills, content clarity, and engagement techniques.

Outcome: The activity fostered students' ability to communicate their professional value proposition effectively, enhancing their verbal linguistic intelligence. It also provided practice in public speaking and persuasive communication, crucial skills for professional success.

Writing Skill Activity: "Professional Vision Board"

Objective: To develop written linguistic intelligence through reflective and goal-oriented writing.

Activity Summary: Students were asked to create a "Professional Vision Board" in written form. This task required them to articulate their professional aspirations, the skills they need to develop to achieve these goals, and the steps they are taking or plan to take to enhance these skills.

Execution: Students began by listing their short-term and long-term professional goals.

They then identified the key skills necessary for achieving these goals and assessed their current proficiency in these skills.

Students wrote a detailed plan outlining how they intend to develop these skills, including specific actions, resources, and timelines.

The written vision boards were submitted for review, and students received feedback on their clarity of expression, depth of reflection, and the realism of their plans.

Outcome: This writing exercise encouraged students to engage in goal-setting and strategic planning, enhancing their ability to express complex ideas and plans in writing. It also promoted self-reflection and personal development planning, essential components of professional growth and success.

Result

After implementing the activities in an English classroom setting with ten undergraduate students, the results indicated a notable improvement in both speaking and writing skills among the participants.

For the speaking skill activity, "Elevate Your Skills," students demonstrated enhanced abilities in delivering concise and persuasive pitches. Initially, many students struggled with clarity and confidence in their oral communication. However, after the activity, there was a significant improvement in their ability to articulate their professional skills and aspirations effectively. Feedback from peers and instructors highlighted better structuring of their pitches, more persuasive language use, and increased confidence in their delivery.

In the writing skill activity, "Professional Vision Board," students showed substantial progress in their ability to articulate their professional goals and outline detailed plans for skill development. Before the activity, many students had difficulties expressing complex ideas and goals coherently in writing. Post-activity assessments revealed improvements in clarity, organization, and the depth of reflection in their written work. The feedback emphasized more strategic thinking in their planning and a clearer expression of their professional vision.

Thus, these activities not only helped in sharpening the students' linguistic intelligence in speaking and writing but also fostered their ability to think critically about their professional

paths. The combination of constructive peer feedback and focused practice contributed to their improvement, underscoring the effectiveness of these activities in enhancing essential communication skills for professional success.

Conclusion

Linguistic intelligence plays a pivotal role in the language acquisition journey of ESL learners. It enables them to grasp the nuances of English language structure, expand their vocabulary, excel in reading and comprehension, develop proficient writing skills, and ultimately become effective communicators in both academic and real-world settings. ESL learners who harness their linguistic intelligence are better equipped to thrive in English-speaking environments and achieve their educational and personal goals.

Linguistic intelligence stands as a cornerstone in the language acquisition journey of ESL learners. Its multifaceted influence empowers individuals to not only navigate the intricate landscape of English language structure but also to flourish in a multitude of language-related domains. From vocabulary expansion and reading comprehension to adept writing skills and effective communication, linguistic intelligence serves as a guiding force, propelling ESL learners towards success in both academic pursuits and the complexities of the real world.

Through harnessing their linguistic intelligence, ESL learners equip themselves with the tools necessary to thrive in English-speaking environments. This heightened language proficiency, in

turn, becomes an invaluable asset, opening doors to opportunities and facilitating the attainment of educational and personal goals. In essence, linguistic intelligence is not merely an adjunct but a vital catalyst in the transformative journey of ESL learners, empowering them to articulate their thoughts, connect with others, and realize their aspirations in a globalized world.

References

- Armstrong, T. (2009). *Multiple intelligences in the classroom* (3rd ed.). ASCD.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press.
- French, F.G. (1963) *Teaching English as an international language*. Oxford University Press.
- Gardner, D. (2013). *Exploring vocabulary: Language in action*. Routledge.
- Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (10th ed). Basic Books.
- Qian, D. (2002). Investigating the relationship between vocabulary and academic reading performance: An assessment perspective. *Language Learning*, 52, 513-536.

**The New Formula of Hindi Cinema –
An analysis of Karan Johar’s *Rocky aur Rani ki Prem Kahani*
MrudulaLakkaraju
Osmania University**

Abstract

Democratisation of viewing spaces, with the pandemic and the surge of online streaming portals, has shifted the choice of content that is to be watched, liberated from the iron hold of producers and cinema theatre cartels right into the homes and more specifically, right into the hands of the viewer. Earlier, each family owned one television set and had to be watched together as a family. The accessibility of the viewing content on the smart phone, through the ‘Apps’ has made the viewer fiercely autonomous. Each viewer can pick and choose the content and sometimes is too spoilt for choice. On these open platforms, when faced with competition from every quarter, the ‘Pan-Indian’ cinema quickly lost out. Now the biggest budget cinema has to compete with the small independent film maker. Neither politics nor power, has any sway, as the final choice of ‘to watch or not to watch’ remained in the hands of the viewer. Content won. On the other hand, after the theatres reopened, the established film industry was desperately bringing together different kinds of formula to woo the audience back for its survival. In the midst of commercial films banking on star power alone, the popular Producer/Director Karan Johar makes a film which is truly ‘Bollywood’ at heart with all its commercial elements, but appealed to the logical, rational and the progressive generation of viewers and that is the new formula the paper attempts to discuss.

Keywords: Pan Indian Cinema, Online Streaming Portals, Independent Film Maker, Bollywood, Formula film making.

Mrudula Lakkaraju, Department of English, P.G. College, Secunderabad, Osmania University, Hyderabad. E-mail: dr.mrudularlakkaraju@gmail.com

Introduction

The ‘Bollywood’, many argue, is a misnomer and it makes ‘Pan-Indian’ cinema sound like a wannabe ‘Hollywood’. This is a name that has come to stick and represent that kind of cinema which is commercial in design. The term commercial is used here to distinguish between cinema that are made purely out of the ‘Auteur’s Vision’ and cinema made for commercial purposes only. The film made of the director, by the director, for translating her/his vision holds the possibility of either earning profits or not. The way the film performs is unpredictable. There are always unexpected hits and success stories. The commercial cinema on the other hand has a formula that caters to the populist agendas and appeals to larger audiences and hence is designed to be commercially successful.

Democratisation of viewing spaces, with many online streaming portals, has shifted the choice of content to be watched, being liberated from the iron hold of producers and cinema theatre cartels into the homes and specifically, right into the hands of the viewer. Earlier, the television had to be watched together but the accessibility of the viewing content on mobile has made the viewer fiercely autonomous. Each viewer can pick and choose the content and sometimes s/he is too spoilt for choice. Pandemic is one chief reason to recalibrate the culture of viewing cinema in theatres. When faced with competition from every quarter, the ‘pan-Indian’ cinema quickly lost out. Now the biggest budget cinema will compete with the small independent film maker. No

politics can be in play with the final choice in the hands of the viewer; only quality content emerges as the winner irrespective of where or who the film comes from.

With films produced by big companies starring big actors suddenly became insipid in comparison to the authentic films from talented, resourceful and independent film makers. The comparison between all kinds of genre existed for the audiences but never before was the competition so fierce. The sheer commercial success and acceptance of *Baahubali* was a wakeup call and a game changer to the film makers of Bollywood that a Pan Indian cinema can originate anywhere in India and not just in Bollywood. It has now become evident that if 'Bollywood' had to compete, it had to rewrite the formula in their films. Formula film, like cheap copies are always present in the market the need is to create original blueprints and formula.

In this context *Rocky aur Rani ki Prem Kahani* is a new formula film that is in the new direction Bollywood has to move to be a part of international representation of Indian Cinema. The movie was directed by Karan Johar, with directorial and production achievements that have promoted Indian cinema on the global scene. The film is still formulaic and plays on certain stereotypes, yet it shows the next generation of film makers how one can retain the certain Bollywood commercial elements and yet appeal to the 'woke' audiences.

Plot Line

The plotline plays on tropes of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Two people fall in love and they are from two very different cultural backdrops. These young people in an attempt to marry first decide to live with each other's family to understand the difference and appeal their case. It ends well with both the families consenting. It sounds formulaic and doesn't offer much of a complexity to warrant a research paper. But, when one watches it, one discovers that woven through the events are anecdotes, some didactic, some metacognitive and some self-depreciative observations on Bollywood. Each stereotype is invited into the storyline, critiqued and modified and all this is well written and is seamless paving the way to a new formula.

Old Formula

Bollywood's filmmakers are wringing their hands with dismay that their tried-and-true formula may be growing stale (Cain, *Forbes*).

The commercial cinema of 60s and 70s were popularised with music and stardom without much attention given to the final product and its impact. The intention was to make cinema which needs to be a hit. To achieve the end, any and every element that might hook the audience's mindset is accommodated. A country like India, where the economic development is high in cities and moderate in towns and minimum in villages, there is still a demand for escapist content in the entertainment sector. The reality is harsh and the cinema offers a getaway. Even if a trip to

Switzerland is unaffordable, a piece is served through the commercial movies for an affordable sum.

There are literally hundreds of films with their most romantic interludes shot before Swiss snow-capped mountain tops, Alpine lakes, medieval castles and traditional villages (Tissot, *House of Switzerland*).

To craft escapist content in film there are certain elements compiled together. The aesthetics of the film are unrealistic. The elaborate high-priced costumes of the lead actors, many of which have triggered a fashion statement across the viewers. There was a ‘Maine PyarKiya’ fashion statement, a ‘Chandni’ fashion statement and ‘Sholay’ denims to mention a few. Cinema has always inspired the fashion sense of movie goers. You wear a piece of the cinema; you are transported into the cinematic world. That becomes a ticket to this hyper reality.

Hindi cinema represents a collective fantasy—a group daydream (Assomull, *Harper Bazaar*).

The hair and makeup of ‘Hindi Cinema’ have innumerable trends. There wasn’t a ‘Hair Saloon’ which did not claim to offer the specialty of an Amitabh Bachchan haircut. The present hair salons see a ‘Shahrukh Khan’ hairstyle prominently displayed and equally sought by the young and the experimental. The flawless skin of the protagonists, the lipstick colours, the way a bindi was used or placed, a particular hair style, either that one of Sharmila Tagore or Sadhana, or the latest pixie hair style of Anushka

Sharma or the long locks of Ranveer Singh. These are trend setters and are followed by many.

Back in the day, the only source of visual inspiration for people when it came to fashion was films and songs. There was nothing else that a common person could browse, flip or scroll through. It is only now because of the internet and social media platforms that people are aware of other trends from across the world (Dhruv, *The Estb*).

‘Exotic locales’ and ‘palatial houses’ are the next discussion point. The houses the lead actors live have to be beyond imagination, offering a dream of luxurious living spaces, unaffordable, unrealistic and out of reach but worth aspiring for. Throughout the movie we have these sudden switches to exotic locales. The songs are the tongue in cheek take on romance. A traditional society like India scorns on public display of affection. But through song and dance you are sanctioned physical touch under the garb of fine arts. The men project their selves onto the male protagonist and the women onto the female protagonist. The problematic of this representation is a debate for another research paper.

International travel out of India is expensive to a majority of Indians and can be realised on the silver screen. The Switzerland, the Director / Producer, Yash Chopra popularised in 80s and 90s is a fantasy and part of the travel bucket list for many. The geographical visuals that are not found in a tropical country like India are fantasised in Hindi Cinema.

One can find all of these components in Karan Johar's Rocky and Rani ki Prem Kahani. This is a successful formula and is a sure way of ensuring a commercial hit. The regular movie goers who seek the fantastic, the surreal and the escapist content of Hindi cinema will find what they are looking for. The film is loaded on these components. The visual aesthetic is stunning and permits to forget momentarily one's reality. That is enough entertainment for many suburban and rural areas.

The New Formula

The abovementioned formula ensured the audiences are drawn to the theatres. Coated in the visually aesthetic content the director raises so many issues and brings them to the forefront for debate and speculation. One of the paradoxes of cinema is if one need to offer corrective criticism, the director has to show the 'bad' element. Once the 'bad' is shown on the film, it will be bigger than life and hence, glorified. So, the corrective action is lost in the grand visual presentation of the 'bad'. The issues that the director successfully put up for the audiences are discussed below.

The Idea of Soul mate

There are certain aspects of life that are in practice, without ever being brought up for opinion and discussion. There is always a certain societal pressure on the individual usually through the family to fit in to a mould. 'Finding the right match', 'finding a boyfriend', 'finding love' are token practices which often are misleading. What one should determinedly look for is a soul mate and any efforts of a relationship should be towards becoming

somebody's soul mate. The modern-day predicament of relationships, their successes and failures revolve around this concept.

The characters Kanwal Lund, Jamini Chatterjee were designed to be soul mates. But they do not get to choose this as they are forced into marriages with different partners where both of them end up miserable and unhappy. The social stigma does not allow them to stay together. Their love story and their suffering is a stern reminder to the young lovers in the film and to the young audiences that without soul mates, relationships become meaningless. The two young lovers work through their issues to become one another's soul mates. For the first time on cinema the Auteur brings this up for discussion paving the way for relationships based on being with a soul mate whether it is a straight marriage or not.

Familial Control

One cannot shut off the influences around and live forever in a water tight compartment. We are swayed by influences that are beyond our control. The deep obsession of families, with categories like religion, caste, race, and family name are attempts to control the genetics and hence people assume that the future progeny is protected. This pressure has always been more on the women of the household. The surname and sometimes the original name of daughter in law are changed and there is a certain inhuman pride exhibited by the groom's family in owning these women after marriage. There is also a tremendous control on the

choice exerted by the women for a partner. The choice of the partner has to be approved at multiple levels of the family. If the choice made is against the family wishes, the child is disowned and sometimes killed for ‘Honour of the family name’. The familial control works in the same way for boys.

This film focuses two kinds of parenting styles. On one hand the matriarchal control in Rocky’s home, highlighting the women who perpetrate patriarchy. Dhanalakshmi, Rocky’s Grandmother is controlling in her attempt to pass on the familial control she experienced from her elders onto the next generation. She grooms her son into an epitome of patriarchy. Both of them scorn on the concept of fun. Being fun, for them is deemed as less masculine. They chide Rocky for acting beneath his masculinity. They are also very controlling of Rocky’s mother and his sister. Each time Gayatri, Rocky’s sister is paraded as marriageable material, she is rejected and it takes a toll on her self-esteem. The societal conformity is a primary agenda, irrespective of the stifling it causes the next generation.

On the other hand, Rani’s family is open, inclusive, respects Rani and her choices. They are gently encouraging and supportive of her decisions. When she refuses to marry Somen, her family’s selection of groom for her, there is acceptance. She gets to choose her career; her partner and she are heard. Both the parenting styles cannot prevent the pain the children must undergo to survive in the world. Through this depiction the Auteur poses the question, “What kind of a parent you wish to be?”

Expectations on children

The Matriarch, Dhanalakshmi, projects her image of a man, which her husband could not fulfil onto her son. She grooms her son into the man she envisions. In doing so, she creates a discord in her son. He just becomes a mother's son, forgetting to be a father's son and to be a husband. This predicament of living up to a parent's expectations is detrimental to the child's overall development. This image the son has to live up to the expectations of the mother, he fails on several other fronts leaving his marriage and his own parenthood in shambles. There is an attempt in most traditional Indian marriages that this trauma is considered a norm and takes on the garb of tradition and ritual. On the other side of the spectrum, we have grandparent and the parents who empower their child to take her own choice. This has somehow to do with literacy. All the members of Rani's family are educated and hence certain awareness is depicted in their parenting. There is a need for all parents not to impose their unfulfilled dreams and projections onto their children, but empower them to make their own choices and own up to their errors and their learning curves.

Body Acceptance

The premise of 'Gender Studies' is that there are different kinds of masculinities and femininities. Bollywood has glamourized one type and in contrast to that, this film celebrates many. It takes it a step further and it normalises it from Rocky's hyper masculine body type to Gayatri's. The pressure to look a certain way, leads to a somatic dysfunction of stuttering and

psychological lack of self-esteem. Outside of the context of her marriage proposals, Gayathri is a regular young girl having regular dreams. The moment there is a pressure to conform she is unsure. She is a depiction in most of our households where women are forced to look a certain way only.

Inner garments

The taboo, mystique and secrecy that are associated with women's issues are addressed in this movie. In many patriarchal households, the male is the norm and the female are the aberration. The male's routine takes precedence over every other. From the choice of routine, the finances, to the food, the policies of the house and other major decisions are determined by the male head of the family. Everybody else adjust around this routine. In such a scenario where everyone attempts to vie for the family head's favour, women somehow feature after the youngest male in the family. Women's issues have lost their priority in this mad rush for power in patriarchal households. The mystique that is built around women is an easy way out for the men of the family to escape the work one has to put in to develop a rapport and understand. The obsession with women's undergarments is part of the mystique. On one hand the inner garments are a taboo and also a fantasy for the men of patriarchy. Anjali Chatterjee takes Rocky shopping. Brought up in a patriarchal family he scorns on women's inner garments and receives a reality check on the hypocrisy of not wanting to know and fantasise simultaneously.

Advertisements

The advertising is a multimillion-dollar segment which ensures that products and services are sold. They are popular and necessary aspect of marketing. Advertisements are paradoxical. If they have to reach a huge market they have to appeal to the popular mindset. It also has the power to change. This power is underutilized for purely commercial purposes. The media has power to influence a large number of people, the advertisements that were made commodified women and limited them to certain social roles. Bette Friedan's analysis in the *Feminine Mystique*, of how women were shown in magazines after the Second World War presented them as housewives, happy at home.

'Dhanlakshmi Sweets' a commercial enterprise makes a new ad which is rejected by the viewers and leads to the fall of stock prices shows three women cooking in the kitchen, making food for the family and extremely happy about it. The younger staff of her company request Rani for her opinion and based off the sample recreate the ad where both men and women come together to make food for the family.

Talent & Gender

Is talent divided into feminine talent and masculine talent? If one says yes, the gender division and gender stereotyping seems logical. It is an argument the 'woke' generation is refuting. It has been proven with practical implementation that anybody is capable of doing anything. There is no task in the world that is inaccessible to any of the genders, now that we have a healthy debate on

LGBTQAI community. Patriarchy selectively appreciates certain talents, sports, household chores, garments, mannerisms as masculine and the other as feminine. It is not another personality type but an aberration. In traditional patriarchal societies, the male is the norm and every other human being is a misfit. When men are groomed to be manly, they lose touch with their feminine side. Every human being as proven by medical sciences has both the male and female hormones. Each one of us is both male and female and in Indian philosophy God Shiva, the 'Ardha Nareeshwara' and 'Adi Yogi' is the God of absolute balance.

Rocky's family looks down on dance as a less masculine form of dance and somehow forgive rocky for performing 'Bhangra' style of dance, assuming that it is somehow still masculine. Their views on dance are challenged by Rocky's father, Chandon Chatterjee, who excels at the graceful Kathak. Rocky does not understand this and so does his father and grandmother. Both of them publicly mock Chandon Chatterjee for his talent in the feminine 'kathak'. When Rocky understands that talent is purely and only talent and it has nothing to do with gender, he embraces this art form and performs in rebellion in front of his family. The women embrace this side of him but the patriarchal heads are angry and lead to further conflict.

Career Women

How is Dhanalakshmi different from Rani? They are divided by age, generation and their priorities. They are both the same. They both do not realise. Patriarchy pits one woman against the

other. Women are the predominant perpetrators of it. The older woman, Dhanalakshmi scorns at the younger Rani as if she is not the woman enough. She judges from her moral high ground. She does not realise that she too is one.

There is no necessity for a career woman to act like a patriarch. You need not dress like a man to work. Women are different and from accepting that difference, come the ability to access emancipation. Dhanalakshmi behaves with patriarchal attributes, belittling all the women around her. On the other hand, Rani proposes an alternative. She is comfortable in her femininity, clear headed about her aspirations and also respectful of all the women around.

Metacriticism

The director has the ability to laugh at himself. There is no need to take cinema seriously. It is just an entertainment medium and it is flawed. The Auteur takes a couple of critical remarks on the kind of cinema he makes to take away the power of judgement from the other critics.

The critique of Bollywood song lyrics that are steeped in patriarchal double standards is offered. The lyrics portray women as just sexual beings and are objectified leading to dehumanisation, a chief cause of violence against women. Anjali Chatterjee, Rani's mother poses this question to Rocky who cringes from buying highly sexualised representation of women's inner wear, creating an inhuman mystique to this everyday utilitarian garment.

The second instance of meta criticism, cinema critical of cinema is during the 'Durga Puja'. There are different kinds of music that is around us, independent artists creating music for every occasion. The Indian audiences are somehow fixated on the Bollywood music and its various nefarious remixes. The very popular example of 'Durga Puja' dance is from a film titled 'Devdas' made by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and the song has two female protagonists dancing in reverence before the idol for the wellbeing of their loved one. In RRR, we have two men who dance to the same tune, snidely remarking that they were breaking a Bollywood stereotype.

Conclusion

There are numerous instances like a premarital dialogue discussing every aspect of each other's life or how cooking is a survival skill both men and women should learn, etc., which surprise the audiences. Commercial Cinema can be intelligent instead of mindlessly entertaining and that too only for select audiences. The audiences have an increasing number of independent working women and they find the patriarchal representations in cinema extremely displeasing. With this film, the auteur, Karan Johar has worked out a formula which has the best of commercial elements and also is progressive. This movie changes the game of movie making. Its acceptance by majority of audiences across India and Overseas has established a precedence that every other film maker has to learn to emulate. The audience's

preferences are changing so should the formula on which Indian commercial cinema is based.

Works Cited

Johar, Karan, director. *Rockyaur Rani ki Prem Kahani*. Dharma Productions, 2023.

Cain, Rob. "Bollywood's Formula Is Getting Stale." www.forbes.com. 30-05-24.

Tissot, Tatiana. "Bollywood's long-standing love affair with Switzerland." www.houseofswitzerland.org. 30-05-24.

Saloni, Dhruv. "Why is fashion in India so heavily influenced by Bollywood films?" www.theestablished.com. 30-05-24.

Assomull, Sujata. "How Bollywood's imaginative, fantastical fashion has evolved over the years." www.harpersbazaar.in. 30-05-24.

Trends in English Language Teaching- Retrospect and Prospect

B. Sheela Rani Simon

Vasavi College of Engineering

Abstract

Unlike teaching of other subjects like Mathematics and Physics, English language teaching and learning has always been dynamic and fluid. Innumerable events, trends and theories have shaped ELT over the years. New approaches and methodologies have been evolved to suit the teaching-learning process from time to time, each one emerging as a rediscovery or re-illumination of older methods. The present paper chronicles the trends in ELT around the globe from the past decades to the current trends followed to teach the language today. The research paper also focuses on the contributions made by theorists, linguists, researchers, educational psychologists and teachers to the field of ELT. Another key focus of this research is drivers of change in ELT-identifying major trends in current ELT research that brought about significant changes in various paradigms. Students and teachers' perspectives on the past and present trends in ELT and in the way, language is taught are also studied and analysed from the data collected and the findings are presented in the paper. An attempt to look at the future of ELT is also made in this research.

Keywords: English Language teaching, approaches, trends, theories, methodologies.

Introduction

Old English or Anglo Saxon was the language of the Germanic Tribes i.e. Angles and Saxons who arrived in Britain in the 5th century AD. The Anglo Saxons along with Jutes settled in many parts of Great Britain during the mid-5th century and began to dominate and spread to most parts of the country. Old English displaced Latin language because of political changes in Europe. Latin gradually became displaced as a language of spoken and written communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Significant changes were brought about in the usage of Old English by Scandinavian Vikings who conquered and ruled most parts of Britain. The Norman Conquest in 1066 also had its influences on Old English both linguistically as well as grammatically. After the Norman Conquest the language used was no longer called Old English but Middle English or Anglo Norman. Since Normans were the descendants of the Vikings who invaded France, many new words and phrases were borrowed from French as well, especially vocabulary related to court system of the government and church. Middle English was spoken till the late 15th century.

The language used by William Shakespeare in 16th century was called Early Modern English. It had borrowings from many European languages such as French, German and Dutch. The Modern English as is known today has its beginning in the 17th century. Due to the British colonialism, English Language spread far and wide and is now the most dominant language in Britain,

Canada, Ireland, United States, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries. Thus, English became the lingua franca of the world in the 20th century. Also, the contributions of the Christian Missionaries had its influence on English in many countries today. It is established that English language is spoken by almost one third of the worlds' population. Like Latin, which was taught in European schools and colleges English Language was introduced in the colonies of the British Empire. Ironically teaching of English in schools and colleges was done like the teaching of Latin. The various approaches and methodologies used have evolved from the way other European languages especially Latin, French and German were taught. A number of theorists and linguists proposed various approaches, methods and techniques to make the learning of English language better.

While teaching of subjects like Mathematics, Physics and sciences has more or less remained unchanged, English language teaching has been evolving and adapting to different classroom situations around the world.

The present study focuses on trends in English language teaching from the past to the present and to examine the language teaching practices in the classrooms at undergraduate level in the state of Telangana.

The aim of the study is to:

1. Research on the various methods of English Language teaching in the world and examine its suitability.

2. Methodologies used in the English classrooms of undergraduate students
3. To find the drivers of change in ELT

The research is based on the premise that methods and trends in ELT are dynamic and ever changing and that there is no one such method or trend in ELT that is suitable at all times. As language is ever evolving so are the methods that are required to teach them.

Review of Literature

English Language Teaching: Retrospect

English language teaching came into the curriculum of education during the eighteenth century. Teaching of English followed the way languages such as Latin and French were taught-grammar rules were memorised and written practices were given. Translations from the second language to the first language were done in order to learn the language. By the nineteenth century, this method was considered as a standard method of teaching language. The textbooks were divided into chapters. Each chapter contained a certain grammatical rule and rule was practiced with a lot of written exercises. According to Freeman (2000) the knowledge of various methods right from the early ages of teaching English language is essential to know the efficacy of learning the language in the classroom.

1. Grammar Translation Method: 1840-1940

This method was widely popular during the ages between 1840-1940. It followed the method used to learn Latin language which was considered as a classical language and not for common use. Literature of Latin language was learnt through learning the rules of grammar and vocabulary so that translation into first language and second language by the students was done in order to understand the literature of those times. Vocabulary was limited to the text that was being taught in the class.

According to Rogers and Richards grammar translation method was used to enable learners to read the literature of that language and for translation into and out of the target language. This method gave importance to reading and writing and did not lay emphasis on listening and speaking skills.

Another aspect of this method was that it laid more importance to accuracy rather than fluency. Also, grammar rules are taught in a deductive manner by laying down the rules from simple to complex and the student is asked to learn the grammar rules of the target language. Instructions are given in their native language so that they understand well and student's native language is used freely to explain the text. According to Larsen (1986) new words are learnt by the students and made to understand them in

their mother tongue thus enriching the learner's vocabulary.

However, the grammar translation method failed in the fact that it wasn't for practical use for common use and little to no importance was given to listening and speaking skills (Neilson 2003). The central focus of learning in the classroom was the teacher, this method made learning teacher centric.

2. The Direct Method: Gouin and Berlitz

Francois Gouin embarked on a new way of learning the target language after having gone through a harrowing experience of memorising words and grammar rules of German language in order to communicate with native speakers of German. This new way he understood was that language can be learnt by transforming perceptions into conceptions and then using language to represent the connections. This led to the 'Series Method' where a series of connected sentences were taught to the students to make them understand. However, this method was short-lived and was replaced by Direct Method given by Charles Berlitz. This method gave scope for a lot of oral interaction, no memorising grammar rules or syntactic structures and no translations involved. In the classroom instructions were given the target language. Inductive way

of teaching grammar was followed and only everyday vocabulary was taught to the learners.

Direct Method was quite popular in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. However due to the constraints of the classroom size, the time involved and budget this method started to decline in popularity, giving rise to the Audio-Lingual Method.

3. Audio-Lingual Method:

This method is based on the linguistic and psychological theories. The main focus of this method is that of mimicry and memorisation of set phrases and teaching of structures of language through drills. This method also made use of audio tapes and

Visual aids and did not focus on grammar learning at all. Learning of vocabulary in context and emphasising on pronunciation was given importance in this method. After 1964 this method started to decline as it was felt that language cannot be learnt through habit formation or through language drills. This method ignored the communicative ability of language learning.

The Designer Methods of the 1970s

Linguists drew their attention to the deep structure of language after the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics while the psychologists laid emphasis on the affective and interpersonal nature of language. As a result new methods emerged which captured the psychological aspects of learning. In 1989 David

Nunan called these methods ‘Designer Methods’ as it meant that one size fits all. Some of these methods were- Suggestopedia, Silent way, Strategies based instruction method and Communicative language teaching method.

1. **Suggestopedia:** Lazanov in 1979 was of the opinion that one is capable of learning more than one thinks. The power of the brain can be enhanced through a relaxed mode of learning where learners are made to be seated in relaxed chairs and are vocabulary, readings, role plays and dramas are played with music in the background. This method works on the premise that relaxation is a means of learning and retaining new knowledge- a relaxed mind is an open mind and learning can be faster and more effective. This method slowly waned because the classroom set up is different and students may not be in a position to relax their brains even though music can be played in the background.
2. **The Silent Way:** Cognitive capacities were given more importance than affective domain in this method. The Silent Way method is also characterised by a problem-solving approach to language learning. In 1972 Gattegno stated that “that it is in learners' best interests to develop independence and autonomy and cooperate with each other in solving language problems”. Here the teacher is silent and doesn't explain to the learners most of the time hence the name.

3. **Strategy based learning:** O'Malley and Chamot (1990) suggested strategies to make learners independent. This method laid emphasis on style awareness and strategy development in order to encourage learning of the language. Textbooks were designed around strategy building activities. This intern helps the learners to learn by themselves through strategies and not depend on the teachers to tell them everything.
4. **Communicative Language Teaching:** The need to communicate gave rise to the communicative language teaching approach. Given the structure of communicative competence where learners are supposed to have accomplished various functions of language and having studied the nature of styles of language and nonverbal communication, teachers felt that need to teach communication through communication instead of teaching about it. This method focuses on the functional use of language for meaningful purposes, fluency and accuracy is viewed with equal importance and using language in a context that is real.

All the method suggests the fact that nothing is fixed nothing is gospel, that one method evolves from another and that researchers exchange notes and talk about their research to bring out a better version of previous methods to make language learning more effective and purposeful.

The present paper focuses on trends in English language teaching from the past to the present and whether students are aware of the methods involved in the teaching-learning process in the classroom. The study is carried out on teachers and undergraduate students in the state of Telangana to find out the methods used in the class and the effectiveness of these approaches and techniques.

The following research questions were investigated:

1. What are the various methods being used in the English language classroom?
2. What are the some of the perceptions of students on the classroom teaching and learning practices?
3. What are teachers' reflections on the effectiveness of methods approaches and techniques used in the English classrooms?
4. Are the teaching methods in line with the present needs of the students?

Research Methodology and Data Collection:

1. The quantitative data was collected through questionnaires
2. The qualitative data was collected through interaction with undergraduate engineering students and teachers to find out the effectiveness of the practices used to teach English language.

Participants:

The participants in this study are both students and English language teachers at the undergraduate level

1. Students in the Study:

. The students are first year engineering students of various colleges in the state of Telangana. These students come from heterogeneous backgrounds in terms of their competencies in the English language. The total respondents are 86 students in the age group of 17 to 19 yrs.

2. Teachers in the Study:

Teacher participants are English teachers from various undergraduate engineering colleges in the state of Telangana. These teachers are in the age group of 25 to 57 years.

Data Analysis

Google form analysis of the respondents using SPSS software was done. The student and teachers' questionnaires were analyzed in detail. The following are the details of the questionnaires used in the research.

Description of the Student Questionnaire: The questionnaire comprises of different questions to seek information and opinions of the students on areas like:

1. The methodology practiced in the classroom to learn the language.
2. Students perception of an effective classroom instruction
3. The relevance of the syllabus in enhancing language learning

Profiles of the Students who responded to the Questionnaires

Students' Profile

88 students who participated in the research were in the age group of 18 to 21 years

56.2% were boys and 43.8% were girls.

Background of the engineering students: The students who participated are from various engineering colleges in different districts of the state of Telangana. 86.4% of them come from urban backgrounds whereas 13.6% from rural areas. 90% of the students come from English medium schools and colleges where the medium of instruction was English. The respondents are from various branches of engineering studies.

Students are from various engineering colleges like University College of Engineering, Osmania University, JNTU, Vasavi College of engineering-Hyderabad, VNRVJIT College. Students were also from various branches of engineering like, CSE, ECE, AIML, EEE, Mech, Civil and IT.

Findings of the Research

I. Quantitative Results

Table1. Shows a sample of questions asked to the students regarding the methods used in the classroom to teach English language. The responses were then analysed and the findings presented statistically as follows

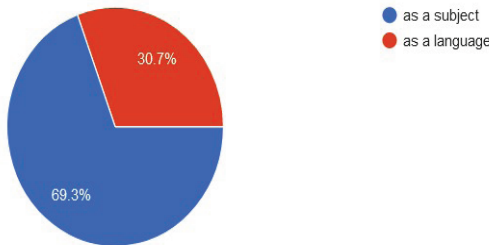
S. No	Research Questions	Responses	
		Yes	No
1.	Were you given opportunities to speak the language in the classroom during your school and intermediate days?	45.5%	37.5%
2.	Is your text book helpful to you with respect to learning the language?	44.3%	18.5%
3,	Is Grammar taught to you by explaining the rules first on the board?	79.5%	20.5%
4.	Do you think technology can improve your learning of the language	74.4%	18.2%
5.	Does the English teacher use activities/tasks as a means to teach the language?	81.8%	18.2%

From the above table it is clearly seen that 45.5% of students only had been given opportunities to speak the language in the classrooms whereas 37.5% were not given any such opportunities in their schools and intermediate colleges. When asked if the textbooks are of any help to improve learning the language, 44.3% students responded by saying yes but 18.5% of them said no. Like in the grammar translation method rules of grammar are explained and practice is given so also 79.5% of the students admit that this old method of teaching is still being practiced in classrooms.74.4%

of the respondents feel that in this modern times technology should be made use of to teach the language too and that technology can improve learning process. 81.8% of the students agree that teachers use a lot of activities to enable language learning in the classroom.

1. How did you learn English Language in your school days?

88 responses

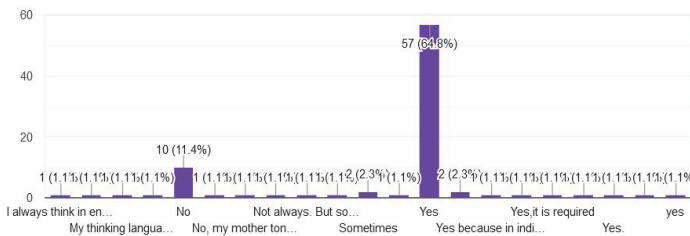


The above pie chart shows that in schools and intermediate colleges’ English language is taught as a subject and not as a language. 69.3% respondents say that English language teaching is like a subject and hence practicing the language is not done in classrooms. 30.7% agree that it is taught as a skill.

2. Do you think in your mother tongue and then speak in English if required?

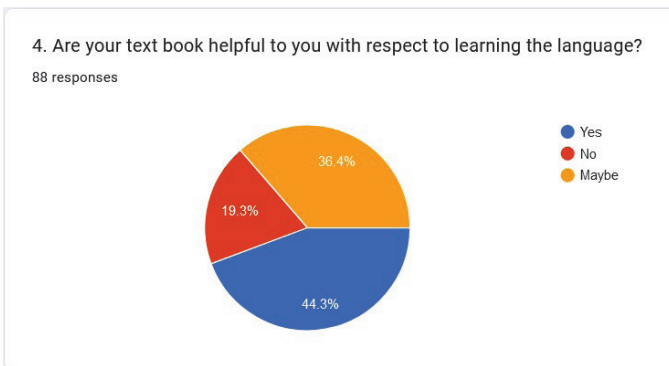
Copy

88 responses



This graph shows that 64.8% of the respondents first think in their mother tongue before speaking in English. This only goes to show that students still go back to the translation method to understand and speak in the target language.

Regarding the usefulness of the textbooks for an English language class 44.3% of the students said that they were useful 36.4% felt unsure and failed to communicate clearly to the question but 19.3% said a clear no to the effectiveness of the course text book in teaching and learning of English language. The pie chart below gives a clear picture of this statistically.



II. Qualitative Results:

Table 2: Shows the findings of the qualitative research that were got from interacting with students and gathering their opinions on trends in English language teaching in the classroom. The table below enumerates the student’s perspective on language learning in the classroom after interacting with them on campus.

S. No	Research questions	Responses
1.	Do you see an improvement in your LSRW skills after attending English classes?	<i>Yes, absolutely as activities are carried out in the classroom.</i>
2.	In your opinion can the teacher be replaced by computers? And why?	<p><i>No. English can only be learned person to person interactions.</i></p> <p><i>Don't think so. Teachers can never be replaced by any technology.</i></p> <p><i>No, the teacher can't be replaced because we will get human values and ethics only through lecturer not by machines.</i></p>
3.	How do you think the English classes can be made more interesting? any suggestions	<p><i>By conducting interesting activities.</i></p> <p><i>By Group Participation, Debates and presentations.</i></p>
4.	How did you learn the language during the lock down period? And was it effective?	<i>Through movies and songs. I think it was pretty effective. It improved my accent and body</i>

		<p><i>language.</i></p> <p><i>During the lockdown period, learning online was effective in a number of ways by accessing the right technology. I learnt at my own pace, going back and re-reading, skipping and accelerating through concepts.</i></p>
5.	Do you like learning in groups are prefer working alone?	<i>In groups.</i>

Description of the Teachers Questionnaire: Teachers questionnaire comprised of various questions to find out

1. the opinions and perspectives on English language teaching
2. to find the methods used by teachers in the classrooms
3. to find out the role of technology in teaching English language
4. the effectiveness of classroom practices

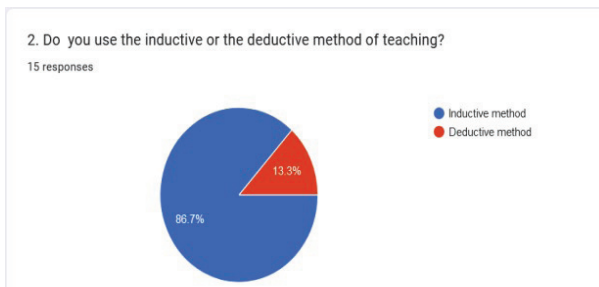
Profiles of the Students who responded to the Questionnaires

Teachers' Profile

Teachers who participated in the research are English teachers working in various undergraduate colleges in the state of Telangana. These teachers are of the age group beginning from 24 years to 59 years. The highest qualification of the respondents is a Ph.D. and maximum educational qualification of the teachers is post-graduation. Regarding the number of years of experience the respondents have ranges from 2yrs to 24years. Teachers of this research come from various cultural and heterogeneous backgrounds.

Findings of the Research

I. Quantitative Results



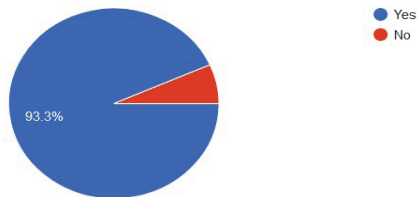
From the pie chart above it is clearly seen that the 86.7% of the teachers use the inductive method of teaching language in the classroom, whereas 13.3% use the deductive method. This goes to show that the teacher is aware that rules of grammar and vocabulary should well be learnt deductively.

The response to the question as to the use of technology in the classroom 93.3% teachers said they use it. Only very few do

not use technology to teach language to students as seen in the pie chart below.

4. Have you used technology to teach English in your classes?

15 responses



To the question of whether grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly teacher were of the view that grammar must be taught explicitly 73.3% of teacher felt so. 13.3% of teacher felt it should be taught implicitly. Ironically when inductive method of teaching is adopted teachers still feel the need to teach grammar rules before giving students any practice. Therefore, methodology used by teachers in the classroom is a mix of both grammar translation method and direct method. The chart below clearly indicates this.

5. Do you think it is necessary to teach grammar explicitly in the class?

15 responses

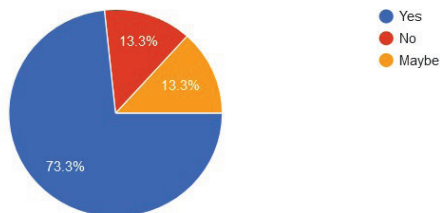
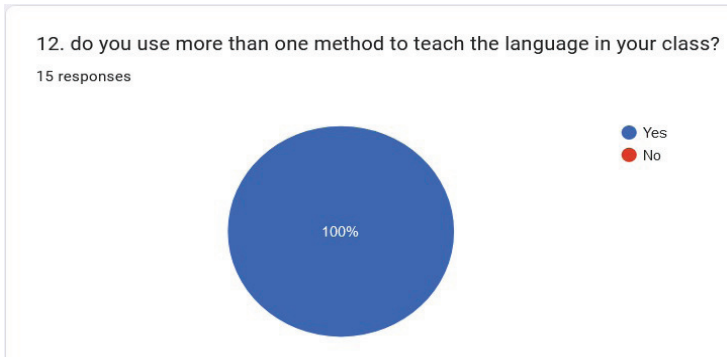


Table below shows the responses of teachers to some of the most pertinent questions with regard to language teaching practices used in the classroom.

S.No	Research Questions	Responses
1,	What in your opinion are some of the skills needed by students today other than LSRW?	<p><i>Comprehension skills,</i></p> <p><i>Multitasking,</i></p> <p><i>Computer skills, Soft skills etc.</i></p> <p><i>Problem solving and creativity,</i></p> <p><i>Bilingual proficiency,</i></p> <p><i>Activity based learning</i></p> <p><i>Soft Skills,</i></p> <p><i>Thinking skills.</i></p>
2	What kind of activities do you use in the classroom to ensure active participation of the students?	<p><i>Jam session, group discussions, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Group discussions.</i></p> <p><i>Writing what they think about the lesson before we begin</i></p> <p><i>Pair work, Group work, individual work,</i></p>

		<i>Group activities, role play, Group discussion, Need for their day to day communicate, Quizzes, Role-play, JAM Session and debates.</i>
3	Name some of the activities you used in class with the help of technology.	<i>Pictography, Word building, online puzzles class blog, Word Clouds, Online assessment, mobile technologies and social networking, Listening activities, Multimedia, Word game, Action with activity etc. Listening comprehension, movie review and conversation,</i>

		<i>Presentation PPTs, projector, Discussions etc.</i>
4	If the answer to question 10 is yes, what learning resources did you use in your class?	<i>Audio visual, e-learning platform etc. A guide, Newspapers, radio advertisements, TV clippings etc. Listening activities to enhance listening skills No Life skills and employability skills activities Newspaper, Journals etc. Online activities Fiction and language books</i>



The above pie chart shows that all teachers use more than one method to teach language in the class. A combination of methods only will give rise to a better approach to language learning.

The responses to the question below were amazing, teachers believe that no one method is useful and perfect to teach language. Some of the responses are as follows

Do you think blended learning is effective? Why or why not?

It is effective as the introverted students can properly understand whatever is being taught.

Integrated technology and digital media with traditional instructor-led classroom activities, give students more flexibility to customise their learning and also think better.

Blended learning represents a fundamental shift in instruction methods. It has the potential to optimize outcomes for individual students in ways that traditional instruction can't.

Blended teaching allows for each aspect to be taught using the most appropriate medium for the topic at that particular stage in the training.

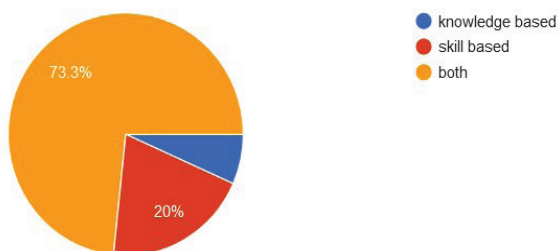
Blended learning is effective and does benefit students, it helps them learn at their own pace, enhances deeper understanding and learning.

Because it helps for all type of learners together.

Finally, the teachers are of the view that evaluation and assessment should be based on skill rather than on knowledge this is represented in a pie chart below.

13. is your evaluation/assessment knowledge based or skill based?

15 responses



Limitation of the Study

The present study has two limitations that are as follows.

1. The study does not include the syllabus design as one of its components
2. The study does not take into consideration of the future of the methods approaches and techniques used to teach language in the classroom.

Conclusion

To conclude the finding of this study certain drivers of change have been identified which gave rise to new trends in ELT.

English language teaching has been evolving throughout time. The first change is the way English language is referred to, it is not just a second language or an international language but is identified as world Englishes or English as a lingua franca. Bilingualism and multilingualism are recognised as a new trend in ELT.

Translanguaging is another recent trend that has emerged through the study to help learners master the knowledge of the language. Shifting from the goals of learning English from linguistic competence to making the learners socially responsible is another new paradigm shift in ELT. Along with fluency content and grammar of the language, students of today have to have the 21st Century skills of which are critical thinking, collaborative, innovative and creative skills. Along with these, values and ethic also should form the core of teaching the language. This study also concludes that shift to eclectic method of teaching is seen to emerge, as different skills are acquired through various activities in the classroom. Task based approach to project-based approach is the significant change observed. English language teaching today is also moving towards multidisciplinary learning. Content is taken from various cultures and backgrounds to help the student to excel in any field and not just one. One significant move is the use of technology in teaching language. Gamification, mobile apps, internet, YouTube, blended learning are all new ways to bring technology into the classroom thus enhancing the language learning process among students. Thus, the recent trends in

English language teaching centres round students' soft-skills, character and technology aided language learning.

References

- Berlitz, M. D. (1898). *The Berlitz Method for Teaching Modern Languages, English Part*. 1st book (10th ed.). Cronbach.
- Howatt, APR, (1984), *A History of English Language Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1995). Social Interdependence - Cooperative Learning in Education. In B. Bunker & J. Z. Rubin (Eds.), *Conflict, Cooperation, and Justice* (pp. 205-251). Jossey Bass Publishers.
- Richards, JC, and Rodgers, TS, (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press
- Larsen-Freeman, Diane. (1986). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press.

CONTRIBUTORS

Kieran Dolin is a Senior Honorary Research Fellow in English and Literary Studies at the University of Western Australia. His main publications are *Fiction and the Law: Legal Discourse in Victorian and Modernist Literature* (1999) and *A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature* (2007), and the edited collection, *Law and Literature* (2018).

K W Christopher is an Associate Professor, Dept of English, University College of Arts and Social Sciences, Osmania University. He has published a book titled *Rethinking Cultural Studies*, Rawat Books (2015) and many articles in reputed international journals including: *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (Routledge, UK) *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (SAGE, UK) and national journals such as *Indian Literature* (published by Sahitya Akademi, Delhi) Christopher's research work figures in Scopus as well as Web of Science. He is also a reviewer for *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (SAGE, UK). Christopher's research interests include archival research, Cultural Studies, Literature and Music, Film, Dalit Studies, Colonialism and translation with a focus on Dalit and Christian contexts.

Shugufta Shaheen is a Professor in the department of English at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, India. Her areas of interests include English literature, comparative literature, translation, Urdu literature, Diaspora, postcolonial and gender studies, Deccan Literature, and Muslim feminism. She is a distinguished scholar renowned for her extensive contributions to literary studies, particularly in the realm of South Asian literature and cultural identity. She has authored numerous works, including *Soghra Humayun Mirza: An Icon of Women's Emancipation Movement and Resistance in the Poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz*, *Facets: A Collection of Essays* and *Revisiting History: A Critical Study of Qurratula in Hyder's Novels*.

Sajaudeen Nijamodeen Chapparban is an Assistant Professor, in the Centre for Diaspora Studies at the Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, India and he was a visiting research Fellow (June 2022) at the Centre for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL, USA, and the Summer Institute fellow (June- July 2022) at Schusterman Center's Summer Institute fellowship for Israel Studies at Brandeis University USA. Presently he is a Visiting Fellow at University of Religion and Denomination, Iran. His areas of interest include International Migration and Diaspora studies, Refugees, South Asian Studies, Citizenship, Nation, Nationalism, and Transnationalism, Contemporary English Literature/s,

Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory, and Interdisciplinary studies. Currently he is working on two book series from Routledge *Global Refugee Crisis* (3 Volumes) and *The Global Indian Diasporas in 21st Century* (12 volumes).

Deepa Jyothi Banoth is an Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English at Kakatiya University, Warangal, Telangana State. She is also the Director, Center for Women's Studies and Empowerment. She was formerly the Director, Career Counselling and Placement Cell, Kakatiya University. She teaches British, Indian and Postcolonial Literature. She has published works on Folklore and Tribal Literature. She has also carried out major research project for ICSSR, New Delhi.

Anuradha Tamme is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in English, Kakatiya University, Warangal. Her areas of interest include British, Indian and Postcolonial Literature.

K. V. Ramana Chary is an Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Telangana University, Nizamabad. He has published research papers in national and international journals, and has been teaching English at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels for over two decades.

Konda Nageswara Rao teaches in the Department of English, University College of Arts & Social Sciences, Osmania

University. He was the National Joint Secretary for AESI (Association of English Studies of India). He was Director, OUCIP (former (ASRC), Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Research Center, Center for Telangana Studies. Currently he is the Director for the Civil Services Academy, Osmania University. His research areas include ELT, American Literature, British Literature, Subaltern Studies, Cultural Studies and Indian Literature. He regularly appears as an analyst on Television.

Bandla Ashok is an Assistant Professor of English in Osmania University. His areas of interest include Indian English Writing, Post-Colonial Literature and Literary Theory and Criticism, English Language Teaching. He was awarded a Fellowship by Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund (Teen Murti), Delhi. He completed a Minor Research Project from UGC.

J. Madhavi is an Associate Professor in English for University College of Arts and Social Sciences, OU. Her areas of specializations are English Language Teaching (ELT), American and British Literature, Indian writings in English and Soft skills. She was a Subject Expert and a Presenter for E-learning scripts for Web Hosting (EMMRC-EFLU). She has been an evaluator for competitive tests like TOEFL and a trainer for CAT, IELTS, and BEC. She received Excellent Educationist Award in 2022.

Mrudula Lakkaraju is a distinguished academic with a wealth of experience. She holds a PhD in Postcolonial Literature from Osmania University and has published books, presented papers, and conducted workshops in her areas of expertise, including English Drama, Postcolonial Literature, Gender Studies, Film Studies, and Communication Skills. With over two decades of teaching experience, she has held various administrative roles, including in-charge Head of the Department of English at Osmania University and Chief Editor of the *International Journal of English: Literature, Language and Skills*. Her achievements include receiving the best paper award at international conferences and conducting numerous workshops as a resource person. She is also a social media influencer, decoding films as visual texts on her Facebook page, @thevisualcritique.

B. Sheela Rani Simon is an Assistant Professor of English in Vasavi College of Engineering, Hyderabad with over 25 yrs of teaching experience. Her areas of specialization include ELT, ELE, Syllabus Design and Employability skills. She obtained her PhD in ELT from Osmania University. She has more than 20 research papers, some of it in Scopus, UGC listed journals and in several national and international journals and books.