

# AMITY UNIVERSITY

## — R A J A S T H A N —

### AMITY SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES (ASL)

#### MA English

**List of students undertaking field project or research projects or internships.**

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12103	MA ENGLISH	Nitish Gupta
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A DISSERTATION ON

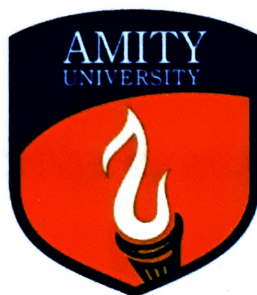
**AGATHA CHRISTIE'S *THE MURDER AT THE VICARAGE* AND *THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD*:  
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE**

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of degree

**MASTER OF ARTS**

IN

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**



AMITY SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

AMITY UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN

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A DISSERTATION ON

**CROSS CULTURAL DYNAMICS: POETICS OF  
CULTURAL SEGREGATION AND ASSIMILATION IN  
THE WORKS OF RALPH ELLISON, CHAIM POTOK  
AND JHUMPA LAHIRI.**

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In

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**



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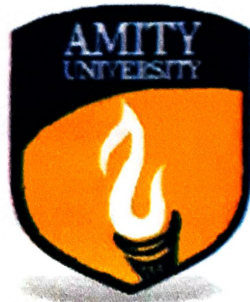
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2017

**A DISSERTATION**  
*ON*  
***NARCOPOLIS: THE ACT OF CHANGING INDIA***

*Submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of degree*

**MASTER OF ARTS**  
*IN*  
**ENGLISH LITERATURE**



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MASTER OF ARTS

IN

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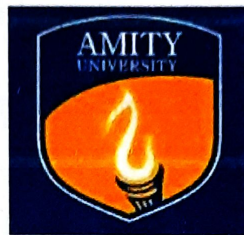
**Amity University Rajasthan**

**2019**

# **Feminism Through the Lens of Mary Wollstonecraft, Alice Walker and Anita Desai**

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Submitted to



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**2019**

**POST MODERN AND POST COLONIAL  
REFLECTIONS IN PETER CAREY'S OSCAR AND  
LUCINDA**

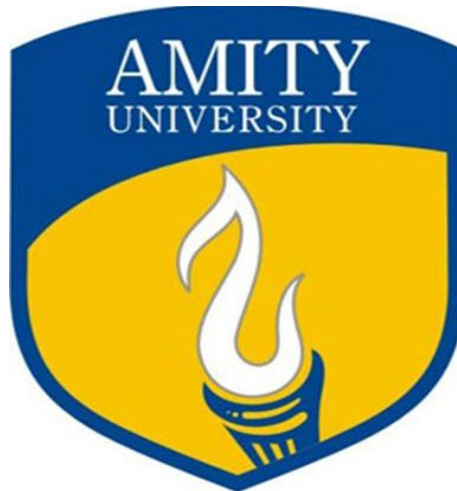
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**AMITY SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES**

**Under the Supervision of:**

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**M.A. English**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

S. No.	Chapters	Page No.
	<i>Abstract</i>	
1.	Introduction	5-13
2.	The World of Peter Carey	14-25
3.	Oscar and Lucinda	26-36
4.	Post Modern and Post Colonial Reflections On Oscar and Lucinda	37-57
5.	Conclusion	58-60
	<i>Bibliography</i>	61-65

# Abstract

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Australian literature can be understood as literature of the settler colony representing a complexity of the formation of both Australian cultural identity and its culture. The lack of an – even loosely – homogenous discourse and the fragmentation of oppressed peoples' experiences in the name of an ill-defined diversity, have created space for a heated debate within the communities of theorists, scholars, activists, and social movements. In many works of literature, specifically those coming out of Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent, we meet characters who are struggling with their identities in the wake of colonization, or the establishment of colonies in another nation. The aim here is to reflect upon the culture and history of Australian literature keeping Peter Carey's works- especially *Oscar and Lucinda* for Post Colonial and Post Modern reflections. With his historical narratives Carrey engages with the multilayered politics of various kinds and their impact on personal lives of the people. He exposes the individual lives under the impact of national and colonial politics. The term 'politics' has a number of connotations and comprises several factors. However, in this study it denotes how political power is exercised by people, communities, gender, races and cultures. In his novels personal is so closely yoked to the political as politics can affect every aspect of human life, be it professional emotional or in relationships. His fictional project largely reveals the fact how politics, in past as well as present, determines human affairs of different levels. The present study will trace the important aspect related to the historical approach as well as rewriting and at times, transplanting modern and colonial themes in the context of the earlier history as well as applying the old rules to the present period and showing the difference between the two periods of pre-colonial and the postcolonial and linking them with the changes during the period of colonization.

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## Introduction

We live in an era that is purely based on the enriched history of its existence. The most recent and crucial time-lines revolve around **Post Modernism** and **Post Colonialism**. For several thousand years, approximately 40,000 to 60,000, large groups of nomadic people lived in the Island Continent, which was later termed as Australia. The oldest surviving cultural traditions in Australia and perhaps on the Earth - are those of Aboriginal Australians.

**Post Modernism and its effect on Australia-** Postmodernism can be seen as a reaction against the ideas and values of modernism, as well as a description of the period that followed modernism's dominance in cultural theory and practice in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century. The term is associated with skepticism, irony and philosophical critiques of the concepts of universal truths and objective reality. It was a reaction against modernism. Modernism was generally based on idealism and a utopian vision of human life and society and a belief in progress. It assumed that certain ultimate universal principles or truths such as those formulated by religion or science could be used to understand or explain reality. Modernist artists experimented with form, technique and processes rather than focusing on subjects, believing they could find a way of purely reflecting the

Postmodernism has often been characterized as against modernism, against the enlightenment and against modernity. The postmodern cultural condition is famously said to involve what we might now call the globalised experience of consumer capitalism—the monetary access to a simultaneous diversity of products and experiences from all corners of the globe.

This can be elaborated in relation to Jean-Francois Lyotard's distinction between two philosophical fields—speculative and emancipatory—which were nominated in connection with his oft-cited remark that the 'grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses'

(Lyotard, 37). Speculative philosophy pertains to **metaphysics**, **ontology** and **epistemology**, that is, the way in which philosophy deals with the big questions of reality and knowledge..

Culture of the original Aboriginal inhabitants was based on oral tradition which was either suppressed or could not compete with Australian literature based on a written tradition. During the colonization of Australia when the country was established as a British penal colony in 1788, Australian literature was influenced by the British literary tradition. Especially in early 19th century Scottish broadside ballads adapted to the convict life and Australian setting as well as Romantic poetry modeled after English

Romantic poets (Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and others) were imitated.. Australian colloquial speech, vernacularism, yarn, short stories, the bush experience, bushrangers as symbolic representatives of the resistance towards British colonialism and realistic writing method were the common attributes of these authors (Joseph Furphy, Henry Lawson, Barbara Baynton and many others). With a growing independence (Australia became a dominion, less dependent on Britain when the country became a Commonwealth of Australia in 1901), economic progress and modernity, realistic writing method started to be understood as old-fashioned and unable to express new Australian experience in the 20th century. But Australian postmodern literature started to develop more systematically in the 1970s when Frank Moorhouse edited a short story anthology *Coast to Coast* in 1973, when the *Tabloid Story* journal was established in the early 1970s and when a new generation of authors such as Peter Carey, Murray Bail, Michael Wilding, Morris Lurie, David Foster, Gerald Murnane, Nicholas Hasluck, Elizabeth Jolley, later partly Rodney Hall etc. play of mind, ludic and absurdist, a fabric of hazard, paradox, contradiction, instability [within which] objects, things, are surfaces behind which there is an absurd or fantastic reality, sometimes surrealistic, shadows on the surface of the real. and others started to publish their experimental postmodern fiction many of which were published in the above journals and anthologies. These authors represent a strong generation of postmodern authors whose work was discussed in Helen Daniel's influential critical book *Liars: Australian New Novelists* (1988). In this book, she called these authors Australian new novelists and this new novel is understood as typical of this quotation indicates typical postmodern poetics the work of the discussed authors is marked by. Peter Carey, Michael Wilding, Murray Bail, partly Frank Moorhouse represent perhaps the most internationally known Australian authors that is why with the exception of Peter Carey their works will be discussed below. In addition to his writing career, Michael Wilding (1942-) has been working as an editor for several journals and lecturing as Professor of English at the University of Sydney, and has written scholarly books on John Milton, British fiction, and classic Australian fiction. Frank Moorhouse (1938-) has been mostly a journalist and editor for several Australian news and journals, and later a full-time writer. And Murray Bail (1941-) has been mostly working as an art critic, journalist and a full-time writer. Their academic and intellectual background, their familiarity with the contemporary tendencies in the development of literature and literary criticism as well as with the Australian literary and artistic tradition have enabled these authors to redirect the trajectory of the Australian short story and novel since the 1960's. Michael Wilding is probably the most prolific of these authors, writing especially novels and short stories. The cultural situation in Britain, Europe, Australia and other countries, the bohemian world of Sydney and Melbourne intellectual elites, the boredom of suburban life and pseudo-intellectualism, mental and ecological crises, the influence of the radical Beats and American (popular) culture, sexuality, sexual deviations, and the

nature of linguistic representation have become the main themes of Michael Wilding's fiction. The Aboriginals were living a "hunter gatherer" life style until 1770, when Captain Cook arrived here and claimed the eastern part of the continent for the British Crown and named it New South Wales. Aboriginal people had then, as they do now their own codes of communication and of cross-cultural contact" (Shoemaker). The Britishers began to alter Aboriginals' pattern of living. There were conflicts and bloodshed, since the arrival of the colonists and many Aborigines were killed in these frontier conflicts. The dogmatic reiteration of modernist values is regressive. To be bonded fairly quickly to the genealogical writings of Michel Foucault and very much sought to find ways one could mobilize their politico-historical reappraisal strategies into compositional practice was attempting to destabilize the throttle grip of modernist aesthetics (which was detested at that point) through trying to understand the fracture point of modernism (which was situated around the 1920s). As it was not trained in modernist values per se, not actively at least, a discovery much of the twentieth-century modernist repertoire through the critical goggles of postmodernity. Values were taken up instantly- the performativity of identity that was found in Judith Butler, the rejection of centralized and fixed meanings, which gleaned from Barthes, Eco and Derrida, and the 'truth-effects' of discursive power from Foucault. To be approached with music writing without the restraints of 'school' or the need to have a specific or paradigmatic voice – there had to be a poly-stylistic appetite and wished own creations to reflect this.

The armed conflicts between the Aboriginals and the Europeans began after 1788 and continued for approximately one hundred and forty years. The whites systematically silenced the Aboriginals' resistance to the invasion of the land. The Aboriginals did not even have the right to vote till 1967. "Today there are a number of pressing issues" argues Sabbioni "for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. Among these are the alarmingly high number of Aboriginal deaths in custody; the attempt to recover the Aboriginal past for the lost generations of children taken away from their mothers and raised in missions; and land rights" The identity evolves out of Australia's historical processes. Today the Aboriginal people have been decimated and they face many problems as a result of the colonial project and the policies of pacification by force. Till today they remain unprivileged socially, politically and economically and they face a great deal of unofficial discrimination. Their daily wage is less and their unemployment rate is more than six times the national average. By 1970 the Aboriginals started militant movements, which aimed to bring separate Aboriginal state; has so far been unsuccessful. Indigenous writer and land right activist, Alexis Wright in her prize winning novel *Carpentaria* ironically elucidates the conditions of Aboriginals in present Australia through Angel Day an Aboriginal and the heroine of the novel as: "Her fortunes were growing out of hand. She now possessed dozens of Heinz baked bean tins and pickle bottles of nails, loose screws and bolts. She became a genius in the new ideas of black fella

advancement". **Peter Carey** is one such renowned Australian author who talks and analyse the 'Post Modern' effects and changes seen in his country. Born in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, Australia (May 7, 1973); he is not only known for featuring the surreal in his short stories and novels but also for publicizing the dire effects of modernism and post modernism that are prominently shown in his works in continuation. The matrix out of which Carey constructs Australian identity largely stems from the convict penal heritage of The aim of this study is to demonstrate how certain thematic and structural patterns run through the fiction of Peter Carey. While the present attempt is not to enforce a reductive reading or to fit his fiction into a framework, a detailed reading of his fiction reveals certain concerns intentions of the novelist, predominantly the construction of an Australian identity. The identity evolves out of Australia's historical processes. The matrix out of which Carey constructs Australian identity largely stems from the convict penal heritage of the first wave of English colonists. The early English convicts, for the sake of survival in inhumane surroundings were adept at fabricating lies, and in time turned out to be adroit too at the art of story-telling or *spieling*. The history of the nation created in Carey's fiction is trapped in the prison of the past, the penal past. However, the nation's history rendered aesthetically in Carey's fiction is largely based on models of truths and lies, i.e. truth value is suspended in a bid to debunk the narratives of colonial histories.

**Post Colonialism in Australia-** Post colonialism refers to a set of theoretical concepts, approaches, and interventions, which deal with the diverse effects of the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. The conceptualization and focus of the postcolonial analyses is very diverse and informed by different schools of thought. Postmodern and Marxian approaches have significantly influenced the formation of the most important postcolonial discourses. These origins provide a distinct critical edge in the postcolonial analysis and often encourage specific actions toward the multilevel liberation and emancipation of communities, which have suffered from isolation, oppression, and discrimination as a result of colonialism. The vast differences between postmodernism and Marxism create a diverse, rigorously debated and inherently self-contradictory postcolonial analysis. Even within the broad realm of critical theory, certain aspects of post colonialism are targeted by objections and criticisms. For example, the British had a colonial presence in India from the 1700s until India gained its independence in 1947. As you can imagine, the people of India, as well as the characters in Indian novels, must deal with the economic, political, and emotional effects that the British brought and left behind. This is true for literature that comes out of any colonized nation. In many cases, the literature stemming from these events is both emotional and political.

The post-colonial theorist enters these texts through a specific critical lens, or a specific way of reading a text. That critical lens, post-colonial theory or post-colonialism, asks the reader to analyze and explain the effects that colonization and imperialism, or the extension of power into other nations, have on people and nations. *Postcolonial Issues in Australian Literature* presents thirteen new essays that address many of the numerous ways in which Australian literature is postcolonial and can be read using postcolonial reading strategies. The collection addresses a wide variety of Australian texts produced from the colonial period through to the present, including works by, among others, Henry Lawson, Rolf Bolderwood, Miles Franklin, Xavier Herbert, Jack Lindsay, Patrick White, Francis Webb, James McAuley, Judith Wright, David Malouf, Elizabeth Jolley, Peter Carey, Richard Flanagan, Rodney Hall, Andrew McGahan, Kate Grenville, Tony Birch, Kim Scott, Alexis Wright, and Melissa Lucashenko. All focusing on works by Indigenous authors and writers of European descent and examine numerous postcolonial issues, including hybridity, first contact, resistance, appropriation, race relations, language usage, indignity, immigration/invasion, land rights and ownership, national identity, marginalization, mapping, naming, mimicry, the role of historical narratives, settler guilt and denial, and anxieties regarding belonging. The content emphasize on the postcolonial nature of Australian literature and utilize postcolonial theory to analyze Australian texts. Within postcolonial studies, literature from South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean is privileged, causing the literature of settler societies such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (and to a lesser extent South Africa) to be marginalized, ignored, or excluded. This provides ample evidence that Australian literature is indeed postcolonial literature, that it deserves more recognition as such, and that postcolonial reading strategies provide immensely productive methods for analyzing Australian texts. Moreover, the collection hopes to fill a gap in postcolonial studies. While numerous collections of essays on Australian literature have previously been published, most of them have focused either on an individual author, such as Andreas Gaile's *Fabulating Beauty: Perspectives on the Fiction of Peter Carey*, or on specific themes, such as David Callahan's *Australia—Who Cares?* Essay collections focusing on the postcolonial nature of national and regional literatures have also previously been published, such as Violeta Kelertas' *Baltic Postcolonialism*, Joan Aaron's *Postcolonial Wales*, and Laura Moss' *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*. However, *Postcolonial Issues in Australian Literature* is the first collection to focus exclusively on Australian literature as postcolonial literature. The marginal status of Australian literature within the American academy more broadly and within postcolonial studies specifically is clearly evident in the American academic job market. The 2009 Modern Language Association Job Information List (JIL) did not contain a single advertisement containing the word "Australian" or the phrase "Australian literature." In 2008, the JIL contained two advertisements that listed Australian literature as one of several acceptable specialties; within the last half dozen years, However, such



positions often stipulate that the successful candidate must specialize in African, Caribbean, or South Asian literature and sometimes must be proficient in a language from one of those regions. There is clearly a bias within postcolonial studies against scholars who focus on literature from the settler colonies, especially Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.<sup>4</sup> The great irony of the situation in the American academy is that the United States is itself a postcolonial nation and a settler colony; however, for a great many reasons, none of which I have the space to discuss here, the literature of the United States is not often read as postcolonial. Although American/ Indian universities are not legally allowed to stipulate in job advertisements that they seek to hire a candidate of a particular nationality, ethnicity, or race, there is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that search committees seeking to recruit a postcolonial studies scholar often prefer to hire scholars who not only specialize in the literature of Africa, the Caribbean, or South Asia but also hail from those regions. Unsurprisingly, the successful candidate was an American-educated scholar from India. The bias within postcolonial literary studies in favor of African, Caribbean, or South Asian literature is so pervasive that some postcolonial theorists, such as Robert J. C. Young, have gone so far as to attempt to define post colonialism in a manner that excludes settler colonies altogether. Young claims that the “third world is the postcolonial world” , identifies the postcolonial world as being comprised of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (including the Caribbean) , and claims that “tri-continental” is “a more appropriate term than ‘postcolonial’ ” . Young defines “postcolonial” in a manner that excludes settler colonies, despite the fact that he begins his book by posing questions such as the following: Do you feel that your own people and country are somehow always positioned outside the mainstream?... Do you sense that those speaking would never think of trying to find out how things seem to you, from where you are? That you live in a world of others, a world that exists for others? Carey does take cognizance of the Australian Aborigines. the first wave of English colonists. This dissertation explores the post modern and post colonial implications of one of the most striking features in Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988). Its overpowering frustration of the expectations of its readers. Through a deeper understanding of its use of narratorial technique and its skilful assertion of irony, the dissertation argues that the novel prevents readers from occupying a detached position in relation to it and its themes. In the Aboriginal narratives "Dreaming" was considered to be their original story. "The Dreaming is a continuous process of certain stories which began in the long ago period called the 'Dreamtime'..." and "it has been passed down from generation to generation. They travelled the vastness of a barren landscape, leaving and engaging in various activities, naming the places and creating the songs and stories with their land as well as ancestors. The oral literature of the Aboriginal portrays not only verbal recitation but it also involves performance. In their ceremonial occasions participants perform their dance and storytelling through their bodies, songs and actions. "However a great deal of their literature (oral literature) has been lost with the passing of

many of the communities who were the custodians, and with the displacement or disruption of those that remain". The modern world came across the oral literature of the Aboriginals when the writers like Catherine and Ronald M. Berndt made attempts to translate this traditional literature into English as, *Three Faces of Love: Traditional Aboriginal Songs* (1976). Today oral literature continues to influence the development of written literature of Australia highlighting its richness. Australian literature in written form, like, that of American, Canadian and New Zealand is of recent origin. It was developed under the colonial system in Australia exposing the experiences of the officers, convicts and Aboriginals. The early settlers faced new landscapes, fauna and flora which were quite unlike they had previously experienced. The early publications were dominated by their experiences in the unknown land. "Many of the officers of the first fleet wrote self-consciously, about their experiences". By 1900, too, Australian readers were beginning to develop something of a taste for writing about Australia and about themselves". Historically, Australia was a collection of British colonies, therefore, its literary traditions began with and was linked to the broader literary conventions of English literature. However, the narrative art of Australian writers has, since, 1788, introduced the essence of new continent into literature portraying many major as well as minor themes like **Aboriginality, marginality, democracy, national identity, immigration and diaspora**. Particular attention is given to its concern with the provisional nature of human ways of seeing, exemplified by the metaphor of glass that is developed throughout the novel. *Oscar and Lucinda* compels readers to reflect on the subject position they take up in relation to it, and, in so doing, on their implication in cultural systems of knowledge that seek to contain and eradicate what is deemed unruly. The dissertation suggests, ultimately, that the ethical project in *Oscar and Lucinda* is performative in nature, and that its success relies on the extent to which it is able to alert readers to the limitations of their ways of knowing, and, consequently, the importance of respecting the otherness of others.

The major histo-cultural inheritance of Australia is founded on forced human displacements. However the nation has a double heritage. While it remains historically a penal colony, it was also a "Promised Land" to the immigrants. This inheritance, along with the particular physical realities of its environment have, from early times, provided writers with enough of inspiration for their works. Being a penal colony, Australia absorbed unwanted elements of 18<sup>th</sup> century England. This led to the "cleansing" of the undesired Aboriginal population. Thus as Djelal Kadir puts it in his article in *World Literature Today*, "Australia and its culture are marked by a legacy of banishments, exclusions, circumspect interest and vested circumscriptions." A brief historical sketch of the nation of Australia is most relevant to a fuller understanding of "Australian National Identity trapped in its historical processes." By itself, the history of Australia makes a fascinating study as it is founded on diverse cultural legacies. It makes even more enjoyable a study when trapped in Peter Carey's fiction.

Carey himself describes that his fiction involves: "a form of political questionings: Do people want to, have to live the way they do now? What will happen to us if we keep on living like we do now universalizing the concept of politics, Carey's fictional world divulges the proposition of culture imperialism and the condition of women under colonization, capitalism and other various forms of patriarchal and colonial politics. The Australian literature is generally divided into three parts **1] colonial up to 1880 [2] The nationalist up to 1920 [3] Modern after 1920**. In a way Peter Carey's fiction can be called as the most modern except Sir Patrick white and Reynold Stowe. There were few great Australian writers before Peter Carey. The first novel by Aboriginal blood writer had been in 1965. There was a drama by Douglas Steward, Ned Kelly in 1943. Almost 55 to 60 years before Peter Carey's novels True History of the Kelly Gang was published. Before studying the element of writing as well as rewriting some factors ought to be considered. His heroes are very strange as far as their backgrounds temperaments and sensibilities are concerned. Harry Joy of Bliss is a person facing three deaths. Herbert Badgery [Illywhacker] declares himself as a liar, cheats five generations and to some extent evens the readership.

Oscar of Oscar and Lucinda is an outspoken gambler priest. Jack Maggs [same name of the novel] is glorification of the Victorian novelist Charles Dicken's Villain Magwitch. The same theme is used to glorify the Kelly Gang [True History of Kelly Gang]. His Tristan smith [The Unusual Life of Tristan Rewriting History and Cultural Identity in the Fiction of Peter Carey] is a crippled but ambitious hero. It can be summed up as odd shrewd criminals and convicts are his important heroes. Peter Carey tries to probe the secrets of Australian minds and the oddities and eccentricities of the rare type of heroes, the effect of colonialism on the hostile outcastes. The male terrorists are some of his principal motifs. There is a lot of violence, rot, menace and hatred. In his creation of strange characters who by hook and crook try to hide their real identity and to succeed in their ambition in spite of their dark past and criminal background. As the result, Carey like the 'philosophy of Marxism' is both praised and blamed. In each of his novels he chooses a new theme using a new technique to confuse the readers. From the point of view of rewriting history it should be noted that he uses a new style of English in every work. Illywhacker uses a tongue-in-cheek style. Ned Kelly uses ungrammatical and straight forward language. Smith uses a fumbling staccato language. Oscar is mannerless and horrible. The only helpless heroes are Joy and Jack Maggs. Harry experiences three deaths and Jack Maggs wants to reunite with his son. In a way Carey tries to rewrite the history of English language, apart from the racial and cultural confusion and the historical metamorphic changes. Carey, in his every work, uses linguistic experimentation. He composes work that can be interpreted like Milton's and Shakespeare's writings in many ways.

Australian literature from the earliest starting point has mirrored its social and political history. In the first hundred years from 1788, authors wrote about the wide open, their living conditions and their environment. All writing was as diaries, unmistakable records and fiction. The essential target of this writing was to familiarize individuals back in Britain with the new land and the test looked by the convicts, squatters, and different settlers. The changing economic and political atmosphere helped another enthusiasm for experimental writing. Literary fictional distributing got a jolt because of the tremendous wholes of cash dispensed to it by another Labor Government in Australia. In this way, the dominant trend was progressively turned around. The outcome was that Australian writing cut off itself from the basically subordinate, European traditional writing.

A detailed reading of Peter Carey's fiction reveals certain concerns intentions of the novelist, predominantly the construction of his **Australian identity**. The identity evolves out of Australia's historical processes. The matrix out of which Carey constructs Australian identity largely stems from the convict penal heritage of the first wave of English colonists. The early English convicts, for the sake of survival in inhuman surroundings were adept at fabricating lies, and in time turned out to be experiments in the art of story-telling or writing. The history of the nation created in Carey's fiction is trapped in the prison of the past. However, the nation's history rendered aesthetically in Carey's fiction is largely based on models of truths and lies, i.e. truth value is suspended in style of the narratives of colonial histories. Carey takes cognizance of the Australian Aborigines. There is definitely a consciousness of their rich cultural past which was destroyed by the English colonizers. The contribution of the immigrant peoples to the construction of national identity, too, is reflected in his fiction. The spectra of the penal past from which the Australian cannot escape, and the realization that he no longer belongs or is acceptable to England, forces him to accept the new landscape and conjure a heaven out of the hellish circumstances.

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### The World of Peter Carey

Peter Carey was born in Bacchus Marsh in Victoria, Australia, in 1943. He studied Science at Monash University, and wrote advertising copy to support himself during the early part of his literary career. Australian identity and historical context play a part in several of his literary works.

He began by writing surreal short stories, and published two collections, *War Crimes* (1979), and *The Fat Man in History* (1980). These stories, along with three previously uncollected works, are all included in his *Collected Stories* (1995).

He then wrote 3 novels: *Bliss* (1981), about an advertising executive who has an out-of-body experience; *Illywhacker* (1985), a huge vision of Australian history told through the memoirs of a 100-year old confidence man or "illywhacker"; and ***Oscar and Lucinda* (1988), a complex symbolic tale of the arrival of Christianity in Australia.** Although not a science fiction writer as such, there are some elements of this in his writing, particularly in *Illywhacker*, which led to this novel receiving the Ditmar Award for Best Australian Science Fiction Novel and being shortlisted for the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel, both in 1986. *Illywhacker* was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1985, and three years later, **Oscar and Lucinda won the same prize.**

While writing his next novel, *The Tax Inspector* (1991), Peter Carey moved to New York, and has since written further novels: *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* (1994); *Jack Maggs* (1997), billed as a re-imagining of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*; *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2001), told in fictional letters from the Australian outlaw and folk hero Ned Kelly to his estranged daughter; and *My Life as a Fake* (2003), a story centred around a literary hoax which gripped Australia in the 1940s. *Jack Maggs* and *True History of the Kelly Gang* both won the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Overall Winner, Best Book) and with *True History of the Kelly Gang*, Peter Carey won the Booker Prize for Fiction for the second time, in 2001.

Peter Carey wrote the script for the Wim Wenders film, *Until the End of the World* (1992), and co-wrote with Ray Lawrence, the screenplay for the film adaptation of *Bliss* (1985). *Oscar and Lucinda* was also adapted for film in 1997, with a screenplay written by Laura Jones. He has also written a children's book, *The Big Bazoohley* (1995) and a non-fiction book, *30 Days in Sydney: A Wildly Distorted*

*Account* (2001). *Wrong about Japan* (2005), is a memoir/travelogue of the author's journey through Japan with his son Charley and their attempts to understand the Japanese culture and heritage.

Peter Carey still lives in New York, where he teaches Creative Writing at New York University. He has been awarded three honorary degrees and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the Australian Academy of Humanities and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His later novels are *Theft: A Love Story* (2006); and *His Illegal Self* (2008).

His novel, *Parrot and Olivier in America*, was published in 2010 and shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize (South East Asia and South Pacific region, Best Book) and the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. His latest novel is *The Chemistry of Tears* (2012), which tells the story of a clock expert who is restoring an automaton while grieving for her lost lover.

Peter Carey was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished services to literature, in 2012. Peter Carey's contribution to the world of literature is surely substantial for he has avoided stereotyped novels or characterization. In every work, he changed the setting, the writing style, the theme to pose the problems of the cross cultural encounter. Although his novels are set in different countries, his pivotal interest is in Australian nativity and mythology. His themes are original and deeply grass-rooted in the Australian soil. Peter Carey is the significant and predominant Australian writer, next only to Sir Patrick White, the only Noble Prize Winner. Carey wants to rethink Australian history and culture and most of his heroes wish to return to the center of the Empire that is Australia. Peter Carey has won the numbers of awards and is frequently named as Australia's next contenders for the Nobel Prize in literature. Peter Carey even in his stories writes about the problems of Australian people in *Tax Inspector*, *The theft*, *Life as a Fake*, and *The Big Bazoon* with his shifting to America, in a way, he stopped writing about Australia, the history and the people. His later novel like *30 days in Sydney*, *Fat Man in History*, *Chemistry of Tears* [2012] deal with the themes of science thrillers and permissive developed society. The *History* is sometimes that of criminals, culprits, convicts and prisoners. Herbert Badgery's jail life is kept a secret. Peter Carey deals with the historical perspective as well as modern scientific progress. He even creates the world of animals and birds. Carey's techniques are different from the traditional, historical style. At times, the story fluctuates among the past the present and future. In a way it is related to history and culture as well as present problems, at times slightly suggesting the futurism and the related problems of mankind in the coming age. His *Oscar and Lucinda* has the image of glass, *Illywhacker* has fake agency of motor shop that the future generation like Hissao in *Illywhacker* might spread business in the world flying in airplane from country to country. The history of Australia slowly leads are gradually growing to the history of mankind of the world. The present work is related to six novels between approximately [two

decades-1981 to 2000. Peter Carey casts light upon the dark as well as the bright side of women. In every novel since *Bliss*, Carey has painted women in dark colour but with realistic situation whether men and women full of pride for the past and love for the present are puppets dancing to the tunes of crucial and complex circumstances. Like the old king and leaders, rewrite and reflect their friends in characters like Alex Duval [*Bliss*], Herbert [Illywhacker] Oscar's, gambling [Oscar and Lucinda], Tristan Smith's affair with Peggy Pram to earn riches [*The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*]. Jack Maggs also is related to an imperial canon and Ned Kelly learns the art of horse stealing and horse branding [*True History of Kelly Gang*] like the Emperor of the past, his heroes and heroines express little but conceal more. Peter Carey manages the historical perspective just as modern logical advancement. He even makes the world of creatures and fowls. Carey's methods are not the same as the customary, historical style. On occasion, the story changes among the past the present and future. In a manner it is identified with history and culture just as present issues, now and again marginally proposing the futurism and the related issues of humankind in the coming age. His *Oscar and Lucinda* has the picture of glass, *Illywhacker* has counterfeit organization of engine shop that the future age like Hissao in *Illywhacker* may spread business in the world flying in plane from nation to nation. The history of Australia gradually leads are slowly developing to the history of humankind.

Peter Carey attempts to test the secrets of Australian personalities and the peculiarities and unconventionalities of the uncommon kind of heroes, the impact of colonialism on the unfriendly outcastes. The male psychological oppressors are a portion of his key themes. There is a ton of violence, rot, menace and hatred. In his formation of bizarre characters who by snare and evildoer attempt to conceal their genuine identity and to prevail in their aspiration despite their dull past and criminal foundation. As the outcome, Carey like the 'theory of Marxism' is both commended and accused. In every one of his novels he picks another topic utilizing another procedure to befuddle the readership. From the perspective of changing history it ought to be noticed that he utilizes another style of English in each work. *Illywhacker* utilizes a joking style. *Ned Kelly* utilizes ungrammatical and straight forward language. *Smith* utilizes a mishandling staccato language. In light of on historical reports and on the wonderful composition found in Kelly's *Jerilderie* letter, the novel intently pursues the well-established realities of a figure currently broadly viewed as both a chivalrous rival of England's uncalled for colonial standard and an early forerunner to Australian nationalism. Having lost his very own father at twelve years old and comprehending what it resembles to be raised on "lies and silences," Ned Kelly decides to compose the history of his life for his infant daughter with the goal that she will some time or another know the truth about him. What pursues is an uncommon narrative of the Kelly family's battle to make due in Australia's unwavering bramble nation. As down and out Irish foreigners they are viewed by the English settlers as "a

notch underneath the steers" and face consistent police harassment and the danger of ousting from their land. At the point when his father is captured and therefore kicks the bucket, Ned turns into the man of the house and battles furiously to help and protect his mom and kin. In the wake of turning into a reluctant student to the acclaimed bushranger Harry Power, Ned is drawn progressively into a life of wrongdoing. He battles with his mom's suitors and the police, and when he shoots the slippery Constable Fitzgerald in self-safeguard, Ned is compelled to escape into the wild backwoods. With his more youthful brother and two faithful friends he outmaneuvers the police, escapes an enormous manhunt, perpetrates crimes of dynamite brave, and becomes hopelessly enamored, at the same time increasing broad help from poor persecuted ranchers. True History of the Kelly Gang gives perusers an exceptional representation of the man behind the fantasy, the confided in friend and adoring son and father who might not forfeit his trustworthiness to spare his life and who planted the seeds of disobedience in the consciousness of a youngster country. The period may be past or the present, the social indecencies, sexual freedom and selfish money related intention are unavoidable pieces of society. Peter Carey provides reason to feel ambiguous about light the dull just as the brilliant side of ladies. In each novel since Bliss, Carey has painted ladies in dull shading however with reasonable circumstance whether people loaded proudly for the past and love for the present are manikins moving to the tunes of vital and complex conditions. Like the old lord and pioneers, revamp and mirror their friends in characters like Alex Duval [Bliss], Herbert [Illywhacker] Oscar's, betting [Oscar and Lucinda], Tristan Smith's issue with Peggy Pram to acquire wealth [The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith]. Jack Maggs additionally is identified with a majestic canon and Ned Kelly learns the craft of pony taking and steed branding [True History of Kelly Gang] like the Emperor of the past, his heroes and courageous women nearly nothing yet cover more. Evaluating Peter Carey's fiction is a problem for any researcher over the world. However, it will be an honest effort to plan the evaluation as objective as possible. Although the aim is of three major aspects Rewriting History, Cultural Identity and Originality and Uniqueness, other aspects also will be studied with essential references and cross references while ferreting out adverse and favorable references. The present work is planned to have an indifferent as well as an objective point of view. In fact, Carey's fiction does not obey the rules and regulations of novel per se as far as characterization the development of plot and inter-relationship are related Novel, in the hands of Carey, takes her own form which is itself a great problem for the researcher. The novelty of the novel form is an interesting feature of Peter Carey's fiction. The novelist, in addition to that, confuses not only the readers but also the critics and interviewers. As the result, it becomes a task for the reader and especially for the researcher in the evaluation of Carey's writing from the perspective of the value judgments of renowned critics. Carey from his first to the last novel [from Bliss to True History of Kelly Gang] uses a variety of setting, theme, technique and the plight



and predicament of the native people. He is the greatest Australian novelist next only to Patrick White, the other writer who can reach the stature of White and Carey and Flanagan whose work is still in the offing. These three writers are representatives of the true Australian spirit though Flanagan is related to Tasmania that was made free very recently, but earlier it was only a part of Australia. Carey's development as an individual novelist starts from his very first novel *Bliss* but his recent novels due to his shifting to America, is about America and Japan. Therefore this present work is limited only to six novels related to the Australian History and Australian culture. As far as the complexity and multiplicity are related, Carey's creation of heroes like Herbert Badgery [*Illywhacker*], Tristan Smith [*The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*] and Ned Kelly [*True History of Kelly Gang*] are rare, unique creations by any other Australian writers [except White and Flanagan]. Carey happens to be one of greatest novelist from the developing world. There are very few parallels in the African and Indian fiction. Rewriting history is a common feature of universal literature all over the world. The difference between history and culture may be simply noted as what had happened actually in the past and what flows in the veins through generations. Since the ancient past, the civilizations, education, idealisms, philosophy are later added to history as well as to culture. Therefore great literature is related to the past, 'holds mirror to the contemporary life' providing some suggestions for the future of mankind. Unfortunately political 'isms' and sense of economy have created different groups like developed , developing and under developed countries , England and American and to some extent Russia or in general Europe are treated as developed countries India, Australia are as developing counties but most parts of Asia , Africa and Australia [3 continents] are still under- developed. Every artist tries to present what had been ideal and beautiful in the past, wishes to comment on at times humorously, sarcastically or obliquely on the present social evils and his/her oeuvre and vita wish to suggest certain ideas, for the progress and development not only of country and, area and people but also of humanity and of world. Peter Carey's fiction covers a span of 150 years. It is from 1830s of Jack Maggs to the contemporary world in *Illywhacker*. Its novels have variety of themes and he employs technical strategies in every novel in a new manner and method. His fiction varies in theme as well as in techniques. For Carey "What he writes" is equally important as 'How he writes it.' His works cover the area of almost two third of the world. However there are certain limitations. Carey's first book *The Fat Man in History* appeared in 1924. There were many changes in his life. He got two Booker Prizes before 2001. He discovered his wife, Alias Summers in 2004. In 2009 he was on the list of Hamish Hamilton. He had lived in America for 20 years. His books have outside locales. After 2003, *Fake Man in History* [Malaysia] *Wrong about Japan* [Tokyo] *Theft and Illegal Self* [New York] and *Parrot and Oliver in America* [America]. However, it is clear that his recent books, received criticism and his interviews at times are blamed for his 'flirting' with readership. There are two types of critics of Peter Carey's fiction.

The female critics like Helen Danial, Ommlindsen, Wenche, Dovey Tarrasa, think of the technical aspects and aesthetic side but the critics like Bill Ashcroft, and Graham Huggan think of cultural and political implications Daniel explains:

“Liars [may be] more truthful, because they tell things the way they really are, the way they are in reality.”

Daniel, “lies for sale:

Peter Carey’s.” Other critics: T. Dovey explains, “In the postcolonial context of Carey’s novels, fantasy can also be “an expression of freedom” [Dovey]

Praised for his inventive mixture of the fantastic, the comedic, and the ordinary, Carey often creates detailed, realistic settings into which he introduces surreal and fabulous events. Usually set in Australia, Carey's works address themes of nationhood and history as he satirizes contemporary social values, explores the illusory nature of reality, and self-consciously examines the art of fiction. Robert Towers has stated that "Carey's prose can hold the ugly, the frightening, and the beautiful in uncanny suspension. It is this gift, among others, that makes him such a strong and remarkable writer."

## **Major Works**

Most of the stories in *The Fat Man in History* depict individuals who experience sudden anxieties when they encounter surreal events in commonplace situations. In others, Carey satirizes the effects of technology and foreign influences on Australian culture and society. In *Bliss*, Carey centers on Harry Joy, a man who dies for nine minutes and has an out-of-body experience through which he observes family members and friends involved in unseemly activities. Carey uses black humor and satire to examine hypocrisy, identity, and moral poverty in contemporary society. He also analyzes the function of stories and story-tellers in a community, as the novel embeds a number of stories within the larger structure of the novel. While much of the novel is related in straightforward, realistic detail, the allegorical plot transports Carey's protagonist from the "hell" of suburban life to a mental hospital and ultimately to a blissful life in a rain forest. *Illywhacker* is an expansive comic novel that relates the adventures of Herbert Badgery, a man who claims to be 139 years old. The novel's title is an Australian slang expression variously defined as "taleteller," "trickster," "con man," and "liar," all of which describe Badgery's main talents. The central focus of *Illywhacker* is the art of lying; Badgery lies constantly in order to survive and improve his life, and Carey employs lying as a metaphor for writing fiction. The picaresque adventures of Badgery are related to Australian historical themes: Badgery was born near the time of Australia's independence from Great Britain, and the book's epigraph is a quote by Mark Twain: "Australian history does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies...." While introducing many characters and events and developing

an intricate series of symbolic references involving animals, Carey explores such themes as colonization, technology, and human relationships. *Oscar and Lucinda* delineates the odd romance between Carey's eccentric title characters who are drawn together by their passion for gambling. The novel begins with Oscar's childhood in rural nineteenth-century Devon, England, where he lives with his father, a renowned naturalist and a preacher in the fundamentalist Plymouth Brethren sect. Gambling on what he believes is a sign from God, the adolescent Oscar reluctantly rebels against the teachings of his father and joins the Anglican Church. Later, at Oxford University Oscar relies on earnings from wagering on horse races to pay for his living expenses and tuition.

Some Critical reviews about Carey:

Carey is an artist who churns and curses and worries and frets. His novels roil, threatening at any moment to erupt impolitely all over the carpet. He is formally ostentatious, often inventing fabulist characters with equally fabulist voices and generally remaining allergic to adjective-free naturalism. Perhaps this is why, despite being one of the world's leading novelists, he is more respected than loved. Too emotionally dangerous to be fully embraced by doe-eyed lovers of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, too much fun to be taken entirely seriously by the dour acolytes of JM Coetzee (the contemporary whose career his most resembles), Carey ploughs his own dogged, compelling, fantastical furrow. For these reasons alone - that he frightens those who want their fiction easy and annoys those who want theirs portentous - a new Peter Carey novel is cause for joy

—Guardian

At a time when readers are so often asked to respect, admire and even to buy a vast number of memoirs and naively autobiographical novels whose only dubious merit lies in their sincerity, Peter Carey's new novel [*My Life as a Fake*] comes like a monsoon after drought. It is a magnificent, poetic contemplation of the lying, fakery, and insincerity inherent in the act of artistic creation. This haunting fable is built around the idea that in great art, the sincerely meant truth may ring hollow; a meretricious lie may have the energy to girdle the earth before it can be retracted.

Carey has always been a mesmerizing novelist, but in his recent, superb novels like this one, *Jack Maggs* (about Dickens's *Magwitch*, seen from the viewpoint of his Australian life) and the incomparable *True History of the Kelly Gang*, he has started to assemble a great Australian national epic in prose. With these subjects of the convict founders of Ned Kelly, the brutal bush-ranger, he has sometimes offended local sensitivities, and this marvelous novel, simultaneously sensational and meditative, may offend more with its subject of national fraudulence. But no one can doubt that one day Australian children will recite the *Kelly Gang* as children of Italy do Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*. —The Times

Carey has an ornamental shrub species (*grevillia*) named after him. Also a car hire company. And a manufacturer of woodheaters. He is an iconic Australian outlaw who lived a brief yet blazing 25 years and stamped himself indelibly into the country's subconscious. November will mark the 120th anniversary of his hanging, but evidence suggests that in millennial Australia, Ned Kelly is as powerfully symbolic of anti-authority and rebellion and courage as he has ever been.

Our world-renowned novelist and Booker Prize winner based in New York. As a writer, he has been bold and brave before - from his fabulous short fiction in the '70s through to his remodelling of Australian history with *Illywhacker* and *Oscar and Lucinda*. Now, in a move that seems almost predestined, a great talent has tackled perhaps our greatest myth. In his 400-page epic, *True History of the Kelly Gang*, Carey has dissembled the famous Kelly armour rivet by rivet, placed the formidable casing around himself and welded himself in.

Carey is not the first to take on Kelly in fiction. That honour belonged to writer Eric Lambert with his novel *Kelly* (1964). Some formidable works have followed, including Jean Bedford's *Sister Kate* (1982) and Robert Drewe's *Our Sunshine* (1991). Both are brilliant in their own way. You can also add Carey's new novel to that canon.

—Sun-Herald Australia

Peter Carey subtitles his book about Sydney 'a wildly distorted account'. He was wise to warn the reader, though distorted is not the word I would choose to describe this fabulously idiosyncratic small masterpiece about that fabled Australian city. Anxious, fierce, fearsome and fretful are more accurate adjectives for Carey's vision.

Peter Carey has lived in New York for the past ten years. Before that he lived in Sydney, where he became one of Australia's most acclaimed writers. Before that, he was born and raised in the wonderfully named town of Bacchus Marsh, near Melbourne. So, in addition to being a genius, which he is, he is not a Sydneysider, but a more southern, cerebral, tortured sort of Australian, of the kind he chronicled so magnificently in his most recent novel, *True History of the Kelly Gang*.

Having investigated in that novel the story of Ned Kelly, the most potent of all Australian legends, Peter Carey uses his recent 30-day sojourn in Sydney to investigate another -the convicts thrown out by Britain

in the 18th century, and their official masters: Sydney's, and in many ways white Australia's, founding fathers. Surrounding all this the Aborigines are omnipresent too, in one of the few books that manage to rail against the wrongs done to Australia's indigenous people without being both patronising and politically correct.

White Australia has learnt everything from the Aborigines it decimated. Like them, every white Australian is raised on stories: telling stories, "yarns", is one of the earliest Australian Bush traditions, and Carey uses this gift, which he has in abundance, to bring his Sydney alive. Not that this short book is as simple as that. Peter Carey flies into Sydney, dazed by Temazepam, determined to force his old Sydney mates to open up into his tape machine and disgorge potent truths that will illuminate "its painful and peculiar human history". He asks these irritated friends to do this by telling stories about Earth and Air, Fire and Water, the elements he sees as defining Australia, or rather, as hovering over its citizens, ever ready to frighten them to death.

—The Times (London)

Novels:

Bliss [1981] , Illywhacker [1985]. Oscar and Lucinda [1988], The Tax Inspector [1991], The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith [1994], Jack Maggs [1997] ,True History of the Kelly Gang [2000] ,My Life as a Fake [2003] Theft: A Love Story [2006] His Illegal Self [2008] Parrot and Olivier in America [2010] The Chemistry of Tears [2012] Short Story Collection: The Fat Man in the History [1974] and other short story collection Juvenile Fiction: The Big Bazoohley: A Story for Children [1995] Non- Fiction: A Letter to Our Son [1994] 30 Days in Sydney: A Distorted Account [2001] Letter from New York [2001] Wrong About Japan [2005]

Screen Play:

Bliss [1985] Until the End of the World [1991] AWARDS AND DISTINCTION: Carey has been awarded there honorary degrees. His has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature [1989], and a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences [2003] in 2010, he appeared on two Australian postage stamps in a series dedicated to "Australian Legends". Carey has won numerous literary awards, including: Booker Prize : Illywhacker, shortlists in 1985; Oscar and Lucinda. 1988; True History of Kelly Gang, 2001; Theft: A Love Story, long listed in 2006; Parrot and Olivier in America, shortlisted in 2010; Peter Carey and J.M. Coetzee are the only authors to have won the Booker Prize twice. Miles Franklin

Award : Bliss, 1981; Oscar and Lucinda, 1989; Jack Maggs, 1998; True History of Kelly Gang, shortlisted in 2001; Theft : A Love Story, shortlisted in 2007. The Age Book of the year Award : Ilywhacker, 1985; The Unusual Life of Tristram Smith, 1994; Jack Maggs, 1997. Colin Roderick Award : Oscar and Lucinda, 1998; True History of the Kelly Gang, 2001. Commonwealth writers Prize : Jack Maggs, 1998; Bliss 1982. New South Wales Premier's: War Crimes, 1980; Bliss, 1982.

#### Literary Works:

NBC Banjo Award : Bliss, 1982; Ilywhacker, 1985; Oscar and Lucinda, 1989. Queensland Premier's Literary Award : True History of the Kelly Gang, 2001 FAW Barbara Ramsden Award : Ilywhacker, 1985. Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction : Ilywhacker, 1986. Townsville Foundation for Australian Literary Studies Award : Oscar and Lucinda, 1988. South Australia Festival Award : Oscar and Lucinda, 1990. Ditmar Award for Best Australian Science fiction Novel Ilywhacker, 1986 Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger : True History of the Kelly Gang, 2003

Peter Carey tries to probe the secrets of Australian minds and the oddities and eccentricities of the rare type of heroes, the effect of colonialism on the hostile outcasts. The male terrorists are some of his principal motifs. There is a lot of violence, rot, menace and hatred. In his creation of strange characters who by hook and crook try to hide their real identity and to succeed in their ambition in spite of their dark past and criminal background. As the result, Carey like the 'philosophy of Marxism' is both praised and blamed. In each of his novels he chooses a new theme using a new technique to confuse the readership. From the point of view of rewriting history it should .In a way Carey tries to rewrite the history of English language, apart from the racial and cultural confusion and the historical metamorphic changes. Carey, in his every work, uses linguistic experimentation. He composes work that can be interpreted like Milton's and Shakespeare's writings in many ways. The present content will trace three important aspect related to the historical approach as well as rewriting and at times, transplanting modern themes in the context of the earlier history as well as applying the old rules to the present period and showing the difference between the two periods of pre-colonial and the postcolonial and linking them with the changes during the period of colonization. The first colony was in 1785. The discovery had been in 1767. The first Governor of Australia was Sir Philip. The three sections in Australian History had been the pre colonial period. Before 1750's there were one century of colonization that continued up to 1880. After Mark Twain's visit the Australian novelist Furphy's novel [Such is Life] established the problems of the past as well as future. He wrote about 'the Bushmen and the Abos,' philosophy and pinpointed the problems of their tragic destiny. Patterson collected most of the old Bush songs in 1905. With the development of Nationalist movement

there were many poets, dramatists and novelists. The modern period started after 1920 and in nearly one hundred years. The Australian writers established their credentials by winning global acclaim Sir Patrick White won the Nobel Prize. Peter Carey won two Booker Prizes and Richard Flanagan won the Booker Prize very recently. It was like India that in 1947 Tasmania became a free country though it was a part of Australia before 1947. Peter Carey in the last 20 years of 20th century and Flanagan in the first 15 years of 21 century proved quality and merit of Australian and Tasmanian writers. Peter Carey after leaving Australia did not write much about Australia. Some of his novels like *Illywhacker* had setting in Australia, England and America. Similarly, Flanagan Booker honored novel has setting of America and Japan though the characters are Australians. As he demonstrated in *Bliss* (1981) and *Illywhacker* (1985), Carey is partial to eccentrics. Here, he provides a splendid array of cranks and monomaniacs — with two of them, the title characters, living out an odd and tender love story. Yet theirs is only the central plot in an astonishingly complex literary performance that moves between England and Australia in the 1860's. There are dozens of characters and at least five important storylines, two set in the Old World and three in the New. Mostly, though, this is a leisurely and witty fable about the two great enthusiasms of the 19th century — religion and science. Many great schemes were hatched to try to harmonize the two, and so it is here. Lucinda, an Australian heiress, consults Joseph Paxton, architect of London's Crystal Palace, and then she and Oscar, a clergyman, set out to erect a glass church — in darkest New South Wales. The whole book is also a literary parody. Here, the results are uneven, largely because Carey has made some errant choices. His first targets are Fielding and Sterne. But these were 18th-century writers who expressed the energy of a particular moment: the last gasp of Merrie Olde England, about to be submerged by piety, industrialism, and red plush draperies with ball fringe. Carey is off the mark here. He fares better when he begins to parody Trollope. His style then becomes more appropriate to the material; also less facetious and digressive. *Oscar and Lucinda* (582 pp.) is sometimes too slow, and its energetic whimsicality can be grating. Against that, though, set writing that is far more often lucid and fine, beautifully drawn characters, and a remarkably clever narrative scheme. A brave and original novel. Peter Carey's Booker Prize winning novel imagines Australia's youth, before its dynamic passions became dangerous habits. It is also a startling and unusual love story.

Oscar is a young English clergyman who has broken with his past and developed a disturbing talent for gambling. A country girl of singular ambition, Lucinda moves to Sydney, driven by dreams of self-reliance and the building of an industrial Utopia. Together this unlikely pair create and are created by the spectacle of mid-nineteenth century Australia.

Peter Carey's visionary brilliance, and his capacity to delight and surprise, propel this story to its stunning conclusion.

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### Oscar And Lucinda

Oscar and Lucinda is considered the most powerful and interesting novel ever written by Peter Carey. The extent of critical investigation it received shows this fact clearly. Carey's craftsmanship in magic realistic genre is at its best in this novel. It has been compared to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Midnight's Children*, and *The Tin Drum*. The earlier criticisms have been focused on thematic, postcolonial, and psychological reading of the novel. To the knowledge of the researcher, no one has taken an Arthur Schopenhauer approach not only to Oscar and Lucinda but also to the other novels of Carey. Among the existing critical investigation, is a study by Bruce Woodcock (1996). Bruce assigned a chapter in his book *Peter Carey* to the analysis of this novel. It gives a general postcolonial reading of Oscar and Lucinda. He remarks, What engages most readers immediately is the self-conscious comedy of the book, coupled with its strangely magical quality – the extraordinary and fantastical elements, obsessive characters, eccentric situations, and bizarre wonders such as a church made of glass being carried across a desert. Bruce also drives his attention to the relationship between Carey's life and his influences. In the novel he finds lots of familiar historical figures as well as some fictional characters. He believes even there is some similarities between Carey's novel and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1986) with regard to their inclusion of history. He believes that both of the novels, "plays with history and fiction in ways which remind us that history too is a storytelling process and something we must be wary of". Another major study of the novel is again a chapter assigned to the novel in Anthony J. Hassall's (1998) *Dancing on Hot macadam: Peter Carey's Fiction*. Hassall's study provides a chapter-by-chapter critical analysis of six novels of Carey. Hassall finds some differences between Oscar and Lucinda and earlier historical novels of Carey. After the futuristic short stories and *Bliss*, Oscar and Lucinda moves back into the nineteenth century. Its depiction of the chaste and tender love of two gentle and generous innocents is in striking contrast to the hyperactive, exploitative, and frequently violent sexual behavior that pervades much of Carey's earlier fiction, and that surrounds the central couple even in this book Anthony concludes that Carey has reinvented 19th century Australian history. But the point of difference between Carey and other novelist such as Patrick White is that Carey reinvented not costume but, "a narrative explaining the present". Hermine Krassnitzer (1995) considers some postmodern aspects in the novel in his book entitled, *Aspects of Narration in Peter Carey's Novels: Deconstructing Colonialism*. Hermine's focus in his study of Oscar and Lucinda is on the analysis of the metaphor and its role in the construction of meaning. He

concentrates on two metaphors of gambling and glass. He utters, Their images permeate the whole novel and their multiple meanings can not only be attributed to the novel's formal aspects such as character presentation and plot structure, but also to its cultural implications, which deal with such basic post-colonial issues such as the political and cultural history of white Australia. With regard to the characterization, extravagant characters who struggle to find and come to terms with their own self are abundant in the novel. Carey has given a postmodern and postcolonial approach to some historical facts of Australia. An interesting fact about the book is that it keeps the reader guessing about the inner life of the main characters. This is a story of misunderstanding between two lovers who are unable to establish a close relationship. Oscar wants to express his love for Lucinda by building a glass church for her but due to a misunderstanding the church will be Lucinda's gift to Dennis Hasset. Lucinda feels contrite about this presence. But the point is that she is not able to deny it. Although their misunderstanding grows, more they try to struggle with the odds in their love. The idea of making a glass church shows the fragile world of their love. It is even evident in these words of the text, "It would be a lovely thing, he said. But it is hardly practical, Mr Hopkins. It is a dangerous word ... Practical. Both principal characters are not optimistic about their future. This sensation overshadows their love affair to such extent that Oscar even thinks to lose the gamble that makes with Lucinda thus, It was a knife of an idea, a cruel instrument of sacrifice, but also one of great beauty, silvery, curved, dancing with light. The odds were surely stacked against him, and had it been a horse rather than a woman's heart he would never have bet on it, not even for a place. It shows a characteristic of Carey's writing. He lets the reader to be informed about the characters' thoughts. Carey's creativity is at its best in this point of the novel when we know that Lucinda is only in love with Oscar not Dennis Hasset but Oscar himself does not know this. Even in a more complicated way, we know that these clues in the text are misleading. As Anthony Hassall avers, The lie of Lucinda's feelings for Dennis Hasset, which has allowed Oscar and Lucinda to stay together long enough to fall in love, will never be exposed to Oscar; and the lie of Miriam Chadwick's "marriage" to Oscar will never be exposed to Lucinda. Later on we see Oscar is fooled by Miriam. He won the bet but lost everything for Lucinda. The story is saturated by extensive melancholy. Scrutinizing Oscar and Lucinda's oddness and unconventionality is a matter of importance in this dissertation. These people are mostly nonconformists. They gamble because it solaces them from their questionable personalities. The manner in which characters interact with the world around themselves has some resemblance with Arthur Schopenhauer's notion of will-less apprehension. Somewhere in the course of their short history as a people, Australians became convinced that they had a manifest destiny. It was to enjoy a disproportionately large share of the good luck in the world. The "lucky country" (what the locals call Australia) has watched itself mature from one of Britain's most marginal colonies into a full-fledged

nation, while steering almost entirely clear of the home country's intractable woes— class divisions, troubles in Ireland, warm beer, soggy weather. No wonder then, that Aussies are so confident about their little island having struck up a cosy relationship with the governing administration of serendipity. Being a pragmatic lot, Australians also hit upon the perfect way to harvest all this good luck. They gamble, obsessively. It's something you still see today, and it's exactly what greeted the Reverend Oscar Hopkins, one half of the central pair of Peter Carey's **Oscar and Lucinda** when he arrives in Australia in the nineteenth century: "Oscar had never seen such a passion for gambling. It was not confined to certain types or classes. It seemed to be the chief industry of the colony." (Peter Carey) Is Oscar, an Anglican priest, shocked by the unrestrained spectacle of dog-racing, horse-racing, mah-jong, poker, and gin-rummy greeting him in New South Wales? Hardly; for the parson is himself a gambler. Arriving in Australia on the outcome of a tossed coin, Oscar finds that sheer luck has left him a gambler in a gambling colony, a native in a strange land, almost as if the coin's toss were the instrument of destiny. It's a recurrent theme in **Oscar and Lucinda**. Chance and inevitability turn out to be twined themes in Peter Carey's vision of the unfolding of the history of Australia: random outcomes of luck link together like vertebrae in the spine of fate; and desperate bets taken by wanderers, gamblers and outcasts, consolidate into the character of a nation.

That nation –Australia –counts Peter Carey as its most famous living writer. Carey's career bears generic resemblance to his entire generation of internationally celebrated writers. In his early days as a writer, he supported himself by working as an advertising copy-writer (like Salman Rushdie); he has left his native country, and gravitated towards the United States (like Martin Amis); and he now lives and teaches creative writing in New York City (like any number of reviewers on *The Second Circle*). Yet his enterprise is uniquely Australian; to set on an exploration of his country's peculiar history and mythology. Carey is still peregrinating through Australia's past, but **Oscar and Lucinda**, the winner of the Booker Prize in 1988, will likely remain the highest peak located in the course of this exploration.

At the novel's centre are two gamblers (the chief difference between them, the narrator informs us, is that one is an obsessive gambler, the other merely compulsive). There shouldn't be, on the face of it, anything unconventional about Oscar Hopkins or Lucinda Leplastrier. Between the two of them they represent the Church and Capitalist Enterprise, the twin bulwarks of Victorian society. Oscar is an Oxford-educated, High Anglican priest, while Lucinda, the inheritor of a substantial fortune, is the proprietor of one of the colony's pioneering glassworks factories. And yet they gamble.

For Oscar—a slight, otherworldly, figure given to visions and transports of divine ecstasy—gambling reveals itself as a schema for tracing the arbitrariness of Divine Grace. Invoking Pascal’s metaphor of the “necessary gamble”, he concludes that faith is itself a die thrown on the chance of the Omnipotent’s existence. It is all a bit too much for the colonials. Oscar and Australia prove to be a terrible match. It is a reckless convicts’ land with a strange puritanical streak. He is the opposite paradox, a bookish parson with a mad thirst for gambling. Very quickly, he turns out to entirely, absurdly, out of place in Sydney—For Lucinda, his companion in games of chance, gambling is rebellion. She plays cards for money because she shouldn’t; it is a way for a proud, independent woman to defy the conventions of colonial society. From Lucinda’s love of chance, comes an obsession with glass—a substance which, in its protean variety, its sensitivity to myriad combinations of light, color and lightness, seems to embody the beauty of a life irradiated by chance and discovery. With gambling and glass, Oscar and Lucinda soon start to test the extent and meaning of Australia’s “good luck”. After all, the foundation of modern Australia was not an episode of universal good fortune. For the native Aboriginals, it was an event of monumental bad luck, that led to centuries of murder, persecution, and continuing immoderations. Carey’s heroes are alive to the way that blacks were abused in early Australia—so often ground like the mortar needed for the nation’s construction. Lucinda feels she does not deserve her wealth because it was robbed from the natives, and Oscar protests in vain while blacks are massacred. Their refusal to accept conventional racism, is a giveaway that they are not gamblers like everyone else—they take it to Colonial Sydney might be besotted with gambling, but only as a concession to the dominance of rigid, antique codes of living. An illicit hand in a Chinese den at sundown compensates for a life in which the outcomes are always the same: injustice for blacks, suppression for women, ridicule for innovators. But gambling is another game entirely for Oscar and Lucinda, an expression of their desire for real change and reformation. In that sense, gambling is also an expression of their innocence. The walls of social obstruction rises around them with fatal inevitability, and the two toss everything on one fantastic, final wager: to transport a glass church across the continent to an isolated missionary outpost.

Peter Carey is a complete writer. He has all the skills, and knows all the tricks. He can combine a genius for stark, under-stated comedy, with a nearly Dickensian generosity of description; the result is that hardly a character passes through this novel without Carey enlightening us to the peculiarities of physiognomy, psychology and personal history that establish that character’s unique and lasting patent over a portion of the reader’s memory. It is hard to forget the colonial farmer you meet on a ship: the fellow is curious about your opinion of Charles Darwin, and always smells of llama-hairs. Equally memorable is his travelling companion: a fat bully with a gift for devastatingly accurate impersonations of his victims. Carey can create landscape like he can create people. He knows the startling beauty of an evening in the Southern Hemisphere: clouds in the sunset shine in “a thin swathe of

soft gold, like a dagger left carelessly on a window sill". Most of all, his genius comes across in the formal structure of the novel—the swiveling perspectives, the brilliant use of free indirect third person, subtle and summary alterations in tone, lyrical set-pieces, the structuring metaphors. The net result is a prose narrative that is a technical marvel; equipped with trap-doors and lifts, it can drop readers at will into a character's mind, lift them as unexpectedly into another's, rotating them freely about the spectacle of now-opening, now-closing inner lives of them characters, in a show as kaleidoscopic as the glass made in Lucinda's factory. Perhaps **Oscar and Lucinda** is too long a book. It falters in the last segment, in the unconvincing description of how the implausible final bet transpires and unravels. You sense that the author is hurling twists and surprise revelations to bring the novel to a forced, fatigued end. But Carey is only tiring towards the end of an extraordinary journey. A most problematic narrative than *Waterland*, Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* invites a plethora of questions concerning false narrative. As Oscar and his father discuss the markings Oscar had actually been making, a prophetic voice writes "and they shall turn their ears from the truth and be turned into fables". However, the words seem more suitable to *Waterland*; in *Oscar and Lucinda*, the narrator turns a fable into his truth. In the opening chapters, the narrator prepares the reader for a story about his origins. The narration tricks the reader into believing that Oscar and Lucinda must come together by the end of the story because the storyteller's existence depends on their joining. The chapter titled "Oscar and Miriam" devastates the reader who realizes that Oscar and Lucinda's lives are only connected through a story. Ending the story when Oscar encounters Miriam, the narration returns to the beginning, where the narrator's mother worships "the sacred glass daguerreotype of great-grandfather". Assumptions the reader made throughout the novel are shattered, leaving the reader to question the validity of the narrator; subsequently, problems with the narration arise that disrupt the meaning of the story itself.

The novel begins with the narrator describing his own life, but he disappears as the story unfolds. It is possible Carey became so involved with Oscar and Lucinda's lives that he forgot about his narrator. If that were the case, he could have erased the first two chapters and solved the problem by having no narrator at all. However, the narrator must exist to assure the reader that people depend on this story for meaning. His mother lives for telling the story: "My mother told the story of the church in a way that embarrassed me. There was an excess of emotion in her style. There was something false. We must have all known it, but we never spoke about it". The narrator overlooks the story's artificial quality because he needs to believe in it just as his mother does, because there is nothing else to believe in. The mother's desire to make Lucinda part of her own history makes sense simply because Miriam's life does not offer a story the mother can be proud of. The false narrative allows the family to believe in their history having significance.

Between the beginning and the end, the narrator's voice returns to dominate the text once, in the chapter "Christian Stories". Just as his family made "a star of Bethlehem from cardboard and silver paper," they create order in their lives by believing in stories. Depending on whether the author or narrator titled the chapter, the narrator may still believe in this list or he has lost his faith in miracles and stories. However, the reader never solves this puzzle. Indeed, Carey quiets the narrator just before the story turns to Lucinda, the woman the reader falsifies as the narrator's great-grandmother. After this point, the narrator only intermittently talks about his mother or uses a possessive voice when telling the story. The narration overtakes the voice of the narrator so that he exists only in relation to the story itself. Ironically, the narrator's problematic disappearance illustrates the danger of stories shaping one's existence. The story initially needs the narrator to claim it as meaningful; once the reader assumes the connection between the storyteller and story as valid the story the dependency rotates and the story creates the one who tells it.

After Oscar signs the marriage document, he "disappeared forever from my great-grandmother's life". Miriam inherits the Lucinda's fortune, and receives a letter from Lucinda, who writes "I made a bet in order that I keep my beloved safe". Miriam meets Lucinda only once, "outside the court in Sydney". Finally, a letter is found in Miriam's petticoat from Lucinda returning the check for ten guineas. From these few remnants of Oscar and Lucinda's lives, how could a story be constructed!?! Ironically, the story could not have been passed on through Oscar's child because the mother never hears it. *Oscar and Lucinda* seemingly lacks an explanation of the pieces of the story coming together. Even if enough clues existed to build a story, the unbelievable detail the narrator provides about the characters' actions and thoughts falsifies the story. For example, the narrator brings Wardley -Fish back into the story looking for Oscar after Lucinda leaves Long nose Point. This piece of the story must be fabricated in order to complete the narration. The remarkable glass church Oscar and Lucinda construct provides a symbolic metaphor to this puzzle.

When Oscar and Lucinda first conceive of the glass church, "all of their emotions were fused together in this glass vision in which they saw that which cannot be seen". The glass signifies meaning for Oscar and Lucinda because it brings them together. Lucinda describes the building of the church as living: "we are alive on the very brink of eternity". The physical qualities of the glass parallel the pieces of the story the narrator artificially pulls together. The panes of glass don't hold up under the pressure of the water. As the transparent beauty shatters, the glass traps Oscar inside, sinking him with the church:

The tilting platform became a ramp and the glass church slid beneath the water and while my great-grandfather kicked and pulled at the jammed door, the fractured panes of glass behind his back opened to

let in his ancient enemy. He could see, dimly, the outside world, the chair and benches of his father's study. Shining fragments of aquarium glass fell like snow around him.

Carey prophesizes the destructive nature of stories when telling them assumes power over meaning in an individual's life. Ruskin asserts that a solid building must serve the purpose of the building and stand strong; the glass church does neither of these, but it provides meaning to Oscar and Lucinda while they believe in it. Indeed, the transport of the church destroys life in its path until Oscar prays for the Church's destruction. In the same way, the narrator's mother believes in the story even though it destroys her relationship with her husband. When stories fall apart, as this one does, the people who found meaning in them must falsify them in order to continue believing in them.

Although the novel breaks down the relationship between stories and meaning, Carey does provide solutions that order the novel. He accomplishes this partly by allowing a character to find meaning in work rather than stories or transparencies. Lucinda loses her fortune to Oscar's wife, which allows her to escape the delusion of the glass church and begin her life.

Lucinda was known for more important things than her passion for a nervous clergyman. She was famous, or famous at least amongst students of the Australian labour movement. One could look at this letter and know that its implicit pain and panic would be but a sharp jab in the long and fruitful journey of her life. One could view it as the last thing before her real life could begin.

Unable to contain Lucinda, the narrative leaves a possibility for the past to become nothing more than history. The cheque Lucinda sends back to Miriam serves as an example: "By the time it was found, her letter was as fragile as the body of a long-dead dragon-fly. Its juice was dry. It was history". Just as the church gets carted away because "it was not of any use," the past becomes meaningless as Lucinda lets go of it. The narrator fabricates the story, but unlike the other two novels, the author presents a possibility for escaping fantasies and living a productive life of one's own.

*Oscar and Lucinda* is a satire about two star-crossed lovers that takes place in the mid-nineteenth century. Oscar Hopkins is a contradictory man, both pious and corrupt. He was raised by a strict, religious father, but he abandons his father's religion in favor of Anglicanism. He spends the rest of his life wondering if his decision has damned his soul to hell, as his father believes. Oscar further endangers his soul when he takes up gambling while in divinity school. Oscar justifies his vice by philosophizing that believing in God is a gamble anyway. How could God condemn a man for having a bit of fun at the racetrack? Locked in an inner conflict between his fears of damnation and his need to gamble, Oscar decides that a little

suffering might go a long way towards redeeming him in God's eyes. He decides to face his crippling fear of the water and sail to Sydney, where he intends to devote his life to dangerous missionary work in the wild badlands of Australia. On board the ship, he meets his counterpart and fellow compulsive gambler, Lucinda Leplastrier.

Lucinda is a feminist ahead of her time in the Victorian era. She is shunned by society for her independent views and refusal to wear dresses with corsets. The rich heiress owns a glassworks factory in Sydney, which her male employees will not let her enter without permission. Lucinda is returning to Sydney from a year-long sojourn in London, where she had hoped to find a husband. However, London society shuns her more cruelly than Sydney society. She returns home, where her weakness for gambling and cards destroys the reputations of the only two men who dare to befriend her, Oscar and Reverend Dennis Hasset, a fellow glass enthusiast. Hasset is sent up-river to a parish in the wilderness by the Bishop of Sydney as punishment for his friendship with Lucinda. Oscar is kicked out of the church entirely by the Bishop when the local press discovers his late night card games with Lucinda. Lucinda feels responsible for Oscar's downfall and takes him into her home. There, the two misfits eventually become friends, and he learns to share her love for glass. Their unmarried, though chaste, cohabitation causes an even bigger scandal in society, but they take refuge in their growing love for one another. Their lack of social skills prevents them from acknowledging that they are in love, but their shared love of glass and gambling spurs them to bet their entire fortunes on a venture to build a glass church. Oscar nobly agrees to deliver the church to Hasset's wilderness parish in an act of love for Lucinda, whom he imagines to be in love with Hasset. This adventure threatens to destroy both Oscar and Lucinda, and in the end, their glass house comes crashing down, but with a surprising twist. This postcolonial undertaking has sometimes led Carey to wrestle with the great works of English literature: *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* (1994) draws on Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, while *Jack Maggs* (1997), a version of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, is told from the perspective of the convict who returns to England from Australia.

But although Carey went to what he calls "a particularly posh" Australian boarding school, he claims he didn't discover literature until he was out of school. He studied chemistry at Monash University for just a year before leaving to work in advertising. There, surrounded by readers and would-be writers, he discovered the great literature of the 20th century, including authors like Joyce, Faulkner and Beckett. "To read Faulkner for the first time was for me like discovering another planet," Carey said in an interview with *The Guardian*. "The pleasure of that language, the politics of giving voice to the voiceless."



Publishers rejected Carey's first three novels, so he began writing short stories. These, he later said, "felt like the first authentic things I had done." He was still working for an advertising agency when his first collection of short stories appeared in 1973, and he kept the part-time job after moving to an "alternative community" in Queensland. His first published novel, *Bliss* (1981), won a prestigious Australian literary prize, the Miles Franklin Award. The book is about an advertising executive who has a near-death experience and ends up living in a rural commune.

Carey's later novels ranged farther outside the bounds of his own experience, but he continued to develop his concern with Australian identity. 1988's *Oscar and Lucinda*, which tells the story of a colonial Australian heiress and her ill-fated love for an English clergyman, won the Booker Prize and helped establish Carey as one of the literary heavyweights of his generation. He won another Booker Prize for *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000), the story of a notorious 19th-century outlaw whose legacy still shapes Australia's consciousness.

Though Carey now lives and teaches in New York City, his home country and its past still possess his imagination. "History," he writes, "is like a bloodstain that keeps on showing on the wall no matter how many new owners take possession, no matter how many times we paint over it."

- Peter Carey and J. M. Coetzee are the only two-time Booker Prize winners to date.
- Carey caused a stir in the British press when he declined an invitation to meet Queen Elizabeth II. The royal invitation is extended to all winners of the Commonwealth Writers Prize, which Carey received in 1998 for *Jack Maggs*. He did meet the Queen after he won the award a second time, for *True History of the Kelly Gang* in 2001.
- Fans of Carey's work know that in 1997, *Oscar and Lucinda* was made into a critically acclaimed movie starring Ralph Fiennes and Cate Blanchett. But they may not know that Carey wrote the screenplay for the critically panned Wim Wenders film *Until the End of the World* (1991) as well as the screenplay adaptation of his own novel, *Bliss* (1991). Bursting with informed gusto, freewheeling comedy, pauses of pathos and moments of surreal poetry – swaggering streetboys ‘with their hands boasting against their braces,’ scared cockatoos flying up "like screeching feathers from a burst pillow" – *Oscar & Lucinda* is a creative explosion of delight at life’s wayward, diverse plentifulness. Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* is a beautifully managed narrative, but one that respects accident. Partly this is by having leading characters who are themselves fascinated by chance. Oscar, brought up in mid-19th-century Devon by his loving but

utterly inflexible father, a leading member of a fundamentalist Christian sect, believes that happenstance is in fact providence. God must be behind all chance events. By a private process of divination, casting a stone on to a lettered grid, he perceives that his father's faith is false, and that he should desert him for the household of the local Anglican vicar. Every day the boy throws lots under "the terrible pressure of eternity".

The very form of Carey's novel seems to make chance visible. It is composed of 111 short chapters, often digressing and including the back-stories of a crowd of minor characters. Every little chapter is a self-contained episode, each one a testimony to luck. There is also its framing device, for the novel is narrated by someone revealing his own genealogy. We know from its first paragraph that "the Reverend Oscar Hopkins (1841-66)" is "my great-grandfather" (and if we look at those dates we might guess at some impending mischance). What is the strangest instance of chance that a person can think of but the chance that brought his or her parents together? "In order that I exist," says Carey's nameless narrator, "two gamblers, one Obsessive, the other Compulsive, must meet". Lucinda follows a path to Oscar "as complex as that of a stainless steel Pachinko ball". But near the end of the novel we realise that the chance occurrence to which we have always been heading is not what we expected: the narrator owes his - existence to an accident that will surprise the cleverest novel reader. The greatest novel in English dedicated to the consequences of chance events, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, is similarly a long story of how its narrator's conception came about. Carey wonderfully reanimates this narrative mission.

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## **Post Modern and Post Colonial Reflections in Oscar and Lucinda**

Oscar and Lucinda is the third novel in the postcolonial phase of Peter Carey's search for an Australian identity. For the first time, he takes a good look at the British imperial influence. The action of the novel takes place during the Victorian period, and Carey chooses to dress his-story up in the corresponding genre-the Victorian novel, which he borrows from the English canon for the occasion. He then proceeds to break its rules. He plays with reader expectations and provokes anger. Carey is a literary gambler; in Oscar and Lucinda he takes the risk of alienating readers by "cheating" them of their "due." The payoff is the possibility of succeeding in channeling this anger to his own ends. A look at Carey's techniques reveals how he shakes up his Australian readers' complacency about official versions of Australian history with their traditional heroes and their exclusion of the Aboriginal perspective. Carey combines the Victorian motifs of gambling and the contemporary Australian obsession with this activity in order to highlight and give meaning to the narrative gambles he takes. Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* stylizes the dual nature of knowledge even more than does A. S. Byatt's *Possession*. Carey frustrates the reader's expectations, thus revealing a primeval anarchic knowledge and deconstructing the reader's artificially-concocted conceptions of knowledge. Like Byatt, Carey plays out "the master trope of irony...where people are self-divided," but Carey also joins the "parable with the parabolic and hyperbolic...the unpredictable, even psychotic". Whereas Byatt plays the human constructs of linear and cyclical time off one another, Carey explodes human constructs altogether. In *Oscar and Lucinda*, "the underside of life is flipped over and we see its vulnerable, luminous belly. Carey's characters are always offbeat, the better to reveal how out of sync humanity really is with its fond conception of itself". In *Oscar and Lucinda*, then, Carey does not replace a fallen human construct of knowledge with the rise of another. His re-visioning of knowledge subverts any construct's attempt to provide order. In Carey's narrative, order collapses only to reveal an anarchy in which all human success can be traced to chance and not wisdom: his past is not a golden age but an age of gambling.

Within the framework of the myth of the fall, Carey uses the glass church as the incarnation of his idea in the same way that Byatt uses creativity and procreativity as metaphors for possession. The desire to possess drives Byatt's characters in the same way that the desire to build a life, by means of a metaphorical

construct, drives Lucinda and Oscar. Carey exploits this desire as an enticing but empty sham. The glittering but fragile glass church represents the unsuccessful fusion of Lucinda's and Oscar's life-building constructs.

For her part, Lucinda builds her life around the controlling metaphor of glass and purchases a glassworks with part of her late mother's financial legacy. Carey likens Lucinda's construct to a drug:

There are drugs that work the same, and while I am not suggesting that our founder purchased the glassworks to get more drops, it is clear that she had the seed planted, not once, but twice, and knew already the lovely contradictory nature of glass and she did not have to be told, on the day she saw the works at Darling Harbour, that glass is a thing in disguise, an actor, is not solid at all, but a liquid, ...in short, a joyous and paradoxical thing, as good a material as any to build a life from.

*Oscar and Lucinda* is a parody of the Victorian novel, juxtaposing the realist conventions of that form with self-conscious narrative interruptions from Oscar's great-grandson as he narrates the Victorian-era story. Some critics have likened this metafictional novel to *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) by John Fowles. Carey's method of ordering the novel promotes questions about partial truths, lies, and omissions of personal and public history. On a personal level, for instance, the narrator's mother ferociously guards the memory of her grandfather, Oscar, as a heroic pioneer minister, not the fidgety gambler who lost his parish because of scandal. The narrator also draws attention to the falsity of local stories about the naming of a wooded area above the town before beginning his own story. Throughout the novel, Carey suggests the ambivalence of any narrative—whether it be a told story, diary, historical record, newspaper report, journal of exploration, or a novel such as *Oscar and Lucinda*.

Because the novel was first published in Australia's bicentennial year, it is most often perceived as a literary revision of imperial colonization. The eccentricity and relative integrity of the two main characters, who are alienated from so-called respectable society, serves to reveal the hypocrisy, greed, and vanity of other characters. Meanwhile, the institution of Christianity and the powerful compulsion to invade, survey, map, and populate the landscape ignores the culture, sacred stories, lore, and practices of Australia's first inhabitants, whose culture is tied to that same landscape. The narrator introduces some stories told to him about Oscar's expedition, including the slaughter and rape of the indigenous Narco and Kumbaingiri people, as well as the dangerous nature of glass from their point of view. The story of the dangers of glass undercuts the idealism and folly of the glass church, connected as it is with the processes of colonization.

Lucinda tries to build her life around a dissembler. By asserting that glass is "as good a material as any to build a life from," Carey implicitly undermines the mission of building a life at all. His claim does not ensure that any material is "good...to build a life from" except from a relative standpoint. Hidden behind a solid facade, the true essence of glass is as slippery and uncertain as Lucinda's status as a woman in Australia.

Australia's national codes dovetail with Carey's concept of anarchy. As a nation with a double cultural signification, Australia provides a backdrop of opposite forces struggling for the fore:

Australia began life as a hell on earth for transported convicts, and the imagery of hellish imprisonment has figured large in its literature and in its cultural self-images ever since. Ironically enough, the other dominant myth of Australia has been as a paradise, a new world, a virgin continent, a south land of the holy spirit, a social laboratory, where the ills of the old European world might be put to right.

Carey parallels the contradictory historical signification of Australia with the paradoxical individual promise of the glassworks and explodes both promises as surely as the Prince Rupert's drop of glass, which shatters in all directions when pinched between a pair of needle-nosed pliers. Recalling her late mother, Lucinda founds the glassworks in the hope of liberating her sex. The glassworks seem to promise an incarnation of Elizabeth Leplastrier's vision:

Queen Elizabeth had seen industrialization as the great hope for women. Factories...would...provide her sex with the economic basis for their freedom. She saw factories with nurseries incorporated in their structure, and staffed kitchen, fired by factory furnaces, that would bake the family dinners the women carried there each morning. Her factories were like hubs of wheels, radiating spokes of care.(29)

Carey's other protagonist, Oscar, makes a journey to the Australian Outback on Lucinda's behalf to transport a glass church into the wilderness. The glass church represents the fulfillment of Oscar's and Lucinda's joint hopes: glass as a means of liberation for her, religion as a means to uncover truth for him.

Unfortunately for Oscar, he uncovers a truth as savage and chaotic as the bush the expedition must beat back to obtain its goal. Narrating the journey to the Outback, Carey transcends boundaries with all the violence of the Romantics, but he transcends quite different boundaries. With an intertextuality at once more subtle and more dislocating than Byatt's, Carey recalls Joseph Conrad's journey into the heart of darkness and also countless classical descents into the underworld. The Stygian river and its hellish surroundings transform the comfortably sheltered Oscar into "a beetle inside the bloody intestines of an

alien animal" — an image that evokes Jonathan Swift's belittling of man by means of his scatology and also Kafka's banal treatment of man as a cockroach that lands in the garbage.

With a scientific precision more brutal than that of his predecessors, Carey documents the chaos at the core of his novel. Force-fed laudanum (opium dissolved in alcohol) through a funnel, Oscar watches a whipped man defecate in his pants. He prays to Jesus, "but no prayer could block out the smell of the man's shit"). His opium reveries include thoughts like these:

If you plucked Sydney from the earth...like an organ ripped from a man, all these roads and rivers would be pulled out like roots, canals, arteries. He saw the great hairy, flesh-backed tuft, which he saw was Sydney, saw the rivers pushing, the long slippery yellow tracks like things the butcher would use for making sausages.

Here Carey explores Romantic and Victorian conceptions of opium. The same drug that supposedly fueled much of Coleridge's and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetic fancy appears here as a disemboweling dose of reality. The journey culminates in Oscar's drowning, the death he always feared, as he slides in the glass church into the river. The waters of his new consciousness close around him and silence his scream in a paralysis of utterance from which he will never recover. Not even his caul can protect him; superstition dies along with his artificial attempt to build a life.

Just as Carey addicts Lucinda to a gentler drug than opium, her withdrawal from her dream is cushioned by a chance success. Lucinda's financial independence proves a fetter that she gambles in order to lose:

And when, at three o' clock in the morning, she snapped her purse shut, she had no more money than the poorest of them. The purse was empty, freed from all weight, contained nothing but clean, watered silk. She felt as light and clean as rice paper...She felt limp as a rag doll, and perfectly safe.

By losing her money and her glassworks and going to work directly in a factory (instead of supervising one), Lucinda immerses herself in the movement to improve factory conditions and becomes famous "amongst students of the Australian labor movement" . Lucinda "[breaks] out of the circle and metamorphoses positively" , but she escapes the circle of hell only by chance. After all, she works in the factory as a second plan, a last resort, a necessity prescribed by financial loss. By juxtaposing the fates of Oscar and Lucinda, Carey inscribes in relief the failure of the organized quest and the artificial objective — in Oscar's case, the doomed attempt to transplant a fragile symbol of social order into an environment that mocks man.

In **Oscar and Lucinda**, although Peter Carey does not use the concept of the enclosed space as deliberately as Byatt, or as cyclically as Swift, constraint plays a major role in defining gender. The constraint he depicts is almost never voluntary, but frequently forced upon women, or, in the case of Oscar, perceived effeminacy. Lucinda resists the ties society attempts to impose upon her; she owns a factory, lives alone, and has intimate friendships with men. Society retaliates by making her an outcast. In contrast, Oscar, abused since childhood for his delicacy and general lack of so-called manly qualities, finds himself restrained. The material structures that contain him become a physical metaphor, or a grotesque, of the less tangible restraints — such as decorum and society — that bind women.

When her radical mother dies, Lucinda suddenly finds herself powerless to control her life. Since she cannot control her inheritance, her mother's lawyer sells her farms against her will. This lawyer also places her in the care of Mrs. Cousins, who takes away her bloomers and tries to make her wear an "obscene bustle" and a "crippling crinoline. Stealing her clothing back, Lucinda continues to stumble into trouble:

But Lucinda did not know what to do in Parramatta. She tried to behave well, but as long as would not wear the bustle it seemed no one would behave well toward her. She sat by her mother's grave until it was judged morbid and she was taken away .

Lucinda discovers, for the first time, the lesson she will learn over and over again throughout her life. If she ever manages to escape the constraints that others impose upon her, people exclude her because she refuses to protect "that more precious and fragile asset: her reputation"( O and L) . A woman in Australia, or anywhere, cannot live without an honorable reputation. Until she turns eighteen, she has no control over her life; "everyone wishes to steer her this way and that, have her sit down, stand up, while all the time they smirked and thought her simple". Her feelings call to mind the mixed desires previously expressed by Maud Bailey:

She was alone in the world, orphaned, unprotected. She trusted nothing so much as she trusted that money, which she wished fiercely, passionately, to keep, even while she tried to give it away. There was no one she could talk to about her feelings. She was pinned and crippled by her loneliness. In the afternoons she lay on her bed. There was a spring coiled tight around her chest. She held her arms straight and rigid by her side, like a trap waiting to be triggered .

She feels alone and exposed but, paradoxically, she also feels "pinned." She does not know whether to seek shelter in her money or flee the constraints it imposes upon her. Without her it, she would still have her farm and these people would leave her alone, but this same money protects her. After her birthday,



only Lucinda's fortune keeps her from being "at their mercy" . For a while she owns her glass factory and lives as she pleases, not caring what the more decorous members of society think of her. With her money, however, she creates a protective shell from which she does not want to venture. As much as she hates the confining guilt and responsibility of it, she does not dare leave it. She cannot escape from this last constraint that causes her so much anxiety.

In contrast, Oscar, the man she will eventually love, seems to be at everyone's mercy. Like Lucinda, whom others perceive as having man-like qualities — she shakes hands "like a man" — Oscar also exists outside defined gender boundaries. The people of his community see him as "so girlish, so harmless" that they cannot accept from him behavior they would "accept in a more robust boy" . As a child, "more robust" boys beat him, make him "eat dirt," and "put coarse mud on his skin because they could not bear it so soft and white". Unable to tolerate the effeminacy it suggests, they attack his soft skin. As he grows older, "more robust" men still abuse him, although in more subtle ways. Wardley-Fish calls him "Odd Bod." Mr. Borrodaile, angered by Oscar's agreement with Lucinda in a debate, mimics Oscar's walk in an attempt "to make all that was good and kind in the young man appear to be weak and somehow contemptible" . More explicitly, Mr. Jeffris suggests that he should bathe with the rest of the expedition "to reassure the men that he has all the correct equipment". Men perceive him as something strange, weak, or incomplete — something separate from themselves. Oscar's failure to live up to standards of manhood make him vulnerable to these attacks and to constraints similar to those which Lucinda tries to escape.

Once Oscar and Lucinda meet the course of their lives become even more extreme. Society increasingly shuts Lucinda out because she refuses to conform to its standards for women of her class. Meanwhile, he becomes increasingly contained for his inability to exhibit masculine qualities. Lucinda, sits alone in her room, desperately wanting to play cards with the stewards, but she knows they will allow not a woman of her class join them. Men cannot accept her as one of them and women dislike her lack of restraint, "her turbulent, often angry sense of her own power" (O and L). Even George Eliot finds it disturbing that Lucinda's eyes do not lower "in deference to her own" . In contrast, when Lucinda first Oscar him on the Leviathan, he is being loaded onto the ship in cage because he cannot board by himself. Afraid of the vast expanse of the sea, Oscar does not want to leave his room where he has squares of celluloid on his windows to contain its infiniteness.. Men find him cowardly and women find him disturbing. These two gender misfits fall in love, perhaps because they each recognize qualities in the other that the rest of the world misses or chooses to ignore. Oscar sees Lucinda's beauty and Lucinda realizes that, although he does not exhibit it in the usual way, Oscar does not lack courage.

As their strange love affair progresses, however, their situations become more desperate. Society, even her parish, makes Lucinda an outcast for living with a man. Even her glassworks, her last refuge, alienate her by readily accepting Oscar among them. In a telling scene, she watches from her window as her workers cavort in the yard . Lucinda, having escaped from those who would shut her in, finds herself shut out, even from the things she owns. Oscar, although an outcast as well, finds himself closed in increasingly grotesque ways. First he goes to work in stuffy office of Mr. d'Abbs:

He would end his days with no feeling of release, but with a dull headache and his shirt sticking unpleasantly to his skin. His dreams shrank until they could accommodate no larger idea than a curtain, or a crisply folded poplin shirt. He only had two shirts . . . his shirts smelt like the old rags Mrs. Williams kept in a bucket in the scullery in Hennacombe. The smell was remarked upon by his fellow workers without anything ever being said. It happened, somehow, in the silence, although silence is perhaps the wrong term. It was more that there was the odd pressure of silence, a lid of silence beneath which there were odd and secret stirrings of sound .

As Lucinda lives in her lonely cottage or works in her empty office, Oscar spends long days in this hot room with clerks who mock him for his smell and his incompetence. The constraint of the office, lidded with silence but filled with sound, makes Oscar miserable, but his pride and his belief that God wills it force him to stay. Carey's claustrophobic imagery — the sticking shirt, the use of words like "pressure" and "lid" — increases the sensation of Oscar's captivity. Leaving the office provides little sense of release; even his dreams tighten, only holding images of his petty desires, such as a curtain to block out the hot sun, or a shirt that does not smell of rags.

Oscar finally manages to escape when the two strike a bargain that would have allowed them both to unite and admit their love without a loss of pride. Oscar offers to take the glass church into the Outback and Lucinda promises him her fortune if he succeeds. Finally Oscar can prove himself and Lucinda can let go of her money, her "rusty armor," that has brought her so much loneliness. The expedition, however, deprives Lucinda of her beloved and subjects Oscar to one terrible confinement after another. His uniform fits poorly, but he never removes it, even to wash, for fear the other men will see him naked. At every river crossing, he is held down and made to swallow laudanum through a funnel forced between his teeth. In a drug-induced dream, he sees himself inside his father's aquarium, foreshadowing his death when he drowns inside the cathedral with which he hoped to win the woman he loves:

He slashed his hands on broken glass. The twisting of the platform had jammed the door . . . He held the doorknob as it came to be the ceiling of his world. The water rose. Through the bursting gloom he saw a

vision of his father's wise and smiling face, peering in at him . . . Shining fragments of aquarium glass fell like snow around him. And when the long awaited fingers water tapped and lapped on Oscar's lips, he welcomed them as he always had, with a scream, like a small boy caught in the sheet-folds of a nightmare.

Trapped in an engagement with a woman he does not love, Oscar enters his church for a last time before the church sinks into the water. This last confinement he enters voluntarily in despair. Many of the restraints he experienced were violently forced upon him, but others he places upon himself. Oscar hates limitless expanses, feeling alone and exposed. Even in his last moments, he "panic in the face of eternity"(67) . The enclosed space, no matter how terrible, offers some measure of security. He cannot even leave it to swim through an opening provided by the breaking panes of glass. Too afraid of the water to swim to safety, Oscar drowns, leaving Lucinda even more alone and bereft of the fortune that protected her. Lucinda, however, manages to overcome despair and poverty and eventually becomes the great woman she had always hoped to be, but her money and her fears held her back. For Lucinda, this suffering "would be but a sharp jab in the long and fruitful journey of her life" (38) . Lucinda takes the gifts that made her an outcast — her strength and her passion — and becomes famous for them.

A bottle. A beer bottle. A bottle of thick dark brown glass, but not a sort of bottle that is seen any more around the Fens...I take the bottle and carry it along the river-bank...from where it will float down to the Ouse, and even, perhaps, in time, to the sea. An old fashioned, but quite unmuddled, beer bottle, with round the base, embossed in the glass, the words: Atkinson Gildsey.

In Graham Swift's *Waterland*, the scene in which Tom Crick discovers a glass beer bottle floating down the river serves as one of the most pivotal scenes in the novel, a symbolic image of the Atkinsons ("beer people") and Cricks ("water people") and, more importantly, a piece of the puzzle in the Freddie Parr murder mystery. The meeting of glass and water also plays an important role in the course of Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda*. When the reader of *Oscar and Lucinda* first encounters an image of glass, it is in the form of the Prince Rupert drop, a piece of glass shaped like a drop of water [It is also important to note that the narrator is physically holding this symbol of glass and water as he writes his family story - "I hold it in the palm of my left hand while the right hand moves to and fro across the page" ]. The final scene of *Oscar and Lucinda*, in which the glass church is destroyed and consumed by water, functions as another important encounter between water and glass. In both *Waterland* and *Oscar and Lucinda*, images of glass are conflated with images of water and the reader is left to wonder "What is the connection between the two?" This set of interlinked essays explore the connection between glass and water imagery in *Oscar and Lucinda* and *Waterland* and show how they are associated with

- creation and destruction
- love and sexuality and
- progress and the power or weakness of empire .

Before examining their power as symbolic images, let us examine the physical characteristics of glass and water:

Glass is a thing in disguise, an actor, is not solid at all, but a liquid, that an old sheet of glass will not only take on a royal and purplish tinge but will reveal its true liquid nature by having grown fatter at the bottom and thinner at the top, and that even while it is as frail as the ice on a Paramatta puddle, it is stronger under compression than Sydney sandstone. (*Oscar and Lucinda*)

However, we also study that in the novel both father (Theophilus) and son (Oscar) are carrying two different kinds of archetypes regarding the belief system of their religion. They both think that they are following the wrong way. Oscar thinks that the deeds and activities done by his father can lead him to go to the hell. Whereas his father thinks that eating the Christmas pudding will definitely send his son to the hell. We see Oscar worrying and praying for his father when Carey writes; “He was praying that his papa would not die. He felt cold and tight across his chest. The pain in his arms did not seem related to buckets, oh lord! Do spare him please, even though he is in grievous error. Let not his blood be poisoned in thy smiting, let him not be taken I ignorance. Dear Jesus, who died for us, lifts the scales from his eyes so he may see true light. Let him not be-cast down. Let him sit with your saints in heaven.” This shows how Oscar is worried about his father’s deeds and he prays for his father so that God can bless him with some light of awareness about what he is doing. This event also throws some light on the changes that Oscar tries to bring in the archetypes adopted by his father. So the faith and archetypal symbols is the product of societal condition, when a group of people stay at one place for a long time, in order to fulfil the gaps in their understanding, they start covering up with half-truths. These half-truths become the part of their existence and they start having them as higher realities.

Soon they start deciding their understanding into binary categorization. This constitutes their consciousness and soon this consciousness denies by binary thinking. We see that even Oscar is a religious person and gambling is something that is not wise for his character. But according to Oscar some amount of evil is necessary and is allowed by God. But Lucinda tries to change those archetypes according to her own status and circumstances. Albeit Oscar also believe in gambling in order to make it as a way to endure life. In addition, if we study the character of Oscar in the light of ‘The Innocent’, Oscar is a character who meets all the characteristics of this kind of archetype in the novel. This kind of persons

tries to uplift and support others by their positive ways of life. This is what Oscar does for Lucinda when he decides that he will help her to transport the glass church on its destination.

In case of Lucinda, she is possessed by his passion of gambling and playing cards. In order to make her life more enjoyable and bias free she becomes the victim of neglecting real meaning of life. She loves Oscar and does not dare to reveal it to Oscar. Likewise, Oscar also comes out from the kind of life he was living since his childhood and started enjoying gambling. Towards the end of the novel he does not find any appropriate state of life, rather he suffers. Carl Jung also gave the principle of Anima and Animus. Anima is a feminine quality which is in existence in both male and female. Anima is an archetype of male in which can be found in both male and female, "Anima means soul and should designate something very wonderful immortal". It is not a documental sense but a philosophical content. It is "a natural archetype statistically sums up all the statements of the unconsciousness, of the primitive mind, all the history of language and religion. It is a fact in the proper sense of the word unconscious". Animus on the other hand is a male principle and Jung explains it as: The animus is obstinate harping on principles, laying down the law, dogmatic, world-reforming theoretic, and word- mongering, argumentative, and domineering. Both alike have bad taste: the anima surrounds her with inferior people, and the animus lets him be taken in by second-rate thinking.

The comparison between glass and "ice on a Paramatta puddle" in *Oscar and Lucinda* illustrates the dual nature of both glass and water, substances which are simultaneously liquid and solid. As a liquid capable of freezing into ice and as a solid whose origins derive from a liquid state, water and glass lend themselves well to the idea of duality and function appropriately as literary symbols in Swift's *Waterland* and Carey's novel.

Peter Carey and Graham Swift use imagery of glass and water to illustrate human sexuality and love relationships. In Swift's *Waterland*, scenes of swimming and water immersion serve to unveil Dick's sexuality and "rawness" of his character:

Can it be that Dick's purpose in diving was expressly to suppress this rebel rod of flesh? ...So that, even now, twisting strands of Dick's congealed seed are floating down towards the Leem, where they will surely float to the sea.

The image of Dick's "congealed seed" floating down the river intensifies the life creating power of water in Swift's *Waterland*. Constantly immersing himself in water, Dick is the embodiment of human sexuality. More importantly, as the product of an incestuous relationship, Dick is the embodiment of sinful human

sexuality. Dick's infatuation with swimming functions as a figurative escape to the waters of the womb, returning to the origin of birth and innocence. As the manifestation of his parents' sin, Dick escapes to the waters as a means of figurative self-cleansing and purification.

Whereas Swift uses water imagery to illustrate the nature of human sexuality, Carey uses glass imagery to specifically reveal the nature of love between Oscar and Lucinda. In Carey's novel, the Prince Rupert drop serves as the "congealed glass seed" which grows into the glass church, the embodiment of love between male and female protagonists:

All their emotions were fused together in this glass vision in which they saw that which cannot be seen — wonder, joy, the transparent trceries of angels dancing.

It was this bee in the box, the Big Bet, the glass bet, which gave the days their excruciating tension, their lovely current, the nights their lightness, expectation. They did not kiss or hold hands. The bet gave them a future which they stretched towards.

Figuratively uniting the religious passion of Oscar with the glass dreams of Lucinda, the glass church operates as a physical monument to the spiritual love and moral connection between them. Oscar's persistence in carrying the glass church to Bellinger (a "vessel of light") demonstrates his insistence on winning Lucinda's love, his Lady Luce, creature of light. By the end of the novel, however, the double nature of glass reveals itself and the glass church becomes not only a symbol of Oscar's love for Lucinda but the site of his sexual betrayal (his affair with Miriam Chadwick)

Oscar had forgotten himself. He was sick at heart, preoccupied by what he had lost, not gained. All he could think was that the glass church was the devil's work, that it had been the agent of murder and fornication.

By the end of Carey's novel, the glass church has clearly become a symbol of both love and sin. Fusing the dual nature of the glass church with the destructive and cleansing properties of water, the aquatic immersion of the glass church symbolizes the destruction of Oscar's love for Lucinda and the purification of his sin with Miriam Chadwick.

- Glass and Water: Symbolic Imagery in *Oscar and Lucinda* and *Waterland* — an Introduction
- Glass and Water, Creation and Destruction
- Glass and Water: Progress, Power, and the Weakness of of Empire.

Postmodernist narrative rejects the linear, the absolutes of cause and effect and the model of civilization, society, and time as inherently progressing and improving as time passes into the future. Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* and Graham Swift's *Waterland*, as well as other twentieth-century fictional "historical" novels such as A.S. Byatt's *Possession*, exemplify this deconstruction of time and progress as the novels depict histories, stories, and myths that neither profess concrete notions of growth and development nor linear accounts of the progression of time. Even the notion of the dependable narrator, traditionally considered the foundation of the historical tale, is disrupted in these post-modern tales of the past, as omnipotent voices interject themselves throughout these stories without a practical basis for their knowledge or insight. Analyzing the crisis of narrative and time in post-modern works, with a focus on Carey's and Swift's novels, leads to a discussion of three primary elements in the fabrication of the story in this genre: history, progress, and false narration. Utilizing overarching notions of storytelling, systems of belief, and imperialist politics, these authors reveal the movement away from Victorian literary modes of definitive knowledge and linear time to create stories based on the cyclical, the unpredictable, and even the impossible. In these post-modern works, words can be disconnected from their referent, random occurrence can supplant conceptions of cause and effect, and the "Here and Now" can become indistinguishable from the past, present, and future.

- **History**

Victorian and modernist conceptions of history rely upon a conception of history as a series of events progressing toward enlightenment, understanding, and the end of human conflict. This attitude toward history is labeled "progressive history." Contradicting such beliefs that espouse the inevitability of betterment, postmodernists discard the so-called "myth of history." In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard advances the postmodernist view of this myth of order and referential progression and chronology. Baudrillard states: "History is our lost referential, that is to say our myth . . . Whereas so many generations, and particularly the last, lived in the march of history, in the euphoric or catastrophic expectation of revolution today one has the impression that history has retreated, leaving behind it an indifferent nebula, traversed by currents, but emptied of references. It is into this void that the phantasms of past history recede." In *Waterland* the protagonist Tom Crick traces his family history, societal history, and personal history directly through this nebula, so that past, present and future no longer progress linearly but circle back on one another to create a continuity or circularity in time that disrupts the progressive history of other eras. In his role as teacher, Crick explicitly champions this cyclical nature of historical development in the classroom by detailing the many retreats human beings have made in the

face of supposed progress throughout human history. "It goes in two directions at once. It goes backwards as it goes forwards. It loops. It takes detours. Do not fall into the illusion that history is a well-disciplined and unflagging column marching unswervingly into the future" .

- Cyclical time is introduced — and reinforced — by a variety of symbols and images that appear throughout the novel. The first metaphor for circularity is that of revolution, a phenomenon which Crick explains is etymologically connected to a "turning round, a completing of a cycle." Understanding historical, societal, or even linguistic revolution as a return to the past or to what came before upsets the entire notion of Victorian progression and linearity. Swift's protagonist affirms that a revolution is "the last setting one would expect Nostalgia to thrive," but in this revolt, Swift suggests that society is rejecting the notion of history progressing through the creation of what is false and "decadent" . If what a people are seeking with revolution is a return to the past, then not only is this type of popular rebellion a literal pronouncement of the tautological essence of time, but it is also a renouncement of the Victorian model of positive historical progress. In a revolution, people seek the establishment of the past in the present, and wish this past to serve as a guide for the future.

- In *Waterland* another negation of linear time is the river Ouse, the body of water that runs forward throughout both the Fens, history, and Tom Crick's story while concurrently winding back on itself, repeating its course. Throughout the novel, the passage of time is marked by this passage of water. Instead of existing merely as an indication of the constant forward flow of history, the Ouse also directly interjects itself into this history, as water becomes a primary actor in the sequence of events in the narrator's life. Water is the site of Freddie Parr's murder and the final resting place for Tom Crick's future, his unborn child extracted from the womb of his soon-to-be wife. However, water also provides the source of livelihood for the Crick family, a lineage that defines itself as a "water people. Swift writes that the Ouse "flows on, unconcerned with ambition, whether local or national. It flows now in more than one channel, its water diverging, its strength divided, silt-prone, flood-prone. Yet it flows continuously, as every river must, to the sea . . . So that while the Ouse flows to the sea, it flows, in reality, like all rivers, only back on itself, to its own source . . . ". Swift unequivocally equates the cyclical nature of the Ouse and the circular bent of history, but he simultaneously also uses the river to question the definitive view of history progressing with certain meanings and for specific reasons. He says that the Ouse flows without "ambition," granting both death and life in its murky waters to the people of the Fens and to Tom Crick's family over their ancestral history. In this sense, the river not only cycles back on itself, but its effect on history and time remains ambiguous. The Ouse challenges the "cause and effect" notion of historical progression merely because it causes and affects a variety of consequences at once; it is unclear,



unexpected, and even perhaps random how this body of water can both create and destroy on its path to circular return.

- Although Peter Carey sets *Oscar and Lucinda's* primarily in the past, like *Waterland*, it also questions notions of linear chronology. Again like Swift, Carey utilizes ancestral history to connect past to present, showing the cyclical components of events and their ramifications. *Oscar and Lucinda's* narrator is not of primary significance in the novel, as he is in Swift's work and in A.S. Byatt's romance novel. Nonetheless, many instances throughout the book pull the reader suddenly back from the past in order to reconnect with the present-day life of Oscar's descendent. The novel begins by establishing the physical resemblance of the narrator's family to Oscar Hopkins. "We lined up: my mother, my brother, me, my sister. We had red hair, long thin necks like twisted rubber bands" (1). This genetic continuation of the past is further exemplified when the narrator distinguishes his father — the non-descendent of Oscar's infamous union — from the rest of the family. "He was not like us at all. He was short, broad-faced, pigeon-chested. He had crinkled eyes and crooked teeth. He laughed and farted. He was a cunning spin bowler . . . He was not like us . . . . Though the narrator's father has no physical continuity with the history of his wife, he is strongly affected by her past, by the tale of the glass church transported to St. John's, and by her on-going obsession with Oscar's religious legacy. The historical monument that is not the father's history intrudes upon his present-day life and makes him part of a cyclical past that is not even his own.

- The narrator also has a more physical connection to his ancestor's life than mere genetic resemblance, a point revealed in the passage on the "Prince Rupert's Drops." The impetus for Lucinda's ownership of the glassworks, for her future life as a champion of the factory worker, for Oscar's voyage to Boat Harbour and consequent mating with Miriam, which then spurred the creation of a family line inducting the narrator of this story, can be attributed to the tear-drop shaped glass of the Prince Rupert drop. Lucinda's passion for the drop consequently shapes her own future and the future of others. "So it was the Prince Rupert's drop, shaped like a tear, but also like a seed, that had a powerful effect on Lucinda Leplastrier. It is the nature of things. You can catch a passion from them . . . ." (O L). The effects of this passion are woven into the present as the narrator declares that he has a drop "right here beside me as I write (I hold it in the palm of my left hand while the right hand moves to and fro across the page) . . . ". The narrator, in his resemblance to Oscar, is a physical artifact of Lucinda's and Oscar's history, but he also possesses an object that symbolizes this connection between past and present. When describing the drop, the narrator communicates a sense of awe and passion for the glass — "If you were here beside me in the room, I would find it almost impossible not to demonstrate to you, to take my pliers and — in a second — destroy it" — that inspired Lucinda to purchase a glass factory a century before . This short moment in the epic,

like the other moments of intrusion on the part of the narrator, serve to reinforce the cyclical connection between past and present and future, in a novel that appears superficially to be set solely in the past.

- A final example of the crisis of linearity displayed in Carey's novel concerns the story of Kumbaingiri Billy — the history of a story within a story. Billy's account of an ancestor who observed Oscar's conveying the glass church to Bellingen provides the basis for an oral tradition which is passed down within Billy's aboriginal tribe and hence to the narrator. This oral history exemplifies one kind of cyclical regurgitation of history in the novel. The tale of Oscar's transport from the perspective of the Australian natives who viewed it also undermines the neat construction of histories and tales as accurate depictions of sequences of events. The narrator questions the source of Billy's narrative, and he posits the possibility that it could have derived from a different tribe, from an earlier date — the history itself is left suspect. "I listened to the story a number of times. Kumbaingiri Billy must have first heard it when he was very young, and now I think it seems probable that its source is not amongst the Kumbaingiri, but the Narcoo blacks whom Mr. Jeffris conscripted at Kempsey to guide the party on the last leg of its journey. But perhaps it is not one story anyway. The assertion that 'our people had not seen white people before' suggests a date earlier than 1865 and a more complex parentage than I am able to trace" (Castles, Alex) In this passage, history becomes muddled by recollection, the limits of the narrator, and by the essence of storytelling itself — the importance of conveying an idea and the essential features of an event supersedes the specific dates, details, and legitimizing facets of the past requisite for narratives in history books. Billy's oral tradition, which establishes a story that serves to link the past to the present, thus creates the circularity that defines *Oscar and Lucinda*, but it also destabilizes this past just as it promotes its continuation into the future. Postmodern historical narrative accepts this notion of unstable history as a consequence of abandoning the all-encompassing meta-narrative, but with this abandonment of the unified, solitary voice of history comes the crisis of narrative. In the postmodern literary world, time is circular and the clear-cut chronology of history that defines the Victorian era is traded for a history exemplified by its characterization as an "indifferent nebula, traversed by currents, but emptied of references."

- Just as postmodern narrative rejects linear order and stable notions of chronology, so too it abandons the traditional concept of historical development as a series of determinate causes and effects. Undermining cause and effect is a primary feature of postmodern rejection of Victorian modes of linearity and stable narrative. Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda*, for example, challenges the idea of the expected outcome, upsetting the reader's perception of what will and should happen at the close of the story and deviating from the reader's assumptions about the history of the narrator's family. Throughout the story,

the reader is led to believe that the narrator is a product of a union of the two primary characters in the story, Oscar and Lucinda. The omnipotent descendent understands his existence to be a consequence of the interactions between the characters in the book's title. "In order that I exist, two gamblers, one Obsessive, the other Compulsive, must meet. A door must open at a certain time" (O and L). . . .But even this, a conclusion which requires, of the active party a journey as complex as that of a stainless steel Pachinko ball . . . might not have taken place if the ventilation system of Leviathan had not displayed a single eccentricity of which its designers had been totally unaware. The irony of this passage perpetuates the postmodern disruption of cause and effect. Though the narrator's existence depends upon Lucinda meeting Oscar, it is not because the two eventually marry and have children but because Lucinda's role in Oscar's life ensures that he eventually meets the actual mother of his children — Miriam. In this sense, the cause is not connected directly to its effect but is instead enveloped in much hazier and ill-defined chain of events. The postmodern novel, even when it is set in the past, relies upon a history where **A** does not cause **B**, but instead may have some distant and unclear impact upon B. Cause and effect, as an orderly, systematic, and decidedly Victorian means of understanding historical chronology, is questioned and rejected in this literary period that defies traditional notions of narrative

- The aforementioned passage in Carey's novel also illuminates another primary aspect of the role of history in postmodernist story-telling — its unpredictability and random nature. The narrator in this novel affirms that the course of Lucinda's relationship with Oscar depended upon such seemingly insignificant details as the placement of Lucinda's ship cabin in relation to the stewards' gambling room or the ventilation system of that specific ship. Furthermore, the entire religious context of *Oscar and Lucinda*, and consequently the unfolding of the events leading to the establishment of the glass church in the Outback, is predicated on an incident involving the disobedient consumption of a Christmas pudding in Oscar's evangelical childhood home. If it were not for Oscar's taste of the forbidden, he would not have thought to question his father's spiritual beliefs and eventually abandon them in favor of Anglicanism. One slight twist in this fictional tale of fate disrupts the entire foundation upon which the rests. In *Waterland*, Tom Crick confronts this question of the unpredictability of nature and evolution. He wonders at the utter changeability of the "zenith" and the inability of human beings to stabilize its placement. Swift's protagonist asks, "Why must the zenith never be fixed? Because to fix the zenith is to contemplate decline . . . Because there must always be — don't deny it — a future" . Tom Crick's Fens provides the perfect backdrop to this tale of historical disorder and random occurrence; it is a waterland that spurs alcoholism, sexual adventurism and murder amongst its inhabitants, it is a materialization of what is wild and uncontrollable in nature and in history. Both Swift's and Carey's novels emphasize this breakdown in the progression of history and time within which events occur predictably and with reason. Instead, the

authors describe a world in which a single random incident in the life course may alter an entire sequence of events and affect numerous generations to come, a universe in which the zenith may not be nailed down, identified, or extrapolated.

- A final aspect of the crisis of the narrative caused by the destabilization of history involves the role of myth or story in creating this history. Tom Crick posits human beings as the "story-telling animal," a species that constructs tales in order to provide order and extract comfort from the seemingly random series of events that propel the universe through space. Crick affirms that for man, "wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker-buoys and trails signs of stories. He has to go on telling stories, he has to keep on making them up. As long as there's a story, it's all right"(Crik,Tom) . The creation of stories as a coping mechanism is just as evident in *Oscar and Lucinda*. Even before the death of her mother, Lucinda fictionalizes the relationship she has with Elizabeth, constructing a reminiscence of closeness that did not actually exist in order to escape the unwelcome incidences of loneliness, anger, and antagonism that actually permeated her childhood.
- Lucinda did not know her mother well. This was not what she imagined. All her life she dusted and polished the fiction she had made as a child: that they were "intimates", like sisters. In her memory there was always laughing and hair brushing, and tickling and cuddling . . . All these things really happened, but if they were remembered so vividly it was because anxiety and bad temper had been far more common.
- As readers, we too construct our own stories in Carey's novel in order to establish a sense of continuity and stability utilizing the haphazard set of facts the author bequeaths us. Carey sets up a narrative composed in equal parts of the backgrounds of two individuals — Oscar and Lucinda — and tied together by the narrative of a future Hopkins descendent. By nature we take this neat package as what it seems to be and create a story in which Oscar marries Lucinda and begets the progeny that eventually brings the narrator into the world in a future generation. Although Carey does distort this perfect chain of events by the introduction of the real bearer of Oscar's child in the chapter entitled "Orphans," this contradictory piece of evidence is so discordant with our notions as an audience of what the denouement should be, that we disregard it in the larger scope of the expected union of Oscar and Lucinda. In this sense, the author perpetuates the human need to fabricate stories to engender feelings of safety and comfort; Carey leads his readers to construct just this sort of story to reconcile all the disconnected facts of the novel and make them appear as a unified and logical tale.
- It is also possible to perceive the postmodern perspective on history as a disruption of the traditional *bildungsroman* blueprint of story-weaving. Suzanne Hader, utilizing a distilled definition

of *bildungsroman* derived from Marianne Hirsch's "The Novel of Formation as Genre," characterizes this genre as a type of story describing "a single individual's growth and development within the context of a defined social order. The growth process [in] . . . has been described as both 'an apprenticeship to life' and a 'search for meaningful existence within society'" (Carroll, Dennis), The novels of Carey and Swift, as well as Byatt, belie this conception of a character's positive development and socialization into society, however, as they bring into question the "building blocks" upon which the Victorian *bildungsroman* would be founded.

- In *Oscar and Lucinda*, Lucinda constructs her life around glass; it is this material which propels the woman's relationships and actions and which consequently motivates the direction of the novel as a whole. Glass in this postmodern work acts as a metaphor for the inherent insubstantiality of the traditional building blocks of life, for the physical properties of glass reveal it to be a substance that while seemingly resilient and indestructible from the exterior is in fact actually quite fragile. From the moment of Lucinda's first interest in the glassworks, Carey highlights the paradoxical nature of glass, and in doing so, questions its reliability as a foundation for a life and livelihood. "I am not suggesting that our founder purchased the glassworks to get more drops, it is clear that she had the seed planted, not once, but twice, and knew already the lovely contradictory nature of glass . . . that glass is a thing in disguise, an actor, is not a solid at all but a liquid...that it is invisible, solid, in short, a joyous and paradoxical thing, as good a material as any to build a life from" (Carey, Peter). In the end, this passage foreshadows the downfall of Lucinda's and Oscar's relationship, for it is glass that eventually causes Oscar to embark on a journey into the Outback, leaving Lucinda behind, and it is the glass church which ultimately becomes Oscar's tomb. The construction of this testament to their relationship — a sacred building made of the paradoxical substance — eventually leads to the destruction of their union, Oscar's death, and the loss of Lucinda's fortune. What the glass church does instigate, ironically, is the creation of a family lineage that is completely unexpected by the reader. This unanticipated conclusion also undermines the traditional concept of a "novel of growth." In the end, it is not romantic love that prompts the beginning of the Hopkin's clan but Miriam's manipulation of Oscar's circumstances, a set of circumstances that came to be due to one woman's passion for glass. The unreliability of glass as the foundation for a *bildungsroman* is substantiated by the outcome of a novel — traditional literary notions of growth, development, and the "search for a meaningful existence in society" are negated as a lineage is born from the remnants of deceit, death, and loss.

- Byatt's also suggests the postmodern notion of the unstable *bildungsroman*, but in this case, the literary form is undermined by the unreliable quest for knowledge. Maud and Roland live the lives of the dedicated scholar; their careers, private lives, and even romantic pursuits are controlled by the more

overarching quest to possess information about the past. As the fate of Christabel LaMotte and Randolph Ash becomes increasingly intertwined with their own, striving to possess knowledge about the lives, love, and poetry of these two Victorian authors imbues Maud and Roland with a sense of coherence in their lives denied by their academic study of the disjointed and postmodern in the setting of the late-twentieth century British university.

- Roland thought, partly with precise postmodernist pleasure and partly with a real element of superstitious dread, that he and Maud were being driven by a plot or fate that seemed, at least possibly, to be not their plot of fate but that of others . . . Coherence and closure are deep human desires that are presently unfashionable. But they are always both frightening and enchantingly desirable.

- The quest for truth, the search for a source of tautological knowledge — these are the elements of the traditional *bildungsroman*, and *Possession* does fulfill this promise of Victorian romantic and personal development to a certain degree. But Byatt's postmodern fiction also challenges this coherent structure of knowledge sought by Maud and Roland. The end of the novel reveals that the two academics will never discover the true end of this Victorian love story; they will always remain somewhat "in the dark." This is accentuated most succinctly in the postscript. "There are things that happen and leave no historical trace, are not spoken or written of, though it would be very wrong to say that subsequent events go on indifferently, all the same, as though such things had never been. Two people met, on a hot May day, and never mentioned their meeting. This is how it was"(Hughes, Robert) . Byatt states that the past, present and future are affected by certain events which will never be discovered by outside parties, which will never become part of the larger, more objective set of facts classified in university halls and libraries as knowledge. In this sense, certain aspects of human history are never fully knowable. Thus, that which drives Maud and Roland as well as the entire academic structure of the university, the belief that with the proper investigating techniques and dogged determinism all indicators of the past may be unearthed and analyzed, is revealed as a false assumption. In this literary conclusion, Byatt effectively undermines the larger quest for knowledge and concurrently strikes yet another crack in the foundation of the Victorian "building-block" novel.

- *Waterland* depicts a final blow to this shrine of the Victorian literary genre. One of the most entrenched aspects of the *bildungsroman* is its portrayal of the inevitability of progress — the progress of human empire, the conquest of man over nature, the belief in the superiority of the future over what has come before. In this sense, history provides the basis of the ultimate *bildungsroman* — the Victorian tale of human existence. From the meager beginnings of the first human beings, people have striven to develop, expand, and improve the quality and ease of their lives over the course of each subsequent

generation. This traditional notion of progressive history is cemented in the construction of linear time. By positing history as a cyclical rather than a linear function, Graham Swift upsets this notion of never-ending advancement and progress. The author's protagonist espouses a notion of history based upon the reclamation of what is lost, rather than upon the gain of what is not yet found.

- There's this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress, it doesn't go anywhere. Because as progress progresses the world can slip away. It's progress if you can stop the world slipping away. My humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. Which is repeatedly, never-endingly retrieving what is lost. A dogged, vigilant business. But you shouldn't go mistaking the reclamation of land for the building of empires.
- Through his ruminations, Tom Crick dashes the historical significance not only of linear advancement but also of imperialism; he destroys any notions of "life-building" based upon the "building of empires" and by doing so contradicts what was considered to be the epitome of Victorian progress. Swift's deconstruction of progressive time and human history is yet another indicator of the downfall of the Victorian *bildungsroman* and the crisis of narrative in the postmodern novel.

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### Conclusion

In conclusion, Peter Carey's text give the moral standards of Australian colonial history which has been based on colonial experiences as well as the desire of writer to reconstruct incidents and explain what they find while visiting the places and meditating over the actions. In brief the significant aspect of Peter Carey's fiction can be mentioned as:

- Effects of colonialism
- The coming of the age of the hero or 'rites de passage'.
- The story of three to five generations of the family.
- The ex-convicts outlaws and outcast criminals.
- The confinements of egotism and the outer world.
- Surrealism and magic realism.
- 'Feminism' Matilda image'
- The male terrorism and their exploitation of women.
- The Gothic elements.
- The Grotesque and the tragic irony.
- The illegal self and true or false self-honour
- The Jest, wit and satire
- The parent motif
- The gender Battles
- Manias and Phobias
- The order and disorder in the society.
- The heroes quest for Truth
- The existential dilemma
- Surrogate parent [mother or father]
- The racial conflicts obsession with art and music.
- Skepticism and interrogation
- Moral struggle
- Emotional drifts
- Pedophilia and child abuse.
- Sexual diversities and perversions
- Lust for power, profit and patriotism
- The class coda [have's and heaven's]
- The cultural conflicts and survival efforts
- The negative feeling like hatred rivalry and menace.
- Inner and outer violence.
- Attack on the white masters and their exploitation.
- The parables and escapism of evil
- The ethics, agitation and revenge of women.
- The psychic tortures and physical sufferings
- The modern aimless worlds of hippies and punks.
- The chess like game plans in political world.
- The description of childhood adolescence youth, middle and old age.
- Female relationship – mother, wife, beloved, daughter, daughter-in-law.
- The voice of the suppressed but not a cry in the wilderness.

Like Cloud street and Bliss, Oscar and Lucinda was first a novel, then a film and then an opera. Should the opera viewer encounter these other versions first to get a true understanding of the plot and characters? Peter Carey's novel Oscar and Lucinda contains short chapters where the characters are developed into distinct personas. The reader gains an insight into their very being. There is a duality of complexity and simplicity.

The plot is a love story with a tragic end. It explores the relationships between the key characters, their addiction to gambling and the personal motivations for that addiction as well as an important element – that of “chance”. The film version (1997) starring Ralph Fiennes and Cate Blanchett, has so many successful elements - scenery, staging, a cohesive story line which is not broken by scene changes with titles or chapter headings - as well as the combined interpretations of the director and individual actors.

Thus we come to the opera already familiar with the story, perhaps having also seen the film. The two operatic acts were broken into scene changes that presented the overall outline of the story. Because of the limited space and staging possibilities everything was minimal.

In Oscar and Lucinda, repressive sexuality is depicted in both Oscar and Lucinda. The act of procreation is just that, an act, it carries no further significance or expression. We are driven by these sexual desires, and in turn are subject to them. After getting familiar with each other, they are unable to experience a successful coital relationship; Oscar fulfills his sexual needs with Miriam Chadwick. In Lucinda’s closing monologue, for example, she muses about sexuality and is driven, so to speak, to strive after those very things she desires. In this manner, Lucinda’s sexuality is a driven or desire-based need to satisfy specific sexual ends. In Schopenhauer’s ‘disinterested’ world, these strivings and desires are manifestations of a will-full humiliation; and as such, deprive us of autonomy. Schopenhauer depicts sex as an interest, in that it draws us away from ourselves. If sex is a driven activity, then it has to be or have an object of desire or drive, which requires an act of will. In this manner there could be no disinterested sex; it is driven by an object or desire outside of us. In Carey’s novel, sex would be a way out, a reprieve from disinterestedness. But as sexual needs or desires are seldom fulfilled, characters such as Oscar and even Lucinda, are never given that reprieve. Sexual fulfillment, then, would be a way out, albeit fleetingly, from the cold dispassion of disinterestedness, the aloneness and solipsism of the Careyan characters. It is important to note that Schopenhauer’s conception of the aesthetic, which includes creativity, is best understood as a culmination of his philosophy of the ‘will’ and its application to the metaphysics of thought itself. He searches for a better notion of what it is to be creative, and finds it in that application of the will-less activity of aesthetic apprehension towards painting, poetry, literature and music.

The sets were few and sparse, the characters - except for the two main protagonists - played many different roles each. It was very clear, due to clever costuming and quick changes, which character was played at any time but still audience members had to employ their imagination to grasp the innate characterizations of the different roles. The libretto was highly narrative and kept to the important details

of the novel's plot..Peter Carey uses every time a new theme and technique to rewrite the history of Australia by choosing different period in his plot-development.

Next his technique refers to the ancient history of Australia. The present chaotic situation and some stray suggestions for the future of his people and his country are his principle motifs in his fiction. His latest novels are related to Japan and America. His recent books are blamed for rewriting history of America rather than of Australia. Carey has been living in America for more than 20 years. It is unlike Raja Rao and Nirad Chaudhari from India, who stayed away but wrote about India and Indians. Perhaps Carey's last books related to Australia are '30 days in Sidney': A distorted Account.

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**HISTORICAL NEGATIONISM IN ‘AN ERA OF  
DARKNESS’ BY SHASHI THAROOR**

**Dissertation**

*Submitted to Amity University Rajasthan*

*for the award of*



**Master's Degree in English**

*Submitted by*

**Ms Indira Das Gupta**

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**AMITY UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN  
JUNE 2020**

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Ms Indira Das Gupta has completed her dissertation titled 'Historical Negationism in An Era of Darkness by Shashi Tharoor' under my supervision for the degree of Masters in English of Amity University, Rajasthan.

To the best of my knowledge and belief the dissertation embodies the work of candidate herself and fulfils the requirement of ordinance related to Master degree in English of the University. This research work is according to the standard both in respect of content and language for being referred to the examiner.

Place: Rajasthan

Research guide

Date:

(Dr Parul Mishra)

## DECLARATION

I, Indira Das Gupta, declare that this dissertation is the record of the research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr Paul Mishra at the Amity School of Languages, Amity University Rajasthan. I submit this dissertation for the award of the degree of Masters in English of Amity University, Rajasthan.

I further declare that this thesis has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree/diploma of this or any other University.

Signature of the student

Signature of Guide

Date:

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# CONTENT

1) INTRODUCTION

2) ABOUT THE AUTHOR

3) HISTORICAL NEGATIONISM: ASPECTS AND RAMIFICATION

4) BRITISH RAJ IN INDIA: BENEDICTION OR NEMESIS

5) ORIENTALIST PERSUASION OF BRITISH TOWARDS INDIA

6) SHASHI THAROOR'S OXFORD CONFABULATION

7) CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS IN 'AN ERA OF DARKNESS'

8) CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

## INTRODUCTION

Historical negationism which is also known as “denialism” is a distortion of historical facts and records. It is re-interpretation of historical records and questioning the assented thoughts and views regarding it. History is a social resource that helps in shaping and defining the national identity. Historical negationism helps in the development of nation’s culture by redefining the national status in a transitional world.

The postulation of history is crucial part of human life. It induces the impression of human action, changes, roles, and the involvement of material circumstances in human interaction, relationship and worldly affairs. It helps to extrapolate the putative meaning of historical events. It is commonly said that present has evolved out of the past. Through the lens of history we are able to understand the existence of society in its present form. It suggests the chances of better understanding our present circumstances and situations. These reflections of past events, situations, choices and forces help us to sketch the possible framework of our present.

The chief objective of my research would be to re-interpret Indian history through Shashi Tharoor’s *An Era of Darkness*. While going through the Indian history, the period from 1858 to 1947 has always been controversial as it is a period of direct British rule over Indian subcontinent. The British came to India as merchants through East India Company. The East India Company initially established itself by owing land and properties, conducting free trade in mutually beneficial relationship. Its main aim was to sideline other European companies and establish direct control over India. The British dismantled the existing political institution, fomented communal division and systematic political discrimination with the promising attitude by securing and maintaining British imperialism. The division between ‘Hindu and Muslim’ and overthrowing the ‘Nawab of Bengal’ are the prominent examples of their ‘Divide et impera’ policy. The research deals with the critical analysis of the issues voiced by Tharoor.

The construction of Indian Railways and roads are often pointed out as the blessings of British rule in India. But real reason behind their 'British Boon' is that it helps the British living in India to move around and carry all the raw materials to the ports to be shipped to Britain. The establishment of education system and introducing English language is another blessing that British bestowed upon us. But in reality it was only introduced with a motive of getting Indians do clerical jobs under British officials. The British helped in globalisation by commercialising the Indian agricultural sector. This commercialisation was introduced with the motive of gaining revenue by trading them in other countries. The farmers were exploited and force to grow crops for the British government. The research is concerned with understanding the iniquities of British colonialism and the nocuous political, social and economic changes that occurred within this 200years.

Shashi Tharoor is notable for his articulacy and enjoys popularity on online platform such as YouTube. His books and speeches stands testament of the depravity of the British Raj. His speech on 'British own reparation to its former colonies' delivered at Oxford Union in 2015 was praised as ground breaking in India and inspired him to write a book. His notable works include: India Shastra: 'Reflection on Nation in Time', 'The Elephant, the Tiger and the Cell Phone', 'India: The Future is now', 'An Era of Darkness', 'Why I am a Hindu'.

The British Imperialism had for long advocated itself as a founder of globalisation and enlightened despotism conducted for the benefit of India. But in reality, no Indian during the colonial era was allowed to regard themselves as British, he was always a slave and a subject under the mercy of his colonizer, never a citizen.

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century India's share of worlds economy was 23 percent, which was equal to all of Europe put together .But after the colonization of India under the British Raj for nearly 200 years and by the time they departed, the India's share of the world's economy has dropped to less than 4 percent.

Shashi Tharoor in his book 'An Era of Darkness' gives a gripping tale of what India has endured under the British Raj- outrageous humiliation on humongous scale and violence. He says-

"Britishers came to India and in 200 years plundered devastated and looted and by the time they left the 90percent of Indian population was below poverty line"

Tharoor quotes Will Durant's remark that British's 'conscious and deliberate bleeding of India... (Was the) greatest crime in all history.' Almost thirty five million people died due to acts of commission and omission by British- in famine, epidemics, communal riots and wholesale slaughter like reprisal killing after 1857 War of Independence, Jalliwala Bagh massacre. Tharoor in his book gives accounts of the social events and various apologies for the empire that had been articulated by otherwise historians as a 'Jolly Good Things'.

'Pile on the brown man's burden

And' if ye rouse his hate,

Meet his old fashioned reasons

With maxims up to date

With shells and dumdum bullets

A hundred times made plain

The brown man's loss must ever

Imply the white man's gain'. – (Labouchère Henry, Brown Man's Burden, 1899)

(It was a response to Rudyard Kipling's poem 'Whiteman's Burden'. It offers an indictment of imperial hypocrisy, with particular emphasis on the violence employed in subjugating countries)

'The Era of Darkness' is that account of history where Indians were trampled upon by the British boot of colonial rule, and what added fuel to the fire was that they had to pay for it,



in cash, in kind, and in blood. The book initiates with 'The Case for India', a work by Will Durant that "tore apart the self-serving justifications of the British for their long and shameless record of rapacity in India."

As Will Durant wrote:

"The British conquest of India was the invasion and destruction of a high civilization by a trading company (The British East India Company) utterly without scruple and or principle, careless of art and greedy of gain, over-running with fire and sword a country temporarily disordered and helpless, bribing and murdering, annexing and stealing, and beginning that career of illegal and 'legal' plunder which has now (1930) gone on for one hundred and seventy-three years" (Durant Will, The Case for India,1930,pg. 7)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shashi Tharoor is a prominent Indian politician, writer, United Nations peace-keeper, refugee worker, human rights activist and former International diplomat. He is currently serving as the Member of Parliament Lok Sabha from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala since 2009. Tharoor was the former Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information. Apart from serving as a reigning MP, he also serves as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology and All India Professionals Congress. (“Shashi Tharoor.” Wikipedia)

Tharoor has not only established a reputation as a diplomat with knowledge of diverse subjects but also carved out a name as an author and essayist. He is a preeminent litterateur who has penned eighteen bestselling works of fiction and non-fiction since 1981. His books centred on India and its history, culture, film, politics, society and more related themes. He has also authored several columns and articles for publications such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, TIME, Newsweek and The Times of India. (“Shashi Tharoor.”Wikipedia) Tharoor got a Sahitya Academy Award for his book ‘An Era of Darkness’.

Shashi Tharoor was born on 9 March 1956 in London, United Kingdom to a Malayali couple. At the age of 2 Tharoor along with his parents returned to India. He joined the Montfort Brother of St. Gabriel in Tamil Nadu. Later on Tharoor joined St. Xavier’s Collegiate School, Kolkata for his high school studies. He graduated from St. Stephen’s College, University of Delhi and went to the United States to obtain an MA in International Relations. Tharoor further obtained his Masters of Arts in Law and Diplomacy in 1977 and his PhD in International Relations and Affairs in 1978. While pursuing his doctorate degree he was awarded Robert B. Stewart prize for best student and was the youngest person to receive a doctorate in the history of the Fletcher School. (“Shashi Tharoor”Wikipedia). At Fletcher, Shashi Tharoor helped found and was the first Editor of the Fletcher Forum of International Affairs, a journal now in its 35th year. Dr. Tharoor was also awarded an honorary D.Litt. by the University of Puget Sound and a Doctorate Honoris Causa in History by the University of Bucharest.(“Shashi Tharoor”Wikipedia)

Tharoor is also exalted for his articulacy while speaking as his speeches seems to enjoy a vogue on online platform such as You Tube. Dr. Tharoor is an internationally known speaker on India's recent transformation and future prospects, globalisation, freedom of the press, human rights, literacy, Indian culture, and India's present and potential influence in world politics. His harangue regarding the impact of education have gathered over millions views on online platform. Moreover, Dr.Tharoor is recognised for his opinions and ideas on wide range of topics such as economics, history, governance and geopolitics due to his well-regarded educational attainment and his broad experience at United States. A compelling and effective speaker, he is fluent in English and French as well as in Malayalam and Hindi. Tharoor has lectured widely on India, and is often quoted for his observations, including, "India is not, as people keep calling it, an underdeveloped country, but rather, in the context of its history and cultural heritage, a highly developed one in an advanced state of decay." He also coined a comparison of India's "thali" to the American "melting pot": "If America is a melting pot, then to me India is a thali – a selection of sumptuous dishes in different bowls. Each tastes different, and does not necessarily mix with the next, but they belong together on the same plate, and they complement each other in making the meal a satisfying repast".

## LITERARY CAREER

Tharoor has authored numerous books. Apart from being a renowned writer, he is a well-known columnist and has written for India's best known English newspapers. Tharoor wrote for The Hindu (2001-2008) and also wrote a weekly column 'Shashi on Sunday' in The Times of India. After his resignation as the Minister of State for External Affairs, Tharoor started writing a fortnightly column on foreign policy issues in the Deccan Chronicle. He has also been a columnist for magazine such as Gentlemen and Indian Express newspaper. He is a frequent contributor to Newsweek International and the International Herald Tribune. ("Shashi Tharoor." Wikipedia) His op-eds and book reviews have appeared in the Washington Post, the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, amongst other papers. His monthly column, "India Reawakening", distributed by Project Syndicate, appears in 80 newspapers around the world. Tharoor's monthly column, "India Reawakening", distributed by Project Syndicate, appears in 80 newspapers around the world. ("Shashi Tharoor." Wikipedia)

Tharoor began writing at the age of 6, and his first published story appeared in the Sunday edition of *The Free Press Journal*, in Mumbai at age 10. (“Shashi Tharoor.” Wikipedia) Each of his books has been a bestseller in India. *The Great Indian Novel* had had 43 reprints as of October 2014, *The Elephant, the Tiger and The Cellphone* has also undergone several hardback re-prints. His books have been cited numerous times. President Bill Clinton cited Shashi Tharoor's book *India from Midnight to the Millennium* in his speech to the Indian parliament in 2000. (“Shashi Tharoor.” Wikipedia) Shashi Tharoor's non-fiction work *An Era of Darkness*, published in the UK as *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*, arising out of a speech he delivered at the Oxford Union, was published in 2016. It sold over 50,000 copies in eight hardback reprints within six months of publication. The UK edition rose to Number 1 in the London Evening Standard bestseller lists. . (“Shashi Tharoor.” Wikipedia)

Tharoor has authored several fiction and non-fiction. His fictional work ‘*The Great Indian Novel*’ takes the story of the Mahabharata, the Indian epic, and recasts and resets it in the context of the Indian Independence Movement and the first three decades post-independence. Figures from Indian history are transformed into characters from mythology, and the mythical story of India is retold as a history of Indian independence and subsequent history, up through the 1970 (ETimes). ‘*Show Business*’ (1992) parodies and satirizes formulaic Bollywood cinema, using it as a metaphor in an attempt to raise and answer questions about contemporary India and Indians. In ‘*Riot*’, Tharoor experiments brilliantly with narrative form, chronicling the mystery of Priscilla Hart’s death through the often contradictory accounts of a dozen or more characters. Intellectually provocative and emotionally charged, it is a novel about the ownership of history, about love, hate, cultural commission, religious fanaticism and the impossibility of knowing the truth. (ETimes) ‘*India: From Midnight to the Millennium*’ (1997) discusses a wide range of topics like caste, democracy in India, Indira Gandhi, the partition of India, and its transition from a socialist economy to a free market economy. (ETimes) Shashi Tharoor argues compellingly that India stands at the intersection of the most significant questions facing the world at the end of the twentieth century. Through his books Tharoor attempts to demystify the complex issues that have been thrown up by the India's transformation over the years.

His book 'India Shastra: Reflections on the Nation in our Time' (2015) brings his insights into Indian society, economics and politics up to date in wide-ranging short essays that extend the narrative right up to the present time.(ETimes) In the book 'An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India' (2016) Tharoor reveals with acuity, impeccable research, and trademark wit, just how disastrous British rule was for India. Besides examining the many ways in which the colonizers exploited India, ranging from the drain of national resources to Britain, the destruction of the Indian textile, steel-making and shipping industries, and the negative transformation of agriculture, he demolishes the arguments of Western and Indian apologists for Empire on the supposed benefits of British rule, including democracy and political freedom, the rule of law, and the railways. The book gave him a Sahitya Akademi Award (2019). In the book, 'Why I Am A Hindu' Tharoor writes about the history of Hinduism and its core tenets, as well as socio-cultural developments in India that relate to the religion, while elucidating his own religious convictions. It is a repudiation of Hindu nationalism, and its rise in Indian society, which relied upon an interpretation of the religion which was markedly different from the one with which he had grown up, and was familiar with. (ETimes)

## HISTORICAL NEGATIONISM: ASPECTS AND RAMIFICATION

The term "negationism" (négationnisme) was first coined by the French historian Henry Rousso in his 1987 book *The Vichy Syndrome* which looked at the French popular memory of Vichy France and the French Resistance. Historical negationism which is also known as "denialism" is a distortion of historical facts and records. It is re-interpretation of historical records and questioning the assented thoughts and views regarding it. History is a social resource that helps in shaping and defining the national identity. ('Historical Negationism' Wikipedia) Historical negationism helps in the development of nation's culture by redefining the national status in a transitional world. In remembering the past, we make use of objective historical facts, drawing on such facts in order to shape our present-day world-view.

But when we engage in historical negationism (an illegitimate, non-academic type of historical revisionism done with the aim of supporting a particular political agenda), earnest attempts to understand and consider history are utterly stymied. ('Historical Negationism'. Whitman Wire) Historical negationism and the failure to acknowledge historical reality is shockingly prevalent. It is not just an Indian phenomenon but it can be recognised in global history. Taking the example, Turkey flatly denies that the Armenian genocide ever took place and Japan's education system fails to mention heinous war crimes committed by the nation in World War II. Turkey flatly denies that the Armenian genocide ever took place and Japan's education system fails to mention heinous war crimes committed by the nation in World War II. ('Historical Neagtionism' Whitman Wire)

History is a continuing dialogue, between the present and the past. Interpretations of the past are subject to change in response to new evidence, new questions asked of the evidence, new perspectives gained by the passage of time. There is no single, eternal, and immutable "truth" about past events and their meaning. Historical negationism is a way of revising history and fixing misconceptions and falsified information within historical narratives. The process is about going through different historical accounts that contain fallacies and revising them with new facts. Revisionists use facts to disprove common misconceptions in popular history. New artefacts, discoveries, declassified information, and personal stories

help to reshape the standard, public accounts. Revisionism utilizes different social lenses, including the political, economic, racial and sexual, and has the ability to disrupt historical narratives that have often focused on white, wealthy men. (“Critical Reading and Analysis of History”)

George Santayana has rightly said – “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” It is easy to take comfort in the idea that the world has changed for the better and such historical atrocities are things of the past, it is profoundly troubling that global remembrance of the past is so clouded by political rhetoric. Understanding history holistically is of paramount importance. (‘Historical Negationism’ Whitman Wire) For every glorious human innovation and brilliant idea, there are also acts of senseless violence and brutal destruction that cannot possibly be justified. Denying the events we find painful doesn’t change the fact that they happened. Our present-day political systems and experiences are built on historical events; in order to effectively move into the future, we must understand history in its entirety – the good, the bad and the ugly included.

Negationism is defined as, “the denial of historic crimes (‘Helen Goggins’ Critical reading and analysis in history). Tharoor in his book ‘An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India’ encourages Indians to think objectively about their history on the basis of primary evidence, rather than take refuge in pleasing platitudes that have metastasized into unsupportable speculations and mindless sloganeering in the service of political and ideological fashions. The practice of historical negationism is crucial in presenting an objective, academic, and truth based narrative on a particular historical event. The historian must be willing to look at history, and accepted narratives, and be willing to adapt their perspective based on new evidence, or analyse an event from a different perspective. Usually, the purpose of historical negation is to achieve a national, political aim, by transferring war-guilt, demonizing an enemy, providing an illusion of victory, or preserving a friendship. The principal functions of negationist history are the abilities to control ideological influence and to control political influence. In "History Men Battle over Britain's Future", Michael d'Ancona said that historical negationists "seem to have been given a collective task in nation's cultural development, the full significance of which is emerging only now: To redefine national status in a changing world". History is a social resource that contributes to shaping national identity, culture, and the public memory.

## BRITISH RAJ IN INDIA: BENEDICTION OR NEMESIS?

Though trade with India had been highly valued by Europeans since ancient times, the long route between them was subject to many potential obstacles and obfuscations from middlemen, making trade unsafe, unreliable, and expensive. This was especially true after the collapse of the Mongol empire and the rise of the Ottoman Empire all but blocked the ancient Silk Road. As Europeans, led by the Portuguese, began to explore maritime navigation routes to bypass middlemen, the distance of the venture required merchants to set up fortified posts.

The British entrusted this task to the East India Company, which initially established itself in India by obtaining permission from local authorities to own land, fortify its holdings, and conduct trade duty-free in mutually beneficial relationships. The company's national dominance started after it began to engage itself in antipathy; working to side-line the rival European companies that pre-existed in Indian market. They eventually overthrew the Nawab of Bengal and soon installed a puppet in 1757. The company's control over Bengal was effectively consolidated in the 1770s when Warren Hastings took control over the nawab's administrative offices to Calcutta (now Kolkata) under his oversight. By the same time British parliament began to successfully control The East India Company through consecutive acts- the successive measures passed by the British parliament to regulate Indian government. Soon Bengal came under indirect control of the British government. The next eight decades were filled with continuous conflagrations, treaties and confiscations in order to extend and establish the company's dominance over the Indian subcontinent. The company vanquished India to the determination of British governors and merchants.

The area controlled by the East India Company grew over time. Eventually, it governed directly or indirectly an area that included modern Bangladesh, most of southern India, and nearly all the territory along the Ganges River in the north. Officially, the British government regulated the East India Company's efforts both in London and in India. Until the beginning of the 19th century, the company ruled India with little interference from the



British government. The company even had its own army, led by British officers and staffed by sepoy, or Indian soldiers. The governor of Bombay, Mount Stuart Elphinstone, referred to the sepoy army as “a delicate and dangerous machine, which a little mismanagement may easily turn against us.” At first, the British treasured India more for its potential than its actual profit. The Industrial Revolution had turned Britain into the world’s workshop, and India was a major supplier of raw materials for that workshop. Its 300 million people were also a large potential market for British made goods. It is not surprising, then, that the British considered India the brightest “jewel in the crown,” the most valuable of all of Britain’s colonies.

The British set up restrictions that prevented the Indian economy from operating on its own. British policies called for India to produce raw materials for British manufacturing and to buy British goods. In addition, Indian competition with British goods was prohibited. For example, India’s own handloom textile industry was almost put out of business by imported British textiles. Cheap cloth and ready-made clothes from England flooded the Indian market and drove out local producers. On August 2, 1858, Parliament passed the Government of India Act, transferring British power over India from the company to the crown. The merchant company’s residual powers were vested in the secretary of state for India, a minister of Great Britain’s cabinet, who would preside over the India Office in London and be assisted and advised, especially in financial matters, by a Council of India, which consisted initially of 15 Britons, 7 of whom were elected from among the old company’s court of directors and 8 of whom were appointed by the crown. Though some of Britain’s most powerful political leaders became secretaries of state for India in the latter half of the 19th century, actual control over the government of India remained in the hands of British viceroys—who divided their time between Calcutta (Kolkata) and Simla (Shimla)—and their “steel frame” of approximately 1,500 Indian Civil Service (ICS) officials posted “on the spot” throughout British India. (‘British raj’ Britannica) The typical attitude of British officials who went to India during that period was, as the English writer Rudyard Kipling put it, to “take up the white man’s burden.” By and large, throughout the interlude of their Indian service to the crown, Britons lived as super-bureaucrats, “Pukka Sahibs,” remaining as aloof as possible from “native contamination” in their private clubs and well-guarded military cantonments (called camps), which were constructed beyond the walls of the old, crowded “native” cities in that era.

## POLITICAL CONSTIGENCY

The East India Company acquired an emplacement in India in 1695 and thus they started expanding their territory in order to control until they became the dominant authority in the Indian subcontinent. After the Indian Rebellion of 1857 the British Government nationalised the Company creating the British Raj. The Company lost all its administrative authorities; its Indian possessions, including its armed troops, were taken over by the Crown pursuant to the provisions of the Government of India Act 1858. A new British government department, the India Council, was created to handle the governance of India, and its head, the Secretary of State for India, was entrusted with formulating Indian policy. The Governor-General of India gained a new title 'Viceroy of India', and implemented the policies devised by the India council. As a result of their relatively small presence in the country the British resorted to many methods to retain control of India. The East India Company increased its power in India by playing local rulers off against each other and the declining Mughal Empire.

### Doctrine of lapse

The Doctrine of Lapse was an annexation policy broadly abided by Lord Dalhousie when he became India's Governor-General from 1848 to 1856. It was used as an administrative policy for the extension of British Paramount. It was a corollary to the doctrine of paramount, by which Great Britain, as the ruling power of the Indian subcontinent, claimed the superintendence of the subordinate Indian states and so also the regulation of their succession. According to the doctrine, any Indian princely state under the suzerainty of the British East India Company, as a vassal state under the British subsidiary system, it would have its princely status abolished ,if the ruler was either "manifestly incompetent or died without a male heir". The latter supplanted the long-established right of an Indian sovereign without an heir to choose a successor. In addition, the British decided whether potential rulers were competent enough. The doctrine and its applications were widely regarded by many Indians as illegitimate. Some other prominent states that became victims were Satara, Jaitpur, Sambalpur, Udaipur, and Nagpur.

### Direct and indirect rule

Direct rule needed superseding of foregoing political institutions and substitute them with centralised, territory-wide, and bureaucratic legal-administrative institutions that were presided by colonial official. Indirect rule was a form of colonial domination via collaboration with indigenous intermediaries who controlled regional political institutions. Leading colonial officials believed indirect rule was more adaptive and culturally sensitive, far superior to direct rule, in that indirect rule allowed for social development through gradual change from within rather than shattering the social fabric, producing opposition from the local populace. Indirect rule is less confrontational and more collaborative, therefore a better means for domination. The colonial administration recognised around 600 semi-autonomous princely states, nominally advised by a British resident; the states possessed one quarter of the country's population. British administrators also employed tax collectors and landlords even in the more "directly" ruled regions of the country and paid for the landlord's loyalty with large tracts of land and some power to collect taxes for personal use.

#### Civil Services

The Civil Service was brought into existence by Lord Cornwallis. We know that the East India Company had from the beginning carried on its trade in the East through servants who were paid low wages but who were permitted to trade privately. Later, when the Company became a territorial power, the same servants assumed administrative functions. They now became extremely corrupt. By oppressing local weavers and artisans, merchants and zamindars, by extorting bribes and 'gifts' from rajas and nawabs, by indulging in illegal private trade, they amassed untold wealth with which they retired to England. Clive and Warren Hastings made attempts to put an end to their corruption, but were only partially successful. Cornwallis, who came to India as Governor-General in 1786, was determined to purify the administration, but he realised that the Company's servants would not give honest and efficient service so long as they were not given adequate salaries. He, therefore, enforced the rules against private trade and acceptance of presents and bribes by officials with strictness. At the same time, he raised the salaries of the Company's servants.

#### Divide Et Imperia

The strategy of "Divide and Rule" was employed by most imperial powers in Indian subcontinent. The British and French backed various Indian states in conflicts between each other, both as a means of undermining each other's influence and consolidating their authority. Further, it is argued that the British used the strategy to destroy the harmony between various religions and use it for their benefits. All communal riots began after 1857, artificially engineered by the British authorities. The British collector would secretly call the Hindu Pundit, pay him money, and tell him to speak against Muslims, and similarly he would secretly call the Maulvi, pay him money, and tell him to speak against Hindus. This communal poison was injected into our body politic year after year and decade after decade.

### ECONOMIC CONTIGENCY

The financial rules observed by British rule caused the fast transformation of India's economic system into a colonial financial system whose nature and shape were determined by way of the wants of the economic system of British. Throughout British rule Indian population confronted common famines, had one in all of the world's lowest existence expectations, suffered from pervasive deficiency ailment and was for the maximum part illiterate. British conquerors wholly the everyday structure of the Indian economic system.

India became increasingly valuable to the British after they established a railroad network there. Railroads transported raw products from the interior to the ports and manufactured goods back again. Most of the raw materials were agricultural products produced on plantations. Plantation crops included tea, indigo, coffee, cotton, and jute. Another crop was opium. The British shipped opium to China and exchanged it for tea, which they then sold in England. Trade in these crops was closely tied to international events. For example, the Crimean War in the 1850s cut off the supply of Russian jute to Scottish jute mills. This boosted the export of raw jute from Bengal, a province in India. Likewise, cotton production in India increased when the Civil War in the United States cut off supplies of cotton for British textile mills. On the negative side, the British held much of the political and economic power. The British restricted Indian-owned industries such as cotton textiles. The emphasis on cash crops resulted in a loss of self-sufficiency for many villagers. The conversion to cash crops reduced food production, causing famines in the late 1800s. The British officially adopted a hands-off policy regarding Indian religious and social customs. Even so, the increased presence of missionaries and the racist attitude of most British

officials threatened traditional Indian life. They exploited Indian sources and over excited archipelago Company came to India bit by bit entered Indian politics, started out divide and rule policy and take hold of the power. When the British were successful in establishing their factories and trading bases, they soon started to influence and highlight the benefits of trade with then to merchant class especially in places like Surat and Kolkata- the major trade centres. They soon lure the merchant class away from the regional and provincial rulers. This was one of the major reasons for the fall of the Nawab of Bengal. The company recruited James Steuart in 1772 as an advisor who recommended creating a central bank and making local bankers and moneylender's directors to soak their pooled wealth back into the economy, as well as to establish efficacious system of taxation to withhold the capital from falling back into their hands. Later when the company increased its dominance over the Indian subcontinent and started acting as its government, Lord Cornwallis in 1793 abolished the right of the local landholders to collect the taxes and dues on trade. Thus this strategy cut off the feudal power of the kings and princes, minimising their military strength and demoting them to the status of landlords.

Commercial policy:

From 1600 to 1757 the East India Company's role in India was that of a trading corporation which brought goods or precious metals into India and exchanged them for Indian goods like textiles and spices, which it sold abroad. Its profits came primarily from the sale of Indian goods abroad. Naturally, it tried constantly to open new markets for Indian goods in Britain and other countries. Thereby, it increased the export of Indian manufacturers and thus encouraged their production. This is the reason why Indian rulers tolerated and even encouraged the establishment of the Company's factories in India. All of a sudden, dress fashions changed and light cotton textiles began to replace the coarse woollens of the English. Before, the author of the famous novel, Robinson Crusoe, complained that Indian cloth had "crept into our houses, our closets and bed chambers; curtains, cushions, chairs, and at last beds themselves were nothing but calicos or India stuffs". After the battle of Plessey in 1757, the pattern of the Company's commercial relations with India underwent a qualitative change. Now the Company could use its political control over Bengal to acquire monopolistic control over Indian trade and production and push its Indian trade. Moreover, it utilised the revenues of Bengal to finance its export of Indian goods. The activity of the

Company should have encouraged Indian manufacturers, for Indian exports to Britain went up from £1.5 million in 1750-51 to £5.8 million in 1797-98, but this was not so. The Company used its political power to dictate terms to the weavers of Bengal who were forced to sell their products at a cheaper and dictated price, even at a loss. (‘Economic policies of British’) Thus, the commercial policy of the East India Company after 1813 was guided by the needs of British industry. Its main aim was to transform India into a consumer of British manufactures and a supplier of raw materials.

#### The Drain of Wealth Policy:

The British exported to Britain part of India’s wealth and resources for which India got no adequate economic or material return. This ‘economic drain’ was peculiar to British rule. Even the worst of previous Indian governments had spent the revenue they extracted from the people inside the country. Whether they spent it on irrigation canals and trunk roads, or on palaces, temples and mosques, or on wars and conquests, or even on personal luxury, it ultimately encouraged Indian trade and industry or gave employment to Indians. This was so because even foreign conquerors, like the Mughals, soon settled in India and made it their home. But the British remained perpetual foreigners. Englishmen, working and trading in India, nearly always planned to go back to Britain, and the Indian government was controlled by a foreign company of merchants and the government of Britain. The British, consequently, spent a large part of the taxes and income they derived from the Indian people not in India but in Britain, their home country. The drain of wealth from Bengal began in 1757 when the Company’s servants began to carry home immense fortunes extorted from Indian rulers, zamindars, merchants and the common people. They sent home nearly £6 million between 1758 and 1765. This amount was more than four times the total land revenue collection of the Nawab of Bengal in 1765. This amount of drain did not include the trading profits of the Company which were often no less illegally derived. In 1765 the Company acquired the Diwani of Bengal and thus gained control over its revenues. The Company, even more than its servants, soon directly organised the drain. It began to purchase Indian goods out of the revenue of Bengal and to export them. These purchases were known as ‘Investments’. Thus Bengal’s revenue was sent to England. For example, from 1765 to 1770, the Company sent out nearly £4 million worth of goods or about 33 per cent of the net revenue of Bengal.

### Land revenue policy:

As agriculture has been the most important economic activity of the Indian people for many centuries and it is the main source of income. Naturally, land revenue management and administration needs a proper care to handle because it was the most important source of income for the state too. The establishment of East India Company worked as the tool of colonial plunder which operated through monopoly of trade and realization of land revenue. To annihilate the traditional Asiatic mode of production, the British Monocracy had converted India into its landed estates and hastens the process of commercial revolution in India. They unleashed far reaching changes in Indian agrarian structure in order to maximize extraction which slowed down the country's progressive development and raised the burden on the Indian peasantry. To consolidate political sword, the English East India Company inherited the institutional form of agrarian system from the Mughal. They super-imposed a system over the existing land settlement pattern in tune with British customs and laws relating to land. Accordingly, government sponsored cooperative movement through different land revenue experiments and brought several changes in land tenure, property relation, agrarian productivity, food supply, marketing, agriculture indebtedness and cultivated land in British-India. Gradually, all these changes transformed Indian economic history from mercantile phase to finance capitalism.

After gaining full control over Bengal in 1765 Company follow traditional land assessment system in the starting but gradually modified the existing land settlement from time to time to collect maximum possible land revenue which was a need of colonial administration.<sup>3</sup> They initiated auction based farming system as the first experiment in 1772, where land revenue collection rights had been allotted on contract basis. This farming system slowly developed into three major land settlements- permanent settlement in Bengal, Raiyatwari in Madras and Bombay, and Mahalwari in North Western Provinces. The Permanent Settlement, also known as the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, was an agreement between the East India Company and Bengali landlords to fix revenues to be raised from land that had far-reaching consequences for both agricultural methods and productivity in the entire British Empire and the political realities of the Indian countryside. The Permanent Settlement was introduced first in Bengal and Bihar and later in the south district of Madras and Varanasi. The system eventually spread all over northern India by a series of regulations

dated 1 May 1793. The main aim of the Permanent Settlement was to resolve the problem of agrarian crisis and distress that had resulted in lower agricultural output. The British officials thought that investment in agriculture, trade, and the resources of the revenue of the State could be increased by agriculture. For this, permanently fixing the revenue and securing the rights of property was done- a system came to be known as the 'Permanent Settlement'. The British thought that once the revenue demands of the State were permanently set; there would be a regular flow of tax income. The system failed in the long run due to operational difficulty as well as because the Permanent Settlement did not take account of the seasonal and precarious nature of Bengali agriculture. The Company also did not understand the structural issues as well as the society.

The Mahalwari system was introduced by Francis Hastings in 1822. It covered the States of Punjab, Awadh and Agra, parts of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. The term "Mahalwari" is derived from the Hindi word 'Mahal', which means house, district, neighbourhood or quarter. This system dealt with the landlords claiming to represent entire villages or even groups of villages. Alongside the village communities, the landlords were jointly responsible for the payment of the revenues. But, there was individual responsibility. The land included under this system consisted of all land of the villages, even the forestland, pastures etc. The process of preparing estimates of produce and rents was simplified too. It also introduced the fixation of the average rents for different classes of soil. This scheme functioned under Mittens Bird. The State demand was fixed at 66% of the rental value and the Settlement was made for 30 years. The Mahalwari system of land revenue worked under the scheme of 1833 was completed under the administration of James Thompson. The 66% rental demanded proved very harsh, too. In the Saharanpur Rules of 1855, it was revised to 50% by Lord Dalhousie. However, the British officers hardly cared of these rules. This created widespread discontent among the Indians.

The Ryotwari system was introduced by Thomas Munro in 1820 based on system administered by Captain Alexander Read in the Baramahal district. The allowed the government's direct contact with the cultivator for the purpose of revenue collection, and gave the peasant freedom to give up or acquire new land for cultivation. The peasant was assessed for only the lands he was cultivating. (Wikipedia) The cultivators have the liberty to sublet his property, or to transfer it by gift, sale, or mortgage. He cannot be ejected by



Government so long as he pays the fixed assessment, and has the option annually of increasing or diminishing his holding, or of entirely abandoning it. In unfavourable seasons remissions of assessment are granted for entire or partial loss of produce.

The East India Company obtained a foothold in India in 1695 and from that start expanded the territory it controlled until it was the primary power in the subcontinent. After the Indian Rebellion of 1857 the British Government nationalised the Company creating the British Raj. The Company lost all its administrative powers; its Indian possessions, including its armed forces, were taken over by the Crown pursuant to the provisions of the Government of India Act 1858. A new British government department, the India Council, was created to handle the governance of India, and its head, the Secretary of State for India, was entrusted with formulating Indian policy. The Governor-General of India gained a new title (Viceroy of India), and implemented the policies devised by the India council. As a result of their relatively small presence in the country the British resorted to many methods to retain control of India.

## SOCIAL CONSTIGENCY

The British followed a policy of non-interference in the social, religious and cultural life of the fellow Indian till 1813 AD. Their thought was to develop partial modernisation, in other words, a 'colonial modernisation'. The ruling elements of the British were imperialistic and exploitative, which was embedded with a new style of imperial values after 1813 AD. Indian society underwent many changes after the British came to India. In the 19th century, certain social practices like female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy and a rigid caste system became more prevalent. These practices were against human dignity and values. Women were discriminated against at all stages of life and were the disadvantaged section of the society. They did not have access to any development opportunities to improve their status. Education was limited to a handful of men belonging to the upper castes. Brahmins had access to the Vedas which were written in Sanskrit. Expensive rituals, sacrifices and practices after birth or death were outlined by the priestly class.

When the British came to India, they brought new ideas such as liberty, equality, freedom and human rights from the Renaissance, the Reformation Movement and the various revolutions that took place in Europe. These ideas appealed to some sections of our society and led to several reform movements in different parts of the country. At the forefront of these movements were visionary Indians such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aruna Asaf Ali and Pandita Ramabai. These movements looked for social unity and strived towards liberty, equality and fraternity. Many legal measures were introduced to improve the status of women. For example, the practice of sati was banned in 1829 by Lord Bentinck, the then Governor General. Widow Remarriage was permitted by a law passed in 1856. A law passed in 1872, sanctioned inter-caste and inter-communal marriages. Sharda Act was passed in 1929 preventing child marriage. The act provided that it was illegal to marry a girl below 14 and a boy below 18 years. All the movements severely criticized the caste system and especially the practice of untouchability.

#### Social and cultural policy

The British had come to India with the idea of making immense profits. This meant buying of raw materials at very cheap rates and selling finished goods at much higher prices. The British wanted the Indians to be educated and modern enough to consume their goods but not to the extent that it proved detrimental to British interests. Some of the Britishers believed that Western ideas were modern and superior, while Indian ideas were old and inferior. This was, of course, not true. Indians had a rich traditional learning that was still relevant. By this time in England there was a group of Radicals who had a humanistic ideology towards Indians. They wanted India to be a part of the modern, progressive world of science. But the British government was cautious in undertaking rapid modernisation of India. They feared a reaction among the people if too much interference took place with their religious beliefs and social customs. The English wanted perpetuation of their rule in India and not a reaction among the people. Hence, though they talked about introducing reforms, in reality very few measures were taken and these were also half-hearted.

#### Education policy

The British took a keen interest in introducing the English language in India. They had many reasons for doing so. Educating Indians in the English language was a part of their strategy.

The Indians would be ready to work as clerks on low wages while for the same work the British would demand much higher wages. This would reduce the expenditure on administration. It was also expected to create a class of Indians who were loyal to the British and were not able to relate to other Indians. This class of Indians would be taught to appreciate the culture and opinion of the British. In addition, they would also help to increase the market for British goods. They wanted to use education as a means to strengthen their political authority in the country. They assumed that a few educated Indians would spread English culture to the masses and that they would be able to rule through this class of educated Indians. The British gave jobs to only those Indians who knew English thereby compelling many Indians to go in for English education. Education soon became a monopoly of the rich and the city dwellers. Though the British followed a half-hearted education policy in India, English language and western ideas also had some positive impact on the society. Many reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and Swami Vivekananda absorbed western ideas of liberalism and democracy and used it to reform some of the non-humanitarian social and religious practices of the time. Though education did not reach the masses but some ideas of anti-imperialism, nationalism, social and economic equality took root through political parties, discussions and debates on public platform and the press.

The spread of English language and western education helped Indians to adopt modern, rational, democratic, liberal and patriotic outlook. New fields of knowledge in science, humanities and literature open to them. English became the lingua franca of the educated people in India. It united them and gradually made them politically conscious of their rights. It also gave opportunity to the Indians to study in England and learn about the working of democratic institutions there. The writings of John Locke, Ruskin, Mill, Rousseau and many others instilled in them the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, human rights and self-government. The French and the American Revolutions, and the unifications of Italy and Germany further strengthened their appreciation of these ideas. Cavour, Garibaldi and Mazzini became their favourite heroes. They began to aspire for these ideals for India.

#### Religion as a tool

The Company banned some Hindu practices like sati and child marriages, which they found particularly abhorrent, and began to allow Hindu widows to remarry in 1856. Governor-

General Dalhousie had begun to allow Christian converts to inherit ancestral property starting in 1850. Though overall, the East India Company men were not "eager to anglicise India, fearing to offend the educated class on whose support they depended, and arouse religious antagonism." In 1813, though they had been forced to admit Christian missionaries, the Company tried to avoid being seen as a proponent of the missions. A publication during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 states that the East India Company even manifested disfavour towards Christianity to obtain the confidence of Hindus. ('British Raj'. Wikipedia)

The establishment of the British Empire was a process of evolution, which passed through several periods marked by significant historical events. The initial phase began with a purely commercial and financial perspective and eventually passed through a more realist paradigm, based on expansion and maintaining power. While the British criticised the divisions of the Hindu caste system, they themselves lived a life ruled by precedence and class, deeply divided within it. Rudyard Kipling reflected this position in his novels. His books also exposed the gulf between the 'white' community and the 'Anglo-Indians', whose mixed race caused them to be considered racially 'impure'. There were two incontrovertible economic benefits provided by India. It was a captive market for British goods and services, and served defence needs by maintaining a large standing army at no cost to the British taxpayer.

However, the economic balance sheet of the empire remains a controversial topic and the debate has revolved around whether the British developed or retarded the Indian economy.

“Controversy remains over whether Britain developed or retarded India's economy.”  
(‘British Raj’, BBC)

Among the benefits bequeathed by the British connection were the large scale capital investments in infrastructure, in railways, canals and irrigation works, shipping and mining; the commercialisation of agriculture with the development of a cash nexus; the establishment of an education system in English and of law and order creating suitable conditions for the growth of industry and enterprise; and the integration of India into the world economy.

Conversely, the British are criticised for leaving Indians poorer and more prone to devastating famines; exhorting high taxation in cash from an impecunious people; destabilising cropping patterns by forced commercial cropping; draining Indian revenues to pay for an expensive bureaucracy (including in London) and an army beyond India's own defence needs; servicing a huge sterling debt, not ensuring that the returns from capital investment were reinvested to develop the Indian economy rather than reimbursed to London; and retaining the levers of economic power in British hands.

## ORIENTALIST PERSUASION OF BRITISH TOWARDS INDIA

“Indians are primitive, not capable to govern” (Mill James, History of India)

The British began their conquest of India from Calcutta, where they established the East India Company — a business venture that was destined to rule India with an iron fist for almost 250 years. When the British returned to their motherland, they depicted India as a barbaric, uncivilized country filled with polytheism, mythology, and idolatry. The scene they painted portrayed India as a country of primitive worshipers bowed down before a ghastly statue of some god or goddess. To them this represented one of the most hideous examples of human degradation, one of those horrors of ignorance which the British had long left behind. The British summed up India as a hodgepodge of heathenish superstitions. This attitude toward India and her spirituality was shared by just about every British in India and at home, from the King and Queen of England down to the desk clerk at the East India Company in Calcutta.

Initially the term ‘orientalism’ refers to the imitation or depiction of aspects in the Eastern world. These depictions are usually done by writers, designers, and artists from the West. In particular, Orientalist painting depicted more specifically about the ‘middle east’. (‘Orientalism’. Wikipedia) It was one of the many specialisms of 19th-century academic art, and the literature of Western countries took a similar interest in Oriental themes. But after the publication of Edward Said critical work ‘Orientalism’ in 1978 there was a drastic change in definition. According to Said the term ‘orientalism’ refers to a general patronizing Western attitude towards Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies. Said argued that Orientalism, in the sense of the Western scholarship about the Eastern World, is inextricably tied to the imperialist societies who produced it, which makes much Orientalist work inherently political and servile to power.

In Said's analysis, the West regards these societies as static and undeveloped—thereby fabricating a view of Oriental culture that can be studied, depicted, and reproduced in service of imperial power while claim the idea that the west society as developed, rational, flexible, and superior. Said pointed out, “Arab, Islamic, Indian, Chinese, become

repetitious pseudo-incarnations of some great Original (Christ, Europe, and the West) that they were supposed to be imitating”. Said further says, ‘only the source of these rather narcissistic Western ideas about the Orient changed in time, not their character, the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. (‘Orientalism and India’)

The orientalism was from the beginning a European enterprise with Indians as objects of knowledge. The Orientalist scholar saw Indians as outside and opposite to the European Self – the rational and materialist British and the emotional and spiritual Indian, appeared as essential and natural entities. In order to maintain master-slave relationship with its Indian subject- British official and historian, up to certain extent, have successfully employed the concept of Orientalism. In addition, Orientalism as a form to hegemonies over the culture and society - to control the Indian illiterate women, oppressed Dalit’s, rural, tribal, immigrant labourers (are part of subaltern) are have been oppression-nationalized at all the structural level-even persist in contemporary India. The period of Orientalism can be said to begin from 1773 with Warren Hastings being appointed the Governor General of the East India Company and extends up to 1832, when, influenced by liberal and evangelical attitudes, the East India Company government made English education compulsory in India and brought the Orientalist phase to a close. Indian histories, languages, and culture were recreated and appropriated by Western intellectual for their own interest. In the process of political domination, while shaping and defining the identity of Orient, to restore a region from its present barbarism to civilization-natives has neither been consulted not treated as anything except pretext for a text.(‘Orientalism and India

In order to subjugate Indian minds; serious inquiries in the field of Hindu and Muslim laws, Modern Politics, Geography of Hindustan(India) Arithmetic and Geometry, mixed science of the Asiatic, Medicine, Chemistry, Rhetoric and Morality of Asia, Music of Eastern Nations, Trade and Agricultural have been conducted. The Hindu moral code (Manushianta) and Hindu religious book (Bhagavadhita) have been translated, English Orientalist rewrote, distorted and manipulated the knowledge they received from their Indian interlocutors-partly through simple ignorance and misunderstanding but also to serve particular administration. However, a growing sense of racial and cultural superiority led the British to ignore Indian informants and disregards Oriental Knowledge, this information failure to certain extent became the cause of the Indian Mutiny of 1957. A genuine imposition on India with new

technology and intellectual will was justified since India was considered lacking the sense of Self-government and fragmented geo-political entity.

British have always regarded Indians as barbaric, uncivilised and superstitious in several books and journals. Several editions of Marco Polo's travels described Kashmiri conjurors that 'bring on changes of weather and produces darkness, and do a number of things so extraordinary that no one without seeing them would believe them. (Marco Polo travel, English translation, 1579) Equally, mysterious seem to have been accounts of men being buried alive and snake charming (Captain Osborn). Not only, was it assumed that the native population were more credulous than British observer, a view consistent with regular portrayal of superstitious Indians, but Indian juggling was also cited as an example of the deceptive nature of the Indian, as 'illustrating the subtle ingenuity of the Hindoos, whose national character often exhibits an ability that only wants leading in the right direction to constitute them most useful members of society.

Weber has made an interesting observation related to the Oriental image of a stagnant India. Weber explained why in his view Indian civilization had not developed into encouraging rationally oriented business activity like the West. (Weber 1958, Juhnki 2006) Weber's India seemed to be essentially magical-religious whereas his Europe represented rationality. Weber even claimed that sciences did not progress in India because Indians had concentrated in a religion that denigrated empirical world. Weber's India was also synonymous to Hinduism, and Hinduism on its behalf was seen by Weber as an unproblematic monolithic single religion, an entity that gave India its essence. The textual view of Indian society depicted by the British has led to the picture of Indian society as being static, timeless, and spaceless.

Historians like James Mill claims that the precise position occupied by the Hindus in the 'scale of civilisation' by means of a potent combination of Benthamite norms, classical political economy and the techniques of 'conjectural history' perfected by Scottish philosophers and historians. The Hindus enjoyed or had ever enjoyed a high degree of civilisation by European standards. The impartial European alone was capable of writing the history of India. Mill examines in turn all of the leading characteristics of Hindu society: the caste system, the form of government, the law, the method of taxation, the arts and sciences, religion and manners. The conclusion which he reaches after this extended exercise in social



anthropology is that the Hindus are merely on a level with the antique civilisations of the past, and other Oriental civilisations of the present; and that this places them somewhat below the level achieved by Europe in its feudal period. This 'scientific' conclusion, he claimed, was of great practical importance to the British people. His low estimate of the state of civilisation attained by the Hindus provided a justification for continued British rule, and supported the view that India should be governed according to civilised European standards, rather than those of the native population.

Mill considered that 'the English government in India with all its vices is a blessing of unspeakable magnitude to the population of Hindustan'. In their present state the Indians were unfit to govern themselves; 'a simple form of arbitrary government, tempered by European honour and European intelligence' was needed. After all, 'even the utmost abuse of European power is better; we are persuaded, than the most temperate exercise of Oriental despotism...' (Mill James. History of India) Mill praised the East India Company for the way in which it had discharged its governmental functions, and was opposed to any suggestion that India should be ruled directly by the British government; this would merely lead to neglect and corruption. He was in favour of encouraging British emigration to India because a large British population would exert 'moral pressure' on the natives and act as a civilising influence. He even went so far as to suggest what the flamboyant imperialist Disraeli later partially carried out, namely that, 'instead of sending out a Governor General, to be recalled in a few years, why should we not constitute one of our Royal Family, Emperor of Hindustan with hereditary succession'.

When discussing Mill's treatment of taxes on rent in the Elements, he saw no objection in principle to a system whereby the bulk of the state's revenue was derived from the annual produce of land. One might even say that in so far as the exactions of the state could be confined strictly to rent or the net produce after payment of wages and profits, he regarded it as the ideal system of taxation. But he was bitterly opposed to the existing Indian system, particularly as reflected in the reforms introduced by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal in 1793. Mill, overly confident in his own claims of knowledge, infantilizes Indians without understanding them. He assumes that Indian experiences were provisional and in need of correction and completion by enlightened guides. Mill wants the British to civilize India,

thereby imposing a particular conception of how a people ought to live and what constitutes a good life, without recognizing the validity of different conceptions.

The imperialism Mill defends is not self-interested but beneficent, not self-aggrandizing but reluctant. Intervention in the affairs of others is done not for commercial advantage but for moral purposes, such as to end slavery, reconcile belligerents, end civil wars, or intercede for mild treatment of the vanquished. Mill thinks that slavery is for savages and in the “very early state of society” taught them obedience and industriousness. Mill thinks that England and some other European nations are more advanced than India and other societies not yet civilized. Mill’s desire that England take charge in bringing about the moral development of Indians—and helping civilize them by assisting them in controlling nature and developing cooperative ventures.

The British took thriving industries -- like textiles, shipbuilding, and steel -- and destroyed them through violence, taxes, import tariffs, and imposing their exports and products on the back of the Indian consumer. They taxed the Indian peasantry at a level unknown under any other rulers, and through torture and cruelty they extracted vast sums of money which they shipped off to England. The Bengal famine of 1943/44 was one of the most egregious where some 4 million died, as Churchill shipped grain from Bengal to Britain to buttress reserve stocks for British soldiers in Europe while Bengalis were starving to death. When apprised of the consequences of his actions, Churchill retorted: “Why hasn’t Gandhi died yet?” Tharoor puts Churchill in the same class as Hitler, Mao and Stalin, despite the idolising of him in Britain.

The orientalist and historians claimed that the British brought democracy, the rule of law and trains to India. They did not write or talk about oppression, torture and imprisonment of people for 200 years which are too deeply documented to be challengeable. Instead they offer a counter-argument: granted, the British took what they could for 200 years, but didn’t they also leave behind a great deal of lasting benefit? In particular, political unity and democracy, the rule of law, railways, English education, even tea and cricket? The British claimed to have given India unity and the enduring parliamentary government.

Since the British came from a hierarchical society with an entrenched class system, they instinctively looked for a similar one in India. The effort to understand ethnic, religious,

sectarian and caste differences among Britain's subjects inevitably became an exercise in defining, dividing and perpetuating these differences. Thus colonial administrators regularly wrote reports and conducted censuses that classified Indians in ever-more bewilderingly narrow terms, based on their language, religion, sect, caste, sub-caste, ethnicity and skin colour. Not only were ideas of community reified, but also entire new communities were created by people who had not consciously thought of themselves as particularly different from others around them. Large-scale conflicts between Hindus and Muslims (religiously defined), only began under colonial rule; many other kinds of social strife were labelled as religious due to the colonists' orientalist assumption that religion was the fundamental division in Indian society.

The creation and perpetuation of Hindu–Muslim antagonism was the most significant accomplishment of British imperial policy: the project of divide ET imperia would reach its culmination in the collapse of British authority in 1947. Partition left behind a million dead, 13 million displaced, billions of rupees of property destroyed, and the flames of communal hatred blazing hotly across the ravaged land. No greater indictment of the failures of British rule in India can be found than the tragic manner of its ending. The Britain did not work to promote democratic institutions under imperial rule, as it liked to pretend. Instead of building self-government from the village level up, the East India Company destroyed what existed. The British ran government, tax collection, and administered what passed for justice. Indians were excluded from all of these functions. When the crown eventually took charge of the country, it devolved smidgens of government authority, from the top, to unelected provincial and central “legislative” councils whose members represented a tiny educated elite, had no accountability to the masses, passed no meaningful legislation, exercised no real power and satisfied themselves they had been consulted by the government even if they took no actual decisions. (‘British Raj’, *The Guardian*)

The East India Company was created in 1600 to cash in on trading with India, which at the time accounted for more than a quarter of all the trade in the world. It soon realised, however, that its ambitions would be better served with a permanent presence in the country, and from then on the trade took off. As the company's men grew prosperous, they began dreaming of expanding their territory and found little opposition. In some 100 or so years, through a series of conquests and some clever politicking, the company created a rival

empire on the subcontinent among the already warring ones (such as the Maratha, Mughal, and Awadh regimes). In fact, Britain's policy was not to unite but to divide and rule. Under the British, Tharoor shows that, the Hindu caste system became more rigid, and communal lines, particularly those between Hindus and Muslims, deepened. Nowhere was the application of that singular ethos clearer than when, on their way out, the colonialists partitioned the subcontinent into India and Pakistan.

A democracy cannot function without a free press and just law. Neither truly existed under the Raj. It is true that the British were the first to establish newspapers in India, catering to small English-educated elite first and large audiences in the vernacular languages later. However, alarmed by their proliferation, the East India Company passed the Censorship of the Press Act in 1799, subjecting all newspapers to scrutiny before publication. In 1807, all other kinds of publication, too, were brought under this rule. Once bitten by the bug and with strict adherence to the law not being insisted on over time, Indians continued with the enterprise. By 1875, there were some 475 newspapers in the subcontinent, mostly owned and edited by Indians. Alarm bells rang again, bringing another round of censorship in the form of the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the revised Press Act of 1910. Under the latter, publishers were required to provide a hefty security deposit, which they would forfeit if the publication carried inflammatory or abusive articles. The racism of the British-owned press was not subject to the same restrictions.

As late as 1920, under the Montagu-Chelmsford "reforms", Indian representatives on the councils – elected by a franchise so restricted and selective that only one in 250 Indians had the right to vote – would exercise control over subjects the British did not care about, like education and health, while real power, including taxation, law and order and the authority to nullify any vote by the Indian legislators, would rest with the British governor of the provinces. Democracy, in other words, had to be prised from the reluctant grasp of the British by Indian nationalists. It is a bit rich to oppress torture, imprison, enslave, deport and proscribe a people for 200 years, and then take credit for the fact that they are democratic at the end of it. A corollary of the orientalist argument that Britain gave India political unity and democracy is that it established the rule of law in the country. This was, in many ways, central to the British self-conception of imperial purpose; Kipling, that flatulent voice of Victorian imperialism, would wax eloquent on the noble duty to bring law to those without

it. But British law had to be imposed upon an older and more complex civilisation with its own legal culture, and the British used coercion and cruelty to get their way. And in the colonial era, the rule of law was not exactly impartial. Crimes committed by whites against Indians attracted minimal punishment; an Englishman who shot dead his Indian servant got six months' jail time and a modest fine (then about 100 rupees), while an Indian convicted of attempted rape against an Englishwoman was sentenced to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment. In the entire two centuries of British rule, only three cases can be found of Englishmen executed for murdering Indians, while the murders of thousands more at British hands went unpunished.

The death of an Indian at British hands was always an accident, and that of a Briton because of an Indian's actions always a capital crime. When a British master kicked an Indian servant in the stomach – a not uncommon form of conduct in those days – the Indian's resultant death from a ruptured spleen would be blamed on his having an enlarged spleen as a result of malaria. Punch wrote an entire ode to The Stout British Boot as the favoured instrument of keeping the natives in order. Political dissidence was legally repressed through various acts, including a sedition law far more rigorous than its British equivalent. The penal code contained 49 articles on crimes relating to dissent against the state (and only 11 on crimes involving death).

Imperial rule destroyed India's local hand loom industry to fund its own industrialization. India became one of the major cotton exporters to the U.K. The raw materials from India were taken to the U.K. and the finished products were sent back to Indian markets and other parts of the world, leaving the Indian handloom industry in shambles and taking jobs away from local weavers. The last famine in India, in Bengal between 1943 and 1944, claimed over four million lives. The Bengal famine — also referred to as the man-made famine — between 1943 and 1944 claimed over four million lives and is said to have been engineered as part of an unsympathetic and ruthless economic agenda. (Chakraborty Rakhi 'The Bengal Famine') Prime Minister Winston Churchill ignored farmers' pleas for emergency food aid, leaving millions to starve as their rice paddy fields were turned over to jute production. Mukerjee cites ministry records that reveal ships carrying cereals from Australia bypassed India on their way to the Mediterranean Sea where supplies were already abundant (Telegraph)

According to Crimes of Britain, during the Bihar famine of 1873, the so-called "relief efforts" were deemed "excessive." The British didn't intend to end the misery caused by the famine but instead devised a strategy to prolong the starvation. The people suffering the famine, in what the empire called the "distance test" were made to walk over 10 miles to and from the relief works, according to the Crimes of Britain. The food provided at these slave labour camps where the annual death rate in 1877 was 94 per cent was less than that provided at the Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald. (Telegraph)

Of course the British did give India the English language, the benefits of which persist to this day. Or did they? The English language was not a deliberate gift to India, but again an instrument of colonialism, imparted to Indians only to facilitate the tasks of the English. In his notorious 1835 Minute on Education, Lord Macaulay articulated the classic reason for teaching English, but only to a small minority of Indians: "We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."(Macaulay, Wikipedia) The language was taught to a few to serve as intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled. The British had no desire to educate the Indian masses, nor were they willing to budget for such an expense. That Indians seized the English language and turned it into an instrument for our own liberation – using it to express nationalist sentiments against the British – was to their credit, not by British design.

The construction of the Indian Railways is often pointed to by apologists for empire as one of the ways in which British colonialism benefited the subcontinent, ignoring the obvious fact that many countries also built railways without having to go to the trouble and expense of being colonised to do so. But the facts are even more damning. The railways were first conceived of by the East India Company, like everything else in that firm's calculations, for its own benefit. Governor General Lord Hardinge argued in 1843 that the railways would be beneficial "to the commerce, government and military control of the country" ('British Imperialism' BBC). In their very conception and construction, the Indian railways were a colonial scam. British shareholders made absurd amounts of money by investing in the railways, where the government guaranteed returns double those of government stocks, paid entirely from Indian, and not British, taxes. It was a splendid racket for Britons, at the expense of the Indian taxpayer.

The railways were intended principally to transport extracted resources – coal, iron ore, cotton and so on – to ports for the British to ship home to use in their factories. The movement of people was incidental, except when it served colonial interests; and the third-class compartments, with their wooden benches and total absence of amenities, into which Indians were herded, attracted horrified comment even at the time. (The Guardian) And, of course, racism reigned; though whites-only compartments were soon done away with on grounds of economic viability, Indians found the available affordable space grossly inadequate for their numbers. An Indian cartoonist depicted the situation by portraying an overcrowded train, with people hanging off it, clinging to the windows, squatting perilously on the roof, and spilling out of their third-class compartments, while two Britons sit in an empty first-class compartment saying to each other, “My dear chap, there’s nobody on this train!”(The Guardian)

The Indian were not employed in the railways. The prevailing view was that the railways would have to be staffed almost exclusively by Europeans to “protect investments”. This was especially true of signalmen, and those who operated and repaired the steam trains, but the policy was extended to the absurd level that even in the early 20th century all the key employees, from directors of the Railway Board to ticket-collectors, were white men – whose salaries and benefits were also paid at European, not Indian, levels and largely repatriated back to England. Racism combined with British economic interests to undermine efficiency. The railway workshops in Jamalpur in Bengal and Ajmer in Rajputana were established in 1862 to maintain the trains, but their Indian mechanics became so adept that in 1878 they started designing and building their own locomotives. Their success increasingly alarmed the British, since the Indian locomotives were just as good, and a great deal cheaper, than the British-made ones. In 1912, therefore, the British passed an act of parliament explicitly making it impossible for Indian workshops to design and manufacture locomotives. Between 1854 and 1947, India imported around 14,400 locomotives from England, and another 3,000 from Canada, the US and Germany, but made none in India after 1912. After independence, 35 years later, the old technical knowledge was so completely lost to India that the Indian Railways had to go cap-in-hand to the British to guide them on setting up a locomotive factory in India again. There was, however, a fitting postscript to this saga. The principal technology consultants for Britain’s railways, the

London-based Rendel, today rely extensively on Indian technical expertise, provided to them by Rites, a subsidiary of the Indian Railways. ('Gifts of British Empire' BBC)

The process of colonial rule in India meant economic exploitation and ruin to millions, the destruction of thriving industries, the systematic denial of opportunities to compete, the elimination of indigenous institutions of governance, the transformation of lifestyles and patterns of living that had flourished since time immemorial, and the obliteration of the most precious possessions of the colonised, their identities and their self-respect. In 1600, when the East India Company was established, Britain was producing just 1.8% of the world's GDP, while India was generating some 23% (27% by 1700). By 1940, after nearly two centuries of the Raj, Britain accounted for nearly 10% of world GDP, while India had been reduced to a poor "third-world" country, destitute and starving, a global poster child of poverty and famine. The British left a society with 16% literacy, a life expectancy of 27, practically no domestic industry and over 90% living below what today we would call the poverty line. (Economic Times)

The India the British entered was a wealthy, thriving and commercialising society: that was why the East India Company was interested in it in the first place. Far from being backward or underdeveloped, pre-colonial India exported high quality manufactured goods much sought after by Britain's fashionable society. The British elite wore Indian linen and silks, decorated their homes with Indian chintz and decorative textiles, and craved Indian spices and seasonings. In the 17th and 18th centuries, British shopkeepers tried to pass off shoddy English-made textiles as Indian in order to charge higher prices for them.

According to a survey in 2016, 43 per cent of British citizens thought the existence of the British Empire was a "good thing," while only 19 per cent disagreed. It's a myth that British imperialism benefited one of its richest colonies, India when on the contrary it drained all its wealth and resources just like colonizers do. The British history book does not talk about the colonized countries. What they talk about is how they glorified, educated and civilised those backward areas. They deny their barbaric act claiming that colonisation benefited those countries as they were 'too poor' to develop their own.

The story of India, at different phases of its several-thousand-year-old civilizational history, is replete with great educational institutions, magnificent cities ahead of any conurbations of



their time anywhere in the world, pioneering inventions, world-class manufacturing and industry, and abundant prosperity – in short, all the markers of successful modernity today – and there is no earthly reason why this could not again have been the case, if its resources had not been drained away by the British. ('Economic Times') If there were positive by-products for Indians from the institutions the British established and ran in India in their own interests, they were never intended to benefit Indians. Today Indians cannot live without the railways; the Indian authorities have reversed British policies and they are used principally to transport people, with freight bearing ever higher charges in order to subsidise the passengers (exactly the opposite of British practice).

This is why Britain's historical amnesia about the rapacity of its rule in India is so deplorable. Recent years have seen the rise of what the scholar Paul Gilroy called "postcolonial melancholia", the yearning for the glories of Empire. The orientalist such as James Stuart Mill and many renowned historians claimed that British Empire was "something to be proud of" ('Writings of James Mill')

## SHASHI THAROOR'S OXFORD CONFABULATION

Shashi Tharoor's eloquent and rigorously reasoned indictment of British colonialism, and his call for Britain to make reparations for having plundered India for 200 years, has won deserved plaudits. At the end of May, the Oxford Union held a debate on the motion "This house believes Britain owes reparations to her former colonies". Speakers included former Conservative MP Sir Richard Ottaway, Indian politician and writer Shashi Tharoor and British historian John Mackenzie. Shashi Tharoor's argument in support of the motion went viral in India after he wrote it out from his personal account. The argument has found favour among Indians, where the subject of colonial exploitation remains a sore topic. Tharoor's book 'An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India' grew out of a speech he made at an Oxford Union debate on the proposition that "Britain Owes Reparations to Her Former Colonies". While An Era of Darkness takes off from that debate, it does considerably more than that. It refutes British claims of superiority, questions the benefits of British rule, castigates governors and their subordinates for their profligacy and arrogance, exposes their corruption, and ridicules the conceit which has taken root in Britain—that the British rule was a divine dispensation, which civilized the natives.

As Britain's global influence has waned in recent years, nostalgic romance of the empire has taken hold among some British historians—notably Niall Ferguson, but he is by no means alone—whose writing provides a comic book version of the empire where the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was an inconvenient footnote and the hundreds of thousands of Indians who toiled on plantations, built the railways, and died on foreign fields for the empire were collateral damage, not even worth remembering by individual names. The power of that narrative is such that many in India are unaware of the extent of despair the Raj brought—it is cringe worthy to see Winston Churchill regarded as a hero in some circles in India, given his central role in creating the Bengal famine of the 1940s.

The story of British colonisation of India is in fact at least two stories. First, through the 18th century, much of India was progressively conquered by the East India Company, a violent

and rapacious enterprise, supported by the British crown. But then, the East India Company's own army (mainly comprising Indians) led an uprising against it in 1857 -- known as the Indian Mutiny or the First War of Indian independence. This uprising was ultimately unsuccessful, and following this, the British Crown took over governing India from the East India Company until India's independence. There are many apologists for the Empire who argue that the British gave many things to India, like the very idea of India, democracy, the English language, the railways, tea and even cricket. But Tharoor has answers for all these claims. He argues that democracy would have been inevitable in this country of the "argumentative Indian" and in this world where most countries enjoy at least some degree of democracy. He also argues that it is a bit rich of the British to claim that they bequeathed democracy to India, after 200 years of exploiting and abusing the country.

There is no moral urgency that can explain today's Indians why British colonialism turned out to be a horror. A lot of the popular histories of the British Empire in the last decade or two, by the likes of Niall Ferguson and Lawrence James, have painted colonialism in rosy colours, and this needed to be challenged. Historical material is available to everyone who's willing to look for it, but perhaps, in the rush of modern materialism, we've stopped looking. Many Brits are genuinely unaware of the atrocities committed by their ancestors and live in the blissful illusion that the Empire was some sort of benign boon to the ignorant natives. There's been a lot of self-justificatory mythologizing in Britain about the colonial era. Popular television shows tend to focus only on the romanticised aspects of the Raj. All this explains Britons' ignorance, but does not excuse it.

British rule deindustrialised India, created landlessness and poverty, drained our country's resources, exploited, enslaved, exiled and oppressed millions, sowed seeds of division and inter-communal hatred that led to the country's partition into two hostile states, and was directly responsible for the deaths of 35 million people in unnecessary and mismanaged famines as well as of thousands in massacres and killings. That just skims the surface of the havoc wreaked by British colonialism. The British conquered one of the richest countries in the world and reduced it to one of the poorest.

Tharoor's speech was widely appreciated in India because of the succinctness with which he illustrates how and why colonial rule exploited the subcontinent, and how violence and racism were the order of those days. He says

“It’s a bit rich to oppress, enslave, kill, torture, maim people for 200 years and then celebrate the fact that they are democratic at the end of it. We were denied democracy, so we had to snatch it, seize it from you”

Tharoor pierces this conceited bubble with vivid prose, telling not only what made the British Empire, but how. He is deeply familiar with English literature and traditions and an unabashed fan of cricket (which sociologist Ashis Nandy called an Indian game accidentally discovered by the British), Tharoor uses facts, arguments, humour, sarcasm and logic to destroy each pillar on which the myth of the empire rests. Far from being a pioneer in free trade, the East India Company was a private monopoly with state backing, which enabled hundreds of young Britons to get immensely rich, upsetting the pecking order of the British society.

Tharoor provides us with a devastating portrait of how the British decimated the Indian economy through these centuries. Tharoor pointed out that when the British landed in India, India’s share of the global economy was 24%, and that by the time they left, it had shrunk to 4%. Britain's rise for 200 years was financed by its depredations in India. In fact Britain's industrial revolution was actually premised upon the de-industrialisation of India. The handloom weaver's for example famed across the world whose products were exported around the world, Britain came right in. There were actually these weaver's making fine muslin as light as woven wear, it was said, and Britain came right in, smashed their thumbs, broke their looms, imposed tariffs and duties on their cloth and products and started, of course, taking their raw material from India and shipping back manufactured cloth flooding the world's markets with what became the products of the dark and satanic mills of the Victoria in England. Meanwhile, colonialists like Robert Clive brought their rotten boroughs in England on the proceeds of their loot in India while taking the Hindi word loot into their dictionary as well as their habits. And the British had the gall to call him Clive of India as if he belonged to the country, when all he really did was to ensure that much of the country belonged to him.

He further refers that by the end of 19th century, the fact is that India was already Britain's biggest cash cow, the world's biggest purchaser of British goods and exports and the source for highly paid employment for British civil servants. We literally paid for our own oppression. And as has been pointed out, the worthy British Victorian families that made

their money out of the slave economy, one fifth of the elites of the wealthy class in Britain in 19th century owed their money to transporting 3 million Africans across the waters. And in fact in 1833 when slavery was abolished and what happened was a compensation of 20 million pounds was paid not as reparations to those who had lost their lives or who had suffered or been oppressed by slavery but to those who had lost their property. Tharoor commented as others have said on the proposition - violence and racism were the reality of the colonial experience.

“The Sun couldn’t set on the British empire, because even God couldn’t trust the English in the dark.” (‘Shashi Tharoor Oxford Speech’ BBC 2015)

Tharoor further pointed out Staying with India, 15-29 million Indians died of starvation in British induced famines. The most famous example was, of course, was the great Bengal famine during the World War II when 4 million people died because Winston Churchill deliberately as a matter of written policy proceeded to divert essential supplies from civilians in Bengal to sturdy tummies and Europeans as reserve stockpiles. He said that the starvation of anyway underfed Bengalis mattered much less than that of sturdy Greeks' - Churchill's actual quote. And when conscious stricken British officials wrote to him pointing out that people were dying because of this decision, he peevishly wrote in the margins of file,

“Why hasn’t Gandhi died yet?” (Shashi Tharoor, You Tube 2015)

Tharoor further says that though the British were trying to do their colonial enterprise out of enlightened despotism to try and bring the benefits of colonialism and civilisation to the benighted, the conduct of Churchill towards the Bengal famine was disappointing. The power of that narrative is such that many in India are unaware of the extent of despair the Raj brought—it is cringe worthy to see Winston Churchill regarded as a hero in some circles in India, given his central role in creating the Bengal famine of the 1940s.

“Even I am sorry - Churchill's conduct in 1943 is simply one example of many that gave light to this myth.” (Shashi Tharoor Oxford Speech, You Tube 2015)

Britain's Industrial Revolution was built on the de-industrialisation of India - the destruction of Indian textiles and their replacement by manufacturing in England, using Indian raw

material and exporting the finished products back to India and the rest of the world. The handloom weavers of Bengal had produced and exported some of the world's most desirable fabrics, especially cheap but fine muslins, some light as "woven air". Britain's response was to cut off the thumbs of Bengali weavers, break their looms and impose duties and tariffs on Indian cloth, while flooding India and the world with cheaper fabric from the new satanic steam mills of Britain. Weavers became beggars, manufacturing collapsed; the population of Dhaka, which was once the great centre of muslin production, fell by 90%. So instead of a great exporter of finished products, India became an importer of British ones, while its share of world exports fell from 27% to 2%.

He also referred to the railway network built by the British to serve their own ends, but which was paid for by taxing Indians. The construction of the Indian Railways is often pointed to as a benefit of British rule, ignoring the obvious fact that many countries have built railways without having to be colonised to do so. Nor were the railways laid to serve the Indian public. They were intended to help the British get around, and above all to carry Indian raw materials to the ports to be shipped to Britain. The movement of people was incidental except when it served colonial interests; no effort was made to ensure that supply matched demand for mass transport. In fact the Indian Railways were a big British colonial scam. British shareholders made absurd amounts of money by investing in the railways, where the government guaranteed extravagant returns on capital, paid for by Indian taxes. Tharoor further says,

“Thanks to British rapacity, a mile of Indian railways cost double that of a mile in Canada and Australia.”

It was a splendid racket for the British, who made all the profits, controlled the technology and supplied all the equipment, which meant once again that the benefits went out of India. It was a scheme described at the time as "private enterprise at public risk". He also spoke about India's enormous contribution — in terms of human and monetary terms — to Britain during the two World Wars. Since a previous participant Mr Lee talked about World War 1 claiming that this couldn't be quantified, Tharoor thought of quantifying it from Indian point of view. He points out that one-sixth of all the British forces that fought in the war were Indian - 54 000 Indians actually lost their lives in that war, 65 000 were wounded and another 4000 remained missing or in prison. India contributed more soldiers to British forces

fighting the First World War than Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa combined. Despite suffering recession, poverty and an influenza epidemic, India's contributions in cash and materiel amount to £8bn (\$12bn) in today's money. Two and a half million Indians also fought for British forces in the Second World War, by the end of which £1.25bn of Britain's total £3bn war debt was owed to India, which was merely the tip of the iceberg that was colonial exploitation. It still hasn't been paid.

Indian taxpayers had to cough up 100 million pounds in that time's money. India supplied 17 million rounds of ammunition, 6, 00,000 rifles and machine guns, 42 million garments were stitched and sent out of India and 1.3 million Indian personnel served in this war. I know all this because the commemoration of the centenary has just taken place. In fact India had to supply 173,000 animals 370 million tonnes of supplies and in the end the total value of everything that was taken out of India and India by the way was suffering from recession at that time and poverty and hunger, was in today's money 8 billion pounds.

Pointing out Scotland Tharoor claims that India's union with Scotland embedded colonialism. The Scots had actually tried to send colonies out before 1707, they had all failed. He further says that this union resulted into a disproportionate employment of Scots, who soon got engaged in this colonial enterprise as soldiers, as merchants, as agents, as employees. Their earnings from India is what brought prosperity to Scotland, even pulled Scotland out of poverty. While talking about the British aids in India which was previously mentioned by fellow debater Sir Richard Ottaway, Tharoor adverb by inferring that the British aid to India is about 0.4 per cent of India's GDP. The government of India actually spends more on fertiliser subsidies which might be an appropriate metaphor for that argument. In recent years, even as the reparations debate has been growing louder, British politicians have in fact been wondering whether countries like India should even receive basic economic aid at the expense of the British taxpayer. To begin with, the aid received is 0.4%, which is less than half of 1% of India's GDP. British aid, which is far from the amounts a reparation debate would throw up, is only a fraction of India's fertiliser subsidy to farmers, which may be an appropriate metaphor for this argument. It's been pointed out that for the example dehumanisation of Africans in the Caribbean, the massive psychological damage that has been done, the undermining of social traditions, of the property rights, of the authority structures of the societies - all in the interest of British colonialism and the fact

remains that many of today's problems in these countries including the persistence and in some cases the creation of racial, of ethnic, of religious tensions were the direct result of colonialism. So there is a moral debt that needs to be paid.

British imperialism had long justified itself with the pretence that it was enlightened despotism, conducted for the benefit of the governed. Mr Churchill's inhumane conduct in 1943 gave the lie to this myth. But it had been battered for two centuries already: British imperialism had triumphed not just by conquest and deception on a grand scale, but by blowing rebels to bits from the mouths of cannons, massacring unarmed protesters at Jallianwala Bagh and upholding iniquity through institutionalised racism. No Indian in the colonial era was ever allowed to feel British; he was always a subject, never a citizen.

Britons may see our love of cricket or the English language, or even parliamentary democracy, conjuring up memories of the Raj as in television series like *Indian Summers*, with Shimla, and garden parties, and gentile Indians. For many Indians, however, it is a history of loot, massacres, bloodshed, of the banishing of the last Mughal emperor on a bullock cart to Burma.

“We were denied democracy so we had to snatch it, seize it from you with the greatest of reluctance it was considered in India's case after 150 years of British rule and that too with limited franchise.”(‘Dr Shashi Tharoor MP - Britain Does Owe Reparations’ You Tube 2015)

Tharoor concludes by saying that there have been incidents of racial violence, of loot, of massacres, of bloodshed, of transportation and in India's case even one of our last Mughal emperors. Yes, may be true that today's Britain are not responsible for some of these reparations but the same speakers have pointed with pride to their foreign aid - you are not responsible for the people starving in Somalia but you give them aid surely the principle of reparation for what is the wrongs that have done cannot be denied. It's been pointed out that for the example dehumanisation of Africans in the Caribbean, the massive psychological damage that has been done, the undermining of social traditions, of the property rights, of the authority structures of the societies - all in the interest of British colonialism and the fact remains that many of today's problems in these countries including the persistence and in some cases the creation of racial, of ethnic, of religious tensions were the direct result of



colonialism. So there is a moral debt that needs to be paid. Reparations are not a new concept. It has been previously done in certain countries. Germany doesn't just give reparations to Israel; it also gives reparations to Poland. There are other examples, there is Italy's reparations to Libya, there is Japan's to Korea even Britain has paid reparations to the New Zealand Maoris. So it is not as if this is something that is unprecedented or unheard of that somehow opens some sort of nasty Pandora box. Tharoor says,

“Let me say with the greatest possible respect, you cannot to be rich to oppress, enslave, kill, maim, torture people for 200 years and then celebrate the fact that they are democratic at the end of it.” (‘Dr Shashi Tharoor MP - Britain Does Owe Reparations’ You Tube 2015)

## CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS IN ‘AN ERA OF DARKNESS’

‘An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India’ is Shashi Tharoor's one of the most important work because it makes a strong argument for sovereignty without shrillness .In the book Shashi Tharoor makes an attempt to highlight the wrongs done by Britain in its former colony, India. Historians like James Mill and writers like Marco Polo, Max Weber saw India as an unmitigated disaster redeemed by the benign, benevolent hand of British rule, Tharoor forcefully argues that colonial rule not only impoverished India, it also enfeebled it. He writes that this book is about India’s experience of colonialism. (‘An Era of Darkness’ BBC 2016) It talks about policies adopted by British India and how those policies made it poor, communal and dependent. It refutes the claims of unification of India by British and argues that India already had a civilizational unity. British dismantled all the political institutions. Seeds of democracy were sown by British, but they never practised it in India. Laws were partial and used as an instrument of oppression for colonial rule. They did not intervene in social and cultural affairs of the country as they were here for career and not for a crusade. British rule in India divided the country along the lines of caste and religion which led to a bloodbath and finally partition. It was not a benign rule but a despotic rule in which 30 million Indian died in avoidable famines and millions in forced migration. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, in which more than 379 unarmed people were killed, was the deliberate imposition of colonial will. Railways, English, education and sports were introduced by British for their interest. In conclusion, ‘it was totally amoral, rapacious imperial machine bent on the subjugation of Indians for the purpose of profit’ (Tharoor Shashi ‘An Era of Darkness’)

In the year 2015, an Oxford Union debate was held on the proposition 'Britain Owes Reparations to Her Former Colonies'. Tharoor took part in it and said, India didn’t ask for compensation or reparation, but it was owed an apology. The speech had an electrifying effect in the age of social media, and virtually every Indian, regardless of political affiliation, cheered the former minister and diplomat, the Congress MP Tharoor. ‘The book An Era of Darkness’ takes off from the debate. It enlarges the arguments of his speech at the Oxford Union in the middle of last year, speaking for the motion 'this house believes Britain

owes reparations to her former colonies'. It refutes British claims of superiority, questions the benefits of British rule, castigates governors and their subordinates for their profligacy and arrogance, exposes their corruption, and ridicules the conceit which has taken root in Britain—that the British rule was a divine dispensation, which civilized the natives.

British rule is accused of making India's share of the world economy fall by a factor of nine, to a mere three per cent at the time of their departure. "Something like the Meiji Restoration could easily have taken place in India without the incubus of British rule," we are informed later. It did not, because "Britain's rise for 200 years was financed by its depredations in India". These depredations caused famines, which led to 30-35 million needless deaths. To attribute Indian unity to British conquest is misleading, Tharoor holds, because it overlooks the "impulsion for unity" of the Maurya, Gupta and Mughal empires, the sacred geography of the Hindu epics and foreigners' views of India as a unit. Unification would have happened anyway: to suggest it would not is "absurd".

As discussed in the previous chapter, the term 'Historical negationism' also known as denialism is an illegitimate distortion of the historical record. It is often imprecisely referred to as historical revisionism, but that term also denotes a legitimate academic pursuit of re-interpretation of the historical record and questioning the accepted views. Tharoor in his book 'An Era of Darkness' accuses British of distorting the historical record. The British claimed that they were trying to do their colonial enterprise out of enlightened despotism to try and bring the benefits of colonialism and civilisation to the benighted. They denied the violence and exploitation that Indian suffered in their hands. The British attributed Indian unity and democracy to British conquest is quiet misleading, Tharoor holds, because it overlooks the "impulsion for unity" of the Maurya, Gupta and Mughal empires, the sacred history and geography of the ancient Hindu epics and foreigners' views of India as an entity. Unification would have happened anyway like it had happened in other non-colonized countries. So taking the credit of consolidation is a bit nonsensical. Tharoor illustrates how violence and racism were the order of those days and how colonialism exploited the subcontinent.

"It's a bit rich to oppress, enslave, kill, torture, maim people for 200 years and then celebrate the fact that they are democratic at the end of it. We were denied democracy, so we had to snatch it, seize it from you," (Tharoor Shashi, 'Oxford Speech BBC')

Far from being an innovator in free trade, the East India Company was a private monopoly with state assistance, which enabled hundreds of young Britons to get achingly rich, upsetting the lancing order of the British life. The only thing that the East India government did in India was marshalled substantial looting, preventing Indian businesses from challenging British monopolies by destroying Indian market, placing import barricades on Indian goods, making British exports to India tariff-free, manipulating the currency to increase Indian debt, setting standards that made Indian manufacturing uncompetitive in global markets, and requiring tea estates to be run by British managers.

When the British colonized India they pretended that it was for a noble purpose, enshrouding the ardency of Indians. Quoting Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, Tharoor points out that it is easier to forgive than forget.

‘[W]hen we kill people, we feel compelled to pretend that it is for some higher cause. It is this pretence of virtue, I promise you that will never be forgiven by history.’ (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*)

British imperialism had long justified itself with the pretence that it was enlightened despotism, conducted for the benefit of the governed. Taking advantage of the collapse of the Mughal Empire and the rise of a number of warring principalities contending for authority across eighteenth-century India, the British had subjugated a vast land through the power of their artillery and the cynicism of their amorality. They displaced nawabs and maharajas for a price, emptied their treasuries as it pleased them, took over their states through various methods (including, from the 1840s, the cynical ‘doctrine of lapse’ whenever a ruler died without an heir), and stripped farmers of their ownership of the lands they had tilled for generations. Tharoor quotes Will Durant, an American historian and philosopher who on reaching Indian shore was shocked by the Britain’s ‘conscious and deliberate bleeding of India’. Durant writes in his book ‘*The Case for India*’-

‘The British conquest of India was the invasion and destruction of a high civilization by a trading company [the British East India Company] utterly without scruple or principle, careless of art and greedy of gain, over-running with fire and sword a country temporarily disordered and helpless, bribing and murdering, annexing and stealing, and beginning that

career of illegal and ‘legal’ plunder which has now [1930] gone on ruthlessly for one hundred and seventy-three years’

Through this book Tharoor tore apart the self-serving justifications of the British for their long and shameless record of rapacity in India. John Sullivan who was the originator of the hill station Ooty or Ootacamund, recorded in his journal in 1840s-

‘The little court disappears —trade languishes—the capital decays—the people are impoverished—the Englishman flourishes, and acts like a sponge, drawing up riches from the banks of the Ganges, and squeezing them down upon the banks of the Thames.’

India was not a desolate piece of land that British conquered, but it was a glittering jewel of the medieval world. Unitarian minister J.T. Sunderland describes India as;

‘Nearly every kind of manufacture or product known to the civilized world—nearly every kind of creation of man’s brain and hand, existing anywhere, and prized either for its utility or beauty—had long been produced in India. India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or any other in Asia. Her textile goods—the fine products of her looms, in cotton, wool, linen and silk—were famous over the civilized world; so were her exquisite jewellery and her precious stones cut in every lovely form; so were her pottery, porcelains, ceramics of every kind, quality, color and beautiful shape; so were her fine works in metal—iron, steel, silver and gold. She had great architecture—equal in beauty to any in the world. She had great engineering works. She had great merchants, great businessmen, great bankers and financiers. Not only was she the greatest shipbuilding nation, but she had great commerce and trade by land and sea which extended to all known civilized countries. Such was the India which the British found when they came.’ (Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’)

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, as the British economic historian Angus Maddison has demonstrated, India’s share of the world economy was 23 per cent, as large as all of Europe put together. It had been 27 per cent in 1700, when the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s treasury raked in £100 million in tax revenues alone. By the time the British departed India, it had dropped to just over 3 per cent. The reason was simple: India was governed for the benefit of Britain. Britain’s rise for 200 years was financed by its

depredations in India. ('An Era of Darkness', Wikipedia) It all began with the East India Company, incorporated by royal charter from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I in 1600 to trade in silk and spices, and other profitable Indian commodities. The Company, in furtherance of its trade, established outposts or 'factories' along the Indian coast, notably in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay; increasingly this involved the need to defend its premises, personnel and trade by military means, including recruiting soldiers in an increasingly strife-torn land.

Britain's Industrial Revolution was built on the destruction of India's thriving manufacturing industries. Textiles were an emblematic case in point: the British systematically set about destroying India's textile manufacturing and exports, substituting Indian textiles by British ones manufactured in England. Ironically, the British used Indian raw material and exported the finished products back to India and the rest of the world, the industrial equivalent of adding insult to injury. While claiming of glorifying and globalising India, it is difficult to forget how they exploited India for their own profit. They were, in a word, ruthless. They stopped paying for textiles and silk in pounds brought from Britain, preferring to pay from revenues extracted from Bengal, and pushing prices still lower. India had enjoyed a 25 per cent share of the global trade in textiles in the early eighteenth century. But this was destroyed; the Company's own stalwart administrator Lord William Bentinck wrote that 'the bones of the cotton weavers were bleaching the plains of India'. (Tharoor Shashi, 'An Era of Darkness')

Under colonial trade policies, the British destroyed the artisanal industries and their monopoly of industrial production drove the rural Indians to husbandry beyond level the land could sustain. Tharoor challenges the notion that Indian political unity is a British gift, by undermining the centuries of continuing civilization, where the Indian abroad from medieval times was known as an Indian, and not as a Punjabi or a Gujarati or Tamil. But for most of the colonial era, the story of Indian manufacturing was of dispossession, displacement and defeat. What happened to India's textiles was replicated across the board. From the great manufacturing nation described by Sunderland, India became a mere exporter of raw materials and foodstuffs, raw cotton, as well as jute, silk, coal, opium, rice, spices and tea. With the collapse of its manufacturing and the elimination of manufactured goods from its export rosters, India's share of world manufacturing exports fell from 27 per

cent to 2 per cent under British rule. Exports from Britain to India, of course, soared, as India's balance of trade reversed and a major exporting nation became an importer of British goods forced upon the Indian market duty-free while British laws and regulations strangled Indian products they could not have fairly competed against for quality or price. .( Tharoor Shashi, 'An Era of Darkness')

Corruption, though not unknown in India, plumbed new depths under the British, especially since the Company exacted payments from Indians beyond what they could afford, and the rest had to be obtained by bribery, robbery and even murder. (Oxford History of India) Colonialists like Robert Clive, victor of the seminal Battle of Plessey in 1757 that is seen as decisively inaugurating British rule in India, were unashamed of their cupidity and corruption. On his first return to England Clive took home Rs.19052982 from his Indian exploits. He and his followers bought their 'rotten boroughs' in England with the proceeds of their loot in India while publicly marvelling at their own self-restraint in not stealing even more than they did. Clive declared:

'an opulent city lay at my mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels... When I think of the marvellous riches of that country, and the comparatively small part which I took away, I am astonished at my own moderation.'

Still the British had the audacity to call him 'Clive of India' as if he belonged to India. What he really did was, exploiting the Indians in the name of glorification and filling his own pockets. It is quiet ironical that the British used the term 'nabobs', taken from Hindi word 'nawab or prince' to describe the employees of East India Company who returned to England after making a fortune. The Whig politician and author Horace Walpole wrote:

'Here was Lord Clive's diamond house; this is Leadenhall Street, and this broken column was part of the palace of a company of merchants who were sovereigns of Bengal! They starved millions in India by monopolies and plunder, and almost raised a famine at home by the luxury occasioned by their opulence, and by that opulence raising the prices of everything, till the poor could not purchase bread!'

While violence and racism were the reality of the British colonialism, the British still claims that all notions that the British were trying to do their colonial enterprise out of enlightened despotism to try and bring the benefits of colonialism and civilisation to the benighted. It is quiet true that Britain was indeed nothing but ‘a sink of Indian wealth’. (Walpole Horace) India bestowed a significant amount in the British colonial expansion- dispatching troops to overseas for war which had nothing to do with India, but everything to do with the protection and expansion of British imperialism. And all this was accomplished by Indian funds, especially land revenue wrested from the labour of the wretched peasantry or collected from various princely states through ‘subsidiary alliances’. Tharoor enumerates Indian Army Deployment overseas by the British in the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth- China (1860, 1900–01), Ethiopia (1867–68), Malaya (1875), Malta (1878), Egypt (1882), Sudan (1885–86, 1896), Burma (1885), East Africa (1896, 1897, 1898), Somaliland (1890, 1903–04), South Africa (1899, but white troops only) and Tibet (1903). (Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’) Moreover he also gives records that show India’s contribution to British accomplishments. 5,787 Indian troops contributed to the Chinese War of 1856–57 that ended in the Treaty of Tientsin (1857) and control of Canton; 11,000 troops sent in 1860 to China, whose campaign ended in the capture and control of Peking; 12,000 troops to release British captives from Abyssinia (Ethiopia); 9,444 troops and over 1,479,000 rupees contributed in the suppression of rebellion in Egypt in 1882 and 1896; and 1,219 soldiers dispatched to quell mutiny in East Africa. In World War II, among the ‘few of the few’ who bravely defended England against German invasion in the Battle of Britain were Indian fighter pilots, including a doughty Sikh who named his Hurricane fighter ‘Amritsar’. (Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’)

The assumption of responsibility by the Crown also witnessed the dawn of a new language of colonial justification—the pretence that Britain would govern for the welfare of the Indian people. As Will Durant commented on India’s condition during British Raj:

‘Hypocrisy was added to brutality, while the robbery went on.’ (Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’)

Tharoor also shows how entire communities were segregated and marginalized by calling them criminal tribes, and poignantly highlights the colonial-era laws that persist in India,



which have far outlived their purpose (such as the sedition law) and which should never have been enacted.

The British have claimed and illustrated in the moments of self-justifying exoneration that they bestowed as with the political unity of India—that the very idea of ‘India’ as one entity rather than multiple warring principalities and statelets, is the unchallengeable contribution of British imperial rule. However the ancient history of India tells us a different story. . The epics such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana have acted as strong, yet sophisticated, threads of Indian culture that have woven together tribes, languages, and peoples across the subcontinent, uniting them in their celebration of the same larger than-life heroes and heroines, whose stories were told in dozens of translations and variations, but always in the same spirit and meaning. Also India had enjoyed cultural and geographical unity throughout the ages, going back at least to Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE. Diana Eck’s writings on India’s ‘sacred geography’ extensively delineate ancient ideas of a political unity mediated through ideas of sacredness. As Eck explains:

‘Considering its long history, India has had but a few hours of political and administrative unity. Its unity as a nation, however, has been firmly constituted by the sacred geography it has held in common and revered: its mountains, forests, rivers, hilltop shrines...linked with the tracks of pilgrimage.’(Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’) Counterfactuals are theoretical but facts are what they are. The facts point clearly to the dismantling of existing political institutions in India by the British, the fomenting of communal division and systematic political discrimination with a view to maintaining and extending British domination. In the years after 1757, the British astutely fomented cleavages among the Indian princes, and steadily consolidated their dominion through a policy of ‘divide and rule’ that came to be dubbed, after 1858, ‘divide et impera’. At this time it was a purely political ploy, and the divisions the Company sought to encourage were entirely based on greed and the desire for self-advancement rather than religion or social group. Arguably, however, the reality of British paramount over India had already become clear thanks to the numerous military victories of the East India Company over Indian princes, and the unequal treaties that reified their subjugation. William Dalrymple quotes one contemporary observer as saying:

‘Of all human conditions, perhaps the most brilliant and at the same time the most anomalous, is that of the Governor-General of British India. A private English gentleman, and the servant of a joint-stock company, during the brief period of his government he is the deputed sovereign of the greatest empire in the world; the ruler of a hundred million men; while dependent kings and princes bow down to him with a deferential awe and submission. There is nothing in history analogous to this position...’ (Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’)

This is not to suggest that pre-colonial India was universally well-ruled— as we know, it was going through a period of disintegration, collapsing Mughal authority, and in many places, conditions bordering on anarchy— but is merely intended to reject the notion that British rapacity would have been seen as an improvement by most Indians of that time. In large parts of India during the period of British colonial expansion, fairly decent governments, broadly accepted by the people, were removed and replaced by British rulers whose motives and methods were, on the whole, much more reprehensible than those they had overthrown. Tharoor Shashi, ‘An Era of Darkness’)

Racism infected every aspect of the Empire, and not just its civil service. Racism, of course, was central to the imperial project: it was widespread, flagrant and profoundly insulting, and it worsened as British power grew. It is instructive to note the initial attitudes of whites in India when they were not yet in a dominant position. William Dalrymple has described well how the rule of the East India Company, in the first two centuries from 1600 to 1800, was characterized by a remarkable level of interaction between the colonized and the colonizer.

The British avouch of evolving the three of democracy’s building-blocks during their colonial rule in India which abetted which further helped India in establishing and strengthening the political unity and democracy. This triumvirate- a free press, an incipient parliamentary system and the rule of law which India withholds and has continued to develop with the passage of time is one of the largesse of British imperialism. Scottish historian Niall Ferguson in his book ‘Empire: How Britain Made the World’ combined commerce, conquest, and some ‘evangelical imperialism’ in an early form of globalization or more specifically ‘Anglobalization’. (Tharoor Shashi. ‘An Era of Darkness’) Thus by doing this the British bequeathed and bestowed to a large part of the world nine of its most distinctive and admirable features, the very ones that had made Britain great: the English

language, English forms of land tenure, Scottish and English banking, the common law, Protestantism, team sports, the 'night watchman' state, representative assemblies, and the idea of liberty.

The last of these, he tells us, is 'the most distinctive feature of the Empire' since 'whenever the British were behaving despotically, there was always a liberal critique of that behaviour from within British society'. Ferguson further adds of the British bestowments

'India, the world's largest democracy, owes more than it is fashionable to acknowledge to British rule. Its elite schools, its universities, its civil service, its army, its press and its parliamentary system all still have discernibly British models... Without the influence of British imperial rule,'

He further wrote;

'Empire not only underwrites the free international exchange of commodities, labour and capital but also creates and upholds the conditions without which markets cannot function—peace and order, the rule of law, non-corrupt administration, stable fiscal and monetary policies as well as provides public goods, such as transport infrastructure, hospitals and schools, which would not otherwise exist'.

Many critic and historians, tend to give the Empire credit for introducing the concept of the free press to India, starting the first newspapers and promoting a consciousness of the rights a free citizen was entitled to enjoy. It is certainly true that Indian nationalism and the independence movement could not have spread across the country without the active involvement of the free press. Although it is quiet strange that the first printing press was established by the Portuguese in 1550 that use to only print books. Later the British established their first printing press in Bombay in 1664. soon a raft of British newspapers began printing in India: the first four in the Company capital of Calcutta—The Calcutta Gazette in 1784, The Bengal Journal and The Oriental Magazine of Calcutta in 1785, and The Calcutta Chronicle in 1786—and then two in the other principal British trading centres, The Madras Courier in 1788 and The Bombay Herald in 1789. (Tharoor Shashi. 'An Era of Darkness') These gazette reflected the interests of the small European community, particularly commercial interests, and provided useful, if not always accurate, information

about the arrivals and departures of ships and developments in the governance of the colony. Affrighted by their escalation and concerned that the Company's critics and enemies could use the press to the Company's disadvantage, Lord Wellesley introduced the Censorship of the Press Act, 1799, which brought all newspapers in India under the scrutiny of the Government of India prior to publication. In the early twentieth century, Indian nationalists began to establish newspapers explicitly to advocate their cause.

There is no doubt that the press contributed significantly to the development and growth of nationalist feelings in India, inculcated the idea of a broader public consciousness, exposed many of the failings of the colonial administration and played an influential part in fomenting opposition to many aspects of British rule. Soon the British authorities began to be alarmed: Lord Lytton brought in a Vernacular Press Act in 1878 to regulate the Indian-language papers, and his government kept a jaundiced eye on the English-language ones. One of the most notable accomplishments of the Indian nationalist media, during a period of relative freedom, in 1891 a journalist from the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* managed to rummage through the wastepaper basket at the office of Viceroy Lord Lansdowne. There he found the fragments of a torn up letter, which with great enterprise he managed to piece together. The letter contained explosive news, revealing as it did in considerable detail the viceroy's plans to annex the Hindu maharaja-ruled Muslim-majority state of Jammu & Kashmir. To the consternation of the British authorities, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published the letter on its front page. The newspaper reached the maharaja of Kashmir, who promptly protested, set sail for London and vehemently lobbied the authorities there to honour their predecessors' guarantees of his state's 'independent' status. The maharaja was successful, and Indian nationalists congratulated the *Patrika* on having thwarted the colonialists' imperial designs. The revised Press Act of 1910 was designed to limit the influence of editors on public opinion; it became a key instrument of British control of the Indian press. Under its provisions an established press or newspaper had to provide a security deposit of up to five thousand rupees (a considerable sum in those days); a new publication would have to pay up to two thousand. If the newspaper printed something of which the government disapproved, the money could be forfeit, the press closed down, and its proprietors and editors prosecuted. The British colonial governments in the provinces enjoyed the right to search any newspaper's premises and confiscate any material they found 'seditious'. The Indian press, in other words, was fettered rather than free, but that it existed, and could serve as a

rallying point for public opinion, is to the credit of both the British authorities and the Indians who worked in the media. British observer, Henry Nevinson, in 1908, 'have I seen more deliberate attempts to stir up race hatred and incite to violence than in Anglo-Indian [i.e. British settlers'] papers, which suffer nothing'. (Tharoor Shashi. 'An Era of Darkness') Nevinson further adds that 'this obvious instigation to indiscriminate manslaughter by The Asian, an Anglo-Indian weekly in Calcutta (9 May 1908)'. Nevinson adds that 'the tone of the Anglo-Indian press is almost invariably insolent and provocative. If "seditious" only means "likely to lead to violence", it is seditious too.' It is true that the press was free but some newspapers (the British owned ones) were freer than others.

There is this argument that Britain left us with self-governing institutions and the trappings of democracy fails to hold water in the face of the reality of colonial repression. Jawaharlal Nehru, who wrote in a 1936 letter to an Englishman, Lord Lothian, that British rule is 'based on an extreme form of widespread violence and the only sanction is fear. It suppresses the usual liberties which are supposed to be essential to the growth of a people; it crushes the adventurous, the brave, the sensitive, and encourages the timid, the opportunist and time-serving, the sneak and the bully. It surrounds itself with a vast army of spies and informers and agents provocateurs. Is this the atmosphere in which the more desirable virtues grow or democratic institutions flourish?

When the British quotes of establishing democracy which India is currently enjoying, it reminds us those scenes of history where the British crushed the human dignity and decency. These were hardly ways of instilling or promoting respect for democracy and its principles in India. It injured India's soul and body which is the very basis of nation's self-respect- the very truth that British deny to accept. The British rationale of leaving us with self-governing institution and embellishing democracy fails to souse the reality of colonial repression.

In one hand the British claim of catalysing feasible political institution in India, a democratic spirit, an efficient bureaucracy and the rule of law while in the other hand they brought with them another anti-democratic project that discredit any credible view that the political unity of India was an objective of British colonialism. The British had a special endowment for bringing out and overdrawing certain identities and drawing ethnically-based administrative lines in all their colonies. Indians were always subjects and servants, never citizens;

throughout the days of Empire, no Indian could have the right to say 'I am British'. While the British always claimed to have bequeathed India its political unity and democracy but in reality they always had the attitude of separating. It had been quiet evidenced in the only already-white country the British colonized, Ireland; instead of assimilating the Irish into the British race, they were subjugated by their new overlords, intermarriage was forbidden and even learning the Irish language and adopting their clothing were prohibited. Moreover the Irish people were discriminated as 'beyond the Pale' (Tharoor Shashi, 'An Era of Darkness').

Bernard Cohn, a scholar of British colonialism in India, has put forward his view that the British simultaneously misinterpreted and oversimplified the features they saw in Indian society, placing Indians into stereotypical boxes they defined and into which they were assigned in the name of ancient tradition. The British did not make effort to understand ethnic, religious, sectarian and caste differences among their subjects; they rather employ these differences for their political expansion by defining, dividing and perpetuating these differences. The British administrators regularly wrote reports and conducted censuses that classified their Indian subjects in ever-more bewilderingly narrow terms, based on their language, religion, sect, caste, sub-caste, ethnicity and skin colour. While classifying and categorising the British created many entire new communities were created by people who had not consciously thought of themselves as particularly different from others around them. Colonialism was made possible, and then sustained and strengthened, as much by cultural technologies of rule as it was by the more obvious and brutal modes of conquest that first established power on foreign shores.

Since the British came from a hierarchical society with an entrenched class system, they instinctively tended to look for a similar one in India. They began by anatomizing Indian society into 'classes' that they referenced as being 'primarily religious' in nature. They then seized upon caste. But caste had not been a particularly stable social structure in the pre-British days; though there were, of course, variants across time and place, caste had broadly been a mobile form of social organization constantly shaped and reinvented by the beliefs, the politics and quite often the economic interests of the dominant men of the times. The British policy explicitly sought to enumerate, categorize and assess their colonial populations and resources for administrative purposes. Ethnic, social, caste and racial

classifications were conducted as part of an imperial strategy more effectively to impose and maintain British control over the colonized Indian population. Under the British rule, the Brahmins with their knowledge of the Vedas were the most qualified and best suited as their intermediaries to rule India. The Brahmins enjoyed British patronage over other groups and began considering themselves above all other castes, which the British, internalizing Brahmin prejudice, thought of as lower castes. India had arguably been a far more meritocratic society before the British Raj settled down to enshrine the Brahmins in such a position of dominance. Just as 'Brahmin' became a sought-after designation enshrining social standing, the census definition of an individual's caste tended to seal the fate of any 'Shudra', by fixing his identity across the entire country. Whereas prior to British rule the Shudra had only to leave his village and try his fortunes in a different princely state in India where his caste would not have followed him, colonialism made him a Shudra for life, wherever he was. While talking about political unity and democracy, the British seems to forget their own army recruitment policies which were usually based on caste classifications. The British made these divisions such an article of faith that even a writer seen as broadly sympathetic to Indians, E. M. Forster, has his Indian protagonist, Aziz, say in *A Passage to India*, 'Nothing embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing'. (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*) The ideas of democracy were not extended to all strata of Indian society under British rule.

The most important among the identity differences was the religious cleavage which focuses between the Hindu and Muslims. India being a heterogeneous country religion became a useful means of divide and rule. The division between Hindu and Muslims was a political strategy to strengthen colonialism in Indian society. Historians like James Mill promoted these religious differences by dividing Indian history in accordance with religion; such as Hindu period, Muslim period.

Historians such as Mill, Macaulay and Mueller claimed that India's pre-colonial political economy was a form of 'Oriental Despotism', which essentially held that Indian society was a static society ruled by 'despotic and oppressive rulers' who impoverished the people. They had effectively established a colonial construction of the Indian past which even Indians were taught to internalize. The facts are clear: large-scale conflicts between Hindus and Muslims (religiously defined), only began under colonial rule; many other kinds of social

strife were labelled as religious due to the colonists' Orientalist assumption that religion was the fundamental division in Indian society. The British-sponsored Shia-Sunni divide in Lucknow is one of the clearest examples of how the British encouraged differences, and how Indians sought to create communities that the Raj would recognize and to which it would give political weight. They transformed religious differences into public, political, and legal issues. And so they have remained. The creation and perpetuation of Hindu–Muslim antagonism was the most significant accomplishment of British imperial policy: the project of divide et imperia would reach its culmination in the horrors of Partition that eventually accompanied the collapse of British authority in 1947.

Several historians, scholars and Anglophile Indians believed that British colonial was a version of the 'enlightened despotism' that characterized the Enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They saw British imperialists, one who denied Indian freedom and democracy as generous and wise. They justified themselves as 'Everything for the people, nothing by the people'. This view is quiet self-serving as there are certain examples that can prove that the British rule in India lacked democracy and public accountability. The most obvious example relates to the famines the British caused and mismanaged.

India played a pivotal role in the Britain's prosperity. This imposed pressure on the Indian citizen. As a result millions of Indians died completely unnecessary deaths in famines. As one can call the British Colonial Holocaust, they ruthlessly imposed economic policy due to which 30 to 35 million Indians needlessly died of starvation. Millions of tonnes of wheat were exported from India to Britain even as famine raged. When relief camps were set up, the inhabitants were barely fed and nearly all died. India during pre-colonial era had never experienced frequent famines. The persistence of famines contributed to the British narrative too that Indians needed British oversight and supervision that, indeed, the Indians would all be dying of starvation were it not for the benevolence of British rule. Moreover the British, in their official reports and reviews of famine, took care to blame everything but themselves—the burgeoning population, declining rice production, the role of climate and other uncontrollable factors, lack of transportation, even indigenous culture.

A report on the famous Bengal famine stated that it was the negligence of the citizen of Bengal that the famine occurred. –



‘The public in Bengal, or at least certain sections of it, have also their share of blame. We have referred to the atmosphere of fear and greed which, in the absence of control, was one of the causes of the rapid rise in the price level. Enormous profits were made out of the calamity, and in the circumstances, profits for some meant death for others. A large part of the community lived in plenty while others starved, and there was much indifference in face of suffering. Corruption was widespread throughout the province and in many classes of society... Society, together with its organs, failed to protect its weaker members.’ (Tharoor Shashi, *Era of Darkness* pg 180) Through their painted words of democracy and political unity the British tried to hide their flaw. They distorted the actual historical records of famine. Lieutenant Colonel Ronald Osborne, who became the first witness wrote about the horrors of famine in 1877, proving the act of historical negationism by the British-

‘Scores of corpses were tumbled into old wells, because the deaths were too numerous for the miserable relatives to perform the usual funeral rites. Mothers sold their children for a single scanty meal. Husbands flung their wives into ponds, to escape the torment of seeing them perish by the lingering agonies of hunger. Amid these scenes of death, the government of India kept its serenity and cheerfulness unimpaired. The [newspapers] were persuaded into silence. Strict orders were given to civilians under no circumstances to countenance the pretence that civilians were dying of hunger.’

The loss of cattle directly impacted agricultural sector and productivity, which would take years, if not decades, to be restored to pre-famine levels. The poorest farmers suffered most, since their existence was always on the margins of economic viability, but their loss of livestock was never compensated by official relief policies, which preferred to target ‘healthy’ cattle for help, usually the cattle of those who could afford to feed them better.

While talking about “enlightened despotism’ the British seem to forget and deny the brutal exploitation and suppression of the Indian citizen. Brutality was an early feature of the military campaigns of the East India Company. Historians attribute the early viciousness of the British to their sense of vulnerability and inability to get their way, in the absence of strong relationships with local society, by asserting power through petty acts of humiliation. British imperialism had triumphed not just by conquest and deception on a grand scale but by ruthlessly suppressing dissent, executing rebels and deserters and chopping off the thumbs of skilled weavers so they could not produce the fine cloth that made Britain’s

manufactures look tawdry. The suppression of the 1857 'mutiny' was conducted with extreme brutality, with hundreds of rebels being blown to bits from the mouths of cannons or hanged from public gibbets, women and children massacred and over 100,000 lives lost. Describing the scenario of the British colonialism in India, historian Jon Wilson says that most of the time the actions of British imperial administrators were driven by irrational passions rather than calculated plans. Force was rarely efficient. The assertion of violent power usually exceeded the demands of any particular commercial or political interest. While talking about the viciousness of the British the fact cannot be ignored that they in order to get their way among the Indian citizen asserted power through petty acts of humiliation. During the Revolt of 1857, thousands of mutineers were killed brutally, as were large numbers of civilians of both sexes. While Indians killing British was always highlighted as betrayal, casual murder was unknown as the British killed Indians with exemption.

Famous historian Andrew Roberts has denied the allegations against the British and affirms galvanically that the British imperialism has led to the modernisation, development, protection, agrarian advance, linguistic unification and ultimately the democratisation of the sub-continent. He claims that it is India who owes its political unity and democracy to Britain. We have administered with the notion that there was something benign and enlightened about British despotism in India.

The construction of railways has always been pointed out as a benign act of imperialism. The British preened themselves for contemporizing India and establishment of railways was their unfeigned incentive of ameliorating India. But I find it quiet fallacious that in order to globalize, a country has to go through a 200 years of exploitation and colonisation. The only reason the British constructed railway was to fill their treasury. The installation of railways would help the British to govern and establish military control throughout the subcontinent. Moreover it would help to transport labour to the fields, mines and transport of raw material to the ports in order to feed the 'satanic mills' of England. (Tharoor Shashi, An Era of Darkness, Pg. 214) The very concept of railways seems to be a colonial scam. Though the British claims the credit of installing railways, the funding of this installation was paid by the citizen of India through taxes. So it quiet groundless to give credit for something which was paid by Indians. To me it seems as if we paid for our own colonialism. Additionally it

did not provide any residual benefit to the Indians as the railways transported raw materials and resources to the ports. The movement of people was inadvertent except when it benefited the colonial interest. Even if the Indian travelled, they were only allowed in the third class compartment which had wooden benches and total absence of amenities. It was quiet disparate from the first class compartment of the British which was provided with all the luxuries. But still the British have the audacity of calling it as an unfeign act while we pay for our own exploitation.

As Tharoor writes in his book quoting Will Durant who wrote about the factual purpose of railways during British rule-

‘the purposes of the British army and British trade...Their greatest revenue comes, not, as in America, from the transport of goods (for the British trader controls the rates), but from third-class passengers—the Hindus; but these passengers are herded into almost barren coaches like animals bound for the slaughter, twenty or more to one compartment...’  
(Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*, pg. 216)

Another factual aspect that Tharoor portrays is the discrimination in the employment process in the railways. Even though the Indians paid for the construction and establishment of the railways they were not employed in the railways. Moreover the Indians were denied of technical and industrial training which added to the above cause of employment. The prevailing view was that the railways would have to be staffed exclusively by Europeans to ‘protect investments’. This was especially true of signalmen, and those who operated and repaired the steam trains, but the policy was extended to the absurd level that even in the early twentieth century all the key employees, that is from directors of the Railway Board to ticket-collectors, were white men—whose salaries and benefits were also paid at European, not Indian, levels and largely repatriated back to England. Even when there were shortages of workers the government preferred ‘British like workers’ and again Indian were left unemployed. In order to fulfil the vacant position the British later on employed Anglo-Indians who were only allowed putting in charge of driving engines within station yards and employed in stations with infrequent traffic.

British racial theories were in full flow on railway matters. It was believed that Indians did not have the 'judgement and presence of mind' to deal with emergencies and that they 'seldom have character enough to enforce strict obedience' to railway rules. When Indian employment was attempted for economic reasons in the 1870s, railway officials argued that it would take three Indians to do the job of a single European. So great was the racist resistance to Indian employees that the project of training drivers was discontinued after a three-year trial, and the drivers who had been trained were once again restricted to yard work. This showed the double standard of the British.

In Britain it was common practice to ensure the merit-based promotion of firemen to drivers, or of station-masters of small rural stations to large stations, this did not happen in India because these junior positions were occupied by Indians, whose promotion would be to posts otherwise occupied by Europeans. In 1970 the regulation on pays, promotion and suitability of jobs were divided according to the nations they belong- European, Eurasian, West Indian of Negro descent pure or mixed, Non-Indian Asiatic, or Indian. While conducting the employment process the local medical officer would certify the race and caste of the appearing candidate.

Even today, British claim of providing India with necessary tools for independence. They elaborated saying that the concept of self-government, democracy, constitution and civil rights were a foreign thing for India until the British arrived. The British asserted that it was due to education provided by British that made the Indians civilised and modern. Not to forget that they introduced English language in India. Considering the statistic record, the British left with a literacy rate of 16 per cent and female literacy rate of 8 per cent which means that one of every twelve female could only read and write in 1947 (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016). To be honest the educating the mass was not one of objectives and priorities set by the British. Before the British came to India, education was contended with a system of communal school managed by the village communities. As Will Durant quotes the grisly nature of British education system -

'The agents of the East India Company destroyed these village communities, and took no steps to replace the schools; even today [1930]... they stand at only 66 per cent of their number a hundred years ago. There are now in India 730,000 villages, and only 162,015 primary schools. Only 7 per cent of the boys and 1 per cent of the girls receive schooling,

i.e. 4 per cent of the whole. Such schools as the Government has established are not free, but exact a tuition fee which... looms large to a family always hovering on the edge of starvation.' (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 220)

The British education policy supplanted and undermines the traditional Indian education system. The traditional method of guru-shishya parampara and the monasteries that received student from other countries such as China and Turkey was reprobated. The Pala period ( 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century CE) saw several monasteries emerge in modern Bengal and Bihar, five of which—Vikramashila, Nalanda, Somapura Mahavihara, Odantapuri, and Jaggadala- which were the pioneers of Indian education system.

When the British asserts that India was uneducated and uncivilised until the British came and enlightened them, it becomes obligatory to remind them of the Nalanda University that enjoyed international recognition when Oxford and Cambridge were not even gleams in their founders' eyes, employed 2,000 teachers and housed 10,000 students in a remarkable campus that featured a library nine storeys tall. (Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*, pg.218)It is said that monks would hand-copy documents and books which would then become part of private collections of individual scholars. The university opened its doors to students from countries ranging from Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, and Indonesia in the east to Persia and Turkey in the west, studying subjects which included the fine arts, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, politics and the art of war. (Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*, pg. 218) But while such traditions give Indian education its moorings in our culture, there is no escaping the stark fact that modern India lost much of it under British rule, achieved independence with only 16 per cent literacy, and is still struggling to educate the broad mass of its population to seize the opportunities afforded by the globalized world of the twenty-first century. At least some of the blame for this surely lies in the system of education implemented by the British. (Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*, pg. 218)

Although the British did give India the English language but it was not a deliberate gift of the British for the benefit of Indian subjects. It was never taught with the motive of enlightening them about their rights and democracy .Rather it was their medium for colonialism which they transfuse to Indians in order to facilitate the task of the government. Lord Macaulay articulated the exact reason for the introduction of English in India. He says-

‘We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.’(Macaulay, ‘Minute on Education’, 1835)

The language was taught with the motive of serving as intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled. Moreover it was Indians who grab this opportunity to learn the language and use it for expressing their nationalist sentiments. It was R. C. Dutt, Dinshaw Wacha and Dadabhai Naoroji who should be credited for using the language as a medium for freedom not the British. Their bourn for establishing Christian missionaries in India was to improve the communication between Europeans and natives and to produce those reciprocal feelings of regard and respect which are essential to the permanent interests of the British Empire in India. Lord Macaulay claimed that

‘A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia’ (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg.219)

Futhermore he says, ‘We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West. In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government...of all foreign tongues; the English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects... What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of more and Ascham, our tongue is to the people of India... The languages of Western Europe civilised Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the Tartar...’ (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg.219)

(Dubbed by an Indian wag, with a penchant for alliteration, as ‘Macaulay’s Moronic Minute’)

An Indian nationalist group in his book published in 1915 wrote that-

‘All Indian aspirations and development of strong character have been suppressed. The Indian mind has been made barren of any originality, and deliberately kept in ignorance... The people are kept under an illusion in order to make them more amenable to British control. The people’s character is deliberately debased, their mind is denationalized and

perpetually kept in ignorance and fed with stories of England's greatness and 'mission' in the world...' (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 221)

Durant noted in 1930 that the British government in India preferred to devote the limited resources it allocated to education to 'universities where the language used was English, the history, literature, customs and morals taught were English, and young [Indians]... found that they had merely let themselves in for a ruthless process that aimed to de-nationalize and de-Indianize them, and turn them into imitative Englishmen'. (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 221) While English instruction acquired a position of dominance in British India, albeit for a small if well-placed elite, a British perspective also infused the study of other subjects taught to Indians through English— notably history. The British saw pre-colonial Mughal history as consisting of a linear narration of events devoid of context or analysis; as for pre-Mughal texts, John Stuart Mill dismissed them as 'mythological histories...where fable stands in the face of facts' (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 221)

In order to replace these older versions, the British reconstructed 'factual' accounts of Indian historiography, adding more contextual analysis in a structured 'British' style—but with the teleological purpose of serving to legitimize and validate British imperialism in India. The English histories and theoretical constructs of India not only promoted divide et impera by inventing the religious 'periodization' of the Indian past, but also portrayed a nation waiting for the civilizing advent of British rule. By arguing that history texts should 'rely upon facts and serve a secular curriculum', they also moved away from the main teaching of religious and mythological texts, including India's timeless epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, which at the very least could have occupied the place in Indian schoolrooms that the Iliad and Odyssey did in British ones.

Scholars and historians claims that the role of the study of English literature in colonial India as a means of socializing and co-opting Indian elites during the early nineteenth century. Furthermore the very idea of English literature as a subject of study was first devised by the British in India to advance their colonial interests. The study and designing of history was not only Anglo-centric but also deliberately impresses upon the student the superiority of the British and the utmost privilege of Indian subjects to be the part of the vast empire on which the sun never sets.

Niall Ferguson, for instance, argues that Britain's empire promoted 'the optimal allocation of labour, capital and goods in the world...no organisation in history has done more to promote the free movement of goods, capital and labour than the British empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And no organization has done more to impose Western norms of law, order and governance around the world. For much (though certainly not all) of its history, the British Empire acted as an agency for relatively incorrupt government. Prima facie, there therefore seems a plausible case that Empire enhanced global welfare—in other words, [that it] was a Good Thing.'(Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg.220)

The British proclaimed the virtues of free trade while destroying the free trade Indians had carried on for centuries, if not millennia, by both land and sea. A globalization of equals could well have been worth celebrating, but the fact cannot be ignored that the globalization of Empire was conducted by and above all for the colonizers, and not in the interests of the colonized. It is quiet fallacious to say that in the long run the British colonialism will prove to be a benefit for the state since the British laid the foundation of tomorrow's globalisation. But human beings do not live in the long run; they live, and suffer, in the here and now, and the process of colonial rule in India featured severe economic exploitation and ruin to millions, the destruction of thriving industries, the systematic denial of opportunities to compete, the elimination of indigenous institutions of governance, the transformation of lifestyles and patterns of living that had flourished since time immemorial, and the obliteration of the most precious possessions of the colonized, their identities and their self-respect. (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016)



## CONCLUSION

A 2014 YouGov poll revealed that 59 per cent of respondents thought the British empire was ‘something to be proud of’, and only 19 per cent were ‘ashamed’ of its misdeeds; almost half the respondents also felt that the countries ‘were better off’ for having been colonized. An astonishing 34 per cent opined that ‘they would like it if Britain still had an empire’. Ferguson has previously argued that the British Empire was the pioneer of this much-vaunted global economic phenomenon, its conquests dressed up as overseas investment and its rapacity as free trade—the very elements that contemporary globalizers were claiming would raise everyone’s levels of prosperity. But this cannot bring justice to the 200 years of agony and tribulation. There were many countries that reached its glorious state without being colonised. Moreover it is quiet inconsequential to say that India had no known history until the British arrived. The historians and scholars take great pride in claiming that the British Imperialism had regenerated the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the foundations of Western society in Asia.

It is arduous to forget the condition in which we found our country after two centuries of colonialism. When talking of historical negationism, the fact cannot be ignored that the British manipulated the historical records under the façade of modernity and democracy. In order to enshroud their truculent appetency and avarice, they gave it the name of ‘regenerating the annihilation of old Asiatic society’ and ‘political unity and democracy’. None of the policies of the British government resulted into the amelioration of Indian subjects. The order was always the British in vantages and Indian in causalities. In order to fill their treasury they killed, tortured, looted and exploited the Indian citizens. But none of these atrocities hold any place or importance in history. It is as if the Indian are bound to endure for the globalisation.

India had once been one of the richest and most industrialized economies of the world, which together with China accounted for almost 75 per cent of world industrial output in 1750, was transformed by the process of imperial rule into one of the poorest, most backward, illiterate and diseased societies on earth by the time of our independence in 1947. The British left a society with 16 per cent literacy, a life expectancy of 27, practically no domestic industry and over 90 per cent living below what today we would call the poverty line. Electricity, one of the supposed blessings of imperial rule in India: Britain governed

India for five decades after the arrival of the first electricity supplies in the 1890s. In those fifty years to independence in 1947, while all of Britain, along with the rest of Europe and America, was electrified, the Raj connected merely 1,500 of India's 640,000 villages to the electrical grid. (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016) The reasons were obvious: the British colonial rulers had no interest in the well-being of the Indian people. India was what the scholars Acemoglu and Robinson call, in their path-breaking *Why Nations Fail*, an extractive colony. Instead of enriching the world, Jon Wilson argues, the British Empire impoverished it.

'The empire was run on the cheap. Instead of investing in the development of the countries they ruled, the British survived by doing deals with indigenous elites to sustain their rule at knockdown prices... The feudal lords now massacring villagers in the Indian state of Bihar were created by British land policy.' (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 254)

Lawrence James's celebration of this abject performance by the British Raj: 'In return for its moment of greatness on the world stage, the Raj had offered India regeneration on British terms. It had been the most perfect expression of what Britain took to be its duty to humanity as a whole. Its guiding ideals had sprung from the late-18th and early-19th-century Evangelical Enlightenment, which had dreamed of a world transformed for the better by Christianity and reason. The former made little headway in India, but the latter, in the form of Western education and the application of science, did.' (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 254)

But the question arises that did India, one of the world's richest country, land of Vedas and Upanishads really needed 'regeneration' that too in the hand of British colonizers. It cannot be forgotten, after all, that the India the British entered was a wealthy, thriving and commercializing society: that was why the East India Company was interested in it in the first place. Far from being backward or underdeveloped, pre-colonial India exported high quality manufactured goods much sought after by Britain's fashionable society. The British elite wore Indian linen and silks, decorated their homes with Indian chintz and decorative textiles, and craved Indian spices and seasonings. So there is no reason that India could not have evolved into a more prosperous, united and modernizing power in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries if left on its own. Rabindranath Tagore put it gently to a Western

audience in New York in 1930: ‘A great portion of the world suffers from your civilisation.’ (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016, pg. 254)

Tharoor asserts that there may have been famines and epidemics in pre-colonial India, but Indians were acquiring the means to cope with them better, which they were unable to do under British rule, because the British had reduced them to poverty and destroyed their sources of sustenance other than living unsustainably on the land—in addition to which Victorian Britain’s ideological opposition to ‘indiscriminate’ charity denied many millions of Indians the relief that would have saved their lives. I agree that the British gifted India with tea, cricket and English language but these bestowals cannot discount the atrocities and afflictions faced by the Indians during colonialism.

The East India Company ensured that both growing opium and selling it were to be British government monopolies. The facts were laid out in an 1838 account:

‘Throughout all the territories within the Company’s jurisdiction, the cultivation of the poppy, the preparation of the drug, and the traffic in it, [...] are under a strict monopoly...the growing of opium is compulsory on the part of the ryot. Advances are made by Government through its native servants, and if a ryot refuses the advance, ‘the simple plan of throwing the rupees into his house is adopted; should he attempt to abscond, the peons seize him, tie the advance up in his clothes, and push him into his house. The business being now settled, and there being no remedy, he applies himself, as he may, to the fulfilment of his contract...’ (Tharoor Shashi, *An Era of Darkness*, 2016)

(The quotes within the quotation are, says the 1838 author, William Howitt, taken from an article on the ‘Cultivation of the Poppy,’ in the *Chinese Repository* of February 1837)

The evils which the cultivation of opium entails upon our fellow-subjects in India arise partly from the ryots in the opium districts of Patna and Benares being compelled to give up fixed portions of their lands for the production of the poppy. The fact that, despite all these wrongs and injustices, Indians readily forgave the British when they left, retaining with them a ‘special connection’ that often manifests itself in warmth and affection, says more about India than it does about any supposed benefits of the British Raj.

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PROJECT ON  
**A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON U.R. ANANTHAMURTHY'S  
SAMSKARA**

A PROJECT  
Submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of degree

**MASTERS  
IN  
ENGLISH LITERATURE**



**AMITY SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES  
AMITY UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN**

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**TIYASHA BASU  
MA ENGLISH  
SEMESTER- 3**

## **DECLARATION**

I do, hereby declare that the dissertation on the topic **A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON U.R. ANANTHAMURTHY'S SAMSKARA** is completed by me under the guidance of **Dr. Parul Mishra** and submitted as the dissertation for the degree of **M.A. English** at **Amity School of Languages** at Amity University Rajasthan.

Tiyasha Basu

4th Semester

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. The Women in Brahmanical Patriarchy
3. Religion and Caste as portrayed in Samskara
4. Unresolved Dilemma in Samskara
5. Conclusion
6. Bibliography

## ABSTRACT

Samskara is an accurate estimate of brahmin society in the sixties or more correctly the brahmin societies of all times which suffer the serious problems of backwardness despite having intellectuals among them. Reason behind all silly problems that emerge is that their energy is directed by age-old convictions, beliefs, customs, traditions and superstition. Ananthamurthy raises questions on very sensitive issues like rituals, samskara, untouchability, sex, community feeling. He scans human weakness such as greed, lust and lack of human concern in the Brahmin community. Ananthamurthy's characters favour freedom from the life in shackles of ritualistic performances.

Samskara, Anantha Murthy's masterpiece, was published in 1965. In 1970 it was made into a nationally acclaimed, award-winning, but highly controversial, film. It was translated into English by Professor A. K. Ramanujan of the University of Chicago and published by Oxford University Press. The novel dramatizes a conflict between two extreme ways of life, the ascetic and the hedonistic; the former is represented by the orthodox brahmins led by Praneshacharya, the latter by their defiant and contemptuous opponent, the pleasure-loving and anti-brahminical brahmin Naranappa. When the novel opens, Naranappa has died, leaving behind him the thorny problem of whether a heretic could receive the death rites due to a brahmin. Samskara is basically structured around the attempt to solve this dilemma. In his attempt to find an orthodox solution to the ticklish problem, Praneshacharya moves from one place to another, being in the process

exposed to a variety of novel experiences including a sexual encounter in the forest with Chandri, the low caste woman who had been Naranappa's mistress. The novel ends inconclusively, with Praneshacharya waiting "anxious, expectant" to go back to his village. Ever since its publication, Samskara has been as controversial as it has been popular. It has been widely praised by the critics, but it has also been harshly attacked by fanatical brahmins who went so far as to try to block the release of the film. The novel is usually interpreted as a forceful portrayal of decadent brahminism in modern India. I wish to suggest that there is another and more important dimension to the novel which has not been noticed by the critics. From this viewpoint, the focus in the novel is not on orthodox brahminism as such but on the figure of Praneshacharya whose moral and spiritual growth through what might be called his "fortunate fall" defines the theme and controls the form.

To his encounter with Chandri in the forest, Praneshacharya responds with contradictory emotions. The feeling of having sinned and fallen is predictably there, but it does not quite supplant a sense of release from an oppressive burden or the exaltation which comes from a liberating and fully realized experience. Steeped in the orthodoxies of his creed, Praneshacharya accepts the conventional judgment that through his act he has lost his virtue. At the same time, however, he has an irresistible sense of having attained through his experience not only physical and emotional fulfillment but also an increased moral awareness as well as a broadening and refining of his human perceptions.

Naranappa the rebel character is anti brahminical in deeds, but Praneshacharya who earned the title 'the crest jewel of vedic learning' rejects the double standard thinking after the death of his wife Bhagirathi. He wants to settle his life with Chandri a prostitute. The sudden death of Naranappa brings the real examination of Acharya's ideals, learning, and wisdom. This event brings a real man out of Acharya's being, burdened with suffocating scriptural knowledge. He wants to live like an ordinary man neither a righteous brahmin nor the crest jewel of vedic learning. This paper will analyse and criticise the novel to help the reader understand the cultural crisis a Brahmin had to go through.

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper intends to study the critical perspective of U R Ananthmurthy's Samskara. The novel Samskara is an accurate estimate of Brahmin society in the sixties or more correctly the brahmin societies of all times which suffer the serious problems of backwardness despite having intellectuals among them. Reason behind all silly problems that emerge is that their energy is directed by age-old convictions, beliefs, customs, traditions and superstition.

Caste system is probably the most discussed and most studied institution of India. It is because this system of oppression is peculiar to the country and has great traditional sanction that has survived till date. Over the centuries, caste system has been scrutinised by the western as well as eastern scholars. Critics have come to a consensus that the institution has proved to be the most durable, most elastic and most resilient. Unlike other traditional institutions like that of joint family that has become obsolete and impractical under the influence of modern industrial revolution and economic system, caste system has survived. It is important to note that struggle against caste predates many modern religions. In sixth century B.C. Gautama Buddha revolted against "caste tyranny" (23). By preaching a new code of conduct he was successful in laying the foundation of a world religion, Buddhism, but he "finally failed" (23) in annihilating caste system. In the medieval ages, many bhakti poets, saints and religious

leaders like Kabir and Guru Nanak were able to penetrate the impregnable castle of caste system, but their influence on society waned with time and caste system again raised its monster head. In the modern age, it survived the social reformers like Jyotiba Phule, Narayan Swami and socio-political leaders like B.R. Ambedkar. It is an irony that positive discrimination, promoted by these reformers helped sustain the 'caste' as need to reclaim the caste comes with accepting the benefits associated with it under constitutional schedules. In fact, the dilemma is of wanting to have the cake and eating it too. The depressed classes listed as scheduled castes in the Indian Constitution want the segregation to remain as it gives them great privileges in the present administrative system, endorsed by Mandal Commission. There are legal documents demanding one to declare one's caste, although at the same time, calling someone by his/her caste name could lead to legal proceedings- it is as if the system thrives on open secrets and the depressed sections ignore the strong social subtext of segregation as long as the administrative or legal system serves them. It gives them access to plum jobs, postings and promotions without regard to merit, efforts or achievements. This ease is a requisite but it takes away the incentive to work. The repercussions are visible in social life as the grouse against the regime of positive discrimination as well as those who benefit from it is brewing.

In fact, caste system has been the biggest dividing factor in the subcontinent. It is a ruthless and diabolic system that dehumanises human beings. One is not known by one's actions and personal traits



but every action will hearken to the caste that a person belongs to. This leads to fostering of stereotypes associated with the particular caste or relegation of defiant or non-conforming actions to a rare case, occurrence or exception. Idioms are used to endorse the caste discourse. For instance, if someone from a lower caste does something praiseworthy it may be dismissed as '*panchon ungliya barabar nahi hoti*', literally translated as 'the five fingers are not equal' but rest of them are of a kind.

Porter sums up the impact of caste system in the following words: Caste represents the most memorable, comprehensive and successful attempt ever made by an order to oppress humanity in its own interest. Its enactments broke up the race into many fragments never to be reunited, separating Aryans from other peoples by impassable barriers, permanently fixing their occupations, interests, associations and aspirations. As men were born so they must remain. Their course of life was prescribed, their places after death predetermined. (25)

Caste still remains a reality not only among Hindus, but also among the Muslims, the Christians and the Sikhs in India. Many people converted to escape the tyranny of caste, but they were able to change only their beliefs; the beliefs of other people about their inferiority remained the same. In other words, caste system became a baggage they could not get rid of, a stigma that remained with them even after converting to other religions: The conversion of so called low castes to Islam and Christianity in many parts of India, and to

sects such as Sikhism and Arya Samaj in Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh, was often motivated by a desire to shed the odium attached to being low. But the converts found that it was not at all easy to shake off their caste and that, in fact, they carried it with them to new faith or sect. Indian Islam and Christianity both bear the stamp of caste system; this is not to say, however, that the caste system among Indian Christians and Muslims is same as the caste system among the Hindus. (80)

In fact, the caste system has proved to be the most durable and flexible of the oppressing mechanisms. Its success in sustaining itself against the onslaught of democracy, constitutional indemnity, modern transport and modern education has forced the social scientists to theorise about the origin of this diabolic system, its sustenance and its annihilation. U.R. Ananthamurthy, one of the most important writers of post independence India, has been a stringent critic of the system. His writings gain even greater importance as he himself happens to be a Brahmin. His accounts show the response of an enlightened though privileged insider to the system. The novelist was accused of “attacking Brahmanism”(82) in *Samskara*. Ananthamurthy’s preoccupation with the caste remained an important theme in *Bharathipura*. In fact, he “critiques and subverts a social system erected on degraded and unexamined cultural-religious foundations” (114). There is a continuity in Ananthamurthy’s writings, where most of his heroes are modern men with progressive thinking and recalcitrant tendencies; the theme of oppression within the caste system and how

Brahmin life has become stagnant under the influence of caste system is also recurring. The best example of this continuity is visible in the novels *Samskara* and *Bharathipura*.

The connection between the two novels is clear from the presence of river Tunga in both the novels. When one reads these two novels one feels that *Bharathipura* starts where *Samskara* ends. In fact, in both the novels Ananthamurthy presents two theories of annihilation of caste. When the first fails, he moves on to another. The setting of both the novels is similar. In both the novels, place of action is located on the banks of river Tunga. While in *Durvasapura*, in *Samskara* “The Tunga river flowed close to the backyards of the houses” (16), “the Tunga flows by *Bharathipura*” in the novel of the same name (219). The issue in both the novels is the same, that is, annihilation of caste, though the methods tried in both the novels are radically different. However, no method proves instrumental in vanquishing the caste. So, though the proposed methods of resistance fail in both the novels, the unwavering thesis statement that emerges from the stories is that annihilation of caste is essential to the development of both the groups: the untouchables and the Brahmins.

U.R. Ananthamurthy’s *Samskara* draws a picture of a decaying Brahmin agrahara in the village of *Durvasapura* in Karnataka. The agrahara is famed after its great ascetic *Praneshacharya*, who is a much sought after scholar. The conflict in the novel arises when *Praneshacharya* is unable to find a solution to the *samskara* of *Naranappa*, a member of the agrahara. Since *Naranappa* had no children, a member of the agrahara had to do the last rites. But

everyone was hesitant since Naranappa had not lived the life of a Brahmin.

When literature holds a mirror to the society and reflects reality, it sometimes ruffles the silence that has long been left undisturbed. Some works of fiction are so infused with the color of reality that the reader forgets the writer behind the work and believes it to be his own experience. U.R Ananthamurthy's *Samskara* is one such novel. The Kannada novel, first published in 1965, translated into English by A.K. Ramanujan, and later made into an award-winning film in 1970, had remained popular with the general reading public and critics alike. Ever since its publication, *Samskara* has remained at the centre of controversy. Ananthamurthy was accused of attacking Brahmanism for the novel is about a *decaying Brahmin colony* in the south Indian village of Karnataka.

The novel *Samskara* unfolds itself through the different meanings of its title *Samskara*. The title 'Samskara' refers to a concept central to Hinduism. The different meanings of the word are:

*Sam-s-kara* 1. Forming well or thoroughly, making perfect, perfecting; finishing, refining, refinement, accomplishment. 2. Forming in the mind, conception, idea, notion; the power of memory, faculty of recollection, the realising of past perceptions. 3. Preparation, making ready, preparation of food etc., cooking, dressing. 5. Making sacred, hallowing, dedication; consecration of a king, etc. 6. Making pure, purification, purity. 7. A sanctifying or purificatory rite or essential ceremony (enjoyed on all the first three classes or castes). 8. Any rite or ceremony. 9. Funeral obsequies. Each of these meanings is explored in

the novel. The novel is set in Durvasapura Agrahara, a Brahmin colony in Karnataka

Ananthamurthy, in the novel also raises questions on very sensitive issues like rituals, Samskara, untouchability, sex, community feeling. He scans human weakness such as greed, lust and lack of human concern in the Brahmin community. The novel is set in Durvasapura agrahara, a Brahmin colony in Karnataka. The agrahara is famous for Praneshacharya, “the great ascetic, Crest Jewel of Vedic Learning”, is looked upon by everyone with utmost respect but on the other hand, we see Narappan who is known for doing all the bad deeds. His character is basically shown in the light that he was made to do everything that is against the beliefs of brahmins. Both the characters are foils to each other.

U. R. Ananthamurthy is one of the most important representative writers in the literature of Kannada language. The short novel Samskara by U. R. Ananthamurthy, Professor in English at the Mysore University, created a big rumpus in Karnataka when it was first published in 1965 in the Kannada language. The novel seems an accurate estimate of Brahmin society in the sixties or more correctly the Brahmin societies of all times which suffer the serious problems of backwardness despite having intellectuals among them as their energy has been directed by their age-old convictions, beliefs, customs, traditions and superstition. Ananthamurthy raises sensitive issues like rituals, samskara, untouchability, sex, communal feeling and human weakness such as avarice, envy, selfishness, and lack of human concern in the brahmin community.

Ananthamurthy's characters ultimately favor freedom from the shackles of ritualistic performances. Naranappa the rebel character in anti-brahminical in deeds but Praneshacharya, the righteous brahmin rejects the double standard thinking. After the death of his wife Bhagirathi he wants to settle his life with Chandri a prostitute. The sudden death of Naranappa brings the real examination of Acharya's ideals, learning, and wisdom. This event brings a real man out of Acharya's being, burdened with suffocating scriptural knowledge. He wants to live like an ordinary man neither a righteous brahmin nor the crest jewel of vedic learning. "*Samskara means religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he may become a full-fledged member of the community*".

The chief protagonist Praneshacharya undergoes the process of purification. His shift from hard core ritualism to realism is thought provoking. Praneshacharya stands for ritualism. He went to Kashi (Benaras), studied there, and returned with the title "Crest-Jewel of Vedic Learning". He is the local guru of all the brahmins, not only of Durvasapura but also of those living in the surrounding villages. He believes completely and practices the law of Karma in special. Praneshacharya wants to attain salvation, and is ready to undergo any sort of tests on the path to salvation. He has deliberately married an invalid sick woman. He leads a celibate life and is proud of his self-sacrifice. His life is pure, totally devoted to religion, utterly devoid of selfish motives. The another tarnished person who lives in this agrahara

is Naranappa. The novel opens with the death of Naranappa, a rebel character.

*A controversy arises regarding Naranappa's death rite because being a brahmin he was anti-brahminical in practice "Alive, Naranappa was an enemy; dead a preventer of meals; as a corpse, a problem, a nuisance."*

Naranappa a catalytic agent who affects change, favors modernism, rejects brahminhood and brings home Chandri, a prostitute, from Kundapura, a nearby town. He drinks alcohol and invites muslims to eat meat. He throws Saligrama, the holy stone which is believed to represent God Vishnu, into the river, and spits after it. If the flowers in the backyards of the other brahmins are meant mainly for the altar, and if their women wear only withered flowers gathered from the altar in their hair which hangs at their back like a rat's tail, Naranappa grows the night-queen plant in his front garden. Its intense smelling flowers are meant solely to decorate Chandri's hair which lies coiled like a thick black cobra on her back. Naranappa, with his muslim friends catches sacred fish from the temple tank, cooks and eats them. Other brahmins are aghast at this sacrilegious act. They have believed, till then, that these fish should not even be touched, that whosoever touches them will vomit blood and will die. Naranappa has even corrupted the youth of the agrahara. Because of him one young man left Durvasapura and joined the army, where he is forced to eat beef. Another young man left his wife and home, and joined a traveling

group of singers and actors. Naranappa's only ambition in life seems to do everything that destroys the brahminhood of the agrahara. His only sorrow is that hardly anything of it is left to destroy, except for the brahminism of Praneshacharya.

Orthodox society does its best to suppress the revolutionary Naranappa and by excommunicating they want to get rid of him. But Praneshacharya is against this radical step. He still hopes to win over Naranappa, and lead him back to Dharma, the proper path. Some days ago Naranappa goes to Shivamogge, a town far away, and returns with high fever. Soon he develops a big lump, and dies within a couple of days. Naranappa dies but his actions struggle to correct the society. The immediate complicated question is, "Who should cremate Naranappa?" Every Brahmin is afraid to volunteer, because he fears that his brahminhood would thus be polluted because Naranappa was theoretically a brahmin when he died. The holy books and Lord Maruti offer no relief to Praneshacharya to find the answer. But Chandri, a prostitute has an answer not for the right person for cremating but for the enigmatic acharya and stinking orthodox society. In a moment Chandri projects acharya to the world of ordinary mortals. A long list of rituals seems him futile.

Initially Praneshacharya decides on the second course of action. He even runs away from home after his wife dies of plague. But wherever he goes he is haunted by the fear of discovery and haunted by Chandri's touch. The novel ends as Praneshacharya decides to return to Durvasapura, and to own up his fall. But Anathamurthy, the author of "Samskara", does not answer the other important question. It is the



question of what the brahmins should do when they are confronted with the confessions of Praneshacharya. What does one do when faced with such truth? As the translator A.K. Ramanujan puts it, the novel ends, but does not conclude.

Praneshacharya and Naranappa are foils to each other. Praneshacharya is everything that Naranappa is not. Sanskrit learning and an ascetic life were Praneshacharya's samskara (way of life). By marrying an invalid, Praneshacharya has even turned his marriage into a penance. But Naranappa questioned everything that was deemed normal by the standards of the agrahara. Naranappa had once lectured Praneshacharya on the hypocrisy exhibited by the so-called scholars of Vedas and Puranas. His words shook Praneshacharya for a moment and made him think that what Naranappa says might be true. Naranappa challenged the very philosophy behind Praneshacharya's life. He asks:

Now, you explicate it, Acharya-re- didn't the Achari himself corrupt the Brahminism of the place? Did he or didn't he? That's why our elders always said: read the Vedas, read the Puranas, but don't try to interpret them. Acharya-re, you are the one who's studied in Kashi- you tell me, who ruined brahminism?...You read those lush sexy Puranas, but you preach a life of barrenness. But my words, they say what they mean: if I say sleep with a woman, it means to sleep with a woman; if I say eat fish, it means eat fish. Can I give you Brahmins a piece of advice, Acharya-re? Push those sickly wives of yours into the river. Be like the sage of your holy legends- get hold of a fish-scented fisherwoman who

can cook you fish-soup, and go to sleep in her arms. And if you don't experience God when you wake up, my name isn't Naranappa.

Naranappa's words lingered in the Acharya's mind for so long that even when he sat for prayers, he "couldn't still the waves in his mind" (26).

So when the question about who should do the samskara, the last rites, for Naranappa, Praneshacharya finds it difficult to find a solution. As A.K.Ramanujan points out in the Afterword,

Ironically, in the very act of seeking the answer in the books, and later, in seeking a sign from Maruti, the chaste Monkey-god, the Acharya abandons and becomes one with the opposite: contrary to all his 'preparation' he sleeps with Chandri, Naranappa's low caste mistress. By what authority now can he judge Naranappa or advise his Brahmin followers?.. His sudden sexual experience with the forbidden Chandri becomes an unorthodox 'rite of initiation'.

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## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **THE WOMEN IN BRAHMANICAL PATRIARCHY**

In India caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy are tangibly prevalent in Hindu society, playing out on the lives of the women, whether of the upper caste or lower caste. The subordination and subjugation of women is a common fact not only in early Indian society, but also well into the twenty first century. Patriarchal society always tries to dominate the sexual agency of women. In Hindu society the concept of 'Varna' denotes four divisions - Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The highest caste in the Varna system always remains busy in dominating the women and their sexuality. They provide different norms and rituals for the exercise of female agency. Though women's bodies are strictly controlled in Brahmanical patriarchy, the upper class women enjoy some kind of supremacy in the social hierarchy over low caste people. The aim of this chapter is to discuss how Brahmanical patriarchy exploits, subordinates, and controls women in Hindu society and how the system makes the low caste women untouchable in the name of so called socio-cultural and religious establishments. U. R. Anantha Murthy's novel, *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*, is a perfect example to back my statement.

Indian Hindu Society is fully controlled by patriarchy. Patriarchy means the rules or norms implemented by the male heads of society. It is a social system of masculine domination over women. In Hinduism the Brahmanas are considered supreme caste. They established many rules and rituals to dominate over other castes. Limited to not only the

caste system, the Brahmanas implemented various rules to control female agency irrespective of whether a woman belongs to a higher caste or lower caste. Uma Chakravarty, the renowned feminist scholar, uses the term 'Brahmanical Patriarchy'. By this term she refers to the control of women and their sexuality through some prevailing practices and norms among the upper castes of India. Brahmanical patriarchy is a variant of male domination and a structure unique to Hinduism and the caste system. "Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy are the organising principles of the brahmanical social order and are closely interconnected" (Chakravarty, 579). Therefore, the caste system is itself constructed through different codes and rituals of Brahmanical patriarchy. Caste system is a social stratification unit or system unique to India. Brahmanical patriarchy shapes or forms the relationships between caste and gender and class. Its main or central factor is the subordination and subjugation of upper caste women. It also controls the sexuality of women. Chakravarty observes that "the purity of women has a centrality in brahmanical patriarchy" (Chakravarty, 579). Their sexual purity rests on the purity of the caste in Hindu society. Brahmanical patriarchy prescribes the norms through which female sexuality is controlled, via the practice of endogamous marriage i.e. marriage within the same caste. "The lower caste male whose sexuality is a threat to upper caste purity has to be institutionally prevented from having sexual access to women of the higher castes so women must be carefully guarded" (Chakravarty, 579). Though Brahmanical patriarchy is basically structured to ensure the subordination and domination of upper caste women, the upper caste women enjoy relative superiority

over the lower caste men and women. The condition of the lower caste people (Shudras) is very painful and humiliating in Brahmanical patriarchy. They are treated as marginalized ‘others’ in the so called supreme religious caste system. U. R. Anantha Murthy has been successful in portraying the picture of the subordination and domination of women in Brahmanical patriarchy through his famous novella, *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*.

Udupi Rajagopalacharya Anantha Murthy was writer and critic in the Kannada language. He is considered as one of the pioneers of Navya Movement. U. R. Anantha Murthy wrote an important novella *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*. This was originally written in Kannada language in 1965 and it was translated into English by A. K. Ramanujan (Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan). It was published in English in 1976. This novella was adapted into an award-winning controversial film in 1970. Anantha Murthy, in his works, depicts the themes of Hindu socio-cultural and religious practices clearly. His writings examine various themes like caste hierarchy, gender hierarchy, class, Brahmanical patriarchy, conflict between lower caste and upper caste, untouchability, the degradation of the norms and rituals of the Hinduism in the cause of Brahmanical patriarchy, etc.

The novella *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man* is a meticulously grounded narrative about brahmin society in the 1960s’ India, or more precisely about brahmin society of all times. This novella places a mirror to the evils of brahmin society and its cultural systems. *Samskara* details various themes like casteism, subordination, and subjugation of the women character in the brahmin society,

untouchability, degradation of Hindu rituals and social norms. The novella deals with people in the Agrahara, a Brahmin village at Durvasapura in Karnataka where the lives of the Brahmanas are entirely or fully governed by the strict rules and rituals of Hindu religion based on caste discrimination, subordination, and domination of women. The story of the novella is rounded by the death of a Brahmana named Naranappa and the process of performing the funeral rituals. That is why the subtitle of the novella is “A Rite for a Dead Man”. I will try to analyse critically how the women in Agrahara are subordinated and subjugated, and how they become victims of Brahmanical patriarchy through the context of U. R. Anantha Murthy’s great novella, *Samskara*.

The women in the novella have been portrayed realistically as victims by the author. They are hunting objects for the hierarchical system of Brahmanical patriarchy. Basically, they are seen as impure, untouchable and sinners. In Brahmanical patriarchy the women are given in marriage before their puberty to protect the purity of caste system. “It is in order to stringently guard the purity of castes that very early on pre-puberty marriage were recommended for the upper castes especially brahmanas” (Chakravarty, 579). As Chakravarty puts the idea women are considered as the gateway of caste system. Being a repository of caste honour she is subjected to patriarchal protection and violence at the same time. In the novella the life of Lakshmiddevamma was dominated and subjugated by marrying her off at the age of eight and she became a widow at ten. She represents the direction of the caste-class nexus. Though she is a Brahmana woman she has to live

separately and in solitude in a house and her property and belongings are snatched away by Garudacharya. The Brahmanas do not give her share to live in their community normally. In this situation Praneshacharya, the guru of that colony, does not come to help her because she is women at first and secondly, she is a widow woman. The Brahmanas address her as 'half-wit'. By calling her a 'half-wit' the Brahmanical patriarchy subordinates her revolutionary attitudes. Lakshmiddevamma is the only women in that colony who curses the Brahmins, not only the Brahmins but also their sons and grandsons and their ancestors. Though she was a widow she regularly quarrelled and fought with Garudacharya's wife Sitadevi, which the others have not the courage to do that. Despite of this, the patriarchal society dominate her by keeping herself to a lone house to live alone.

The fundamental principle of Hindu social organization was a closed structure to preserve land, women and ritual quality within it. The ideological framework to ensure the sexual purity of upper caste women was provided by Stridharma or Pativrataadharma. "Menstruation, according to the myth, (Ramayana) was associated with women's participation in brahmin murder. It is a mark of women's innate impurity and at the same time her innate sexuality." (Chakravarty, 581) During the time of menstruation of Bhagirathi, Praneshacharya feels hatred for his wife. He believes his wife to be an instrument of his 'tapas' or penance to reach heaven: "By marrying an invalid, I get ripe and ready". (Murthy, 2)

Menstruation is a natural phenomenon for women. But in Brahmanical patriarchy it is seen as impure. Brahmanical patriarchy



makes women subordinate by marking the time of menstruation as sinful. Touching a menstruating woman implies that one has become polluted. Praneshacharya raises the question “How can I touch a woman polluted by her menstrual blood?” (Murthy, 84). Bhagirathi has been dominated psychologically. As she represents a bodiless woman she is fully dependent on her husband. But her husband thinks of her as a means of getting into heaven: “This invalid wife is the sacrificial altar of my sacrifice” (Murthy, 76)

Going further into the novel, one notices the various other dimensions of domination and subjugation of women. This novel documents the hierarchical structure created by the highest Varna in the Varna system, Brahmanas. Basically in Brahmanical patriarchy the women, irrespective of their caste affiliation, are identified as impure, untouchable, subordinated or marginalised. In Brahmanical patriarchy there is a hearsay that if the Brahmanas talk with lower caste people they will be polluted. Even they are not allowed to raise their voice in front of Brahmanas. If they happen to be women, then they are dominated by the very name ‘woman’. Woman means lack. They are only the instrument of sexual gratification for men. The very beginning of the novella shows that when Chandri, a lower caste woman, came to give the news of Naranappa’s death to Praneshacharya, the ‘Crest-Jewel of Vedic Learning’ and the head of the Brahmanical patriarchy of Durvasapura village, he gets shocked by thinking that “If the Acharya talked to her, he would be polluted; he would have to bathe again before his meal”. (Murthy, 2) Praneshacharya, like other Brahmins, thinks that Chandri is a lower caste woman and concubine of

Naranappa. She is basically considered a prostitute. So, seeing her face is a kind of sin for him. There is a popular belief among the Brahmins that low caste women are all sexually licentious; they are only to be consumed for as sexual objects. So, in the novella, Chandri, Belli, Padmavati are categorised as prostitutes. Chandri is not only untouchable to the Brahmins but even invisible. A glimpse of her will pollute the Brahmins. Behind this veil everyone wants to possess her and her beauty. Moreover, Praneshacharya, the real Brahmin in the Agrahara, wants to possess her. Possessing the beauty of the lower caste woman implies that she should be dominated. She is considered only as the object of their appetite: “In sex she’s the type who sucks male dry.” (Murthy, 8) One is not born as prostitute, but patriarchal structures of power make her so. In other respects, Belli is a woman from a lower caste, an outcaste. After having sexual intercourse with Belli without her consent Shripati says that:

Belli was all right for sleeping with, she was no good for talk. If she opens her mouth, she talks only ghosts and demons. (Murthy, 41)

By categorising the lower caste women as prostitutes or whores the Brahmins subjugated them. They make them marginalised. Forms of marginalisation, untouchability is witnessed when Chandri hears the conversation of the Brahmins from a distance behind the tree, and when Sitadevi throws the betel leaf, betel nut, and a quid of tobacco to Chinni. Not only the Brahmin men but also the Brahmin women

oppress them, by depriving them from access to the basic resources of life.

In Brahmanical patriarchy women, irrespective of caste status, are often not allowed to enter the premises of a temple. They are also not given the permission to interfere in the discourse of the men. Chandri, being a women and a lower caste women, is not given the permission to enter the temple. Not only the lower caste women but also the upper caste women face the same dominating approach of a patriarchal society. While discussing about the death rituals of Naranappa, upper caste women like Anasuya, Sitadevi, Lakshmiddevamma are not allowed to interfere in the talk. And when all the Brahmins are ready to undertake a trip to Kaimora the women are not permitted to go with their husbands. It may be because they are women, and the foremost thing is that they have an innate sexuality which is viewed as a threat to the society. Brahmanical patriarchy dominated over women in the so called name of innate sexuality. “Manu argues that by carefully guarding the wife (the most important category of woman as far as the Brahmana ideologies were concerned) a man preserves the purity of his offspring, his family, himself and his means of acquiring merit.” (Chakravarty, 582) By imposing various norms and rules upon women, the patriarchal society subordinated them.

The lower caste women in Brahmanical patriarchy are not even allowed to live in close proximity to the Brahmin people. The faces of lower caste women are considered as polluted. Padmavati, a low caste women, lives in a house far from the common Brahmin people. Belli and Chinni’s houses are also far from the houses of the Agrahara

people. The upper caste women also face the same situation. Though Lakshmiddevamma is a Brahmin women she is treated as an outcaste. She has become an outcaste deviated from the mainstream of Brahmin life. The Brahmin Garudacharya subjugated her by taken away all her belongings and means of living. She has to live alone and she is accused of inviting the curse of the epidemic death in the Agrahara. As the Brahmins in Durvasapura think that they are the Madhvas, and they are superior than the Smarta clan (represented by the folks of Parijataputra), the Smarta people are not allowed to live altogether with the Madhvas. The Madhvas consider them low in comparison with them and think that they are like the people of lower caste.

Caste inequality is premised in a convergence of relations of productions and reproductions. In a male dominated society the males are considered as productive forces. They dominate the female agents and the lower caste people. They also subjugate the reproductive force of the women. There is also inequality in the case of sexuality. “In Manu’s view the king may overlook the offence of a ‘maiden’ who makes advances to a man of a high caste (this was obviously a permitted lapse) and in the case of a maiden who courts a man of a lower caste the king should force her to remain confined in the house.” (Chakravarty, 585) “Manu reserves the highest punishment for the wife who though aware of the greatness of her relatives (i.e. of their high status) violates the duty that she owes to her lord i.e. her Stridharma and her Pativrata-dharma.” (Chakravarty, 585) Patriarchy constructs the social structures such that if a women goes to the another man apart from her husband she will be excommunicated. But if a man feels a

sexual appetite for other women there is no sin or threat of excommunication. In Brahmanical patriarchy and in *Manu Sanhita* it is constantly said that women should be carefully guarded. They have fickle nature. By birth they are supposed to yearn for sexual pleasure. Evidently, the low caste women occupy a contradictory position in the system of Brahmanical patriarchy. They are cast as purely sexual objects. When Chandri and Belli engage in sexual intercourse with Naranappa and Shripati, they are stamped as prostitutes. Their natural sexuality has been dominated and subordinated by excommunicating, exploiting and addressing them as whores. But, in contrast with these women, the male figures of society are not excommunicated. They openly enter into sexual relation with low caste women. The low caste women are not seen as rightful partners of them. They are basically someone's concubines or someone's sexual partners. That is why Praneshacharya, Durgabhata, Shripati, Naranappa sexually consummate their urges with multiple women without their consent. This is a kind of paradoxical domination. If the women belong to a lower caste, the domination intensifies by applying certain norms and further regulating their bodies and being.

The social organization through which caste is reproduced is endogamy- a total prohibition on marrying outside one's caste group. In earlier times, when new communities were included within the system to enable expansion of the labour force, endogamy ensured that these communities preserved their distinct identity within the Jati system. While endogamy regulates marriage for men as well as women, the prohibition applies more to upper caste women than any other group.

Marriage is central to the principles of hierarchy that organize caste society in India. In the essay “Castes in India” Ambedkar argues that the caste system is based on the ‘superimposition of endogamy on exogamy’. Since men enjoyed the privilege in male dominated society, they sanctioned the sexuality of women, either through consent or coercion. *Samskara* projects that the wife of Putta represents the inter-caste theory of marriage. According to *Manu Sanhita*, inter-caste relationship will naturally put the offenders in untouchable sect. Putta is the product of that inter-caste marriage; naturally he is an untouchable. Putta thinks that after marriage a woman cannot visit her parents. She has to lose every relationship and make herself entirely dependent on her husband. When Putta is not able to dominate his wife through consent, he even beats her. Through coercion or physical force, Putta, another representative of male dominated society, dominates the feelings and desires of her wife.

The Brahmanical patriarchy organises a closed structure to dominate the women, basically the upper class women. Manu’s dictum even here outlines the importance of the ideological mechanisms; in this view no man can completely guard a woman by force and therefore, it is women who of their own accord must keep guard over themselves. But in situations where the ideological level of control over women was unsuccessful, law and customs, as prescribed by the brahmanical social code, were evoked to keep women firmly under the control of the brahmanical kinship network. The upper caste women have been ideologically subordinated. They are identified with the forces of the patriarchy. Like the male dominated society the upper caste women

keep a hateful and contemptuous attitude towards the low caste women. The Brahmin wives refer to Chandri as a “filthy whore” and describe her as “provocative”. They also take the view of their husband that if they see the low caste women they will be polluted. That is why Lakshmanacharya’s wife Anasuya curses Chandri to the core of her heart. She advocates her as “seducing witch”. The upper caste women are treated as a tool for patriarchy to dominate the low caste women.

This chapter basically gives an overview of the Brahmanical patriarchy. It mainly focuses on the subordination and subjugation of the women. Factor such as unequal control over property, unequal performance of sexuality and the endogamous marriage system, etc. enable us to see the so called rigid norms and rituals of the caste system in India. This paper shows us that not only the low caste women, but even the high caste women are also exploited and marginalised. The males have full domination over the women. They help themselves to become prostitutes and whores, and to lead a deprived and worse life than animals. Patriarchy basically create the tradition where the women are just treated as consumer’s commodities irrespective of their roles as wives, mistress, prostitutes, etc.

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**CHAPTER 3:**  
**RELIGION AND CASTE**  
**AS PORTRAYED IN SAMSKARA**

Religion and caste are probably the two most important aspects of Indian social and cultural life. So many critiques of religion and caste have been attempted and time and again casteism has been attributed to Hinduism and the researches have been done to prove that. U.R. Ananthmurthy has taken a different stance in Samskara through the story of learned Brahmin, how he refutes the alleged religious sanction of casteism and orthodoxy. In Samskara, Ananthamurthy argues how the origin of casteism and untouchability can be attributed to the misunderstanding of Dharma, rather than the understanding of it. Through his study of the ways of achieving moksha, the novelist shows that orthodoxy have no place in Hinduism.

The novel also shows how the practice of orthodoxy can hamper the social and economic development of the community. How casteism and orthodoxy can affect the people is shown through the differences that exist between the two subcastes of the Brahmins: Madhavas and Smartas; and through Brahmin females and untouchable females.

U.R. Ananthmurthy's Samskara has already achieved the status of a classic. It is one of the most important post-independent novels written in India which studies both metaphysical and social aspects of Hinduism. It is very well known that the main aim of the religion is to liberate the human beings. So the human beings follow the rituals and prayers and other dictates of the religion in order

to gain an entry into the paradise; and to attain moksha as in the case of Hinduism. Religion not only controls the spiritual life of the individuals, but also the social lives of the adherents. Impact of religion starts before the birth of an individual and continues even after death. It plays a major role in shaping the psyche of an individual and influences his decisions regarding marriage, and social relations. In the case of Hinduism, the most well known social practice that has been studied by the scholars in India and abroad is that of casteism. Samskara studies not only the spiritual aspect of Hinduism and the caste system, but also orthodoxy in rituals. The sociological and anthropological studies that have been done in the field of religion and casteism have tried to study them from the scientific point of view, but the novel treats them in a literary way. Without commenting directly on anything, the novelist tells his story and leaves the job of interpretation to the readers. The current paper is an attempt to study the novel as a treatise on the ways of achieving moksha and the validity of casteism from religious point of view, and its impact on the Indian social system. The first theme that is taken up by the novel is about *life after death*. One of the greatest metaphysical aspects of the religions is that they offer glorious life after death in paradise to their selected followers. They have also laid different criteria to judge the eligibility of the pious candidates who vow for it. This criterion generally includes: following a set of rules, leading an honest, faithful and pious life. The Hindus yearn for even a step further and want to achieve moksha , a kind of supra-existence which means freedom from the cycle of birth and death. But what is

the best way of achieving that supra-existence is the question that has been contemplated by the human beings since the rise of religion. The question becomes even more important because of the diversity, in Hindu beliefs and culture. Murthy probes this question through the character of a Brahmin named Praneshacharya who is renowned in South India for his knowledge of scriptures and is known as “crest jewel of Vedic learning.”

Another important issue that has been taken up in the novel is that of *caste*. It not only probes if the caste has its origin in the religion, but also its impact on the people of different castes. The first difference that is evident between the Brahmins and the lower caste is that of complications in social life. The life of Brahmins is full of complications while the life of the untouchables is remarkably simple. This is evident from the title of the novel which also means the last rites of a person, for the Brahmins this is a very complex affair as they are forbidden to eat anything while the uncremated body is lying there in the *agrahara*. In addition to that there are a lot many rituals connected with the last cremation rites and there are lot many things at stake also. The Brahmins are afraid that they might lose their Brahminhood by cremating Naranappa who did not lead a life of an orthodox Brahmin. This complicated ritualistic affair is compared with the cremation rites of the untouchables who just leave the bodies and “fired the huts (*Samskara*, 40).” When the novel was published it was a centre of lot of controversy for its portrayal of the Brahmins. U.R. Ananthamurthy has himself written:

I remember once a mild-mannered, hospitable woman who had served me lunch, beckoned to me as I was preparing to leave. 'Nobody likes us anymore. Why do you poke fun at us? If you had ridiculed members of other castes could you survive? Because we endure it even when people sneer at us, everybody chooses to ridicule us. Is that the right thing to do?' (2005:3)

There is no doubt that the Brahmins in the novel are described in a very negative light. In the agrahara of Durvasapura we do not find even a single Brahmin who is described in positive words with the only exception of Praneshacharya. Their bodies are shown to be deformed and they are shown to know all kinds of sins: "sins of gluttony, sins of avarice and love of gold"(Samskara, 24).

Portrayal of Brahmin males is somewhat positive as there are no untouchable male characters in the novel to compare with, but the portrayal of Brahmin females is most damaging as they are described as "short, plump and round" (Samskara, 31) and their cheeks "sunken," breasts "withered" and mouths "stinking of lentil soup" (Samskara,37). The Brahmin females in the novel are all asexual objects devoid of any feminine charms. Moreover, they are all greedy and scheming ladies who have strong lust for gold and wealth. On the other hand, the untouchable females are described as the epitomes of feminine beauty.

In the novel Chandri is described as “utterly beautiful, beyond compare,” and while telling his friends about Chandri, Sripati challenges his friends: “In a hundred-mile radius, show me such a doll, and I ‘ll. say, you're a man” (Samskara, 38). The Brahmin females are compared with untouchable girls like Chandri and Belli who are not only sexually attractive, but also faithful and good hearted. Chandri readily parts away with the gold ornaments for the cremation rites of her beloved Naranappa, while Brahmin females start competing with one another in coveting for that gold. The portrayal of Brahmin women as asexual objects seems unjust when we have a look at the Brahmin ladies like Hema Malini, Sonali Bendre, Vidya Balan and Moushmi Chatterji and others who are considered among the most beautiful females. But here the novelist lets his own thoughts, own biases seep in the text. In the novel he is not depicting the Brahmins in negative light, but the practitioners of untouchability. In his personal life U.R. Ananthmurthy has been a very vocal against the caste system. In his Author's note to Bharathipura he has written:

“If you ask me what is the worst of the Indian civilization, I would say it is untouchability. I can understand slavery-a slave can fight back-but untouchability gets internalized. The victim gradually begins to feel he is untouchable” (2010:x). There is no doubt that Brahmin males and females are portrayed in the most negative light in the novel, but by showing them like this the

novelist seems to portray the idea that the people who do physical work gain, physical beauty so the untouchable females are beautiful while the Brahmin females are “plump.”

There are some people who have argued that caste system is a part and parcel of Hinduism, the writer himself was acutely aware of that. In his essay “Five Decades of my Writing” he tells: “The world I grew up assumed that the caste system and the hierarchies associated with it were rock-like and permanent and God-made” (2007:17). These myths are broken by the writer through the character of Praneshacharya. The novelist shows that when a savant like Praneshacharya can misinterpret the Dharma then the others surely can. Then there is an incident in the novel where Praneshacharya recalls the story of a brahmin who was “debarred from the places of sacrifice” (Samskara, 48) because he was addicted to gambling, but even then the gods came to answer the gambler's call. This incident clearly shows that when the Gods can go to answer the gambler's call then surely they cannot be so prejudiced against some human beings to label them untouchables, and thus the practice of untouchability is not of divine origins as some people have called it to be. Praneshacharya himself believes in the concept of pollution as in the beginning of the novel he does not want to talk to Chandri because “he would be polluted” (Samskara, 2). Towards the end of the novel Praneshacharya does not want to sit and eat in the temple because he is in pollution period. There is a popular belief that if any person in

pollution will eat in the temple then the temple chariot will not move. Praneshacharya eats in the temple but the temple chariot does not stop. So the pollution caused by his wife's death proves to be a myth. Similarly the pollution caused by the touch of human beings and the entire system of untouchability based on the notion of inferiority of human beings is a myth which needs to be demolished. It is important that these thoughts have been aired by the author in many of his essays: "Hinduism means many things to many people. It is the worship of Nirakar Brahman, as well as fulfilling the most selfish desires through vratas. It says that this creation is the manifestation of God, and, it also holds the most rigid kind of caste system"(2007:305). This statement by Murthy brings out the essential dichotomy of the people who practise untouchability.

The question that is posed by the writer is if every human being is a manifestation of God then how some of us can be untouchables. The people who believe that casteism has religious sanction often quote Manu Smriti as the source. There is the reference to the text in the novel also. But it should be noted that Hinduism does not start or end with Manu Smriti. Hinduism is a dynamic tradition that keeps on changing with time so it cannot be identified with the religious texts like Vedas or Upanishadas or Manu Smriti.

There are number of texts in Hinduism which are interrelated and independent at the same time. For example somebody facing the question of Sri Krishna's killing in Mahabharata will find the reason behind it in Ramayana, but at the same time both the texts are different in their organisation and are separated by considerable time. So some

shlokas occurring in the Manu's text cannot be considered as the sole basis for caste system, before doing that the other texts are to be consulted also. For example a hymn in Rigveda tells about the occupation based caste system rather than the birth based:

*A bard am I, my dad's a leech, mammy lays corn upon  
the stones. Striving for wealth, with varied plans, we  
follow our desires like kine.*(12)

The hymn tells about the three persons of same family doing the job of three different castes. Similarly in Bhagvad Gita Sri Krishna says: “The four divisions of society (the wise, the soldier, the merchant and the labourer) were created by me according to the natural distribution of qualities and instincts” (23).

These two shlokas from the two important books definitely show that the caste system was not based on birth it was rather based on occupation and the system was fluid where everybody was able to change his or her caste according to his or her abilities. This point is also emphasised in Mahabharata:

*“That Shudra who is ever engaged in self-control,  
truth and righteousness, I regard him a Brahmin. One  
is twice born by conduct alone”* ( 83-93).



It is also important to note that caste system is only supported in Dharm Sutras and Smritis, but they never had the same status as the other religious canon known as Shruti (Vedas and Upanishdas) and “it is laid down that whenever there is a conflict between the shruti and smriti literature, it is the former that prevails. It is Manusmriti, which is particularly supportive of caste system but where it conflicts with Vedas and Upanishads, the latter would prevail”(4786).

The kind of critique Ananthmurthy has attempted could have been done by a Brahmin only. The novel becomes even more important as it is an account of an insider, an experience of a person who was a member of a community that practised untouchability. The novel is indeed a strong critique of the caste system and effectively proves that it has no place in the modern society and at the same time also proves that it has no religious sanction as argued by many. Moreover, the novel becomes even more authentic social document when we come to know that it is not entirely fictional and is based on the childhood experiences of the writer. The writer himself tells:

*“In my village everyone thought that Samskara was a totally realistic novel, and they identified every character with a living person in the agrahara. And when I went back to my village the woman next door said, “Oh Anathu, you have created Chandri perfectly.” Each and every character was real”* (2007:370).

Taking the raw material from his life, the writer remarkably proves that caste system has no sanction in the religion and at the same time proves that orthodoxy too is an alien concept for Hinduism which is dynamic and mobile and always ready to accept changes.

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## **CHAPTER 4: UNRESOLVED DILEMMA IN SAMSKARA**

U.R. Ananthmurthy emerges as a social reformer through his novels. Like Charles Dickens he has pointed out deep rooted evils in the social life of Indian villages. Samskara reveals the futility of the centuries old caste system operating in India. The caste system checks the growth of national integration. The novels written by him are examples of realistic characterisation. The novels portray an allegorical miniature of India which requires self-examination and self-rejuvenation through lofty ideas that will take the nation through in its quest for all round progress. To do this, the nation must get rid of the albatross that hangs around its neck. It is sad to think that the father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi had to shed his blood fighting for the fusion of the caste-divide in India. The characters in his novels are life-like, which makes it more interesting for the readers as they can relate.

U.R. Ananthamurthy portrays or sketches the characters in the novels in the most realistic manner. He selects characters from ordinary life. The personality of the character is drawn through physiological processes. He collects incidents and facts from real life. The character creation is a kind of documentation. U. R. Ananthmurthy is a modern-day writer and a critic in the Kannada Language as well as considered as one of the pioneers of Navya Movement. His novels purportedly scrutinise aspects ranging from challenges and changes faced by Brahmin families of Karnataka.

The majority of his novels expose a reaction of individuals to situations that are remarkable and artificial. He portrays the tale of mystery, passion, spiritual exploration as well as mysteries of present and past.

U.R. Ananthamurthy's novels *Samskara* (1965) suggests naturalism. Naturalism deals with the nearest cause for the phenomenon. Every social event or incident can be traced back to its nearest cause. The characters and incidents in the novels written by him seem to be drawn from his own personal life in the Brahmin agrahara. To quote Ananthmurthy's own words:

“...while growing up in agrahara, social and cultural responsibilities to face life induced knowledge in my mind. But it's due to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's influence in pre-independent India.... apart from that the surrounding in which I lived was influential. If we rub our eyes and observe the surroundings which we live in, it imparts knowledge in us. The rebellion spirit emerging in me questioned the age-old rituals and hence exhibiting unacceptable social behaviour seem to embed in me, the conflicting points- imagination and stark reality, Such memories formed an integral part of my life. My stay in the temple surroundings, the evenings prayers with long session of rituals, the festivals in the Kaarthika maasa, holy preaching, a life along with my fellow men who led a simple life, a sect of society suffering due to the meaningless belief of caste system, poor farmers being dragged to the court frequency by the landlords – these memories reflect in my writings.”

Those were the words of Ananthamurthy in the speech given by him while receiving the Jnanpitha award. Such memories in his childhood had arose a torrent of conflicting views in his mind. His mind was in a dilemma which remains unresolved. Ananthmurthy's writings at various stages explicit the dilemma erupted in his mind about the correlation between tradition and modernity.

U.R. Ananthamruthy's novel Samskara (1965) and his later published novel Avashte (2011) have a basic ground of similarity between them. Both the novels have been directed as films and accepted by the audience. If drawn a comparison between the two novels mentioned above, one can recognise the internal conflict which the protagonists Praneshacharya and krishnappa Gowda undergo is more or less alike. They are involved in internal conflicts, a state of mind with unresolved in internal conflicts, a stage of mind with unresolved dilemmas hunting for a rational solution for the problems. They try to find their "self" in the social arguments. These characters appear, to grow in this unresolved state of mind. They emerge to be the reflection of the reader'. And sometimes, the other way round i.e. an alien state of mind from of that of the reader. Their state of mind, at times, appears to be miles away from reality. The basic similarity amongst the two novels is the similarities of main characters i.e. the protagonists in both novels have striking similarities between them. The characters rising up to be significant, their weakness, the ways they overtime their weakness, the incidents which given way to

transcend their weakness-these are the basic similarities in the novels. Most significantly the characterization of both the protagonists –Praneshacharya and Krishnappa gowda the complex personalities in themselves. Though they appear straight and simple in nature, they are truly intricate characters dwindling within Themselves.

Coming to the novel Samskara the story and the dilemma of the protagonist begins with the question of the cremation of Naranappa. A person respected by the whole community undergoes a process of resurrection when he finds himself stuck with the cremation of a member of his own community. The status and respect he had gained till then remains a problem as dead body of Naranappa. As a result, he dwindles with conflicting thoughts, dilemmas. Self interrogation and tries to interpret the incidents of his past. He comes face-to-face with the reality of life at the end of his confused state of mind. What would happen when he comes face – to –face with the life? The writer leaves the story without providing an ending. It seems he has given room or space for the reader to imagine and ending of the novel.

The novel “Samskara” depicts the life of Agrahara extending for seven to eight days. The story weaves around the incidents in the agrahara which happen in a time span of seven to eight days. Though the protagonist of the novel is egoistic or observed with self-pride, the feeling of self-pride and ego in Praneshacharya can be viewed only at a subtle level. But the main component of Praneshacharya’s character is his self pride and feeling of superiority.

“.... he bathed Bhagirathi’s body, dried her up and dressed her in a fresh sari every day. Then he offered food and flowers to her as he worshipped God every day. He used to put flowers in her hair every day. He gave her holy water then Bhagirathi touched his feet and from his side he blessed her. Then he brought her a bowl full of porridge from the kitchen. This was done for the last twenty years between them the day began with the bath at dawn and through the day he supplied the food and medicines to his wife. After doing this service Praneshacharya every day went to Maruthi temple for worship.”

This narrative brings out the aestheticism of Praneshacharya. The person who does all the primary works for the lame Bhagirathi finally offers her holy water and flowers and gets his feet touched by her, thus displaying husband – wife relationship and hence subtly reveals the prejudice underlying in Praneshacharya the feeling of superiority as a husband and a respectable Brahmin of the community. The pride he takes in marrying an invalid woman and taking care of her displays Praneshacharya’s claim of superiority by leading a life of self –sacrifice. The person who claims to be given the birth of a brahmin to lead a life of salvation also insists his feet to be touched by his invalid wife explicit the self –pride in Praneshacharya. He lacks far-sighted vision only in the crucial matter of cremation of Naranappa. He is regarded as the Crest Jewel of Vedic learning. How can he be considered as an enlightened man when he is caught in the question of Brahminhood, holy books and torrent of God-evil or good? He doesn’t take a rational approach. The Crest Jewel lacks the knowledge of considering a corpse as a mere



non-living thing which the low –caste, uneducated Chandri understands, “it’s a dead body, it’s decaying. It should be cremated”

With the help of Ahmedi Bari, a Muslim, she cremates the body of Naranappa. Praneshacharya caught in the conflicting thoughts, probing on the thought of omitting Brahminhood realises the universal truth, ‘a corpse is a mere non-living thing only when his identify is at its stake..... the thing which is to be burnt becomes a problem among the things which will be burnt.”

-is realised by Praneshacharya. He realises this truth after his self pride is destroyed. He also realises the truth that it was his feeling of superiority which made him feel that he can win over Naranappa at any cost, by his nobility. Naranappa, though drunk and involved in anti-social behaviours, used to get up and convey a sense of respect as soon as he saw Praneshacharya. This only served in strengthening his over –confidence about the effect of his aestheticism that bore upon others. It gave way to strengthen his egoism. The occasions where he was forced to admit defeat before Naranappa’s Anti –social behaviours, forced him to be suspicious about his own aestheticism. When he learnt that it was his preachings luscious puranas that paved way to Shripati making love to Belli, he started realizing the victory being gained by Naranappa over him. Hence he retorted to preachings of Vedas instead of luscious puranas. Praneshacharya’s realization about the decadent brahminhood in himself happens a little late and hence deepens his misery. Praneshacharya loses his courage when the problem, of Naranappa’s cremation tops on him as a mountain.

When he fails to find solution for the problem, he appears to be breaking down; praneshacharya fails to hold a practical approach towards the problem. He tends to ignore the fact that a decaying corpse need to be created and should not let the Brahmins to starve for a longer time. The fact which half-wit Lakshmiddevamma realizes about a dead corpse being allowed to rot which has never happened before and hence nullifying Brahmanism is surprisingly not understood by the learned man Praneshacharya . When he fails to find an apt solution in religious holy books, he comes face-to-face with his own self-pride, feeling of superiority, craving for respect and status, His mind is torn by conflicting thoughts and remains unresolved even after the novel ends. The novel ends but doesn't conclude. He is haunted by the thought of being susceptible to insult as he fails to find a solution rather than being worried about a rotting corpse which is turning the agrahara nauseous. Acharya's dilemma deepens with the act of love –making to Chandri accidentally. He fears to face the society after the act and exhibit an escapist attitude by insisting Chandri to reveal about what happened between them. After this, he is haunted by the ways to gratify his carnal desires rather than anything else. One can see Praneshacharya tormented by the torrent of dandling thoughts in himself.

Praneshacharya fails to find a solution for Naranappa's cremation in despair, makes love with chandri. Consequently, he starts meditating on the memories of the past and the encounters with Naranappa. He

recollects Naranappa's words which conveyed that every action of human being will bear positive and negative consequence. Praneshacharya, who had dedicated his complete life to attainsalvation, depriving himself of carnal desires, starts suddenly carving for sexual pleasure. His minds start being pre-occupied with the thought of gratification of his sexual desires and hence desires to find out Chandri. He moves accordingly. On his journey to nowhere, he happens to come across putta of Malera caste. Putta takes Praneshacharya to the world which Praneshacharya had shut himself of the whole of his life. Praneshacharya experiences a feeling of mixed emotions -disgust and at times bewilderment, when he moves through the fairs and festivals along with putta. Praneshacharya looks indecisive and appears fickle-minded when he is dreading by the thought of being identified and hence land up losing the gained superior status Crest Jewel of Vedic learning. Though he decides to move to Chandri by shedding his Brahminhood, he finds himself being haunted by the thought of losing his fame and popularity. He seems to be caught in a dilemma throughout the novel. The worst part is neither of his dilemma seems to be resolved even though the novel ends. Praneshacharya panics at thought of being haunted by Naranappa's ghost and doesn't bother to find out Naranappa's body and rushes back home. It reveals the deteriorating aesthetic and moral beliefs. He gets his wife's body cremated with the help of other Brahmins but pays no attention to Naranappa's body which ought to be cremated. His negligence towards a dead corpse rotting in agrahara displays in

unacceptable behaviour of learned Brahmin. Chandri's timely action of cremating a corpse which was turning a nuisance raises her to a high esteem in the eyes of the readers. The whole novel seems to be encompassed with unresolved dilemmas. The high-caste Brahmins who are considered to be embodiments of noble qualities are portrayed the other way round.

Low-caste people appear far more practical and less pretentious and explicit to have a rational approach towards life. Ananthmurthy portrays hypocritical attitude as the basic trait of Brahmins and thus highly pretentious. The title of the novel is apt with the novel revolving around the various connotation of the word "Samskara".

The very word *Samskara* gives way to various conflicting opinions and thoughts, which later culminates into unresolved dilemma of the human minds sketched in the novel.

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## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

To conclude U.R. Ananthamurthy's *Samskara*: It portrays the rural life and activities of different segments of society in an Agrahara but major focus is on the Brahmin community. It is a story of human existence with its psychological weaknesses and strengths. The novel shows the shift of ethics due to modernisation. Ananthamurthy portrays a realistic picture of the hidden as well revealed facts of brahmin community. It is a nice description of follies and foibles of orthodox Hindu societies. So many critical questions are left to the readers, but the readers are not supposed to be the role players in such societies but the elites or the serious and silent observes. Therefore the novel fails to prove a lamp post or a revolutionary step to the upcoming generation for showing the true path of morality, ethics and brahmin life in the sublime vedic culture.

In the current scenario, caste system has become rigid and stagnant as inter-caste marriages are discouraged and even inter-dining is still a taboo in many areas. Of course, the Brahmins have made it static for their selfish motives, but they do not realize the harm it is doing to them. In bringing out the impact of caste system on Brahmins, Ananthamurthy has taken some liberties. For example, some of the most beautiful women in post-independence Indian have been Brahmins. The famous actresses like Rekha, Madhuri Dixit, Anushka Sharma, Deepika Padukone, Vidya Balan ("List of Brahmins") are Brahmins. So the description of Brahmin females as ugly and asexual

objects seems to be biased. The Brahmins in modern era are also not averse to joining modern professions. Some of the pioneers in India's software industry have been Brahmins. Even famous social scientist M.N. Srinivas writes that Brahmins are not clinging to their traditional occupations only, he writes about a Karnataka village:

Brahmins and Lingayats are the traditional priestly castes of Rampura. This does not mean that every Brahmin or every Lingayat is actually a priest. In fact, the bulk of Brahmins and Lingayats are engaged primarily in secular occupations while even those who practice priesthood often also engage in subsidiary occupations such as agriculture and money lending. (42)

Thus readers might find that the conditions described in Anathamurthy writings are fictionalized exaggerations, but the message he wants to convey is clear. Caste system not only oppresses the people who are termed as untouchables, but it has a reciprocal effect on the so called high caste people also. The high caste people have to live according to the prescribed customs. They cannot enjoy their lives. Their conduct is always open to the scrutiny of the people. In other words, they live a life of a slave to the customs as much as those that are marginalized in the caste system. The caste slavery is even worse because the person is slave to something that is inside him. Thus, it is in the best interest of mankind to dismantle this

oppressive structure of casteism and thinking of women as a lower class than man.



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**Role of Literature on Socio-politics:  
A Study of Charles Dickens' Select Fiction and Autobiography**

**Dissertation**

*Submitted to Amity University Rajasthan*

*for the award of*



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*Submitted by*

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**AMITY UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN**

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# **Role of Literature on Socio-politics:**

**A Study of Charles Dickens' Select Fiction and Autobiography**

**by**

**NITISH KR. GUPTA**

A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
of Arts in Amity University

May

2021

## **DECLARATION**

I, Nitish Kumar Gupta, declare that this dissertation is the record of the research work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Parul Mishra at Amity School of Languages, Amity University Rajasthan.

I submit this dissertation for the award of the degree of Masters in English of Amity University, Rajasthan.

I further declare that this thesis has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree/diploma of this or any other University.

Signature of the student

Signature of Guide

Date:

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## Table of Content

<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	I
<b>Abstract</b> .....	II

### **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

1.1 Literature and Its Aim.....	01
1.2 Importance of the Victorian age.....	06
1.3 Charles Dickens as a Social reformist .....	08
1.4 His works as a Social and Political Criticism.....	10
1.5 Statement of the Problem.....	15
1.6 Objectives of the Research.....	16
1.7 Research Method .....	16
Works Cited.....	17

### **CHAPTER TWO: Literature and Sociopolitical influence**

2.1 Literary background.....	18
2.2 Socio-political reform in literary work.....	19
2.3 Socio-political Movements in the Victoria age.....	21
Works Cited.....	29

### **CHAPTER THREE: Depiction of Sociopolitics in Charles Dickens' works**

3.1 About.....	31
3.2 Oliver Twist.....	31
3.3 David Copperfield.....	33
3.4 Political views and principles in his more writings.....	35
3.5 The message behind Dickens' depiction.....	37
Works Cited.....	39

**CHAPTER FOUR: DICKENS AS A SOCIO-POLITICAL NOVELIST**

4.1 How important Dickens was?.....40  
4.2 Dickens teaches us how to think.....43  
4.3 The Sociopolitical view point of Dickens.....44  
4.4 Techniques and Styles in his works.....45  
4.5 Characters; How Dickens picked.....47  
4.6 Autobiographical Elements in bringing Sociopolitical reform..... 47  
4.7 Dickens’ Sociopolitics satire in his works.....48  
Works Cited.....50

**CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....51**

**BIBLIOGRPHY.....55**

## **Abstract**

### **Role of Literature on Socio-politics: A Study of Charles Dickens' Select Fiction and Autobiography**

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Literature has significant influence in social and politics. It is through literature that a true world is portrayed and this in turn depicts the untended loopholes prevalent in a social structure. The social novels which reflect through characters the entire scenario of a social condition of life, gender issues, employment. In a sense these fiction and autobiography actually draw a very sad miserable life in a society. So, inevitably such novels call for a change, change in the structure, change in ideology of the state. Politics is a broad term which is driven by the political parties. The political parties are association of people having ideologies. No politics or political party can be successful in governing a society without a frame of ideologies that cater to the interest of the people. So, the social novels which clearly scream for a change actually calls for a change in political agenda and therefore a change in society. One of the causes of the French Revolution was the influence of the philosophers who not only taught and preached but wrote down their works and their theories carried within it a call for change in the structure. The root cause of the Revolution was economic no doubt. But a group of furious mob does demand for a revolution and bloodshed when their grievances against many oppression snowball gradually. In a sense, a sole factor cannot be a reason for such a massive scale demand for change. Rousseau's Social Contract revolves around the slavery abolitionist theory. It does not truly demand an abolition of slavery but his literature convey the message of free will and free born. Writers through their literary genres (political literature) call for a change which is the need of the hour. As ideology and politics cannot be separated from each other so does literature and 'change'.

Literature has been an influential Source since ages, If you could remember **Guru Chanakya**, his work **Chanakya-Neeti** is immensely followed in Indian Political



Circles. We have numerous philosopher whose guidance is followed even today In the entire world. People even today read Hilter's Mein-Kampf. Writers have long been using their pen to influence social change. Consider Charles Dickens, The poor were banished to the workhouse and to prisons when they couldn't pay their debt in Dickens' time, so he wrote books exposing both the foolishness and cruelty of these practices. (Oliver Twist, Little Dorrit) People read his work, and despite his novels being fiction, they inspired his country to change the way things were done. An example of a work that directly affected politics in the United States is the book, "The Jungle." That book was published during Theodore Roosevelt's administration and was a fictionalized account of what happens inside of a meat packing plant. Even today, the book is not for the faint of heart. Roosevelt read that book and it caused the start of the FDA, grading of meat, and inspections of food factories, etc. But you asked for how this was done and not for examples. There are always topics that are either controversial or merely timely or ripe and many authors want to write about those things. But an author who figures out for his or herself a topic that his country or better yet the world should change, and that he or she believes few authors, if any else, is writing on, THAT is the author that is going to be listened to. To be different is to be new and exciting and the world of literature always drops everything for what is new and exciting. So in the end, the answer to your question is that politics will be influenced by what everyone is listening to at that moment, and that is more likely to be whatever is the new exciting thing at that particular time.

There are both positive and negative aspects of society influencing literature and vice versa. A totalitarian society has a detrimental effect on literature as severe censorship prevents many good books from being published and finding their audience. On the other hand, said censorship makes writers use various devices like Aesopian language which in its turn makes their language more elaborate and complex. Can it be considered as positive influence?. Really good literature can influence society in a very beneficial way. A good example is Dickens' Oliver Twist, after publishing of which the public attention was attracted to the notorious workhouses. Rousseau's Emile, or on Education was a foundation of France's system of education after 1789. There are some books which had a negative impact on society as well, the most infamous being Mein Kampf by Hitler, to my mind. I don't think I need to give the details of this bad influence as well as its consequences since they are only too well

known to the humanity. We have great political literature which directly pertain to ideologies, such as capitalism, socialism, Marxism, Nazism and so on written by great thinkers and theorists. They have led to changes in the political system of governance.

IN DICKENS' FICTIONS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, characters are cast in detailed and meaningful social situations, and an evaluated social world is created. Yet even those critics who agree roughly that this is so, and agree further on the stature of these novels, disagree markedly as to Dickens' own politics or view of society—disagree in fundamental respects, that is, on what disposition of mind lies behind and shapes these novels. Sometimes the disagreement has in part to do with personal conviction. G. K. Chesterton, a Catholic with mixed politics of his own, bolsters as he can Dickens' orthodoxy. T. A. Jackson, a naive Marxist with insufficient respect for brute fact, attempts to show that Dickens was a Communist in all but name, and that the really fundamental incompatibility between Dickens and his wife lay in the complete antithesis of their convictions about contemporary society as a whole."

However, the problem remains even when there is no dimming personal bias. The best modern critics of Dickens, Edmund Wilson and George Orwell, have described an enigmatic mixture of radicalism and conservatism in his novels, and tried—with somewhat different results to find a commonsense rationale for the mixture. Common sense and general terms, however, are an insufficient bulwark against purposeful misinterpretation, and now, as conservatism becomes the mode, there is a tendency to refashion Dickens also, and to make him seem safer than he was. One recent writer says that Dickens finds his solution in philanthropy, not government; that he looks to the past instead of the future; that when he “describes a wicked rich man he is portraying a moral type and not a class type”. Does this come to fair terms with the matter? For Dickens found in fact no social in either philanthropy or government. He looked more to the past than to the future when he wrote, because there was more there to see and describe; yet he had no morbid fear of the future, and constantly defended industrialism and progress to his more reactionary contemporaries. Increasingly, too, he was aware of, and in his fiction took sharp awareness of, the place of class in the formation of character.

Charles Dickens legacy was using his novels and other works to reveal a world of poverty and impossible struggles. His vivid descriptions of the life of street children in the city, workhouses and Yorkshire boarding schools, “The closing of the Yorkshire boarding schools was perhaps the most direct change caused by the writing of Charles Dickens.”, lead to many reforms. His works describing the corruption of the politics and justice system put the system under intense scrutiny. His strongly written characters inspired people whether to found orphanages for children whose mothers could not care for them, to found schools to educate the underprivileged, or to set up hospitals for those who were sick. Dickens himself worked to help many charities, setting up homes for women and lending assistance to organizations that helped educate and provide medical attention to the children living in the slums of London. Ultimately, Charles Dickens was a leader whose writing and deep seated hatred of oppressors bettered the lives of the poor and would and will, even today, inspire others to do something to help those suffering in oppression and poverty.

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## --CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

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### 1.1 Literature and Its Aim:

Literature, like all other exploring activities, necessarily reflects current social, political and economic conditions. Class categorization has been reflected in literature as soon as it had appeared in life. In the Heroic Age, the epic tales of kings and chiefs that were sung or told in their barbaric courts differed from the folktales that were told in peasant cottages. Class distinctions in the literature of modern times exist more in the works themselves than in their audience. Although Henry James wrote about the upper classes and Émile Zola about working-men, both were, in fact, members of an elite. The ordinary people would prefer sentimental romances and “penny dreadful.” Popular literature had already become commercially produced entertainment literature, a type which today is also provided by television scripts. The elite who read serious literature are not necessarily members of a social or economic upper class. It has been said of the most ethereal French poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, that in every French small town there was a youth who carried his poems in his heart. These poems are perhaps the most “elite” product of Western European civilization. But the “youths” were hardly the sons of dukes or millionaires. It is a curious phenomenon that, since the middle of the 18th century in Europe and in the United States, the majority of readers of serious literature as well as of entertainment literature have been women. The extent of the influence that this audience has exerted on literature itself must be immense.

The subject of literature is nothing less than human life and human experience. Every poem, play, fiction and non-fiction deals with some aspect of human life and experiences. It has, sometimes, been said that literature is like a mirror that reflect life for us.

In the ancient times literature used to represent morals and life as it is. The Greek and Roman philosophers believed that the purpose of literature should be didactic, i.e. its

purpose is to teach morals and good behaviour. However, Literature is of great importance and is studied as a means that helps provide the ability to connect human relationships, and define what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, words are alive more than ever before.

Aristotle presented the first fully developed theory as to how literary art can and should function within society. With the ability to see the world with a pair of fresh eyes, it triggers the readers to reflect upon their own lives. Reading a material that is relatable to the readers may teach them morals and encourage them to practice good judgement. This can be proven through public school systems, where the books that are used tend to have a moral-teaching purpose. An example would be William Shakespeare's stories, where each one is meant to be reflective of human nature; including both the good and bad. Consequently, this can promote better judgement of situations, so that the readers do not find themselves in the same circumstances as perhaps those in the fictional world. Hence, literature is proven to not only be reflective of life, but it can also be used as a guide for the reader to follow and practice good judgment from The real meaning of Dickens writings goes beyond the eloquent phrasing, plot devices, characterizations and the sensitive handling of emotional human condition. The characters were contingents of England and were immersing in a perfectly observed and created world, full of conflicts and contradictions, inspiration and intrigue, love and loss, spitefulness and self-loathing and justice and truth.

Dickens' novels have become public property. They have been endlessly retold, adapted, imitated, and pirated on both sides of the Atlantic for a century and a half. Dickens is often seen as the representative Victorian and his novels have almost become synonymous with Victorian England. For he frequently based his characters on real people and used real places, particularly the streets and neighbourhood of London, as setting for his stories. The connection between his fictional world and the actual world of Victorian England has fascinated his readers. Like many writers, Dickens drew on his own life experiences to produce his stories. These stories were mainly focused on evil society, and through them he critically describes the new industries that forced children into labour, and the injustice of the courts when they were to resort to.

Conditions in England urged writers to be directly concerned with contemporary social issues that focus on class, gender, and labour relation, all of which were the cause of societal turbulence and growing strong hostility between the rich and the poor of England. Hence the novels of the late 18th and 19th centuries were used as platforms for criticisms that called for socio-political-economic reform. Dickens was the foremost socio-political reform writer as will be shown in this research paper. England was moving steadily in the direction of becoming Europe's most stable and prosperous country. The industrial revolution, and the railway age made it possible to use steam engines in mines, factories and ships. Small towns began to swell into smoky centers of manufacturing industry. All this was taking place under a government and legislature that were still narrowly restricted to the privileged few, who were wealthy by birth or becoming wealthy through commerce. Despite this industrial revolution, with all the factories, mills, mines. England was still an almost entirely agricultural country. The English countryside was a part of everyone's existence. The industrial revolution, however, was just beginning to bring dirt and squalor, ugliness and crime, into the lives of the poor who were forced by the new circumstances to live and work in the mills and factories of the new towns. Labourers were unfairly treated without redress, women workers were ill-treated and underpaid, while children were often forced to work under painful conditions. Society in the countryside was still effecting social structure. A small agricultural community was still more or less governed by the landlord or lord of the manor to whom rents were paid by the tenants of farms or cottages. No body in the rural community had much authority except for the local parson, or, to a lesser extent, the apothecary or surgeon. Industrial advancement created social unrest and economic distress among the masses. While creating the privileged class of capitalists and mill-owners, the Industrial Revolution also brought in its wake the semi-starved and ill-clad class of labourers and factory workers who were greatly dissatisfied with their miserable lot. National wealth was increased but it was not equitably distributed. A new class of landed aristocracy and mill-owners sprang up. They looked with eyes of disdain and withering contempt on the lot of the ragged and miserable factory hands. Conditions of life held no charm for labourers and workers in the field; for they were required to dwell in slum areas with no amenities. To make things worse, and prospects of better life more dismal, the debtor's prisons were legally established, to become the final

destination for the poor lot who failed to pay their debts. These changes and living conditions in 19th century England were illuminated through Dickens' writing. As well, the deplorable conditions of labourers, miners, debtors, and prisoners soon caught the eyes of social reformers. The Victorian era came to witness vigorous social reforms and a line of crusading humanitarian reformers. It was an age of humanitarian consideration and social promotion for great numbers of the English people. It is no wonder that during this age a considerable number of writers and philanthropic social reformers emerged with a new humanist attitude to life which was not bound by creed or dogmas. In the works of Charles Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, Carlyle and Ruskin, can be noticed the crusading zeal of the literary artist to bring about salutary reforms in the social and economic life of the English people. The growing importance of the masses and the large number of factory hands gave a spurt to the Reform Bills, which heralded the birth of democratic consciousness among the people. The Victorian age witnessed the conflict between aristocracy and plutocracy, on the one hand, and democracy and socialism on the other. The advance in the direction of democracy was well-marked out, and in spite of the protests of Tennyson and Carlyle, its sweeping tide could not be stopped. The long struggle for personal liberty was decidedly settled, and democracy became the established order of the day. The king and peers were stripped of their power and left as figure-heads of a past history. The last vestige of personal government and the divine right of rulers disappeared, the House of Commons became the ruling power in England and a series of new reform bills rapidly extended the suffrage until the majority of the English the people were given the right to choose for themselves those who would represent them.

Dickens, one of the greatest writers in English literature, wrote about these issues and the problems that the people of his time faced, He made use of his own life experiences and creatively to reflect the conditions under which the people lived. The selected novels such as Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby and Hard Times are illustrative of Dickens' emotional response to the these conditions. His writings may well to be considered as a warning against the conditions of his time. He wanted people to be aware of what was happening to them and put things right.

Dickens was considered the greatest novelist of his time. As a sociopolitical reformer, he became one of the most famous author in Europe as well as America. When he

visited America to give a series of lectures, his admirers followed him wherever he went, and the speeches he delivered may well be likened to that of the fans of a superstar today.

He became well known the world over for his characters and. Some considered him the spokesman for the poor in view of his intense human sympathy, his unsurpassed emotional and dramatic power and his zeal for struggling against the evils and abuses that befall the oppressed class or helpless individuals.

Dickens made people aware of the terrible conditions which a considerable number of the English people lived under during the Victorian era, for he himself happened to experience those conditions. His own childhood was very much like that of many of his characters in *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. The main focus in his novels is the poor people whose lives are reflection of his own misery and frustration during his childhood.

Close examination of Dickens' novels will provide a deeper understanding of the social condition of his time and his attitude towards the prevailing situation in England. Hence the attempt, to underline his reforming endeavors, which are the main objectives of this research.

This study will further confirm Dickens' warnings against industrialization and its inhumane nature. It attempts to substantiate the assertion that he was a social moralist writer who was intent on exposing the harsh reality of the Industrial Revolution. Even though he belongs to the middle class, he expressed great sympathy with the plight of the poor. He sought to make his readers aware of the terrible conditions under which people lived. Dickens paid special attention to children whose lives were a constant reminder to him of his miserable childhood and his deep sense of the injustice and oppression that he suffered as a labouring boy. A victim himself, Dickens vehemently attacks child labour. In addition to being deprived of education; the children were subjected to injuries at the factories where they had to work hard and for long and get little pay. This is particularly obvious in *Oliver Twist*, in which he fiercely attacks the Poor Law Act and the workhouse system, for the harsh conditions under which the children had to work. Though a male writer, Dickens' representation of female characters is employed to convey some views that were related to gender issues



during his time. He is inclined to conform to the Victorian gender construction which is geared towards the pure and gentle woman. However, he is hostile to “fallen” women. Underlying this view, are undertones of criticism of the Victorian patriarchal system and conciliatory attitude towards women. This will also be underlined in this research, for Dickens, unlike other Victorian male writers, was sympathetic towards women in his society because he was aware of the exploitation and oppression that they were subjected to.

## **1.2 Importance of the Victorian age:**

While it may seem unnecessarily repetitive to begin a study of the political element in Dickens with an account of his life, however a more embracing knowledge of the early influences in his childhood, of his background, of his ambitions and occupations, of his friends, of his travels, of his dramatic and theatrical connections, of his marital rift and its consequences, of his journalistic connections, is necessary to make the logical connection between the writer, his times, and his tonics. If his books sparkle at times with social and political satire, it was his life and his times that influenced him to write with a penchant for laughing to scorn the evils and abuses of mid-Victorian England. Oftentimes his books are autobiographical accounts of his experiences; his characterizations in many recognizable instances are drawn from acquaintances, friends, and even from his parents. In general, his writings represent his imaginatively vivid reactions to life, particularly English life in the middle and lower classes of society. If he required any incentive to bring the political and social abuses of his native land to the attention of the British public, he found that incentive in his unhappy youth.

Novel is the greatest achievement of the eighteenth century. Its firm establishment and assured popularity date from the age of Dr. Samuel Johnson. It was with Richardson that prose fiction passed definitely into its modern form. It grows fast and comes to its full flowering in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century novel falls into three distinctive stages or periods the pre-Victorian (1800-1837), the early Victorian (1837-1870), and the later Victorian (1870-1902). The outstanding figures of the pre-Victorian period are Sir Walter Scott, Maria Edgeworth, Edmund Ferrier and Jane Austen. These novelists share the complacency of their time. Feeling an

affinity with the higher circle and having a sense of disdain for the lower strata of society, most of these novelists show utter unawareness of what is happening in the society of their day . Great changes take place, but they fail to ruffle the calm surface of their work. The snug world of their novels exists without feeling any pressure of contemporary events and Socio-political problems.

By the time Jane Austen starts writing, the eighteenth century world is almost gone, but the world of her novels is still the world of Pope and Johnson. It is unaffected by Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Though writing in the nineteenth century, spritually and morally she belongs to the eighteenth. She ignores the decisive forces and events of her period. Her world is confined to a few landed families.

Raymond Williams calls it a “Rural backwater”, which is completely cut off from the social changes and turmoils of the time. The world of her love does not require a wider social context. She does not trespass beyond the two inches of ivory. For her there is no social or national problem. The atmosphere of her novels is of peace, seclusion, security and stability. She believes in the dictum of art for art's sake and writes pure novels. In her artistic craftsmanship, she outshines all her contemporary novelists. Sir Walter Scott, the father of the Historical Novel, in England, moves amidst the scenes of the past as if they were his natural element, and keeps his eyes closed to the happenings of the age. He writes for the idle rich, and his values are those of a settled society . His task is confined to the imaginative re-creation of history. His respect for tradition prevents . him from making any disturbing observations about society and expressing his faith in change and progress. He shows no concern with the present and its problems. He is always ashamed of the fact. For him the novel is a thing of luxury, meant only for the amusement of the polished life.

The death of Jane Austen in 1817 marks a break with the classical type of novel and that of Scott in 1832 with the romantic type of fiction. With the advent of Dickens, there is born a new type of novel, different from that of Jane Austen and Walter Scott -"no longer rooted in he romantic past, like Scott's or withdrawn from nine-tenths of current happenings like Jane Austen's" but bearing a distant affinity with those of Defoe, Goldsmith, Sterne, Richardson, Fielding and Smollett in pattern as well as content. But Dickens as a social critic differs widely from his eighteenth century predecessors. In comparison with the casual, subdued and ineffectual social concern

displayed by these predecessors, that of Dickens is more sustained, more overt, more genuine and more telling. What Walter Allen says about *Pickwick Papers* is equally true about their work also, i.e., they have "no designs on us and no ulterior motive."

Likewise, the novels of Dickens are different from those of his Godwinian predecessors - Holcroft, Charlotte, Smith, Mary Hays, Caleb Williams and Godwin himself. The Godwinian novels display socio-economic concern but they are lamentably abstract. They are written in the tradition of the eighteenth century rationalism. In them the novelists manage "to dehydrate the reality into an abstract generalization."

Dickens also towers high above the contemporary socio-political novelists.

### **1.3 Charles Dickens as a Social reformist:**

In the major novels of Charles Dickens the socio-politics concern has almost a thematic force. It pre-occupies his mind to an extent which is un-precedented. In his novels Dickens assumes the office of a critic, teacher and reformer. He does not act merely as a spinner of yarns or the idle singer of an empty day. He has a serious purpose before him. Besides acting as an entertainer, he seeks to preach and chastise, too. He is the first novelist who concentrates his attention on specific social ills and lashes out against injustice and inhumanity. In his novels he launches a crusade against hypocrisy, corruption and selfishness prevailing in the society of the Victorian Age. In them he takes up cudgels to set right the evils and vices of his times when in the words of Cruikshank, "Statesmen were without ideals, the church without vision, the crown without owner and the common people without hope."

Charles Dickens was one of the most important social critic who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social and moral abuses in the Victorian era. He showed compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of English society, and contributed to several important social reforms. Dickens' deep awareness of social ills are derived from his traumatic childhood experiences when his father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea Debtors' Prison under the Insolvent Debtors Act of 1813, and he at the age of twelve worked in a shoe-blackening factory. In his adult life Dickens developed a strong social conscience, an ability to empathise

with the victims of social and economic injustices. Dickens believed in the political and ethical potential of literature, and the novel in particular, and he treated his fiction as a springboard for debates about moral and social reform. In his novels of social analysis Dickens became an outspoken critic of unjust economic and social conditions. His deeply felt social commentaries helped to raise the collective awareness of the reading public. Indirectly, he contributed to a series of legal reforms, including the abolition of the inhumane imprisonment for debts, purification of the Magistrates' Courts, a better management of criminal prisons, and the restriction of the capital punishment.

Charles Dickens was influenced by Carlyle, but he followed his teaching he exposed the ills of Victorian society. Dickens was not one of novelist to draw attention of the reading public to the deprivation of the lower classes in England, but he was much more successful than his predecessors in exposing the ills of the industrial society including class division, poverty, bad sanitation, privilege and meritocracy and the experience of the metropolis. A novelist universally associated with social issues. In Dickens' fiction, most characters have a job, but he rarely shows them at work. His novels are centrally about social relationships.

Dickens hits at some concrete social, political, religious, economic and institutional abuses in his works. It is the keen awareness of the enormity of the problems along with a serious concern displayed at their existence, that differentiates Dickens from his predecessors as well as his contemporaries. His strokes are not vague and ambiguous.

They are aimed at certain definite institutional and departmental abuses. Among the novelists of his age as also of the preceding age he stands as a unique example of a didactic writer, for whom the art of fiction is not an escape. He weds the art of fiction with high purpose. He uses it as a means to expose evils in order to arouse public conscience and to convey his message. He steps out of the province of an artist and performs the function of a social critic and social reformer.

In fact, it was especially his unhappy childhood and the difficult hard-working, low salaried years of his youth that spurred Dickens to take up his pen as a cudgel in the interest of innocent, underprivileged, victimized children. He wept with his victimized child creations shamelessly; he badgered their persecutors relentlessly; he exposed the

weaknesses and hypocrisies of the body social and politic in the kleig-light brilliance of his satirical exposes--ell because he could identify emotionally the sufferings of his imaginary world with his own real childhood.

#### **1.4 His works as a Social and Political Criticism:**

In his novel *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) created a utopian and nostalgic vision of pre-Victorian and pre-industrial England prior to a rapid industrialization and urbanization. Although the novel was designed to be comic, it is not free of Dickens' characteristic social commentary, which would become more pronounced in his later novels. The descriptions of Eatanswill in chapter 13 and the grim Fleet Prison in Chapter 41 anticipate some of Dickens' preoccupations with the condition of England, which are revealed in his subsequent novels dealing with the darker and more disgusting side of Victorian times. The following passage from *The Pickwick Papers* anticipates Dickens' life long concern with the effects of industrialization on English Society. It was quite dark when Mr. Pickwick roused himself sufficiently to look out of the window. The straggling cottages by the roadside, the dingy hue of every object visible, the murky atmosphere, the paths of cinders and brick-dust, the deep-red glow of furnace fires in the distance, the volumes of dense smoke issuing heavily forth from high toppling chimneys, blackening and obscuring everything around; the glare of distant lights, the ponderous wagons which toiled along the road, laden with clashing roads of iron- all be tokened their rapid approach to the great working town of Birmingham". Dickens' later novels contain some of his most trenchant pieces of social commentary.

Beginning with his second novel, *Oliver Twist*, through *Nickolas Nickleby*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Chimes*, *Dombey and Son*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and ending with *Little Dorit*, Dickens totally rejected the claims of classical economics and showed his moral concern for the social well-being of the nation. His early novels expose isolated abuses and shortcomings of individual people, whereas his later novels contain a bitter diagnosis of the condition of England. *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), which represents a radical change in Dickens' themes, is his first novel to carry a social commentary similar to that contained in the subsequent condition of England novels. Dickens explores many social themes in *Oliver Twist*, but three are

predominant: the abuses of the new Poor Law system, the evils of the criminal world in London and the victimization of children. The critique of the Poor Law of 1834 and the administration of the work-house is presented in the opening chapters of *Oliver Twist*. Dickens gives the most uncompromising critique of the Victorian workhouse, which was run according to a regime of prolonged hunger, physical punishment, humiliation and hypocrisy. In contrast to *Pickwick paper*, in *Oliver Twist* Dickens shows England as a country of what Disraeli called “the two nations”: the rich and privileged the poor living in object and inhumane conditions of deprivation, misery and humiliation. Many characters of *Oliver Twist* function as allegories. Dickens challenges the popular Victorian beliefs that some people are more prone to vice than to others. Like Frances Trollope, Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell, Dickens was fully aware of the victimization of women in Victorian society. Nancy is forced into prostitution by poverty, hunger and life in a corrupt environment. John Bayley points out that: “Nancy’s living is the living of England, a nightmare society in which drudgery is endless and stupefying, in which the natural affections are warped, and the dignity of man appears only in resolution and violence. It is a more disquieting picture than the carefully and methodically symbolized social panoramas of *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend*”. In *Oliver Twist* Dickens presents a portrait of the macabre childhood of a considerable number of Victorian orphans. The orphans are underfed, and for a meal they are given a single scoop of gruel. Oliver, one of the oppressed children, dares to ask for more gruel and is severely punished. This scene, which has become “the most familiar incident in any English novel” strongly appealed to the Victorian conscience. Dickens challenged the Victorian idea of charity for the so-called “deserving poor”. He showed persuasively that the workhouse was a failed attempt to solve the problem of poverty and unwanted children. *Oliver Twist* can be read as a text book of Victorian child abuse and a social document about early Victorian slum life. When Oliver goes with Sowerberry to fetch the body of a woman dead of starvation, he can see an appalling view of derelict slum house. Dickens succeeded in making Victorian public opinion more aware of the conditions of the poor. He depicted persuasively the disorder, squalor, light, decay, and the human misery of a modern industrial city. Although the initial condition of England discourse changes into a sentimental moral fable on the subsequent pages, *Oliver Twist* is an important manifestation of Victorian social conscience. The motif of child abuse in the context the Victorian education system is continued in *Nicholas*

Nickleby (1838-39). The novel contains a serious social commentary on the conditions of schools where unwanted children were maltreated and starved. Nicholas is sent to Dotheboys Hall, a school run by the cruel and abusive headmaster Wackford Squeers. Dickens was critical about the Victorian education system, which is reflected not only in *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Hard Times* and *Our Mutual Friend* but also in his journalism and public speeches. In *Nicholas Nickleby* Dickens describes abusive practices in Yorkshire boarding Schools. However, Dickens does not only criticize the malicious education system, but he is primarily concerned with the fates of these unfortunate children who are representatives of the most vulnerable portion of the society. *Bleak House* (1852-53) is Dickens' finest novel, although not his most popular, it exposes the abuses of the court of chancery and administrative incompetence. For Dickens, the court of chancery became synonymous with the faulty law system, expense court fees, bureaucratic practices, technicality, delay and inconclusiveness of judgements. Dickens also criticizes slum housing, overcrowded urban graveyards, neglect of contagious diseases, electoral corruption, preachers, class divisions, and neglect of the educational needs of the poor. The book opens with the famous description of London in fog. "Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green meads and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollution of a great city.... Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds". This fog is also very symbolic. It stands for institutional oppression which penetrates into every segment of Victorian society. Dickens sees London as a place of human misery, and the world he perceives is governed by greed and money. *Bleak House* also carries a warning against the excesses of the laissez-faire economy. The descriptions of streets, buildings and people are realistic and reflect the living conditions of England in the mid 19th century. The colors in the novel are predominantly grey and black, and the fog becomes one of the central symbols of the novel.

In the story 'The Baron Crogzwig' told in Chapter 6 of *Nicholas Nickleby*, the members of Parliament are required to remain Bachelors, as "three members out of every four must vote according to their wives' consciences. In the novel there is an M.P., Mr. Gregsbury, a mere windbag. He is a thick-headed gentleman, "with a

loud voice, pompous manner, a tolerable command of sentences with no meaning in them. At the time of his election he gave certain assurances to the people of his constituency . He does not intend to keep them and is not ready to resign under any circumstances. He needs a secretary who has to wait in the lobby to help him in case he forgets anything or wants a fresh cramming. During the great debates the secretary has to sit in the front row of the gallery and has to say to the people around : "You see that gentleman , with his hand in his face, and his arm twisted round the pillar - that's Mr. Gregsbury - the celebrated Mr. Gregsbury.

Similarly other M.P.'s also, such as George Gordon and Sir John Chester in *Barnaby Rudge*, Mr. Gradgrind in *Hard Times*, Mr. Merdle in *Little Dorrit*, Mr . Veneering in *Our Mutual Friend* and Sir Joseph Bowley in *The Chimes* are undesirable persons. Mr. Merdle , a great forgerer and thief, commits suicide when his dazzling financial schemes fail . Mr. Veneering who has no political opinions and creed of his own, buys a seat in Parliament for the rotten borough of Pocket Branches. Dickens writes :

This particularly obtains in all parliamentary  
affairs whether the business in hand be to get a man in,  
or get a man out or to get a man over , ...  
nothing is understood to be so effectual or scouring  
nowhere in a violent hurry - in short,  
as taking cabs and going about.

Power abuse is one of the social and political problems in the society. It is happen because there are two social division namely upper class and lower class. Power abuse can be used as subject in literary work because literary work is a picture of human life. One of the literary work that use power abuses as subject is *David Copperfield*. The author of *David Copperfield* is Charles Dickens, a famous author at Victorian era. Power abuse is also related to the oppression so that so that it can be analyze by using Marxist Approach. Marxist Approach is one of the literary, which based on economic and political theories of Karl Marx. Literary work is a picture of human. It means that the society influences literary work in many aspects such as social aspects, economic aspects, political aspects, science and technological aspect, cultural aspects, and religious aspects. In this novel, power abuse can be seen from characters and characterization, plot, style, and theme.



In *Hard Times* (1854) the social consequences of industrialization and urbanization are perhaps most persuasively depicted, which Dickens wrote at the prompting of urgent external circumstances. *Hard Times* is more than any other of his condition of England novels influenced by Carlyle's social criticism. It deals with a number of social issues: industrial relations, education for the poor, class division and the right of common people to amusement. It also draws on contemporary concern with reforming divorce laws. Cazamian sees Dickens in *Hard Times* as an "intermediary link between the social thought of Carlyle and Ruskin." Raymond Williams described *Hard Times* as "a thorough-going and creative examination of the dominant philosophy of industrialism of the hardness that Mrs. Gaskell saw as little more than a misunderstanding, which might be patiently broken down" . Similarly, in his study, "The Rhetoric of *Hard Times*", David Lodge wrote: "On every page *Hard Times* manifests its identity as a polemical work, a critique of mid-Victorian industrial society dominated by materialism, acquisitiveness, and ruthlessly competitive capitalist economics. To Dickens, at the time of writing *Hard times*, these things were represented most articulately, persuasively, by the utilitarians . Dickens, like Thomas Carlyle and many other contemporary intellectuals, criticized utilitarianism, although they confused utilitarian ethics with Laissez-Faire industrial capitalism, which, like utilitarianism, was based on the self-interest principle. In *Hard Times* Dickens created a condition of England novel, which directly engaged with contemporary and social issues. Dickens echoes many of Carlyle's arguments against the power of social machinery and materialist consciousness. However, contrary to Carlyle, Dickens shows that the positive aspects of human nature are not easily destroyed. Fancy, imagination compassion and hope do not disappear completely. They are preserved in which characters as Sissy, Rachael and Sleary. Even Mr. Gradgrind revealed eventually some traces of humanness. Ultimately, Dickens did not take up Carlyle's favourite theme of the aristocratic hero as the saviour of a disintegrating society. Coketown, the city of fact, foreshadows the emergence of a monstrous mass urban society based on a rationalism, anonymity, dehumanization. The dominant feature of the town is its inherent ugliness. Its inhabitants lack individuality and are the product of an inhuman, materialistic society. "It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town

of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled.” In *Hard Times* human relationships are contaminated by economics. Dickens is concerned with the conditions of the urban labourer and the excesses of laissez-faire capitalism. He exposes the exploitation of the working class by unfeeling industrialists and the damaging consequences of propagating factual knowledge at the expense of feeling and imagination. However, although Dickens is critical about utilitarianism, he cannot find a better way of safeguarding social justice than through ethical means. *Hard Times* proves that fancy is essential for human happiness, and in this aspect it is one of the best morally uplifting novels. Dickens avoided propagating employer paternalism in the manner of Disraeli, Charlotte Bronte and Gaskell, and strongly opposed commodification of labour in Victorian England. *Hard Times* was in fact an attack on the Manchester School of Economics, which supported laissez-faire and promoted a distorted view of Bentham’s ethics. The novel has been criticized for not offering specific remedies for the condition of England problems it addresses. It is debatable whether solutions to social problems are to be sought in fiction, but nevertheless, Dickens’ novel anticipated the future debates concerning anti-pollution legislation, intelligent town-planning, health and safety measures in factories and a humane education system. Dickens as a social critic exerted a profound influence on later novelists committed to social analysis. It can be noted that Charles Dickens’ works played tremendous role in the implementation of social policies that changed the lives of the poor. Apart from his works, Dickens’ active involvement in promoting social reforms raised public awareness in the fight against poverty, deprivation of education, child labour and prostitution.

So, Dickens was a great social reformist as well as a great social critic of Victorian period.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem:**

The main aim of this research is to point out Dickens’ contribution to social and political reform in 19th century England through his novels. The study of the socio-political problems in the major novels of Charles Dickens becomes a subject of immense interest and engagement, as, throughout his life, Dickens remained an ardent and vehement commentator of the society of his time. Though Dickens' social concern

finds its explicit expression in his letters and articles, it is clearly discernible in everyone of his novels. Despite his sentimentality, melodrama, caricature and humour, Dickens stands before us as a social critic in his novels. Though fiction is no substitute for fact, Dickens makes the social realities of his novels intenser and brighter by giving them the colour of his creative genius.

This is based on the presentation, discussion and analysis of his five selected novels: The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield and Hard Times.

### **1.6 Objectives of the Research:**

During Dickens' life time England had seen rapid changes. As one of the greatest English novelists Dickens combined his literary mind with a variety of social changes and interests. Some critics argue that he saw the novel as an important tool for social reform. Thus, he can be considered as a social critic and the representative novelist of the Victorian period. Child subjugation is a repeated theme in Dickens' works; and it can be attributed to the social viruses and the injustice done to children during the Victorian era. Through interpretation and analysis of the five selected texts (The Pickwick paper. Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield and Hard Times) it will be attempted to show the extent of Dickens' writings and how he contributed to bringing about SOCIAL AND POLITICAL reform in England. Dickens is believed to conform to the writing conventions of his time; and a close examination of his three novels will show how he truthfully and realistically depicts the social conditions of his time, especially the miserable lives of the poor. This research attempts to investigate and analyze Dickens' works and his contribution to Victorian social reform. The objectives of the research are as follows:- To examine the influence of the Victorian age on Dickens's work. To explain how Victorian literature focused on the masses. To highlight how Dickens used his literary capabilities to criticize the Victorian society.

### **1.7 Research Method:**

In this research the prescriptive analytical method is used from mainly Dickens' five selected novels (The Pickwick paper, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield and Hard Times).

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## --CHAPTER TWO: Literature and Sociopolitical influence

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### 2.1 Literary background:

The central belief of Victorian society was in progress, that things were better than ever before and could be made still better. This belief was the force for thousands of voluntary associations that worked to modify the lives of the poor, both at home and abroad. It was also under-laid the charitable foundations created by wealthy benefactors and the public philanthropies of some of the greatest industrialists. Social experiments were conducted by individuals such as factory owner Robert Owen, who founded Utopian communities in which wealth was held in common. Novelists such as Charles Dickens were passionate social and political reformers who brought the intolerable conditions of the workhouses and the factories to the attention of the public in their books. Some of the Dickens's novels *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) and *Hard Times* (1854) are examples of this kind of literature.

By the end of the first half of the 19th century, Victorian age, a considerable number of the English people had become avid novel-readers. Theatres were regarded damaged, possibly even immoral. Despite the fame and popularity of figures such as Byron, the greater demand by the people was for stories. Women had already successfully demonstrated their ability to compete successfully with their male counterparts; including Mrs Radcliffe (1764-1823), Fanny Burney (1752-1840), Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) and Jane Austen (1775-1817).

Connected with the fast rise in the popularity of the novels, was the growth of a moneyed, leisured and educated middle class reading public, and an increase in the number of circulating libraries. Serialization was to some extent an artistic strain on the novelists, but many major works, particularly those by Dickens, Thackeray and Hardy were first published as of the call for social reform. The novelists of the first half of the century identified themselves with the age which requested the triumph of Protestantism. They shared a specific climate of ideas, feeling, and assumptions, and accept the idea of progress without much questioning. The age represented the

success of Protestantism. The taboo on the frank recognition and manifestation of sex had come into existence slowly, hence the abandonment of Fielding. Later on, the novelists began to question and criticize by displaying a kind of hostility to the dominant prevalent assumptions. The character of scientific discovery was seriously disturbing to the 19th century minds. Instead of providing evidence that the universe was both stable and transparent to the intellect, it showed the universe to be incessantly changing and probably governed by the laws of chance. After the publication of *The Principles of Geology* (1830-3) by Charles Lyell and later *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) by Charles Darwin, many intellectuals were led into religious disbelief, or into some form of personal religions which, though they might contain elements of Christianity, were essentially anthropological.

David Hume's intellectual philosophical *Writing on Human Nature*, offered a challenge for reformulation by Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher of Scottish descent. Another Scot, Thomas Carlyle (1795- 1881), made German thought widely known in Britain, Goethe being the chief influence. Carlyle led a new spirit of reform, a desire for individual fulfillment and liberation, "the religion of hero worship" or cult of great men, a reaction against the principle of *laissez-faire* and the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and James Stuart Mill. His views were rehanged to inspire the stream of "social problem" novels between 1830 and 1860. Most notable among those writers who fell under the spell were Elizabeth Gaskell, Disrael and Dickens.

## **2.2 Socio-political reform in his literary work:**

The Poor Law Act of 1834 was an instrument of laws which was introduced in England and the rest of Britain to provide public relief under a system which required that all those who needed assistance such as the widows, the sick and the unemployed, had to be accommodated at the workhouses. The act contained no clause that would permit for harsh treatment of the poor. Nevertheless, the fact was that it is the commissioners of the Poor Law Act who established the policy of brutality as pointed out by S. Robert "These commissioners, three in number and with extensive powers to form and supervise the newly created poor law unions, wished local guardians to give relief to able – bodied paupers only if they entered a workhouse".(1898;67)

The rise of capitalism brought obvious prosperity within the middle class. Nonetheless, the Industrial Revolution was a period of huge poverty among the majority of the English citizens. Despite claims that industrialization created employment, one should also bear in mind that the move from rural to urbanized areas must have economically affected a large number of people, for there would be high competition to survive in a capitalist society. Some people managed to become members of the middle class or the bourgeoisie, while others became skilled artisans, tradesmen and professionals. However, not every member of society belonged to the middle class, since there were people who belonged to the lower class and who were mostly unemployed, hence they were labeled by the Victorian middle class as “paupers”, a class of people who received the poor relief as stipulated by the Poor Law. The “paupers” were usually people who were not only unemployed or sick, but recipients of insufficient wages.

During the Victorian period, most of the lower class members of the British society were living in poverty and their children were either affected, or felt obliged to work in the factories in order to increase the family’s income. Obviously, the fact was that economic conditions forced poor children into working, sometimes as hard and long as their parents. Even the British Government was thought to have overlooked child labour, a fact which was admitted by Altick who believed that the Parliament itself claimed that a child was more useful to his family working: most children began working at the age of seven and were not allowed to leave the factory until they were twenty – one. They had to sign contracts called indentures that virtually made them the property of the factory owner.

The 1870 Education Act set up school districts. Local rate payers were asked to build a primary school in an area where one did not already exist. The local board had the right to command children to attend these schools and to charge a nominal fee. By 1874 over 5,000 new schools had been founded. In 1880 education became compulsory up to the age of 10 (raised to 12 in 1899) and in 1891 it was made free.

To the poor, the education system was inefficient and could offer very little. This is clearly depicted in Dickens' *Great Expectations*: “Mr. Wopsle’s great aunt kept an evening school in the village; that is to say, she was a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity, who used to go to sleep from six to seven, in the society of youth who paid two pence per week each . . . . and Mr Wopsle had the room upstairs, where we students used to overhear him reading aloud in a most dignified and terrific manner. . . .” (Ch-VII)

The only education that the poor child received was either that of being beaten into submission by the workhouse authorities or employers: “In *Oliver Twist*, the reproach on children’s education is extremely apparent. Oliver, when raised by Mrs. Mann almost receives no education at all. What he knows is only to obey “the elder lady” if Oliver hopes to escape from her cruel ‘hands and sticks’ ” (21).

### **2.3 Socio-political Movements in the Victoria age:**

The Social and political reform system in the Victoria age was a mechanism that sought to emulate the wave of initiatives that aimed at curing the social viruses during the former part of that era. Historically, such reforms were often rejoined to halt the general practices that had been taking place for many years in short bursts; hence reform was often accomplished by private citizens and businesses, with little or no government intervention. These reforms were also extremely diverse, ranging from the commonly cited safety or health codes of the early 20th century, to the ill-fated and universally banned movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The historical facts about social reform are quite messed up. For the sake of simplicity, it can be said that the Victorian system displayed only the most common reforms and ignored the private sector reforms, favoring the more easily managed state reforms. These reforms can be seen as helpful, or harmful, for, overall, it depends on one’s personal attitude, regardless of public opinion which was mainly concerned with the cost and benefit of kinds of reform that might be brought about.

Despite the fact that the United States’ size alone accounted for its eventual supremacy, and the British entrepreneur’s lack of capital reinvestment allowed



Germany to gain land, it was found that the foot soldiers of the industrial machine were unfit and uneducated for battle against their competition. The poor standard of potential recruits for the Boer War sparked the realization that the defence and expansion of the Empire was at stake. Not only this, but there was the rise of trade union membership and socialist ideas which accounted for the establishment of fears of revolution. The Independent Labour Party was formed in 1893, and it was obviously clear that a series of measures would have to be implemented to calm the people.

Reform movements began to take place within the major political parties, and were accompanied by the newly empowered middle classes that began to feel uneasy. This was reflected in the literature of the time by writers such as Morris, Carlyle, and Ruskin who warned that traditional English freedoms were under threat from land-desecrating capitalists and that the dignity of labour must be re-affirmed. There were those of middle class origin who wished to see for themselves the problems that were faced by the poverty-stricken people, in an attempt to alleviate their suffering.

Charles Booth was such a man who accumulated wealth from his shipping interests, and was dismissive of contemporary anecdotal literature of the time, as it conflicted with his own experiences in London. Dismissing the Social Democratic Federation's estimate that one in four Londoners was in great poverty, as socialist propaganda, he decided to carry out a survey for himself. Seventeen years and seventeen volumes forced him to come to the conclusion that the SDF had, in fact, underestimated the problem.

Marx's social theory is based on what he called historic materialism, a conception of history worked out by himself and Frederick Engels. According to his theory, the ultimate forces in the evolution of social life, the ultimate causes that determine the evolution of morals are of an economic nature. They are to be found in the changes of the modes of production of the necessities of life. To a given mode of production and exchange of the necessities of life, correspond certain forms of social institutions and moral conceptions. These forms will prevail as long as the former continues to exist, though not always in their purity or in absolute sway, they have to contend with remainders of former institutions and the germs of a slowly evolving new mode of life.

This is quite obvious in the earlier stages of social life. But the more complex society becomes, the more will the objective causes of social evolution recede into the background, and subjective ones appear to determine its course. Notwithstanding the powerful subjective factor is in history, remains under the control of the working of the economic foundations of social life. This idea has been underlined by Marx, who states:-

*“Even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural law of its evolution, it can neither jump over normal phases of its development, nor can it remove them by decree. But it can shorten and alleviate the pain of child-birth”.*(10)

Wherever the industrial development reached certain points, it is bound to call forth social movements and economic changes. These economic changes will have revolutionize the brains of the people more than all the pamphlets and leaflets written in glowing terms and distributed broadcast by the young heroes who are prepared to risk freedom and life for a generous ideal.

Marx has formulated the main principles of social evaluation- in his Criticism of Political Economy- as follows:-

“A formation of society will not disappear until all productive forces are evolved for which it is wide enough, and new and higher systems of production will never be installed until the material conditions of their existence are hatched out in the very bosom of the old society. Hence humanity always sets itself only to solve problems it is capable of solving; for if you examine things closer you will always find that the problem arises only where the material premises of its solution exist already, or are at least in the process of being formed”. (3)

Marx was a revolutionary evolutionist. But he was far from revolutionary romanticism, which in the natural philosophy of Socialism light is a more important factor than heat. In he wrote:

“The minority puts into the place of the critical a dogmatic conception. To them not real existing conditions are the motive force of revolution, but mere will. Whilst we tell the workers, you must run through 15, 20, 50 years of civil wars and struggles, not only for changing the conditions, but for altering yourselves and for rendering

yourselves capable of political supremacy, you, on the contrary declare: 'We must at once capture power, or we may go and lay down to sleep.' Whilst we explain, especially to the German workmen, how undeveloped the proletariat is in Germany, you flatter in the coarsest way the national sentiment and the sectional prejudice of the German handicrafts-men – a process which, true, is more popular. Just as the Democrats have made the word people, so you have made the word proletariat a fetish. Just like the Democrats, you substitute the revolutionary phrase for the revolutionary evolution". (7)

In a way similar to Dickens', Marx criticized capitalism for its oppression of the poor, and the term "Marxism" that comes into use was based on the suggestion that industrialization polarized society into the bourgeois and the much larger proletariat, who were the working class, hence the conflict between the two classes as noted in The Communist Manifesto that Marx co-authored with Friedrich Engels. "The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones"(8). Marx indeed Marx saw the industrialization process as the logical dialectical progression of feudal economic codes, necessary for the full development of capitalism.

Marxism sympathizes with the working class or proletariat and espouses the belief that the ultimate interest of workers best matches those of humanity in general. Marxists are committed to a workers' revolution as a means of achieving human emancipation and enlightenment. The theory of Marxism promotes socialism which is a political and economic system in which everyone has an equal right to a share of a country's wealth and main industries which are owned and controlled by the government (Heilbroner).

Written during the same period as the development of Marxism and socialist thought, Charles Dickens' works were also concerned with the relationships between the workers and the industrialists, and the poor and the rich. Marxian analysis would attempt to look at the work as a highly mediated "reflection" of the social conditions. Good Marxist criticism addresses not only the content of a given text, but also its form.

In addition to Marxism, other theories such as Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution (1859) also come out. Darwin's concept stresses competition for survival in a capitalist society in which only the capitalist have access to economic resources while the poor are deprived. Therefore, the lower class struggles to survive by resorting to crime; the women are reduced to prostitutes while children and men are subjected to low paying jobs such as factory workers, dustmen and chimney sweepers.

Darwin's concept of "struggle for survival" has been translated into "survival of the fittest" was also known as "Social Darwinism" after it was formed into a theory by nineteenth century philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Spencer applied the theory of natural selection to social, political and economic issues, which was further adopted by Victorian writers such as George Elliot, or even earlier in the century, by authors like Jane Austen who incorporated it into their novels.

After 1890, social reformers used Darwinism to advocate a stronger role for government and the introduction of various social policies. Their movement became known as Reform Darwinism. Which stated that "Human beings need new ideas and institutions as they adapt to changing conditions"(20).

Living conditions varied from the magnificence of the middle class to the dirtiness of the lower class labourers. Social commentators such as the Webb's, and the Hammonds, and novelists such as Charles Dickens stressed the "rapidity of change and the terrible effects of industrial transformation upon the living standards of the masses" (12).

In contrast to the middle class nobility, the lower class lived in small over crowded houses where poor sanitation led to fatal diseases such as cholera, typhoid and small pox. A large number of the working class also died from chest infections caused by the dust from mines and smoke from factories, while some children and men died at the factories due to accidents, mutilations and poisonous chemicals. Dickens' novels, particularly Bleak House and Hard Times, generally portray the living conditions of the working class.

Fortunately, the standards of living for the poor began to advance after the government passed public health acts in 1872 which controlled sanitation, hygiene

and setting of boundaries on construction of homes. Further, human relations were altered by the people's preoccupation with the accumulation of wealth during the Industrial Revolution. This was noted by Thomas Carlyle "how wealth has more and more increased and at the same time gathered itself more and more into the masses, strangely altering the old relations and increasing the distance between the rich and poor." (10).

The kindnesses, goodwill, trust and communalism that existed during the pre-industrial era were replaced by "enmity, suspicion and distrust" between masters and workers (Tufnell Hudson; 10). Consequently, as Carlyle observes, that the rich and poor become more separated, the masters do not personally acquaint with the workers as evidenced by Dickens in *Hard Times* whereby the labourers are also called the "Hands", which confirms the indifference of the capitalists towards their employees.

During the Industrial Revolution, there were limited educational opportunities for children; their parents sent them to work. Child labour became an integral part of the system as the children were paid very less than adults. They worked under awful conditions and for long hours with poor lighting, bad ventilation and without cautionary clothing and helmet.

However, with social protest and reports of child abuse, laws prohibiting child labour and the factory acts in 1864 guarantee that no child under the age of 12 was to be employed as a factory worker. Unfortunately, some of these reforms were implemented long after people like Charles Dickens had gone to work as factory labours under indecent conditions.

Even though the Industrial Revolution brought an prosperity to the middle class in Great Britain and the part of Europe, the poor whose existence was overshadowed by the success of the middle class were crushed. In Dickens' novels there is depiction of the slums of London and its poor inhabitants the corruption of its society.

Thomas Hardy portrays a kind of reformist inclination when he criticized certain social constraints that endangered people's lives in the 19th century. As a realist writer, he expressed the view that the current rules hindered the lives of all involved. In two

on a Tower, he opposed these rules. The novel is supposed to overcome class- based boundaries of love.

It may be adequate here to say that Dickens had but the most elementary knowledge of political economy as such. So, he seems to have shared the old and not too straight idea that political economy was a dry-as-dust hobby, in which sociologists and other uninviting people constantly speculate. However, he vowed emphatically that he shared Ruskin's view that no scheme of life, no political organization of industry, was or would be complete if it did not provide that all labour should only be pursued under conditions which would allow human qualities full play and which would promote the whole round of human happiness. Ruskin's full, final idea of political economy as a science of human welfare included within its vision not merely the processes by which men gain a livelihood, but all human efforts and satisfactions.

Dickens was not a person who supports an idea of any particular theory of general constructive reform. His teaching was limited to emphasizing the necessity for better sanitation and housing and education. He denounced the evils of landlords, the poor law, child labour, the prison system, gambling, slavery, and other particular social defects. After all, he became the prose-prophet of the cause of social reform itself, and the firm upholder of that which alone is the assurance of its ultimate success.

At once Dickens motivates that our primary duty is to help in the rising of the community at large"; at another is bespeaking "your enlightened care for the happiness of the many ".At another, he quotes favourite stanza from Tennyson's Palace of Art and Lady Clara de Vere, in which the same lesson is taught. Always, the message is the same—the inalienable right of all men to equality of opportunity for social service and self- development.

In 1869, at a great gathering in Birmingham, Dickens declared, "I will now discharge my conscience of my political creed, which is contained in two articles, and has no reference to any party or persons. My faith in the people governing is, on the whole, infinitesimal; my faith in the people governed is, on the whole, illimitable."

George Robert Gissing believed that Dickens was never a democrat, and that in his heart of hearts he always held that to be governed was the people's good. However a few months later, Dickens refuted this, and declared that his faith in those who were governing the people was small and his faith in the great mass of the people who were governed was boundless. The declaration was not that it was " good to be governed " in the narrow sense in which the word is used, but that he had the profoundest belief that in spite of the yoke of class government, the people, the great mass of labouring, sinning, erring people, would yet work out their own salvation.

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## **--CHAPTER THREE: Depiction of Sociopolitics in Charles Dickens' works**

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### **3.1 ABOUT:**

This chapter attempts to discuss and analyze some of selected novels: *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *The Old Curiosity Shop* and show how they reflect the conditions under which the people in Dickens' time lived and the challenges they faced.

Dickens' lifetime coincides with the greatest period of penal and legal reform in British history. During that period many studies were carried out on the causes of crime, and how to remove them. This led to developments in educational and charitable institutions. Dickens himself had great sympathy for the suffering of children, and his sympathy drew much strength from the traumatic experience of his own childhood. He also had great pity for female offenders, and was charitable and kind to them. Indeed, he and virtually ran a home for fallen women, and was more lenient with female than male offenders. This was probably because he saw them as victims of circumstance; and despite ill-treatment, they remained loyal to their pimps. One reason why Dickens gave so much attention to crime and its effects in his works was that crime was an inescapable social problem at the time. Hence, his great passion for dramatizing and commenting on the outstanding topical issues of his day. Dickens was also concerned with the world of increasing crime and how to combat it; some of his novels end without the operation of human or divine justice against offenders. The form of punishment he chooses most often is self-punishment, usually arising from a guilty conscience. This reflects the manner in which Dickens constructed his ideal moral world, in which mercy and forgiveness are highly rated and demanded, and punishment for evil is unnecessary; for evil characters ultimately come to inflict such punishment on themselves. As observed by Reed (1995, 65) Dickens applied the same principles in his fiction similar those in fairy tales and children's literature of nineteenth century England: evil intentions are the evil person's own undoing.

### **3.2 Oliver Twist:**

“Society and Class” is reckoned to be a central theme of most of Dickens’s novels. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens is inclined to underline the superficial class structures, and the fact that at the core, everyone is really the same, regardless of the social class in which they happen to be born. Dickens also shows how callous and uncaring the Victorian society was; folks just ignored the plight of the less fortunate because they were so self-satisfied, and so convinced that the systems adopted to take care of the poor were the best and most human. Dickens attacked the social evils of his time such as poor housing, unjust courts, greedy management and the underworld. These are actually the thematic evils that are reflected in "Oliver Twist". Consider the following passage; “And what an excellent example of the power of dress young Oliver Twist was. Wrapped in the blanket which had hitherto formed his only covering, he might have been the child of a nobleman or a beggar; – it would have been hard for the haughtiest stranger to have fixed his station in society. But now he was enveloped in the old calico robes, that had grown yellow in the same service; he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once – a parish child – the orphan of a workhouse – the humble, half-starved drudge – to be cuffed and buffeted through the world, despised by all, and pitied by none”. (14)

"Oliver Twist" is a novel which projects the social evils prevalent during the nineteenth century. The author paints the criminal world with all its gory detail and exhibits its inhabitants with their deformity and wretchedness. He focuses his attention on the greedy and corrupt officials of the Parish and reveals the crudity and cruelty of the officers of the law. However, he does not express bitterness towards them. He laughs at them and their eccentricities through humor and irony. Some have been critical of the frequent rhetorical moralizing and philosophical outpouring in the novel. Dickens used such devices neither to enhance the beauty of the novel nor to reform the people. The involvement of the novel made him express his views on certain issues without inhibition. Such expressions were conventional in the Victorian novels. Dickens talks his way into the heart of his readers. Not merely does he tell a tale but he comments on it too, his attitude is that of a man talking unrestrainedly to a large audience and occasionally addressing it. His style is the natural outcome of that attitude. Dickens is a master of realism. His observations, experience and encounters have filled the pages of the novel with incidents and characters that are true to life.

Reading the novel may lead to contrary expectations. The readers of 'Oliver Twist' did not respond by taking to the streets and protesting the Poor Act Amendment. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the novel opened their eyes to the plight of the poor. It can be said that the social reformers must have won a better informed audience. The real genius of Dickens is that he was able to promote his own beliefs through the novel, whose plot twists are enough to keep the reader engaged.

### **3.3 David Copperfield:**

Obviously, poverty is bad. It is poverty that leaves David isolated and without a future as a child labourer in London. The charitable institutions are bad, it is at one of them that Uriah Heep has turned into a vengeful monster. Wealth is also bad, for it can make people selfish and unfeeling, like Steerforth. In the world of this novel, the only way for an honorable man to cope with poverty is to sacrifice long hours of his life to honest professional toil: this is the path that both David and Traddles choose. However, the characters who are allowed to work their way out of poverty are relatively few. It is only the sons of gentlemen – people who are born into the English middle class – who can follow David's path. The working-class characters like Mr. Peggotty and Ham Peggotty are virtuous in part because they do not upset the social order. Nevertheless, despite David's rags-to-riches story, the class system in David Copperfield is to a great extent still rigid.

The tone of David Copperfield is often melodramatic and emotional, but the language of the novel is actually quite realistic. There is a lot of dense descriptions of the setting and characters of the novel, which makes it seem as though the events are happening in front of us. However, even the most objective account of the scenery of the novel will eventually give way to commentary from our helpful narrator, David himself. As has been pointed out in the section "Narrator Point of View" nothing in this goes unframed by David's impressions and judgments. Let us take, for example, David's description of his stepfather's horrible factory:- Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse was at the waterside. [...] Modern improvements have altered the place; but it was the last house at the bottom of a narrow street, curving down hill to the river, with some stairs at the end, where people took boat. It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own, abutting on the water when the tide was in, on the mud when

the tide was out, and literally overrun with rats. Its paneled rooms, discolored with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years, I dare say; its decaying floors and staircase; the squeaking and scuffling of the old gray rats down in the cellars; and the dirt and rotteness of the place; are things, not of many years ago, in my mind, but of the present instant. The most general of observations are: the placement of the factory in London in relation to the river Thames, its colouring, its rats (blech). At the same time, while this may seem like an objective description, it has subtle inflections of David's own feelings about the factory. When David "dare[s]" to say that it was covered with the "dirt and smoke of a hundred years," he is saying that that is how dirty he felt it to be at the time. The "dirt and rotteness" of the place also suggest connotations of personal disgust and hatred. But what makes it really personal is that David sees this scene in his mind "not of many years ago [...] but of the present instance." The factory is so disgusting that David can see it, as though it is in front of him now – and he shows it to the reader as though it is in front of both of us. It is like a traumatic flashback, this description of the factory. David's depth of bad feeling colors the whole description with a sense of disgust and revulsion that is anything but objective. As a narrator, David uses these long, wordy descriptive passages so that he can move quietly back and forth between description and commentary. But his commentary is often so subtle that it seems to be part of the description. There is no sharp line between the novel's realistic scenes and its emotional content; both types of narration seem inseparable. By combining David's feelings with descriptions of the novel's world, Dickens makes David's feelings literally a part of the world of the novel. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why everything David narrates seems powerfully moving to the reader.

Even though the novel's main focus is on David Copperfield, it also provides a broad cross-section of mid-nineteenth Century English life. David's adventures take him through many segments of society: from a rural village in Suffolk to coastal Yarmouth; from abusive country schools to degrading city factories, and from poverty and obscurity to fame and fortune. Given the wide range of this novel, it makes sense that the final chapter goes well beyond David's life to survey the different lives of people we have met during the novel course of events. The final chapter, "A Last Retrospect" is much like the other retrospects that are to be found in Chapters 18, 43, and 53. All three chapters are narrated in the present tense, as though David is looking

at the events and unfolding them right before his eyes. The use of the present tense contrasts with David's usual past-tense mode of narration. By changing the mode of storytelling from past to present tense, Dickens is ratcheting up the emotional content of each of these chapters: they no longer take place in David's distant memories. Suddenly, the events narrated seem to be happening right up close. Dickens uses this emotional method of storytelling six times to emphasize both extreme joy and extreme sorrow in David's life. These chapters work like punctuation – the exclamation points of the novel, if you will. It goes without saying that the final chapter is the last exclamation point the novel needs.

### **3.4 Political views and principles in his more writings:**

To understand the political views and principles of Dickens, we must be familiar with his typical method of attacking a problem mentally. First of all, Dickens was not a philosophical or an abstract thinker. According to Santayana, Dickens was insensible to the great themes of the human imagination - religion, science, politics, and art. For example, while he had a religious disposition and realized the necessity of a religious spirit in the world, Dickens had no religious ideas. Properly sneaking, he had no new ideas, or abstract generalizations, on any subject. what he had was an all-embracing participation in the life of man and sympathy with its suffering. What he saw of ancient institutions made him fight them, not as philosophical systems of thought like Disraeli, but as needless sources of misery and oppression for the poor. His outstanding political passion was philanthropy, sincere, heart-warming, and favoring the underprivileged; but it manifested itself only in its negative and reforming side. Of positive utopias he had nothing to say. Ordinary life for Dickens was sufficiently good, lovable, and happy if only the cruelties, the selfishness, and the injustice were removed. For him there was more piety in being human than in being pious.

Dickens's most effective weapon to combat the abuses against which he waged relentless war was a merciless irony. By its use he honed to laugh the time-honored humbugs out of office and the chief abuses out of existence. The secret of his humor seems to be exaggeration. His description, for example, of the Circumlocution Office is a masterpiece of satire and caricature. There's a lot of truth in what Dickens wrote about it; there was a shameful emphasis on how not to do it; there was a pointless

delay in handling inheritance cases; there was a reprehensible neglect in handling patent cases. Englishmen were taking their inventions to the Continent and were allowing other countries like Germany and France to profit from their ingenuity, because they could get no satisfactory hearing in the Court of Chancery. Take, for instance, the way Dickens handles the case of the inventor Daniel Doyce. After a fruitless afternoon at the Circumlocution Office, trying to find out how the case for Mr. Dorrit stands, Arthur Clennam on his way out meets a friend, Mr. Meagles, who is accompanied by the inventor Doyce.

This chapter shall concern itself with the evolution of political ideas in the works of Dickens. At the start of his writing career Dickens gives the impression that he is feeling his way along during this formative period he was trying to discover what the people liked and wished. He reacted to public change. When, for example, he began to edit *Humphrey's Clock* as an organ of social criticism, preachment, and uplift, the circulation dropped; as a result Dickens changed his plans for the publication and introduced the regular installment for a new novel, *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

After his literary successes Dickens identified himself with his public more and more. Their sufferings were his personal concern. In his walks through London he visited the slums to see how the people vegetated; before he wrote his criticism of schools, he visited the Yorkshire district and saw the shameful educational system in operation; before he wrote of the factory problems, strikes, and lock-outs, he visited Preston to see a strike in full swing. After he had filled his mind with local color, he emotionalized the poor man's experiences, which are imaginative enlargements and prolongations of his own.

At the time when *Oliver Twist* was being published in monthly installments, 1838-39, the new Poor Law had been in operation for several years. This law, the pride of Reform Ministry, was based on the principle that, if you make the workhouse conditions intolerable enough, men will prefer to work in factories rather than to inflict themselves on the charity of the workhouse. That was the practical meaning of 'no outdoor relief'. Against the inhuman and unchristian methods of the Poor Law, Dickens wrote the opening chapters of *Oliver Twist*.

The political references in this novel are incidental to the main story. The satire deals with a local arm of the Poor Law enforcement, the Beadle, his official staff, the

matrons, and workers, all of whom interpret the Beadle's will for the poor house victims without benefit of charity. Because the starving Oliver dared to ask for more gruel, Oliver is denounced by the board of officials, on an inspection tour, as a potential criminal and ingrate.

In his next published novel, *Nicholas Nickleby*, there is little of a political nature. Yet the book reveals some of Dickens's early ideas on labor, his attitude toward wages, the relation of employers to employees, and shrewd observation of the externals of an M.P.'s behavior. One of the employers in the novel is Ralph Nickleby, a money lender, who is the brains behind a joint stock company.

The next novel of Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, grew out of the failure of his *Miscellany*, *Old Humphrey's Clock*, to click with the reading public. While it contains no political characters, it does have a graphic description of a factory town, one of the towns through which Nell and her grandfather travel in their escape from the specters of the past. Though the chapter in which this description occurs is merely an isolated adventure in Nell's flight, it is important because it gives Dickens's early impressions of the filth, squalor, and misery of factory towns and factory families. Here, in brief cameo etchings, Dickens shows the pity wringing effects on the poor, of long hours, low wages, lay-offs, and the lack of education, sanitation, health, and necessary food.

### **3.5 The message behind Dickens' depiction:**

There is a strong case made in Dickens's novels: that education is not simply the classroom experience of memorizing facts. In his novels Dickens expresses the idea that having an emotional component to our education is crucial. It is also shown in the novels that this kind of learning can happen at any time in life. Learning about the way other people live the fundamental to valuing them as fellow creatures; learning about them only in terms of their productivity is a recipe for class warfare. If this proper groundwork is not laid, then a perverted kind of learning can take its place, full of cynicism and misanthropy.

Dickens is one of the great Victorian age writers, and he can be counted on to give a rich and revealing picture of contemporary schooling. He stands out as social and political critic, and in his novels he seems to refrain from giving negative portrayals



unlike his fellow writers. He portrays mass education as a sinister force whose aim is to destroy in the students those qualities which Dickens treasures most. He made the best choice when he used factory-style method of mass education to begin his novel about the depersonalization and dehumanization caused by the excesses of the Industrial Revolution. Even those who are inclined to portray the negative side by depicting the teacher's incompetence or cruelty cannot refute the underlying value of Dickens' attack on the educational system through his depiction of schooling in his time. Dickens has given us a view of what a more systematized urban school might have been like at that time.

Dickens' messages about poverty and charity have travelled through decades and we can learn from the experiences of his characters almost as easily as we can learn from contemporary experiences. These are many reasons that make us read Dickens. "We need to read Dickens's novels," "because they tell us, in the grandest way possible, why we are what we are." Like most people, we think we know who we are without knowing it. We are Oliver Twist, always wanting and asking for more. We are Nicholas Nickleby, the son of a dead man, incurably convinced that father is watching us from beyond the grave. We are Esther Summer's son, longing for a mother who has left because of circumstances beyond her control. We are Pip who is in love with someone far beyond his reach. Dickens also tells us a lot about human beings and human interaction.

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## --CHAPTER FOUR: DICKENS AS A SOCIO-POLITICAL NOVELIST

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### 4.1 How important Dickens was?:

Charles Dickens was an important and novelist of the Nineteenth century. He is the greatest novelist that England has yet produced. He is the realistic writer of some great novels such as Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, David Copperfield, and Bleak House in which his comic view of life, socio-political criticism, knowledge of story telling and use of humour have been colorfully represented.

Dickens' first novel was Pickwick Papers, the ultimate comic and humorous novel in English language. His comedy is never super-imposed because it is an effortless expression of a comic view of people's life. Dickens seems to see things differently in an amusing and exaggerated way, and in his early work with much exuberance he plunges from one adventure to another, without any thought of plot or design.

As a novelist, Dickens is a social Chronicler. He is found to have introduced social novels in a much broader sense. In his such novels as David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, Hard Times, he gave the contemporary social picture and attacked the various vices of the Victorian age. Dickens enjoyed life, but hated the social system into which he had been born. There are many indications that he was half-way towards being a revolutionary, and in many of the later novels he was to attack the corruptions of his time. In Oliver Twist, which followed in 1837-8, pathos is beginning to intrude on humour, and Dickens, appalled by the cruelty of his time, feels that he must convey a message through fiction to his hardhearted generation. Yet some modern social historians assert that he disguised the depths to which the lower classes had been brutalized. His invention is still abundant, as he tells the story of the virtuous pauper boy who has to submit to perils and temptations. Burnaby Rudge, with its picture of the Gordon Riots, is Dickens's first attempt in the historical novel, and here plot, which had counted for nothing in Pickwick Papers, becomes increasingly important.

In David Copperfield, he brought the first phase of his novel-writing to an end in a work with a strong autobiographical element, and with such firm characterization as Micawber and Uriah Heep. Bleak House is the most conscious and deeply planned novel in Dickens's whole work, and clearly his art has moved far from the spontaneous gaiety of Pickwick Papers. It was followed by Herd Times, a novel dedicated to Carlyle. While in all his work Dickens is attacking the social conditions of his time, here he gives this theme a special emphasis with A Tale of Two Cities he returned to the historical novel and, inspired by Carlyle, laid his theme in the French Revolution. None his works shows more clearly how wide and unexpected were the resources of his genius. He completed two other novels Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend before his death, and he left unfinished the manuscript of The Mystery of Edwin Drood.

Like all great artists he viewed the world as if it was an entirely fresh experience seen for the first time, and he had an extraordinary range of language, from comic invention to great eloquence. He invented character and situation with a range that had been unequalled since Shakespeare. So deeply did he affect his audiences that the view of life behind his novels has entered into the English tradition. Reason and theory he distrusted, but compassion and cheerfulness of heart he elevated into the supreme virtues.

Through the questions of Public Health, Administrative Reform, and labor difficulties Dickens was gradually led to take a larger view of society as a whole. Until now he had taken a narrow view of the complex English political, industrial, and social world; as each problem presented itself to him he viewed it as an isolated problem island. The crimes in earlier novels were fraud, hypocrisy, selfishness, conniving against the poor; the good and evil were chiefly individual and a matter of private morals. But, as House points out,

“Public Health could not be dealt with in this individualistic way: one foul cesspool might infect a score of families; the directors of one foul water company might infect a whole town; one man's meat might literally be another man's poison.”(191)

The same conviction dunned itself into his consciousness through repeated examples of administrative red tape, labor strikes, and epidemics of cholera. How administrative red tape winds its tentacles around the lives of thousands of innocent citizens is graphically described through the delays of Chancery in *Bleak House* and of the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*. How labor troubles and dishonest Trade Unions and unjust employers can disrupt the work and peace of individual workers and even of a whole town is treated in *Hard Times*. How the evil effects of slums and unhealthy living conditions can burrow their devastating way through the various strata of society is shown in Tom-All-Alone's effect on Jo, Hawdon, Esther, and even Lady Dedlock. Consequently, Dickens realized that many problems were social in character and complex in nature; that a social organization was necessary to combat giant evils and abuses in the field of health and economics and administration of justice; that in most instances individual effort was doomed to failure unless supported by a Government of good will and foresight. In other words, Dickens in the early-1850's was forced to realize what many politicians had known long before:

“.....that the machinery of life designed to control an aristocratic, agricultural, and mercantile society could not control the society that industrial capitalism had imposed upon the older scheme.”(182)

This understanding led him to his cleaning statement of social conditions in his next three novels.

After *David Copperfield*, Dickens entered into the passageway of his dark period and wrote three books which have occasioned much controversy about his political and social disillusionment. Stevenson compares this period of Dickens's writings with the dark period in which Shakespeare wrote his problem comedies. These dark novels, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*, brood in an atmosphere of bitterness and frustration. They flay, through satire and caricature, representatives of the higher social strata, trace legal and social injustices to the parliamentary parties, emphasize the depressing effect by the futility of even the sincere and well-minded characters, and deliberately employ social criticism as the motivating purpose, not merely of episodes, but of the entire novel.

Evidently, the satire of political characters is more generalized than in Disraeli; the political characters are not individualized but are policies or political principles

personified. As Chesterton says in another connection, Dickens had this of the philosopher about him that he always remembered people by their opinions. "Here he treats the politicians" as if they were no thin else but their opinions. He studies then: as points of view, symbols of a state of mind with which he disagrees. His art consists in finding an opinion without a leg to stand on, and then giving it two legs to stand on. Obviously, in this political gathering, the important personages are Boodle and his retinue and Buffy and his retainer. The rest of the company are merely supernumeraries who are addressed and who applaud, agree, shake their heads, and in general are the puppets who dance to the whim of their political masters.

In Dickens the women characters do not play the active part in politics that Disraeli's women characters do. They do not intrigue or plan or inspire their husbands to political heights; their main interest seems to be in the election results or to be named, like Volumina Dedlock, on the pension list. None of them is guilty of service; for to a member of the Dedlock dignity such activity of usefulness is unthinkable. Since even the rich have many poor relations, Sir Leicester was no exception; and his many cousins were glad to visit him and live for a few weeks on his magnificent scale. For some time Sir Leicester had made efforts to get Volumina, now in her sixties, placed on a pension; but when Buffy explained that times were not propitious for that, Sir Leicester was convinced the country was going to pieces. Another of Dedlock's cousins is the Honorable Bob Stables, who "has been for some time particularly desirous to serve his country in a post of good emoluments, unaccompanied by any trouble or responsibility" (386). But again Buffy was unable to dispense a political job, and again Sir Leicester reached his melancholy conclusion. The rest of the Dedlock cousins

".....lounged in purposeless and listless oaths quite at a loss how to dispose of themselves... Cousins at the piano, cousins at the soda-water tray, cousins rising from the card table, cousins gathered round the fire."(386-87)

The satire of the upper class is obviously from the viewpoint of a member of the middle class, who is a close observer of the political and social drama in English life.

#### **4.2 Dickens teaches us how to think:**

The question why we still read Dickens is one that is always raised. The answer may be, "Because he teaches us how to think" But it will be reasonably acceptable to say

that many writers can teach us how to think. We read Dickens not just because he was a prominent writer of his time, but a man whose writings still appeal to our modern times. We read Dickens because his perception and investigation of the human psyche is profound and illuminating, and because he tells us things about ourselves by portraying people and their traits and habits that may well seem familiar in our present time. Dickens' messages about poverty and charity have travelled through decades and we can learn from the experiences of his characters almost as easily as we can learn from contemporary experiences. These are many reasons that make us read Dickens. "We need to read Dickens's novels," "because they tell us, in the grandest way possible, why we are what we are." Like most people, we think we know who we are without knowing it. We are Oliver Twist, always wanting and asking for more. We are Nicholas Nickleby, the son of a dead man, incurably convinced that father is watching us from beyond the grave. We are Esther Summer's son, longing for a mother who has left because of circumstances beyond her control. We are Pip who is in love with someone far beyond his reach. Dickens tells us a lot about human beings and human interaction.

### **4.3 The Sociopolitical view point of Dickens:**

During the nineteenth century, Dickens stood out as the most dominant literary figure of his time. His successful career coincided with the first half of the reign of Queen Victoria. He was the precursor of social reform who preceded Charles Darwin and Karl Marx who eroded the century's liberal consensus. Although best known for his novels, his shorter works, particularly his Christmas stories, also gained fame. Fiction became the property of an increasingly democratic and literate society on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Dickens mastered the serial novel, producing most of his major works in parts that were published monthly. His exaggerated humor and sentimentality touched a deep chord in the reading public of the day, and his cast of legendary characters is legion. As a social critic of both private and public evils, he criticized his age for the destructive nature of the new factory system in *Hard Times* (1854), the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham in *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839), the dehumanizing greed exhibited by Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, and legal corruption in *Bleak House* (1852-1853). Not only did Dickens entertain, but also his moral concerns helped shape the public conscience of his own and later times.

Known for his biting satire of the social conditions of his time as well as for his comic worldview, Dickens began, with *Pickwick Papers*, to establish an enduring novelistic reputation. In fourteen completed novels and countless essays, sketches, and stories, he emerged as a champion of generosity and warmth of spirit, those human traits most likely to atrophy in an industrialized society. In his own day, he appealed to all levels of society, particularly to members of the growing middle class, whose newfound literacy made them educable to eradicate the social evils they themselves had fostered. He was extremely popular in the United States despite his ongoing attack on the lack of an international copyright agreement; an attack which was directed in part against the Americans who had a financial stake in pirated editions of his works. Above all, Dickens appealed to his readers' emotions and, through them, to an awakened social sense. To be sure, Dickens's sentimentality offends as many modern readers as it pleased the Victorian. Indeed, the twenty-first century reader may study his novels primarily for the enjoyment of his craft, but to do so is to ignore Dickens's purpose: to argue on the side of intuition against materialism, as Angus Wilson puts it, or on the side of the individual against the system, as Philip Hosbaum has pointed out. In his facility for comic language, for example, Dickens created the unforgettable Sairey Gamp, Flora Finching, and Alfred Jingle, whose manic lingo creates worlds with a preposterous logic of their own. But such lingo is sometimes a shield for a warm heart and sometimes an indicator of fragmentation and despair. The keen reader would discover that Dickens's attacks on certain social institutions, such as the Poor Law in *Oliver Twist* or the Court of Chancery in *Bleak House*, are actually attacks on universal human evils—the greed, hypocrisy, and lust for power that lead to dehumanization and make, for example, a “species of frozen gentleman” out of Mr. Dombey instead of a warm, affectionate human being.

#### **4.4 Techniques and Styles in his works**

Dickens loved the style of the 18th century. According to Ackroyd, other than this, perhaps the most important literary influence on him was that of the fables of *The Arabian Nights*. His writing style is marked by a profuse linguistic creativity. Satire, flourishing in his gift for caricature, is his forte. An early reviewer compared him to Hogarth for his keen practical sense of the ludicrous side of life, though his acclaimed mastery of varieties of class idiom may in fact mirror the conventions of



contemporary popular theatre. Dickens worked intensively on developing arresting names for his characters that would reverberate with associations for his readers, and assist the development of motifs in the storyline, giving what one critic calls "allegorical impetus" to the novels' meanings. To cite one of numerous examples, the name Mr. Murdstone in *David Copperfield* conjures up twin allusions to "murder" and stony coldness. His literary style is also a mixture of fantasy and realism. His satires of British aristocratic snobbery—he calls one character the "Noble Refrigerator"—are often popular. Comparing orphans to stocks and shares, people to tug boats, or dinner-party guests to furniture are just some of Dickens's acclaimed flights of fancy. Dickens, the author, worked closely with his illustrators, supplying them with a summary of the work at the outset and thus ensuring that his characters and settings were exactly how he envisioned them. He would brief the illustrator on plans for each month's installment so that work could begin before he wrote them. Marcus Stone, illustrator of *Our Mutual Friend*, recalled that the author was always "ready to describe down to the minutest details the personal characteristics, and ... lifehistory of the creations of his fancy." Dickens is often inclined to use 'idealized' characters and highly sentimental scenes to contrast with his caricatures and the ugly social truths he reveals. The story of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) was received as incredibly moving by contemporary readers but viewed as ludicrously sentimental by Oscar Wilde: "You would need to have a heart of stone," he declared in one of his famous witticisms, "not to laugh at the death of Little Nell." In 1903 G. K. Chesterton said, "It is not the death of Little Nell, but the life of Little Nell, that I object to." In *Oliver Twist* Dickens provides readers with an idealized portrait of a young boy so inherently and unrealistically 'good' that his values are never subverted by either brutal orphanages or coerced involvement in a gang of young pickpockets. In his later novels, Dickens tends to centre on idealized characters (Esther Summerson in *Bleak House* and Amy Dorrit in *Little Dorrit*), but this idealism is meant only to highlight his tendency towards poignant social commentary. Many of his novels are concerned with social realism, focusing on mechanisms of social control that direct people's lives. For example, the factory networks in *Hard Times* and the hypocritical exclusionary class codes in *Our Mutual Friend*. Also, Dickens is inclined to employ incredible coincidences (e.g., *Oliver Twist* turns out to be the lost nephew of the upper class family that randomly rescues him from the dangers of the pickpocket group). Such coincidences are a staple of eighteenth century picaresque novels such

as Henry Fielding's Tom Jones, which that Dickens enjoyed reading so much. However, to him these were not just plot devices but an index of the humanism that led him to believe that good wins out in the end and often in unexpected ways.

#### **4.5 Characters; How Dickens picked:**

Dickens used his rich imagination, sense of humor and detailed memories, particularly of his childhood, to enliven his fiction. Dickensian characters, especially so because of their typically whimsical names, are amongst the most memorable in English literature. The likes of Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, Jacob Marley, Bob Cratchit, Oliver Twist, The Artful Dodger, Fagin, Bill Sikes, Pip, Miss Havisham, Sydney Carton, Charles Darnay, David Copperfield, Mr. Micawber, Abel Magwitch, Daniel Quilp, Samuel Pickwick, Wackford Squeers, Uriah Heep are so well known that they became part and parcel of British culture, and in some cases have passed into ordinary language: a scrooge, for example, is a miser. Dickens' characters have often become so memorable that they took on a life of their own outside his novels.

#### **4.6 Autobiographical Elements in bringing Sociopolitical reform:**

All authors might be said to incorporate autobiographical elements in their fiction. This is particularly true of Dickens' novels, even though he took pains to mask what he considered his shameful, lowly past. David Copperfield is the most obviously autobiographical novel, but the scenes in Bleak House of interminable court cases and legal arguments are drawn from the author's brief career as a court reporter. Dickens's own family was sent to prison for poverty, a common theme in many of his novels, and the detailed depiction of life in the Marshalsea prison in Little Dorrit is drawn from Dickens's own experiences of the institution. Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop is thought to represent Dickens's sister-in-law, Nicholas Nickleby's father and Wilkins Micawber are certainly Dickens's own father, just as Mrs. Nickleby and Mrs. Micawber are similar to his mother. The snobbish nature of Pip in Great Expectations also has some affinity to the author himself. The character of Fagin is believed to be based upon Ikey Solomon, a 19th century Jewish criminal of London and later Australia. It is reported that Dickens, during his time as a journalist, interviewed Solomon after a court appearance and that he was the inspiration for the gang leader

in *Oliver Twist*. When the work was published in 1838 the unpleasant, to modern eyes, stereotype of the Jewish character "Fagin" as fence and corrupter of children reflected only the endemic view of the time. The characterization aroused no indignation, or even comment, and it seems to have been written without conscious of antisemitic intent. By 1854, however, Dickens was moved to defend himself against mild reproof in *The Jewish Chronicle* by reference to his "strong abhorrence of...persecution of Jews in old time" that found expression in his *A Child's History of England*. His sensitivity on the subject increased: in 1863 he explained that the character of Fagin was "called a 'Jew', not because of his religion, but because of his race." He took pains to include in *Our Mutual Friend*; 1864, the sympathetic Jewish character "Riah". Dickens may have drawn on his childhood experiences, but he was also ashamed of them and would not reveal that this was where he gathered his realistic accounts of squalor. Very few knew the details of his early life until six years after his death, when John Forster published a biography on which Dickens had collaborated. A shameful past in Victorian times could taint reputations, just as it did for some of his characters, and this may have been Dickens's own fear.

#### **4.7 Dickens' Sociopolitics satire in his works:**

Through the questions of Public Health, Administrative Reform, and labor difficulties Dickens was gradually led to take a larger view of society as a whole. Until now he had taken a narrow view of the complex English political, industrial, and social world; as each problem presented itself to him he viewed it as an isolated problem island. The crimes in earlier novels were fraud, hypocrisy, selfishness, conniving against the poor; the good and evil were chiefly individual and a matter of private morals. But, as House points out,

“Public Health could not be dealt with in this individualistic way: one foul cesspool might infect a score of families; the directors of one foul water company might infect a whole town one man's meat might literally be another man's poison.”

The same conviction dunned itself into his consciousness through repeated examples of administrative red tape, labor strikes, and epidemics of cholera. How administrative red tape winds its tentacles around the lives of thousands of innocent citizens is

graphically described through the delays of Chancery in *Bleak House* and of the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*. How labor troubles and dishonest Trade Unions and unjust employers can disrupt the work and peace of individual workers and even of a whole town is treated in *Hard Times*. How the evil effects of slums and unhealthy living conditions can burrow their devastating way through the various strata of society is shown in *Tom-All-Along's* effect on Jo, Hawdon, Esther, and even Lady Dedlock. Consequently, Dickens realized that many problems were social in character and complex in nature; that a social organization was necessary to combat giant evils and abuses in the field of health and economics and administration of justice; that in most instances individual effort was doomed to failure unless supported by a Government of good will and foresight. In other words, Dickens in the early 1850's was forced to realize what many politicians had known long before:

“...that the machinery of life designed to control an aristocratic, agricultural, and mercantile society could not control the society that industrial capitalism had imposed upon the older scheme.” (182)

This realization led him to his sweeping condemnation of social conditions in his next three novels.

After *David Copperfield*, Dickens entered into the catacombs of his dark period and wrote three books which have occasioned much controversy about his political and social disillusionment. Stevenson compares this period of Dickens's writings with the dark period in which Shakespeare wrote his problem comedies. These dark novels, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*, brood in an atmosphere of bitterness and frustration. They flay, through satire and caricature, representatives of the higher social strata, trace legal and social injustices to the parliamentary parties, emphasize the depressing effect by the futility of even the sincere and well-minded characters, and designedly employ social criticism as the motivating purpose, not merely of episodes, but of the entire novel.

To explain this pessimistic attitude in the usually buoyant Dickens, Jackson postulates a thorough-going revolutionary change in society and politics at the root of Dickens's social criticism. However, taking a more balanced and reasonable stand, Stevenson attributes the dark period to causes that may be classified as domestic, literary, social, and political. First of all, in the spring of 1851 Dickens's father and infant daughter died within two weeks, furthermore, in January of 1851 Mrs. Dickens suffered an illness which “as the probable start of her emotional difficulties. As Wilson says, a

cramping marriage and social maladjustment caused Dickens's frame of mind.” (44-45)

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## --CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

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In his initial works, approximately in those appearing from 1836 to 1845, Dickens takes a narrow individualistic view of the England; he treats it simply as composed of individual persons reacting on other persons or small communities rather than as powerful society or organizations influencing the country as a whole. This outlook extends to business, finance, society and politics. His themes seems to be modify the individual employer, business man, people's mindset and politician, and you will improve society. Even his political characters are treated more as individuals than as members of an influential organization.

In his piece of writing, the political characters are unclear and are associated with general political ideas. Here he satirizes the election for beadle, the parliamentary bombast of the speeches, the irregularities of elections, the political fanfare with local parades, hand shaking, baby kissing- all reminders of ward politicians. Dickens satirizes the House of commons for much talking and little action, and the new Poor Law for unchristian methods, a dubious tribute to the Beadle, a local official. In these years, he discusses the externals of an M.P.'s behavior, the high-sounding phrases of pupker, and Bonney, Gregsbury's interest, not in satisfying his constituents but merely in prolonging his own political life. In the Gordon Riots, he views Parliamentary procedure through a fugleman; he himself viewed parliament through the eyes of the middle class.

In American politics, he saw the evil of English government repeated and uphold slickness at elections, tampering with public offices, useless name-calling and long landed debates, political machinery moving for private gain rather than public good. In the factory towns, he describes the filth, misery, melancholy, discrimination, racism, starvation, death, the long hours, low wages, and lay-offs. The evils of which the poor are guilty he blames on ignorance, the ignorance he blames on lack of schools, and the lack of schools he blames on the government which is condemning the poor. In Filer, Cute, and Bowley, Dickens shows that the laws work against the

poor: their conclusions are based on figures, not on human nature; and laws are enforced not with understanding but with a "Put it down" attitude. In his novels dealing with employers like Scrooge, the Cheerybles, Nickleby, and Chuzzlewit, he teaches in effect that money breeds misery, pain, and even death for its owners, unless it is used to help the poor. Therefore, use money not as an end to be attained by accumulation, but as a means to be distributed among the needy; for money is a power for good or evil.

In the period from 1848-1859, Dickens contributed most of his political criticism; for he now realized that society was a complex organization of many interacting groups and influences. Changes and advances had gone on in the past thirty years which had left their impress on law and society, on business and politics. Dickens was inclined to blame the big business men and the worship of money for many of the resulting evils. Big business had made the small shop-keeper out of tune with the times; money, concentrated in the commercial class, had become the sun around which the poorer social planets did extravagant homage.

But other agencies forced their importance on his growing social consciousness. In his labor for the poor, the Board of Health and its work claimed his attention; here he saw a powerful ally. The cholera epidemics of 1849 and 1854 only strengthened his conviction that proper sanitation and provision for health must be made before any other social advance could be effected or consolidated. Epidemics were social cancers eating away at the vitals of the people; slums were social eye-sores and disease-breeding dumps; these were not private but public evils and dangers. Bleeding Heart Yard and Tom-All-Alone's and Coketown multiplied misery, sickness, drunkenness, irreligion, and immorality. In this field, argument, debate, and theory were useless; action and prevention and medical work were imperative and were needed immediately. His political agitation for a Public Health Board that was organized to crush rampant epidemics was, practically speaking, his most effective contribution; for here his fiery speeches and articles and descriptions were based on actual facts and indisputable figures and convincing arguments.

Furthermore, the Chancery like a giant octopus spread its grip into every segment of society. Besides, English society had a mill-stone tied about its neck-- the antiquated,

inactive aristocratic group; and society was doomed unless it could shake off this weighty drag or rejuvenate it with young ideas. Unfortunately, this decadent ruling class, clinging like ivy to ancient concepts of government in a socially changed world, brought political power to bear on the whole country through , corruption, bribery, influence, and party machine politics and intrigue.

In another social field, the business world, especially of factory towns, caused to untold millions of workers heartless misery by starvation wages, sixteen-hour work-days, and child labor. All this was done in the name of patriotism, to make England the workshop of the world; but it was accomplished through an inhuman application of economic principles of supply and demand, of buying in the lowest market and selling in the highest, and through unjust mergers of manufacturers against laborers. On the other hand, trades unions, organized to protect labor, had, through unscrupulous leaders, caused needless strikes, delays, and shutdowns, and had used pressure and unjust measures to force unwilling laborers to join the union. This happened when the union leader, the rabble-rouser Slackbridge, stirred in the workers against Blackpool.

With regard to his democratic leanings, democracy was not the same concept for Dickens as it is for Americans. His illimitable faith in the people governed did not express that he wished all the members of the lower and middle classes in his day to have a vote or to take an active part in the political machinery. Besides his fear of mob rule, he was convinced that the people had no able leadership. Unfortunately, their leaders were usually blind guides, often looking for power, money, or an easy life, under the pretext of serving the interests of the classes. On the other hand, the people were not educated enough to vote for the right men; and they did not know enough about politics, parties, or government to take an active share. Therefore, the lower classes should be educated so that they would be able to have an intelligent voice in their unions, in their factories, and eventually in their country.

With regard to Parliamentary reform and criticism, Dickens exposed the most obvious and flagrant abuses: a the political hypocrisy and factional shams called the Party system. Party politics had lost its high aims and had become a mere game; all



politicians aimed at securing honors, offices, or rewards. The debates were conducted according to elaborate parliamentary procedure in high-sounding, elegant phrases; but they were merely sham-fight whose aim was to impress the people. Consequently, honest reformers despaired of getting any practical reforms through such a hypocritical procedure. Besides, the average Englishman considered politics merely a conflict between aristocratic families or wealthy interests; the welfare of the poor - was obviously only a secondary consideration. Furthermore, to add to the shameful hypocrisy, secret party funds were used to influence elections. Dedlock and Veneering made use of funds in their elections; even the manufacturers who got James Harthouse to represent them in Parliament were not above compromising means. Obviously, the political game was a closed corporation of the rich and no mirror of the poor man's desires.

But of positive platforms from Dickens there is not a word. Perhaps, as House suggests, the society he had in mind differed little from that of Robert Owen. After all, it was enough for him to point out the evil and sick surroundings; it was the work of government to pick the positive good and apply remedies. Dickens always worked within the framework of English society as it existed in his day, he never reached or advocated any revolutionary change in the constitution of government. He was interested in better laws for the poor and honest representatives of the people in Parliament. With those basic improvements, Dickens must would have been satisfied.

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DISSERTATION ON  
**DEPICTION OF TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE IN INDIAN ENGLISH PARTITION  
LITERATURE**

A PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of degree

**MASTERS OF ARTS**  
IN  
**ENGLISH LITERATURE**



**AMITY SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES**  
**AMITY UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct, I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referred all material that are not original to this depiction.

**ANIRUDDH SARAN**

**SIGNATURE**



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**ANIRUDDH SARAN**

**M.A. ENGLISH**

**SEMESTER 4**

## **TABLE OF CONTENT**

1. INTRODUCTION
2. DEPICTION OF TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE IN THE NOVEL OF BAPSI SIDHWA'S 'CRACKING INDIA'.
3. DEPICTION OF TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE IN IN THE NOVEL OF KUSHWANT SINGH' 'TRAIN TO PAKISTAN'.
4. DEPICTION OF TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE IN THE NOVEL OF BHISHM SAHAI 'TAMAS'.
5. CONCLUSION

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The partition of the Indian subcontinent on the communal basis into the sovereign states of India and Pakistan at the dawn of freedom, after a long period of slavery and trust with destiny, on August 15, 1947 created a hell lot of human killings on the earth which was marked as one of the bloodiest upheavals in the history of human race. It shocked mankind with its traumatic tales of anguish and dismay at man's wolfish cruelty to man in the name of religion. The birth of a new nation was actually the creation of two nations out of a many people, which resulted in an endless tale of destruction, massacre, loot, rape and inconceivable inhuman cruelties. The exchange of trainloads of dead bodies of refugees as a Gift from India and a Gift from Pakistan dominated the contemporary scene with horrendous stories of barbaric cruelties, communal fury and religious frenzy. It also produced the scenario of homelessness, rootlessness, the perpetual dishonour and irreparable loss, of shame and condemnation of displaced people.

Hindu Muslim and Sikhs who have lived together as one entity for centuries were brain washed that they all are now divided and they are all enemies now, they now have to leave there place where they have lived for ever. They started turning against each other and this thing turned into a huge massacre and people who escaped these thing went through other problems such as finding a new place where they can live and spend their rest of the life peace fully. When all these things were going on during the time of partition killing and looting the houses was not the only thing which took place but abduction of women and making them slaves to work in the and keeping them as a person which they never wanted to be is one of those bitter reality of

partition which not only traumatized the women who was raped and abducted but also their families who lost their loved ones and have to live with the truth that they might never meet them. Killing people all around the nation in the name of religion scared the people who were safe and knew that they won't be getting harmed. These types of people also decided to move to the other part of the country where they thought that they were safe as there were people of their own community and religion. Partition made friend turn against each other. People who said that they don't mind having a Hindus/Muslims friend killed in the name of religion and forgot all the brother hood and believed that the only thing that they can do now is kill because that is what everyone around them was doing and people whom they were killing were of different religion and that was the only thing which would give them a place in their own community and they won't stand as the odd one out. People who really helped other people from different community were also killed, they were called as the traitors and disowned their families and denied that they belong to their community. Youth were brought into this massive killing by telling them if you are not coming to take revenge then you are betraying your own country and your own religion, youths who were sitting back at their home were called as cowards. To get rid of these title people who were not into killing innocents people also game alongside with the murders.

These all things were represented by the writers of that era and they penned the real description of trauma and violence which people went through at the time of partition. There are many writers who explained the traumatic situation of partition in their own manner but motive was always the same, to make people understand the blunder of partition to make people understand the pain people went through, to make the readers feel the pain of families falling apart and how it feels like when the people we love suddenly get killed by people who they used to call as brothers and sisters, to understand the pain of how women who were abducted and were physically abused for the reason of she belonging to a different religion.

The dissertation deals with few such novel and short stories writers who have give us the description of the brutal reality of partition of India. These writers have their own ways of describing the traumatic situations of partition, few have actually shows us the act of violence taking place during partition and few have described the violence without even describing the actual incident. Whatever may be the writing style of the writers the real motive of writing was to describe the partition and to show the reads the real meaning violence. The writes have shown

us all kinds of emotions people had during partition, we see how narrow minded people became when they got the news of partition, and they have also shown us the other side of the community who didn't believed in killing or in any kind of other violence.

In the journey of showing the real condition of partition, these writers went through a lot of struggle. Few writers were put on court trials for writing the reality and making a controversy all over the country. People who were unaware of fact that these type of things happened during the time of partition they enlightened themselves through these novel and short stories. People soon started blaming the government and people who were the reason for the partition. The change in the thinking was brought thoughts these works, people started changing their minds and thoughts about having the emeriti against the different community.

The first chapter is about the representation of trauma and violence in the novel *Cracking India* by Bapsi Sidhwa, Sidhwa was born to Gujarati Parsi Zoroastrian parents Peshotan and Tehmina Bhandara in Karachi and later moved with her family to Lahore. She was two when she contracted polio which has affected her throughout her life and nine in 1947 at the time of Partition facts which would shape the character Lenny in her novel *Cracking India* as well as the background for her novel. She received her BA from Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore in 1957. She married at the age of 19 and moved to Bombay for five years before she divorced and remarried in Lahore with her present husband Noshir who is also Zoroastrian. She had three children in Pakistan before beginning her career as an author. One of her children is Mohur Sidhwa, who is a candidate for state representative in Arizona.

She currently resides in Houston, US. She describes herself as a "Punjabi-Parsi-Pakistani". Her first language is Gujarati, her second language is Urdu, and her third language is English. She can read and write best in English, but she is more comfortable talking in Gujarati or Urdu, and often translates literally from Gujarati or Urdu to English. She was awarded as Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard (1986) Visiting Scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Center, Bellagio, Italy, (1991) Sitara-i-Imtiaz, (19910, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts) Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award (1994) Premio Mondello for Foreign Authors for *Water* (2007) Inducted in the Zoroastrian Hall of Fame (2000).

She was not only famous for her novel *Cracking India* but because of some of her other works like *Their Language of Love*: published by Readings Lahore (2013, Pakistan.) *Jungle Wala Sahib* (Translation) (Urdu) : Published by Readings Lahore (2012, Pakistan) *City of Sin and Splendour : Writings on Lahore* (2006, US) *Water A Novel* (2006, US and Canada) *Bapsi Sidhwa Omnibus* (2001, Pakistan) *An American Brat* (1993, U.S.; 1995, India) *Cracking India* (1991, U.S.; 1992, India; originally published as *Ice Candy Man*, 1988, England) *The Bride* (1982, England; 1983;1984, India; published as *The Pakistani Bride*, 1990 US and 2008 US) *The Crow Eaters* (1978, Pakistan; 1979 &1981, India; 1980, England; 1982, US)

She was awarded as Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard (1986) Visiting Scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Center, Bellagio, Italy, (1991) Sitara-i-Imtiaz, (19910, Pakistan's highest national honour in the arts) Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award (1994) Premio Mondello for Foreign Authors for *Water* (2007) Inducted in the Zoroastrian Hall of Fame (2000).

The novel is about the partition on India into two nations India and Pakistan. The novel begins in Lahore during World War II. In Chapter One, Lenny has a cast on her leg due to polio and enjoys spending time with her ayah, whom she and the novel simply call Ayah. Lenny often goes with Ayah to sit in the park by Queen Victoria's statue; there, she observes Ayah's relationships with her many male admirers, who come from all kinds of religious and social backgrounds. Lenny's brother Adi is born, and the family celebrates British victory in World War II through a Parsee religious service.

Ayah describes some of the other people in the household, including Papoo, the sweeper's daughter who is routinely abused by her mother. She also describes Imam Din, and goes with him to his village 40 miles outside Lahore. Back at home, Lenny and her brother eavesdrop on a dinner party where the adults discuss Gandhi and the possibility of an independent India. Lenny goes with her mother to see Gandhi, who is visiting Lahore. One day, Imam Din's family arrives in Lahore, saying that they have been told by the Indian military to evacuate and move to Pakistan.

The family's ground staffs chases after Hari, the gardener, and succeeds in ripping off his dhoti, or loincloth. Ayah is spending more time with Masseur, one of her suitors. One day Lenny, upset by the discussions around the creation of Pakistan, rips one of her dolls down the

seam. Around Lenny's birthday, the creation of Pakistan is announced. Many of the Hindu and Sikh families leave the neighbourhood, while others convert either to Islam or Christianity. Millions of Muslim refugees arrive in the city. Papoo is married off to a middle-aged man. When a mob swarms the house demanding all non-Muslims, Lenny inadvertently reveals Ayah's hiding place. Ice-candy Man, one of her admirers, carries her off.

The family gets a new ayah, named Hamida. Hamida once lived in the rehabilitation centre for refugee women next door. Meanwhile, the narrative presents Imam Din's great-grandson's story of his escape from India to Lahore. Lenny is confused by the meaning of the term, "fallen woman."

Lenny and her cousin are convinced they keep seeing Ayah everywhere. One day, they learn that Ayah is living, possibly as a prostitute, with Ice-candy Man in the red light district. Lenny and her godmother, who she calls Godmother, go to visit her and Ice-candy Man, who is now her husband. Ice-candy Man defends himself as a poet and his relationship with Ayah. Godmother promises to help Ayah get away from Ice-candy Man and to be returned to her family. She sends in the police to take Ayah, who is then delivered to the rehabilitation centre next door. Ayah refuses to visit them as she is ashamed. Ice-candy Man patrols the road outside where Ayah is living, until one day she is sent back to her family. When Ayah Leaves, Ice-candy Man leaves Lahore as well.

The second chapter picks out the elements of trauma and violence in the novel *Train to Pakistan* written by Kushwanth Singh. (Born, 2 February 1915 – 20 March 2014) was an Indian author, lawyer, diplomat, journalist and politician. His experience in the 1947 Partition of India inspired him to write *Train to Pakistan* in 1956 (made into film in 1998), which became his most well-known novel.

Kushwanth Singh was educated in New Delhi, and studied law at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and King's College London. After working as a lawyer in Lahore Court for eight years, he joined the Indian Foreign Service upon the Independence of India from British Empire in 1947. He was appointed journalist in the All India Radio in 1951, and then moved to the Department of Mass Communications of UNESCO at Paris in 1956. These last two careers encouraged him to pursue a literary career. As a writer, he was best known for his trenchant secularism, humour,

sarcasm and an abiding love of poetry. His comparisons of social and behaviour characteristics of Westerners and Indians are laced with acid wit. He served as the editor of several literary and news magazines, as well as two newspapers, through the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1980-1986 he served as Member of Parliament in Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament of India. Kushwanth Singh was bestowed with the Padma Bhushan in 1974. But he returned the award in 1984 in protest against Operation Blue Star in which the Indian Army raided Amritsar. In 2007 he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award in India. He was honoured with many awards Rockefeller Grant, 1966

Padma Bhushan, Government of India (1974) (He returned the decoration in 1984 in protest against the Union government's siege of the Golden Temple, Amritsar) Honest Man of the Year, Sulabh International (2000) Punjab Rattan Award, The Government of Punjab (2006) Padma Vibhushan, Government of India (2007), 'All-India Minorities Forum Annual Fellowship Award' by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav (2012) Lifetime achievement award by Tata Literature Live! The Mumbai Litfest in 2013 Fellow of King's College London in January 2014.

The story of the of the 'Train to Pakistan' represent the trauma and violence in a manner in which it makes us think about the condition of people in during that time in a whole different way. He has shown partition from every class point of view and helps reader understand what they might have gone through. The story is about a fictional village named Mano Majra; it was one of those villages during the partition in which Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs still lived in peace. There was no effect of partition and enmity, until a train lode of dead bodies arrives in Mano Majra from Pakistan. To maintain the peace in the village the news of the arrival of the dead bodies was not spread in the common people, but whiles the cremation of the dead bodies the villagers come to know about the dead train arrival from Pakistan and the riots which was going around outside the village.

Sikhs in the village got outrageous as people from their community were getting killed and Muslims were easily migrating to Pakistan without any harm. Sikhs started gathering people who could help them in massacre in the name of religion. They planned to kill the person who were going to Pakistan in the train, but failed because of Jugga, who was send by Hukum Chand. Chand's intentions to send him was to save guard he love Haseena, but Jugga's intention to fail



there plan was to save her beloved Nooran who was a Muslim and was leaving for Pakistan with her blind father.

The story tells us about the changing mid-sets of the people with time and how their thoughts were changing because of this politics going all over the nation. All the feeling of brotherhood in between Hindus and Muslims vanished into the tin air, now all what people cared about was how they can kill more people belonging from the different community. All they wanted was to increase the count of kill and making sure that they are killing more people than the other community. The readers also finds out that the crimes that were taking place during the time of partition were not only because of the religious hate but also to take advantage of looting money from people of their own community. The mentality of people was so cheap that all they wanted was to take advantage of the situation; they never had any sympathy for any one body around them.

It is a fictional narrative story which depicts the reality of trauma and violence in the most realistic manner and bound the reader with the story. The chapter is about the representation and analysis of narrative style of Train to Pakistan.

The third chapter is about the depiction of trauma and violence in Bhisham Sahani 'Tamas' Bhisham Sahani was born on 8 August 1915 in Rawalpindi, in undivided Punjab. He earned a master's degree in English literature from Government College in Lahore, and a Ph.D from Punjab University, Chandigarh in 1958.

He joined the struggle for Indian independence. At the time of Partition he was an active member of the Indian National Congress, and organized relief work for the refugees when riots broke out in Rawalpindi in March 1947. In 1948 Bhisham Sahni started working with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), an organization with which his brother, Balraj Sahni was already closely associated. He worked both as an actor and a director. At a later stage, he directed a drama 'Bhoot Gari'. This was adapted for the stage by film director, screenwriter, novelist, and a journalist Khwaja Ahmed Abbas. As an actor he appeared in several films, including Saeed Mirza's Mohan Joshi Hazir Ho! (1984), Tamas (1986), Kumar Shahani's Kasba (1991), Bernardo Bertolucci's Little Buddha (1993) and Aparna Sen's Mr. and Mrs. Iyer (2002).

As a result of his association with IPTA, he left the Congress and joined the Communist Party. Thereafter, he left Bombay for Punjab where he worked briefly as a lecturer, first in a college at Ambala and then at Khalsa College, Amritsar. At this time he was involved in organizing the Punjab College Teachers' Union and also continued with IPTA work. In 1952 he moved to Delhi and was appointed Lecturer in English at Delhi College (now Zakir Husain College), University of Delhi.

The story of Tamas is about the conflicts that took place in different places of India in the name of religion, ugly incidences were taking place in the name of religious fights. Tamas is interestingly a poignant novel about the terrible events that took place during the partition of India. It is based on actual events, and authentically follows the tragedies that unfold in the town after a pig, considered unclean by the Muslims, is ground slaughtered on the steps of the local mosque. These types of things were common in that part and it led to a situation where people started migrating from Pakistan to India and India to Pakistan.

The dissertation ends with a conclusion where we see all the reasons of why these catastrophic things took place and how it traumatised the whole nation.

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Depiction of Trauma and Violence in the novel of Bapsi Sidhwa's 'Cracking India'.**

Cracking India by Sidhwa's American publishers, Milkweed Editions (1991) is her third novel. It is her most serious, political novel till now. The novel also came to the public with the name of 'Ice-Candy-Man', on the name of a very major character in the novel who also played a very important role in the story. It is the only novel in which she uses a child narrator who is polio stricken. The story is told in the present tense and first person through the voice of a young girl Lenny, a girl who is trying to understand the meaning of partition and why everyone is so

worried about it. The primary focus is on human struggle and the history of the partition struggle becomes secondary. The novel examines to prevent the logic of partition as an offshoot of fundamentalism sparked by hardening communal attitudes. The novel set in Pre-Partition India, in Lahore. This is a novel of upheaval which includes a cast of characters from all communities. There are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Parsis. So multiple perspectives on partition from the affected communities emerge as the novel which shows the trauma of different communities of where they will be standing if the partition takes place.

The historical background for the novel is as following. When India gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, the nation was divided into separate countries: India, the Hindu homeland, and Pakistan, the Muslim homeland. This was the political solution to a long-standing religious conflict. To carry out this millions were forced to move, and during this mass migration, hundreds of thousands died not because of the lack of resources that they did not had but because of the hate that was created by the British rulers in the minds of people. People were brainwashed that Hindus and Muslims who had lived together for centuries were there enemies and the best way to get rid of them was to kill them for no reason at all. People started killing each other in the name of religion. Those who survived also suffered - becoming refugees, losing fortunes and homes, succumbing to hunger and disease and countless women were raped and then punished, their husbands and families rejected them as polluted. Much of the bloodshed and anguish took place on the Punjabi plains in northern India, a rich farmland intersected by five rivers. Lahore, a major city in the Punjab province and once known as “the Paris of India”, was given to Pakistan. Because of the city’s strategic position, it turned into a massive refugee camp.

The novel gives a glimpse into events of turmoil on the Indian sub-continent during partition. Historic truth is only a backdrop of the novel and the personal fate of the Ice-Candy-Man comes into the focus. The Ice-Candy-Man is a close associate and admirer of an eighteen-year-old ayah working in a Parsi household to look after a polio afflicted child, Lenny. It is through Lenny that we come to know of the action of the novel and the seriousness of the narration is harmed. She narrates the story of her changing world with sophistication and wonder. “It is an adult that speaks through the child’s memory and keeps the reader on guard and creates a sense of impressions that the child is capable of reminiscing”.

Lenny's constant companion is the Ayah and not her parents. The other characters close to her are her Godmother, and Godmother's younger sister 'slave sister,' and Lenny's brother Adi, a year younger than her. The Ayah is central to the story and the object of everybody's desire. In the words of Lenny:

“Ayah is chocolate-brown and short. Everything  
about her is eighteen years old and round and  
plump. Even her face. Full-blown cheeks,  
parenting mouth and smooth forehead curve to  
form a circle with her head. Her hair is pulled  
back in a tight knot.”(CI 15)

Ayah has thirteen admirers, who wish to have ayah in different ways in their lives. Among them are 'the Fallattis Hotel' Cook, Imam Din, the Government House gardener, Hari, the Chairman, the pathan knife-sharpener, the butcher, the puny Sikh Zoo attendant, the masseur, and the Ice-Candy-Man.

Chinaman sells embroidered bosky silks from door to door; the Pathan sharpens knives on his machine powered by a pedal, and above all the Masseur who has “invented oil that will grow hair on bald heads. It is composed of monkey and fish glands, mustard oil, pearl dust and an assortment of herbs”. He courts the Ayah by quoting the Urdu couplets of Ghalib and Faiz. Ice-Candy-Man member of the same group is a man of varied interests. He is a Muslim street vendor drawn like many other men by the magnetic beauty of the Ayah. Lenny observes the transition of the Ice-Candy-Man through the roles of an ice cream vendor, bird seller, cosmic connector to Allah via telephone and pimp.

Ayah is at the centre of Lenny's scheme of things and her amorous adventures become central to Lennie's perceptions. The nexus between Lenny's world of childish pleasures and innocence and the fast-changing ambience is realised. The covetous glances of the Ayah's admirers including the Masseur and Ice-Candy-Man awaken her to sexuality and passion and give her a glimpse of the adult life. Initially her world is made secure by strong and doing

women like Rodabai and Ayah. For Lenny, the process of growing up, of seeking to understand the adult world is largely an attempt to make sense of the senseless events of the partition.

Lenny's development from childhood to adolescence coincides with India's independence from Britain and the partitioning of India into India and Pakistan. Lenny's passionate love of Ayah and the loss of innocence that accompanies their changing relationship and building a thought of getting away from her puts a lot of trauma in her mind, through the partition is an energetic centre to the plot. From the lap of her beautiful Ayah, little Lenny observes the clamorous horrors of partition.

Cracking India is, so far, the only novel written by a Parsi on the theme of partition. The novel shows in the beginning the non-committal attitude of the Parsi community towards the flux in which the various communities of India found themselves in the beginning of the twentieth century. It distils the love-hate relationship of the Hindus and Muslims through the consciousness and point of view of Lenny.

The novel sets the tone and of the events in the very beginning. The tone of neutrality manifest in the narrator - character Lenny, in describing the situation of the partition and contribution of Parsies in the division of India and Pakistan on basis of religion, narrator tells us that Parsies are on the neutral side. This this was cleared to us in a scene where Lenny's father and mothers invites Mr and Mrs Singh and Head of Police department and British Office Mr Rogers and his wife. They have a conversation on the division process and what is Parsi's point of view on it. On this Lenny's father says that "Let whoever wishes rule? Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land!" He said that because he was afraid and aware of the fact that if partition takes pace then there will be a brutal fight in between the Hindus and Muslims, for the sake of their lives Parsies made it very clear to the nation that they will stand on the neutral position and will not leave their home in which they had lived in for ages. In this scene and particularly in this statement that we get from Lenny's father we see fear of losing home and fear of getting killed for no reason by some other community. The trauma of violence which was to take place in Lahore remained in the minds of all the people were making turning against each other.

When a patient comes to Col. Bharucha for the treatment and when he comes to know that the child is having cough from six days and still the father of the child does not know about it the doctor scolds him:

‘Why didn’t you bring him earlier?’ the doctor roars.

‘I’m sorry, sir,’ the man says. ‘She didn’t tell me’. ‘She didn’t tell you? Are you a father or a barber? And you all want Pakistan! How will you govern a country when you don’t know what goes on in your own house?’(CI 38)

As the action of the novel unfolds, we confront a pattern of communal peace where the three communities - the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs - are still in harmony with one another. But the intimations of an imminent death and destruction lurk in the symbolic significance of Lenny’s nightmares at the break of dawn. In one of these nightmares she faces an immaculate Nazi soldier “coming to get me (Lenny) on his motorcycle.”

The nightmare symbolizes the impending vivisection of India which was as cruel as the dismemberment of that child. Lenny’s lack of pain, however, is suggestive of her community’s indifference on account of its aloofness from the religion-political conclusion. This chilling horror that she feels over no one being concerned by what is happening adds up the lack of concern on the part of the authorities to check the unbridled display of barbarism during partition.

Another nightmare that Lenny has is that of a Zoo lion breaking loose and mercilessly mauling her. The hungry lion which invariably appears at the crack of dawn seems to be a symbol of the flood of mutual hatred that the dawn of Indian Independence released to cause havoc to the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs on both sides of the border. With these three nightmares that Lenny sees the novelist prepares the reader for the brutal and bloody pattern of communal discord that became very obvious during partition.

Underlying the basic unity among the various religions of India is the Hindu Ayah and her multi-religious throng of admirers, Sharbat Khan, Imam Din, Sher Singh, and the Ice-Candy-

Man. The Ayah is indiscriminating towards all and it is in this that she becomes a symbol of the composite culture that India is. Interestingly enough, as the events roll ahead with a restless speed, the group of Ayah's admirers begins to dwindle. A similar symbol of the unity of Indian religions is provided by the visitors to the Queen's park where men of all religions and creeds rub shoulders with one another. The park presents a picture of different religious groups keeping away from one another's company. The passions run high even when men of different religious communities talk and chat with one another.

As the setting sun of the British Empire gathers its parting rays before sinking into oblivion, the lumpen elements around Ayah meet less frequently at the Queen's Park and more at the 'Wrestler's Restaurant.' The geographical shift in their get-together is a premonition of the emergence of the pattern of communal discord. The British Queen, whose statue stands abandoned in the park, is soon going to relinquish her sovereignty over India and the Wrestler's Restaurant to which all flock now is a symbol of the wrestling ring that partition is going to raise on the joint borders of India and Pakistan while discussing the fate of Punjab, the Masseur hopes that if the Punjab Province is divided, Lahore will go to Pakistan. The Government House gardener hopes that this will not come true as the Hindus have much of their money invested there. At this the Sikh Zoo attendant, Sher Singh shouts:

“And what about us? The Sikhs hold more

Farmland in the Punjab than the Hindus and

Muslims put together!”(CI 65)

When the Masseur advises Sher Singh that it would be good for their community to cast their lot with one country rather than be divided into two halves and lose thereby their “clout in either place.” By this Sher Singh, like the lions he tends, turns on him and asks him not to worry about their clout and that it will be alright. Seeing Sher Singh in a high temper, the butcher, with his professional mercilessness, cites the English, who call the Sikhs a “bloody nuisance.” At this Sher Singh and the “restaurant owning Wrestler” threaten the Muslims with dire consequences in the event of Partition. The verbal skirmishes between the butcher and the Masseur on one side and the Government House gardener, Sher Singh, and the restaurant-owner on the other, show how deep the pattern of communal discord among the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs has become.



Lenny used to visit a village called Pir Pindo, she enjoyed going there and spending time with people outside her house. The patterns of communal relations between Lenny's first and second visit to Pir Pindo are, therefore poles apart. While during her first visit, the Sikhs and the Muslims had pledged their lives to save each other from any intruders, during her second visit, that enthusiasm has evaporated in the heat of the violence that the Akalis hold out for anyone comes in the way of their resolve. It is in this atmosphere that the Akali leader, Master Tara Singh, visits Lahore. Addressing a vast congregation outside the Assembly Chambers he shouts 'Pakistan Mordabad!' The Muslims, in turn, shout "so? We'll play Holi-with-their-blood". The Muslims of Pir Pindo that fell on the Indian side of the border are subjected to mass slaughter by the marauding gangs of the Akalis from the surrounding Sikh villages, the Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore undergo a similar harrowing experience. Their fate gets blighted when a train-load of corpses comes from Gurdaspur to Lahore.

The Ice-Candy-man's relations lie dead in the heap of corpses in the ill-fated-train. The Ice-Candy-Man learns that the dead were all Muslims. After this he wants to take revenge against to Sikhs. He now looks with hatred on his long standing friend Sher Singh, compelling him to flee from Lahore. In this vitiated communal atmosphere, insanity prevails as ordinary men lose their rationality. Such degradation is best exemplified in the rage of Ice-Candy-Man who says: "I'll tell you to your face - I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies of my sisters and a bag full of Muslim women Brest on that train from Gurdaspur that night I went mad, I tell you, I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus and Sikhs I had known all my life! I hated their guts". Revenge becomes the major motivation for the Ice-Candy-Man and his friends. The role of humour and the consequent violence as depicted by Bapsi Sidhwa is compact and realistic.

The condition of Lahore were getting even worse, The distinction between the two becomes marked when a gang of Muslim hooligans comes to abduct Ayah Imam Din goes to the extent of telling a lie about Ayah, "Allah-Ki-Kasam, she's gone." In contrast, the Ice-Candy-Man not only abducts her but throws her to the wolves of passion in a Kotha. He also kills, out of jealousy, his co-religionist, the Masseur.

Thus, Bapsi Sidhwa shows that the defenders of Islam who turned Lahore into a burning city were not even true proponents of Islam. Imam Din's character therefore, shines in the novel amidst all the darkness and terror affected by religious fanatics like the Ice-Candy-Man. Through Lenny's eyes, Sidhwa sums up the gradual Islamisation of Pakistan as a gradual lessening of colour, a growing monotone. When Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were together, there was colour and gaiety, but with the riots and the vanishing of the Hindus and Sikhs, the place becomes drab. The Hindu, Sari-Clad Ayah, her midriff showing, has been replaced by the Muslim Hameed, covered modestly from head to foot. The colour and the charm have disappeared. The violence in Lahore has, however, changed Lenny's relationship with Ayah as well. Abducted, raped, forcibly married to the Ice-Candy- Man, renamed Mumtaz, Ayah has lost her zest for life.

The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) attempts inter-community marriage between the Hindu Ayah and her Muslim admirer, Ice-Candy- Man who becomes a victim of the communal passions of partition. Initially the Ice-Candy-Man is part of the frenzied mob, which abducts Ayah and keeps her in the brothels of Hira Mandi. Later he repents and attempts to make amends. But love is shown as powerless. Ayah has revulsion for her newly acquired Muslim identity. The Ice-Candy-Man now a "deflated poet, a collapsed peddler," follows her to Amritsar in vain. Their relationship is serrated forever, another victim of communal uncontrolled and the chaos of partition. In this novel Bapsi Sidhwa implies that love does not conquer when communal and obscurantist passions are aroused.

The most tragic aspect of the abuse of Ayah is that it is set off by Lenny's truth-infected tongue. It is Lenny who betrays Ayah to the mob which had come looking for her at Lenny's house. Taken in by the blandishments of the Ice-Candy-Man, 'Don't be scared Lenny Baby ... I'll protect Ayah with my life!,' Lenny gives away her hiding place and sees the Ice-Candy-Man change before her eyes and knows that 'I have betrayed Ayah,'

One of the most memorable creations of the novel *Cracking India* is Ice Candy Man whose versatility manifests in the numerous roles he plays, from Popsicle-seller to Allah's messenger. His subsequent transportation and penitence further attest to the chameleon - like quality of the emotions of a people and their gods.

The change from the pattern of communal discord to that of reconciliation is, however, traced in the person of the Ice-Candy-Man. Though his role in the violent events of partition is painted in lurid colours, his growing passion and love for Ayah is shown to redeem him from the morass of senseless communal hatred. From a rough and rustic man, the Ice-Candy-Man becomes a person of refined sensibility. When Ayah is taken away from him and sent to Amritsar, he follows her across the border. His willingness to leave the land that he so much cherishes, for the sake of his Hindu beloved is not only an example of self-sacrifice but also symbolic of a future rapprochement between the two warring communities - the Muslims and Hindus. Thus, the analysis of the changing pattern of relations shows a pattern of communal peace between the Hindus and Sikhs, on the one hand, and the Muslims on the other.

Cracking India includes among all of the ingredients, a brilliant sense of humour as well. Sidhwa explains, "Laughter does so many things for us. It has the quality of exposing wrongs and getting rid of anger and excitement. The novel deals with a wide variety of topics including several analyses of Sidhwa's subtexts on male/female authority issues. The novel calls to recollection the pain of old, caked wounds so that they may finally be healed. As the other title of the novel, Cracking India suggests, to crack India is at once to fragment, to dismember, as it is to continue what lies below and within. One involves showing and the other, telling - both of which are skilfully combined in the novel. The scenes of devastation accompanying the partition are shown without excessive comment; the trauma and violence is permitted to reveal it. The inner realities and the historical background are commented on driving home the combination of violent contradictions, distortions, and heroism that pervade the novel. Sidhwa, at her best, goes beyond the trauma and violence of the partition to record instances of courage, of compassion, of sacrifice, and of honour.

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### Chapter 3

#### **Depiction of Trauma and Violence in the novel of Kushwanth Singh's 'Train to Pakistan'**

Kushwanth Singh was among the earliest Indian writers to take up the traumatic issue of India's partition and dealt with it in an easy and clear manner. He handles the theme of partition deftly exploiting it both intellectually and emotionally. Singh does not question partition directly, but he criticizes it severely.

Train to Pakistan brings out a moving account of the bloody partition, in the small Indian village Mano Majra on the border of India and Pakistan. The village is situated on the banks of river Sutlej and is predominantly a Sikh village. Sikhs and Muslims had lived there for generations in peace and harmony. Majority of the Sikhs were the Landowners and the Muslims were their tenants. The only Hindu family was Ramlal's, who was the affluent money lender. Ramlal gets robbed and killed by a band of dacoits under the leadership of Malli. But the police arrest the usual suspect Jugga Singh, a local dacoit. At the time of the incident, Jugga Singh was with his Muslim beloved, Nooran in the fields. Jugga Singh was considered to be the strong suspect because of his former connections with the bandits, outlaws and the dacoits. Amidst the chaos of partition, a European educated young man with an ambiguous name of Iqbal arrives to the village and heads towards the Gurudwara to ask for a place to stay. Later, he too gets arrested in connection with the murder of Ramlal. The simple and humble residents of Mano Majra are undisturbed by partition and Independence till a train from Lahore silently comes over the bridge at an unusual time carrying loads of dead Sikhs. The people have loved each other and they swear not to harm their friends, neighbours and brothers. Very soon, the Mano Majra's are influenced by outsiders and get corrupt enough to turn towards their old friends.

After burning all the dead bodies brought by the train to Pakistan, the villagers witness another train that arrives in a similar manner, but this time filled with more horror. The entire village goes into a state of trauma and because of the arrival of the trains Mano Majra is introduced to unexpected mass migration of people. The earlier rumours of communal violence turned into reality. Plots were hatched and tales were spread about the mass deaths and

destruction in the neighbouring towns and villages. Friends became enemies and the long lasting tradition of brotherhood and harmony vanished due to the fights going out in both the nations. Every Sikh in the village spoke to their Muslim brother with deep rooted suspicion, suspicion of hate that might have taken place in their hearts. The Sikhs were even ready to kill their Muslim brothers. Helpless Muslims decided to move to the refugee camps which would later on take them to Pakistan safely. The Hindus and Sikhs decided to take revenge upon the Muslims by killing all the refugees on board in a train fleeing India and heading to Lahore. Jugga Singh comes to know about this conspiracy and decides to rescue all the passengers including his beloved, Nooran. He changes the entire plot at the cost of his own life. The passengers escape a terrible fate and reach their destination without any serious harm.

The novel gives a visual of how locally and individually, the villagers of Mano Majra begin to change their mind sets after the arrival of the trains carrying a lot of dead Sikhs and of the Sikh refugees from Pakistan. The once unified Mano Majra's are separated into ethnic groups. Hindus and Sikhs stood on one side and the Muslims on the other. The plot to kill all the Muslim refugees shows the amount of hatred and madness that had collected in the minds of the innocent villagers.

In the opening of the novel, Kushwanth Singh briefs about the Indian Independence by telling on the weather. It was the summer of 1947 and lot drier than the other summers. By mentioning about the season, Singh tells us the effect of the partition, the outcome of Independence, which has cut one great nation into two halves, spreading out tension in every single home and exploding into bloody riot. The friends turn into everlasting enemies and men with humanity turned into beasts, seeking blood of their own people on both the sides of the newly formed Indo-Pak border.

The fractured Independence that India attained did not have any effect on the people living in country side. Mano Majra was also one such remote village, which did not bother about Independence and its effects. Perhaps, the people had a different opinion about their status if India attained Independence. When Iqbal, the social reformer poses a question before the Village Lambardar, "Why, don't you people want to be free? Do you want to remain slaves all your lives?" The Lambardar after a long silence answered:

Freedom must be a good thing. But what we will get out of it? Educated

people like you, Babu Sahib, will get the jobs the English had. Will we get more lands or more buffaloes? No, the Muslim said, Freedom is for the educated people who fought for it. We were slaves of English, now we will be slaves of the Educated Indians... or the Pakistanis.

In the circumstances created by partition, the affected people instead of getting more land or buffaloes lost whatever land and cattle they possessed and they all had to flee to their new destination for survival. The people in the countryside did not value the Independence. People now had this mind-set that they were better off under the British. At least there was security. Independence through partition meant killing and robbing. The people in the countryside felt that the real beneficiaries of freedom were thieves, robbers and cut-throats. When Iqbal questions to Lambardar as to what is going to happen now, the Lambardar answered, "We know what is happening. The winds of destruction are blowing across the land. All we hear is killing. The only ones who enjoy freedom are thieves, robbers and cut throats."

Independence not only divided one country, but it also parted the ways of life, manners and attitudes. It also broke a long-held friendship and created permanent enmity. It induced thirst for blood of the other. Kushwanth Singh portrays Mano Majra as bright, contented and calm during the times of riots while most of the other villages across the country were going through the burden of communalism. The Muslims and Sikhs were happily ignorant of the brutal riots that were setting a blaze the entire nation. The Mano Majra's were unaffected still and stuck to the ideas of Gandhi's brotherhood, even though Gandhi himself was then walking the bloody paths of the riot inflicted India. Nevertheless, Mano Majra was a typical village where people belonging to various religions lived in peace and harmony. Sikhs and Muslims, more or less were equally distributed in the village. Though religiously distinct, they all worshipped the common deity. Hindu, Sikh and Muslim or pseudo-Christians – repair secretly whenever they were in special need of blessing. Imam Baksh and Meet Singh were the two religious heads of the Muslims and Sikhs respectively. Both the Muslims and the Sikhs loved their clerics. Imam Baksh had endeared himself to the villagers as 'Chacha/Uncle' and Meet Singh was the 'Bhai' to everyone. The two priests waited for each other to make the first call for prayers in the morning. Meet Singh says to the social worker, Iqbal: "everyone is welcome to his religion. Here next door is a Muslim mosque. When I pray to my guru, Uncle Imam Baksh calls to Allah..."

Mano Majra had functional Integration, and indeed there are tens of thousands of villagers like Mano Majra, where the law has always been peaceful co-existence, and not communal strife. It is only after the arrival of the train which contained the dead bodies, the village slowly advances towards disintegration and the age old harmony gets shattered. Even then the majority Sikhs of the village did not encourage any harm to the Muslims, though communal passion had been prevailing in the atmosphere.

Communal riots take place when a person is caught hold of religious fervour. It is a known truth that communalism never involved people's real-life demands or interests. If propagated rightly that their religion itself were in danger, the fear complex can be fully aroused and can be put to a situation of frenzy. The Sikhs were all agog that their religion would be at stake and this fear led them to act immediately against the Muslims.

If the communal politics has to be moved to the level of popular movement, some kind of emotionalizing factor is needed. Even the educated youth could not resist, but has to get into the passion of his community. There cannot be difference between the youth of the village and the youth of other parts of the nation in this matter. In fact, it was the village youth who fumed and fretted that the Sikhs had sent the Muslims alive. Such youth only symbolize false religiosity. The uneducated peasantry group of Sikhs belonging to Mano Majra succumbed to the instigations made by the educated. The words Hindu, Sikh and Muslims were constantly used to infuriate the Sikh peasantries. "...for each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two...". Such words not only infuriated their minds but it also clouded their reason. The news that the Muslims of their village had already left did not give them any relief. They did not want the Muslims to go unharmed, and thus they try to execute a plan where they can kill a great amount of Muslims.

This is just the addition to the nightmares that the villagers of Mano Majra had to undergo in the next few weeks in the wake of the Partition. The number of events which contained of violence followed each other rapidly in the summer of 1947, leaving the villagers totally helpless and disoriented. Bhai Meet Singh, the priest of the Gurudwara, very aptly sums up what the villagers went through towards the end of the novel. Updating Iqbal on the recent events in Mano Majra, the Bhai tells him: What has been happening? Ask me what has not been happening. Train containing the dead bodies came to Mano Majra. We burned one lot and buried



another. The river was flooded with corpses. Muslims left the village, and in their place, refugees have come from Pakistan.

When such a community of people who seem to have no dealings with the political life of the nation whatsoever are suddenly pulled down the people into political cataclysm, it is but natural that it would not register on them at first. As Singh shows in the novel, it is through the medium of the refugees that the people of Mano Majra first come to know of the violence just outside the confines of their little world, a violence that was spilling over and now spreading into the heart of their own village. When Meet Singh expresses his discomfort with the idea of being entrusted with the place where no Muslim were left in the villagers' property, saying that it might later lead to misunderstandings between friends, the Sikh officer replies, you are quite right:

“Bhaiji, there is some danger of being misunderstood. One should never touch another's property; one should never look at another's woman. One should just let others take one's goods and sleep with one's sisters. The only way people like you will understand anything is by being sent over to Pakistan; have your sisters and mothers raped in front of you, have your clothes taken off, and be sent back with a kick and spit on your behinds”(TP54).

This is actually a blow that is even worse than the evacuation of the Muslims. The villagers of Mano Majra thought their friends and neighbours were reaching safety and for that reason, the evacuation meant something good to them. But what the Sikh officer was talking of was a scenario devoid of all sanity and humanity. Gradually, the novel records the progressive darkening of their vision as they are stripped, one by one, of all their illusions. And nowhere does this transpire better than in the actual act of the evacuation of the Muslim inhabitants of Mano Majra.

The Muslims of the village of Mano Majra thought that they were going to the neighbouring Chandannagar camp only for a few days, locking their houses and leaving their cattle under the care of the Sikhs. But soon they learn that though they will be staying at the Chandannagar camp for a few days, afterwards they will have to leave for Pakistan. The truth now strikes them that they have been moved to go to Pakistan and not to halt and then come back to Mano Majra once the storm has blown over. But an even greater shock awaits them, and this is

the realization that they cannot take their belongings with them, and that they can only take what they can carry in their hands. They are forced to leave everything not under the care of their fellow villagers, as they had thought, but in the custody of Malli, the dacoit of the neighbouring village and his gang and a few refugees, and everybody knew what these people would do with their belongings. Still, a pretension is kept up by the police that their goods will be returned to them in due course, and so, a mock list is made of the items left behind. Both the Muslim and Sikh officers involved in this operation know, of course, that the Muslims are going to Pakistan forever and that nothing will remain of their belongings, which will either be looted or destroyed.

Hence in a matter of hours, the world of the Muslims in Mano Majra falls apart forever. They are stripped of all their hopes, begin to realize that they are about to lose everything, and yet are powerless to do anything about this. In a unique way, this ironic building up of loss is dramatized in the novel, showing the utter helplessness and trauma of ordinary people overwhelmed by historical forces that are simply beyond their control, or even their comprehension. But the most poignant part of the entire episode is of course the farewell, or rather the lack of it. As the narrator says:

“There was no time to make arrangements. There was no time even to say goodbye. Truck engines were started. Army soldiers rounded up the Muslims, drove them back to the carts for a brief minute or two, and then on to the trucks. In the confusion of the rain, mud and soldiers herding the peasants about with the muzzles of their stun guns sticking in their backs, the villagers saw little of each other. All they could do was to shout their last farewells from the trucks... The Sikhs watched them till they were out of sight. They wiped the tears off their faces and turned back to their homes with heavy hearts” (*TP 73*).

Kushwanth Singh symbolizes Iqbal, as a replica of the cunning political leaders in the garb of socialism who literally comes to Mano Majra not to induce Communal carnage or to stop the riots, but to watch the drama at Mano Majra. He is so sarcastic and nihilistic in approach, which brings down the spirit of his mission, which was to keep the village unaffected by communalism. He makes mockery at the entire nation’s problem as an off shoot of the annual birth rate. Towards the end of the novel he finds that no corner of the northern frontier of India was free from the infection of communal virus. In a fit of emotion he even thinks of sacrificing himself to avert the attack on Muslims heading towards Pakistan planned by the Sikhs. But for

him sacrifice was futile and he felt that he won't be there to witness and admire the supreme act. Being a reformer Iqbal had a proclivity to interpret every situation in terms of violence for the sake of grabbing political and economic stability. Kushwanth Singh portrays Iqbal as a member of a higher social class, a snob and a fraud.

Kushwanth Singh registers the rhetoric of revenge through dishonouring Women that was voiced at from all the three communities. The conversation between the Sub- inspector and the magistrate Hukum Chand is pertinent. The conversation between them throws light on a much regretted but underplayed aspect of partition violence. The sub inspector says:

“Sometimes sir, one cannot restrain oneself. What do the Gandhi caps in Delhi know about the Punjab? What is happening on the other side in Pakistan does not matter to them. They have not lost their homes and belongings, they haven't had their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters raped and murdered in the street” (*TP 78*).

To the sub inspector's outrage, Hukum Chand responds in a more submissive manner. He says:

“I know it all. Our Hindu women [...] so pure that they would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them” (*TP 78*).

Chand's response not only erases from the ethnic community the presence of the raped Hindu woman, but also endorses the popular ideology voiced even by Gandhi, of suicide as the only option for woman raped or about to be raped. Hukum Chand not only reinforces the common Hindu nationalist rhetoric about women's purity and defilement, but also locks the 'Hindu Woman' into a discourse where sexual violence is a form of dishonour, a dishonouring which amounts to social death, and therefore supposedly makes the very victim- the woman of that violence desire physical death.

The novel tells about the Sikh masculinity in transnational Indian public spheres. Jugga, who is portrayed as a criminal is also ethical in a way that he does not commit any crimes against his fellow villagers. By being such a responsible villager, his type contradicts the class-prejudiced assumption of Chand. Jugga goes further dominant discourses of class identity and religious belonging that marks national citizenship and engender ethnic violence. But it is ironic

and significant that it is the figure of Jugga, as a young, hyper masculine, sexual bad man who saves the Muslim refugees and not the state representative. His deed of saving hundreds of Muslims thus undercuts the best effort made by Chand to engineer communal carnage. Even then Jugga's lower class criminality is redeemed by his heroic true love only through his body which had a lack of confidence and courage. It is only on his crushed, rural, hyper-masculine body which get victory for the secularism, which was figured as heterosexual inter-faith love is inscribed.

The various inter- ethnic sexual relationship prevalent in the novel are only between Sikh/Hindu men and Muslim women. The novel does not figure any masculinity and heroism involved with a non-Muslim woman. However, the Muslim women in the novel are represented as either a girl- prostitute in the name of Haseena or Nooran, as a pregnant woman carrying an illegitimate child in her womb. Haseena's body becomes a place for fake bureaucracy in the name of Chand to toy with and Nooran's pregnant body becomes the carrying agent of the product of the birth of the Pakistani nation out of Sikh-Muslim love. Nooran's body is also suggestive of the impurity of the ethnic and national identities. But this birth of the Pakistani nation is inscribed as symbolically enabled through the violent sacrifice of Jugga's strong Masculine body. Jugga's wounded peasant body becomes an embodiment of both the region of Punjab and the secular Indian nation. This embodiment of true India is also a victim of nationalist politics and its failure. Jugga becomes an authentic representative of India. He is both a secular hero and a victim of the nation. The violence to the male citizen's body becomes an evidence of the failure of the Indian nation state.

Jugga's sacrifice is not an imaginary contestation that engineers the failure of communalism at the time of crisis, but it is a troubling return of a humanist, non-national, non-communal force enlightening the violent and contingent boundaries of communal nationalism in the form of Nooran's pregnant body and Jugga's crushed body. As Judith Butler puts it in a different context, an enabling disruption, the occasion for a radical reticulation of the symbolic horizon in which bodies comes to matter all. Jugga's body in a sense takes the wound of the nation-state, in an embodied performance of a sensate, secular democracy; however, the bodies of Nooran and Haseena are sexually and culturally different through prostitution and pre-marital pregnancy which are deployed in a different manner. They are not coded as heroic. The narrative

worked with both male and female bodies, where the male body is heroic and the female body is shown as a transitional object and a symbolizing site of intelligibility in the discourse of nationalism. The narrative also suggests that the imminent temporality of the Indian nation can exist only through the traumatizing banishment of interethnic love, and of impure, unintelligible, inter-ethnic identities whose future possibility is embodied by a pregnant Nooran. Jugga's body shows an ideal masculinity and Nooran's body and her fecund femininity being Islamic in origin inspires to symbolize the secure and also disappears to stave off the threat of ethnic impurity in the secular nation.

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## **Chapter 4**

### **Depiction of Trauma and Violence in the novel of Bhisham Sahani's 'Tamas'**

Tamas is emotionally intense and quite reflective in its approach. The novel is episodic in nature. But it inculcates multifaceted dimensions of partition in its corpus. It depicts the actual experiences of a vast and mixed population of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. The victimization of innocent people in communal aversion and violence, the full face of beastliness, violence, rape, arson, loot, burning, sacrificing, murdering, use of false religiosity and historicity to well up communal holocaust and cheap motives of short-sighted and astute politicians are delineated in totality with consummate dexterity. The pre-partition and post-partition conditions which culminated into the tragedy of partition undeniably credit Tamas as a Hindi classic.

The multidimensionality of the novel persists in its depiction of the full face of beastliness, but irrespective to all the ill strands of partition, the writer renders his keenness towards humanity. The writer's commitment is secular throughout the novel. The novelist glorifies communal harmony, mutual tolerance, moral standards and Estela humane values and pious sentiments. The didactic purpose of the novel is to denounce communalism in all hues. It inspires the readers to fight against barbaric and inhuman practices in its all contours. Its attempt is to indicate the strong consciousness of communal harmony and secularism. It depicts the

sweetness of communal harmony, tolerance and traditional faith and respect of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities for each other.

The novel also depicts the identical problems of Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs. It explores their relationships and mutual dependability on each other. The title of the novel *Tamas* signifies the bleakness, darkness or inertia. It also signifies the social forces which put obstacles in public life, and defiles the traditional conventions and norms. The collision of social forces due to false religiosity and historicity exposes the harsh and grim realities which tarnished all human values, morals and faith. It becomes quite clear after the reading of the novel that the fundamental truth of India's partition was its meaninglessness. The novel signifies the futility of hatred, suspicion and infused tension because even parting geographical boundaries did not solve the problem. As a matter of fact it aggravated and multiplied the miseries of the people living in close proximity.

Partition only suggests the ignorance and darkness of communal violence waged by different communities against one another. Thus, *Tamas* signifies dissension, disharmony, distrust and treachery. These pernicious strands only yielded destruction, degradation, demolition, degeneration, and death to the Indian soil. *Tamas* in this way signifies end of life. *Tamas* negates the spirit of life, progress, prosperity, tolerance and peace. The novel *Tamas* exposes the life-world shared by Hindu and Muslim and Sikh prior to partition. In fact, they confirmed that their finite human lives, their social fates, were entangled and intermixed with each other. They confirmed their religious selves were not separated from the work they did. In terms of the language and friendship too they had no formal distinction or division perceptible or visible. The Hindu and the Muslim identities had never been formed in contempt with each other, not even in conceited identity. The recollection of the Hindus and Muslims confirms it.

*Tamas* was written by Bhisham Sahni originally in Hindi. It was published in 1973, and won him the Sahitya Academy award in 1976. The English translation of the novel by the writer himself was published in year 2001. The same novel was translated by Raj Rajan after a lapse of nearly three decades. Sahni's English translation of the novel truly follows the tempo, tenet, sensation and impression of the original novel. It maintained and prolifically reflected in the originality of the novel.

Bhisham Sahni was born in 1915 into a devout Arya Samaji family in Rawalpindi (Now in Pakistan). He completed his schooling from Rawalpindi and after that he went to Government College Lahore in 1933 from where he took his Master's Degree in English Literature. He returned to Rawalpindi and rendered his services to his father's import business for some time. But, he found the work too much draining and decided to teach at a local college. Young Sahani simultaneously began to participate in the activities of the Indian National Congress. Sahani's family decided to settle in India after 1947. And he took the last train to India. He settled down in Delhi where he taught at a Delhi University college. In 1957, he went to Moscow to work as a translator at the foreign Publishing House. He worked in USSR for nearly seven years during which time he translated several Russian books in Hindi. He returned to India in 1963 to resume teaching.

Sahni's first collection of short stories, *Bhagya Rekha*: (Line of fate) was published in 1953. He edited a literary journal, *Nai Kahaniyan* from 1963-67. There are five novels, eight collection of short stories, three plays and a biography to his credit. Many of his

books have been published into various languages. As a writer, Sahni won the distinguished writer award of the Punjab government, the Lotus award of the Afro Asian writers' Association and the Sovietland Nehru award. The personal experiences of Sahni as a young man when he had to work as a relief officer after partition are implicit in *Tamas*. In the novel he had re-examined the series of communal riots in pre independent India. Partition has been shown as a bloodier example of a long history of communal conflicts. The novel authentically studies that the politics of separate tendencies, identities, hysterical religious fervour, tussle in political camps, and vehement religious differences which were the major causes to bring about the fragmentation of the nation. The primary force in both the version of *Tamas* is that, even during the darkest hours and evil days of the partition, there were a number of non-heroic and fallible people who continued to be abided by the gamut of civility, decency and sophistication.

These people always weighed greater values to gracious actions for the humanity rather than mere preaching. In all religious and political matters they maintained the decency of magnificent civil acts. The novelist readily acknowledges that eventuality in life is always and everywhere weighing enough chances to prejudice, bigotry, stupidity, opportunism and



contradictory loyalty. The novelist suggests that these divisive strands lead miseries to everyday life. But life was stable enough to suggest its own kind of claim, elegance and civilization poise.

The novel *Tamas* is a study in two fold dimensions of partition of the Indian-subcontinent. Firstly, it was a particular historical event and it has its own momentum and passion. Secondly, the Hindu Muslim riots and the violence reeked against each other's causes, motivation and provocations. The novel exceptionally discriminates these two passions and ideologies. *Tamas* is the study of the existing aberration within the composite ethos of the country; there are marks of unresolved and deadly crossed sign of economic and social tangle. And it also depicts the unredeemable antagonistic practices between different religious groups. The novel *Tamas* is uninviting. It promises neither forgiveness nor redemption like that of Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*. But, undoubtedly the novel intones with Intizar Hussain's *Basti*, Ashfaq Ahmad's *Gadariya* (*The Shepherd*), and with Krishna Sobti's *Zindaginama*. Like Bhisham Sahni, millions of Hindus and Muslims do not believe that mere change of rulers and lands would mean exile forever.

The people were engrafted into the roots of their memories, genealogies and tradition since generations. They never thought that these roots could ever be exterminated.

Bhisham Sahni as a progressive writer has critically assessed and examined the socio-religious parameters of the Indian consciousness. He realistically portrayed the inherent relics of the Colonial Rule. Sahni as a Hindi writer concentrated on both the prepartitioned Indian tempo and its social lore. The novel delineates the eruption of communal riots incisively but his objective seems to be committed towards communal harmony, religious tolerance, humanism and moderation. Sahni supremely extols human values and ethics. The novel *Tamas* records the predatory times of 1947. As a witness and sufferer of communal mayhem, Bhisham Sahni knows that after such an irreparable ruin there could neither be forgiveness nor forgetting. But his attitude for partition tragedy is secular. He has depicted the meaninglessness of riots, killing, hatred and fear in the communities for each-other. He exposes the immoral religiosity and unethical interpretation of history. He emphasizes on the essence of humanism, liberal values, mutual tolerance, education and respect for other cultures and creed.

The perceptible drift of the novel is to eulogize Gandhian ethics and ideals like truth and non-violence and communal harmony. The novel exposes the nationalistic movement which despite the Marxian, Gandhian and liberal ideals failed blatantly to maintain its goal of unity, secularism and solidarity. Freedom was achieved but at the cost of bloody cleavage of humanity. The immediate concern of Tamas is to focus on human tragedy. The novel sensibly captures the pestilence in the young minds, the miserable and degenerate state of old men, women and small children. In his novel Bhisham Sahni has praised the intrinsic harmony of rural people. He rather viewed that the partition of the country was a tragedy and a conspiracy.

The novel sufficiently focuses upon the socio-economic factors of the existing society in 1940s. The novel eulogizes the cultural synthesis and the unity of the Indian people. It depicts that only as a result of that mutual coexistence they had evaded outer intrusion. But after the arrival of the British on the Indian soil the socio-cultural cord was hard hit and fragmented. And this fragmentation finally culminated in the catastrophe of partition. Therefore, the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 was nothing but the culmination of the blot pasted by the British to the Indian civilization.

As a person and as a writer, Bhisham Sahni has developed a deep faith in humanism. He condemns both Communalism and Colonization. Humanism begins to surge in him since his childhood in Rawalpindi and youth in Lahore. His interaction with his family and his Muslim neighbours, his early ideological fascination for Gandhi and later involvement with left and his membership in the Congress Tameeri programme shaped his making into a mild humanity. He supports the progressive and scientific approach to social phenomena. His ardent faith is in the integration of both traditional world-views. It is found in his work. His intellectual orientation and positive approach of existentialism could be seen in the novel.

Tamas is an anatomy of partition. As the title of the novel suggests, it is an attempt to see through the inertia, darkness and ignorance involved in communal violence. The genocide occasioned under the instigation of the fundamentalists of the three major communities living in secular and united India is the corpus of the novel. The human degradation which followed the fragmentation of the nation was one of the worst tragedies the world has ever witnessed. The

novel is an unreserved study of the falsity of self-centered fundamentalists who duped innocent people into serving their ulterior purposes. In the novel a good number of episodes deal with communal mayhem during the pre-partition days. In the very first episode of the novel Nathu (a low cast chamar) is shown involved in pig slaughtering. Next day the pig was found to be thrown at the steps of a mosque, which flares up the communal riots in the city. The vicious deed was carried out under the instructions of Murad Ali. Murad Ali was the representative of local Municipal Cooperation of the city.

He employed Nathu to kill a pig in pretext of veterinary services. But, actually his chief motive was to infuse inter communal disharmony by hurting the religious sentiments of people. His intention behind hurting the religious sentiments of his co-religionists and the desecration of the mosque was to detonate the Muslims against the Hindus. On the other hand the layman like Nathu, a member of lower strata of the society, never suspects the ill design of astute diplomat like Murad Ali.

Partition literature bluntly brings back into view where the politicians had employed simpletons for the fulfillment of their cheap motives and venal ends and worked unabated to rouse one community against another. The novel is interspersed with communal poison. It depicts both the rural and urban areas were infected alike in communal orgy. It portrays how at the behest of three communities the Hindu, the Muslim and the Sikh the whole mass was plunged in the blatant preparation of genocide. The religious call of the three communities made partition a religious war. The communal genocide was to safeguard and preserve the identity and religious sanctity from domination and subjugation of another community. Being an active participant of Indian National Congress activities Bhisham Sahni has critically and with ironical detachment analyzed the corrupt practices of the Congress workers. Historical records confirm that the demand of Pakistan was made in 1940s. Erstwhile, there were only strong indication and presumption that the proposed union may fall likely to divide. Polarization in the community set in only after 1939-1940s. Only after that political antagonism and separatism was accelerated.

Bhisham Sahni has described the Congress workers at length in the first section of the novel. In the “the street cleaning programme” and in the “prabhat pheri” conducted by the Congress workers their pitfalls are exposed ironically and unreservedly.

In Tamas too Mehtaji “had spent sixteen years of his life in jail and was the president of District Congress Committee, always dressed in spotless white khadi”. He is mocked for being a prototype of Nehru. And Mehtaji is “unmannerly accused of gaining a fifty thousand rupees insurance policy from Sethi, a contractor, in lieu of which, Mehta would help him secure the Congress ticket for the next General Elections”. The novelist has interpreted the evil design of the British through Richard, a civil servant, and the highest executive officer of the district. Besides being a civil servant, Richard was also a connoisseur of Indian art and a scholar of history. The conversation between Richard and his wife reveals the British policy of divide and rule. Their conversation expounds that the British intention had always been to aggravate alienation and suspicion in Indian masses.

The Hindus and the Muslims accused and counter accused each-other for the disintegration and degradation of cultural and social co-existence. But precisely it is interesting to note that both Hindus and Muslims had had a close interaction and interdependency on each-other whereas the British had always kept them aloof from Indian lore of social life. The Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs merged their separate identities and presented a mixed populated Indian civilization. The British always maintained safe distance from Indian life. The British always categorized them as rulers. As the rulers of the land, the British cleverly intruded the social and cultural fabric of Indian life and left indelible imprint into it. The British influenced the Indian life in every manner. The British influenced every institution and establishment.

It was possible to tighten the disruptive and fissiparous tendency in the country to safeguard the unity and integrity of the nation. But the British wanted to create tension because they understood that they would be able to safeguard themselves and their empire by aggravating communalism, and they successfully did that. The conversation between Liza and Richard reveals that the British played a vicious and vital role in the promotion and procurement of communalism. The British passivity to curtail the riots and mounting tension is one of the same developments. Sahni is of the view that the British passivity to launch preventive measures finally culminated into the worst calamity.

The main thrust of Tamas is the failure of the Gandhian Caps. Time and again the novel depicts the Congress activists engaged in heated arguments and counter arguments. In addition to this the Gandhian ideology and philosophy was questioned by the Congress Estelar Workers themselves. And the Congress Workers admit their failure to manoeuvre the British policy. The novelist records a heated discussion between the Congress activists. Kashmiri Lal a devout Congress activist. Kashmiri Lal poses the question to Bakshiji, the man erected on Gandhian principles. He interrogates

I want to know what guidance non-violence has to give me  
at such juncture? Bapu has advised us not to use violence.

If, in the event of a riot, a man were to attack me, what  
should I do? Should I fold my hand and say, “Come,  
brother, kill me? Here is my neck? (TMS26)

Another activist Shankar interfering the discussion accounts, “Gandhiji has said that a person himself should not indulge in violence. Nowhere has Gandhi said that if a person is subjected to violence he should not resist”. Bakshiji ventures to give the true sermon of Gandhian ideology. He substantiates thus:

Bapu has advised us not to use violence? If such an  
eventuality arises, my first duty is to tell the fellow  
patiently that what he is doing is something very  
wrong, that he should desist from doing it.(TMS26).

But Kashmiri Lal jumps at Bakshiji dilemma and further enquires what if he does not listen? In great exasperation Bakshiji loses his equilibrium and broke out:

You yourself should not indulge in violence. That is  
number one. You should persuade the fellow to desist from

using violence. That is number two. And if he does not listen, fight him tooth and nail. That is number three. (TMS27).

The novelist flashes light on the incidents where the family refrains from accepting the abducted women. In the novel a Brahmin girl Praksho, is abducted by Allah Rakha and forcibly marries her. Her parents desist from accepting her back. “Her parents laments may our Prakasho live happily wherever she is. Of what use is her coming back to us? They must have already put the forbidden thing into her mouth”. This incident reveals that parents abstain from the recovery of their abducted daughters and women in the wake of family reputation and honour. The general belief was if a girl or woman fell into the enemy camp she has ruined, sullied, tainted not only her modesty but also family reputation and honour. She is considered as decrepit. No longer to be accepted back in the society. Thus, women are confined to everlasting imprisonment.

The last section of the novel focuses on the relief measures committed by the principle political parties. After the riots social and cultural unanimity is snapped for ever.

A strong trend had set in - Muslims were keen to move out of Hindu localities, and likewise, Hindus and Sikhs from predominantly Muslim localities though outwardly many people viewed when the condition become normal, no one would like to leave the locality he has been living in. (TMS37-38).

The novelist gives an example of Sheik Nur Elahi and Lala Lakshimi Narain both were intimate friends. In needful hours they help each other but deep inside both were fanatics. After the riots although both exhibited friendly terms but it lacked sincerity. “Within their heart lurked aversion, even hatred. But both were elderly, worldly-wise

Businessmen, who knew well enough that they needed each other”. The novelist also signifies the polarization in the political arena. “If a Hindu stood for election now, he would need the support of Congress; likewise if a Muslim stood for election he needs the support of the Muslim League”. A “peace committee” comprising of seven Muslims, five Hindus and three Sikhs is

constituted. The novelist sheds a tinge of ironical touch as Murad Ali was also one of the members of the Peace Committee. But the eyes that could recognize him (of Nathu) are closed for ever. "Nathu was dead, or he would have recognized him at once". In the novel, only Manohar Lal and Richard's wife Liza understand the British manoeuvre. Liza suspects Richard's promotion and observes:

Will you be promoted Richard? Richard answers it is not a question of promotion, Liza. If there are disturbances in a place, the government usually effects a change of personnel at higher level, senior officer are transferred and new officers sent in (TMS52).

Richard's promotion signifies that the successful intervention of the British in the social, cultural and political sphere is appreciated by the Colonial powers. The novel Tamas delineates the futility of two nation theory. It depicts the failure of the Gandhian disciples and so called nationalist

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## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Partition has always been a blot on the history of India, whenever a book or a short story is written on the partition; the readers find the pain and misery of the people who struggled through all the riots and pointless fights in the name of religion. Every writer who has written about the partition had their main focuses on the violence which took place during the partition. Some has given a direct depiction of violence where as some on the other hand has shown violence in an indirect manner where narrative of the story is the only way in which a reader can see it. Writers' main motive for writing about the partition of 1947 was to show the trauma with which people during that time went through, they wanted to convey to the readers of this time and tell them about the condition of people who suffered during partition. There are a lot of thing common in the depiction of partition which almost every writer has shown, it is the women being the central victim of the war, war which was fought during the partition.

During the election for president in America in 2015, Hilary Clinton candidate for the presidential ship said that "women has always been a victim of every war which has ever been fought in the history, when a man goes to fight in the war a wife loses her husband, a sister loses her brother, a mother loses her son and a daughter loses her father". We see this thing coming into a reality when we read the true representation of violence from which all women went through when they had no men in their support. We see how men who were turning mad for killing in the name of religion would not hesitate rapping a women or abducting her and keeping them as their slaves. It was the time where a woman was not allowed to empower themselves, even we fail to see any women playing a major role in the partition of India. People do not expect anything from a woman but to cope up with the situation and accept everything quietly without adding their opinion or any better suggestion.

This was not only the condition of the women at that time but also the poor man at that time were having a situation where they were not allowed to make their own decisions but to follow the rules made by the British Government. Hindus were supposed to live in India and Muslims were placed in Pakistan as per the law of partition, a line was drawn on the map of

India which the poor were not able to understand. People didn't see any point in leaving their place where they have lived for years. They failed to understand that why Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who have lived together as one entity for centuries were fighting with each other in the name of religion. Poor had nothing but their homes and fields in which they harvested, now they have to leave both of them behind. They did not have any surety whether they will be getting a land to harvest or a place to live in the new nation where they were walking into. All that they knew was they will be living there and in the place in which they were at present the circumstances were only leading towards their death.

The poor people on the safe side had a whole different mind-set with respect to the partition and the migration which was taking place. They found it as an opportunity to steal and make some extra wealth which they could have never made through simple farming and odd jobs they used to do. Minds of the people was affected in both the cases it doesn't matter if they were safe or unsafe, all what people at that time thought was how can they take advantage of the situation. In this situation also women were again in that same pain and misery were they had no choice and to go with whatever was going.

Women who were on the safe side were fine with their men going out and killing people and abducting a woman and keeping that woman as a slave in their house. Some women who lost their husbands and family to save their pride they committed suicide with their children by jumping into the fire and water wells. The real reason behind doing this was to protect themselves and their children from getting raped and becoming the slaves of people from different religion. Many committed suicide because they were forced to change the religion which they were following from the birth.

The condition during partition became so violent that people who were of the same religion were killing their fellow man because they were in the support of non-violence, people with the mentality of non-violence were considered as coward and anti-religious. There were some people in that time who were taking advantage of the people who just migrated to another country, as in the novel Tamas by Sahani we see how a girl was raped multiple times, not by the people from another religion but by the people of her own religion who were pretending to help refugees. By this incident which is illustrated in the story we can actually figure out how the

minds of the people were affected in the favour of violence, for the people of that time there was no empathy for other people's misery.

Few people who were not into killing others and looting people were also brought into it, not directly but indirectly. As it is shown in the story of 'Cracking India' the Ice Candy Man was a nice person and didn't believe in killing and slaughtering people in the name of the religion because he understood the politics played by the British to divide and rule. He was brought into the business of killing when he went at a railway station to receive his sisters from India but received their dead bodies and a bag full of women's breast. This incident had a great impact on him and he started doing the same thing as everyone else was, he started killing and looting the house of people from different religion. Later on he also killed one his friend from his own religion because he loved a Hindu girl with whom he wanted to get married with. Now the story was not about killing people from other religion but was to take anything they wanted by killing anyone.

Revenge full mode of the people was everywhere around the boundaries of India and Pakistan, people who were peacefully migrating to the other parts of the country were killed because they were of a different religion and that's what people from the different religion did to their people who were migrating from their country. As shown in the story of 'Train to Pakistan' people were actually in a state where they actually just wanted to kill the people migrating to Pakistan because they had their people killed. They said that if they kill our one man then we should kill their two, if they are abducting our one woman then we will take their two. This was the time where ideologies of Gandhi was vanished into the thin air and people forgot that an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind.

People who managed to survive were in the sorrow of the friend who left their side and now not in their contact. There were people who were migrating but not because they wanted to live but because they wanted their families to live. Basically every one at that time was going through a trauma; people who created trauma from violence were also in a trauma because most of the people who were involved in the killing and slaughtering were the people who had lost their families on the other part of the nation.

Partition of India was not the partition of a land but it was the partition of people's emotions, it was the partition of relations of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. The real reason behind the Partition was to create a nation in which people they can actually live in harmony; every religion might have their own set of choices that might follow. Every religion having their own lands and their own identities. People lost the real reason of partition and things turn opposite and people started killing each other, people made it the blunder of the history of India.

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