

Decoding Postcolonial Voices, Identities, Cultures and Resistances

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Prof. Sandhya Tripathi

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PREFACE

The present book endeavors to unravel the complex tapestry of postcolonial experiences, examining narratives that span continents, languages, and cultures. Each chapter of this book is a beacon that casts light on various aspects of postcolonial discourse, offering fresh insights into the ways in which colonized peoples articulate identity, voice, and resistance.

The book opens with Debojyoti Dan's chapter, "To Be or Not To be Postcolonial that is the Question: Looking Back at the Non-Hegemonic Works of Art Beyond the Praxality of Theory." This foundational piece challenges the conventional boundaries of postcolonial theory, urging a reconsideration of what it means to be postcolonial in the contemporary era. Dan's argument sets the stage for the subsequent chapters, each of which dives into specific works and themes that contribute to the broader understanding of postcolonial studies.

Prof. Prajakta S. Raut explores Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" in her chapter, examining the melioristic strains within the narrative. Raut highlights how Angelou's autobiographical work not only narrates personal suffering and triumph but also serves as a potent symbol of the Black American struggle for identity and resistance against oppression.

In the third chapter, Dr. Rakesh Roshan Singh analyzes Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's "Decolonising the Mind," focusing on

the political implications of language in postcolonial contexts. Singh's insightful analysis elucidates how language acts both as a tool of colonial control and a weapon of cultural resistance, thus providing a pivotal understanding of Ngugi's advocacy for linguistic decolonization.

Pranita J Shinde tackles Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" with a specific focus on its non-protagonist female characters. Her chapter enriches the discourse of womanism, presenting a critical study that highlights the nuanced portrayal of these characters' struggles and resistances within their social and racial contexts.

Dr. T Eswar Rao delves into Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart," examining it as a quintessential postcolonial text that articulates the cultural conflicts and tensions resulting from colonial intrusion. Rao's analysis highlights how Achebe's narrative serves as a form of resistance by asserting African culture and history.

M. M. Sohil provides a comprehensive overview of postcolonial writings by Muslim women, including works such as "The Hours Past Midnight," "My Feudal Lord," "Blasphemy," and "Madras on Rainy Days." Sohil's chapter not only explores the intersection of gender, religion, and postcoloniality but also illuminates the diverse ways in which Muslim women negotiate their identities and resistances within and against both colonial and patriarchal structures.

Finally, Dr. Raf Raf Shakil Ansari examines Mourid Barghouti's reflections on Palestine in his autobiographical works *I Saw Ramallah* and *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here*. Ansari's analysis of these narratives of return offers profound insights into the ongoing struggles of displacement and identity faced by Palestinians.

This book is intended for scholars, students, and general readers who are interested in understanding the varied and vibrant landscapes of postcolonial studies. By presenting critical analyses of literature and language that reflect the postcolonial condition, it aims to foster a deeper appreciation of the complexities and diversities of postcolonial identities and resistances. Through these explorations, “Decoding Postcolonial Voices, Identities, Cultures and Resistances” seeks to contribute significantly to the discourse on global literary studies and the ongoing dialogues surrounding decolonization and social justice.

Prof. Sandhya Tripathi

-1-

To Be or Not To be Postcolonial that is the Question: Looking Back at the Non- Hegemonic Works of Art Beyond the Praxality of Theory

Debojyoti Dan

“The term post-colonialism—according to a too-rigid etymology—is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence Day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state. Not a naïve teleological sequence, which supersedes colonialism, post-colonialism is, rather, an engagement with, and contestation of, colonialism’s discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies.... A theory of post-colonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence, and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism.”
(Helen 81)

In this brief discussion, my point is neither to examine the variety of provocative writings produced under the rubric post-colonial theory nor simply to essentialise the term

“post-colonial,” but rather to unfold its slippery political significations, which occasionally escape the clearly oppositional intentions of its theoretical practitioners. Ania Loomba in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* points out “Social order...had to depend upon the inculcation in the minds of both exploiters and exploited of a belief in the superiority of the exploiter and the inferiority of the exploited.” (11) We will take this as a point to look into different works that predate colonial and postcolonial times and yet present us with certain postcolonial, revolutionary takes.

Part One: ‘Kubla Khan’

The poem ‘Kubla Khan’ by Coleridge is my favourite choice to talk about the multidimensionality of postcolonialism in writings which were written before the bracketed resource of postcolonial study. Mostly this poem is taken as a supreme product of the Romantic age, exhibiting the creative imagination at its zenith. But when we politically deconstruct the poem, we find Kubla Khan, the central character is not the centre of the poem, and instead, it is Coleridge himself who is at the centre, who rivals Kubla’s dome. Political phenomena emerge in this poem through the use of words like ‘decree’, which suggests the inviolable command of the dominant over the colonies, forcing them to build a monument of temporal fame, the pleasure dome. In the words of Louis Pierre Althusser: “A state or any society is structured with an interesting level of confrontation and contestation between different ideologies. Put aside the plurality, there are basically two main opposing sects of ideology – the dominant and the dominated.” (Althusser 482) In the dream world of Coleridge, Kubla acts as the arbitrary autocrat whose predatory attitude makes others the dominated victims.

The words 'walls and towers' represent the divide-and-rule policy of the colonizers. But Kubla's dome [empire] is temporary as was the Sultanate period in India, or the Islamic control over the world before the crusade; Coleridge's dome [empire] is the British empire ['a miracle of rare device'] which emerged with the purpose of cultural, economic and political control. Therefore its impact will be always there throughout the anglophile colonies [like India].

The East India Company came explicitly to exploit the 'twice five miles of fertile ground' (Coleridge 298) of India for Indigo plantation and 'forced' the native cultivators to comply. The words like 'sunless sea' and 'savage place' both evoke the metaphor of darkness and wilderness that is found later so vividly in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, thereby linking the Xanadu and Africa in a close symbiosis. If there is tyranny and colonization, there would also be protests, revolts and war "And 'mid this tumult" (299) of discontent and mutinies, Kubla hears the 'Ancestral voices prophesying war' (299). Thus Coleridge, the occidental missionary, indulges in the colonial discourse of condemning the Oriental tyranny of the Sultanate regime, as the one which produced the chaos of 'tumult' and frenzy.

The 'ancestral voices prophesying war' (299) that Kubla hears from the bursting 'tumult,' (299) reveal the historicity of two warring empires during the actual Kublai Khan's reign. It details the text's historiographical specificity within imperial history by detailing an 'oriental' colonial world through the lens of an emerging British colonial authority; it also encapsulates some of the poems' major concerns about reanimating and sustaining 'ancestral voices' for a modern era within a distinct cultural context. He also shows that

when the natives of the colonized died in war, their wives lamented – ‘woman wailing for her demon-lover!’ (299) [The coloured race is often compared with demons in colonial discourse]. She is a subaltern woman, who like the ‘mute’ motherland is unable to protest the destruction of her fertility and laments her loss.

In postcolonial theory, subaltern studies occupy a significant place; they derive their force from Marxism and Post-Structuralism. Subaltern studies are primarily concerned with sociocultural and historical aspects of the society incorporating the people that are subordinate in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office, or in any other way. It is the subject position that defines ‘subalternity’. Even when it operates in terms of class, age and gender, it is more psychological than physical. The lack and deprivation, loneliness and alienation, subjugation and subordination, resignation and silence, the resilience and neglect mark the lives of subalterns, even when they resist and rise, they feel bounded and defeated by their subject positions. They have no representatives or spokesperson in the society they live in and so helplessly suffer and get a marginal place or no place at all in the history and culture of which they are an essential part as human beings. The subaltern has become, M.H. Abrams has remarked in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* ‘a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse and internalized by colonial peoples who employ this discourse’ (237). Subaltern is a British word for someone of inferior rank and combines the Latin terms for “under” (sub) and “other” (alter). In this darkness of Kubla’s rule, will come to the missionary Coleridge to provide, the natives with the ‘bright’, light of civilization. The concluding lines of the

poem justify the 'mission civilisatrice', hiding the extortion and domination of British rule with the 'rare devise' of supreme felicity of Edenic prosperity: "For he on honey-dew hath fed,/And drunk the milk of Paradise (Coleridge 299). Thus we can see that the poem 'Kubla Khan' has its centre outside the classification of Romantic Imagination and that the 'logos' of the poem is not Kubla Khan, the Tartar prince. The poet himself exists not only in itself but also as Coleridge the Colonizer, who is defending the occupation of 'fertile lands' of the colonies and thereby justifying 'the ways' of colonizers 'to [native] men.'

But the poem 'Kubla Khan' is not just political because it defends colonialism; it also subverts the colonial despotism within the rubric of this poem. On the one hand, we could read into the pro-imperial valences, the Khan's emphasis on materiality, as a reappropriation of the Western imperial project of conquest. On the other hand, 'Kubla Khan' could serve as a critique of colonial expansion given, for example, the earth's resistance to the imperial palace and garden, as the poem's statement on the evanescence of materiality and the unnatural 'construction' of colonialism and despotism. Therefore revealing that even a magnificent kingdom like Great Britain will be converted into 'little England' when its colonies are gone. It is the same as what happened with other great Kingdoms, like Greece, Rome or Egypt, the history of imperialism is fraught with the irony of evanescence and that is what Kubla hears and so does Coleridge himself.

Part Two: 'Ulysses'

When we are talking about colonialism, imperialism and the treatment of natives by their colonizers in British Romantic poetry, we cannot possibly forget the same

political undertones in British poetry in the Victorian Age, especially in Tennyson's rewriting of the myth of Ulysses, where the 'savage race' of Ithaca resists against the parameter of subjugation and refuses to belong to the imperialistic cartography. Now unlike Prospero, the colonizer in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in the poem 'Ulysses', Ulysses himself is a native of Ithaca, so we are going to make our analysis to borrow Michel Foucault words from *The Birth of the Clinic* 'based on the rediscovery of the absolute values of the visible'(xii) So Ulysses is not a Colonizer of Ithaca, rather, he is the embodiment of Queen's Imperial soldier, who has returned to his own country after the conquest of the colonies and its subsequent loss, very much like Colonel Redfern of *Look Back in Anger*. Now the question is what is the centre of this poem 'Ulysses', for traditional critics, it is the Victorian embodiment of the search for knowledge, but by deconstructing the poem, with the use of Derrida's methodology, we can find that this poem is the nostalgia of Colonizer who has been forced to return home and finds: "It little profits that an idle king,/By this still hearth, among these barren crags,/Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole" (poetryfoundation.org/poem/174659). The word 'profit' and another word which he later uses 'hoard', brings out that his native land is unable to provide what exactly he got in colonies – profit, and how he had stored them, like a neo-capitalist.

Nineteenth-century British Hellenism anchored itself to the rock of the Athenian fifth century: the Golden Age stretched from the great defeat of the armies of the East at Marathon to the death of Socrates in 399 B.C. It was in that era's military excellence and subsequent achievements in

the political and cultural spheres that educated Victorians apprehended their Victorian likeness.

When phrases like ‘Vext the dim sea’ appear in the poem ‘Ulysses’, it reminds one of the naval prowess of Queen’s fleet. Thus this poem provides us with an imperial agent – Ulysses profits from exploitation, which are carefully hoarded and finally the journey through the sea, thereby recollections of ivory trade and blood money through slavery became an underlying motif. Thus the poem aptly ends with Ulysses’ nostalgia for exploiting profit from colonies, and his regret of being forced to come back to his homeland:

“Tho’ much is taken, much abides; and tho’
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”
(poetryfoundation.org/poem/174659)

The dissolution of the Empire and the refusal to give it up becomes self-evident in the above lines as we deconstruct the political phenomenon of the poem ‘Ulysses’. The sea had been good to Britain’s expanding commercial empire. The narrator of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* strikes the right note of reverence and gratitude in his paean to the English Main:

“It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled--the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time,

... captains, admirals, the dark interlopers of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned “generals” of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they had all gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch.... The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealth, the germs of empires.” (Conrad 17)

Fredric Jameson gives us a drier formulation of ‘The Gigantic Tale’ in his essay on Conrad. The sea writes Jameson, represented ‘the element by which imperial capitalism ... realized its sometimes violent, sometimes silent and corrosive penetration of outlying precapitalist zones’ (Jameson 213). Conrad’s ‘knights-errant of the sea’ – the advance guard of imperial capitalism – named and mapped previously unexplored littorals, making these ‘new’ lands available for commercial trade and colonial expansion. Thus Tennyson’s Ulysses crosses the sea, seeking knowledge of the new lands to colonize. He announces his determination ‘to follow knowledge ... / Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought’ (poetryfoundation.org/poem/174659). Knowledge – the whole cartographic project of opening up the interior, of filling in the gaps – becomes for him, as for a Burton or Livingston seeking the source of the Nile, an end in itself, self-justifying. Yet wittingly or not, as history proves, the proto-colonial quest for knowledge goes hand-in-hand with the European quest for power—‘the servant of colonial plunder,’ in Anne McClintock’s phrase, that ‘both preceded and legitimized the conquest of territory’ (McClintock 28).

While the Greek captain’s previous voyage had exposed him to a human geography of ‘cities of men / And manners, climates, councils, governments’ (Homer 13-14), the prospects he now lays before his listeners and his readers

are not only 'untraveled' but, like mythic South Africa settled by the Boers, curiously uninhabited: 'clear for plowing', as Odysseus would say. This may be partly in deference to gaps in ancient and medieval geography, especially when it came to the world beyond the Pillars of Hercules (Dante's *mondo senza gente* in *The Inferno*), but it also suggests the blinkered cultural attitudes that guided European expansion throughout the nineteenth century. In this scenario, one thinks of the passage from J.A. Froude used as an epigraph in V.S. Naipaul's *The Middle Passage*: 'There are no people there in the true sense of the word,' Froude wrote of the Caribbean, 'with a character and a purpose of their own' (Naipaul 6). Such blank areas denote pure potential--for settlement, technological development, and mastery. The bare canvasses that are unfurled before Tennyson's Ulysses are all the more attractive as sites of colonial potential; they are sites to be staked out, surveyed, and ultimately occupied. Ulysses looks to the western Ocean for the same reasons Kipling's "Man Who Would Be King" would later look to Kafiristan, 'no one ever goes there ... No one knows anything about it really' (Kipling 148-49).

But the cartographic spaces the poem conjures serviced other, less territorial imperatives besides. Their very blankness makes them all the more available to colonization by the European imagination; they are the very same 'blank space[s] of delightful mystery' that Conrad's Marlow so loved 'to dream gloriously over' (Conrad 22). Like the tropical island evoked by J. Michael Dash, they 'could have no essential meaning but [as] a kind of tabula rasa' (Dash 13-14). Ulysses' mariners and Tennyson's readers are left free to inscribe this virgin parchment with whatever monsters and pleasures they desire.

Part Three: La Liberté guidant le peuple

Eugène Delacroix's painting 'La Liberté guidant le peuple' shows a movement from the chaos to the cosmos. Revolution is here against the political ambivalence of France in the 1830's. July Revolution marked a period in history as the game changer for the political structures. What we see in the painting is a fecund gambit of political signs. If we move our gaze from the external blaze of French Romanticism to the deeply inherent political signs we discover what Derrida calls the 'eidos' of the painting and also locate the teloscentric coordinates in it. (see Fig.1.)



Fig.1.Eugène Delacroix, 'Liberty Leading the People', oil on canvas, September – December, 1830 (exhibited and purchased by the state from the Salon of 1831) 2.6 x 3.25m (Louvre, Paris).

Seen in the Derridian sense the painting 'La Liberté guidant le peuple' uses an infinite number of sign-

substitution to construct the political motif of mass movement. The premier object a viewer may notice is the monumental—and nude to the waist—female figure. Using the concept of French grammar, we can see that the term ‘Liberté’ is feminine, hence the article ‘la’ before it, which justifies Delacroix’s use of the female figure, but here she not only represents liberty but revolution as well, since revolution is also feminine in French grammatological order. So the female figure is both liberty and revolution and is leading the people. We cannot assume revolution to be a passive formulation any more. Thus Delacroix uses the light to a great effect when it falls on the face of the lady. This use of light has German precedence, as it is called the ‘weißes Licht’ or the white light. So we can see that the figure of the lady is a sign – revolution is a creative and living organism, hence female and she is the ‘weißes Licht’, the ‘élan vitale’ or the positive energy. Revolution is the female pentagramic ritual of fertility, with five points: birth, menstruation, childbirth, menopause and death. The birth of revolution is like the birth of creative poetry. Coleridge writes in his *Biographia Literaria* it flows powerfully from the primary imagination of poets, philosophers and painters to the secondary imagination (85) of the revolutionaries, as the unmanifest becomes manifest and revolution rises from being a concept to a realistic flourish. Then begins the menstruation: the process of fecund investment, a fertile flow of mass support. Childbirth is the by-product of revolution as it gives birth to a new political structure, then we see the crone state when the revolution starts ebbing and it enters into a menopausal state, where it loses its creative impulse. The death of the revolution is the beginning of the next cycle of politics and a structured

system of government, as is seen after the July Revolution, a new system replacing the old in France.

Coming back to the painting, her yellow dress has fallen from her shoulders, as she holds a bayoneted musket in her left hand and raises the tricolour—the French national flag—with her right. Left is a politically significant side, it not only represents communism and bloody massacres of the dominant class; it also signifies the solidarity of the proletariat class. Here the proletariats of Paris are using bayoneted muskets to assert their existence through fire and blood. With the right hand, she holds the flag. Rightist philosophy is always that of flag-holding and predominance of power and discipline. Thus Liberty not only means to unleash chaos through her bayoneted musket, but also power and discipline. Foucault defines discipline in his book *Discipline and Punish* by saying:

“Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. (222).

So we can see that Liberty provides a perfect balance between chaos and cosmos, revolution and discipline,

destruction and creation. The colour yellow of her dress is often used as the symbol of a phlegmatic non-committing attitude. But that garb is de-robed from the public sentiments in a revolution, thus the Female figure that represents Liberty finds her stoicism towards revolution torn out.

The red, white, and blue arrangement of the flag is mimicked by the attire worn by the man looking up at her. Red is the colour of revolution, white symbolised peace to follow and blue is the colour of hope. Fecund Liberty powerfully strides forward and looks back over her right shoulder as if to ensure those whom she leads are following. Her attitude is the famous reminder of Blake's Fiery Orc. Los uses the Chains of Jealousy to bind the Orc upon a mountain, and the Orc becomes part of the rock. While bound, his imagination is able to exist in a cave located in Urizen's kingdom, which wakes up Urizen. Being one with rock and having the fire of revolution within, he becomes the Tyger, burning with volcanic wrath and energy. Here Liberty is another form of Blake's Tyger, upholding the great flag of freedom, making revolution creative, having the rock of faith in humanity and unleashing the bondage of slavery. Her head is shown in profile, and more significantly she wears a Phrygian cap which is the 'transcendental signified' of freedom. Delacroix deliberately uses this costuming for creating multiple signifiers: the freed Roman slaves who were given one to wear to indicate their newly liberated status, again worn in profile she signifies the Roman monarchs whose faces are sculptured in coins in the same way and finally the 'Phrygian cap' is the signification of the symbol of freedom and liberty on both sides of the

Atlantic Ocean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the paintings not only the Lady provides the political 'interpretant' in the Derridian sense, but also those who surround her. The first year of the Revolution saw members of the Third Estate taking control, the assault on the Bastille in July is represented here by the man on the far left holding a briquette (an infantry sabre commonly used during the Napoleonic Wars). His garments—apron, working shirt, and sailor's trousers—identify him as the proletariat. The articles of his garment have definite revolutionary traits. The handkerchief around his waist, that secures a pistol, has a pattern similar to that of the Cholet handkerchief, a symbol used by François Athanase de Charette de la Contrie, a Royalist soldier who led an ill-fated uprising against the First Republic, the government established as a result of the French Revolution. The white cockade and red ribbon secured to his beret also identify his revolutionary sensibilities. This factory worker provides a counterpoint to the young bourgeois beside him who is the representative of trade and commerce. He wears a black top hat, an open-collared white shirt and cravat, and an elegantly tailored black coat. He prefers a short gun to more soldierly firearms. These two figures make clear that this revolution is not just for the proletariats but for those of the bourgeoisie too. The fallen and dead figures are the sacrificed bodies and in the background Bastille is encircled by the smoke and fire of destruction.

Part Four: 'L'Internationale'

Now let us deconstruct the song ‘L’Internationale’. The music score of this song is from where we should start

De- bout, les dam- nes de la ter- re, De- bout! les for- cats de la fin! La
 rai- son tonne en son cra- ter- re C'est l'e- rup- tion de la flu. Du pas- se fai- sons tab- le
 ra- se Foule es- clave de- bout! de- bout! Le mon- de va chan- ger de ba- se: Nous ne som-
 mes rien, so- yons tout! C'est la lut- te fi- na- le, Grou- pons nous, et de- main L'In-
 ter- na- tio- na- le se- ra le genre hu- main, C'est la lut- te fi- na- le; Grou- pons
 nous et de- main, L'In- ter- na- tio- na- le se- ra le genre hu- main.

investigating its very essence of Postcolonialism. (see fig.2.)

Fig.2.

It became associated with communism and mass protest as the days went on, inspiring some of the greatest works on colonialism and postcolonialism, like Frantz Fanon’s 1961 work ‘The Wretched of the Earth’ which takes its title from the first line of ‘The Internationale’:

“Arise, wretched of the earth
 Arise, convicts of hunger
 Reason thunders in its crater
 This is the eruption of the end
 Of the past let us wipe the slate clean” (web)

The action of violence that the song explicitly suggests is adapted by Fanon, who decodes this concept of violence against the colonizers in the following lines of his famous novel *The Wretched of the Earth*:

“The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and

broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. To wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action..." (31)

The rising spirit of revolution as represented in the music score above reminds us very much of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Opus 132 Neue kraft fuhlend*, we see the emergence of an individual from confinement, a lifting of dejection and a rejuvenation of spirit (see fig.3.):



Fig.3.

The term 'Internationale' is a part of political philosophy which has a socialist expression to it, as it decodes the system of power from the autocratic hegemony of a particular nation to include the working class of all countries. It defies the identity inside the national boundaries and proves nationalism to be a defunct sentiment. As the walls of nations fade, the proletariat of all the nations come together to violently overthrow capitalism. The entire song is a noisy kaleidoscope of proletarian posturing, connecting the ontological coordinates of starvation, wretchedness, repression, and oppression with the omnipotence of surplus value. The defiance of the wretched is a violation of hierarchical order and hegemonic decree. The wretched are the dominated

section of society, belonging to the lowest position of the Third Estate of French society in the 1870's. The workers are the dominated section and it is the time for them to shake off their inferior status and seize power:

“Masses, slaves, arise, arise

The world is about to change its foundation

We are nothing, let us be all

Chorus:

This is the final struggle

Let us group together, and tomorrow

The Internationale

Will be the human race” (web)

The repression of the bourgeoisie, clergy and monarchy has thwarted the lives of the working class people; those who protested were punished and were forced into obedience or death. The process of oppression of the dissident takes place in two distinct ways as pointed out by Gramsci in *Selection from the Prison Notebook*:

“...either the dominant ideology strives to contain the subordinate by using political manoeuvrance or if that fails, by using military power to entirely dislodge the threat. Both the intellectual manipulations and the use of violence do nothing but display the power of the state to handle dissidence” (53).

The word ‘Oppression’ in Latin, means being weighed down with physical or mental distress and for centuries human beings with their guarded behavioural patterns have either been an agent of oppression or served as a catalyst. But the question lies in whether the human race alone is to be blamed for such an act of external factors together have crippled and strengthened the success rate of oppression.

Physical, societal, economic, and political environments together give rise to the form of oppression existing in societies, advanced or backward, where we live and interact and this gives rise to various modes of oppression.

In Paris, this phenomenon took the sharpest of forms—mass hunger and civil war. In 1870 Louis Bonaparte launched an attack on Prussia which failed disastrously. The terrible condition of the masses born out of poverty and starvation led to the articulation of this song. The working class tried to organise mass uprisings because of which they were condemned as criminals. Pottier himself was condemned to death in his absence.

Pottier's criticism of the state is Marxian in temperament. In *The Communist Manifesto* Karl Marx points out:

“In the case of the nations which grew out of the Middle Ages, tribal property evolved through various stages - feudal landed property, corporative moveable property, capital invested in manufacture - to modern capital, determined by big industry and universal competition, i.e. pure private property, which has cast off all semblance of a communal institution and has shut out the State from any influence on the development of property. To this modern private property corresponds the modern State, which, purchased gradually by the owners of property by means of taxation, has fallen entirely into their hands through the national debt, and its existence has become wholly dependent on the commercial credit which the owners of property, the bourgeois, extend to it, as reflected in the rise and fall of State funds on the stock exchange.” (98-137)

Pottier's song provides similar formulation demonstrating the appalling condition of the working class as the capitalists of the nation cheat them, Monarchy represses them and clergy restrains them:

“The state represses and the law cheats
The tax bleeds the unfortunate
No duty is imposed on the rich
'Rights of the poor' is a hollow phrase
Enough languishing in custody
Equality wants other laws:
No rights without obligations, it says,
And as well, no obligations without rights.” (web)

Pottier saw in the 1870s the history of oppression and made this anthem of the working class, much in the same way Marx paved the way to communism.

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Melioristic Strain Manifested in Maya Angelo's 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings'

Prof. Prajakta S. Raut

“A Dream is a picture of a possibility. We should have a strong heart and a prepared mind to turn that into reality.”— Pia Wurtzbach, Miss Universe 2015

It is the truth universally acknowledged that life is a dome of many- coloured glass and nothing in life is permanent. *This tide will also pass* is always the undercurrent. Nothing in life is absolute that way. Everything in life is having its respective twists and turns. All days are not Saturdays but succeeded by Sundays. As a result, one can have his/her cake and eat it too, though at different times. In keeping with this new sensibility, the term *melioristic* optimism or for that matter, practical optimism has started a new momentum, believing in taking life as it is, without any glorification or false romanticisation as well as declining somber, gloomy, disheartening pessimism, accrediting the fact that *there is a light at the end of every tunnel and dream*

is a picture of possibilities. With fierce determination and persistent labour, one can turn it into possibilities, thus a compromise between complacent optimism and cynical pessimism. This awakened psyche has altered critics' approach in looking at certain writers with 'melioristic lens', who were otherwise labeled as 'dark, depressed and nihilistic.' Thanks to this 'mingled' outlook, a notable Afro-American writer Maya Angelo has started winning recognition in a more 'healthier ,fresh light' and today her pessimism or negativity is considered to be pessimism for those who refuse to accept Rose with 'thorny' side.

It is the truth universally acknowledged that bearing injustice is a crime. Enduring anybody 's torture is indicative of giving a wrongdoer an opportunity to repeat the wrong. So, rather than 'operate' in the wrong system and falsely rationalize it, some people prefer to opt for *the road not taken*. The contemporary Afro- American literature falls in the second category, getting characterised by the theme of protest, rebellion against the existing white dichotomy and meliorism.

As one reads the modern black literature (may it be novel, drama or poetry), one becomes aware of their awakening consciousness and their confrontation with the white world. Why should there be any confrontation? Most of the critics do deplore the fact that even though the American black lived in America for over three centuries in the midst of white culture, with its social, political and racial discriminations, he was always an alien within that culture and lived a life of indignity, shame and torment. There has not been much significant Change even in this twenty first century in the era of emancipation and glocalisation. And the sorry state is that the confrontation is

still on in the country from where the notion of Independence got firstly propagated. From the very beginning, the blacks in America got treated as 'toilers' by the superior and prosperous whites. The first of these 'toilers' were brought as slaves from Africa, without their choice. In this new land called America, they were segregated and humiliated as "the dark- skinned aliens".¹ (Jackson 3) They had been deprived of everything. What added to their misery was 'slavery' and 'colour- caste', "two white institutions that flourished and successfully collaborated with each other for a definite design and which played a major role in destroying the lives of black Americans and in profaning every claim of justice and equality that American democracy had always hailed." ² (Ostendorf 12)... Contemporary black writers have not failed to reflect this in their literary output. The current research paper hinges round *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. The research paper brings home the realization that the contemporary American black (Wo/ man) is in no state to consider oppression to be the ultimate fact of life. It discusses the axiomatic relationship between literature and society in keeping with the suppression of black identity on account of race bias by ethnocentric, white community. It drives home the traumatic experiences of southern slaves of both sexes. It brings the glaring side of white patriarchy and the system of 'economics of slavery', making black literature 'a literature of necessity' 'apart from being the literature of meliorism due to its attempt to find silver linen amidst aversive crises.

Problem Statement: Deeper penetration in Maya Angelo's autobiography mark a remarkable shift from 'painful pessimism' to 'melioristic optimism'.

Objectives of the Study:

- 1) To make the readers realise that undue expectations are useless and so our aspirations, goals should be with full eye on reality.
- 2) To enlighten the audience about pragmatic optimism which in the long run will accompany them to reach to their destination by making them accept their limitations.

Benefits of the Study:

This research is expected to give following benefits:

1) Theoretical Benefits:

To make the audience take life in entirety, objectively rather than in fragments which will spare them from tantalisation in the wake of complacent (idealistic) optimism.

2) Practical Benefits:

To help readers develop 'softer' personality which is the 'hard' requirement in today's time being the very essence of 'flexible' mindset.

Research Method:

1) Type of the Research:

In this research, the writer resorts to Descriptive- Qualitative method.

2) Type of Data Required for the Study:

a. Primary Data:

The primary data source of the study are the autobiography *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) and the subsequent other autobiographical narratives like *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry like Christmas* (1976), *The Heart of a Woman* (1981) and *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986).

b. **Secondary Data:**

The secondary source of data comprise articles based on melioristic ideology and its practical implications, background information about Afro- American writing with reference to double quest in the wake of 'twice' oppression as 'black' and 'women', ideology of Maya Angelo, Critical appraisal of her work, Interviews by Maya Angelou etc.

3) **Techniques of Data Collection:**

In this case, the writer uses two techniques of collecting data:

a) **Observation:**

This step is used to make our research more penetrative by reaching the depth of the matter which involves actual reading of the works by Maya Angelou.

b) **Library Research:**

This involves reading articles pertaining to melioristic ideology upheld by its proponents, Background information related to twentieth century era as Reactionist, Socio- Cultural forces to have shaped Afro- American writing with a specific linen of dual vs. Double consciousness by Afro-American women writers.

4) **Techniques of Data Analysis:**

Our research paper is Descriptive and Qualitative. The 'melioristic' ideology is elucidated through the portrayal of characters and the destination they reach in the course of time including the choices, mid-way they opt for to make the situation.

Theoretical Expounding of 'Meliorism' "To everyone with a dream, know that your dreams are valid and on your path,

you are never denied and only redirected.”— Catriona Gray, Miss Universe 2018 from Philippines

Before probing into Angelou’s traversing from bearishness to meliorism, one had better try to know what exactly we do mean by meliorism. Etymologically, it is derivative of the Latin word ‘melior’ (better). So, meliorism is based on the belief that the world can be made better by human effort. So, meliorism is based on the belief that the world can be made better by human effort. The proponents of this ideology uphold that humans can, through their interference with processes that would otherwise be natural, produce an outcome which is an improvement over the aforementioned natural one. Thus, for meliorists, progress is a real concept leading to an improvement of the world. Chronologically speaking, the term is reportedly coined by British author George Eliot in her letters published in 1877. Sociologists consider it to be the foundation of contemporary liberal democracy and human rights and is a basic component of liberalism ⁽³⁾, giving space to every individual to ameliorate rather than make him a dweller of ivory tower since one has to work within the system in order to make it work in itself. Thus marking a breakaway from Robert Browning’s Complacent optimism viz. ‘This world’s no blot for us, nor blank; it means intensely and means good’, meliorism make it a point that ‘the world is not always good or beautiful but one can still make it a better place to live and survive at his or her level.’

Thus considered to be a pragmatic optimism by Lester Frank Ward, William James and John Dewey, meliorism stands in the middle between optimism and pessimism and treats the salvation of the world as a probability rather than a certainty or impossibility.⁽⁴⁾ Meliorism has also been used

by Arthur Caplan to describe position in *bioethics* that are in favour of ameliorating conditions which cause suffering even if the conditions have long existed. (for instance, being in favour of cures for common diseases, being in favour of serious anti-aging therapies as they are developed).

A closely related concept discussed by Jean- Jacques Rousseau and Marquis de Condorcet is that of perfectibility of man. From the point of view of meliorists, no one is in his entirety, as a result 'imperfect' in certain respects; that is the reason why a unique amalgam of pros and cons:

"Such is the object of the work I have undertaken; the result of which will be to show, from reasoning and from facts, that no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human faculties that the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; that the progress of this perfectibility henceforth above the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us." ⁽⁵⁾

The reigning *funda* in the form of 'sure shot, show fire' ways of becoming successful professional viz. 'be fierce, fearless and be flawed', 'be what you are but try to give the better version of yourself', 'foreground your pluses in such a way that the people will forget your weaknesses or make your minuses to be your strengths' 'anticipates James' compromising meliorism. Even giving a death blow to obsolete 'ageism' which affects one's self-esteem with 'age is just a number 'or' 'a person in sixties is a young boy of twenties with forty years of maturity' thus respecting one's time zone since everyone is having right to find fulfilment any point in life, are the offshoot of such flexible approach

towards life. So, for such practical optimists, one should never be afraid to dream and work in the direction of 'having cake and eat it, too,' though at different times.

Modern thinkers like Hans Rosling and Max Roser have gone one step ahead to establish this flexible, compromising stand. Roser expressed a melioristic position in the mission statement for Our World in Data.⁽⁶⁾ He said that all three Statements are true at the same time, "The world is much better. The world is awful. The world can be much better."⁽⁷⁾

But it all depends up to how one takes it or perceives. Like William James before him, Rosling also held a halfway position between optimism and pessimism, emphasizing human being's capacity to improve the world ⁽⁸⁾ at his or her pace by being committed to the goals and working 'super hard' to get it.

Literature Review: These melioristic ideas are becoming the *currency* of the present era to such an extent that on literary platform it has led the reappraisal of writers irrespective of time who were once upon a time, were dubbed as 'gloomy doomy'. The case of Afro- American writers like Maya Angelou (Marguerite Johnson, 1928-) is evidential here. In keeping with the dispassionate appraisal of twenty first century, it is getting crystal clear that it was the suppression of black identity on account of 'race' and the system of 'economics of slavery ' sharply conditioning the lives of black men and women and undoubtedly an exploitative mode of production which "dehumanized the African slaves and compelled them to pass generations in a milieu of dispossession."⁹ (Houston 12).Declaration of Langston Hughes, " We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark- skinned selves

without fear or shame we build our temples for tomorrow and we stand on the top of the mountain, free within ourselves “ gave a clarion call to antagonism towards the attitude of white society as regards to their dealing with black. This protest against the historically rationalized society gave birth not only to literature of protest but also to a “ literature of necessity” and subsequently to “ literature of meliorism “, by promoting the image of the ‘New Negro’ as a Rebel who was in no mood to listen to the dictates of the white American racists and “ his newness rejected the standards set by the whites.”¹⁰ (Kiermar 12) The writers like W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, Ilan Toomer, Ralph Ellison undoubtedly contributed in drawing attention of all sane people who called themselves ‘ homogenized’, to the issues of ‘ black culture ‘ But in the writings of Afro- American women writers like Lorraine Hansberry, Ntozake Shange, Toni Morrison, this quest got multiplied as ‘ black’ and ‘ women’ in the wake of ‘ double subjugation ‘ experienced by them of ‘ double patriarchy’ , of race and gender, “The most oppressed group of any oppressed group will be its women, who are twice oppressed. As oppression marks people more militant, women become ‘twice ‘militant, because they are twice oppressed”¹¹ (Hansberry 6)

Since nothing in life is absolute and we human beings have a very limited perception, we get opinionated on the basis of our experiences in life. Maya Angelou, too, was no exception to it. Being a true product of the ‘milieu’, several influences of twentieth century era worked effectively in the formation of Angelou ‘s impression about life mainly as ‘black’ and ‘Woman ‘. Her maiden book *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings* bears testimony to this as her best- selling

autobiographical narrative. It set in motion a writing career to complement her significant work in dance, the theater and the Civil Rights movement. Being a first- person account of her life from the age of three, when she arrived in Stamps, Arkansas, to live with her only child in San Francisco.

In the opening scene, Maya flees in embarrassment from the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in Stamps after failing to remember her Easter Service lines. The succeeding thirty-six Chapters depict her life in Stamps, then in St. Louis, back in Stamps and finally in California through vignettes arranged in chronological order. Angelou relates events from the perspective of the middle-aged adult she was when writing, but she gives them the flavour and personality of the child experiencing them. The resulting combination of a black girl's innocence and the confident, penetrating, sometimes bitter insights of a knowledgeable and successful black woman lend the narrative tension, drama and force.

As is getting manifested, the centre of Angelou 's life in Stamps was the general store owned by her grandmother, Annie Henderson— “Momma “to Maya and her brother Bailey, who was a year older and her closest friend throughout childhood. Maya recalls optimistic mornings when black cotton pickers met at the store and their despairing evening return from the fields. She remembers helping to hide Uncle Willie in a vegetable bin in the store after a condescending Former Sheriff warns, “A crazy nigger messed with a white lady today. Some of the boys'll be coming over here later.” (2) She recalls an incident in front of the store when some white children torment “Momma”, who keeps her dignity but says nothing.

She vividly remembers the Joe Louis- Primo Carnera heavyweight championship boxing match, to which everyone listened on the store radio. When the “Brown Bomber” Louis began to get the upper hand, Angelou recalls: “Some bitter comedian on the porch said, ‘That white man don’t mind hugging that niggah now, I betcha.’” (5) Relief and joy greeted Louis’ knockout victory (“If Joe lost we were back in slavery and beyond help”). Afterward, people who had come some distance to listen to the fight made arrangements to spend the night in town: “It wouldn’t do for a Black man and his family to be caught on a lonely country road on a night when Joe Louis had proved that we were the strongest people in the world” (16).

As one gets to know further, Maya’s father visited Stamps when she was eight- she and her brother never understood why their divorced parents had sent them back to their grandmother- and drove Maya and Bailey to St. Louis to live with their mother. During their year there, Maya was raped by her mother’s live- in lover, who was subsequently murdered, presumably by Maya’s enraged male relatives. Back in Stamps, Maya moped around in sullen silence for a year but she found direction and pride through her acquaintance with the sophisticated and sympathetic Bertha Flowers, a “lady who threw me my first life line...our side’s answer to the richest white woman in town” (24).

Maya even recalls Saturdays, summer picnic fish fries and Holy Roller revival, all of which left special marks in her memory. The Holy Rollers energized the otherwise understandably discouraged black community through oblique criticism of the “white folk”. As the preacher put it: “Charity don’t say, ‘Because I give you a job, you got to bend your knee to me’” (16).

Graduation for the eighth grade class of 1940- “the whole young population had come down with graduation epidemic”- was almost ruined by an insensitive, patronizing white guest speaker. Nevertheless, the ceremony ended in bold jubilation with everyone joining the class valedictorian, who concluded his speech with “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing.” Angelou explains, “It was the poem written by James Weldon Jones. It was the music composed by J. Rosamond Johnson. It was the Negro national anthem.” (27)

Among her last memories of Stamps is the day Momma took her to the local white dentist to have two painful teeth pulled. The dentist, who had borrowed money from Momma during the Depression, refused to treat Maya, telling Momma, “Annie, my policy is I’d rather stick my hand in a dog’s mouth than in a nigger’s” (13). Momma then demanded interest on the money she had previously lent the dentist; with that ten dollars, she took Maya by bus to a dentist in Texarkana.

As the story gets unfolded further, one gets to know that at thirteen, Maya leaves Arkansas for good. Momma took her and Bailey to live in Los Angeles for six months. Momma then returns to Stamps while Maya and Bailey join their mother in San Francisco. It was during World War II and blacks had taken over the formerly Japanese Fillmore section. Maya had an inspiring teacher named Miss Kirwin at George Washington High School and she won a scholarship to study drama and dance at night at the California Labour School. Her mother was married to a wealthy, self- made man named Daddy Clidell. In their building lived black con artists who regaled Maya with wonderful tales of outwitting whites.

Later, one finds, Maya travels to Los Angeles to spend the Summer with her father. Formerly, a doorman at Breakers Hotel in Santa Monica and then a member of the kitchen staff at a navy hospital, Bailey Johnson, Sr., lived in a mobile home with a woman who knifed Maya, who had started a fight when the woman had called Maya's mother a whole. After the fight, Maya decided to strike out on her own and lived for a month in an abandoned automobile in a junkyard in the company of other young blacks doing the same. Upon her return to San Francisco, she became an assistant streetcar conductor. Bailey, who had fought with his mother, left home to start his own life as a dining- car waiter on the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Angelou remembers herself at fifteen as not pretty, nearly six feet tall and flat chested. She was worried about the possibility of being a lesbian and as a result decided to have sex with a handsome young man who lived in her neighbourhood. It was a forgettable encounter but had one long- lasting result: Maya got pregnant. After finishing high school, she gave birth at sixteen. Her recollection of sleeping peacefully and protectively next to her new born son brings the autobiographical narrative to a close.

Melioristic Tinge: A deeper probing in her autobiography makes one garner insights into the American rural black community in the 1930's and its worldview. For white readers, the insights are revelations often surprising and discomfiting, while black readers can see them as an exhilarating, poignant and unprecedented sharing of community memories and experiences. Angelou reveals her childhood dreams of waking up white, childhood envy of girls with "good" hair- "more straight than kinky"-lifelong paranoia about white people and their world and the

pervasiveness of racism in American life. But in the later part, gradually, we witness her sense of pride in the everyday achievements of Momma, Bailey, Sr. Uncle Willie, Bailey Jr and other blacks weighted down with disadvantages. She also notes the pains of being black and female in the South, “The Black woman in the South who raises sons, grandsons and nephews had her heartstrings tied to a hanging noose” (Angelou 35- 180).

The black man’s fate is no better as she observes about her father, “He was a lonely person searching relentlessly in bottles, under women’s skirts, in church work and lofty titles for his ‘personal niche,’ lost before birth and unrecovered since” (Angelou 35-180).

Even about her rape she says, “The act of rape on an eight- year – old body is a matter of the needle giving because the camel can’t. The child gives, because the body can, and the mind of the violator cannot” (Angelou 40-180).

A deeper probing in the autobiography makes one realise that Angelou is not for intellectual cowards and invalids. Her pessimism will be depressing for those who are morally and intellectually incapable of standing shocks in life. She is not complacent or idealistic in her attitude or making tall tales by sitting on higher pedestal. As a result, she does not supinely give way to the cheap optimistic feelings that “*somehow good will only be the final goal of ill.*” She is a sturdy realist who takes life at its face value and what actually is the state of affairs in the world. She considers it simply wish- fulfillment to indulge in cheap optimism, when the forces of evil, sadness and despair overpower her on all sides. It is foolish and unwise for her to be an optimist when She sees the conditions of life in a realistic and faithful light. Such is the realistic vision of life

unfolded by Angelou in her autobiography. She is a pessimist, but her pessimism is more satisfying than the cheap optimism of some thinkers who hesitate to call a spade a spade and gloss over the realities of life by a thin veneer of superficial optimism apart from their building castles in air. Her philosophy and sturdy realism will enable human being to drive away day- dreaming and come to the realities of a hard and stern world. Angelou brings home to us to view life realistically as it is without expecting too much from the world, its Controller who is many a time mutinying and His created beings. So even when we give wings to our dreams and work hard for it, the results are in the hands of that Supreme force. In the case of ordinary mortals, only efforts are in his/ her hands. As a result, withdrawing involvement after the completion of task will be more *melioristic* for such beings.

Angelou is melioristic in the sense she is taking control of the things on her own after accepting the reality that *the world is all about fairness*. She accepts the reality and finds out a way right from her giving back to the offending lady to giving birth to a child without marriage since she did not want to turn into a lesbian. She becomes a mother at quite an early age but brings up a child on her own. Singly she takes up a responsibility by fighting the 'twice' battle on her as 'black' and 'woman', showing her doubly 'militant' spirit. Thus, instead of sitting mopingly and shedding tears, speaking despairily, she is finding out her way to make the situation better. *Life is not always and immensely good but rather painful, with misery and despair* but Angelou is making it somewhat a better and comfortable place to live and survive as 'black' and 'woman' since black women, too,

do have a 'vagina' and blackness is more a 'skin' than a 'coat' for them.

Limitations: The research paper has confined itself only to Maya Angelou and her one maiden autobiography due to its figuring prominently in at least three contexts: In women's writing in general, in the literature of the American black experience and in its significance as autobiography, though she is having four more autobiographical narratives to her credit viz. *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' 'Merry Like Christmas* (1976); *The Heart of a Woman* (1981) and *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986).

Conclusion: In the light of the above discussion, dubbing Angelou to be a pessimist will be rather unsound since Angelou here is not bemoaning over her fate despite being acutely aware of her 'place' in colour bias America. As she put it in her overview of the years portrayed, "The Black female is assaulted in her tender years by all those common forces of nature at the same time that she is caught in the tripartite cross fire of masculine prejudice, white illogical hate and Black lack of power." But her distinctivity is getting manifested in the fact that she is not ready to consider oppression, "masculine prejudice" to be the ultimate fact of life. She refuses to live by disabling definitions that mark women as inferior. She can do this because she possesses an inner strength as a result of her special heritage as a black American woman. In the autobiography she demands attention as an individual, thus joining the voices of other females around the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from George Sand in France to Alfonsina Storni in Argentina and from Virginia Woolf in England to Forugh Farrokhzad in Iran, who had described themselves as "caged

birds”, capable of soaring if given the freedom to do so and showing clearly in their writing to do so.

The above furnished explanation sounds quite satisfying and heartening to establish Angelou’s reputation as a meliorist. If things are what they are, why should one not face them without any illusion? After all, becoming a part of the system in order to make it work in itself with Feasibility and practical flexibility is more the need of time to survive.

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The Politics of Postcolonial Language: Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Decolonising the Mind

Dr. Rakesh Roshan Singh

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is one of the major literary figures in African Literature. He explores the theme of memory, language, culture and power in a postcolonial context. The essay *Decolonising the Mind* blends post-colonial theory, autobiography, African history, pedagogy and literary criticism. Ngugi committed the essay *Decolonising the Mind* "to all those who formulate in African languages, and to all those who over the years have sustained the sublimity of the literature, philosophy, culture and other paragons brought by African languages. The object of this paper is to deal with the issues related to language. Language is a basic question in post-colonial studies. Language performs two activities at the same time. It is a means of communication and also the carrier of culture and both these activities take place almost together. Language imprints honest and true pictures of the physical and mental environment so it is always creative. Now Ngugi discusses the relation between language and colonialism. The colonialist suppresses the slave nation and their only aim to exercise a complete control over these

communities. Their own language which slowly grips their whole personality, they forget their native culture and thus the foreign control becomes more and more powerful. This is what the colonisers have done in Africa.

Language is the central question in post-colonial literature. Language is the 'species-specific' and 'species-uniform' possession of man. Language is a set of traditional communication signs used by humans to communicate in a community. In this essay Thiong'o concentrates his attention to the close relation between language and culture in a nation. He declares- Language, any language, has a dual character: It is the means of communication and carries both culture. In *Decolonising the Mind*, Language exists as culture and Language exists as communication. Thiong'o clarifies the mutual relation between language and culture. The most important quality of language is that it is a means of communication among the humans. It creates culture and in turn culture purifies and promotes language and thus both of them depend on each other for progress. In fact, they are the product of each other. Culture can be carried forward forever only through language. This language, with the passage of time takes the form of images and is written on paper which becomes literature. Thus, language, whether spoken or written has equally great significance in promoting culture.

“Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture: Culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves and affects how they

look at their culture, at their places politics and at the social production of wealth at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings.” (Thiong’o, *Ngũgĩ wa (1986). Decolonising the Mind*)

Communication between humans drives the development of a culture, he argues, but language also carries with it the history, values and aesthetics of a culture. As he puts it, language as culture is the unified retrospection of a people’s experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its origin, development, banking, expression and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next.

In ‘Decolonising the mind’ Thiong’o sees language, as the enabling state of human consciousness rather than history of culture. Language choice and the use of language are central to the people’s self definitions in relation to the entire world. Language has therefore always been at the center of two competing social forces in twentieth century Africa.

Thiong’o discusses the conflict between nation and foreign language. Many post-colonial scholars and writers communicate the colonial practice of commanding the colonizer’s own native languages on the colonized peoples, even prohibiting the use of colonized people’s native language. This foreign language creates greater difficulties for the children of colonized country. The whole realism of that country is rooted out and in colonialism, through conquest and political dictatorship; they control the social production and wealth. They dominate the mind of the colonized because they know that economic and political control cannot be completely effective without mental control. So, the language of the colonialists dominates the

language of the colonized. This creates most damaging influence on communication and medium of education.

“Imposing a foreign language, and suppressing the native languages as spoken and written, were already breaking the harmony previously existing between the African child the three aspects of language. Since the new language as a means of communication was a product of and was reflecting the ‘real language of life’ elsewhere, it could never as spoken or written properly reflect or imitate the real life of that community.” (Lovesey, Oliver (2000). *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. New York: Twayne Publishers. P.125)

This is true when we consider language as communication. When a foreign language is imposed, the spoken and written language of the native country is totally suppressed. Consequently the harmony between the child and his language is completely destroyed. The foreign language does not belong to them so it is not the language of real life of that community. This is why the language of technology always seems to be external. Thus, learning a foreign language for a child is simply a mental activity and not an emotional experience.

Thiong’o says in details about the harm of imposition of a foreign language on children. The aim of the colonialists is to control the wealth of the people of the colony. In fact, they control everything, the entire achievements of the language of real life. In this way, colonialism achieves two things together. They knowingly destroy the culture of those people, including their religion, history, education, art, dances and literature and at the same time, the colonizers promote and celebrate their own language. Thus the language of the colonizers controls the language of the

colonized which is very important aspect for the mental suppression of the colonized. He again discusses the relation of culture and language and that the colonial language is most harmful for the native children. Language is the expression of feelings and experience through images. But culture is not confined only to this expression. Language is undoubtedly expressed through images but through them, the child sees the world. He understands only that has been told to him through such language. The misfortune of the colonial child is that he does not see the world through his own or his national outlook, but through the outlook of the foreigners, the colonizers. The foreign language has been imposed on him and he has to read and understand everything only in that language, so his knowledge is not real but only what has been given to him through foreign language. Thus, his own personality and understanding is completely destroyed.

“Since culture does not just reflect the world in images but actually, through those very images, conditions a child to see that world in a certain way, the colonial child was made to see the world and where he stands in it as seen and defined by or reflected in the culture of the language of imposition.” (Thiong’o, Ngũgĩ wa (1986). *Decolonising the Mind*)

Thiong’o considers English in Africa to be a Cultural Bomb that continues the process of erasing pre-colonial history and identity. The effect of cultural bomb is to eradicate a people’s faith in their names, in their languages, in their surroundings, in their tradition of struggle, in their unity and their capacities.

Thiong’o formulates language as the ground and carrier of culture, the role of the writer in a neo-colonial nation is

immanently political. To write fiction in English is to ‘foster a neocolonial mentality’. On the other hand, writing in African languages is a jab at the systematic oppression of imperialism. He vindicates for African writers to associate with their subversive traditions of anti-imperialism in Africa.

“I believe that my writing in a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialistic struggles of Kenyan and African people... I want (Kenyans) to transcend colonial alienation. We African writers are bound by our calling to do for our languages what Spenser, Milton and Shakespeare did for English; what Pushkin and Tolstoy did for Russian; indeed what all writers in world history have done for their languages by meeting the challenge of creating a literature in them, which process later opens the languages for philosophy, science, technology and all other areas of human creative endeavors.” (Brown, D. A. Maughn (1987). “Decolonising the Mind by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o”. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20 (4): 726–8 doi:10.2307/219661)

Thiong’o also engages with this issue on a distinctly personal level; when he selected to abandon English, he chose to enact out his own theory in practice. As one biographer points out, “Writing in Gikuyu, then, is Ngugi’s way not only of harkening back to Gikuyu traditions, but also of acknowledging and communicating their present.” (P.186; Biersteker, 2008 on history of Gikuyu Literature)

The language as communication through the hand signs and the spoken word historically evolved almost simultaneously but the written language developed much later. The communication between human beings through language is the basis of the evolution of culture. When we

do similar things or actions again and again in similar circumstances, certain patterns, habits, attitudes, experiences and knowledge emerge out of it and they are handed over to the next generation. This becomes the basis of their further development. Slowly all these values accumulate in a very large number. They become the truths of life and control over ideas. We are able to recognize the difference between right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly in the external and internal relations. As time passes, it becomes the way of their life and makes different from others. Thus, they develop their own culture and history. This culture includes moral and artistic values and the spiritual ideology through which they see themselves and their place in the universe. This develops in them a sense that they are the members of human race. All this is possible only by language. It creates culture because it makes it possible to collect the memory of people's experience. So culture is inseparable from language and it makes the growth and transmission of knowledge and experience from one generation to the other.

In most societies the written and the spoken languages are the same, in that they represent each other: what is on paper can be read to another person and be received as that language which the recipient has grown up speaking. In such a society there is broad harmony for a child between the three aspects of language as communication. (Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa (1986). *Decolonising the Mind*)

Thiong'o tells that the domination of European languages is more harmful because the native writers begin to produce literature in European languages. The Africans speaking English were very few in African society. The

literature produced in English created characters- men and women from the peasantry and working class who essentially spoke in English. They are bound in novels and dramas. But they are also hanging between the two identities. They were neither pure Europeans nor real Africans. Their mentality was unstable and they seemed to be searching for their existence. They were torn between two worlds. This effort certainly had a damaging influence on the common Africans and the basic culture of the country. But at the same time, it is also a truth that in spite of all this, the native African languages were not wiped away. It has not ceased to exist; rather the native languages have a powerful existence in the country. This class is not all in all, and African languages are not confined only to them. Thiong'o firmly proves that foreign and colonial languages may have their sway but it is quite temporary. The native culture and native language continue to exist and later on flourish. It is just like a challenge to the colonizers and a warning to those who have discarded their native African language and are running after the European languages.

“This European-language-speaking peasantry and working class, existing only in novels and dramas, was at times invested with the vacillating mentality, the evasive self-contemplation, the existential anguished human condition, or the man-torn-between-two-worlds-facedness of the petty-bourgeoisie. In fact, if it had been left entirely to this class, African languages would have ceased to exist- with independence” (Booth, James (April 1988). “Decolonising the Mind by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o; Wole Soyinka by James Gibbs –Review”. *African Affairs* 87 (347): 292-3.)

Thus Language is a form and bearer of culture. The language of culture and that of communication are identical because communication and culture are the product of each other. Language creates culture which embodies the values of that society and through which man understands himself and his place in universe. So the language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character. So language, culture and history of a particular community can never be separated.

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-4-

**Detailed Analysis of Non-protagonist
Female Characters in Alice Walker's *The
Color Purple*: A Critical Study of
'Womanism'**

Pranita J Shinde

Introduction: Gender equality, men and women having the equal rights and responsibilities, equal opportunities in the society has been a globalized matter of debate for centuries. Women from all over the world have used literature as a voice to preserve their rights as women. Female authors have achieved an extra ordinary success in the field of literature. Alice Walker is also one of the celebrated “black womanist” writers who acquired international recognition for her portrayal of oppressed yet powerful black women in her works.

This paper primarily focuses on the detailed study of non-protagonist women characters in Alice Walker's Pulitzer prize winning novel *The Color Purple* in terms of “Womanism”. The novel not only portrays the struggle of the heroine Celie, but the minor characters Nettie, Sofia,

Odessa, Squeak, Tashi and Shug Avery. The emancipation of black women is not an easy task. Black women have to struggle against white racist culture as well as black patriarchal culture. However, a faceless and subservient woman in *The Color Purple* liberate herself with each other's support. Alice walker stands apart from the plethora of womanist literature for her depiction of transformed strong, independent and valorous women.

Womanism: "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender". When Alice walker quotes this line in her most acclaimed work *In search of our mothers gardens*, she actually tries to emphasise on the severity of Afro-American women's oppression over the mainstream Anglo- American feminism. Alice walker throughout her writing not only focuses on 'gender inequalities' but also raises her voice against discrimination based on race and class. Alice Malesenior Walker born on 9th February, 1944 in Eatonton, Georgia became a prominent figure in Afro American literature through her philosophical stance on issues of black women. The depiction of oppression and struggle of Afro – American people brings the elements of her own personal experiences in Georgia.

Her novel *The Color Purple* is the true representation of "womanism" where she speaks about various female characters as the victims of violence and subjugation. The protagonist Celie, along with various minor characters, such as, Celie's mother, her sister Nettie, her daughter-in-law Sofia, her husband's mistress Shug Avery are women of dissimilar temperaments and diverse familial background. Although being different in various ways, they all fight for the same issue of their self-identity and individuality. All the women in Alice walker's *The Color Purple* improve their

miserable lives and emancipate with each other's support and care. Alice Walker being the voice of black women, contributes in Afro-American harmonious coexistence made many Afro-American female writers, use the concept of "womanism" in their writing which paved the way for self-respected and self-conscious black women.

Afro-American Authors: Alice Walker was an eighth child of her parents who were sharecroppers. Throughout her childhood she has witnessed slavery and oppression in the lives of the black community. Walker met with an accident when she was just eight years old which left her blind in one eye. This incident brought loneliness in her life. However, this solitude made her to read more and more and she started writing her own poems. The years which she has spent in Spelman College in Atlanta during her masters were the most crucial years in her life as she got involved in the civil rights movement. Her first volume of poems 'Once: poems' was published when she had to go through the suffering of aborting her child before marriage. But she did not stop there and proved herself to be a versatile writer. Through her career as a writer she wrote many short stories, poems, novels as well as essays. Walker published her first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* in 1970, but she received the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *The Color Purple* which was a huge success and brought international recognition for her. She has coined the term 'womanism' in her collection of essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Garden*. Throughout her writing Alice Walker not only raised her voice for black women but for the environmental issues as well.

Black people were never privileged to show their talent in literature as it was limited to white Europeans.

Nevertheless, Phillis Wheatley is considered as the first Afro- American writer for his 'Poems on various subjects, religious and morals'. In the beginning the writings of Afro-American authors dealt with the physical and psychological oppression of black people. The women authors such as Harriet Jacob, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Wilson, the female poets, Lucy Terry, Sarah L, Francis E.W Harper through their writing portrayed black women's sufferings which was far more brutal than the sufferings of black men. The Harlem Renaissance has an important role in upliftment of Afro- American literature both for male and female writers. The racial discrimination is always prevalent subject of Afro-American literature as they are getting marginalised treatment by white even today.

In case of black women sexism emerges as severely as racism. However, they were brutally tortured by white slavers as it was easier to torment them and they would passively submit to their white master than the black men.

Militant black were publicly attacking for their racism but they were also establishing the bond of solidarity with them based on their shared acceptance of and commitment to patriarchy the strongest bonding element between the militant black men and white men was their shared sexism- they both believed in the inherent inferiority of woman and supported male dominance. (Hooks 99)

Hence, the condition of black woman was worst not only because of the racism but the united sexism of both white and black men. Womanism is a term coined by Alice Walker the first Afro-American woman winner of Pulitzer prize which deals with both feminism and racism. Her straightforward views on any issue made her one of the

most unique and sharp critics. womanist attributes are something courageous, audacious or being grown up as a responsible person. Womanish is something which is not 'girlish'. Another interpretation of womanism is woman's love for other woman, which can be both sexually or non-sexually. According to Walker it was crucial to understand black feminism differently than white feminism as the negative and stereotypical attitude of Americans towards black women are far more severe than the oppression of white women. Through the concept of womanism walker tries to give voice to black women's power, abilities and their quest for freedom. The term initially has to face criticism from the different parts of the world but it was eventually appreciated and influenced many other areas of studies such as, gender studies.

Representation of Black women in *The Color Purple*: Womanist approach can be seen clearly in her various novels including *The Color Purple*. Right from the minor character of Celie's mother to the protagonist Celie herself had to undergo the dilemma and the experience of powerlessness. In the end, like walker's black women, they all turned out to be self sufficient supporting their own self and each other

Alice Walker's most acclaimed novel *The Color Purple* describes the lives of women in black world. In spite of various hardships, they all rise up against the predicament and their individual struggle with each other's support and self - acknowledgement. Women in *The Color Purple* are subjected to abuse, rape, mutilation, beating, physical as well as psychological suppression which further gives birth to existential distress in women in the novel. According to Jean- Paul Sartre's theory of Existentialism human being is

“subject rather than object”. They must find their self-identity rather than just performing the roles forced upon them. The bonding of sisterhood in the female characters overpowers not only the domestic abuse but their liberation from patriarchal system.

Celie the protagonist of the novel has to suffer oppression right from her childhood which develop a belief in her that in order to survive she has to remain silent and submissive to the men in her family. The only way she can express her pain is by writing letter to God, whom she considers a passive listener and unable diminish her suffering. She always stayed passive against the abuse of her step-father, husband, whom she calls Mister and step-son Harpo. According to Sandra Gilber’s and Susan Gubar’s “theory of Castration” Celie was the victim of lack of social power. The portrayal of protagonist and her transformation in the novel is true representation of the condition of many Afro-American women. Celie being anti- womanist in the beginning was jealous of women whom she wanted to become like. She advised her son Harpo to beat her wife Sofia instead of being obedient to her.

Sofia, a bold and fierce black woman rejects the oppression and is never ready to submit herself to the system where women were completely dependent on whites and their black husbands for survival. She is the one in the novel who believed in the equality in men-women relationship. In order to maintain her dignity and self-respect she has to endure humiliation and physical torture in imprisonment. Sofia broke the tradition of doing as man of the house dictates. Sofia being physically stronger than Harpo resist to disobey the patriarchal ideology and stereotypes. That is the reason of their chaotic marriage

even though they were in deeply love with each other. Harpo's mindset about marriage and expectations from Sofia are the results of the social norms he was living in. The change in Celie's perspective is evident throughout the novel when she actually builds impactful bonding Sofia and stands against patriarchy. Her reunion with Harpo in the end of the novel makes her 'womanist' who values her relationship with husband. At first Celie tried to incite Harpo against Sofia for beating her in order to control her, but gradually due to the hardship they endured a good relationship developed between them.

Womanism which is not only about standing against the oppression but adoring the feminine qualities and strengths of other women is truly seen in the relation between Celie and Sofia. Sofia also shares the same bond of respect and support with her husband's mistress Squeak. Squeak belongs to both black and white race tries to help out Sofia in getting herself released from jail but she was raped and insulted by warden during the task. The rape was not considered for the justice. Bell Hooks rightly tries to describe this condition of Afro-American women where justice against rape was only considered for white women:

As far back as a slavery, white people established a social hierarchy based on the race and the sex that ranked white men first, white women second, though sometimes equal to black men, who are ranked third and black women last. What this means in terms of the sexual politics of rape is that if one white woman is raped by black man, it is seemed as important, as significant than if thousands of black women are raped by one white man (Hooks 53).

This incident made Squeak understand her self-worth and like Sofia she also leaves Harpo, who, she believes, only loves her skin and not her. Like all other women in the novel, Squeak turns out a strong and independent woman with the support of Sofia and Shug.

The arrival of Shug Avery, another important character in the novel and mistress of Celie's husband brought positive changes in Celie's life. Shug helped her begin sexually, emotionally as well as financially independent. She herself being empowered, helped spur confidence in Celie. Despite of living in marginalised society, she is powerful and strong because of her womanist attributes. Her trait of controlling her emotions and relations is exactly opposite of Celie. However, like Celie she also has to undergo suffering in her childhood which leads her to live her life independently. Due to her liberated views she has to leave her house and her children. she also couldn't marry with 'Mister', who is Celie's husband because of his father's prejudices. Her confidence and free spirit attract Celie and made her fall in love with Shug, even though she is her husband's mistress. Shug developed the optimism in Celie when she says God is everything.

"God ain't he or she but it. It don't look like nothing, it ain't picture show, it ain't something you can look at apart from anything else, including yourself" (Walker 195). With this Shug changes Celie's perspective of looking at life. She made her understand that God resides in individuals. One has to be happy in order to feel and find it. This positive outlook of Shug Avery made Celie to break all the clutches of her marriage and run away with Shug in order to live independent and peaceful life.

The mutual love between Nettie and Celie keeps them emotionally connected even when they are physically away from each other for several years. Nettie, despite of being grown up in the same family is the smart and intelligent sister of Celie. She always encouraged her to fight against the maltreatment she receives from her husband. “You got to fight” she always used to say this to her sister when she stayed with her in her house and witnessed the torment she had to bear. Nettie is ambitious and well-read girl who travelled all over the world in order to live liberated life and upliftment of their community. After leaving her sister’s place Nettie chosen her own path and became a teacher to keep herself away from enchained life in her family. Celie’s husband tried all ways to control Nettie but to no avail. She manages to escape from his clutches and builds her own identity with her positive outlook. Nettie tries to contact Celie through her letters but those did not reach to Celie due to her husband. When Celie finally got all the letters she realised that Nettie has experienced all kind of racial and patriarchal oppression which she was experiencing in her home.

Nettie’s loneliness is depicted through her letters when she says, “when I don’t write to you I feel I feel as bad as I do when I don’t pray, locked up in myself and chocking on my own heart. I am so lonely, Celie” (Walker 117). The letters shared by these two sisters represents their unending love. The letters to Nettie and the God were symbol of hope and resolution in Celie’s life. Nettie was the one who took care of Celie’s children Adam and Olivia unknowingly as they were adopted by her friends, minister Samuel and his wife Corrine. The children who were separated from Celie after their birth by her step-father. Although Nettie was unaware

about her relationship with she loved both of them and eventually realises the truth from Samuel.

Unlike Celie her daughter Olivia was liberated and sharp girl. Tashi is another Olinka girl where Nettie and her friends were living. She befriends Celie's daughter Olivia and also marries her son Adam. Tashi, despite of being bold and intelligent, had to undergo suffering of female circumcision and facial scarification. She could not even continue her learning as Olinka culture doesn't believe in educating girls. This actually means they deny giving power and authority to women over men. But she was so keen to learning that after completing all the household cores in the end of the day she secretly learns from Olivia. The introduction of western culture made her fond of its modernity which eventually resulted in her marriage to Adam. The way Shug changed the perspective of Celie's life, Olivia also helped Tashi to break the clutches of Olinka's stereotypical culture and transformed her life completely.

Alice walker's most of the works give us the true picture of patriarchal structure of Afro- American society and its effects on women's position. After examining each female character, it is seen that there are women like Shug Avery, Sofia. Nettie who actually proved themselves strong in the male dominating culture by standing independently and acquiring self-entirety on their own. These women not only transformed their own lives but also inspired others for development and liberation. The bonding between Celie and Shug, Sofia and Squeak, Nettie and other Olinka women are an essence of the womanist colour. The friendship and bond of sisterhood among all the female characters in the novel redirects their lives to emancipation. The different types of female ties such as motherly, sisterly,

sexual or simply friendship is found throughout the novel which helps in putting fire in them against the abusers. Women in the novel not only arouse for their freedom but they also make the men in their lives re-examine their behaviour. According to Walker purple colour symbolises royalty, authority and dignity which all the women attains in the end of the novel. *The Color Purple* is a successful tale of the womanist ideology of recuperating black persecuted females. Their self-cognizance eventually gave new direction to their lives as well as the future generations.

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Assertion and Resistance: A Study of *Things Fall Apart* as a postcolonial Text

Dr T Eswar Rao

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe stands as a seminal work in postcolonial literature, offering a poignant exploration of the complex dynamics between assertion and resistance within the context of the African experience during the colonial era. Published in 1958, Achebe's magnum opus meticulously examines the transformative impact of European colonialism on traditional Igbo society in Nigeria. In this postcolonial narrative, the themes of assertion and resistance emerge as pivotal lenses through which the intricate interplay between cultures, identities, and power structures is scrutinized. Postcolonial literature, a genre that emerged in the aftermath of decolonization, provides a critical examination of the consequences of colonial rule on colonized societies. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* epitomizes this genre, serving as a nuanced and richly textured exploration of the clash between indigenous cultures and the encroaching forces of European imperialism. The novel unfolds against the backdrop of historical and cultural shifts, capturing the profound

implications of colonial intrusion on the fabric of African societies.

Central to the narrative is the theme of assertion, embodied by characters such as Okonkwo, who symbolizes the unwavering commitment to traditional Igbo values and the assertive defense of cultural heritage. The novel portrays the resilience of the Igbo people in maintaining their cultural identity amidst the winds of change brought by colonial forces. It delves into the pride, social structures, and individual agency that define the assertive spirit within the indigenous community. Resistance, another key theme, surfaces in the face of colonial intrusion. The Igbo people resist the imposition of foreign ideologies, institutions, and religions, creating a narrative tension that underscores the struggle for autonomy and cultural preservation. Achebe deftly navigates the complexities of spiritual and cultural resistance, portraying characters that become the vanguards of tradition against the encroachment of colonial influences. This article seeks to unravel the intricacies of assertion and resistance in *Things Fall Apart* as emblematic of the broader postcolonial discourse. By delving into the characters' struggles and the clash of worldviews, this exploration aims to shed light on the profound consequences of colonial encounters. Understanding the assertive efforts to uphold cultural identity and the poignant resistance against external forces provides invaluable insights into the resilience of marginalized societies facing the challenges of colonialism. Utilizing a postcolonial literary analysis framework, this study employs close textual examination, historical contextualization, and theoretical perspectives to dissect the themes of assertion and resistance in "Things Fall Apart." By examining the characters' motivations,

cultural contexts, and the broader socio-political landscape, this research aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how Achebe's narrative serves as a microcosm for the broader complexities inherent in postcolonial societies. In essence, this exploration endeavours to contribute to the on-going discourse on postcolonial literature, underscoring the enduring relevance of *Things Fall Apart* as a profound study of assertion and resistance in the face of colonial transformations.

Cultural Pride and Identity: In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the theme of cultural pride and identity emerges as a central pillar around which the narrative revolves. The protagonist, Okonkwo, becomes the embodiment of the Igbo people's unwavering commitment to their cultural heritage, offering a compelling exploration of the intricate relationship between individual identity and the broader communal ethos. Okonkwo, a fierce and resolute warrior, represents the epitome of Igbo masculinity and the embodiment of cultural pride. His unyielding adherence to traditional values, such as bravery, strength, and honour, underscores the importance of these principles within the fabric of Igbo society. Okonkwo's character serves as a microcosm of the collective cultural identity, emphasizing the pride the Igbo people take in their customs.

The novel meticulously portrays various rituals, ceremonies, and traditions that form the tapestry of Igbo culture. From the elaborate wrestling matches to the rituals surrounding the yam harvest, Achebe illustrates how these cultural practices are not merely customs but integral components of the people's identity. The meticulous detailing of these rituals underscores the profound sense of

pride the Igbo people derive from their unique way of life. The social structure within the Igbo community is defined by a meticulous set of roles and responsibilities. Okonkwo's ascent within this structure, from a struggling youth to a respected warrior and leader, highlights the significance of societal roles and the pride associated with fulfilling them. The intricate web of relationships and responsibilities reflects the communal commitment to maintaining a cohesive cultural identity. Achebe's use of language is crucial in conveying the nuances of cultural pride. The incorporation of Igbo proverbs, idioms, and linguistic peculiarities not only enriches the narrative but also serves as a linguistic assertion of the Igbo identity. Language becomes a tool through which the characters express their values, wisdom, and cultural distinctiveness, reinforcing the pride they take in their linguistic heritage. The novel delves into the symbolism embedded in art and artefacts, such as the intricately carved wooden icoing and the symbolic weaving of the traditional wrestling headgear. These artistic expressions serve as tangible manifestations of cultural pride, each piece carrying layers of meaning that connect individuals to their heritage and signify the enduring strength of Igbo traditions. The Igbo people's close relationship with the natural world is depicted as a source of cultural pride.

The harmonious coexistence with the environment, the agricultural practices, and the symbolism attached to natural elements all contribute to the people's profound connection to their land and traditions. This ecological symbiosis becomes a source of pride and identity. In essence, the theme of cultural pride and identity in *Things Fall Apart* transcends individual characters, weaving

through the very fabric of Igbo society. Achebe's narrative underscores the significance of cultural pride as a driving force that shapes individual destinies, interpersonal relationships, and the collective resilience of a people determined to preserve their identity in the face of external challenges.

Social Hierarchy and Power Dynamics:

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* intricately examines the social hierarchy and power dynamics within the Igbo society of pre-colonial Nigeria. Through vivid characterization and nuanced storytelling, Achebe illuminates the complex interplay of status, authority, and tradition that govern the lives of the novel's characters. At the apex of Igbo society stands the revered elders and titled men who wield considerable influence and authority. Chiefs like Okonkwo's father, Unoka, and village leaders such as Ogbuefi Ezeudu exemplify this traditional hierarchy, their decisions and pronouncements carrying significant weight within the community. Their authority is rooted in age, wisdom, and adherence to cultural norms. Within the broader societal framework, clan affiliations and familial ties play a crucial role in determining one's social standing. Achebe explores the intricate dynamics of lineage and kinship, depicting how familial connections confer both privileges and obligations. Characters like Okonkwo strive to elevate their family's status through achievements and displays of prowess, navigating the delicate balance of power within the clan. Igbo society is patriarchal, with men holding primary positions of authority and decision-making power. Women, while essential to the functioning of the community, are often relegated to domestic roles and subjected to the authority of their male counterparts.

Achebe portrays the tensions and inequalities inherent in these gender dynamics, highlighting the constraints placed upon women's agency and autonomy. Rituals and ceremonies serve as mechanisms through which the social hierarchy is reinforced and maintained. The annual wrestling matches, for instance, provide a platform for young men to showcase their strength and skill, thereby earning respect and recognition within the community. Similarly, rites of passage, such as the ceremonial circumcision of young boys, mark significant transitions in social status and responsibilities. Bakhtin adds that in an ideal novel which has a proper language of non-abstract nature and reflects characters' active engagement "with the world and with each other" in a proper context (Sandler 156).

Achebe also explores the dynamics between insiders and outsiders, shedding light on the treatment of marginalized groups within Igbo society. Characters like the *osu*, considered outcasts due to their association with the deities, are relegated to the fringes of society, denied full participation in community life. Their status reflects the entrenched social hierarchies and the stigma attached to those deemed inferior or impure. The arrival of colonial forces disrupts the traditional power dynamics within Igbo society, introducing new hierarchies based on racial superiority and economic exploitation. European colonizers usurp indigenous authority structures, undermining the traditional institutions of governance and imposing their own systems of control. This colonial intrusion precipitates a profound upheaval in the existing power dynamics, ultimately leading to the disintegration of traditional social structures. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe skilfully navigates

the intricacies of social hierarchy and power dynamics, offering a nuanced portrayal of a society grappling with internal tensions and external pressures. Through the lens of his characters' experiences, he exposes the fragility of established power structures and interrogates the forces that shape individual agency and collective identity in the face of change.

Resistance against Change: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* vividly portrays the resistance against change as a central theme, depicting the tensions that arise when traditional societies confront the encroachment of external forces, particularly European colonialism. Through the experiences of its characters and the evolution of Igbo society, Achebe explores the complexities of resistance and the profound consequences it engenders. The primary form of resistance in the novel revolves around the preservation of Igbo cultural identity in the face of colonial intrusion. Characters like Okonkwo vehemently oppose the imposition of Western values, institutions, and religion, viewing them as existential threats to their way of life. The Igbo people's steadfast commitment to their customs, language, and spiritual beliefs becomes a defiant assertion of their cultural autonomy. Achebe depicts the Igbo people's resistance to the spread of Christianity as a symbolic battleground for the clash of worldviews. Despite the missionaries' zealous efforts to convert them, many Igbo individuals, including prominent figures like Ezeulu, staunchly reject the foreign religion, recognizing its role in eroding their indigenous spirituality and social cohesion. The introduction of colonialism disrupts the traditional social order within Igbo society, sparking tensions and conflicts among its members. The imposition of colonial

laws, taxation, and administrative structures undermines the authority of indigenous leaders and traditional institutions, leading to resistance and unrest among the populace. In some instances, resistance against change manifests in armed conflict and acts of defiance. The Igbo people, feeling threatened by the encroachment of colonial forces, engage in sporadic acts of resistance, including the killing of colonial representatives and the destruction of their property. These acts of defiance reflect the desperation and determination of a people fighting to protect their autonomy and sovereignty.

Achebe also explores the phenomenon of cultural revivalism as a form of resistance against colonial hegemony. Characters like Obierika and Nwoye's conversion to Christianity initially signal a departure from traditional beliefs, but ultimately, they find themselves drawn back to their roots, embracing aspects of Igbo culture as a means of asserting their identity in the face of external pressures. Despite their resistance, the Igbo people ultimately face tragic consequences as their world is irrevocably altered by colonialism. The novel's title, *Things Fall Apart*, encapsulates the devastating impact of cultural disintegration and societal upheaval wrought by the collision of indigenous traditions and colonial forces. The resistance against change, while valiant, proves insufficient to stem the tide of external influence, leading to the fragmentation and destruction of the Igbo way of life. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe masterfully captures the complexities of resistance against change, highlighting the resilience and defiance of a people confronting the forces of colonialism. Through his nuanced portrayal of characters and events, he underscores the enduring struggle for

cultural preservation and the profound human cost of resistance in the face of inexorable change.

Colonial Intrusion: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* meticulously depicts the profound impact of colonial intrusion on traditional Igbo society, illuminating the complexities of cultural collision, power dynamics, and resistance. Through vivid storytelling and nuanced characterization, Achebe exposes the disruptive forces unleashed by European colonialism and their far-reaching consequences for the indigenous population. Colonial intrusion is characterized by the imposition of European values, ideologies, and institutions upon Igbo society. Missionaries, traders, and colonial administrators introduce Christianity, capitalism, and Western education, challenging the existing socio-cultural norms and spiritual beliefs of the Igbo people. The clash of worldviews between the indigenous culture and colonial ideologies forms the crux of the novel's narrative tension. Colonialism brings with it economic exploitation as European powers seek to extract resources and exploit labour from colonized territories. Majumder refers to E. B. Tyler, an anthropologist, whose writing is thought to be objective. Tyler writes

The tourists, after reaching the impassable countries [in Africa] and seeing no police system available in their own countries, come to the direct conclusion that the cannibals live there as their wishes. We think it is a wrong belief, because, in these 'uncivilized' countries there are severe rules and regulations in each stapes of life. (p. 137)

In *Things Fall Apart*, the arrival of colonial traders disrupts the traditional economic system, introducing a

market economy that undermines the self-sufficiency and communal ethos of Igbo society. The commodification of goods and labour leads to unequal trade relations and economic dependency, exacerbating social inequalities within the community. The colonial intrusion undermines the traditional authority structures within Igbo society, challenging the legitimacy and autonomy of indigenous leaders. European administrators and missionaries usurp power from local chiefs and elders, imposing colonial laws, taxation, and administrative systems that erode the authority of traditional rulers. This erosion of indigenous governance leads to internal strife and social unrest as the community grapples with the loss of its autonomy.

Colonialism precipitates cultural erosion as indigenous traditions, language, and customs come under threat from Westernization. The introduction of Christianity and Western education leads to the marginalization of indigenous spiritual practices and languages, fostering a sense of cultural dislocation and identity crisis among the younger generation. Achebe portrays the complexities of cultural hybridization as the Igbo people navigate between their traditional heritage and the allure of Western modernity. Colonial intrusion triggers resistance and conflict as the Igbo people grapple with the loss of their autonomy and cultural sovereignty. Characters like Okonkwo and Obierika embody the spirit of defiance, resisting the encroachment of colonial forces through acts of defiance, rebellion, and armed resistance.

Okodo points to the relationship between the cultural performance and religion of the Igbo. He says;

If the dramatic performances of Greek classical culture originated from ritual performances in honour of gods,

Dionysus and Appolos, why would the ritual performances of Igbo gods, nay all the gods in Africa, be rejected. (p. 131)

. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe provides a searing indictment of colonial intrusion, offering a powerful critique of the exploitative and destructive forces unleashed by European imperialism. Through his vivid portrayal of characters and events, he underscores the complexities of colonial encounters and their enduring consequences for colonized societies.

Spiritual and Cultural Resistance: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* intricately examines the theme of spiritual and cultural resistance as indigenous communities grapple with the encroachment of European colonialism. Through nuanced characterization and rich narrative detail, Achebe illuminates the ways in which individuals and communities assert their cultural identity and autonomy in the face of external pressures. The novel portrays the resilience of indigenous spiritual practices in the face of colonial intrusion. Characters like Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, embody the steadfast commitment to traditional religious beliefs and rituals. Despite the spread of Christianity, individuals like Ezeulu continue to uphold the spiritual traditions passed down through generations, resisting the imposition of foreign religious ideologies.

Achebe vividly depicts the importance of rituals and ceremonies in maintaining cultural cohesion and spiritual connection within Igbo society. From the annual Feast of the New Yam to the rituals surrounding childbirth, marriage, and burial, these ceremonies serve as tangible expressions of cultural identity and resistance against colonial influences. The meticulous preservation of these

rituals becomes a form of defiance against the erosion of indigenous traditions. Oral tradition and storytelling emerge as powerful tools of resistance in “Things Fall Apart.” Characters like the village grits and elders pass down ancestral wisdom, myths, and legends, preserving the collective memory of the community. Through storytelling, the Igbo people assert their cultural heritage and challenge the dominant narratives propagated by colonial authorities. Language serves as a potent form of resistance against colonial hegemony. Achebe incorporates Igbo proverbs, idioms, and linguistic nuances throughout the narrative, affirming the richness and complexity of the indigenous language. By centring the narrative in the Igbo language, Achebe asserts the importance of linguistic autonomy and cultural pride, resisting the linguistic imperialism imposed by colonial languages like English. The novel explores the tensions surrounding colonial education as characters grapple with the assimilationist agenda of missionary schools. While some individuals, like Nwoye, embrace Western education as a means of social mobility, others, like Okonkwo, vehemently oppose it, viewing it as a tool of cultural erasure. The resistance against colonial education reflects the broader struggle to maintain cultural integrity and autonomy.

Clash of Worldviews: Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* masterfully navigates the clash of worldviews between traditional Igbo culture and the ideologies introduced by European colonialism. Through vivid characterization and rich narrative detail, Achebe illuminates the complexities of cultural encounters, highlighting the tensions, conflicts, and consequences that arise when disparate belief systems collide. The novel portrays the intricate cosmology and

spiritual beliefs of the Igbo people, rooted in a deep reverence for ancestral spirits, deities, and natural forces. Concepts such as chi (personal god) and ogbanje (spirit child) shape the worldview of the characters, influencing their actions, decisions, and perceptions of the world around them. Achebe underscores the profound spiritual connection that underpins Igbo culture, presenting it as a fundamental aspect of identity and communal cohesion. Colonial intrusion brings with it the introduction of Christianity and Western ideologies, which challenge the indigenous belief systems of the Igbo people. Missionaries like Mr. Brown and Reverend Smith seek to convert the indigenous population to Christianity, framing their religious teachings as superior to indigenous spiritual practices. The clash between Christianity and traditional beliefs creates a rift within the community, leading to ideological divisions and conflicts. Achebe explores the dichotomy between tradition and modernity as characters grapple with the competing demands of cultural preservation and social change. While some individuals, like Okonkwo, staunchly adhere to traditional values and customs, others, like Nwoye, are drawn to the promise of Western education and Christianity.

Consequences of Resistance: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* portrays the consequences of resistance against colonial intrusion and societal change with profound clarity. Through vivid characterization and rich narrative detail, Achebe illustrates the complexities and repercussions of challenging established power dynamics and cultural norms. Resistance against colonial intrusion triggers internal strife and conflict within Igbo society. Characters like Okonkwo and Obierika, staunch defenders of

traditional values, clash with individuals who embrace Christianity and Western education. These ideological divisions lead to tensions, arguments, and ruptures within families and communities, fracturing the social fabric and undermining collective solidarity. Characters that resist colonial influence often face marginalization and stigmatization within their own communities.

The OSU, for example, are ostracized and discriminated against due to their association with indigenous deities. Similarly, individuals who reject Christianity or refuse to adopt colonial practices may be labelled as backward or primitive, facing social exclusion and ridicule from their peers. The resistance against colonialism often exacts a heavy personal toll on individuals who dare to defy the status quo. Characters like Okonkwo, who adamantly oppose colonial influence, endure personal sacrifices and tragic consequences as they struggle to uphold their principles. Okonkwo's ultimate downfall serves as a poignant reminder of the high price of resistance in a changing world. Despite their efforts, the resistance against colonial intrusion ultimately proved futile in stemming the tide of change. As colonial influence spreads, indigenous traditions, languages, and spiritual practices come under threat, facing gradual erosion and extinction. If Okonkwo is a tragic hero, his hamartia is his inability to comprehend the new emerging social discourse and how he can establish a stable position for himself through his true voice. Choosing the wrong way, he commits suicide which is an unforgivable sin in his religion. However focusing on him and his shortcomings, a reader should not forget that the true tragedy was in fact brought about by "colonial

intolerance” (Levine 96) leaving no room for Igbo voices to be expressed.

The novel depicts the loss of cultural heritage as a profound tragedy, signalling the irreversible impact of colonialism on indigenous identities. Resistance against colonialism exacerbates socio-economic disparities within Igbo society. While some individuals benefit from collaboration with colonial powers, others suffer economic deprivation and social marginalization as a result of their resistance. The imposition of colonial economic systems and land appropriation further entrenches inequalities, widening the gap between the privileged and the disenfranchised. The resistance against colonial intrusion ultimately leads to the loss of indigenous autonomy and sovereignty. European colonial powers impose their own systems of governance, laws, and administrative structures, usurping the authority of traditional leaders and undermining indigenous institutions. The erosion of self-determination leaves indigenous communities vulnerable to exploitation and domination by external forces. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe poignantly depicts the consequences of resistance as a central theme that underscores the complexities and tragedies of colonial encounters. Through his nuanced portrayal of characters and events, he invites readers to reflect on the enduring legacy of resistance and its implications for individual agency, cultural survival, and collective resilience in the face of external pressures.

Through acts of defiance, armed resistance, and cultural revivalism, the Igbo people assert their agency and contest the dehumanizing effects of colonial hegemony. Achebe skilfully navigates the complexities of postcolonial encounters, illuminating the clash of worldviews, power

dynamics, and cultural transformations that shape the lives of characters and communities. The novel serves as a microcosm of broader historical processes, inviting readers to grapple with the enduring legacies of colonialism and the complexities of cultural exchange, adaptation, and resistance in a globalized world. *Things Fall Apart* serves as a potent call for cultural understanding, empathy, and empowerment in the face of colonial legacies and contemporary challenges. By centring the narrative in the experiences of marginalized voices and communities, Achebe challenges readers to confront the injustices of the past and to work towards building inclusive societies rooted in mutual respect, dialogue, and solidarity. More than six decades after its publication, *Things Fall Apart* continues to resonate as a seminal work in postcolonial literature, inspiring critical reflection, dialogue, and activism. Its exploration of assertion and resistance remains as relevant as ever, offering profound insights into the complexities of cultural identity, power relations, and human agency in a rapidly changing world.

Things Fall Apart stands as a timeless testament to the enduring struggles for cultural pride, autonomy, and resistance in the face of colonialism and societal change. Achebe's powerful narrative invites readers to engage critically with the complexities of postcolonial encounters and to strive towards a future rooted in justice, equality, and cultural pluralism.

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Postcolonial Writings by Muslim Women: An Overview of The Hours Past Midnight, My Feudal Lord, Blasphemy, and Madras on Rainy Days

M. M. Sohil

Introduction

The final hour of colonialism has struck, and millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia, and Latin America rise to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination. (Che Guevara, speech to the United Nations, December 11, 1964)

Rajathi Salma: Rajathi Salma is basically a Tamil Muslim woman. She was born in 1968 in Tamil Nadu a state of India. There are various books in Tamil language authored by her. She is a social worker, a good speaker and also a columnist. She studied only up to the ninth class. At the age of seventeen she has started writing seriously. After she gradually started doing social activities and participated in politics. Rajathi Salma became the sarpanch of her village for the first time in 2002. She gave her first interview and came out in the public. She was very much afraid of her

husband and her family. Her interview was published in the leading magazine of the state.

The works of Rajathi Salma have been translated in English language. She has written novels and poetry in Tamil language and all her literary works have been translated from Tamil to English language. She became famous due her novel *The Past Hours Midnight* and it has been short listed for Crossword Book Prize and long-listed for the Man Asian Prize. Salma constantly struggled for her survival as writer and as an activist for the cause of women society in her village. She has contributed a lot for her society and to the Tamil literature as well as in English literature.

Works

- Irandaam Jaamanglin Kathai (*The Hours Post Midnight*).
- Salma: *Filming a Poet in her Village*, 2013.
- Pachchai Devathi (*English as a Green Angel*).
- Manaamiyangal (*English as the Dreams*).

Tehmina Durrani: Tehmina Durrani is a Pakistani woman writer, women's right activist and author of several books. She was born on 18 February in 1953. Her first book "My Feudal Lord" caused discord in Pakistan's society by describing her abusive and traumatic marriage to Ghalum Mustafa Khar. Durrani was born in an educated and influential family. She is the daughter of a former Governor of State Bank of Pakistan and she is the granddaughter of Nawab Sir Liakat Hayat Khan the Prime Minister of Patiala State. She was married to Anees Khan at the age of seventeen and they had one daughter. Durrani and Khan got divorced in 1976. Durrani married Khar, who was called Lion of the Punjab, who had been married five times.

Durrani and Khar had four children. After thirteen years they separated.

The autobiographical truth and fictional aspects combined bravely by Tehmina Durrani in her writings to bring forth the unknown realities and unspoken plight of suppressed women in the male hegemonic society. Durrani has presented her ironical life story and relationship with her husband Khar in her autobiographical novel *My Feudal Lord*. This novel is the real picture of the Pakistani politicians and the role of husband in the muslim country. Women always find her in the first line of those who work for the welfare of young muslim girls and their education. In her another novel *Blasphemy* she has revealed the innermost thoughts, hidden experiences, secret fantasies, family issues and unbelievable facts of muslim male dominated society of the modern world.

Works

- *My Feudal Lord*, 199.
- *A Mirror to the Blind*, 1990.
- *Blasphemy*, 2000.
- *Happy things in Sorrow Times* 2013.

Samina Ali: Samina Ali is an India author born in India Hyderabad in 1969. She immigrated to United State of America. Her debut novel, *Madras on Rainy Days*, she served as the Curator of Muslima, (Muslim Women's Arts and Voices) an international Museum of Women. Samina Ali is social activist in America and is running some non-profitable organizations for the Cause of Muslim women in America. She is the founder of American Muslim Feminist Organization Daughters of Hajar. A public intervention was held by Samina Ali in 2017, under the title what does the Quran say about a Muslim woman's hijab? At the Tedx of

the University of Nevada, she has explained the bases of hijab and has clearly described the limitation and probation of wearing of a bra by Muslim women. We find that her video has been viewed more than eight million people across the world by 2020.

Works

- Madras on Rainy Days. 2004.

A Critical Review of Postcolonial Literature: Much of the existing literature on Muslim women in India is confined to a consideration of their status and role in the context of Islam and its tenets on women, which include customs and practices which differentiate between the status of men and women. (Lateef 14)

The study is undertaken to analysis the critical review of the novels of the post colonial writers and it is expected that these novelists has been taken to give a new insights to the readers and researchers. These novels of post colonial writers have been chosen to examine the issues presented by the writers. These novels are *The Hours Past Midnight*, *My Feudal Lord*, *Blasphemy*, and *Madras on Rainy Days*. Literature is the product of the society and it is considered as the reflection of social and cultural aspects of a society. This novel was written in Tamil language titled as (*Irandaam Jaamangalin Kathai*) later on it was translated into English, (*The Hours Past Midnight*). It is all about the Muslim women and their social circumstances and traditional values of a society. Literature is possible within a society and is written about the social, cultural, political, economic, and religious activities of the people living together in a society. The author has clearly stated the issues like marriages, divorces, freedom expression and social restriction applied on women and young girls. These

issues have been described by characters themselves in the novel *The Hours Past Midnight*. The novel itself provides a clear blueprint of social issues and problems faced by women in a patriarchal society. This novel is taken to study the characters and their related issues presented by the author in order to give new insights to the readers.

The Hours Past Midnight: The theme of freedom of expression is hidden in *The Hours Past Midnight*. The characters in the novel have expressed their great concerns about the freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of dignity, freedom of love, after one another in the novel. The restrictive socialization and ill practices induced young girls like Madina Firdous, Fatima and Rabia to take harsh steps in the life. The different norms are reflected through the social emendation of Fatima, who elopes with a Hindu man, and consequently, her mother's banishment from the community. Nobody questions men like Sikander, Karim and Abdullah for their illicit relationships with several women. Men are free. They do not have any seclusion and subsequent emancipation like women. The female body becomes a site of ceaseless pregnancies and childbirth. Women like Saitthoon and Raihaina had to bear endless children at the cost of their health. The masculine control over women's bodies is also reflected through the exploitative relationship between Mariyayi and her employer, Karim. The different norms are allied with the stigma associated with divorced or widowed women like Firdaus, Maimoon and Sherifa, who also face social exclusion and confinement. We have divorced women like Firdaus, Maimoon and Sherifa, women who have faced social restriction are Madina Firdous, Fatima and Rabia and other characters who suffered through various other social

issues are Firdaus, Zahura, Rubia, Wahidia, Moimina, Sherifa, Saitthoon and Raihaina. This novel is also considered as autobiography of the author Salma who has faced such problems in her childhood. The novel is the reflection of Tamil Muslim society and is conditioned by social and culture aspects of Muslim women. Salma's Firdaus, Zahura, Rubia, Wahidia, Moimina and numerous other characters suffer unanimously in the patriarchal setup but cling tightly to their immediate families. In *The Hours past Midnight* Salma has voiced the expectations of new generation who are exposing social impositions as Rabia who protests against her mother Zohura and Firdous and Madina protesting against social norms and religious scripture in order to enjoy their will.

My Feudal Lords and Blasphemy: Durrani a Pakistani women writer she became very famous among women of the Muslim society by her publications for her works like the *Blasphemy* and *My Feudal Lord*. The autobiographical truth and fictional aspects combined bravely by Tehmina Durrani in her writings to bring forth the unknown realities and unspoken plight of suppressed women in the male hegemonic society. *My Feudal Lord* is the true archetype of women's plight and their repressed condition. In her another novel *Blasphemy* she has revealed the innermost thoughts, hidden experiences, secret fantasies, family issues and unbelievable facts of Muslim male dominated society of the modern world. Durrani has not only depicted the horrific story of Peer and other characters through the publication of *Blasphemy* but she has also portrayed the real picture of her problems and issues faced by her living with her ex husband Shabaz Shareif in a novel namely *My Feudal Lord*. One of the important and interesting fact about the

post colonial writers is that they always tell us about their own experiences in the form of autobiography or their personal issues from other countries of the world. Post colonial writers always portrayed the real picture of the society.

All the three writers Tehmina Durrani, Rajathi Salma and Samina Ali have dealt strongly with the issues, social debates, and other social stabilization factors. Which they agree is woman who though laden with male atrocities performs their roles effectively as family burden. The role of anchors and all these characters in the novels like *The Past Midnight Hours*, *My Feudal Lord*, *Blasphemy*, and *Madras on Rainy Days* who dreams high for all the female population. Rajathi Salma, Tehmina Durrani, and Samina Ali have portrayed the good as well as bad ethical review of their society differently. Rajathi Salma has given space to rural and illiterate characters in her novel where as Tehmina Durrani have developed the worst spirit and ethos of her society through elite, urban, and rural characters. Characters in the novel of Rajathi Salma have voiced out differently we have Firdaus, Zahura, Rubia, Wahidia, Moimina and numerous other characters suffer from varied social, cultural, and patriarchal crises. Samina Ali and Tehmina Durrani have dealt with the theme of self realization, self esteem, and empowering the women in the present societies.

Madras on Rainy Days: *Madras on Rainy Days* depicts elaborately the social protocols of the zenana sub-culture. The five-day's ceremony lush with the rich traditions of the families“ Muslim culture vividly dwells into the elaborate marital festivities within the zenana culture in the Indian walled city of Hyderabad. (Achmare, 4)

Samina Ali was born in India and spent her childhood spending part of each year in India and part in the United States. She attended school in both countries and became fully immersed in both cultures, and her writing reflects this unique cultural experience. That has won the award “the Prix du Premier Roman Estranger award” from France. Samina Ali’s first novel is Madras on Rainy Days, which was published in 2004. It is considered as a semi-autobiographical novel of Ali. The story of the novel is about a young woman who belongs to both the countries India and United States of America. She after returning from United States America marries to a stranger person in Hyderabad India.

Madras on Rainy Days is a book that talks about the condition of the women in general and the Muslim women in particular. (RATHO, P 1)

We find that the character of Layle in the novel is westernized and has affiliation to the western ideas and culture. She experienced free culture and free vision in the United States of America. She enjoyed the free cultural relationship with an American man. It is explored that Layla a central character of the novel is involved in a secret relationship and she has keep it hiding from her new husband. It is later on that she feels that her husband has also secrets of his own. Now we find that both are struggling to establish personal peace. It is also explored that both are eagerly waiting to create a congenial environment as in the background there is occurring violence between Hindu and Muslim in India. Madras on Rainy Days is about the independence of self and to create own destiny.

Conclusion: In the concluding part it is understood that the novels are about the voice of the women who tried to

protest against the rights of education, self freedom, male dominant society, patriarchal roles, and all social issues that make hindrances in the empowering the women. We find that the writers may have faced these issues and other social problems personally in their families or in the society but they have expressed it all in the form of writings. All Muslim women writers of postcolonial resonate that the real custodian of any society, cultural tradition, and social customs are womenfolk. Beliefs, practices, traditions within the society, family, and between the family and society are happened and transferred from one generation to another generation mostly by the women. It is believed that women are the anchors that keep the boat from drowning. In all these novels under consideration Muslim women writers of the postcolonial era have framed some events and have drawn from some real life issues of their society.

All these writers have tried to present the social, economic and political pathetic conditions of women present era. Muslim women writers raised different social issues which are existed in the societies. It can be understood by the discussion of the themes, characterization, and plots of novels from the beginning towards the end of these novels. The works of these women writer are satirical which satirized on men and their cruelty and imposition of their rules on the womenfolk in the traditional ways. In one way Muslim woman writers of the postcolonial era have expressed their social concerns in order to reach to public through English language and literature and in another way they have self feelings and self experiences within their societies and the same things have been portrayed though plots, stories and characterizations. It is from their writings that they want to share all to the world in order to have

pace in development, space in the society and women empowerment in the society as compared to the male counterparts.

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**Narratives of Return: Mourid
Barghouti's Reflections on Palestine
in *I Saw Ramallah* (2000) and *I Was
Born There, I Was Born Here* (2011)**

Dr. Raf Raf Shakil Ansari

Mourid Barghouti's works, *I Saw Ramallah* (2000) and *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* (2011), serve as poignant reflections on the experience of returning to Palestine. Amidst the backdrop of the enduring Palestinian conflict, Barghouti's narratives delve into the deeply personal yet profoundly universal journey of Palestinian returnees. These works offer a vivid exploration of the return process, capturing the complexities and transformations that Palestine underwent after the exodus. As a significant voice in Palestinian resistance literature, Barghouti's writings go beyond individual recollections to illuminate the broader narrative of Palestinian return. They provide insight into the struggles, hopes, and disillusionments faced by those who return to a homeland altered by conflict and displacement. Through Barghouti's lens, readers witness the emotional and physical landscape of Palestine, marked by the traces of history and the resilience of its people. *I Saw Ramallah* and *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* not only recount

Barghouti's personal experiences but also act as a testament to the collective experiences of Palestinian returnees. They highlight the enduring quest for identity, belonging, and justice amidst the realities of occupation. These narratives contribute to the rich tapestry of Palestinian resistance literature, offering a poignant and introspective portrayal of a people striving to reclaim their homeland and heritage. The present paper aims to analyze Mourid Barghouti's works, *I Saw Ramallah* and *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* as narratives that illuminate the experiences of Palestinian returnees, focusing on the return process and the changes observed in Palestine after the exodus. It also aims to examine how Barghouti's writings serve as a lens into the broader narrative of Palestinian return, shedding light on the struggles, hopes, and challenges faced by individuals seeking to reconnect with a homeland altered by conflict, and to explore the significance of these works within the context of Palestinian resistance literature.

Resistance Literature, emerging as a vibrant descendant of postcolonial literature, holds a pivotal role within Third World Literature, particularly since the 1980s. While 'postcolonialism' primarily encompasses the vast body of works arising in the 20th century against British and French colonialism, the concept of Resistance Literature provides a platform for marginalized voices, including Dalits, tribal communities, blacks, women, and those impacted by conflict. This literary genre not only serves as a repository for the experiences and grievances of the oppressed but also, for the first time, highlights its political agency within national independence movements. This shift in focus was notably articulated by Barbara Harlow in her seminal work 'Resistance Literature' (1987), where she asserts, "The theory

of resistance literature is in its politics” (45), emphasizing the political potency of this genre. In the context of West Asian nations like Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, the rise of Resistance Literature was a response to Zionist encroachment and the swift spread of Islamic fundamentalism following 1950. Palestinian literature, in particular, embraced this form of expression after the tumultuous events of 1948, which saw the loss of Palestine to Jewish forces and the subsequent displacement of its people.

The Palestinian conflict, since the pivotal year of 1948, has been marked by a series of tumultuous events that have shaped the political and social landscape of the region. Known as the Nakba, or ‘catastrophe,’ 1948 saw the establishment of the state of Israel and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes. This event, which Palestinians commemorate annually, remains a central and defining moment in their collective memory. Subsequent wars, such as the Six-Day War in 1967, further solidified Israel’s control over Palestinian territories, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), formed in 1964, became a significant player in the struggle for Palestinian self-determination, with its leader Yasser Arafat gaining international attention. The Oslo Accords in the 1990s aimed to bring about peace, yet the hopes for a two-state solution were repeatedly challenged by ongoing violence, settlement expansion, and disagreements over borders and sovereignty. The Second Intifada from 2000 to 2005, characterized by widespread Palestinian uprisings and Israeli military responses, added another layer of complexity to the conflict. Today, the Palestinian territories remain

divided, with Gaza under Hamas control and the West Bank governed by the Palestinian Authority. The ongoing conflict continues to result in human rights abuses, displacement, and deep-seated grievances on both sides, highlighting the urgent need for a just and lasting resolution.

The catastrophe of 1948 and the ensuing loss of homeland spurred the birth of Palestinian resistance literature, disrupting traditional forms of Arabic literary expression. “The Palestinian writer a radical disruption occurred in 1948 when the state of Israel was created. The year has been described in Arab historiography as the year of the ‘disaster’ (nakbah).” (Harlow 18) As thousands of Palestinians found themselves exiled from their ancestral lands, the call for armed resistance against Zionist occupation became urgent. Literary figures such as Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, and Tafiq Zayyad played pivotal roles in this movement, using poetry to juxtapose the themes of refugeehood, homeland, and war through symbolic imagery like the olive tree and Arab coffee. The public recitation of their poems became a form of active participation for Palestinian youth in the armed struggle against Israeli occupation as Harlow quotes Stendhal’s statement that “Politics in a work of literature is like a pistol shot in the middle of a concert, something loud and vulgar and yet a thing to which it is not possible to refuse one’s attention.” (16)

The publication of the anthology ‘Poetry of Resistance in Occupied Palestine’ (1968), just four years after the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), marked the formal recognition of resistance literature in Palestine. Apart from poetry, autobiographical works gained prominence among Palestinians, providing a

platform to document their life experiences for future generations. Autobiography emerged as a potent genre within marginalized and resistance literature, with Palestinians since the 1980s using it to narrate their untold stories. Notably, the catastrophe of 1948 remains a central theme in Palestinian autobiographies, serving as a cornerstone of their collective memory and national identity. These autobiographies, particularly those of internal refugees, exiles, and the diaspora, serve as an alternate history of Palestinian resistance movements. They challenge dominant narratives crafted by Jewish and Western historians, offering unique perspectives on the struggles and resilience of the Palestinian people.

Palestinian resistance literature stands as a powerful testament to the enduring struggle for self-determination and justice amidst the tumultuous backdrop of the Palestinian conflict. At its core, this genre serves as a poignant expression of resistance against occupation, displacement, and the loss of homeland. Autobiographies play a particularly significant role within this literary tradition, offering firsthand accounts of Palestinian experiences. Notable works such as Ghassan Kanafani's 'Men in the Sun' (1962) and 'Returning to Haifa' (1969) explore the lives of Palestinians displaced in 1948, capturing the profound impact of the Nakba on individual lives and identities. Similarly, 'An autobiography: A Mountainous Journey' (1990), by Fadwa Tuqan offers a poignant reflection on Palestinian identity and resilience through the lens of a prominent poet. Additionally, Raja Shehadeh's 'Strangers in the House' (2001) presents a compelling account of life under Israeli occupation, documenting the daily struggles and complexities faced by Palestinians in their own land.

These autobiographies, among others, not only serve to preserve the collective memory of the Palestinian people but also act as powerful tools of resistance, challenging dominant narratives and asserting the right to tell their own stories. Through these personal accounts, Palestinian resistance literature continues to amplify voices of defiance, resilience, and the unwavering quest for freedom and justice.

Mourid Barghouti was born in 1944. In his writings Mourid Barghouti weaves a life narrative that grapples with questions, doubts, and a reconstructed sense of belonging to Palestine. This return to his homeland was made possible by the 1993 Oslo Accords, despite their widely recognized failure to improve Palestinian human rights. These accords allowed for the establishment of Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Barghouti's exile, which began during the Six-Day War in 1967 and lasted until 1996, provided the absence necessary for him to revisit his people and places, reflecting not only on his past but also his present. Born into one of Palestine's largest families, he grew up in the village of Deir Ghassanah, near Ramallah, where he completed his secondary education before studying English literature at Cairo University. However, just as he was about to complete his B.A. degree in 1967, news arrived that Ramallah had been occupied by Israel. This event marked the beginning of his prolonged exile, with only a brief return in 1995. After this trip, Barghouti published *I Saw Ramallah* in 1997, capturing his experiences and reflections. Throughout his career, he taught in Cairo, Kuwait, and Budapest, enduring a 17-year exile from Egypt for political reasons. As a renowned poet, Barghouti was honored with the Palestine Prize for Poetry

in 2000, solidifying his place in Palestinian literature and activism.

Introduction to Mourid Barghouti's Autobiographical Works: In autobiographical texts like *I Saw Ramallah* and *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* Mourid Barghouti vividly recounts his experiences of returning to Palestine, shedding light on the challenges faced by returnees from both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives. *I Saw Ramallah* particularly highlights Barghouti's journey back to Palestine from Jordan, narrating the difficulties encountered at the Allenby Bridge crossing. Through a poetic style, Barghouti captures the essence of Palestinian poetry transforming from a reflection of the land to a reflection of occupation's impact. The literature produced by returnees foregrounds the untold stories of Palestinians alienated from their homeland. Similarly, *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* serves as a sequel, delving into Barghouti's observations on Palestine's plight post-Oslo Accord, reflecting on the continuous conflict and insecurity. In 'I Saw Ramallah,' Mourid Barghouti offers an intense lyrical account of his return journey to the West Bank from Jordan, capturing the essence of Palestinian displacement. Originally published in 1997, the work received enthusiastic reception in the Arab World and gained wider attention when translated into English by Ahdaf Soueif in 2000. Its popularity in Western academia was further boosted by a foreword from Edward Said, who hailed it as a profound depiction of Palestinian displacement and the existential struggles faced by every Palestinian. Seen as a pioneering prose-poem, the text openly confronts the challenges of Palestinian returnees, highlighting the alienation felt in a transformed Palestine now occupied by outsiders. The text

poignantly portrays the dilemma faced by thousands of Palestinians' occupied homeland. It delves into the double consciousness of refugee hood and alienation experienced by returnees, offering a keen insight into their predicament. Through Barghouti's narrative, the text vividly captures the complexities and emotional weight of the return experience as Edward Said mentions in the foreword, "Every Palestinian today is therefore in the unusual position of knowing that there was once a Palestine and yet seeing that place with a new name, people, and identity that deny Palestine altogether. A 'return' to Palestine is therefore an unusual, not to say urgently fraught, occurrence." (Barghouti, viii)

Return to Palestine 'I Saw Ramallah': The crossing of the fragile wooden bridge between Jordan and the West Bank prompts Barghouti to question his identity; is he a refugee, a citizen, or merely a guest in the land of his upbringing? "It is very hot on the bridge. A drop of sweat slides from my forehead down to the frame of my spectacles, then the lens. A mist envelops what I see, what I expect, what I remember. The view here shimmers with scenes that span a lifetime; a lifetime spent trying to get here. Here I am, crossing the Jordan River. I hear the creak of the wood under my feet. On my left shoulder a small bag. I walk westward in a normal manner-or rather, a manner that appears normal. Behind me the world, ahead of me my world." (Barghouti, 1) The lush landscape of Palestine, depicted as the unmatched beauty of his homeland, adds to the complexity. His return journey forces him to confront the state of his homeland; is it truly his, or Israel's, or simply a land where Palestinians are destined to reside? These questions continually disrupt his perception of the homeland, shattering it into fragmented images. Like many

Palestinians, Barghouti grapples with the existential dilemma of his identity: refugee or Palestinian citizen? The latter seems unlikely, as the state of Palestine is effectively determined by Israel's control. The presence of Israeli soldiers with guns implies ownership of Palestinian land, creating a sense of fear and a mirage of homeland for Palestinians. Barghouti also critiques Israeli settlements, likening them to Palestinian diaspora, which further alienates Palestinians. These settlements, he notes, have essentially become the embodiment of the Jewish state, erasing the true essence of Palestine for its people. The joy of return and reconnecting with Palestinians who stayed behind is tinged with a sense of loss and hopelessness, as the birth of a new state does not guarantee full autonomy for Palestinians. When he writes about seeing his house again, he reflects on the date of his birth: "Here my mother gave birth to me. Here in this room I was born, four years before the birth of the State of Israel" (Barghouti, 56). The occupation has bred difficulty, distance, fear, and a profound sense of strangeness among all Palestinians. It has also left a lasting memory of the homeland, particularly poignant for returnees. Barghouti's vision of displacement involves the loss of progressive possibilities rather than a recoverable past, "Since I left the naivetés of childhood behind me I no longer wish to retrieve the dead so that they come back as I have known them in my past or theirs. I do not want to recapture Deir Ghassanah as it was or my childhood in it as it was ... The Occupation forced us to remain with the old. That is its crime. It did not deprive us of the clay ovens of yesterday, but of the mystery of what we would invent tomorrow" (Barghouti, 69).

This collective memory, born from prolonged estrangement, has fueled a rich body of Palestinian literature, characterized by resistance poetry and life narratives. This literature serves as a symbolic remembrance of the homeland, focusing on the collective experiences and memories of thousands of Palestinians who continue to endure the challenges of displacement and occupation. Barghouti then describes about his native town Ramallah which is best known as West Bank that has gone beyond recognition. Further, he says that the place bends itself to be ruled as the way people wanted, “She has gone her way, sometime as her people willed, and more often as her enemies willed. She has suffered and she has endured. Is she waiting to rest her head on your shoulder or is it you who seeks refuge in her strength? (Barghouti, 42).

This passage vividly captures the sense of alienation and strangeness that has enveloped the land of Palestine for its people, particularly those like Barghouti returning after long periods of absence. It paints a picture of a land unaware of the profound changes that have taken place since its inhabitants left. Barghouti’s narrative becomes a poignant account of the various sufferings and hardships endured by Palestinians in exile and upon their return. In recounting Barghouti’s journey to his homeland to obtain a passport for his son, the text unveils the arduous and harrowing journey he undertook to reach Palestine. Similar to the works of Palestinians such as Nammar, Nusseibeh, and Tuqan (who reside within Palestine), Barghouti’s text illuminates the struggles of Palestinian returnees as they attempt to reclaim their lost spaces now occupied by Israelis. This narrative serves as a testament to the resilience and determination of those seeking to reconnect with a homeland altered by

occupation and displacement. The destruction of landscape and Palestinian nature can better be understood through the words of Josephus: “The soil may be as good as ever, the climate the same, but where are the walnuts, the figs, the olives, the grapes and the other fruits? . . . Alas! All gone ... and there are no inhabitants ... to cultivate this ‘ambition of nature’.” (16)

Identity and Landscape *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here*: Barghouti’s significant work, ‘I Was Born There, I Was Born Here,’ is often seen as a continuation of his earlier narrative in ‘I Saw Ramallah,’ both centered on his return to Palestine. However, unlike its predecessor, this text delves into a myriad of untold stories surrounding the broader Palestinian return experience. Through Barghouti’s personal struggles, the text also amplifies the voices of Palestinian returnees in a collective sense, presenting narratives of a common nature. Chapters such as ‘Driver Mahmoud,’ ‘The Identity Card,’ and ‘Ambulance’ vividly recount the shared experiences of returning to Palestine, highlighting the myriad challenges faced due to cultural and economic shifts among returnees. Furthermore, the text offers a poignant portrayal of the contemporary landscape of Palestine, illustrating the profound changes wrought by two significant conflicts. Barghouti states about the geography of Palestine, “I am not familiar with these roads that Mahmoud is taking, and not just because my geographical memory has faded during the years of exile; the sad and now certain truth is that I no longer know the geography of my own land.” (16)

In contrast to his previous work, *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* is a collection of essays exploring various themes related to returning to the homeland. These essays delve

into topics such as employability, family memories, visits to Jerusalem and Deir Ghassanah with Tamim, among others. Jerusalem and Iraq feature prominently, reflecting on the loss of Palestine and key events like Yasser Arafat's leadership of the PLO and the increasing corruption within the Palestinian Authority (PA) government. Notably, Barghouti's writing on places occupied by Israel serves as a form of resistance against the occupation of Palestine and the dominance of Jews over Palestinians. Through detailed explorations of significant locations like Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Deir Ghassanah, the essays vividly illustrate how the once-rich landscape of Palestine has been transformed into an inhospitable environment for its rightful inhabitants. Barghouti points out how the trees work as the symbol of resistance; "Trees fascinate me not just for their beauty but because I see in them also a symbol of resistance without bluster or bragging. It fascinates me to that the unarmed trees knows that everything that is permanent is temporary" (170).

Challenges at Checkpoints and Alienation: Barghouti vividly portrays the plight of Palestinians subjected to long waits at Israeli Army checkpoints, which serve as barriers to their migration. He describes these checkpoints as a powerful weapon used to prevent the influx of Palestinians into their own homeland. An example he shares is when he took his son Tamim to Palestine, hoping to introduce him to its rich landscape, only to find Palestine presenting itself as a land devoid of its people and its once remarkable beauty. Barghouti's memory of Palestine is marred by the changes in its landscape and culture. He laments the emptiness and disillusionment he encounters, with the land now largely occupied by Jews. The pervasive sense of

hostility and alienation towards both the land and its inhabitants weighs heavily on him during his stay. Barghouti's says in 'Desires,' one of his Arabic poems, "Allow us to see in the faraway lands What beauty they have For the immigrant's eye fears looking deeply into beauty. Let's reside and depart just for desire's sake to stay or to move away." The text serves as a narrative of the myriad sufferings and turmoil endured by Palestinians seeking to return to their lost homeland. Through these personal accounts, the text illuminates the common experiences shared by Palestinians as they navigate the complexities of returning to their homeland. Thus, the intensive narrations of the two texts work towards reinventing Palestinian history; he says in one of his interviews, "When you own your narration, it becomes your history." (Hammer 48)

Conclusion: Reinventing Palestinian History: In the culmination of Mourid Barghouti's autobiographical works, *I Saw Ramallah* and 'I Was Born There, I Was Born Here,' we witness a profound effort to not only recount personal experiences but also to reshape the narrative of Palestinian history. Barghouti's narrative serves as a form of cultural resistance against the occupation and domination faced by Palestinians. Through his introspective journey, Barghouti critiques the Israeli settlements, portrays the challenges of checkpoints, and vividly describes the alienation felt upon returning to a changed homeland. These autobiographies become more than personal memoirs; they emerge as testimonies to the collective struggle and resilience of the Palestinian people.

One of the most striking aspects of Barghouti's narrative is its impact on Palestinian identity. As he grapples with the existential questions of belonging and displacement, readers

are confronted with the complexities of being Palestinian. Barghouti's struggle to define his identity in the face of occupation and exile resonates with many Palestinians who find themselves in similar predicaments. His works serve as a mirror reflecting the multifaceted nature of Palestinian identity, shattered by displacement yet resilient in the face of adversity. Moreover, Barghouti's autobiographies prompt reflections on Palestinian history itself. By narrating the personal stories of returnees and the challenges they face, he sheds light on the broader historical context of Palestine. Through his lens, readers gain insights into the intricate web of political, social, and cultural forces that have shaped Palestinian history. Barghouti's works become a tool for reevaluating and reinterpreting Palestinian history, challenging dominant narratives and offering alternative perspectives. The autobiographies also contribute to the rich tradition of resistance literature in Palestine. Drawing on the works of scholars like Barbara Harlow, who emphasized the importance of literature in resistance movements, Barghouti's texts become part of a larger body of literature that resists oppression and occupation. His poetic style and evocative prose serve not only to document experiences but also to inspire a sense of collective resistance among Palestinians. As Harlow notes, literature becomes a means of bearing witness and asserting agency in the face of adversity. Looking towards the future, Barghouti's autobiographies open up possibilities for continued resistance and resilience. Through his narratives, readers are reminded of the enduring spirit of the Palestinian people, determined to reclaim their homeland and assert their rights. The autobiographies serve as a call to action, urging readers to confront the injustices faced by

Palestinians and work towards a future of peace, justice, and self-determination. The autobiographies transcend personal narratives to become powerful testaments to the Palestinian experience. Through his introspective journey, Barghouti reimagines Palestinian history, shapes identity, contributes to resistance literature, and inspires hope for the future. These works stand as poignant reminders of the ongoing struggle for justice and liberation in Palestine.

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List of Contributors

Debojyoti Dan is a poet and a literary critic. He has been teaching in Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya (College) in the department of English, since 2009. He has special interests in Modern and Postmodern literature and theories. He was the Head of the Department in English in Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya, from June, 2015 to January, 2017. He learned French initially From Rama Krishna Mission and then pursued further diplomas in French from Alliance Française du Bengal. He has several publications to his credit including two books of poems *Enigma of Red Shadows* (2011) and *Enigma Unveiled* (2023). He has written various chapters in edited international books and peer reviewed journals. The recent ones being “Is Homeland A Myth? Borderless Boundaries of Mind and Center-margin conflicts in the Film ‘The Pianist’ in the book *Centres & Margins: Issues and Conflicts*. He was awarded the first prize in the world French Poetry Competition known as ‘*Le Printemps des Poètes*’ in 2007. He had worked in Alliance Française du Bengal as a cultural co-ordinator in the Cine club from 2007-2009.

Prof. Prajakta S. Raut is working at the department of English, Abhinav Degree College, Goddeo, Bhayander (E), Maharashtra, India

Dr. Rakesh Roshan Singh is working as an Assistant Professor, PG Dept. of English & Research Studies, K.B.P.G. College, Mirzapur, U.P., India

Pranita J Shinde is a Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Mumbai. She received her master of arts degree in English language and literature. Qualified Maharashtra SET examination in the year 2023. She has also presented paper in 16th International and 52nd Annual Conference of ELTAI. She has Completed British Council's certificate courses, "Teaching creativity and Imagination: An Introduction to core skills of teacher".

Dr T Eswar Rao is working as an Assistant Professor P.G Dept. of English, Berhampur University, Bhanja Bihar, Ganjam, Odisha, India

M M Sohil is a teacher in School Education Department Government of Jammu and Kashmir. He is posted at Government High School Bohardar Neel. Zone Banihal Ramban J&K. He is working in Education Department since 2004. He has published more than thirty five research papers on different topics. These papers have been published in National and International Journals and some papers have been published in UGC recognized Journals. He has presented more fifteen research papers in International Conferences/Webinars and has presented more than forty five research papers in National Conferences/Seminars. Mr. Sohil has also participated in more one hundred National and International Conferences/Seminars/Workshops/ and Webinars. Sohil has published some Poems, and Short Stories. He published more than five chapters in books. Currently he is working on three books.

Dr. Raf Raf Shakil Ansari is working as an Assistant Professor, Sharda University.

