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E-mail: [ravindranba1992@gmail.com](mailto:ravindranba1992@gmail.com)

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Assistant Professor of English,  
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Virudhunagar- 626001,  
Tamil Nadu, India.  
E-mail: [hsjju22@gmail.com](mailto:hsjju22@gmail.com)

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E-mail: [malaimanu00@gmail.com](mailto:malaimanu00@gmail.com)

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## **PUBLISHER: Maheswari Publishers**

(The publishing unit of PANDIAN EDUCATIONAL TRUST- TN32D0026797)

3/350, Veterinary Hospital Back side,  
Virudhunagar – 626001.  
Mobile: 8526769556, 9965669994  
Mail: [literarydruid@gmail.com](mailto:literarydruid@gmail.com)

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Research ought to be active to create a major boundary in the academic world. It must enrich the neo-theoretical frame that facilitates re-evaluation and enhancement of existing practices and thoughts. Eventually, this will effect in a primary discovery and lean-to the knowledge acquired. Research is to establish, confirm facts, reiterate previous works ant to solve issues. An active endeavor to endow rational approach to these types for educational reformations through academic research has become the focal intention of the journal. Now, we feel very proud to bring January, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2022 contributed by the Academicians and research Scholars of the literary field.

**M.Vinoth Kumar & S. Kulandhaivel**  
**Editors'-in-Chief**

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## Marxist Concerns in the Selected Works of Neel Mukherjee

**Mr N. Atheesh**, M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, Reg no: 20213153102203, S.T Hindu College, Nagercoil. Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University.

**Thiru. M. Thanumalaya Perumal**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, S.T Hindu College, Nagercoil. Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University.

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### Abstract

*For years, Marxist theorists have used literature as an expression to expose class struggle. Theorist interpretation has been enhancing the world, and novelists all over the world have been able to make an exposition of radicalized people through fictitious works. Many unfulfilled revolutions have occurred in India. However, the works produced are entirely a product of history, which can be analyzed by examining the material conditions of the past society. As an Indian writer, Neel Mukherjee uses his novel to protect the working class by depicting the realities of Indian society. The themes of his novels revolve around the misinterpretation of ideological thoughts, specifically communist extremism symbolized as the Naxalite movement, at the same time pathetic peasant struggles were presented. Mukherjee defines the transformation of people into radical mentalities, as well as the causes and consequences that prompted them to attempt a subaltern revolution. Although the majority of his works refer to bourgeoisie novels, the author emphasizes the significance of hegemonic Indian society. As a Bengali-born author, he has written three novels, each being an allegory of Bengali society and inspected the pulse of the lower class at ground level. Neel Mukherjee's tension as a Marxist thinker is visible.*

**Keywords:** Naxalbari Uprising, Communist Party, India, Neel Mukherjee, West Bengal.

Karl Marx created Marxism, which is the conflict between social classes, particularly between capitalists and workers. Marxism demonstrates that the exploitation of workers by the upper class will result in class conflict. According to Marx, the conflict would lead to a revolution in which the working class would overthrow the capitalist class and seize control of the economy. In India, Marxism is active and well, because of the Communist Party of India-Marxist, which has been trying to abolish the Indian society's class system. To understand Indian society, Indian Marxist scholars apply essential assumptions from Marxian analysis. In India, Akshay Ramanlal Desai was the scholar who contributed the most to the growth of Marxist sociology.

Literature is a medium through which writers can cope with the critical effects of capitalism and depict the aftereffects and harsh realities of capitalist society. Literature has for years advanced the field of Marxism by enabling novelists to speak to the political and



social structures of society. Some Indian political novels resemble the significance of Marxist theory, and novelists use the ideology to express class struggle and capitalist society's hegemony.

The novels by Neel Mukherjee depict a fractured Bengali society. He was able to analyse Bengali society through the political and social actions of West Bengal's history as a Bengali-born English writer. The novels illustrate the paradoxes of society that has been thrown into disarray by the capitalist's imperialistic domination. Mukherjee's books, *The Lives of Others* 2014 and *A State of Freedom* 2017, have a touch of violence that aims to repair the injustices of Bengali society's proletariat through righting the subalterns. The novel stories depict the harsh realities of the times, with the author explaining the Naxalbari Uprising and other extremist movements aimed at overthrowing capitalism. Mukherjee says:

I feel very bleak about history and the human race right now. Where did we take this wrong turning in history? Late capitalism has not been good for us. I think the whole capitalist order has a lot to answer for. The marriage of liberal democracy and capitalism is coming unstuck. It hasn't worked. Why haven't we got rid of racism in America? Why haven't we got rid of nationalism and intolerance? The only way to deal with it all is to look it in the face and try and write about it and depict it in very unblinking ways. (Neel Mukherjee *On Displacement And Desire* 76).

Mukherjee is concerned about society and places a maximum priority on the people of the lower classes, as seen by the fact that he shows it from all sides of a realistic novel. *The Lives of Others* is Mukherjee's second novel, set in Calcutta in 1967 and depicting the class tensions that can be considered the plot's core. This is a disturbing depiction of a wealthy society under threat from violent extremist attacks. *The Lives of Others* begins with a devastating murder-suicide of a peasant named Nithi Das and his family, who were oppressed by the landlord's supremacy, and a sequence that depicts the full extent of rural worker's toil. Violence is a fixture in the lives of peasants who are subjected to exploitation, poverty, and other aspects of social injustice. The story makes a strong connection between this circumstance and the Naxalite revolution's deadly response. The novel covers the narrative of a family during one of West Bengal's most contentious periods in recent history, especially the Naxalite movement and the state's repression of it.

Another novel by Mukherjee is *A State of Freedom*, which depicts the tragic lives of society's lower classes. The book explores the human desire to conquer the fundamentals, but restricted factors strike them. Another perspective is that people are more inclined to engage in extremism to obtain their basic needs. He beautifully depicts the brutality inherent in the class system, as well as the resulting violence and despair.

Mukherjee's political insight was successful in reflecting reality through his writings. The core of the works has a bourgeoisie tone inside them. That indicates the desire to speak up for those in the lower socioeconomic strata. However, the fiction provides limited space and viewpoints for lower-class characters, focusing on the Naxalite revolution primarily as a critique of middle-class bourgeoisie society.





Mukherjee mentioned capitalism in his work *The Lives of Others* by categorising the members at various economic levels. *The Lives of Others* is the story of the Ghosh family, a middle-class family from Calcutta who lived at 22/6 Basanta Bose Road. The patriarch, Prafullanath, and his wife Charubala, as well as their five children and their families, live in a spacious four-storey house. The family owns a paper factory in Bengal and many paper mills. Due to poor management, union unrest, and the economic downturn that afflicted West Bengal in the 1960s and 1970s, the firm was formerly successful but is now in a state of crisis. The novel, on the other hand, tells the story of the Naxalite battle through the eyes of the family's oldest grandchild, Supratik, who has left Calcutta to join the movement in rural West Bengal. In letters to his aunt Purba, Supratik discusses his political path and the hardships and obstacles of engaging in the rural insurgency. The use of a contrapuntal structure emphasises a dialectic contrast, a confrontation, between the Ghosh family and Supratik, middle-class and university-educated youth, right from the start.

Because of the tight class system and constant conflicts and divisions, the house on Basanta Bose Road might be considered an allegory of the Bengali social setting. Its members constantly argue and conflict amongst themselves over money, prestige, and status, creating a constant instability that echoes the political climate of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, the house's area is arranged in a strict hierarchical order, with various forms of discrimination between family members. From the top floor, the patriarch Prafullanath and his wife Charubala rule the house. The restrictions they impose on the home's space provide some spatial pattern, but they do not ensure family peace or well-being. Indeed, the residents of the house are allotted rooms in declining order based on their age, power, and prestige concerning other family members. Adinath, the oldest son and successor to the family company, lives on the top level with his wife and children, alongside the patriarchal couple. Chhaya, the spinster sister, resides on the second level. Priyonath, the second-born, and Bholanath, the third child, live on the first floor with their families. Rooms for the servants and Purba, the widow of the youngest son, and her children are located on the ground level.

According to Marxist ideology, the bourgeoisie is a social class that formed with modern industrialization to own the means of production and whose cultural interests include the value of property and the preservation of capital to maintain their hegemony in society. Here, Mukherjee introduces the poisonous form of bourgeoisie ideology. Purba and her two children are treated as a slave by the family since she is despairing and penniless. The narrator tells that “They have to stay hidden away, all three of them, in one room on the ground floor of this big four-storey house, as if they were servants and not what they are, true family” (Mukherjee 17). Purba is avoided by the entire family since she is a widow with a working-class background. She must perform the same duties as an ordinary servant and is not permitted to eat with the rest of the family. Her children do not have access to the same educational possibilities as their more privileged cousins.

She has suffered from inequity and discrimination as a result of her family's economic ideals, which has resulted in her being seen as a second-class resident. As the narrator stated:



Not all family bonds are equal. The lie so assiduously propagated by mothers – How can you ask who is my favourite? They are all my children, I love all of them equally. Are you partial to one finger of your hand over another? – is disbelieved by everyone, yet it is quite astonishing what pervasive currency it has in the outward show of lives. Everyone is hectically denying the existence of favourites, of special affections and allegiances and alliances within a large group of siblings, or between parents and children, while, just under the surface, the empty drama of equality is torqued to its very opposite by the forces of conflicting emotions and affinities. (Mukherjee 105)

By analysing the statements made by the narrator, it's visible that comparing the examples is true. Mukherjee similarly uses the characterization of Supratik to highlight the disastrous consequences of capitalism. In the Ghosh family, a university graduate is politicised by the Communist Party of India and, with the influence of the Naxalite movement, he is influenced and reverts to extremism. West Bengal's economic crises in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the upper-middle-class surrendering political power. The current system was challenged by uprisings in the countryside, the Food Movement, and ultimately the Naxalite movement. In politics, the establishment of a United Front government put an end to the Congress, which was the voice of Bengali businessmen. Many individuals resort to the United Front or the Naxalite movement to reform society as unemployment and dissatisfaction increase. This is what we see in the character of Mukherjee, with university students like Supratik, who become increasingly ideological and contemptuous of their parent's generation, eventually joining the revolutionaries' ranks.

Supratik's radicalised nature was well-examined. In addition to the novel, Supratik's letter to his mother explained his ignorance towards his family. Inside the house, he felt unsafe. His letter was stated as:

Ma, I feel exhausted with consuming, with taking and grabbing and using. I am so bloated that I feel I cannot breathe any more. I am leaving to find some air, some place where I shall be able to purge myself, push back against the life given me and make my own. I feel I live in a borrowed house. It's time to find my own. Trying to discover my whereabouts won't get you anywhere, so save that energy; you might find you need it for something else. I'll write periodically to let you know I'm alive. Forgive me. Yours, Supratik. (Mukherjee 60).

In a great way, Mukherjee showed a character from a bourgeois household who transforms into a radical in a great way. His Supratik was capable of understanding his family's hard-line capitalism, and his analysis convinced him to work for the lower classes. Even though Purba was a slave, he formed a strong attachment with Purba. He was aggressive towards his upper-class relatives. Supratik aims to break down social barriers and eventually become a communist activist and a Naxalite fighter. While studying at Presidency College, he becomes involved in politics as a member of the Students Federation, the Communist Party of India's student wing. Supratik participated in the late 1960s Food Movement and other political activities. He soon realises though, that he isn't doing enough



and that the main battle is taking place elsewhere. Supratik decides to support the downtrodden following CPI principles.

Throughout the novel, Mukherjee's shaping of Supratik can be seen as a touch of Marxist principle. Supratik rejects capitalist values and attempts to fit in with peasant culture. Change, as well as his fight against himself and his middle-class upbringing, are the first steps toward revolution for him. The work, like *The Lives of Others*, highlights both the capitalist class and the working class in society and also glorifies those who attempted to rectify the situation and improve the poor's plight. Using the perspective of a Marxist thinker, Mukherjee explored the challenges of Bengali society in his novel.

*A State of Freedom*, another work by Neel Mukherjee, similarly tackles the pathetic lower-class people. Similar to *The Lives of Others* it also has equal themes in common. The narrative is centred on people from the lower social classes and their lives of full injustice and discrimination. It also discusses the investigation of the cruelty of societal divisions. Soni is a figure who appears in Mukherjee's places, such as Supratik. The change that he has made here is the change of class, from Soni from the working class who is against the upper class. She has been radicalised by the influence of Maoist groups as a witness to harsh persecution by the capitalist class, and Mukherjee portrays her as a woman for the lower classes, while also being able to connect extremism with misinterpretation of ideology.

Mukherjee's desire for unequal society is central to the narrative. Soni, who had been through too much trauma as a child, watched her mother's suicide as a result of bad hospitalisation for the poorest strata of society. These events prompted her to join the far-right party. The author also portrayed the necessity for a balanced society among the lower classes.

The government does not give us those things, rights and respect. We have nothing except the rights to jail, jameen and jangal. They're going to take our water, land and forest away from us (Mukherjee 193).

These kinds of claims from the Maoist parties influenced Soni to change her mind and join the Maoist party to save her community from the capitalists. As a leftist writer, Mukherjee focused on demonstrating the negative effects of capitalist administration and social exploitation. In the course of conveying this, Mukherjee also discussed the negative repercussions of extreme groups, which are driven by a misreading of ideology. He mentioned in the lines:

The Party, as the Communist Party of India- Maoists had two guerrilla wings; the group Soni joined was the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army" (Mukherjee 195).

Through author was able to demonstrate the Maoist extreme group's evil intents as well as their agenda to enlist the peasants and working class in their mission. Hanya Yanagihara addressed *A State of Freedom* as:

Neel Mukherjee's breathtaking *A State of Freedom* is that rarest, most wonderful of things: a book both literarily dextrous, full of unforgettable scenes, images, language, and characters, as well as a furious, unsparing, clear-eyed study of how a society's



gross inequities of money and power demean and deform the human condition. The most astonishing and brilliant novel I have read in a long, long time. (*Astonishing And Brilliant: A State Of Freedom*, The New Novel From Neel Mukherjee).

Studies point to the Naxalite group's nihilistic existential ideology as one of the reasons for the revolution's downfall. A similar concept was expressed by Mukherjee. In *The Lives of Others* and *A State of Freedom*, Mukherjee paints a picture of a divided Bengali society in which one component appears unable to connect with the others. Taking the middle-class viewpoint, the work is more of a parable about bourgeois values and their decline than a study of subaltern reality. At the same time, Mukherjee also considered the economic growth of the lower-class people.

Rabindra Ray in his work *The Naxalites and their Ideology* criticized the movement as “terrorism and political assassinations to a nihilistic ideology, and that, in turn, to the Naxalites’ inability to gain the support of the industrial proletariat.”(Ray). Mukherjee's novel appears to accord with this conclusion with its emphasis on massacres, bombs, and the sacrifice of innocent lives. Both of Mukherjee's novels focus on class inequalities and even illustrate the march of extremism and its side consequences, as well as address the vital role of the Naxalbari movement and its influence on working-class people. The storyline depicts the relationship between the young middle class and the subaltern. The *Lives of Others* and *A State of Freedom* explain the Naxalite movement's demise, and it becomes evident from an examination of the works that the extremist group's actions and results on the common people are fatal. As a Marxist thinker, Neel Mukherjee was able to highlight the negative consequences of Bengal society in the post-colonial 1960s. Mukherjee does not hold back from emphasising the grave ramifications of the capitalist system. His emphasis in demonstrating an unbalanced society was on capitalist tension rather than the role of the working class. The passion for his motherland and his status as a Marxist thinker are clear in Mukherjee's work.

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## Inclusion of Life Skills in English Literature

Ms S. Jessy, Scholar, Alagappa University College of Education, Karaikudi.

Dr J. Jayachithra, Research Guide, Alagappa University College of Education, Karaikudi.

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### Abstract

*Life skills are necessary for students of the twenty-first century. Graduate students are good at obtaining grades and ranks, but job opportunities tend to be scarce. Even though they are proficient in their subject matter, they lack the skills and qualities required for employability. Students should also develop their character qualities, such as their attitude and behaviour. We have a lot to teach our students not just in literacy, but also in life skills. According to the current situation, today's young brains do not take their lives seriously or properly care for themselves or maintain a healthy connection with their family, instructors, friends, and even neighbours. The instructor is the best individual to shape their thoughts and keep them on track. Literature may assist to address these injustices by teaching life skills and educating them to work and contribute to society.*

**Keywords:** Life skills, literature, English language, attitude, and employable

### Introduction

A corpus of written works is referred to as literature. Traditionally, the term has been used to describe visionary works of poetry and prose that are characterized by their writers' aims as well as the perceived aesthetic brilliance of their execution. Language, national origin, historical time, genre, and topic matter are only a few of the ways used to categorize literature.

According to the present circumstances, today's young minds do not take their lives seriously, do not take adequate care of themselves, and do not maintain healthy relationships with their family, instructors, friends, or even neighbours. The main objective of life- skills-education is to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. And meet out the challenging situations. In the educational system along with the teacher, it is the textbook that guides the students to the right path. Subjects develop abilities like problem-solving, logical reasoning power, and analytical attitude. From time to time, changes related to the teaching objective, its evaluation, and monitoring are equally important to fulfil the need.

As a teacher, we have the responsibility to mould the character, behaviour, and attitude of the student and persuade him to have a principled life, and even motivate him towards learning and acquiring knowledge and its application through hard work, farsightedness, determination, and discipline. Thus by gaining self-confidence to overcome



the hurdles that he is going to face in this learning process. Even we should be the source of his/her motivation and personality development. To justify it we can teach literature to a student which acts as the best resource for both the teacher and the student.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Anderson (2005) aimed at evaluating the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents regarding the value of life skills and the Life long Guidelines Program due to the increase in the number of children committing extreme acts of violence prompting many schools to adopt and implement character education programs. The life skills and Lifelong Guidelines program focuses on producing a caring community of responsible citizens for life. Shawn (2014) conducted a study entitled "Look After Yourself, or Look After One Another? The study was an Analysis of Life Skills in Sport for Development and Peace HIV Prevention Curriculum. The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical discourse analysis, guided by the concept of bio pedagogies, of the Live Safe Play Safe (LSPS) manual that Right to Play (RTP) has used to train facilitators for its HIV/AIDS prevention program. The findings demonstrate that discourses of risk, individualism, and deficiency constructed life skills in a way that aligned with neoliberal approaches to health promotion and development, emphasizing risk management and individual responsibility, while glossing over the broader social and political factors influencing HIV transmission

Jinka Jyotsna, T.Dwarakanath (June 20180) explains in 'Teaching Life-Skills through Literature'? Literature is a term used to describe a written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, "literature" is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the imaginative & creative, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. Why should we teach life skills to the students of the twenty-first century? If we observe the present scenario of the students at both the Post-Graduate and Undergraduate levels, they are good at securing grades and ranks. But they are unable to become employable. Recent statistics say that only 15% of them can be employable. What about the remaining 85% of the students? Though they are good at their subject matter, they are not able to employability, to possess the required skills and qualities.

### **Life Skill**

Life skills have been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

They represent the psycho-social skills that determine valued behaviour and include reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, personal skills such as self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. Operationally, life skills in this study mean the availability of life skills with the ten categories or types

- 1) *Decision-making*
- 2) *Problem-solving*
- 3) *Creative thinking*
- 4) *Self-awareness*
- 5) *Interpersonal relationship skills*
- 6) *Empathy*
- 7) *Self-awareness*
- 8) *Empathy*



4) *Critical thinking*

9) *Coping with emotions*

5) *Effective Communication*

10) *Coping with stress*

Perusing writing educates us on these life abilities, and makes us more mindful of these life aptitudes.

### **Life Skills in English Literature**

The English language is not only to develop literary skills but also to develop life skills through life lessons. It plays a significant role in daily life situations all over the world. It is an international language that is used in all aspects of life. It is the language of science, politics, economics, education, information, and technology. Accordingly, it is necessary to learn English as it is essential for communication and development (Hamdona, 2007). Keshta (2000) indicated that English is a universal language: the language of communication across countries in the international world of trade, business, air transportation, and technology.

Every author in English literature should and must consider the readers' life skills, such as social, societal, religious, political, and communicational issues. It draws readers into society and makes them active participants in real-life situations. By reading and understanding, individuals may better their status in life by solving difficulties, making decisions in stressful scenarios, strengthening their relationships, and being aware of their surroundings, for example. The literature, all of the instructors agreed, had the biggest impact on daily instruction.

Literature is used in a wide range of fields, from marketing and mass media studies to literature and rhetoric, ethnography and cultural studies, gender and age issues, sociology and political science, psychology and cognitive science, and so on, because it can be used to test and examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication. Furthermore, it has a positive association with sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, and it is a key player in the creation of artificial intelligence.

In this paper, I have taken some examples from the works of a few authors, like Robert Frost's 'Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening', 'The Road Not Taken', quotes from Buddha, and "If" by Rudyard Kipling.

**Robert Frost's** 'Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening' is one of the most famous poems in American literature. In his poem, "If you've ever seen or experienced snow, you've probably taken a few minutes to marvel at its beauty. Possibly you were drawn to this element of nature that is at once soothing to look at and dark in its association with cold, winter, and the silence of nature. In literature, the seasons of nature are often used to explore the relationship between life and death, In between life and death,

*"And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep"*

Through his poetry, he teaches us to improve our life skills by fixing difficulties while we are trapped in between problems and enjoying our lives while we have Miles to go before we sleep. These poetry sentences have a profound significance that makes our lives more meaningful and aids in the development of life skills by allowing us to enjoy the current moment between life and death.





Also in "The Road Not Taken," Robert Frost, an American writer, allows himself to choose between two diverging paths. Our lives are dotted with moments when we must make our own decisions and no one can assist us. Each of us faces several forks on the road throughout our lives while success is never simple.

Even Buddha quotes,

*Do not believe anything anybody tells you,  
including anything I tell you,  
unless it agrees with your own experience and your common sense.*

In Buddha's own words, he explains how to live a life in the world of thorns. Buddha preached life skills, which we understand to be valuable.

To strengthen my understanding of life skills, I chose the poem "If" by **Rudyard Kipling**. This is one of the greatest poems written by John Kipling and is intended to serve as parental advice for his son. It is a noble and worthy life lesson. Every generation of all ages will find it suitable. It's a noteworthy piece of poetry that contains a lesson of value for almost everyone. Anyhow, it can be regarded as a set of virtues outlined by the poet that is conducive to the development of good human behaviour.

Kipling shows his readers the ideal way to act during times of dire crisis. He informs the readers to make themselves strong enough in a way that they can take responsibility for their choices and actions bravely and not indulge in the blame game. As he says,

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise...*

As a result, he wants the readers to study the value of life skills because they are crucial to the continuation of the life cycle in the modern world. According to the poet, faith is the most fundamental concept one needs to hold on to live a fulfilling life. He reminds us not to hate anybody or doubt anything. Is there a step-by-step guide to getting to the bottom of hell? Kipling also advises that defeat is not a defeat, it is a step toward success. Life is not perfect without defeat, and we cannot analyze our capabilities at odd times. He advises inviting defeat to learn another lesson. He urges his readers to have the courage to accept life's failures. Studying literature helps us develop this skill. In addition, he advises that success isn't easy, if one follows the precepts of life skills, one will fit in well with all sections of society.

If one adheres to the tenets of life skills will be able to blend in with people from all walks of life. This is a valuable life skill that can only be learned via reading. Reading literature teaches us these life skills, and makes us more aware of these life skills.



To sum up, literature will be a valuable tool for teaching and instilling life skills in today's youth to become true citizens of the country. Literature may assist to address these injustices by teaching life skills and educating them to work and contribute to society.

### Conclusion

Life skills enable adolescents to live happy and successful life. Providing life skills education helps to build the foundation for learning the skills of individuals. A proper and relevant life skills education is needed for every youth to effectively adjust and participate in society. According to the current situation, today's young brains do not take their lives seriously or properly care for themselves or maintain a healthy connection with their family, instructors, friends, and even neighbours. The instructor is the best individual to shape their thoughts and keep them on track. Thus Literature may assist to address these injustices by teaching life skills and educating them to work and contribute to society.

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## World of Culture Changes when Nature becomes our Teacher: An Eco-Critical Approach to the Movie *Barbie of Swan Lake*

Ms S. Kogila<sup>1</sup>, PhD. Scholar in English Literature, Department of English, School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities, SASTRA Deemed to be University, Thanjavur.

Dr Sujatha A Menon, Research Supervisor, Senior Assistant Professor, Department of English, School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities, SASTRA Deemed to be University, Thanjavur.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5188-5863><sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*“Nature never did betray The Heart that Loved her” as William Wordsworth said nature holds the power of Love, harmony, and prosperity. As we see, it changes the shape but at last, it will teach us the reality. As a teacher and a mother, Nature never separates us; as a child and students, they are doing as they wish. But nature has its way to teach or guiding the right path for beings. Once upon a time, this bond between the teacher(nature) and the student communities (humans, non-humans) was beautiful and fruitful. This fruit-bearing season changes when human moves toward rationality. “a commitment to rationalism, the view that reason (or rationality) is not only the hallmark of being human; it is what makes humans superior to nonhuman animals and nature (Warren 2009)” but the battle never be drawn. The wisest and noblest teacher never fails to win and teaches in the same way nature wins the match as well as teaches the Human. In this paper, the researcher attempts to bring out the characteristics of Nature as a teacher in all aspects through the movie Barbie of Swan Lake (2003) directed by Owen Hurley. This nature class happens in the Forest, a library of all creatures. Thus, this paper portrays the place of Peace, Wisdom, and Love and illustrates, “Let Nature be our teacher” through the characters from the forest such as Fairy Queen, Elves, and Unicorn. Through this, the forest teaches us the quality of being to Odette, Daniel and their Families- the representatives of Human beings.*

**Keywords:** Forest, Human as a Rationalist, Nature, Teacher.

### Introduction - Owen Haley's *Barbie of Swan Lake*

This is the third movie of the Barbie series, released on September 30, 2003. It was directed by Owen Hurley and written by Elana Lesser along with Cliff Ruby. This 81-minute movie was telecast on Nickelodeon from November 16, 2003, onwards. It is mentioned as Fantasy, Romance and Adventure. But this paper attempts to trace the element of Eco-Criticism in this movie. In general, the protagonist of any movie would be male or female same as in the case of *Barbie of Swan Lake*. Odette, a beautiful young girl who is the protagonist of the movie chases a majestic unicorn named Lila into the enchanted forest. She is supposed to pick up a magic crystal which ultimately transforms her into a saviour of the



enchanted forest. She asserts that she is unfit for doing the job. She is about to move to the forest, and Rothbart, an evil wizard changes her into a swan. But she can regain herself after the sunset with the magic crystal given by the Fairy Queen. She vows to save the forest from Rothbart. In the meantime, love is cherished between Odette and Prince Daniel. Finally, her intelligence and the powerful bond of love between Odette and Prince Daniel be the strongest weapon for defeating Rothbart.

### **Nature as a Teacher of Odette**

Odette is a young girl who loves dancing. She dances even while baking. But she is not as brave as her sister to do what she wants or loves. She represents many girls' dreams of contemporary society. Like men, women also have wishes to make in their life but they are afraid or afraid of some cultural norms.

Like in India, women have to quit their job after marriage as she holds a lot of responsibilities as a mother, daughters-in-law, and wife. Due to these many badges, women tend to lose their own identity by themselves as well as by society.

This identity crisis is shown in many places as Odette fails to prove her role in the given places. At first, she refused to dance at the ball even though her father asked her to do so:

**Father: "Odette, you're a wonderful dancer you should go to the village, and dances with your sister"**

**Odette: "...and have everybody stare at me. I...I couldn't" (Swan Lake 04.24-29).**

To her sister, she refused to come out for riding on the horses:

**Marie: "come on I'm heading out again, you'll love it."**

**Odette: "thanks... but!"**

**Marie: "no thanks, right?"**

**Odette: "right" (Swan Lake 05.06-15).**

This refusal has been shifted to Forest also. At first, she refused to break the spell because of her fear, she refused to accept her bravery and Wisdom to Lila, the Unicorn. But her single transformation shows her Innate identity to the whole world.

**Odette: "wait please, you have the wrong girl I can't be the one. I haven't overcome anybody in my life I wish." (Swan Lake 16.56-17.04)**

Lila, the Unicorn as the forest creature boosts her up, as a rationalist representative, Odette underestimates her and does not want to think about her.

**Lila: "...hey you're braver than you think"**

**Odette: "at least one of us thinks so" (Swan Lake 28.10-15).**

She revolves as a Bright Protagonist by showing her courage and wisdom throughout the process of breaking the spell and this bright diminished the so-called powerful authorities like the Queen, Prince, enchanter and Magical Supremacy.

So, the transformation is not a simple magical process. It teaches her life lesson to be herself despite her Fear, Innocence, Shy and Chaste which would be called the four basic



values of Women in Tamil-Atcham, Madam, Naanam, and Payirppu. Women are not an individual identity to hold all the qualities. Everyone knows it but does not understand it. Some built their wall for their success; some deviate from their role and go out of the level and some do it perfectly. This is the impact of modernism and the uncontrolled pace of freedom resulting from the lack of basic Rationalism.

For instance, If Odette knows she is making cookies for satisfying the needs of the common stomach, she would never stop the children to have them.

If she knows she is dancing for herself, not for others' eye candy, she would never hesitate to dance at a ball. If she knows her big responsibility to save the entire enchanted forest, she would never say **"I can't."** (*Swan Lake 16.59*).

Thus, everything happens after she transforms Swan (transformation of herself also). Owen Hurley may use any other form of Nature, but why Swan? Is there any reason for it? Yes, it is. White Swan has symbolic characteristics, According to Worldbirdscom LLC, Tchaikovsky depicted Feminine softness, beauty and Grace but the swan also symbolizes love, trust, loyalty, inner beauty, self-love and

TRANSFORMATION. Once Odette is transferred into Swan, she possesses all the mentioned characters or qualities.

LOVE: She knows the problem of the entire forest, as well as its being and she, understands their suffering too. Odette's mind cannot let her go by leaving them alone. Though she loves Prince Daniel more, she shows her passionate love and cares towards them which would be the ultimate success for our teacher. She does what has to be done, there is no room for dilemma and hesitation in her words. and for that, she says No to Daniel.

**Odette: "Daniel, I...I can't..... I need to stay here to help them."**

**Daniel: "I'll Come back with an army."**

**Odette: "You can't. He is too powerful. He'll do to you what he's done to us."**

**Daniel: "I'll take that risk."**

**Odette: "and your men?!"** (*Swan Lake 43.43-44.05*).

TRUST: As a character, Odette is not trusting herself to do things that she wishes. This would be the case at the beginning of the movie, she was introduced as a flat character. She looks like a motif of Refusal, due to the lack of trust in her. Her refusals are a rejection of Dance at the ball; rejection for Riding the Horse; rejection for accepting her foretold. She could not but her transformation transfers her from the outlook of the motif and gives her courage to defeat Rothbart. She completely trusts Fairy Queen and also her ability to break the spell. She follows the words of the Fairy Queen. She is ready to take the risk of going to the library the place which other fairy creatures are afraid to go.

**Odette: "which self next Erasmus? we are going to find the book if it takes all day"** (*Swan Lake 33.14-18*).

LOYALTY: She is a Loyal person, her loyalty doesn't change because of her transformation but gets a new form, she projected the true form of Loyalty by accepting his invitation to the ball and by succeeding in her challenge to safeguard the Forest. She lacks



confidence in her inner beauty and self-love in the first part of the movie. But in the second half she becomes an active protagonist, she finds out her ability, believes it and explores it through her wit and bravery.

**TRANSFORMATION:** Through the term, ‘bio religionism’ Berg and Dasmann explain, “a distant resonance among living things and factors which influence them that occurs specifically within each separate place on the planet” (65). This reflects on the location of the Forest too. When she was in town, she hesitates to mingle with outside people and they too didn’t care about her much. She is a helper to her father and a cook to her sister. Everything seems to be demand-based. And that is the ultimate set-up of the city Landscape. **“We were humans. We chose to be ants in the anthill, bees in the beehive- settlements for those who obeyed without question” (Aranyaka,012).** but the place forest contrasts it. As mentioned in the book of the forest *Aranyaka*, Amrita Patal pointed out that we are human and we are equal. **“I thought we were equals, bilateral symmetry of leaves. He, fire of enlightenment and me, fire of the microcosm” (093).** This is the exact situation in the forest. **“Human laws are meaningless” (022).** She transformed herself from a sensitive village girl to an intellectual girl in common. She understood her inner image from her friend Lila, the Unicorn.

**Lila: “...hey you’re braver than you think”**

**Odette: “at least one of us thinks so” (Swan Lake 28.10-15).**

As Saviour

**Odette's Father: “I still can’t believe we’re here or that you saved this enchanted forest” (Swan Lake 1.14.44-50).**

**Odette: “a friend once told me you’re braver than you think turns out she was right” (Swan Lake 1.14.50-56).**

### **Nature as a Teacher to the Kingdom as a Whole**

Prince Daniel has appeared to be a very active young man. Adventuring and exploring are his main domain of wish along with this he loves hunting and is good at archery. His role in the movie, *Swan of Lake* is not merely a hero entry as Prince Daniel but a depiction of the entire ruling system. The opening scene shows the practice of targeting. Thus, the flashlight focuses on his hobby. The bond between the archery and Daniel is more powerful than the bond with his mother. The very first meeting them depicts the stereotypical practice of the Wedding plan. But our hero, Daniel refuses it because of his interest in exploring. So, this character introduction is just a normal action scene between Prince and Queen not a soulful talk between Son and Mother. She holds the power in her **eyes** not **love**. The same in the case of Daniel, he feels for what had bothered her mother but not cared for her.

As this paper previously illustrates the deviation of Odette’s attitude by comparing fairy creatures in the Forest, there is a deviation in the character of Prince Daniel also. More than Daniel, the word ‘Prince’ has its way of portraying the character. Owen Hurley has not taken Daniel as a single entity. He represents a Monarch through the character Daniel. Owen made Rothbart describe Daniel in one scene as perfect as could be.



**Prince Daniel: “You wanted me to kill her.”**

**Rothbart: “Yeah a Hunter, aren’t you?”** (*Barbie of the Swan Lake* 38.25-29).

He also screened how can a cultured society be ruled as well as how culture failed to learn from nature. “In the early 17th century, French father of modern philosophy René Descartes framed the world as essentially split between the realm of mind and that of inert matter”(Alberro,2019). This film has two types of the ruling party. One looks as cherished as the flowers as Kathyayini says, **“Life is a cherry tree in a good year-bent with fruit succulent to bursting point”** (Aranyaka, 013). Fairy Queen is the ruler of the cherished enchanted forest. Lila (unicorn), Carlita (Elf comes Shank), Ivan (Elf comes to Porcupine), and Erasmus (a troll) are some of the children of Forest. This forest has been enchanted not their minds of them. So, it flourishes even in an Enchanted situation. This enchanted forest resembles a home for all. It invites Odette, Daniel and all to the climax. On the contrary, the house of humans depicts the divisions of modernity. The townhouse is beautiful for those who had power or money. So even for a human, it would not be a happy place or home, obviously not for others. Owen Harley pictured the unlike situation of a bird and Lila, the unicorn. The symbolic representation of these creatures' intro scenes aims to project the attitude of humans towards non-humans. The bird flies over the palace as it needs a place to dwell. When she wets in the fountain, she feels good and relaxes on the pillar. But the shot of Daniel does not allow her to so, she flies again. This symbolic shot represents the disconnection between humans and the world of birds, their loving harmony has been affected by humans and also the humans missed its affectionate relationship. It's the same for Lila too. The crowd happens to attack her either to entertain themselves or for getting beneficial things from their King. These instances visualized clearly that the place of humans has been enchanted and is a place for anguish.

These changes had been done by humans, not by any other intervention. In the name of culture and civilization, people segregate themselves based on power, money, range of work and even through their actions. They cannot mingle within themselves. They are not merely showing respect towards the upper class or the ruling class. **“In human settlements, the best way to be safe is to threaten no one”** (Aranyaka027). Their action becomes systematized as they are doing their routine, they conditioned themselves to **do** respect instead of **showing** respect. But in the case of the forest, Fairy Queen became the ruler of the Forest by her uncle. Her uncle has chosen her for her wise and kind heart. She **cares** for the people and the forest instead of **ruling** it. This can be seen by some inferences through the known characters such as Lila and Odette. Odette maintains some systematic and accustomed signs of showing respect for Prince Daniel. She has to bow in front of prince Daniel despite the situation. They are not in town, now they are in danger in the enchanted forest. Even this situation stimulates her to do so. Prince Daniel also shows his attitude through gestures and questions to Odette. He does not care much about the pupil from his place. Instead, he asks about the place, Forest. They do not care or think about how to safeguard the people of Forest instead they roam around to ease themselves.





On the contrary, Lila the classy Unicorn of the Fairy Creatures of the forest can talk what she has in her mind directly to the Queen. Not only Lila, other characters in the film (Elves, Erasmus..) behave the way they are. They are not changing their own identity for the sake of power. They stand for their own identity especially Originality. They won't change under any circumstances and vice versa. But they show their respect and care in a kind way when it is needed not by any external force. Thus, **“Nature is so simple! It is so calm, so cool, so beautiful!”** (*Nature is My Teacher*). The Fairy Queen is projected as a model for the leader. Her focus line on the movie is very less compared to Odette and Rothbart for the matter. She appears only for a few scenes but in a powerful way. The main focus of the story is Odette and her way of breaking the spell. This movie also projects some important areas like class Division, Self-realism, and Authority. These things seem to be lacking properties of vivisected culture. As William says, **“...relationships are not only of ideas and experiences but of rent and interest, of situation and power; a wider system”** (*The Country and the City*,7). But later, they learn everything from nature and its creatures. As Amrita Patal mentioned, **“O Sun, be my teacher. No one else can satisfy me”** (*Aranyaka*,073). Nature is pictured as a great teacher to whom it has been needed. One of the Instances is Fairy Queen. In a contrast to the character Queen of the town, Fairy Queen **cares** for the people rather than **rules**. At the very first meeting, she was not utter any exaggerated words and not yelled out her storyline of the forest. Instead, she thanked Odette for saving Lila.

**Fairy Queen: “First, let me thank you for helping Lila” (14.35-37).**

This shows she cares more than anything. She is a pure heart and she never forces Odette to save the forest, she knows the risk so she left it to her choice. But when Daniel is in dire need of Odette, he is ready to take the risk not alone but with an army. For his selfish need, he is ready to sacrifice the lives of people. But even for saving the entire forest none is willing to allow Odette to take the risk, especially the fairy queen. **“Aranya doesn't mind you alive, it doesn't mind you dead. In fact, it doesn't care one way or the other”** (*Aranyaka*,022). But ironically Forest serves as the place for safeguard and rationale and the place of humans is a place of irrationality.

In the storyline, Saviour (Odette) saves the forest. But it connotes that the Forest (teacher) saves the Human. As Prabhaskar Karan says, **“Through nature, our logic develops into psychology, our sense moves to sensation, and our moral matures to principles”** (*Nature is My Teacher*). In the climax, the entire human community that they focused, on happened to be in the forest as a creature of Nature not the product of culture. They seem to be happy and logical in their way. The transformation affects the whole and creates a change in their mind.

**Odette's Father to Prince Daniel: “First I have one very important question young man. How many layers for the wedding cake?”**

**Odette: “as many, as you'd like papa”**

**Lila, the Unicorn: “and can it have a lot of those frosting flowers! I love those flowers. (1.15.01-15).**



Lila is not hurt by any human and the baker family doesn't have to customise their respect for their Prince. All becomes one and fine.

### Conclusion

There will always be a teacher for everyone to give tremendous things which never known by anyone that they need it. That is nature. As Karan says, “**As we attach ourselves with nature, it makes us delight every moment (*Nature is My Teacher*)**”. The ultimate aim of our life is to *Live and let Live* as humans failed to do in a civilised society. At times nature tries to teach us but literacy scholarship dominates and blocks the mind to think wisely. This paper elaborated on this idea from an ecological perspective. Thus, *Barbie of Swan Lake* is not just a movie of Fantasy but a book of Ingenuity.

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## The Ascendancy of Ernest Hemingway's Novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" on Petro Marko's Novels.

Mary Siniya M. V., PhD. Research Scholar, Department of English,  
St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education and Research, Avadi, Chennai-54.  
Dr S Uma Maheswari, Supervisor, Professor, and Head, Department of English,  
St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education and Research, Avadi, Chennai-54.

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### Abstract

*The recognition of Hemingway's translated works in Albanian literature and culture had begun in 1957, and it reached to peak in the last decade of the twentieth century. In all probability, Hemingway's works in Albanian literature were received with comfort, curiosity, respect, admiration, and enthusiasm both by readers and literary critics. In addition to the reception there are track down and proof that Hemingway in his novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" had instigated Petro Marko to write the novel "Hasta la Vista". This is anticipated to the actuality that the twain writers had gone to volunteer to brawl in Spain, for the world wars. Withal, they lined up in different brigades, Petro Marko in the XII Brigade and Ernest Hemingway in the XV Brigade. Both novels have similar themes, motifs, symbols, conflicts, events, and styles. Therefore, using qualitative and comparative literature methods this article will attempt to shed light on the impact of Ernest Hemingway's novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" on Petro Marko's novel "Hasta la Vista". The paper concludes, that when Hemingway recounted his experience in the Spanish Civil War in his novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and after the Albanian writer, Petro Marko read his novel and had direct contact with Ernest Hemingway, he wrote his novel "Hasta la Vista" under Hemingway's influence. As a result, Petro Marko's novel is quite similar to Hemingway's novel though there are differences, as well.*

**Keywords:** Comparative literature, American and Albanian literature, direct influence.

History has proven so far that writers, through their literary works, are the first challengers of war and any kind of oppression and exploitation. Therefore, they are scrutinized more by the political representatives of tyrannical regimes which contribute to and cause these social and human deformities and deficiencies more than any other category of the elite. Such a thing happened on the occasion of the Spanish War when in 1936, the Congress of anti-fascist writers was held. In Spain, more specifically in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona, this Congress was held for several days in a row, which was attended by several well-known writers from different countries and was greeted through telegrams by outstanding scientists, artists, and researchers such as Romain Roland, Albert Einstein, etc. Petro Marko's journey to Spain had lasted a long time, so much so that it reminds the



Albanian readers and scholars to vicissitudes of Homer's *Odyssey*. Unfortunately, the "paratext", means prefaces, afterwards, translators' notes, reviews, and genuine analytical articles in the Albanian language. Apart from some journalistic writings, two or three critical treatises and a preface on the reception of Hemingway's work in Albanian works had not been accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative pretext Kurti, while some of the most distinguished researchers, scholars and literary critics, who wrote about Hemingway in Albanian literature areas" and research articles on Hemingway's influence in Albanian literature and culture. "When I read his novel" he claims "I was so amazed that I started writing my novel entitled *Hasta la Vista* on the same subject" (6). When it was published, I sent Hemingway a copy, where I wrote: "Deeply inspired by your novel dedicated to the American both novels belong to classical, Balzacian realism. This is because they have detailed and concrete expositions of the characters, setting places, events and basic conflicts of the characters. The characters are depicted first visually and externally and then internally and psychologically; the events are described in detail, without overlooking the character's social problems.

The dialogues, the external descriptions and the changes in the narrative points of view are proportional and in keeping with the best practices of the realism novel (Zyberaj, 2003, p. 20). For the poor tradition of the Albanian novel of that time, a model such as *Hasta la Vista* was nonetheless a good start for a new narrative school. The novel is a product of P. Marko's deep knowledge and experience of that Spanish reality and many facts and phenomena that have to do with various aspects of the Spanish Civil War (Qosja, 1981, p. 557). According to Dr Sadri Fetiu:

Through this novel, Petro Marko marks the beginning of overcoming the chronological form of recounting and depicting historical events, which was done thus far by Albanian novelists, who in their works explored true historical events of the periods before and after the National Liberation War (Fetiu, 1979, p. 52).

Moreover, Dr Agim Vinca, estimates that through this novel: "P. Marko brought to the Albanian novel of the 50s not only thematic freshness but also new structural, compositional, linguistic and stylistic elements, thus becoming the inspiration of new trends and processes in the later development of Albanian novel" (Vinca, 1995, p. 146).

On the other hand, Hemingway too, as a great, vocal and articulate representative of a remarkable literary tradition, who was familiar with all the great achievements in the modern novel, starting with James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, etc., and continuing with other great and innovative novelists, has preferred simple narrative techniques avoiding deep philosophical reflections, inner monologues and stream of consciousness narrative techniques. Moreover, in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway chooses not to use even some of the most original achievements he employed in his earlier works: suggestive, implicit and straightforward dialogue, symbolic connotations of natural landscapes, the unfinished epilogue and the unwritten end. He displays and depicts the rich and turbulent internal state



of Robert Jordan through the clear dialogue of the protagonist with himself, a situation which is described through the following phrases:

“R. Jordan said to himself..., and himself told R. Jordan...” (Hemingway, 1995, p. 188).

In this respect, the two novels are quite similar because both authors demonstrate the same artistic and literary authenticity, candidness and efficiency. Suffices to explain that *Hasta la Vista* has all the elements of a historical novel and could be considered a model of the historical novel given that at the centre of the attention of its narrative is a historically world important event, the Spanish Civil War, and the characters and the author ever-present and comprehensive. In formal, structural and narrative parameters the two novels demonstrate simplicity, accuracy and functional perfection. But the novels do not have the same dynamic, the same expressive force in the most relevant neuralgic points. The protagonists of P. Marko’s novel have little psychological insight and complexity, and little social and human significance compared to E. Hemingway's heroes. Even at the get-go in their epigraphs, both authors reveal different intentions, P. Marko promises a homage novel for Albanian volunteers in Spain, while Hemingway vows to elaborate in prose a poetic and philosophical view of the poet John Donne, namely he undertakes to give an account of the tragic intertwining of the fate of each man with the whole human condition:

No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if Promontorie were, as well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.. (Hemingway, 1995, p. 4)

Hemingway uses the Spanish Civil War as an opportunity and an enormous experience to make his discoveries about human nature. He does not make a distinction between two types of killings: the martyrs, ours, on the one hand, and the others, the enemies, on the other hand, unlike Petro Marko, who even in the epigraph of his novel makes this distinction and announces this black and white, straightforward and explicit attitude. The hero of P. Marko’s novel *Hasta la Vista*, Gori Gjinleka is a static character, who remains a character on a dead end, not fully developed. He volunteered to participate in the Spanish Civil War an event of continental importance, though he lacked a strong, all-encompassing knowledge and experience of the world. The world for him consisted of only communists, proletarians-brothers and bourgeoisie enemies. He does not develop psychologically and mentally, he only gives himself up to the international-communist utopia and surrenders himself to the leaders of the revolutionary movement. The character Gjinleka has come to symbolize the essential feature of the crowds, the sincere submission to superiors, the reverence for the cult of the leader-commander and the blind worship of his political group. The cult of Professor Tomorri and the cult of communist commissars, in general, is a model of that submissive idolatry and fascination of the masses with the high communist leadership that would culminate in Albania years after *Hasta la Vista* was written. Indoctrination, dogmatism and philosophical



and political shallowness are not attributes of the conscious aesthetic characterization of the hero by the author but are traits of self-imposed restrictions of the author, certainly incited and induced by editorial pressure, self-censorship and pre-conceived practices force back then in Albania.

The above-mentioned inequalities are a reflection of the cultural and literary formation of the two authors, but, at the same time, they are a consequence of the discrepancies between the respective cultural-political environments. Innate talent, stylistic perfectionism and a life filled with extraordinary experiences are what distinguish Hemingway. But we would add that he was an extraordinary reader. From an early age, he had read and analysed all the masterpieces of literature, arts and philosophy that had been created and written in his country, Europe and Russia. However, although he was part of this great tradition, Hemingway decided not to write based on tradition but against it, employing radically innovative, original and legible style. In addition, he had a huge experience which he recounted in his novels, including *Hasta la Vista*. On the other hand, in P. Marko's case, it is his life experience until 1944 that had a huge effect on his writings because after that his familiarization, enrichment with western culture and natural intellectual developments becomes impossible. Hence, because of the communist regime in Albania, his experience as a participant and witness of great events, instead of being an advantage and a raw material for major literary works, turns into restraint, adversity and a strong motive of silence and concealment of his real outlook, convictions and opinions.

The first successful and promising P. Marko literary works in literature are not welcomed but instead become a cause of his persecution and all-around violence. The opposite is true of Hemingway. This is because in Hemingway's literary beginnings Ezra Pound upon expressing his conviction that Hemingway writes brilliantly and is the most stylistically talented prose writer, strongly influenced and convinced Ford Maddox Ford to open him on the path for a new literary career. Hemingway shows his gratitude to Ezra Pound by rescuing him years later from the death penalty. Looking at the concrete circumstances where and how E. Hemingway and P. Marko lived and worked, we can notice the inequalities between the two authors, through their works, as a result of the respective literature, cultures and traditions. Cultural tradition could not offer more to the talented P. Marko because for the cultural horizon of communist Albania at that time, the publication and presence in the library of a novel like *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was considered unnecessary and undesirable. Even in the decades that followed, Hemingway's and novels of other foreign authors were censored and banned and some of them were even legally punishable. Moreover, it is worthwhile to point out that in fact as a complete book Hemingway's novel in question reached the Albanian reader only by 2002.

Whenever a researcher is allowed to compare a literary work with another, regardless of the point of view he approaches, he will unavoidably compare various elements of those works. In this case, the two important novels, one the American literature *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway and the other one *Hasta la Vista* by Petro Marko, which belongs



to Albanian literature, have similarities and differences and other common and special elements. In P. Marko's novels, discourse is a motivating element, which is sometimes personal and emotional with very diverse metaphorical language. All of Marko's works are interconnected and thus all his books constitute a sort of integral system, which narrates or displays similar issues and elements from different perspectives. They communicate with each other, connect with ideological, thematic and discursive bridges and they contain more or less similar characters, changing only their names, events, etc. He structures the text on the principle of thematic code, each end becoming a new beginning.

Thus, the themes he explores are personal, national and sometimes universal. Hemingway's works on the other hand are structured ironically and sarcastically, with short, indirect sentences, sometimes with idiomatic discourse, ironizing the futility of war, death, suicide and anxiety. Authors of both novels through their original ideas reveal the multiple importance of the Spanish Civil War. Through their works they remembered, praised and admired the solidarity of many fighters and soldiers of different countries who gave their contribution by being near those who needed support and help to fight against a world invader, the Nazi-Fascists. First, Hemingway, through his novel, tried to realize the initiative and support of all his compatriots, during the time of the terrible war, who were ready and willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of humanity, only to come to the aid of those in need and to respond to the destructive fascism. So, the very idea the author realized in the work moralizes the heroic gesture of the participating characters and through them reflects all the national support and backing of his entire country to the cause of this war. The initiative of many writers who have written various literary works about the Spanish Civil War, especially Ernest Hemingway's initiative, has influenced the prominent Albanian writer Petro Marko to do the same. Namely, he highly appreciates this initiative, this valuable work, which becomes a push, a motivation and a model for him to dedicate a literary work to all Albanian volunteers who took part in the Spanish Civil War. The development of the main theme of the Spanish Civil War by both writers is realized through a similar narrative. The description of events and situations in the development of battles is given in detail by both writers.

In E. Hemingway's novel, the theme is explored with the description of situations and events through characters, which are not so numerous, and the major theme and events mainly revolve around the protagonist of the novel Robert Jordan, who is portrayed as a missionary, whose mission is to blow up the bridge. On the other hand, Gori Gjinleka in P. Marko's novel *Hasta la Vista* is a character, who sets the plot in motion, because he acts in many situations, he is very cooperative and dear to others even though he is not charged with any special task or mission like Hemingway's protagonist, Robert Jordan. Since the themes of both novels deal with war, the reader goes through and experiences sensitive situations and moments, both emotional and spiritual, especially in certain instances. In both novels, in addition to the theme of war, the theme of love is also explored. This way, the lives and love affairs of the protagonists are described with sensitivity and emotionality, which makes them



feel motivated and it gives them courage and strength to accomplish tasks and missions they have set for themselves.

In E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Robert Jordan falls in love with Maria, while Gori Gjinleka in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* falls in love with Anita Gonzales. Both Maria and Anita are witnesses and survivors of the sad and tragic events of the war. While Anita escapes as the only survivor of her entire family, Maria is a victim because she is captured as a prisoner of war, thus their destinies intersect at one point as they both have a bitter fate (Zyberaj, 2003, p. 35).

The theme of love is explored by both writers but in a different ways. If in Hemingway's novel love appears and develops gradually and is ever-present, in Petro Marko's novel it has another temporal and spatial dimension. That is, love in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* emerges by chance but is nurtured by the sincerity of the past and the fidelity of the future. Gori's love for Anita aspires to be longer-lasting. It is more idealistic and contains a purpose behind it, which is not that evident in Robert Jordan's relationship with Maria. Hence, to his last love, Maria, he was not loyal in the physical sense, because Robert had previously had relationships and affairs with women, but in the spiritual sense, because he had felt with Maria the real pleasure of loving someone. Both protagonists and their girlfriends seem to express their feelings freely and strongly. Gori Gjinleka and Robert Xhordani appear as true protagonists, worthy of being loved and not afraid of the war, well aware of the goals and missions they have set for themselves to accomplish and continue with dedication and determination the fight to the end. In addition to the two main protagonists, we also have other characters who perform their actions, have dialogues, move the story along a plotline within the novel and give value and contribution to the fulfilment and completion of the novel substantively. Maria's fate in E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is almost identical to Anita's fate in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista*. The differences in destinies of the two characters are so small and insignificant that they are not worth noting.

Moreover, one has the impression that their similarity, along with some other motifs like that of the dilemma of the first murder of the enemy, is more a result of Hemingway's influence on P. Marko than of a casual correspondence and similarity between these two novels. In addition, in these two novels, we have images that are quite similar to each other, especially when it comes to the atrocities of the phalanges against the defenceless population, which were oftentimes carried out against innocent people only because some of them either supported the movement or sympathized with it. Other motifs that are similar in these two novels are the destruction of the bridge by XhemailKada in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* with the demolition of the bridge by Robert Jordan in E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which is the leitmotif of the latter and around which almost all other events revolve. The adoption of orphans is a motif we encounter in both novels. Pilar's love and care for Maria until Robert arrives is almost akin to the French colonel's paternal care for Anita, whom he had adopted as his daughter, following the tragedy of the war. The pain of the murders





different characters are forced to commit is another motif we come across, which is similar in both of these novels.

When there is genuine contact and interaction between writers, there is a direct influence between two kinds of literature that extends beyond the borders of a country and a language. A literary influence cannot exist unless an author has read another writer's 'original' text or has had direct interaction with him or her. However, proving this relationship, which is based on clear-cut causation, between nationally distinct writers is difficult, if not impossible especially when some writers do not mention (deliberately or unintentionally) their debt, if any, to certain foreign writers or works. However, in this case, the Albanian writer, Petro Marko, was open, candid and transparent enough to admit that he not only had direct contact with Ernest Hemingway but that in writing his novel *Hasta la Vista* he was directly influenced by Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Both authors, Ernest Hemingway and Petro Marko wrote novels on the same world-historical event, the Spanish Civil War. These novels have undoubtedly similarities and differences. It is clear that when it comes to similarities, both Petro Marko and Ernest Hemingway, endeavoured to connect their literary works to the world-historical event, the Spanish Civil War, because they both participated in this event.

Both novels E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* were written for the same purpose, to represent and admire the struggle of various heroes who participated in the Spanish War. Through their works they remembered, praised and admired the solidarity of many fighters and soldiers of different countries who gave their contribution by being near those who needed support and help to fight against a world invader, the Nazi-Fascists. The development of the theme of the Spanish War by both writers is realized through a similar narrative, namely the description of events and situations in the development of battles given in detail by both writers. In addition to war as the main theme, both authors have simultaneously developed the theme of love. Moreover, in these two novels, we have images that are almost completely similar to each other, especially when it comes to the atrocities of the phalanges against the defenceless population. In both novels, the bridge is the main common motif and symbol of hope. The adoption of orphans is another motif which is quite similar in both novels. Since both novels were written with the same idea and motif, then no doubt that the features of the characters of these novels are similar in certain aspects and respects because they hold the same attitudes, ideas and visions about the war mission against the enemy, etc.

Differences between the two authors include their socio-cultural contexts, literary traditions and periods and the languages in which both authors wrote their novels. There are also differences when it comes to writing their novels because both authors used different methods and during their creative process, they created original novels, through an artistic process with genuine systems of aesthetic and ethical values. Petro Marko and Ernest Hemingway also had divergent creative and ideological approaches in exploring themes, motifs and conflicts in their novels. Much of this is due to the American literary, historical



and political great tradition, something that the Albanian tradition cannot claim due to various upheavals throughout its history. Authors of both novels employed original ideas to reveal the multiple importance of the Spanish Civil War. Another difference has to do with time, within which the events of these two novels take place.

There is also a conceptual difference between how Ernest Hemingway and Petro Marko see the solidarity between characters in the war. There are also differences as regards the development of the theme of war. War in these two novels differs in the social and psychological aspects. Petro Marko's *Hasta la Vista* is characterized by a pronounced emotional strain and boundless hopes that can very easily end in disappointment, while Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is characterized by a more rational action and a greater opportunity to face the challenges imposed by the the the war. And finally, the first tends to completely deny the past and partly the present for the sake of the future, while the second tends to defend the values of the present, primarily for their own sake and then for the sake of the future. It is based on these that the conceptual differences between the war and its development stemmed and were conditioned. The first is characteristic of the Mediterranean mentality in which P. Marko belongs as an Albanian in Spain, while the second is characteristic of the transatlantic mentality of people who are typified through the figure of Robert Jordan. On these premises, the conceptual differences between the war and its development are raised and determined. The first conceives it as a means to an end therefore one should pursue its goal as much as possible, without asking for the prize, while the second conceives it as a struggle but also as an ability that one must possess to care for people and their lives, even if he is an enemy. We hope that this paper on the influence of Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* on Petro Marko's novel *Hasta la Vista* will contribute to the deepening of Albanian and American literary and cultural ties and relations, to the better knowledge, dissemination, reading and recognition of Hemingway's work in Albanian literature and culture and to the incitement of other scholars to embark on conducting other researches on Ernest Hemingway's influence in Albanian literature and culture.

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## Six-Word Novels: Their Evolution and Exploitation in Language Teaching

**Dr S. Parvathavarthini**, Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering & Technology, Karaikudi.

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### Abstract

*The English language is the most sought after language in the present day scenario, especially for engineers. In technical institutions language is taught by adopting Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning methodology. Language is learnt through various tasks in technical contexts. When these are taught in a more general context the response is better. Hence the paper aims at teaching language through a different context to the engineering students. Further, in a fast-moving world that survives through social media and the internet, an attempt has been made to pull out a genre that is prevalent in social media. The study is on employing Six-Word novels to teach the English language to engineering students.*

**Keywords:** Six-Word Novels, Evolution and Exploitation, Language Teaching.

### Introduction - Evolution of Six-word Novels

Six-word novels are a type of flash fiction. Flash fictions are novels that are written with a predetermined length or number of words. These are called sudden fiction which has been written with 1000 words, 750 words and 100 words. Six-word novels, as the name suggests are short stories that are written with just six words. It was supposed to be introduced by Ernest Hemingway according to the urban legend that was circulated till 2012. In 2012 (Frederick A Wright), an article was written where it was found that there was no proof connecting the shorter story with Hemingway. The story that was attributed to Hemingway runs as “Baby shoes for sale: Never worn.” The article established that a different version of the story was found in the newspaper published in 1912 when Hemingway was just 12-13 years of age.

These six-word novels were revived by Larry Smith on Jan. 6, 2006, under the name Six-word memoirs (<https://sixwordmemoirs.com>). He created a website along with Rachel Fershleiser and called for the readers to write their memoirs in six words. The collection of which was published under the title, *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs from Writers Famous & Obscure*. It was the first of the six-word memoir book series and was published in 2008. Around thousand stories contributed by both popular and unknown personalities were included in it. The next book on love and heartbreak was published in 2009. A separate platform was opened for the teens by Smith in 2008. The popularity of this genre spread widely and it was used in hospitals, awareness campaigns and by teachers.



The publisher Harper Collins has published a teacher's guide to using Six-word memoirs as a teaching tool. Second grade teachers and college teachers were suggested to use this as a teaching tool. A lesson plan for books 1 and 2 is found on the website. This genre is taken up for the present study on teaching language through literature.

### **Background to the study**

As Kavitharaj (2017) says teaching language through literature can be enjoyable and fun. Further, it can enhance the writing style of the learners. Selecting an appropriate literary work to teach language is equally important. Further, the literary text should pique the interest of the learners and it should be relevant to them. As Jewett (2017) points out reading an entire novel can be boring, and time-consuming and the present-day learner might feel exhausted, despite its interesting content. Looking at the advantages, a text that is a story at the same time is small and will fit the demand of the language teachers and the learners. One such literary genre is the shorter short stories, namely the Six-word novels.

### **Objectives**

1. A study of the origin and growth of six-word novels and their impact on the present-day learners.
2. An attempt is made to fathom the possibilities of teaching language through the shortest form of stories with limited diction.

### **Hypothesis**

1. Language through literature would be more fun and contextual and makes learning easier.
2. Employing Six-word novels helps students learn vocabulary and grammar better.
3. Six-word novels can be used to improve the writing skills of learners.

### **Research Questions**

1. Can the short stories' shortest form be used to teach a language?
2. What aspect of language can be taught using Six-word novels?

### **Methodology**

Two groups were identified from the same age group, in this case, learners of the control group and experimental group were selected from first-year BE students. The Control group was taught vocabulary, grammar and writing in a general way, wherein the concepts were taught directly without any link to literature. The experimental group was taught language through six-word novels. Later on, this group was made to answer a questionnaire about their learning capabilities and the effectiveness of learning a language through literature. Later on, an assessment activity was done were given for both the groups to gauge the retention capacity of the learners after a period of one week.

In the experimental group, learners were exposed to six-word novels and the platform was made open for discussion and interpretation. The learners were made to guess the meanings of the words and their usage along with the form of the words. They were then made to employ the learned words in sentences and similar six-word novels. Likewise,



learners were also made to identify the sentence structures, subject-verb agreement, different forms of the words and punctuation in the samples given to them.

### Discussion

Students were given a collection of 20 Six-word novels selected for vocabulary building. The selection of the stories was done based on their pliability to teach grammar, vocabulary and writing skills. There were at least 6 stories with new words or with new usage, 6 stories with punctuation marks, and 6 stories with different sentence structures in the selected stories. The class was divided into a group of five with 8 or nine members per group. Each group was given at least three stories one each for grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure. Students were made to read them and time was given for them to interpret them as a whole class. During the interpretation, students were asked to guess the meaning of the new words. Once the interpretation was over, the learners were asked to find out similar words with the same meaning for the stories given to them. They were also asked to make sentences on their own with the new words that they have learnt. This was also done for the set of similar words collected by them. At the end of the given time, each group was made to read out their sentences and their new words. Likewise, as a group, students were made to identify punctuation marks and explain their purpose as a team. Finally, the learners were asked to write their six-word novels. Some examples that were given to the students are as follows

- **My headstone was a participation trophy (doctor 1979)**
- **“Can I scratch out my existence?” (where did all go)**
- **“Freeze! Don’t move!”**  
**“I’m just...”**  
**Bang! (iliococcygeus)**
- **“Eventually, cemeteries grow. Cremations become popular.” (razzilox)**

For vocabulary activity, students were given a six-word novel (My headstone was a participation trophy). The word headstone was not familiar to many students; they came out with gravestones and tombstones for synonyms. They also made sentences using all three words. Learners were strictly advised to have different sentences for the words in the respective groups. The learners were also made to identify the various punctuation marks and give an explanation for the same for the given stories. They were also made to rewrite them with different punctuation marks. The change in the meaning of the punctuation marks was changed was noted. The third activity for the group was to write similar six-word stories with the same sentence pattern.

The response was comparatively better in the experimental group. Later on, during the assessment activity (choose the best option for the 15 words that they have learnt), students from the experimental group did well. Out of 46 students, nearly 35 of them were able to choose the correct answer for 14 words. On the other hand, in the control group, only 20 students out of 56 were able to choose the correct answers for 14 words. The learners in the



experimental group revealed that they found the session more interesting and interactive than the normal classes. They wanted to have more classes in such a manner.

### **Limitations**

Learning and teaching language through literature is interesting to both the teachers and learners especially when the sample literary content is an interesting story. Though this shortest genre was interesting, it had its limitations when it was made available to teach language. The selection of appropriate stories for the activity requires more attention and time. It gives little room for teaching all aspects of language. Since the content is less, only the basic sentence structures can be taught. Likewise, when it comes to writing skills also, there is not enough scope to teach learners paragraphs and other writing forms using these shorter stories as models.

### **Results and Conclusion**

1. Can the short stories' shortest form be used to teach a language?  
Yes. These stories can be used to teach language.
2. What aspect of language can be taught using Six-word novels?

The present study found that only a few aspects of language can be taught using Six-word novels like vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation and basic writing skills.

The current study revealed that Six-word novels are very popular among students. Students enjoy the learning sessions as these samples prove interesting, and challenging and it takes lesser time. Naturally, learners of the digital world are captured by its impact. The retention of the lexis is also more as the students were able to remember more words compared to the control group. Likewise, students enjoyed employing short and basic sentence structures while hitherto they went for long and complicated sentence structures. It is an apt activity to engage the learners for more than three to four sessions. Furthermore, slow learners found it helpful due to its basic sentence structure. It helped them to gain confidence to write in English using simple sentence structures. Fast learners were also fascinated by the brevity of the content and its effectiveness, they also tried writing effective Six-word stories. Another interesting factor that added to the learning was that the learner's creativity was triggered.

The study concludes that learning a language through literature is fun and interesting. Likewise, Six-word novels are not only entertaining it are also effective when adopted to teach language. At the same time due to its short form and limited words it lends itself to teaching only a few aspects of language namely lexis, grammar and writing skills. Even in these three aspects, the scope is limited. Still, it can be used to teach language as it grasps the learner's attention and retains it for more time due to its style that reflects that of digital learners. Further, its brevity and easy accessibility assist the teachers to introduce it to the learners. Similarly, it also helps the learners to grasp it soon as it requires less time. Though there are a few limitations, its advantages outweigh its limitations, hence it can be adapted to teach language effectively.



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## The Recursive Spectre of Violence: Memory, Trauma and Time *A Study of Waryam Singh Sandhu's "Shadows" (1998)*

Robin Singh Arya, P.G Scholar, Ashoka University, NH 44, Rajiv Gandhi Education City, Sonapat, Haryana.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1498-498X>

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### Abstract

*Is an act of violence an isolated disruption in normalcy that can be neatly cordoned off in time, or is it a far-more pervasive current of agony that exceeds any such temporal demarcation? Is it possible to characterise a traumatic incident as an “event” in the past, or does it demand an acknowledgement of how the suffering of the past lives on in the present? Set against the backdrop of the Khalistan insurgency in the Punjab of the 1980s and 1990s, Waryam Singh Sandhu’s short story “Shadows” (Parchchhavein) details the rampant bloodshed of the time that also carries within itself the inevitable ring of the events of the Partition in and around 1947. In the present essay, I wish to investigate the representation of violence in “Shadows” that demands to be understood not merely as an “event” with neat temporal borders but as a constituent of the numerous and recurrent waves of violence that both constitute and disrupt the collective psyche. All along with this exploration, I focus on the strategic narrative techniques that the text employs to convey the horror of violence to the readers and the subsequent lasting impact that it leaves on its characters. By drawing upon memory as a theoretical category, I argue that memory serves a paradoxical function in the text: while the resurfacing of traumatic memories of the 1940s is painful and agonising in the face of the events of the 1980s, the amorphous nature of memory also opens up avenues where possibilities of collective catharsis and healing might lie. The curious tension between remedial hermeneutics and the recurrent surges of violence in “Shadows” ultimately resolves itself with the victory of the latter, as violence establishes itself not merely as a disruptive “event” but as the pervasive state of being in the world itself.*

**Keywords:** Recursive Violence, Memory, Trauma, Time, Waryam Singh Sandhu, *Shadows*

## I

### Theoretical Triumvirate: Trauma, Memory and Time

“The time is out of joint; O cursèd spite, That ever I was born to set it right!”

— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5

In this section, I briefly lay out a theoretical framework of trauma and its effects on



time perception that I would later draw upon to illustrate the role of memory, temporality and violence in the text. Let me speak of time first. The vast philosophical and scientific debates about time are too heterogenous to describe here in detail, but I take as my starting point the humble proposition that the experience of violence and trauma affects how individuals come to experience time. The focus of the present study is the psychic temporal reality of the “victims” of physical and mental violence but one may claim that the experience of time gets altered even in the mental reality of the “perpetrator”. Allow me to chart out my proposed relationship between trauma and time in some strokes.

The lasting after-effects of a violent event disrupt the ordinary past-present-future linearity of time. Instigated by emotional trauma, the memories of the *past* invade the *present* as is also exemplified by incessant flashbacks that trigger the memory to unearth the *past* often as a consequence of a “trigger” in the *present*. In this regard, the present study foregrounds an aspect of time that has always been central to its etymological history: arising from the Old Germanic *time*, “time” is cognate with “tide” and the rising and falling actions that we associate with it. As Robert D Stolorow underlines, “[e]xperiences of emotional trauma become *freeze-framed* into an eternal present in which one remains forever trapped, or to which one is condemned to be perpetually returned by life’s slings and arrows” (Stolorow 2015; italics mine). The emphasis on the *freezing* of the past is crucial as it brings to mind the narrator’s comment in “Shadows” that the horrifying murders of Hussain Baksh and his family lay embedded in their eyes as a “*frozen* snapshot of a film” (33) that he is cursed to revisit again and again: “I would scream in my dreams and wake up. I would see a surging sea of deep red blood into which jumped Balbir Singh with both his feet. And as he would walk towards me, I would scream” (36). How the narrator is destined to revisit that gory violence time and again as triggered by the events in his presence is the thematic current that, I suggest, enables us to frame our discussion around the theory of memory, time and trauma in the text.

When the average extension of time has been disrupted so horribly that *the past* can never be *the past*, the experience of time in trauma assumes a cyclical nature in which *the past* and *the present* constitute a future of their own marked by incessant repetition. One of the leading scholars of trauma studies, Cathy Caruth, underlines the same *repetition* that is the defining characteristic of trauma, that resurfaces in “the form of repeated intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts” along with “numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (or avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event” (Caruth 4). As this temporality of *the past* being repeated endlessly is starkly different from others who still are (to an extent) observing time as progressing from *past to present to future*, the victims of trauma often consider themselves helpless and passive in face of the mere repetition of time and memories. Consider the helplessness in the narrator’s response when his friends, Manohar and Pargat, are discussing their opinionated stances about the political climate: “But what could I say? Time was slipping out of my fingers and leaving its traces behind. My eyes were full of dust flying around” (33). The experience of being snatched away from the way others experience the passage of time sustains the feelings of



isolation and alienation from the world that the victims of trauma face. With this theoretical framework of trauma, memory, time and recurrence, let us go to a close engagement with the text to illustrate its reflections in Sandhu's "Shadows."

## II

### The Recurrent Haunting: Narrative, Memory and Violence

"The past is never dead. It's not even past."  
— William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*, 1951.

In this section, I wish to underline the parallel between the trope of *recurrence* that finds voice in Sandhu's "Shadows": first, in the way that the story organises its narrative in which anecdotes, memories, and symbols keep *re*-appearing; and second, the way the story presents violence as being characterised by *recurrence* on a broader historical canvas, including yet exceeding the violence of 1947.

On the narrative level, "Shadows" is fascinated with the trope of repetition. Usually presented to the reader as a function of memory, the story recounts multiple events that have happened in the past already and that are repeated in the present with little change. This repetition of cyclicity in the story is allowed majorly because of the presence of an intergenerational cast of characters: the narrator's grandparents, his parents, the narrator himself, and now, his children. The incidents in the narrator's childhood are repeated in the lives of his children, constituting a cycle of events in which the *future* is just an endless repetition of the *past*. Consider the flight of the narrator's memory and the intermingling of the past with the present when he sees his children huddled up around his mother for stories: "While my mother narrated those stories to my children, I would feel as if my grandmother, wrapping me in her shawl, was telling me [stories]" (31). Elsewhere in the narrative, symbolic elements keep reappearing in different ways intergenerationally. The "*parna*" touching the earth when Fazal Haq bows down in front of Balbir Singh *re*-surfaces when the rope around Balbir Singh's neck touches the ground while he offers the narrator to climb upon his shoulders (34, 38); how Fazal Haq describes Balbir Singh to have wetted his clothes with his "pee" *re*-appears again when the narrator urinates on Balbir Singh's shoulders (34, 38). The narrative future is presented by the text as a seemingly self-conscious re-writing of the tablet of the past which disrupts the linear progression of time and causes it to just rotate cyclically (or helically, to be precise). That the story ends precisely at the moment when it begins with the "child-like question" (30, 45) asked by his youngest daughter enables the text to come full circle, collapsing the beginning and the ending with the simultaneous equivalence between the past, present and future.

Before we recount the recurrence of violence in "Shadows," much of which posits the Partition as a reference, it will be beneficial to place the argument in a scholarly context. The Partition of India constitutes such a horrifying legacy of violent murders, abductions and



rapes that it continues to be a “shadow,” in the literal sense of the story’s title, and its trauma continues to live on in the present. A vast critical corpus endorses this view of how Partition is alive in the living communal memory of South Asia. The historian Vazira Zamindar termed this legacy of the Partition as the “Long Partition” affirming Ayesha Jalal’s poignant comment about how 1947 is “a defining moment that is neither [a] beginning nor [an] end” (qtd. In Sengupta xii). Urvashi Butalia, the leading Partition historian, has commented that her seminal work *The Other Side of Silence* (1998) was itself catalysed by the 1984 riots in India that made her family feel that “it was partition again...we thought we had seen the worst of it during partition, yet...” (Butalia 31). Priyamvada Gopal has argued in a similar vein that the microscopic occurrences of violence such as communal riots often invoke what she calls “the trope of the Partition” (Gopal 69). I wish to take seriously the argument about the legacy and the “trope” of Partition’s violence that constitutes a blinding “shadow” in the representation of violence in Sandhu’s “Shadows.”

In the story, when the readers get to know that Manohar and his father have been killed in the “senseless” (*andhadhund*) firing, the immediate response of the text is to recount the horrifying murders of Fazal Haq, Reshma and Hussain Baksh’s child. The rampant bloodshed of the *present* moment forces the memory to revisit the horrors of the *past*. The same is true for the forced displacements that happened following the vivisection of India in 1947. When Hussain Baksh submits his possession in the narrator’s grandfather’s custody, the latter quickly dismisses the Partition to be a minor disruption: “Simpleton! This confusion won’t last long. How can anyone leave his hearth and home... You people have come back and live here” (33). Some decades later it is his Hindu friend Manohar who is contemplating leaving the village, and the narrator’s memory brings forth his grandfather’s exact words about the village being his “hearth and home” that he wishes to say to Manohar, but eventually fails. While it is true that the two major points of temporal reference in the story are that of Partition in 1947 and the Insurgency in the 1980s, in a curious instance, the story presents the violence of the Partition as itself an iteration of a cycle of violence in the history of the the the religious conflict. Consider the gruesome murder of Hussain Baksh’s youngest child who is murdered despite his innocent cries to avenge the deaths of “tenth Guru’s children” (35) — Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh — who were killed by Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind in 1705. The original Punjabi mentions that the weapon used to kill Hussain Baksh’s family is the *kirpan*, a single-edged curved sword, recommended in Sri Guru Gobind Singh’s commandments as one of the five *Ks*. The English translation is “sword” or “dagger” which evacuates the religious connotations of a *kirpan* and underplays its symbolic value. The cyclical waves of violence, therefore, are situated within the larger socio-religious history of South Asia of which the Partition and the Insurgency are painted as mere iterations.

The depiction of violence in “Shadows” is also untypical because the narrator of the story belongs to a community that is rendered safe from the two waves of violence: while the violence of the Partition targets Muslims (the family of Hussain Baksh), the violence of the



insurgency attacks Hindus (Manohar and his father). They are the *spectators* of gory violence resulting in the murders of their family friends, and eventually haunted by their violent memory. But memory as an agent of remembering is haunted by its amorphous nature, as it is animated by forgetting, erasing and healing. Does “Shadows” present to us any possibility of memory acting as a healer in face of all the horrific violence? Or is it merely a repository of pain and suffering that continues to haunt the collective psyche of its characters?

### III

#### Remedial Hermeneutics: Memory, Forgetting and Healing

“Our memory is a more perfect world than the universe: she gives back life to those that don't exist any more.”

— Guy de Maupassant, "Suicides", *Les sœurs Rondoli* (1884)

In this section, I illustrate the paradoxical nature of memory in the text: it serves as the psychic site of the traumatic “event” but it also distorts that remembrance by forgetting, and thereby opens up possibilities of healing and moving ahead. Additionally, it also paints the past *before* the trauma as an idyllic space against which the deterioration in the present is mapped.

Even as it is a tale of horrifying violence, the “Shadows” paradoxically starts not on a grim note but by recounting the days of a pre-Partition idyllic space of communal harmony, youthful laughter and innocent happiness. The playful bliss of Reshma, the daughter of Hussain Baksh and Fatima, playing with the narrator echoing the refrain — “We will drag our feet...go home only after it rains.” (31) — presents to the readers a merry past *before* the ravages of the Partition. I emphasise this to underline the story’s complex rendering of the past: it is the source of pain *and* consolation, simultaneously. The story’s investment in a meta-narrative of story-telling is also fascinated with this dual nature of memories. The past lives on in the stories that travel from one generation to the next, carrying forward the nostalgia of happy days left behind as well as the scarring of the pain and agony.

It is in the blurry and amorphous nature of memory, I suggest, that the story opens up an imaginative realm of collectivity in which the communal markers of its characters dissolve into each other, thereby erasing their religious identities in favour of shared humanity. The realm of imagination, free from the stringent logic of reason, carves out another space in the narrative where helplessness in the face of violence binds disparate communities with each other across the confines of space and time. When Fazal Haq bows down before Balbir Singh, the narrator states that in his memory his “face would blend with the faces of Kashmiri pandits, who had stood beseeching in Anandpur Sahib” (34). The reference here is to the Kashmiri Pandits who had approached Guru Tegh Bahadur in Anandpur Sahib in 1675, seeking protection from the Mughal King, Aurangzeb. Memory acts as a bridge of solidarity between Muslims in 1947 and the Kashmiri Pandits fleeing the atrocities by the Mughals in



1675 as it blends their faces in the abstract figure of the helpless victims. Consider too a similar strain of blending of faces of different communities in a “blurry” human figure as the victim:

Often, the images we had of Muslims, from our family tales, would get sullied by all the stories [of Muslims as perpetrators] we had heard about other Muslims from Pargat. Their faces would become blurry. And then would emerge a figure from that haze, a bent neck and a shining sword piercing through it and it would become vibrant before our eyes. We don’t know whose neck it was? Was it Fazal Haq’s...? Of his eight-year-old grandson? Of Pargat’s uncle or brother?... But many times we felt that it was our neck! (36)

The hazy victim figure in the realm of imagination can therefore encompass Muslims, Hindus and the children themselves in whose imagination such thoughts are arising, across borders of religion, space and time. In yet another instance, the narrator claims that the *face* of Abdul Gani resembled that of his maternal grandfather, and elsewhere, while being carried by Balbir Singh, he *imagines* that it was as if “Balbir Singh had lifted Fazal Haq on his shoulders” (39). Imagination, freed from stringent reason and reality, is the site where a shared communal being is first-made apparent in the story even in the face of such a gruesome cyclical history of violence.

It is tempting to invoke here the ethical reflex embedded within Levinas’ reading of the “the Same and the Other” (Levinas 26). Levinas maintains that the Other is “infinitely foreign” yet it is only in *his face* that one can glimpse the “infinitely transcendent” where “epiphany is produced” that can “break with the world that can be common to us, whose virtualities are inscribed in our nature and developed by our existence” (Levinas 300). “Shadows” achieves the radical acceptance of the alterity of the Other in a slightly different manner, one that Levinas rejects. The imagination of the narrator blurs the figure of Abdul Gani and Fazal Haq with *his* own or *his* relatives. Levinas regrets that the working mechanism of ontology: is “a reduction of the other to the same” (43). It would be a fertile area of study to see the way the ethical reflex in “Shadows” develops by blurring (reducing?) everyone’s faces into the face of either his own or his family members.

Beneath the pervasive violence between Muslims and Sikhs in the village, the story soon opens up a radically different space for harmony after the entry of Abdul Gani, the Muslim from Pakistan who is visiting his native village. Gani, a member of the same community who had been slaughtered mercilessly in the village, is met with boundless love and welcome on his return: “the people of the village were flocking to him and taking turns to invite him for food at their place” and “he was responding to the joyful and curious queries of the people” and “exchanging pleasantries” (39-40). (The word in the original Punjabi is *ram-Tamiya*, literally, “to talk of Ram and Rahim.” The English translation – “pleasantries” – is much plainer and underplays the strategic use of *ram-Tamiya* in the context of the bridging of broken communal ties at this juncture in the story.)

Gani’s character might also be an intertextual reference to Mohan Rakesh’s “The Owner of Rubble.” In that context, the intertextual study of Rakkha Pehelwan and Balbir is



useful, as both stories force the perpetrators and the victims to come *face to face* with each other and open up a possibility of forgiving in the face of the gory violence of the Partition. My understanding is that it is possible to read “Shadows” as a palimpsest and a contradiction to “The Owner of Rubble”: while the intertextual references open up a possibility of forgiving, “Shadows” advances the argument by underlining how the violence of the Partition was, unfortunately, accursed to be repeated in the history of Punjab.

Even as Balbir Singh shies away from meeting Gani initially, their eventual meeting brings forth a communal harmony despite the violent legacy of the Partition — Balbir Singh greets him with “Salaam, Maulvi Ji” and Gani responds with “*Sat Sri Akal*, Sardar Balbir Singh” (41) — thereby exchanging the social greetings traditionally associated with their religions. By imploring Balbir Singh to “sweeten [his] mouth and spit the bitterness away,” Gani invites him to share *jalebis* with him to which Balbir Singh reluctantly agrees, but then proposes that he will eat with Gani on the same plate: “*Shah*, don’t put more...I will take from this plate...I will not become untouchable...” (42) It remains unclear in the story whether Gani knows explicitly that Balbir Singh was involved in murdering Hussain Baksh’s family but he argues that it was the over-arching political structure that caused Partition and “[n]ow all repent, my dear brother!” (40) A counter-point might be to say that the story redeems Balbir Singh without any consequence for his actions — I differ with that position slightly. What the story narrates is a consequence of how the social fabric of the village is torn asunder amidst the wave of Partition violence. Indeed, as Joya Chatterjee warns, one wonders “why people who had lived cheek by jowl for so long fell upon each other in 1947 and its aftermath, with a ferocity that has few parallels in history” (qtd. in Sengupta xi). I suggest that with the interaction between Gani and Balbir Singh, the story presents to us an avenue for collective healing and the repair of broken social ties after the Partition.

But even as the story presents to us the possibility of moving beyond violence, is such a project sustainable at all? Or are the characters in the story accused to suffer the same cyclicity of violent history again?

## IV

### The Spectre Haunts Again: Cyclicity, Violence, Helplessness

“Scars have the strange power to remind us that our past is real.”

— Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses* (1992)

In this concluding section, I wish to interrogate the second wave of violence that finds voice in the text, that of the insurgency in the 1980s. I argue that as compared to earlier waves of violence, the bloodshed of the insurgency establishes in the text that instead of being a disruption, violence has come to be cyclic with a far more amorphous, shadowy and unreadable character. In the first section of the essay, I argued how the violence of the 1980s in “Shadows” carries within itself the ring of 1947. Here, I wish to investigate how this



particular wave of violence is similar yet different from that of 1947.

When faced with the repeated worsening of social climate some decades after the Partition, the narrator's friend, Manohar, confides in him about his fears of having to leave his village. In the narrator's mind, this rings a parallel with how Hussain Baksh had sought the help of his grandfather during the Partition. His response to Manohar, however, reveals how helpless he feels in the face of the recurrent waves of violence and displacement. I wanted to reassure him with my grandfather's words. "Don't feel bad for nothing...this confusion is short-lived...who leaves his hearth and home, O Simpleton! You have to come back here...and live here... But how could I say all this to him? What was in my hands? (42)

He cannot even say any empty words of consolation to his friend, because even the earnest words of his grandfather to Hussain Baksh had been rendered superficial in the wake of the violence of the Partition. In the face of a new form of violence, there is now a tacit acknowledgement within the narrator's remarks that *this violent "confusion" is, after all, not "short-lived" but that it is now the very state of being in the world itself*, a "background" against which life needs to be lived. Shortly afterwards, Manohar and his father are killed in "senseless" firing. Their perpetrators are never identified: "And now who knows who 'they' were! They had come marching, and left after indulging in the preposterous act...Nobody had an answer to that question" (45). While at least the perpetrators of the violence of the Partition could be identified, the current violence is so pervasive and "senseless" that no clear perpetrator could be blamed. "They" who had sprayed bullets fatally wounding Manohar and his father always remain "they" in the story: unidentifiable, unblameable, unrecognisable. The omnipresent violence is met with the surrender of thought on the part of "sensible, mature people" (*saying*): they grieve about the loss of lives, but are "quiet about those who had sprayed the bullets" (45). They recede into silence, almost acquiescing to the pervasive violence that is now a reality that they are forced to live with.

It is useful here to invoke Slavoj Žižek's theorization of subjective and objective violence. Žižek in his treatise *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* distinguishes between two types of violence: "subjective violence" is "the most visible" and "performed by an identifiable agent"; "objective violence" is "invisible" embedded within "the contours of the background which generates such outbursts" (Žižek 1). He also clarifies that while "subjective violence is experienced as such against the background of a non-violent zero level...of "normal," peaceful state of things," objective violence is different in the way "it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent" (Žižek 2). While I am not arguing for *applying* Žižek's theorization of violence to the story, I suggest that from the Partition to the Insurgency, violence has moved from being a disruption — a consequence of subjective violence — to more pervasive and senseless violence that has seeped into the social fabric in the story, constituting a "non-zero level standard". The zero-level against which subjective violence is mapped has also refigured because, with the horrifying memory of the Partition in the background, any new eruption of violence does not seem a disruption but a mere coming forth of violence that was always lying beneath the





surface. The story paints the violence of the Partition in South Asia, therefore, as veering away from a “subjective” violence as disruption with a clearly identifiable agent to an “objective violence” that characterises the unidentifiable, slow, intangible violence against which other eruptions of violence are adjudicated (and for which no clear perpetrators can be blamed).

The “child-like” question that the narrator’s youngest daughter poses at the end — “Respected Mother: By any chance was Balbir Singh there among those who had fired last night?” (45) — introduces the theme of the *recurrence* of violence yet again. After all, the victims have changed but the larger social schisms facilitating violence have sustained. As compared to the “sensible and mature people” who had “stopped asking such questions,” the child’s inquiry yet again collapses two timelines into one another as it becomes challenging for her to keep apart two seemingly similar narratives of violence that she has been consuming. But even as the story might hint that the “child-like question” is mature in itself, it also carries the terrifying possibility that yet another generation in the family — the narrator’s children — has been interpellated into the violent intergenerational trauma being passed on from every generation to the next. While her identification of the cyclicity of violence is an intelligent gesture, the very fact that children in the family are depicted as consuming stories of graphic violence from their elders is a *cycle of trauma in itself* that carries the possibility of both its catharsis and perpetuation.

In this essay, I have argued for an analytical emphasis on the relationship between violence, trauma and time. In Waryam Singh Sandhu’s “Shadows,” the violent “event” resists being bound to a demarcated temporal territory, and it recurs time and again in memory and reality. While memory serves as a reservoir of painful memories that pushes one to revisit the traumatic past, its imaginative power also opens up possibilities for collective healing. The recurrent waves of violence, however, that of the Partition and the Insurgency, cause the time perception of past-present-future to crash into one another as later violence invokes the “trope” of the Partition violence. The story also hints toward the possibility that violence is no longer a mere disruption in an idyllic space but an unfortunate and all-pervasive reality that the characters in Sandhu’s “Shadow” need to inhabit. I will end on a note of hope. If violence is cyclic, so is the human spirit and desire to form solidarity in face of that threat. I conclude this essay in the silent hope that in the face of the *recurrent* waves of violence, the inhabitants of South Asia hold on to that resolute intimacy.

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