

E-ISSN: 2584-167X



Academic Research News

Development relies in Research

Academic Research News

Peer-Reviewed Journal

Volume 2, Issue 2 - December 2024

Editor –in –Chief

Mrs. A. Gomathi



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ISSN 2584-167X



9 772584 167004

E-ISSN: 2584-167X



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Title Verso

Journal title : Academic Research News
Abbreviated key-title:
E- ISSN Number : 2584-167X
Editor-in-Chief : Mrs. A. Gomathi
Publication frequency: Bi-Annual (Calendar Cycle - June and December)
Volume/Issue Type : Volume 2 Issue 2
Place of Publication : Virudhunagar
Start of Publication : December 2024
Paper Size (Format) : Digital A4 Size
Medium of Publication: E-version
Subject : Multidisciplinary Studies
Language : Tamil, English
Access Type (URL or DOI): Diamond OA, Online, Indexed long time in Internet Archive
Subscription Type : APC
Publisher : Maheswari Publishers, (The publishing unit of PANDIAN EDUCATIONAL TRUST- TN-32-0003213)
Publisher Website : <https://pandianeducationaltrust.com/>
Journal Site : <https://pandianeducationaltrust.com/academic-research-news.html>

Pandian Educational Trust supports SDG Goals and is a member of UN SDG Publisher compact.

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Academic Research News is a Peer-Reviewed Journal (E-ISSN: 2584-167X) published **Bi-yearly (June – December)** which is published by **Maheswari Publishers**, patronized by **Pandian Educational Trust, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, India**. **Academic Research News** aims to bring down Academic Research to promote research support for the academicians and scholars in the field of academic news related to research, indexing, ethical publishing and other related news. Research through this academic medium motivates in all aspects of main and inter-disciplines of the core area of study with authentic e-publication. Making Internationalization of **Academic Research News** in the globalized world aids the scholarly community to gather knowledge on Academic Research in the all fields of learning. The impudence and revelation of academic research on internet could foster green printing and open access nature in the domain research. All of these motivate best distribution of research that produces positive outcomes for the betterment of research and education and the unification of the people in our world. In achieving the aim, our journal **Academic Research News** has been created.

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Publisher Contact:

Maheswari Dharmalingam

Pandian Educational Trust (TN-32-0003213),

Maheswari Publishers, (The publishing unit of PANDIAN EDUCATIONAL TRUST- TN-32-0003213)

3/350, Veterinary Hospital Back Side,

Virudhunagar- 626001, Tamil Nadu, India.

Mobile: +91 8526769556,

email: editorptjts@pandianeducationaltrust.com,

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Mutiny of Traditional Indian Feminine in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows*

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Abstract

Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows explored the conflict between tradition and modernity. One can live an isolated life to forget all family, social responsibilities and obligations. The protagonist is projected as a modern woman yet the minor characters follow the traditions of the family. Modern women cannot inculcate all the traditions whereas the elder doesn't support modernity. Total opposition towards tradition forces the protagonist to study abroad yet does not avoid the traditional practices. In life, everyone has to live with a relationship and there is no way to escape within the circle.

Keywords: Tradition, Modernity, Opposition, Relationship.

Deshpande's concern is to depict the pain and conflict of the modern educated Indian women. Her fiction explores the search of the woman in fulfilling herself as a human being, independent of her role as daughter, wife and mother. Indu, the protagonist of the novel represents the modern, educated and liberated woman and contemporary Indian middle-class woman who hopes to become independent and complete in herself. She is an educated Indian woman who leaves home at the age of eighteen to study in the big city of Bombay. It is a forced vacation because she cannot tolerate the rigid behaviour prevailing in the house. She hates her dominating Akka and calls her the old tyrant of the house.

Indu is a writer and belongs to the modern society. Hence, she breaks away from all the traditional rigid customs that are unnecessarily imposed on women. Thus she is torn between self-expression and social stigma. Indu proposed to Jayanth and married him against the wishes of Akka and others. Indu loved Jayanth too much when Jayanth was shocked to find passion in her with initiative in lovemaking. Her relationship with Naren helps her to release her long subdued passions.

In the novel *Roots and Shadows*, no woman remarried but Indu loved Naren but refuses the rumour and says her statement that there is going to be only one man in her life. According to the tradition, women wait for their husbands to eat food after that the women will eat on the same plates but Indu is opposing this way:

It disgusted me to see the strew plates, the scattered remnants. And yet, for the whole lifetime, the women patiently cleared up the mess with their bare hands after each meal. And women like Kaki even ate off the dirty plates their husbands had eaten in earlier.... We will eat when we want and if we want. A Declaration of Independence. (68-69)

Among all the women characters, Akka deserves special attention. All the members of the family fear as well as respect her. It is Indu who questions and challenges the authority of Akka walks out of the house and marries Jayanth to seek fulfilment in her way. But Indu is called back by Akka when she falls critically ill and realizes that her end is near. She chooses Indu as her heir and wills her entire property, including the house. Indu returns to her ancestral home and has a brief meeting with Akka who soon passes away. After her death, she left with responsibilities of the family including the marriage of her cousin, Padmini. She

manages to fulfil most of them. “You people... you’ve thought of everything... the families, the communities, the stars, and the gotras, everything...” (94)

Her memories of episodes and events from the past interlink with one another to give the picture of childhood, leaving the house, marriage and coming back. She is the narrator and the motherless daughter of one of the sons of this huge family. She left the house full of resentment and rebellion, determined to prove to her and the family that was not her home. It is the rejection of the family in the most emphatic terms possible. This particular phase of her life gives her enough experience to know the world which exists outside the four walls. However the introspection and self-analysis, she comes to realize that is indeed a comfort in living as part of the family.

One of the widowed aunts, Narmada Atya looked after her, when she was just fifteen days old. Atya was living in a joint family. As a child, everyone in the family pampered her because she was a motherless child but her father did not shoulder the responsibility to bring her up. Another widowed relative is dominating in nature and she commands not only because of her age but also her wealth. It is Akka, the rich widow who makes Indu come back when she is on her deathbed and leaves all her wealth to Indu.

A conflict arises in Indu whether to help Anant Kaka by selling the house or to keep the house but finally, she decides to sell off the legacy of Akka. Before Akka’s death, she fixed the marriage of Padmini without consulting the girl. Indu honours her wishes and she broods over the fate of a woman in a large family and deeply resents the fact in traditional Hindu joint families. But women are nothing more than puppets without any identity, voice or name in the family. But her revolutionary idealism finds no place in the family. Padmini refuses to romanticize her marriage which is an arrangement arrived at her good by the elders.

A woman’s life, they told me, contained no choices... The women had no choice but to submit, to accept. And I had often wondered... have they born without wills, or have their wills atrophied through a lifetime of disuse? And yet Mini, who had no choice either, had accepted the reality, the fanality, with a grace and composure that spoke eloquently of that inner strength. (17)

Akka knows that many well-deserving candidates are living in the ancestral house itself. In this huge family where only the close family meant were twenty of them. “It was now six days since Akka’s death, and the close family was left at home. Which still meant about twenty of us” (41). The orphan boy, Vithal who is given shelter and food refuses to be part of the family and keeps Indu herself away for ten years away from the family.

Indu loves freedom and always has a resolute mind. She may be called the new woman who has the desire and freedom to talk about things and question the seriousness and nature of matters related to her. Indu’s attempt to break off from the ancestral house, the joint family and its tradition are not successful. Indu is planned for modern life but she again returns to the traditional way of life.

Another important aspect is that the older members of the family have remained devout Brahmins whereas the younger generation makes casual reference to caste. But once again the traditionalism of the hierarchal society is placed. The secular replaces the religious for this liberal younger generation. An old lady who dominated over everyone in the house would be the last person to bring about change. “But then, new pillars take the place of the old” (21).

Akka refuses to go to the hospital when she is sick because she does not know what caste the nurses and doctors belong to. She is the representation of the old order and fixated

on untouchability that she is also very particular about how a girl should conduct herself in society.

Akka's illness had meant nothing but trouble and inconvenience for everyone in the house. Why didn't you get her admitted into hospital? I had asked Kaka. Kaka had looked at me apologetically. She wouldn't let me. She didn't want to go to a hospital. She was worried about the kind of people she would come in contact with. "God knows what caste the nurses are", she said, "Or the doctors. I couldn't drink a drop of water there". (30)

The life of Akka shakes many of the stereotypical views of the hard life of Brahmin widows in traditional families. Akka is privileged based on caste but her status as a widow makes her an oppressed person. "We Indians can never get away from caste. If we've rejected the old ones, we've embraced new ones". (61) Akka is a representation of the middle-class, upper-caste gendered subject who is caught in the struggle between the traditional and the 'modern/western' mode of thinking and living.

Indu asserts her position as a human being equal to that of man and does not want to submit herself to anyone's dictates. This projects her bitter struggle through conflicting trends between the old people's traditions and emerging new ideas. Indu is seen as a woman who achieves freedom but cannot break herself free from the clutches of tradition and realizes that her education and exposure do not support the women who go around the Tulsi plant to increase their husband's life span. Indu calls her husband by name when Susanda Atya tells her:

Shows disrespect, she would have said. They also say it shortens your husband's life. That's just to frighten the women. To keep them in their places. And poor fools, we do just that. What connection can there be between a man's longevity and his wife's calling him by name? It's as bad as praying to the Tulsi to increase his life span. I used to watch the women piously circumambulating the tulsi, devoutly standing in front of it with folded hands and closed eyes. (39)

Even her husband is an educated modern man for whom she remains passive and submissive.

Deshpande has very artistically juxtaposed two sets of Indian women. One is the representatives of Narmada, Kamala Kaki, Sumitra Kaki, and Atya and the other is representation by Indu. Indu's academic achievement, economic independence and attitude mean nothing to the women of the older generation, as their aim in life was, "To get married, to bear children, to have sons and then grand children". (109)

An educated woman resents such traditional practices. There is history and culture, religions and customs, individual and family faiths, family tradition and histories but there are people around whose expectations and relationships are different. Even the orthodox widow of the early twentieth century emerges with a strong personality and a sense of duty and devotion to family. The succeeding generation of women is stronger and more modern and has more freedom than the preceding generation. The upcoming women may give birth to children in the house and not in hospitals. "The dark room. Where so many women had given birth. It seemed to me as if the smell of childbirth still clung to it". (29)

Child marriage is prohibited by the younger generation of girls against the curbed freedom. Narmada Atya was saved by his elder brother from the crude rituals after the death of her husband. The people who observe strict traditions consider her as a second citizen in the world of windows and avoid the food prepares by her. The bare skull with its short hairs looked obscene and indecent. Even though she has no children, she was not suggested for remarriage. "A childless widow, knowing she had no claim on anyone. The house had been, perhaps, her only security... widow's way of living, her rituals, her fasts and her self-

deprivations” (23). Society neither prefers her second marriage nor her lifestyle without a shaven head. Even in the new generation era widows are not permitted to take part in functions and marriages that telecast the society that is dominated by males.

The issues of arranged marriages in middle-class families can be envisioned through the marriage of Akka in the past and with the marriage of Mini in the present. Indu speaks about against the traditional mode of settling marriages when she sees Mini who is being pushed into an incompatible marriage by her elders. With her marriage, it is clear that an arranged marriage is not a marriage of two souls but purely of sentiment and tradition.

Generally, society never cares about a man who takes in sexual liberties with impunity and if a woman indulges in the same, she is looked at with bad eyes and thereafter she is branded. Indu realizes that she should listen and be faithful to the voice of her inner conscience because she believes that conscience is the softest pillow that one rests on the concept of marriage that later can be seen as a practical joke. Hence, it is true that a poor woman is locked along with an animal. She cannot execute the thoughts that she has and cannot express them with concerns.

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Author Contribution Statement: NIL.

Author Acknowledgement: NIL.

Author Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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Exploring Identity and Resistance in Select Bama's Novels

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Abstract

Bama is a distinguished Dalit feminist writer in Tamil literature and has notably contributed to the discourse on caste and gender oppression in India. Her novels, translated into English, have amplified her voice and made her works available to the global audience. This article examines the impact of English translations of Bama's novels, mainly Karukku, Sangati, and Vanmam. The works capture her unique narrative technique, cultural nuances and themes of resistance, unity, and empowerment, whilst addressing the demanding situations of linguistic and cultural transference. By analyzing those works, the paper highlights the significance of such works in retaining the essence of Dalit literature and broadening its readership.

Keywords: Bama, Dalit literature, Caste, Gender, Tamil Literature, Identity.

Introduction

Dalit literature has long served as a voice for marginalized communities to claim their identities and challenge oppressive systems. Among them, Bama stands proud for her shiny portrayal of Dalit women's lives and struggles. Her works, written in Tamil, depict the intersectionality of caste and gender with authenticity and uncooked emotional electricity. English translations of her novels have played a pivotal position in bringing her narratives to a much wider target market, fostering cultural dialogue and cohesion.

Bama's Novels

Karukku (1992), Bama's debut writing, is an autobiographical novel that delves into her reviews as a Dalit Christian woman. The novel's title symbolizes the serrated fringe of a palm leaf, reflecting the ache and resilience of the Dalit network. In Tamil, the text employs colloquial language and oral storytelling techniques, vividly taking pictures of the rhythm of Dalit lives. The English translation by Lakshmi Holmström preserves these stylistic factors even as making the narrative accessible to non-Tamil readers.

Sangati (1994) shifts the focal point from man or woman experiences to a collective narrative of Dalit women. It portrays their normal struggles, solidarity, and resistance in opposition to caste and patriarchal oppression. Holmström's translation captures the polyphonic voices of Dalit women, although a few cultural idioms and humour lose their immediacy in the manner of translation.

Vanmam (2002) explores inter-caste warfare and its devastating results on marginalized groups. The novel opinions the divisive techniques of caste politics that avert unity amongst oppressed corporations. While the English translation stays trustworthy to the narrative, the complexity of Tamil cultural references challenges the full transference of meaning.

Themes and Challenges

Bama's works spotlight general themes of oppression, resistance, and empowerment whilst keeping their rootedness in the Tamil lifestyle. However, Bama's works is fraught with demanding situations, along with linguistic nuances, as Bama's use of colloquial Tamil, Dalit

dialects, and idiomatic expressions calls for careful variation to deliver their essence in English; cultural context, since positive practices, ideals, and customs essential to Dalit lifestyle might also require explanatory notes for non-Tamil readers; and authenticity as opposed to accessibility, as striking stability among preserving cultural specificity and ensuring clarity for a worldwide audience is a steady venture for readers. Indeed, the English translations of Bama's novels have had a profound impact on literary and academic circles. They have added Dalit literature to global audiences, fostering empathy and consciousness of caste-based oppression. Furthermore, these translations have stimulated comparative studies and enriched postcolonial and feminist literary discourses.

Conclusion

The English translations of Bama's novels serve as effective conduits for disseminating Dalit voices and experiences throughout linguistic and cultural boundaries. While translation unavoidably includes some degree of loss, the transformative capacity of Bama's narratives transcends these boundaries. Her works aim to inspire readers globally, advocating for justice, equality and human dignity.

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Author Contribution Statement: NIL.

Author Acknowledgement: NIL.

Author Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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Ethnic Identity Crisis in K. S. Maniam's *The Return*

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Abstract

This paper attempts to analyse the identity crisis faced by the Indian people in Malaysia. "The Return" is an autobiographical novel by K.S.Maniam, where he explores the bitter experiences undergone by the Indians in Malaysia. The novel talks about three generations of Indians Naina, Periathai, and Ravi. It exposes the hyphenated life of these people in the host land. The novel depicts how these immigrants make efforts to adjust themselves to the new land. The protagonist, Ravi faces only conflicts in his mind as he intends to master the English language. The novel focuses on the identity crisis experienced by Ravi. Even though he wishes to adapt himself and assimilate, he finds no way to adjust himself for there is an ethnic conflict that makes him realise that he cannot come up in life in the host land.

Keywords: Ethnic Conflict, Identity Crisis, Class Discrimination, Immigrants, Host Land.

Introduction

This paper attempts to analyse the identity crisis faced by the Indian people in Malaysia. *The Return* is an autobiographical novel by K.S.Maniam, where he explores the bitter experiences undergone by the Indians in Malaysia. The novel talks about three generations of Indians Naina, Periathai, and Ravi. It exposes the hyphenated life of these people in the host land. The novel depicts how these immigrants make efforts to adjust themselves to the new land. Emmanuel Nelson observes that the "haunting presence of India" (15) lies at the core of diasporic fiction by writers of Indian descent. K.S. Maniam's fiction testifies to his observation. K.S. Maniam is a diasporic writer with a Tamil descent. He has written collections of short stories such as *Haunting the Tiger: Contemporary Stories from Malaysia*, and plays such as *The Cord or the Sandpit*. He has also written three novels namely *The Return*, *In a Far Country* and *Between Lives*. K.S. Maniam's autobiographical novel, *The Return*, "charts the poignant journey of self-discovery of an Indian boy growing up in Malaya and gradually moving apart from his family and immediate surroundings" (104). He gives a vivid account of the experiences of three generations of Tamil migrants in Malaysia. The first generation includes the protagonist's grandmother, Periathai, "and her struggles in her new country – Malaysia" (14). She migrates to Malaysia with her three sons. She is a hardworking woman nicknamed "Camel". She works as a tinker. It is a belief among the Indian immigrants that Periathai has the power to cast away the "evil eye" from ailing children.

Ethnic Identity Crisis in the Novel

The first part of the novel has the towering presence of Periathai, the first-generation migrant, the author has liberally employed Tamil words to flavour the dialogues like "thinnai," "kolam," "thali," "avarakai," "vadai," "thundu," "thavani," "thurnuru," "ayah," etc. There is also a reference to "Pongal" and "Thaipusam". As the novel progresses the use of Tamil words becomes nil. It symbolizes the gradual decline in the practice of the Tamil culture, tradition, and even the mother tongue by the third-generation migrants. Periathai hails from a family of farmers and she has a natural affinity towards soil. She ardently wishes to own a piece of land in Malaysia. Her dreams never realize her death. The second-

generation migrant comprises the protagonist's father, Kannan called "Naina" by all. He earns his livelihood by working as a laundryman. He tries to cling to the Tamil tongue and Indian religious practices. He appoints Murugesu to teach his son the Tamil alphabet. He specially brings books from India for the Tamil school by the Riverside Estate. It is Murugesu who prepared Ravi, the protagonist, for his initiation ceremony. Ravi had a strong admiration and reverence for his homeland, India. Ravi records, "The Primer I took off the shelf shrine every Friday evening, after the Puja, had the gloss of a mysterious rich world" (22).

Though Naina reveres his mother tongue to the core, he surrenders to his second wife's compulsion to send Ravi to the English school in Sungai Petani. Naina's decision to send him to the English school has a drastic effect on young Ravi. His mental state is recorded as "The world I had known fell apart" (23). The Tamil textbooks which are specially ordered from India contain "fields, jungles and characters" (24). He recalls, "The lines of curving, intricate Tamil writing unfolded an excitingly unexpected and knowable world" (24). His yearning for the land "one lived in but never saw" (16) is revealed through his words. Tamil festivals they celebrate in Malaysia could transport Ravi to his roots. He relates:

These festivals together with Thaipusam and Pongal created a special country for us. We were the citizens of an invisible landscape brought into existence by the lights, mango leaves strung out over the door ways, the pilgrimages to Sri Subramanya temple in Sungai Petani Thaipusam, the painting of the bull horns the day after Pongal and the many taboos that filled our daily lives. We weren't allowed out of the house between midday and two O'clock the spirits of the dead would be about. (16)

Ravi has a very strange experience in the English school in Sungai Petani. Miss. Nancy who is in charge of Ravi's class is a typical English woman who has an aversion to the unclean Tamil boys. She tries to inculcate discipline, cleanliness and hygiene in her students. He recalls, "... Miss. Nancy, with her microscope like eyes, detected an invisible grain of earth in the lines of palm or between nail and flesh (31). Ravi gives a realistic account of Miss. Nancy's obsession with cleanliness. He draws an instance to make it clear:

The education that Ravi begins to get was initially a cultural assault. What was so usual for the Hindu boys was prohibited by Miss Nancy. For instance, going to school without brushing one's teeth and having coconut oil in the hair (which Miss Nancy considers as rotten butter) was prohibited. Miss Nancy, his first English teacher was the embodiment of the colonial culture. She shaped the boys' way of thinking and lifestyle to establish the insights of social mobility. She turned a boy round. She peeked into the ear, twisting it towards the light; she ran her finger nail on the chin of the upturned face... (31)

The Indian boys were flinched by her attitude. Their mothers smoothen down their hair with coconut oil. "Black wires" (31) she yelled out on another occasion.

Miss. Nancy's classes have a profound influence on Ravi. He says, "The craving for order soon possessed me" (44). He manages to find a place for himself in his small house. He says, "I marked off a cubicle with chalk. No one could step into that imaginary room" (44). Whenever he is in that imaginary room, he is insulated from the rest of his family. His English education alienates him from his former friends who attend the Tamil medium classes. Ravi's English education instils in him a strong craving for imitating English habits. He affixes the name "James" to his name Ravi, and corresponds with his British and American pen pals. "James Ravi lived in the drawers, emerging at night, when the shop was closed, my parent gone back to hospital house" (123).

The class difference among immigrants is a distressing reality. Ravi feels humiliated when the upper-class migrants treat him as an untouchable whenever he goes to their house to collect the dirty clothes or to deliver the washed clothes. The upper-class people never like the dhobi's son getting an English education. In the hostland, "class-based discrimination in Malaysian Indian communities, such as Ravi's, is evident in the narrative." (125). His self-confidence gets eroded when he listens to their caustic remarks. The training he gets from the English school and the lessons he learnt from them are the only solace to Ravi whenever he encounters ill-treatment from the upper class. Ravi's determination and willpower help him secure a job in a new secondary school in Sungai Petani. Later, Naina relinquishes his laundry business and turns to planting and farming and subsisting on the crops that the land provides. Naina too gets the eviction notice. When Ravi gets a job, Naina feels that all the learning is a mere waste if they do not own a land of their own. He says, "We can make all the money get all the learning. But these are useless if our house pillars don't sink into the clay of the land" (175). Naina's attempt to establish a personal anchor is also futile. The ultimate tragedy for Naina is that only in death by fire does he become part of the land he wishes to claim. Unlike Periathai and Naina, Ravi is convinced that the land cannot be his. For this reason, he stands aloof from all symbols of proprietorship, from all dreams of building houses and acquiring property. Instead, he concentrates on educating himself. Mastering the English language ensures a career in teaching which requires no engagement with land. Yet Ravi's attempt to save himself by immersing himself in a foreign language is of little help. However, the greater tragedy is the knowledge brings only a little hope of a possible recovery. *The Return* is evocative and moving in its account of migrants' abortive attempts to be rooted in alien soil. Maniam is acutely aware that a noxious compound of poverty, oppression, frustration and marginality will accompany the cultural integrity of the diaspora. Maniam's novel conveys a haunted sense of cultural loss.

Conclusion

Thus, the novel portrays the bitter experience of immigrants in an alien land. It showcases the difficulties encountered by Malaysian people before and after independence, as they migrated to achieve their goals. K.S.Maniam brings to the limelight the class distinction and discrimination which result in the identity crisis.

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Author Contribution Statement: NIL.

Author Acknowledgement: NIL.

Author Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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Shakespeare and Kannadasan

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Abstract

This essay is an attempt to bring out certain similarities between the Tamil poet, writer and playback songwriter Kannadasan and English dramatist and poet Shakespeare. What I have observed in Shakespeare and Kannadasan's writing is an exaggeration. Kannadasan wrote and lived – century and Shakespeare was a dramatist and poet of the 16th century. It is interesting to know that Shakespeare and Kannadasan commonly share certain aspects. As Shakespeare was born in a village, came to London, and tried opportunities in the field of drama, Kannadasan also came from a village to Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu to get opportunities to write for the Tamil cinema and both to earn money. Both Shakespeare and Kannadasan created and transcreated taking the ideas from their reading of classical writings. They both studied only eighth standard but improved their knowledge of literature by studying old and classical writings. They have extraordinary observations of life and the world. They have observed well the many different aspects of life and characteristics of people in general and the different aspects and works of nature. They have improved their knowledge through deep observation and self-study. They recorded the facts about life and nature outside of the context of writing. Whenever they have the opportunity to write, they have inserted the messages about life and the world, which they have gathered through their hard study and observation.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Kannadasan, Comparative Literature.

Introduction

Shakespeare has written plays, dramatic poetic lines and poems and Kannadasan has written screenplays and playback songs for cinema and poetry. Shakespeare has worked for the theatre but Kannadasan has worked for the cinema. Both of them have worked for money, but they have never sacrificed the art while working for the money and it is their greatness. Shakespeare's lines containing information about life and the world mesmerized the audience and likewise, Kannadasan's lines containing information about life and the world from the audience immediately attracted them fully. As scholars of the world celebrated and celebrated Shakespeare's lines, Kannadasan's lines were and are celebrated by people of Tamil Nadu and people of southern India as the Tamil language is parental one of their different mother tongues. The southern Indian people have high regard for Kannadasan and high praise for his lines with the kind of surrendered enthrallment because they convey some rich and wonderful ideas about life, people, nature and the world as Shakespeare's. The main argument is that both Shakespeare and Kannadasan convey the ideas of life and the world with some kind of exaggeration, which makes their ideas and thoughts clear, brighter and popular bringing them name and fame.

Shakespeare and Kannadasan

An amount of exaggeration is necessary in speech, writing, singing and acting to make the point reach the audience successfully. It may be apt here to quote one famous actor Sevaliar Sivaji Ganesan from Tamil Nadu. He has acted in hundreds of Tamil movies and he is popular for a sort of exaggerated acting, which cannot be taken negatively for as an actor

he shines in his action with exaggeration with less or more amount. He has a face, appearance, majestic and high tone, big and good eyes, majestic and stylish walking, etc. He has acted, spoken dialogues, walked, laughed and cried with a kind of exaggeration and shined as a star in them all. He used to show his way of understanding and imagination of the matter for which he acted. He showed much involvement in the acting of any role from hero, villain, and comedian to farmer, beggar, coolie, and innumerable different roles. He happened to be innovative in his acting in any role through his big involvement and imagination about his acting any particular role. He has even acted as Othello for the scene of murdering Desdemona with another very talented actress Savithri, who acted as Desdemona, from Tamil Nadu. The argument here is that such exaggeration makes the art of all kinds successful as Poe says the death of a young lady and more that the death of a beautiful young lady will attract the heart, mind and soul of the reader instantly making the poem successful. Such exaggeration also brings beauty and attraction to the matter. I quote some lines of Shakespeare and Kannadasan to prove the point. They haven't written the following lines not only with exaggeration but with a kind of similarity in meaning. Shakespeare writes,

**We are to gods as flies to wanton boys
They kill us for sports**

Kannadasan writes in one of his playback songs:

Who will not be rocked if he is rocked, Kanna (by you Kanna)

Who will not be rocked in the cradle of desire? Kanna (by you Kanna)

The name Kannan represents God. The meaning Kannadasan makes in the above lines is that God is responsible for men wallowing in several desires. He means that God with a purpose makes men rock in the cradle of desires to teach men lessons about life and transform them good shaking off the illusions about things in the world. Shakespeare has written with the meaning that God makes men do many things and finally kills them. As the butterfly in the hands of wanton boys, men are in the hands of God who only makes them do many things in the world as he desires or plans and finally makes them leave the world through death. Shakespeare means that everything happens with men from birth to death according to the desire of God. So He is responsible for everything men do including his death. Shakespeare writes of life:

**Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creepeth in this petty pace from day to day
To the syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.**

Shakespeare in the above lines has recorded life as a tale told by an idiot, as the one full of tensions and difficulties, and as the one having no meaning finally. The exaggeration in the lines of Shakespeare and Kannadasan can be noted. With complete exaggeration, which makes the matter instantly clear, attractive, reachable and successful, Shakespeare has shown how the space passes in a very subtle way in a very small amount of time not alerting men to become conscious or which men cannot naturally be conscious, but taking them to the last minute of time of their life, which is already recorded or decided, which Shakespeare puts compressing more meanings as "To the last syllable of recorded", which is a great example

for the great, extraordinary and matchless way of putting words for conveying the ideas in great and entirely different way, which can be found with Kannadasan's writing too. Shakespeare compares life to a "brief candle" that burns out very quickly and calls the man with life a "walking Shadow" and a poor player of his life who moves here and there and does so many things in the world of the stage during his lifetime and he is forgotten when he dies. What is very important, rare, unknown and great is Shakespeare his great way of employing words apart from his great ideas. The point is that Shakespeare and Kannadasan employ words making a meaning which is unknown in other writers and it displays their greater perception of all the meanings of the words they have used in their writings. Kannadasan in one playback song has written:

**When the ant is skinned and seen, the elephant has come
When my heart is skinned and seen, Janam (genius) has come
The heart that remains before birth has come today
The peace that comes after death has come**

Kannadasan writes in one playback song for the ladylove in the hands of her lover losing her control completely out of emotional love:

**Oh parrot (ladylove) with untidy hair
Oh the fruit (ladylove) tasted with love
It is the state...What is the fate?
(what fate causes this state of immersing in the feeling of love and surrendering
Fully to lover not minding the shame)**

Kannadasan has written it for the situation of a young girl in the hands of her lover with her feelings of love kindled in which she has a mind to think of her shameful state with her untidy hair and other of her awkward position. Kannadasan calls it a fate of human beings through which everybody has to pass through and has written meaning that it is a shameful fate that human beings have got. He has written the meaning of fate it is what human beings have in general. Shakespeare writes about love with all exaggeration to show the short period of love:

**Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream
Brief as the lightning in the collied night.
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth;
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up
So quickly bright things come to confusion.**

Shakespeare in the above-quoted lines means that love is short-lived and he brings out the meaning by saying that before one gets the power to tell somebody to see the lightening, it will be swallowed by the jaws of darkness. Going beyond the point of writing before one saying, Shakespeare writes with all exaggeration before one even gets the power to speak it and no more idea and exaggeration can be added here. Shakespeare writes here and everywhere with final exaggeration and nothing can be added more or altered. Kannadasan has written for one of the playback songs:

**Where is peace there I want a place
Where men don't live there I want a place**

These above lines are a very good example of the lines of Kannadasan written with great exaggeration similar to Shakespeare's. The meanings of the lines are clear without the necessity for explanation, In the same playback song Kannadasan has written:

God who created eyes and created woman is cruel one

When my hands play Veena cries

When my hands embrace the flower shoots

If I am let to sleep, I will worship you Mother (Goddess)

If I am given peace today at least, I will sleep Mother (Goddess)

All the above popular lines of Kannadasan make interesting meanings in original Tamil listened, enjoyed and applauded in Tamilnadu. One can note the exaggeration in the meanings of these lines. Since the meanings of the lines are clear, let us move to the other examples. The point is that all the great lines of Shakespeare and Kannadasan have been written with exaggeration.

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Author Contribution Statement: NIL.

Author Acknowledgement: NIL.

Author Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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An Eco-Critical Analysis of Gieve Patel's "On Killing A Tree"

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Abstract

This paper presents an eco-critical analysis of Gieve Patel's poem "On Killing a Tree," emphasizing the interconnectedness of nature and humanity while critiquing modern ecological destruction. Patel's use of irony and symbolism exposes the brutality of deforestation and its consequences, urging modern humanity to reconsider humanity's exploitative relationship with nature. The paper examines the spiritual and environmental significance of trees, framing them as life-giving entities essential for ecological balance. The discussion integrates literary allusions to Chaucer, T.S. Eliot, Toru Dutt, and others, illustrating the evolving representation of nature in literature. Ultimately, this study highlights Patel's poignant call for ecological preservation as a moral and existential imperative.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, eco-spirituality, Gieve Patel, *On Killing A Tree*.

Introduction

Earth is the mother of all living beings, who gives love and nurture all, to her all creations are her children, including plants, animals, insects, micro-organisms, human, beings that exist on earth. The environment where humans live is called biosphere, which consist of land, water, and air. The biodiversity of earth, called as nature is currently in a state of declining due to the greed and cruel practices of modern humans who become alien from nature. In the present era more and more beings who belong to biodiversity become extinct because of the humans. From the time memorial poets, writers, artists, painters, philosophers, and other recorders of history get influenced by their surroundings which include environment, native land, animals, plants, which is mirrored in their works. In literature one could find old poets like William Wordsworth who loved nature. In European literature many poets talk about nature and its miracles, such as in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* the general prologue begins with the celebration of April as a time of renewal and vitality, "whan that aprille with his shouressoote"(1) which is paraphrased as "April is the sweetest month" by modern scholars as an allusion to this modern poet T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land* opens as, "April is the cruellest month,/ breeding Lilacs out of dead land"(1-2)It not only alludes the beginning of their respective works, but also shows the status of nature's well being of their respective time.

Indian poets such as Nissim Ezekiel, Gieve Patel praise as well as reflect nature and human relationship. Indian English writers also write works on natural reflections as a reminder and wakeup call to protect world as a whole and prevent nature's wrath just like John Steinbeck's *The Grapes Of Wrath*, which is based on Dust bowl that occurred in 1930s due to exploitation of nature because humans engaged in World War 1. The cause and effort of human nature will always be bore by the humans themselves. In this background this paper attempts an eco-critical analysis of humans' impact on nature in Gieve Patel's "On Killing A Tree." Gieve Patel was born in 1940 in Mumbai. He completed his education at St Xavier's High

School and Grant Medical college in Mumbai, then worked as a Medical practitioner. He belongs to the Green Movement. As a person who fought for preservation of Nature as well as Humans, he presents this poem “On Killing A Tree”, which is filled with murderous intent. People who don’t know about him might think this is a poem about the complete systematic method of killing a tree, but how can a nature lover, a kind hearted man, a physician writes a poem of panorama of mindless killing of tree, which is the most cruel action towards nature. In this poem Patel uses irony and symbolism to denounce humans for their eco-terrorism as well as to promote the idea that tree is also a part of the earth, a source of life to many beings including humans. He persuades the readers not to destroy trees, which he equates to killing, a psychopathic murderer of greed who makes the future generation bore the curse called natural disaster and artificial ecology.

Eco-critical Analysis of the Poem

Ecocriticism is the study of literature and ecology from an interdisciplinary point of view, where scholars of literature analyze the texts that illustrate environmental concerns are analysed and examine the various ways literature treats the subject of nature. While ecospirituality highlights the harmony between ecological science and spirituality, ecoterrorism represents its opposite, a manifestation of humanity’s destructive tendencies toward the environment. Ecoterrorism is defined as “destruction, or the threat of destruction, of the environment by states, groups or individuals in order to intimidate or to coerce governments or civilians”(Encyclopedia britannica)

Gieve Patel’s “On Killing a Tree” symbolically highlights the mutual relationship between natural elements, condemning humanity’s failure to practice the art of giving, as noted by Jolly K.V. Modern era, dominated by machines and material values calls for immediate vaccine to free human from their sickness called greed, which induces many recorders to produce works towards the goal of protecting ecology, the new age of transformation and protection of nature. The new era literature produce genres such as ecocriticism, eco-poetry, eco-feminism, eco-narratives, eco-spirituality, bioregionalism, blue humanities, and so on.

The environmental consequences of humanity’s anthropocentric attitude are reflected in the rampant deforestation, as Patel equates destroying a tree to the murder of a person, as discussed by Priyanka and Rajavelu. Destruction of nature leads to destruction of life. Patel’s work serves as an alarming signal for preserving nature, emphasizing that preserving ecology sustains all living species on the planet.

Patel explains the growth of the tree and how its not an easy event to kill a tree, because it is not only a tree that is going to killed, but also all the beings that depend on it will be affected, which include not only animals, birds, rodents, insects, but also humans of present as well as future. A tree grows little by little by absorbing the abundant energy of nature, like rays of sun, water from ground and rain, air, and nutrients from earth. It also reciprocates as much as possible to nature in its long life unlike humans who wantonly plunder and destroy mother earth’s resources. Tagore’s words, “Trees are the earth’s endless effort to speak to the listening heaven,” echo Patel’s poetic symbolism of trees as life-giving entities. He mentions the words of time, one to kill a tree, as even modern machines can’t cut through trees at once it will take time to cut a tree, and another in the process of tree’s growth. It compares the time taken for growth and time taken for destruction of

nature by human, Patel uses symbolism to show the tree's role in nature as well as its natural growth cycle through his first stanza:

**It takes much time to kill a tree,
Not a simple jab of the knife
Will do it. It has grown
Slowly consuming the earth,
Rising out of it, feeding
Upon its crust, absorbing
Years of sunlight, air, water,
And out of its leprous hide
Sprouting leaves. (1-9)**

From early civilization nature nurtured humans with abundance. It plays a vital role in human life as well as in human character. Before knowing how to cultivate crops, humans had a great dependence on nature as a nomadic tribe. His life depends on nature, lead a life of one with nature. In William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Duke Senior, a character in exile speaks the words of praise and spiritual philosophy he gained in nature as, "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones and good in everything" (Act-2, Scene-1, 563-564). From these lines one can find the nature's healing and transformation traits.

Modern humans change towards worst in the concern for nature, as the greed grows, humans willingly bestow violence and eco-terrorism against nature which bestow humans with kindness and love. Deforestation and its adverse effects have been noted globally. According to a FAO report, India's forest area was reduced to 70.6 million hectares in 1990, and the world's forest area drastically declined from 7,000 million hectares in 1900 to 2,370 million hectares by 2000. In "On Killing A Tree" humans not only cut the trees and pull the barks, which is an act of torture against tree, but also continue to uproot it from its core from the Earth and let it completely die:

**So hack and chop
But this alone won't do it.
Not so much pain will do it.
The bleeding bark will heal
And from close to the ground
Will rise curled green twigs,
Miniature boughs
Which if unchecked will expand again
To former size.(10-18)**

Patel uses irony to convey the message of not killing trees and from direct context one can see the brutality of humans upon trees. Gieve Patel's poetic depiction of cutting a tree mirrors the destructive nature of deforestation, emphasizing its consequences, such as soil erosion, disrupted rainfall cycles, and extinction of species. Nature restores itself but humans won't let it happen. They completely destroy it by pulling its soft white roots, which is the anchor of trees where it grows for years. The nature helps humans to neutralize the pollution factors released by humans in ecology, which kills life. Trees act as a source of life, but humans treat it as a source of materialistic income only, not as part of nature or as a life:

**The root is to be pulled out —
Out of the anchoring earth;**

**It is to be roped, tied,
And pulled out — snapped out
Or pulled out entirely,
Out from the earth-cave,
And the strength of the tree exposed
The source, white and wet,
The most sensitive, hidden
For years inside the earth.(19-29)**

Patel brings out the slow withering of life from the tree, as it goes through the process of cutting and sawing. The poem highlights the absurdity of destroying something so vital to the environment, underscoring nature's rightful claim to existence alongside humanity. He further explains the process the tree is forced to bear as it gets roasted by sun and seasons to completely lose its life and turn into logs and debris as:

**Then the matter
Of scorching and choking
In sun and air,
Browning, hardening,
Twisting, withering,
And then it is done. (30-35)**

From ancient times humans worship nature in their own ways, ancient humans live one with nature, but modern humans work against nature which destroys the natural balance of ecology. Deforestation not only disrupts ecological balance but also poses an existential threat. For instance, India loses about 1.5 million hectares of forest cover annually, leading to soil erosion and resource scarcity. In the poem Patel mentions the death of a tree which is just a tip of an ice berg in a mountain called Deforestation, humans don't feel sad or guilt to destroy the natural ecological balance. The consequence is they themselves or their next generations have to bear the effect of these causes in the form of ecological imbalance or disasters like, drought, land slide, polluted air, contaminated water, increased heat, food shortage, and so on. Humans forget that they can't endure the wrath of nature if it reciprocates the malice and cruelty of humans. Patel's "On Killing a Tree" is a plea to recognize the dire consequences of environmental destruction. The poem serves as a cautionary tale against uncontrolled deforestation and its impact on future generations. Trees have a life and they are part of humans' life on earth. They not only help humans in physical sense but also in spiritual sense just like the poets' works such as, "Our Casuarina Tree" by Toru Dutt. Poems like, "Tree At My Window" by Robert Frost, "Plant A Tree" by Lucy Larcom are the result of current changes in the Ecology. It is the humans' duty to protect nature, by stopping deforestation and promoting afforestation Humans can stabilize the current biosphere from further destruction and let the nature heal itself as it has the power to heal itself. As Wangari Maathai rightly said, "When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and the seeds of hope," which aligns with Patel's call to preserve nature for the sustenance of all life. For present and future lets plant trees and protect the ecology. So, the future of the genre like apocalyptic and dystopian will always remain as a fiction.

Conclusion

On Killing A Tree is a poem that explores how to keep environment safe, how humans should love nature and be eco-friendly. It is a poem about making the

environment green. Patel uses his wonderful language capability to give his readers a poem full of irony as well as symbolism of nature's importance to Earth's beings and philosophical knowledge of life.

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Author Contribution Statement: NIL.

Author Acknowledgement: NIL.

Author Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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Short Communication

UGC Guidelines for Banning Plastic

Plastic waste has become one of the most significant environmental challenges, adversely affecting soil, water, human health, and overall well-being. Excessive plastic consumption, coupled with inadequate waste disposal systems, has overwhelmed urban waste management infrastructure and polluted rivers and water sources in rural areas. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the Government has launched a nationwide campaign to curb plastic use, particularly single-use plastics, and promote environmentally friendly alternatives.

Higher educational institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes and behaviours. With their extensive reach and influence, they can effectively educate students and communities about the importance of reducing plastic consumption. In alignment with this national initiative, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issues the following guidelines for all HEIs in India:

Guidelines for the Use of Plastic in Higher Education Institutions

1. Scope

1. These guidelines apply to all higher educational institutions (universities and colleges) across the country.
2. HEIs are encouraged to implement policies and practices that promote cleaner, plastic-free campuses.

2. Plastic-Free Campuses

All HEIs must systematically work towards making their campuses free of plastic by banning its use and adopting environmentally sustainable alternatives.

3. Institutional Responsibilities

Each HEI shall undertake the following measures:

1. Prohibit the use of single-use plastics in canteens, shopping complexes, hostels, and other institutional premises.
2. Organize awareness campaigns and sensitization workshops to educate students and staff about the environmental hazards of single-use plastics.
3. Mandate students to refrain from bringing non-biodegradable plastic items onto campus.
4. Encourage students to educate their families about the dangers of plastic pollution and promote plastic-free households.
5. Install necessary alternatives such as water stations to reduce dependence on plastic water bottles and promote eco-friendly options like cloth and paper bags instead of plastic bags and packaging materials.

4. Community Engagement

HEIs participating in the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan must extend their plastic-free initiatives to adopted villages, conducting awareness campaigns and promoting the use of sustainable alternatives until these villages become plastic-free.

Campaign to Reduce/Eliminate Littered Single-Use Plastics

A. Prohibited Items

The following single-use plastic items must not be used:

1. Disposable plastic or thermocol (polystyrene) cutlery, including plates, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, trays, straws, and stirrers.
2. Thermocol decorations.
3. Plastic flags.
4. Plastic wrapping or packing films are used for gifts and invitation cards.
5. Plastic or PVC (flex) banners of less than 100 microns in thickness.

B. Discouraged Items

The following items should be discouraged, with a preference for sustainable alternatives:

1. Plastic carry bags.
2. Artificial plastic flowers.
3. PET plastic water bottles, particularly those with a capacity of less than 1 litre.
4. Plastic folders.
5. Any other plastic products for which eco-friendly substitutes are available.

By implementing these guidelines, HEIs can contribute significantly to the national effort in reducing plastic waste and fostering a cleaner, healthier environment for future generations.

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Author Contribution Statement: NIL.

Author Acknowledgement: NIL.

Author Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



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