

Dilemmas of Contemporaneity in the Twenty-first Century Literature: Voices of Dissent and Reparation

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The book is envisaged with a positive aim of bringing in discourses the current trends, movements and schools in English Literature with a special focus on its new and young authors. The broader spectrum is 'Contemporaneity and Historicity' of English Literature. It focuses upon how far our writers were able to represent the post-postmodern dilemmas of the digital age. The methods and strategies adopted by the new and young writers to represent the reality is analyzed and how far the dissenting voices are being represented in our society. Literature should mirror the dissenting voices in the society and the new and young writers are in a dilemma as they are not able to express themselves. The social networking has taken up the challenges to popularize some of the brutal and uncivilized acts of terror in our society. The literary world turns a deaf ear to the pleas of the society and very often fails to fulfill their duty.

The present era is witnessing vast changes and challenges from various domains. How far contemporary fiction is holding a true mirror to the social realities around us? Could it succeed to develop its own ways to tackle the issues? Intellectuals and research scholars are debating and discussing them quite often. The essays contained in this book have been contributed by teachers and students as part of a presentation in a seminar. Divergent topics have been discussed which includes diaspora, mythical paradigms, and space of resistance and survival. A new vigor and vitality is seen in literature to voice the dissenting voice and the world is trying to listen to them. It is indeed the first step for empowerment. The question of identity crisis is discussed with reference to the selected poems of Allen Curnow and Fleur Adcock. Gender is another issue discussed in this book. Gender minorities hold a feeling that they are trapped in a wrong body and incessantly tries to come out of the gender dilemma in which they are immersed as a result of the compulsions created by the heterosexual dominated group of the "normal" human society. This normality is foisted on the minor section and keeps them away from the main stream society. As their voices for their right and identity are being questioned by the heterosexual society they find new ways to mark their presence.

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Editor

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**Dedicated to
The Contributors**

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Geisha in the Western Fantasy: An Orientalist Reading of Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*

Sajda Khalid

Arthur Golden's book *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a popular fiction and created inter-cultural interest and excitement. In this paper, I would like to apply Edward Said's idea of Orientalism to the study the various fictional devices that Golden used in telling the geisha's story, with the western reader as the preferred audience.

In the ground-breaking text *Orientalism* (1978), the late cultural critic and Palestinian American theorist Edward Saïd defined Orientalism as the western attitude that views Eastern societies as exotic, primitive and inferior. He argued that the dominant European political ideology created the notion of the Orient so that they could justify their attempts to subjugate and control it. It is basically the sum of the West's representations of the Orient.

Europe and the United States regarded the non-western world as the Orient. The word 'Orient' is a Western word and a product of Western thought. The Orient is believed to be everything that the West is not, its 'alter ego'. The West, often called the 'Occident' occupies a superior rank while the Orient is its 'other' occupying a much inferior position. The growth of orientalism began mainly with the colonial expansions of the European or western countries into the East. Although many countries have gained independence and power since long, traces of oppression, racism and exploitation still continue.

It is important to understand Said's argument that what the West views or understands of the Orient is not based on reality or what actually exists in Oriental lands, but it is a product of the West's dreams and fantasies. So, Orientalism imposes upon the Orient the Western views of its 'reality'. This paper will analyze that part of the reason for the success of the geisha phenomenon in the

West is that Golden used concepts appealing to American audiences but not Japanese audiences. I've taken Arthur Golden's fictionalized memoir *Memoirs of a Geisha* and tried to analyze the fictional elements used by Golden to make it pleasing for the Western audience. This might be the reason for its success in the West, while it did not create a "geisha boom" in Japan.

First of all, it's essential to understand what Geishas are in order to fully understand the point made here. The Japanese have always idolized geisha, and know that geisha is a highly respected profession. They are considered a living treasure in their Japanese culture. In Japan, while prostitution was legal, geishas were forbidden by law to provide sexual services. They were considered an embodiment of femininity, admired by Japanese girls and women.

Like many other professions in Japan, geisha teach their skills to the younger generation, which is an art that

can only be learnt from observing rather than from reading texts. These behaviors and skills that are given to the next generation may appear exotic or peculiar to the Western readers, though they are part of a geisha's social identity. Geishas feel power and pride in their performances, but due to sad fact of misrepresenting reality, they may appear submissive to the eyes of the West.

European missionaries and traders had been travelling to Japan since the 16th century, but the West's fascination with geisha arose only during the late 19th century. Western audience in the 19th century began to romanticize about geisha as pretty, submissive creatures wearing exotic robes or kimonos and having elaborate hairstyles, somewhat like the women of Victorian England. All along the West has believed itself to be more culturally advanced and sophisticated than its Orient counterpart.

Even though the Japanese culture fascinated and puzzled westerners, they could not imagine such a proud and

highly respected occupation as that of the geisha. In reality, Geishas are artists who entertain their clients at a formal banquet with traditional music and dance (and definitely without sex). Golden has used certain Orientalist techniques and devices whereby he made the work more exotic and enjoyable for the West. He had intensively interviewed a former real-life geisha Mineko Iwasaki for two weeks and her story was altered and distorted in the making of the book.

After learning about her life as a geisha, Golden fictionalized a memoir form, taking snippets from Iwasaki's true story. He never could have created solely from his imagination the story he actually wrote. Instead of employing his own Western voice as omniscient narrator, Golden let the protagonist 'Sayuri' tell her story, which only enhances the belief in the Western readers that they are hearing a true geisha story. The novel opens with a chapter titled "Translator's Note", which consists of a soliloquy by "Jakob Haarhuis", a fictional professor

created by Golden who is a Professor of Japanese history at New York University.

Golden relates that the "Haarhuis" family (who are fictional) moved from Netherlands to Japan and the young Haarhuis remembers a dance performance he had seen in Kyoto by the beautiful geisha "Sayuri". Fifty years later, the so-called "Haarhuis", reunites with the so-called "Sayuri" who had migrated to New York by then and even agrees to have her life's history recorded. For the western audience, it may seem as an advantage to the Japanese as they could have their culture recorded or preserved.

Furthermore, Golden continues to gain the readers' trust by explaining that he is honoring "Sayuri's" wish to have her story published after her death. Thus, his research method appears legitimate, and he appears to care about his informant, "Sayuri". The novel, thus, becomes Sayuri's autobiography so that the reality of the Orient is preserved. Secondly and interestingly,

Golden's choice of a fishing village as the setting for Sayuri's childhood was an ideal Orientalist device, as the idea of "fish" and the "fishy smell" are stereotypical of Japanese in the Western mind. Moreover, the choice of the name "Sayuri", is a poor choice for a geisha's name.

Sayuri is a common female name as far as the Japanese are concerned, and it would not be a geisha's name. Geisha are high-status artists, with special names that signify the roots or background of a geisha, such as where she received her training, or who her teacher is, or for which teahouse she works. "Sayuri" has been selected as it sounds pleasing to Western ears, like a sweet, pretty girl's name.

Memoirs of a Geisha includes many detailed sexual scenes which are solely to satisfy the Western appetite, as it provided a way for the West to taste the exotic, the bizarre, and the erotic Orient and at the same time maintain their distance. The sex scenes are set to titillate

readers so they may experience the bodies of geisha, when in reality geisha are not available for providing sexual services. But of course, that is something the Western readers do not want to know. What they want to read is what they think or fantasize is happening there.

Golden sexualizes geisha and "Sayuri." It would not be wrong to criticize Golden for having distorting facts. He could have focused on the true geisha life, their artistic training and performances, and intellectual conversation, by which he could have relayed a real or factual description of the Geisha life as it is. But instead, on closer inspection we find that he has opted to sexualize geisha because that is what was expected by the readers.

Moreover, all geisha in the book speak English fluently and act as direct and assertive as modern American women. Joining strange men in a mixed bath, making sexual overtures to soldiers, geishas are portrayed as similar to prostitutes. Here, the colonizer is

privileged to sexualize and consume the bodies of the colonized, who welcome their advances. In the novel, we find the character "Sayuri" commenting, "All the stories about invading American soldiers raping and killing us had turned out to be wrong; and in fact, we gradually came to realize that the Americans on the whole were remarkably kind". No doubt, it must have been pleasing for the western year, only emphasizing their role in the world as "saviours" or as bringing development and advancement to an under-developed country.

Golden's devices present the book as a fiction of the West, by the West and for the West. The fictional *Memoirs of a Geisha*, published in 1997 was received with great popularity in the United States than they were in Japan. Western audiences found the story of the fictional geisha, Sayuri, believable and exotic, while Japanese audiences were not as excited. Golden treated Japanese culture and geisha as an object to be sexualized, exoticized and romanticized. Hence, we

can conclude that in portraying the Orient, they were actually writing about themselves, putting on pages their own desires, fantasies and fears.

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Metro Fiction and Contemporary Realities: An Analysis of Amruta Patil's *Kari*

Aathira Nandan

As literature is often treated as a sturdy response to the contemporary realities, a discursive analysis of Amruta Patil's *Kari* is attempted here which lines out similar attempts from the author's part. The metro life is deeply entwined to the characters in *Kari* give a dystopian vision. The text come under a group of fiction which can be titled as metro fiction based on its setting and also poignant references to metro life. The buzz and hubbub of metro is symbolised in *Kari* through repeated mentioning of the metro railway.

Sewer, landfills, huge buildings, hectic office lives, shared apartments, heavy traffic, metro trains, labyrinth of roads, pollution, subversion of gender roles are some aspects through which

contemporary realities are represented in the graphic novel *Kari*. The pictorial realm of the text often speaks louder than the verbal delivery. The lives of characters and their alienation in this novel move to the point of absurdity.

The huge buildings which frame the text visually and verbally create a sense of claustrophobia in the minds of the readers along with that of the protagonist, Kari. The mindset of the people who dwell in these concrete structures leave them quite cold and distant without making its inhabitants feel at home. There are mainly two categories of buildings that appear in this novel: residential apartments and workplaces.

Nobody in this novel is in love with the buildings they reside. They are there because they have to be. This lack of warmth makes the concrete structures quite uninviting. The novel begins with the double suicide of Kari and Ruth, who jump from the top of the building. The security nets catch Ruth and bring her back to life, while Kari is caught in a

sewer which prevents her death. The ending of the novel is also an attempt at suicide by Kari trying to jump off the building.

There are continuous references to death. Beginning with the suicide attempts of the two leading characters at the beginning of the novel, death silhouettes a shadow at the back of various characters, especially that of Angel and Kari. Various organs of human body like heart appear in different parts of the novel, often rummaged and manhandled. Most of them are malfunctioning like the breasts of Angel which underwent mastectomy. These organs appear similar to the amputated body parts of the Ganesh idols immersed in the sea.

These isolated body parts seem to suggest that the human life in the metro has ceased to be organic and meaningful. People live and lead their lives mechanically and are disintegrated. Their lives are marked with very few significant gestures. Though there is a

liberating atmosphere resounding in the air of the Mumbai metro, purposelessness haunt the urban spaces and make them less colourful and imaginative.

There are different descriptions of the urban realities. The homeless people are seen to “sleep on roadsides, under carts and benches, on platforms.”(78). When Lazarus and Kari sneak into their private lives it is considered very natural. The homeless are spectacles to be commented on, sympathised or to be warded off. Even Kari call it ‘arthouse voyeurism’(78). The episode of Ganesh Chaturthi and immersion of the idols is something peculiar to the urban reality of Mumbai. The idols carried in huge procession and the amputated body parts of the idols after the immersion juxtapose the ideal and the real.

The visual narrative on the two sides of the book (92-093) seems to represent the whole utopian and dystopian metro life. (Fig.2 and 3). Every now and then we find Kari digging into the sewage, at times for digging out Ganesha’s, at times

for digging out aborted foeti. Deaths are also crowd less in metros. The death of Angel happens without any buzz and hubbub. It is accepted by everybody as a routine thing except for Kari's statement, "More than anything else, I find it hard to quote my friend in closed brackets."

Only she feels the loss of her philosophizing friend. The city is named 'smog city' by Kari truthful to its polluted condition. The phrase appears in the text many times and always near to the moments which anticipate decay and disheveling. "The smog city looks even more anaemic in the sun"(108). "Birds from every corner of smog city converge midair and alight on the building opposite ours"(112).

Fairytale Hair moves into its first round of auditions. The office is busy with rubbernecks taking extra coffee breaks. Urban princes, princesses, handmaids and stepsisters start trickling in. It's odd and heartbreaking to be partially responsible for meting out fame or oblivion to these people. (Patil, 64)

These are simple, unassuming sentences from Kari. It is a comment on the urban work culture, where people are busy, overloaded, thirsting for breaks: but at the same time breaking their backs for nothing significant. In the Ad company there is tight competition and Kari and Lazarus have to work a lot to get in the good books of their boss. The caption which Kari comes up with for the launching of the new product Fairytale Hair, "shot of the blue egg, cut to princess and her pretty hair, and then the super Fairytale Hair!", seems all absurd.

None of the team members believe in the product or in its success. But at the same time it suggests that we all live with our own fairytale ghosts. It is also about categorising women according to their makeover. The stereotype of the fairytale woman is maintained, though she has become urban and sophisticated. Woman's body is still commodified and the concept persists that a model needs to arouse sexual desire in the minds of the onlookers. Fame and oblivion that is met

out to people are not about their quality but about how they appear. Here Susan Lush is a symbol signifying voyeurism.

'Lush' is yet another word suggestive of women's sexuality as seen by men and by women. Even the term 'lesbian' as sounded by male critics seem to resonate with a sexuality alien to women and her body. Kari refuses to accept the term and be labelled as a 'lesbian'. "A peach, for one, creature of texture and smell, sings like a siren. A fruit that lingers on your fingertips with unfruitlike insistence, fuzzy like the down on a pretty jaw"(Patil, 66).

Usages like 'unfruitlike', suggest the merging of borders which repeatedly happen in the text-the visual and the verbal, the overflowing sewers, men and women staying at the same apartment, formal and informal relationships between colleagues, different gender roles, life and death, roads and buildings, fiction and reality- all seem to be against falling into compartments. The protagonist confesses that she and her

life's episodes stand for no particular issue like blurring genderlines, yet her favourite form of movement is 'float', which is about moving against borders.

The mules on which Kari and Angel go for ride on Juhu beach also suggest hybridity, or a non-belongingness. The mules are technically not horses though Kari and Angel are supposed to go on horses for rides. "The breaking of love laws" (69) is also suggestive of abnormality. The images from the bollywood movies that appear between the two women, Kari and Ruth, when they meet for the first time symbolise the normal love laws. (Fig.1). These will be crushed down by the two characters sooner or later. The other woman of her life, Angel advises Kari to be herself. As a sinking patient, she enjoys the remaining moments of her life with Kari. Angel has crossed the border of a typical female body with shaven hair and prosthetic breasts.

The eponymous character, Kari, stands for a woman who is not attractive

and angelic. In Kathakali, Kari is the generic name of women characters who are demonic in nature. They are dangerous, vulgar, and overtly sexual. They cross the borders of gender. At the same time they satirise the ideal women and the beautiful damsels whom the male desire. Both Kari characters and graceful heroines are the products of a male psyche which points at the fetish and phobia for women in the minds of men. A woman who cannot be defined and controlled is always treated as dangerous by men. Amrutha Patil's Kari defies definitions, labels and refuses categorisation. She is a woman who is confident to openly state her sexual affinity. She wants to take her relationship with her lover Ruth totally outside the gender roles.

Ruth is considered the other of Kari. Ruth has long hair, is more 'feminine' among the two. What fill in the gap between the two is the coloured fantasies of Kari. Kari tries to possess Ruth through her figment of imagination.

According to Kari, Ruth escapes death after their attempted suicide as she gets caught in the security nets. She escapes to a better place leaving Kari alone in the metro. Why did they attempt suicide and where did Ruth go are questions which remain unanswered even at the end of the text. Is Ruth a real character itself is a question, since no other character in the novel seems to have seen her except for Kari.

Even when considering Kari as a graphical novel, the style of narration is very particular of the novel. Fiction and reality converge at quite unexpected points. The colour codes used are also well thought of and planned. Bright colours draw out the scenes with Ruth. Colour codes are used even in some other episodes, though they are faded and less attractive. The pages are coloured when the protagonist is amused. Otherwise they are grey and gloomy. The fantasies of Kari are seen as represented in colours. They are more real to her than the stinging urban reality.

Though the novel as a whole seem to go against the stereotypes, it at times sticks to them. For instance, when the protagonist comments that loud men do not dislike other loud men, it makes one feel that there is a concrete division between each gender and its performance. 'Crystal Palace' and its inhabitants try to put Kari into heteronormativity which she refuses to in any way. They advise her to get along with Lazarus and pass comments like, "eventually a woman needs a man and a man needs a woman."(81). Amidst all this Kari is isolated and suffers from anxiety attacks. She feels the other households, which 'Crystal Palace' faces, to be having normal lives with "Children cluttered at study tables. Husbands in lungis. Phone conversations, food on the table. Wandering pets"(89).

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The Problem of Identity Crisis in the Selected Poems of Allen Curnow and Fleur Adcock

Sajeesh K

Mass migration becomes a regular process in this world, where refugees are recurring phenomenon. In establishing an identity, people are forced to move from one place to another and this changed identity status make them desperate. The anxiety of modern era and the constant search for a shelter is a matter of concern for scholars and writers in academic circle.

Modern literature discusses this loss of identity or a new identity in an alien place, acclimatization and cultural adaptation, theme and problems of exile experiences. It inflicts pain on those who have it and at the same time it arouses a new way of thinking. It provides readers untold stories and experiences of those rootless people. The feeling of being an outsider raises the question of identity; hence it leads to a hybrid identity. Many

contemporary writers face the anxiety of expressing their instincts and impulses once they lost their identity.

Apart from these a group of people faces another strange situation; one becomes out of place in one's own place, another group live with a perennial exiled life. The former is apparent in settled colonies where native inhabitants are being alienated; a process of 'othering' in one's own native land. In countries like New Zealand and Australia both the native people and European descendant settled people face identity crisis.

While the former group is being estranged and uprooted, the latter is striving to find a space in the changed circumstance. These two problems cannot be addressed together because of their divergent ways of life, outlook and culture. This paper is an attempt to analyze the problems where the poets Allen Curnow and Fleur Adcock reach a critical phase unfamiliar to them. New Zealand had a colonial background

where identity crisis is prevalent both to native people and the descendant people.

The identity is a chief concern in lives of the Maori and the European descendants. Though the Maori people were the early settlers in New Zealand who probably arrived between 1200 and 1300 AD, they internalized the climate and the island by settling a life. This Polynesian group formed the Maori tradition in the land and led a life similar to the stone-age until the arrival of the White Europeans in the latter half of the 17th century.

In the beginning of the 20th century New Zealand was transformed from the Maori world. The encounters between Europeans and Maori continued and sailors referred to New Zealand as the "Cannibal Isles". Following the fight, the treaty of Waitangi made Maori weak. They were forced to sell their land, thereby estranged in their own land. They were homeless and uprooted, but on the other hand the newly arrived British people prospered their life and condition

and took the formers' place. While the Maori faces homelessness and dislocation, the Europeans face a strange crisis of not having in their proper place. This crisis is the chief concern in the writings of Allen Curnow and Fleur Adcock.

The theme of national and social identity, cultural integrity and racial issue are central in New Zealand literature. Both Allen Curnow and Fleur Adcock possessed a strange identity which they did not like to have. Though they embraced English identity, their New Zealander identity troubled them. On the other hand the Maori writing struggling to find a space in the land with a strong sense of tradition. It is more concerned with the preservation and documentation of their culture that were being eroded by the Europeans.

From his early personal poems and political satires, Curnow then began to centre more on New Zealand and its history and his notable publications include *Enemies: Poems* (1937), *Not in*

Narrow Seas (1939), *Island and Time* (1941) and *Sailing and Drowning* (1943). In his writings he identified a number of distinctive national themes as New Zealand progressed beyond a strictly colonial identity.

In the beginning of the 20th century, New Zealand was trying to form a distinctive national culture and it is a common belief that artists can help to define New Zealand. The 1930s saw the emergence of a new breed of writers, whose works were a reaction against established ideas and conventions and they were also influenced by recent trends in literature, notably modernism, and by social and political events such as dislocation and mass migration. Along with a growing sense of nationalism, the sense of being an outsider was a great concern for these writers who still looked to England as "Home" and felt a lost identity.

The spirit of exile is the essence of Allen Curnow's many poems. Three of his poems are taken here to analyze the

theme of exile and they are "House and Land", "In Memorium, R.L.M.G" and "To Fanny Rose May". In "House and Land" Curnow treats the characters, especially the older generations, sympathetically. Curnow finds their problem still relevant. It depicts the world of a Pakeha household in New Zealand visited by a historian, apparently searching the origins of colony. People live in a place that does not belong to them.

The poem begins with the historian in the property's cowshed, asking the cowman "Wasn't this the site, asked the historian, / of the original homestead?" From the cowman's reaction, we come to the conclusion that this is the original homestead. The cowshed is in fact the homestead in which Miss Wilson was born and raised. This implies that Miss Wilson's origins were mean, uncomfortable, and poor. The cowman does not answer, but said "I just live here". The prefix "Miss" further hints at

her unmarried status, which is also an idea about her economic status.

From the cowman it is clear that her mother preceded her father in death, and the cowman has only worked for her since the old man has been dead. The present state of the homestead is explained in the next stanza. The "moping" of the dog sets the mood and atmosphere, followed by "under the bluegums, and the colour blue is associated with depression. The dog is symbolic in some way of the old woman who is psychologically shackled to this place, a stagnant privy being a fair comparison with her life. The images like the chained dog, the privy, the fowl house all give us the impression of depression and of being trapped.

The third stanza shows us Miss Wilson, sitting below pictures of her kinsman in England, "the baronet uncle, mother's side". The England's class based society is revealed here. She would not be the first colonial to claim an upper class origin in England. The picture of

"The Hall" represents a typical ancestral residence of the English aristocracy. Her concept of home lies in England, unlike this place in which she lives. Though she has been living here she does not identify New Zealand as her home country.

The baronet, the hall, the silver teapot and all these images create an impression of wealth, grandeur and aristocracy but the tragedy is that the house might fall at any time. She is living in an artificial world and Curnow satirically describes them. "People in the colonies, she said, /Can't quite understand.../It was all my father's land". But the fact is that the great expanse of land was here for millennia before her father's arrival. It was settled land and his ownership remains after his departure. So what she tries to convey is that as she is a colonial she tries to vindicate her own denigration.

From the evidence, the historian concludes that the "spirit of exile...is strong in the people still" The final stanza describes the cowman and the rabbitier.

The rabbit is supplying the household with meat and this is interesting that Miss Wilson still pretends her aristocracy. The symbolism of the confined dog is reinforced as it now looks "lost and lame" just like the old woman. The "great gloom" at the end of the poem is an intensification of the depressed atmosphere of a land of exiles.

In "In Memorium R.L.M.G" Allen Curnow brings out a similar idea. The poem is taken from *Tomb of an Ancestor* and it is honouring the poet's eternal grandmother. This poem is treated with a positive mood. While "House and Land" reflects a sense of loss, this poem is treated in a gentler way. During the course of time the poet had come very close to this country. The picture of RLMG is entirely sympathetic, without the touch of satire found in Miss Wilson.

The picture of her homesickness for the mother country is effectively carried out. The opening of the poem states her nostalgic feeling for the mother country: "...burst into tears and cried / Let me go

home". The image of home is crucial to the oldest generation and what they desire for is native identity. But the grandmother is forced to stay in the changed circumstances and each of the ships that are passing is painful for her, further she knows that she cannot claim anything in her home country. Where she could finally reach is the yellow grave: "she died by the same sea. /...she led us... / to the yellow grave". The poet knows that this is the ultimate fate of all European descendants who once settled in the island and unable to return.

All her home country feeling ended with her death, so as the present generation and in the latter such a nostalgic feeling is futile. Unlike the older generation, the poet and his generation attempt to live in the island: "...our feet/ were seen to have stopped" and he continues to say that even the street is like an ink-blue river; the colour blue here too associated with depression and desolation and the feeling of depression reflects "in the heat to the bay,

the basking ships, this isle of her oblivion, our broad day”.

Nostalgia for a lost national identity of the older generation is typical of his poems. The grandmother's lost desire frequently haunts the poet. Though the degree of nostalgia towards the lost home, from older generation to the present generation is diminishing, it is indispensable. The spirit of exile is permanent and therefore it is kept in every European descendant. He concludes the poem by reiterating the influence of his deceased grandmother's home feeling: “...she stretched like time behind us, or / Graven in cloud, our farthest ancestor”.

The companion piece of “In Memorium R.L.M.G” is “To Fanny Rose May” and it is addressed to his great aunt. While the older generation struggles to cope with the serious problem of homesickness, the present generation like Curnow accepts the reality that New Zealand is their homeland. The old generation finds sweetness in their lost

fabulous old England. The voyage which took the English sisters to this new land deserves attention and praising. After settling in the island, the memories of their mother country continue to haunt them, a painful reality only old generation suffers. Therefore they call the alien land “barbaric”.

A note of lamentation is apparent in the companion poems. It is evident in the poems: “Let me go home”, “watching...ships after ships”, “fabulous old England”. But a growing acceptance of the homeland is taking place in the present generation. Curnow calls New Zealand “My mountainous islands”. He is indeed demonstrating the effort of habituating the climate as well as the culture. This anxiety has been one of his chief themes: “A million years old memory, but there's / Neither memory nor world here, but that hill...I grow (here) and this praise flows, this blood, this name”.

The state of misplaced identity is further taken by many European descendants

and Fleur Adcock is a prominent figure among them. Though she was born in New Zealand, she spent much of her childhood in England. She received her education from England and she has been writing full-time since 1989. A collected edition of her poetry, "Poems: 1960-2000" was published in 2000.

In 2008, she was named Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for service to literature. In her writings, she questions identity. The sense of being a New Zealander and the English root is a crisis she faces in her poetry. She loves being in England but resists when her family moves back to New Zealand. Therefore a search of identity and genealogy is a matter of concern for her. The subject matter of her poetry is contemporary events in order to explore the dilemma of an exile artist.

She rejects modernist tendency of TS Eliot and Ezra Pound. Her experience of a white immigrant is a matter when she comes to know her New Zealander identity. The same poet, when she returns

England, finds the English identity an escape from New Zealand. Though she was not oppressed and discriminated on the basis of race and ethnic, she chose England as a self-imposed exile in the country of her ancestors. The question of identity and belonging reflect in many of her poems and two of her poems are analysed to discuss ancestry, geography, displacement and the natural world of England and New Zealand.

"Immigrant" as the title suggests is about her own experience when she arrived in London from New Zealand. She feels like a stranger in her dream country. Published in 1979 in her "The Inner Harbour", the feeling of a person in a new culture is highlighting here. She tries to become English by all means but inside, the New Zealander identity is troubling her. On the one hand she deserves to be a genuine Londoner and on the other hand she struggles to lose her New Zealand accent.

Arriving in London she "pause on the low bridge to watch the pelicans". Like

the speaker pelicans are non-native birds. Though they resemble typical English swan like birds when they float, it is awkward when it comes to putting their large beaks into water. The image of pelican makes her aware of her immigrant identity. When this identity comes out within her, she tries to cling to her outward English identity: "I clench cold fists in my Marks and Spencer's Jacket". This ambivalent identity is awkward for the poet, a dandy game.

The poet then goes on to confirm her English identity by secretly testing her accent: "Secretly test my accent once again: /St Jame's park; St Jame's park; St Jame's park. She knows that she has not quite mastered the English accent yet. Many immigrants from New Zealand are aware of their accent. Some believe their accent is wrong and it is not up to the standard of British accent. This is why she repeats the English word thrice to ensure the quality of accent. All these create a sense of dislocation in the poet.

Fleur Adcock's elegy on the death of her contemporary New Zealand writer James K Baxter shares a similar ambivalent nature who was a poet and a playwright. He is known as an activist for the preservation of Maori culture. While writing this poem she faces a personal dilemma. Though she is attracted by the English literary style, she praises the contribution of Baxter, who stands for Maori tradition. Her style changes here as if she is speaking to someone in an informal way.

The poem is taken from the collection "The Scenic Beauty" (1974). The poem is a farewell letter, written in Shakespearean form. As she is not a trendsetter she uses iambic rhyming for writing this letter poem. "What better models have we...?" Dylan and Eliot were not his model, but North American Lowell was his favour. Fleur was influenced by English tradition and not by Baxter. She knows that she has New Zealand blood, "our ocean is called Pacific, not Atlantic". Therefore when

thinking about Baxter she writes this farewell poem. She doesn't know whether to approve a Maori poet or to go with English tradition. But his death is a shock to her as he is Fleur's husband's friend.

She places him with New Zealand and "destruction can't delete an image". Fleur still recollects him though she is a hemisphere away from him. She knows him for the last 20 years. The poet minutely recollects all her memories with Baxter and his "generous comments on my verse". She doesn't call it a dirge, but a letter though she knows "those tolerant eyes will register no more". Even in this condition the poet is not sure and finally she says: "but praise all that you gave to the tradition?" The uncertainty and contradictory attitude are apparent in the poem.

Though she wants to strengthen her English tradition, she cannot completely root out her native identity. The exile experiences of both Allen Curnow and Fleur Adcock and the resultant identity

crisis are less harmful though painful at personal level. In an age of mass migration people experience the problem in many ways. For some, a permanent shelter is their destination, and for other identity crisis is their concern. It varies from person to person and region to region.

Both Curnow and Fleur share the problem of cultural and national identity crises. Their condition of being in-between or hybridized identities is more personal. Rootlessness and cultural displacement therefore become their frequent subject matter. Curnow deals with the problem of defining his New Zealand identity and he accepts the position where he stands and Fleur on the other hand does not want to have her national identity and tries to embrace her ancestor's tradition.

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Migration and Assimilation: Dilemma of Existence in Susan Abulhawas' *Morning in Jenin*

Faiz Abdulla K.

Susan Abulhawa is a well-known contemporary Palestinian American writer. She organized an NGO called 'playground for Palestine', which was basically for Palestinian children prosperity in Palestine and UN refugee camp in Lebanon. It predominantly aims to allocate playground for deprived children in Palestine. Abulhawa also tagged under the label of children literature. It was mainly because of her depiction of anguish child faces in Palestinian background. Abulhawa herself is a victim of wars, conflicts, chaos, and bloodshed in her childhood. Therefore, she endorsed America for better, comfortable and peaceful life.

She wrote her debut novel *Morning in Jenin*, which was enormously

acclaimed in Middle East writings in English. She clearly portrays the story of a young girl, named Amal. Amal strives from Zionist attack and grabs her from the dystopian and conventional societal platform into cosmopolitan liberation. This novel also portrays the transition of Amal from one social milieu to another. In her migration to America, she explores a new world and entertains cosmopolitan culture and lifestyle. She assimilates with cosmopolitan values at the same time confused with her native Palestinian identity in America. By portraying the character Amal, Abulhawa confesses her own acquaintance of perplexity.

The present paper elucidates the process of transition and assimilation of an Arab woman from Palestine. In order to accomplish modernity and newfangled lifestyle she completely disregards tradition and conventions inherited from her native land. She consistently attempt to escape from patrilineal tradition, conventions and stereotypes. Therefore the transition from indigenous to

cosmopolitan has been easily taken place. At the same time, the innate influence of her indigenous culture, language and ethnicity often mismatch in the process of building the cosmopolitan identity.

While assimilating with adaptive cultural artefacts, Abulhawa replaces indigenous ethnic formation into globally accepted values, particularly by her central character, Amal. Amal strives from Zionist attack and snatches herself from conventional bounds of Palestinian background. Consequently, she alters her culture and identity according to the norms and values of adaptive land. By receiving academic education, the clear indication of change in her character was visible.

In fact, modern education plays a crucial role in order to shape a cosmopolitan Identity. It was not possible by leading a life in Palestine. She realized Jenin in Palestine is a land of political turmoil and chaos. Moreover, it tenaciously bound up with tradition, customs and conventions. Consequently,

she thought about migration to America and earnestly tried to get educational scholarship to study in America.

Here the great dilemma occurs between modern education and native obsession. On the one hand, she was trying to get scholarship to get rid of conventional bounds of native society. At the same time, the inherent values and congenial norms haunt Amal identity. The dual labels often confront her to disclose the real self. However, this young girl bravely takes the decision to earn and get educated and settled in America.

She has taken a huge risk by selecting host land for bringing new identity. America was the land of varieties. At the first landing itself, she realized the versatile faces of America. But in each steps of amalgamation, Amal gradually realizes that, her native identity is a troublesome task either in America or any other part of the world. Perhaps, her dress, language and all other inherited habits may not be acceptable to the

cosmopolitan world. It can be arguably analyze that the innermost reason of Amal's metamorphosis from indigenous to cosmopolitan is ambiguous unequivocal in its effect:

Feeling of inadequacy marked my first months in America. I floundered in that open ended world, trying to fit in. But my foreignness showed in my brown skin and accent. Statelessness clung to me like bad perfume and the airplane hijackings of the seventies trailed my Arabic surname. It's okay. Haven't you ever seen an escalator before? (Abulhawa, 169)

It is a clear indication of existence dilemma of Amal at the initial stage of her settlement. There are mainly three elements she confronted with. The first one was her physical outlook. Her brown skin evidently shows that she is from Middle East region.

In fact, being a foreign in America, it is difficult to develop interpersonal relationship. In the second aspect she confronted was the language. Her Arabic

mixed English accent was easily recognized that, she is an Arab native. In third phase is the lack of acquaintance with technology and advancement. Since Palestine was always trapped with chaos and conflicts in both domestic and international level. It is still under developed in many aspects. All these three elements of her strangeness in America cause initial complications in her settlement.

Amal's dressing style also contradicts with American general garment sense. Her Palestinian garments need to be changed for the sake of adapting societal pattern in host land. She started to assimilate cosmetic stuffs and she stretches away from the traditional style that she followed for the last few years. It was really a difficult task to forget about the past upbringing of her Amal life.

She inculcated lots of traditional and cultural values even though she stands in the midst of social and political outbursts. But she confronted with a great dilemma

while accepting American Life style. The luxury and elite comfort was a hectic task for Amal to amalgamate with new ideas and technologies. This process of hybridity would eventually result "a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabha 211).

It took long years to blend with American general consciousness. She realized the fact that this new life is completely different from the old life she had. She was free from inherited dreams. She was no more anxious about the expectations of family and make dreams. Amal learns mobilization and reconstitution in her culture as Gerald Delanty says that "the belief that human agency can radically transform the present in the image of imagined future" (Delanty 3). The radical accommodative change in Amal's life is the assimilation with American culture. It causes the easily transubstantiation of Amal's entire belief and ideology.

Cultural metamorphosis is apparently exemplified in different parts

of the novel. There is a clear blend of American fashion and lifestyle in Amal. She started drinking alcohol. She found new men and women. She easily gets familiar with strange men. That means she started dating with American youngsters.

I metamorphosed into an unclassified Arab-western hybrid, unrooted and unknown. I drank alcohol and dated several men-acts that would have earned me reputation in Jenin. I spun in cultural vicissitude, wandering in and out of the American ethos until I lost my way. I felt love with American and even felt that love reciprocated (Abulhawa, 173).

This is how metamorphosis gradually happens in her life. Earlier gradual transformation later becomes more fastened. Once she moves forward, then each of her steps brings immediate result. "There is need to realize the significance of cultural encounter which takes place in

diasporic writing, the bicultural pulls and creation of a new culture which finally emerges" (Jain15).

Abulhawa replaces herself into the character Amal. By portraying Amal, she identifies the complete transformation from one social milieu to another. Bicultural pulls Amal in order to create and accept a new form unfamiliar culture. She gradually changes her name from the Arabic dialect, Amal into Any, which was easy for pronouncing for Americans. She deliberately changes it because of American public mentality. People can be easily identified the ethnic and cultural identity by her name. It was a terrific existential dilemma for Muslim especially post 9/11 war in America. Perhaps it may be the main reason that, Amal came to change her name into Amy. It also shows the insecurity of her native identity in America.

"I deliberately avoided political discussion, did not write to the people who loved me and let myself be known as "Amy"- Amal without hope. I was a word

drained of its meaning. A woman emptied of her past. The truth is that I wanted to be someone else. And that summer at Myrtle Beach. I was Amy in bathing suit (Abulhawa 178). This transformation raises a great question of her indigenous identity and assimilation to cosmopolitan identity. While accepting materialistic as well as ideological norms and values she stands in a great dilemma of existence. She used bathing suit and exposed her body in to public.

Till then those things were considered a great taboo in her native culture. However, those taboos have turned into liberation in her host land. Amy was quite comfortable in all sense of exposing her personal freedom. Newfangled lifestyle of Amal makes her stubborn and sharp in her decision. The journey of Amal's life never ends up here.

The most impressive reason of her predilection and assimilation to America was freedom and protection. In fact, the

flight all the way from Jenin was mainly to establish a firm and free identity. Her youth simply limited in the narrow world, in which war and bloodshed were usual incidents. Apart from all, from the perspective of woman, she had again the story of suppression and marginalization. That also leads Amal to break the boundary and get the freedom of air in America.

Despite of restrictions and sufferings, Amal's strong determination to afford education was exceptional. Abulhaw's life and career itself proves that, she brings the attention to the welfare of children and women. She helped Palestinian children with more care and protection. She regained all loses of childhood pampering by doing welfare activities to children.

Amal's life in *Morning in Jenin* is the best example of facing dilemma of existence in her life. She stands between migration and assimilation by adopting dual identity. Her native identity brings homeland identity and cosmopolitan

adaptation bring host land identity. Even though she assimilates with cosmopolitan identity, there is a big confrontation in her native identity. It can arguably observe that this confrontation dismantles the individual-self inherited from her native land. The dilemma of existence remains in host land as well. Each of her individual change occurs by mental frustrations and complexities. Abulhawa is also the best example of this dilemma of existence. That is the reason, while settling in America, she involves with welfare activities in Palestine.

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