

Musings on World Poetry

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PREFACE

Encompassing many worlds, styles and tongues, the magnificence poetry offers varies from the ancient epics, to the haikus, to the piercing insights that delineate distinctive poets and the movements they represent. With its power to reshape pain or joy, this art form has transcended its definition of ‘emotions recollected in tranquility’ to wider purposes, revealing coping mechanisms, mysteries of the self and the world, resistance, creating spaces where minds stride fearless, or as Beau Taplin remarks, making us collapse to our knees with the poet, roar with the thunder and burn with the stars. Poets, the ‘legislators of the unacknowledged world’, peer into hidden places, wander, record their experiences, and refresh language by returning words to their concrete roots. The music so created at its best is heard so deeply that it approximates silence; it serves up the substance of our life, and becomes more than a mere articulation of experience, whereby the invisible world is made visible. However, many aspects of the literary culture having changed since early mid- nineties, critics opine that a *fin de siècle* has ushered in a revival of interest in purely aesthetic matters. In classrooms where students’ educations are limited to brisk canonical texts which make them wonder what they have to do with their own worlds, teaching poetry remains a bigger challenge beyond being articulate about this art form. The collection of articles titled, “Musings on World poetry” is an attempt to look at world poetry from divergent scholarly perspectives.

On Poetry and Philosophy —or,

What's Love got to do with it

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Abstract

'On poetry & philosophy' attempts to meditate on the twin relationships of poetry & love and philosophy & wisdom, alongside their allegiances to — quite possibly reliance on — the beyond, to muses, perhaps even to the divine. And asks: are these relationships really that different? And, can they really even be separated from, divorced from, each other? It begins with a rumination on Plato's eviction of poets from his ideal republic: not out of hatred for them, nor because he thought them not good enough, but precisely because good poetry can move one beyond oneself. Out of respect for — one might even say love of — poetry. And opens the possibility that poetry is nothing other than a name for the waiting of the possibility of wisdom.

The role of poetry in relationships has a long history — from epic poems recounting tales of yore; to emotive lyric poems; to rude, irreverent, limericks; to Hallmark cards which have ditties that allow one to cringe and somehow fall in love at exactly the same time. Without going into the question of aesthetics — even as notions of beauty; the senses, *aisthesis*; perhaps even the *sublime*, something beyond which overwhelms, always remain with us — or attempting to choose which form, which type of poem, is superior, we might want to consider why poetry has long been part of the story of relation.

And whilst doing so, keeping in mind the fact that poetry — especially poetry that moves, which transports, us — is the form that Plato continues to warn us about; particularly if we want to become good citizens.

The poet, irremediably split between exaltation and vulgarity, between the autonomy that produces the concept within intuition and the foolish earthly being, functions as a contaminant for philosophy — a being who at least since Plato, has been trying to read and master an eviction notice served by philosophy. The poet as genius continues to

*threaten and fascinate, menacing the philosopher
with the beyond of knowledge.*

Philosophy cringes ...

~ Avital Ronell¹

And considering the notion that the philosopher is the lover of wisdom, we might begin to ask ourselves: *why is one lover warning us against, perhaps even warning us off, another?*

For, if the philosopher is one who is in love with wisdom, then is the poet perhaps his rival, her challenger, for that very love? Moreover, one should try not to forget that, despite his warnings, Plato — through Socrates — constantly speaks of Homer as his favourite. Furthermore, by adopting both his own voice, whilst mixing it with Socrates', Plato is adopting the form of poetry that he warns us most about:

¹ Avital Ronell, *Stupidity*, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003, 287.

prosopopoeia.

A warning that almost serves more as homage to poetry than anything else.

And here, we might open the register that one of the main reasons he ejects a particular kind of poet is on the grounds of effecting effeminacy on the populace — for, good poetry moves you, affects you, transports you, shifts you beyond reason, *puts you out of your mind*. However, Plato also teaches us that rhetoric in its highest form requires inspiration by way of the *daemon*: a moment of divine intervention which seizes you — perhaps even causes you to cease — putting you *beyond yourself*. In other words, a good rhetorician must always already be open to the possibility of otherness — quite possibly the same otherness that resides in the feminine. Where perhaps, the effect of effeminacy that poetry opens, effects, brings about, is precisely the source of its power: through listening to poetry, one's body, one's *habitus*, is opened to the possibility of the feminine. And here, one must remember that the source of all learning — and teaching — also lies in

mimesis, in repetition, in habit. And, once the *habitus* is opened to the possibility of invasion, of intervention, of otherness, there is quite possibly no possibility of distinguishing whether the mimesis is that of reproduction or if there is always already a productive aspect to it. And, if learning cannot be controlled, the very notion of teaching itself is shifted from a master-student relation to one where the so-called master is potentially altered as well — where, the relationship between the master and the student is not only inter-changing, but one cannot even know who is teaching, or learning, at any point. All that can be said is that they are in relation; which means that one is ultimately unable to locate the locus of knowledge, of wisdom — the very site which Plato is attempting to convince us is the sole domain of the philosopher.

And, it is this that philosophy is cringing from.

To compound matters, philosophy is striving for wisdom; which can only come through the divine. In other words, this is a gift that has to be bestowed on one — and, perhaps more importantly, wisdom is always already exterior to one's control and knowledge. At best, it is the role of one to recognise the gift, to answer the call as it were. All whilst

bearing in mind that any decision to pick-up, to respond, comes with risks: for, each time we answer a call, we run the risk of it ruining our day, perhaps even wrecking ourselves. For, each time we respond, pick up, we are leaving ourselves completely open to being affected by another.

II

Thus, philosophy finds itself in the position of Vladimir and Estragon.

For, since they have no idea who Godot is, they can never know if or when he shows up — thus, if he even came (and we are taking his gender on the word of the boy, some boy — we don't even know if it is the same boy — who comes round in the evening), or has already come, they would not be in any position to know it.

And even if someone comes and announces, 'I am Godot', the wait would not be over — without any referent to the name, without any correspondence between the name and what it is naming, they would have to take on faith that the one who calls himself Godot, is indeed who he says he is.

Hence, all they can know is that they are — all they can choose to do is to be or not to be — waiting for Godot; and *Godot is the name of that waiting*.

And, all philosophy can know is that it is waiting;

and *wisdom is the name of that waiting*.

III

Which brings us to Tina Turner's eternal question: "what's love got to do, got to do with it?"²

And, alongside it, a question of love;

in particular, a meditation on the quotidian — and deceptively everyday — phrase, *I love you*.

Keeping in mind that if love is a relation between persons — who remain singular whilst attempting to respond to each other — it is a relation in which none of them subsume the other(s) under themselves; a relation in which every one remains wholly other, remain singular.

²Terry Britten & Graham Lyle, 'What's love got to do with it' in Tina Turner, *Private Dancer*, Los Angeles: Capitol Records, 1984.

Where the ‘you’ in the statement remains shrouded in mystery.

And, even if the ‘you’ is replaced with the name of the person, the veiling remains: for, names refer both to the singularity that is the person and every other person bearing that name, at exactly the same time. To compound matters, the only time one has to utter a person’s name is in their absence — thus, the referentiality of a name to that particular person is an affect of memory. All whilst trying not to forget the possibility that memory brings forgetting along with it, quite possibly has forgetting written into it. Thus, whenever we utter a name — even if we accept the correspondence between the utterance and the person in front of us — all we are doing is uttering the fact that we are naming. So, it is not so much that *a rose by any other name would smell as sweet* but more appropriately, *a rose is a rose is a rose* — where the relationship between its name and the phenomenon of its sweet smell can only be established after that moment of naming, that instance of catachresis.

So, whenever one utters *I love you*, not only is it a performative statement, it is the very naming of that love — a forging, making, of a relation between you and another.

And since there is no necessary referent — one is naming that referentiality as one utters it — this suggests that it is a symbolic statement; without which the mystery of the other, the mystery that is another, cannot be maintained.

And, if we reopen the register that relationships are an encounter between two (or more) who remain wholly other to each other, they always entail a togetherness (*sym-*) that exists from a distance, after a throwing (*bole*), between the ones involved. Thus, there has to be *a-space-between* for this to take place. Otherwise, all that is happening is one subsuming the other within their own sphere of understanding; where, one is effectively effacing the other. If that were the case, the other person is a mere extension of the self — and, one is in a masturbatory relationship with one's imaginary.

In other words, one cannot love another without maintaining this gap — thus, a certain unknowability — through a ritual, in this case the utterance *I love you*. For, regardless of how sincere one might be when uttering those words, one should try not to forget that the phrase long precedes you, that you are always already in citation.

Perhaps as importantly, only when the love for another is enigmatic, retains an element of being (perhaps just slightly) beyond comprehension, can that love maintain the possibility of being an event. And if an event, it cannot be known before it happens; at best, it can be glimpsed as it is happening, or perhaps even only realised retrospectively, if at all.

Where, at the point in which it happens, it is a love that comes from elsewhere: a strange phenomenon perhaps best captured in the colloquial phrase, *I was struck by love*; or even more so by, *I was blinded by love*. A blinding to not only the object of that encounter, the ‘you’, but perhaps also to the subject of the encounter, the self: after all, one very rarely, if ever, knows why one has *fallen in love, stumbled into love*.

Where perhaps, all that can be said is, *there were an encounter*.

And it is for this reason Cupid is blind: not just because love is random (and can happen to anyone at any time) but, more importantly, even after it happens, you remain blind to both the reason you are in love and the person you are in love with.

And since one is in an unknowable relation with another, the only possible approach possible is ritualistically: a lesson that religions have long taught us — that since one is never able to phenomenally experience the God(s), one has no choice but to approach them symbolically. For, rituals are strictly speaking meaningless: their actual content is interchangeable — and it is the form through which they take place that is crucial. And where, by performing them in the precise way in which they are formed we are hopefully informed of their — and they perhaps allows us to momentarily catch a glimpse of their — secrets.

After all, secrets are never about their content. Rather, they entail the recognition that they are secrets; *the secret lies in their form as secret.*

That is, *you have to know you know ...* tautological;

always also a *leap of faith.*

Where, since the God(s) are beyond our cognition, rituals open the possibility of experiencing them. Which is not to say that one will necessarily — can even — know what one is experiencing. But, that one can potentially open oneself

to the possibility of the experience: nothing more, and infinitely nothing less.

Where, the offering — which is an integral part of all rituals — is precisely what opens the possibility of an exchange. All whilst trying not to forget that proffering something does not guarantee you will like what is returned: for, there is always a reciprocation, but what is returned to you is never known in advance, only reveals itself (if even) at the moment it is received. This also means that the worst thing one can do is to not to offer something: that would be akin to a cutting-off of possibilities, a complete closing of oneself to another. At the same time, this means that you also cannot wait for the other (even if said other is a text) to give you something before you make your offering: if so, it would be nothing other than a calculation, a strategy. Naturally, this would seem irrational, even stupid. But it is precisely the stupidity involved that saves the relationship from being banal — more importantly, prevents it from entering the profane.

Which is not to say that enigmatic love cannot end — of course it can.

However, the difference lies in the fact that if the relation is wholly transparent, it is subsumed under reason — completely predictable, within the self, and thus never open to the possibility of otherness, exteriority, musing. Whereas, love that is an event is one that opens itself to the possibility of the divine, the sacred ... is potentially closer to the possibility of wisdom.

And, if we establish — or, at least posit — that both *love* and *wisdom* are exterior to our knowledge, and might be the finitude of our selves, this suggests that *they are names for the possibility of an openness to otherness*. In other words, and what choice do we have here but to use the words of the other, the philosopher — the lover of wisdom — is nothing other than *a name for the one who is waiting*.

But that still leaves us with the question of this uncomfortable relationship between philosophy and poetry.

However, before we attune ourselves to the call of that question, we might have to take a momentary detour, and consider the whether it is possible to call one, let alone one-self, a poet.

For, if we take the notion of a poet to be one who reaches the highest levels of rhetoric (beyond the lawyer and the orator, who aim to either please the crowds or convince by way of sophistry), we must then also acknowledge that one can only become a poet at the moment one is seized by, at the point one is inspired by, the *daemon*. Without this divine moment, all (s)he can do is practise her craft. And, as no one can control when a *daemon* makes her appearance, one could always be practising in vain — in some way, one is always already training to be least in the way when the *daemon* whispers into one's ear; one is rehearsing *so as not to be vain*. And since one cannot know when — or even if — the *daemon* will appear, there is no time frame to the *praxis*: unlike the lawyer who speaks against a clock, poetry knows no time; *the only time that matters is the time appropriate to poetry itself*.

Thus, all the one who makes poems is practising for is the possibility of effacing her self — for the possibility that is waiting.

Where, in order for the possibility of poetry to occur, in order to be seized, the poet — along with all her concerns — must cease.

In other words, there is no poet;
only the possibility of poetry.

Sacrifice destroys that which it consecrates. It does not have to destroy as fire does; only the tie that connected the offering to the world of profitable activity is severed, but this separation has the sense of a definitive consumption; the consecrated offering cannot be restored to the real order.

~ Georges Bataille³

However, even as there is no time frame to this waiting, even as all we can say is that poetry is a name for waiting, the one who is practising is always also in time. And since (s)he is in a symbolic relationship with the possibility of poetry, this suggests that the practising — her practise — is her sacrifice; and time is precisely what (s)he is sacrificing.

And here, it might be helpful to turn to a strange source when it comes to poetry — one Georges Bataille — and

³Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: an Essay on General Economy, Vol 1*, translated by Robert Hurley, New York: Zone Books, 1991, 58.

consider his reminder that the “essence of sacrifice is to consume *profitlessly*,”⁴ where each exchange is beyond rationality, beyond calculability, beyond reason itself, “unsubordinated to the ‘real’ order and occupied only with the present.”⁵

Where, since there is no need for a physical change in the object of sacrifice — “it does not have to destroy as fire does” — this suggests that the tie is severed symbolically. Hence, there is an aspect of trans-substantiation in this sacrifice: the form remains the same; in fact there is no perceivable change — this is the point at which all phenomenology fails — but there is always already a difference, an absolute separation from the “real order,” from logic, calculability, reason. The object of sacrifice, “the victim” is “a surplus taken from the mass of *useful* wealth ... Once chosen, he is the *accursed share*, destined for violent consumption. But the curse tears him away from the order of things ...”⁶ And, it is this tearing away from the order of things — the order of rationality, from *les mots et les choses* (if one wants to be a touch playful) — that

⁴*Ibid.*, 58. *Italics* from source.

⁵*Ibid.*, 58.

⁶*Ibid.*, 59.

“restores to the sacred world that which servile use has degraded, rendered profane.”⁷ For, only when it is no longer useful, when it is no longer subjected to — subsumed under — the order of use, merely a thing to be utilised, can the object be an object as such, can a subject be a subject as such; a singularity.

Thus, it is never so much who or what is sacrificed,
but the fact that there is a sacrifice.

So even as (s)he is sacrificing her time to poetry, it is always already beyond her knowledge whether what (s)he is doing is actually preparing her for poetry or not — all (s)he can know is that she is sacrificing and nothing more.

Hence, all (s)he can do is open her self to the possibility of this relation — all (s)he can do is *be in love with poetry*.

And, at the moment the muse whispers into her ear, (s)he ceases to be, and becomes *a medium for poetry*.

In other words, there might well be no difference between poetry and wisdom —

⁷*Ibid.*, 55.

where, *the moment of poetry is the moment of wisdom.*

And since this possession is always already beyond cognition, this is quite possibly also a divine moment.

Where, it is not just that poetry, distant sounds, love, wisdom, are premised on relation, but that they are also relations themselves. Relations that cannot quite, cannot even, know of themselves as relation, but are only — always already — an openness to the possibility of relation;

that is, *waiting ...*

And this might well be the reason for the philosophy's aversion to poetry. Not so much because it may corrupt the youth (this is, after all, the aim of all thinking, all philosophy), but precisely because in order to do so, philosophy must wait for a moment of possession, for divine musing ... for poetry.

Where, all thought, all thinking, all philosophy, is nothing other than the waiting for the possibility of — the possibility that is — poetry.

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The Transfusion of Ecological Consciousness in the Ecotone of Eco poetics: A Selective Study

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Abstract

The creation which is a perfect amalgamation of all the species comprising of humans, animals, birds and nature which in the broader sense denotes the natural, physical and spiritual source of life claims for an ecological balance in the most dynamic, decisive way. Among the other genres of literature, Eco poetry in its distinctive feature of arousing the poetic artifacts that embody the ecological imperative for subjective sensitivity as well as social change has gained enormous response in contemporary times. The word “Ecology” with its alarming influence has occupied a significant realm at the outskirts of increased globalization and technological expansion. It is rightly portrayed in the literary maneuvers of eminent poetic maestros like Shelly, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron etc. in the interpretation of ecological consciousness in human existence. This paper is an attempt to reconnoiter the works of a few Romantic poets

who have dispensed the substance of nature both with the eco tone of subjectivity and objectivity. It also showcases the sphere of ecological consciousness that is upraised through ecopoetry.

Keywords: eco poetry, subjectivity, ecological disaster

Ecopoetry has been recognized as a very forceful and increasingly substantial field of literature. In other words, Ecopoetry can be reflected as a division of traditional nature poetry. In the book, *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction*, Bryson (2002) asserts:

Ecopoetry is a mode that, while adhering to certain conventions of traditional poetry, advances beyond that tradition and takes on distinctly contemporary problems and issues, thus becoming generally marked by three primary characteristics: an ecological and biocentric perspective reorganizing the inter-dependent nature of the world; a deep humility with regard to our relationships with human and nonhuman nature; and an intense skepticism towards hyper rationality a skepticism that leads to an indictment of an overtechnologized modern

world and a warning concerning the very real potential for ecological catastrophe.(pp 5-6)

From the ancient times nature has been materialized in the consciousness of the writers' writings especially in the poetic forum. Poetry has the captivating driving force within it from Biblical times till date to have driven us towards the world of nature. Nature has been perceived in different connotations by different poets. To Shelly, the revolutionary, the wind seemed to be rough that wailed, as the poet himself, since the world was wrong. His own thoughts would scatter like leaves, like the glowing ashes around the world in an apocalyptic divination of the Utopian conception. Keats longed with heart ache, the beauty and happiness sought in the nightingale's song that aroused an intense excruciating consciousness of inaccessible inclinations. These poets were ignorant to the viciousness of the city. They did not experience the chaos of the crowded streets, the adulterated air. To these literary eyes the world was an inspiring, beautiful place to live in. They could canvass amazing musings of nature comprised of wondrous virgin woods, primeval streams and the beauty of wildlife transfusing everything into a rich virtual paradise giving paramount scope for creative manifestation. This would

predominantly outrage the poetic sensibility between the poet and the natural world. These poets witnessed nature closely, growing together in its premier form of beauty being fascinated by their natural milieus.

In *Ode to the West Wind* (1819), Shelley portrays the seasonal alteration driven by the wind energies, while addressing it as “thou breath of Autumn’s being” the one blowing the deceased leaves from the trees like ghostly impressions. This shadowy and gloomy metaphors of Autumn bringing bereavement by Winter, is then juxtaposed with “Thine azure sister”, Spring, the one reviving the collapsed seeds, transporting fresh life. Shelley’s powerful descriptions in recounting how “black rain and fire and hail will burst” in the course of a storm, arouses an intimidating picture of chaos or the termination of the worlds and existence; whereas “the Atlantic’s level powers/cleave themselves into chasms” creating waves great enough to immerse “palaces and towers”. These depictions of destructive natural powers stimulate fright and apprehension. In the other hand, Wordsworth pictures a more submissive portrayal of nature in *Tintern Abbey* (1798) where Wordsworth returns to the country after a long period of five years and senses a feeling of nostalgia as he

witnesses “These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs’. The natural surroundings offer him a tranquil restoration from “the din / of towns and cities”.

The impressions of subjectivity which Wordsworth and Shelley showcase towards Nature in *Tintern Abbey*(1798) and *Mont Blanc*(1817) respectively are worth of admiration and appreciation at nature's majestic power and beauty. But, in both the master pieces it has been presented with a note of different imageries and interpretations of nature and the waymanhoodought to haveindulgencein it. In the opinion of Shelley, nature is at the same timemagnificent and noxious; a vigorous force which cannot be restrained by man. In the process ofescalating nature's artisticstateliness, Shelley cautions man not to parallel beauty with that of serenity. In *Tintern Abbey*Wordsworth has urged toplace man and nature not in opposition, but has interpreted them as harmonizingrudiments of a whole, identifying man as a part of nature. Shelley enclosures with the majesty of nature’s appealing power to craft*Mont Blanc*, fighting against naturethe supremacy of his own understanding to recognize*Mont Blanc*’s sublimity and thereafter to eloquent its regalexquisiteness in his own creative ways.

Wordsworth articulates the restorative powers of Nature as it renovates his soul:

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure;.... (ll. 27-31)

Wordsworth in his autobiographical literary maneuver, *The Prelude* (1799), narrates the experiences of his childhood time spent with nature which has bestowed upon him "a cheerful confidence in things to come".

According to Byron, Nature was an influential outlet or passage to human sensation, reaction and evolution. Contrasting Wordsworth, who romanticized Nature and fundamentally consecrated it, Byron perceived Nature more as an acquaintance to humanity. Unquestionably, natural exquisiteness was notably desirable to human malevolent and the issues consequent upon civilization, but Byron also acknowledged Nature's treacherous and punitive elements. Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) associates Nature to

liberty and self-determination, while simultaneously presenting Nature's hypothetically noxious elements in the punitive waves that appear to lurk to flood, the oubliette. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812) pours expressions to Nature as an asylum from human skirmish, nevertheless, amongst the inundations, the simmering vehemence of the natural world. Unlike the nature poets in the time bygone who inclined more in the direction of the pastoral and idyllic, the nature poets in contemporary times are arousing far-reaching ecological and conservation themes. Analyzing the writings of the past several years, stimulating and redolent creative maneuver has taken place that scrutinizes this poetry has instigated to amateur the groundwork for research in eco-poetics. Eco-poetry gives a complete picture of various environmental standpoints thereby crafting and endorsing cognizance of the environment.

It is the humane in man that claims to acknowledge and respect the human relationship and perennial bond between nature and the environment. Eco-poetry provides the perfect platform to honor and understand this message. Eco-poetry stands with the strong affirmation in creating acknowledgement for the human interdependency on the

earth. It is not just the curious experiment by eco poets with pictorial and textual enterprise. But they articulate an aesthetic ecstasy, the stream of thoughts by crafting a molten message through structured verses, triplets and couplets.

One finds such vibrating rhythm in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* welcoming the year's season into the spirit's:

When April with its showers sweet

Has pierced March drought down the root.

Then people long to go on pilgrimage.

When Wordsworth saw

A host of golden daffodils,

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze,

We too rejoice in the beauty of nature. And when
Keats' Nightingale's

...plaintive anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?"

Thus one comprehends that pleasure cannot last forever and that bereavement and death is but an inexorable and inevitable truth of life.

John Felstiner (2010) reconnoiters the amusing heirloom of poetry that accepts nature as their subject, and he validates their potency, dynamism and beauty. In our present time of ecological disaster, he resists, poetry has an inimitable dimension to refurbish one's responsiveness to the environment in its jeopardized state. Felstiner observes:

Once alerted, our eye and ear find environmental imprint and impetus running through a long legacy....Poetry more than any other kind of speech reveals vital signs of our tenacity on earth. (p. 4)

It is acknowledged that the Romantic poets are anxious principally in nature and in its completeness, not just in the animate intellect, but also in the spiritual and metaphysical replication, nature's ingenious supremacies

that draw to an eventual contemplation of the state of humanity and individual's relationship with the creation. Their writings also prostrate the poet's melee to comprehend nature and man's innovative and destructive analogous powers, which is still existent in the present time, in the context of man's unquenchable need to construct the realm of meeting the hassles of an ever increasing populace which has been extensively beheld to be extinguishing the earth's network of ecology and eventually himself, either by means of pollution or the manipulation of natural resources. However, in voicing their yearning for an epitome world, the Romantic poets also remains unrestricted in inkling the light of hope, with the proclaim that if man abstains from this ferocity, nature can be conserved.

Nature is an essential and central part of our life. But while appreciating, acknowledging and experiencing the sanctifications she confers on us, we overlook that we are marauding her resources and thus preventing our progenies the inclination of adoring nature in all her copiousness and multiplicity in the forthcoming. The exquisiteness of nature has been inscribed in the literary works of artists and poets. The mere poetic articulation testifies such movable touch.

Then how wondrous in envisioning the power of the real nature itself!

The persistent battering on the natural world by human habitation has stirred the consciousness in many thoughtful people, the responsiveness of the prerequisite for curative action to stand still the vandalism of our world. Scholarly studies and literary creative have played a key role in probing into these intimidating ecological issues. In the words of Bryson, Eco-poets help

Reorient us within our world, when they render their conceptions of the world in such a way that their poems become models for how to approach the landscape surrounding us so that we view it as a meaningful place rather than abstract space. (12)

Poetry liquefies in dissolving the limitations between the divided human minds and the natural world, softens the antagonism between individual welfares and the welfares of nature.

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The Rap of Revolt: Thematic Analysis of Vedan's Verse

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Abstract

Poetry has been a medium of expressing protest and dissent since time immemorial. Ideological protest happens through different medium, of which poetry has a special significance. Collective victimhood and trauma are the major themes of these poems especially when it focuses on the issues of downtrodden. But protest through social media platforms has a greater appeal compared to other medium because it is easily accessible. In YouTube a Malayalam rapper named Hirandas Murali alias Vedan created a novel trend: protest through the rhythm of rap songs. To write a rap song in Malayalam is not an easy process especially if it is related to the issues faced by minority community. Vedan's Voice of Voiceless, Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam and VAA hailed him to the zenith of popularity. Through Voice of Voiceless, he juxtaposes certain major issues faced by the downtrodden, like the toxic relationship between the master and the slave, inequality, injustice, colour discrimination

and the place of dwelling. His second rap song named Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam exposes some global threats like war, internal conflict, genocide, refugee problems, forced sterilization, nepotism and so on. Through VAA he puts forth a solution to these problems: a collective protest. So he invites the subalterns to gather in the society to regain their rights. This paper argues that the first song deals with issues faced by the subalterns in India. From the specific he moves on to the global context in his second song and sheds light on the issues faced by minorities across the globe. The third song which can be considered a conclusion posits a collective ideological revolution as a solution to oppression.

Keywords: protest, minorities, rap songs, social injustice, and discrimination.

Protest through poetry is as old as the history of mankind as it is believed to be the first medium that has been used to convey the feelings of human beings. Protest poetry is a double edged sword which slaughters not only the foes but also the age old customs which treat people unjustly. Juxtaposing the collective victimhood and trauma make these poems a beacon light which sheds light on the dark corners of life. In the words of Roger Robinson “the poet’s

job is to translate unspeakable things on to page; poets can touch hearts and minds; they can translate trauma into something people can face." (*Roger Robinson: 'Poets can translate trauma'*)

Racism, inequality, casteism, social injustice, and discrimination are the focal areas of protest poetry. Minorities and subalterns act as central figures if this poetry and their existential crisis is the major point of concern. Either be a prey or be preyed upon is the ultimatum of our society. In one way or another it affirms that equality is a myth. As a result the powerful emerge as dictators while the powerless become mute victims and are forced to remain voiceless for centuries. Protest poetry gives voice to the generations of oppressed people and also aims at bringing about a change in the society.

Ideological protest happens through different medium, of which poetry has a special significance. Changampuzha Krishna Pillai's *Vazhakula*, Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan's *Kirathavriham* and *Kurathi* are the epitome of Malayalam protest poetry. With the emergence of social media and various online platforms, protests have acquired a new dimension- that of online protests which have far more reach

than other protest writings. Hirandas Murali, a 26 years old Malayalam rapper and a native of Trissur, nicknamed *Vedan* is a new trend setter in Malayalam rap song culture. According to him “my art is my politics. It is the politics of caste, class and colour”. (“*Malayalam Rapper Vedan’s Songs of the Hunted*”). Rap song and rap culture are not novel for the people of Kerala. But a rap song for the sake of protest is something unusual.

Hirandas Murali takes for himself the name *Vedan*, which means hunter According to him his name “means hunter. I sing of the hunted and the hunter and I felt this name suited me” (“*Malayalam Rapper Vedan’s Songs of the Hunted*”). The name also serves as a tribute to his community. *Vedan* penned and sang three famous rap songs - *The Voice of Voiceless*, *Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam* and *VAA*. These songs could be considered as part of a series rather than as single pieces. It narrates the pathetic condition of the downtrodden. The first song deals with issues faced by the subalterns in India. From the specific he moves on to the global context in his second song and sheds light on the issues faced by minorities across the globe. The third song which can be considered a conclusion posits a collective ideological revolution as a solution to oppression. It also

motivates the people and enhances them to realize their inborn potential. More than a song, his creations belong to the category of protest poetry. It discloses the ground realities of the downtrodden.

Voice of Voiceless was released via YouTube on 13th June 2020." *Vedan's* song talks about the rights of the oppressed, caste and religious divides, slaves and lords, land and labour, justice and betrayal and the power of a single spark"(Johanna). The song has as its central issue the oppression faced by Dalits in India. The song not only depicts the issues of the Dalits but also the politics of *Vedan*. It gives a collective identity to those people whose identities have been unacknowledged by the society. It also gives voice to the sufferings of the people who have been denied even the basic human needs and rights. The denial of these needs makes life more pitiful and the end result is trauma.

The song reveals the toxic nature of master slave relationship. The latter is considered to be a non-human entity from the *ab initio*. They work relentlessly in the fields for their masters and their contributions are never acknowledged. They toil on the earth till dusk without any complaint but the owners are not ready to even consider

them as human beings. Severe punishment and hatred are the only rewards that they get for their hardships. This negativity collapses their dreams along with their lives. Unequal distribution of power ensures that the rich becomes richer and poor tends to be poorer and the mightiest man-made boundaries expel the subalterns. *Vedan* declares it through his words and enquires to the society as to how long they will suffer this oppression

Who the slave and who the lords

Of these irrigated fields?

Who fenced them into thousand fragments?

How many kinsfolk decimated?

Spines stooping Heads hanging

How long will you survive? (*Voice of Voiceless* 0:12 - 0:30)

These arguments and enquiries not only disturb the minorities but also agitate the corner stones of the society.

Colour discrimination is yet another prevalent issue faced by the Dalits. Those who are fair in complexion are considered acceptable while those who have dark

complexion are regarded undesirable. Black colour has been given a negative connotation since the ancient times. This prejudice continues to exist even today. *Vedan* expresses in one interview that “The colour of my skin is black. Here in Kerala, everyone is obsessed with fair skin. Yet, when the Black Lives Matter movement started in the US, everyone here began to show their solidarity. But in our own country, people discriminate against those with dark skin. This really hurt me, no one wants to talk about the issues of caste and colour discrimination here” (Johanna). Yet the orthodox society hides the fact that this is the colour of their hardships. The black colour is a result of the hours of toil endured by them under the scorching sun.

You are born of this soil, yet

Looked upon with hatred

...

Who demanded justice

Was thrown into dungeon

Losing his head. (*Voice of Voiceless* 0:34 -0:35 0:57- 0:58)

They spoil their life for the well-being of their master. This hatred of colour continues from generation to generation, consequently resulting in vengeance and self-pitying.

Voice of Voiceless projects another problem faced by subalterns: a place of dwelling. The place of dwelling is as important for an individual as their self-esteem. A home gives a man shelter, freedom, peace, security as well as identity. It is one among the basic needs. But by the use of tricks and foul play, the owner snatches the land from these poor people. As a result, they become insecure which leads to existential crisis. The song also makes it known that deceit has always been a part of subaltern history. As the song goes:

Yearned for a bit of land

Land that never betrayed you

A foul play behind the scene

You knew...

Justice died long back (*Voice of Voiceless* 1:09 - 1:15)

These lines proclaim that betrayal and destituteness are part of their life.

Hope for the future is the life breath of humans. The development of their future generation is still a dystopian dream for the Dalits.

The slave never saw the future in his children

He got buried in the earth

Of black battlefields (*Voice of Voiceless* 2:13 - 2:14)

To escape from this disastrous situation they strike against the government. Such people are either termed as terrorists or as anti-nationalists. Vedan, through his verse, announces that it is the time to protest. *Voice of Voiceless* is not only a rap song but also a booster aimed at boosting the confidence of the minority community.

Vedan's verse not only satisfies his vengeance but also the collective revenge of his community. It repeatedly announces that Justice is their end. It is not a selfish narrow minded goal but the need of a community, who are aspiring to regain their self-esteem. So *Vedan's* verse echoes the voice of many, it repeats their woes and hopes.

What I want is not just for me but for all

You are not willing to share any

How many gave their lives for that

Yet you stand by and laugh. (*Voice of Voiceless* 1:38 - 1:47)

Unlike this song, *Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam* concerns some global threats -Refugee issues, communal riots, terrorism, nepotism, war, genocide and so on. On 6th November 2020 , *Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam* was released via YouTube. It speaks of the ugliness of society along with the trauma endured by the minority people. The thirst for power has turned humans into war mongers. Countries are fighting each other for insignificant reasons. Universal brotherhood has become a mere concept because siblings are ready to kill each other to satisfy their personal needs. War and internal conflict are the two sides of a coin, which spoils the life of many and shatters the dreams of common folk. Power and selfishness are the reason behind these problems. Syria, Korea, Mexico and many other countries are struggling with the after effects of these blood thirsty wars. Those who are powerful remain safe but the powerless ones, especially the minorities, are forced to flee from one country to another to safeguard their lives.

Syria, the scar on your chest is bleeding, rotting with flies around

Korea, the blood thirsty vultures are preying on you

In the devilry of religion, mother India is wandering in search of light

(Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam 0:15

- 0:23)

A government is the representative of people, it stands for the people and fulfills their dreams and protects their rights and satisfies their needs. Unfortunately the same authority treats some people as second grade citizens and expels them from the boundaries of their native land. When the social activists raise their voice against these injustices they are brutally murdered. These evil practices are still prevalent in our earth.

Children as refugees is a global threat. Childhood is believed to be the golden period in one's life at the same time in some countries these children are searching for an oasis to live. Due to internal agitations and wars they become refugees and in order to escape from the calamity, they are forced to flee from one country to another. Yet these children drown into the depths of death and God becomes a mute witness to their fate. Alan Khurdhi, a sad figure among

the numerous refugee children, lost his life in the dark caverns of Mediterranean Sea. Malak and Asifa are two other buds of childhood who have lost everything due to the vengeance of other people. An analysis of these issues certifies that these wars and internal conflicts have a religious connotation. Religious fanaticism is a major hazard faced by certain countries. The people of these countries fight each other without recognizing their friends and foes to satisfy their unseen God. They believe that these sacrificial rites will help them in reaching heaven. Humanity becomes mere spectator in such conditions.

Nepotism , genocide and forced sterilization are the other global hazards which disrupts the peace of Palestine and China.

The mass genocide of Palestinians is an everyday normal

China, your red flag smells corrupt with the scent of aflamed quaran

(Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam 1:22 - 1:29)

The incidents happening in these countries proclaim that humans are too selfish and narrow minded and are not ready

to accept their fellow beings. These devilish beings are ready to slaughter their siblings to taste the illusion of power. Here brotherhood is nothing more than a mirage.

Poverty is another major issue faced by African countries and Somalia. The children of these countries are suffering from severe diseases due to malnutrition and poverty.

Zomalian children are scrambling through in search of a deep of water

Buddha in Myanmar is armed with weapons , thirsty for blood.

(Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam 0:48 - 0:55)

Buddhists are believed to be guardians of peace. Buddha abandons his kingdom when he recognized that power is just an illusion. The voice of the universal human suffering disturbs him to such an extent that he abandons his kingdom. But the successors of Buddha in Myanmar are taking weapons to satisfy their thirst for power. Thus, *Bhoomi Njan Vazhunidam* holds a mirror to the cruel face of human beings. Even though it is a rap song, an underlying universal trauma is evident in the verses of Hirandas Murali.

Vedan's VAA "exists in a world of labour, difference and struggles of everyday life and it is an outcry"(Soman). Vaa is written in the form of revolutionary poem. In Malayalam, the word 'Vaa' means come, so Vedan is inviting his companions to gather to fight against these atrocities. From his life he recognizes that patience cannot help one to win the battle, one should raise one's voice against injustice. So it is the time to awake, arise and fight.

Where there is oppression

Fists must rise

Where there is discrimination

Voices must rise

Where men are slaves

Rebellions must rise

Where there are fetters,

Pickup your hammers

Come! (*VAA 1:36 - 1:48*)

It is evident that never give up is the major thing one has to follow in one's life. Tennyson's message "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield"(Tennyson 70) is the same message conveyed by VAA also. In the third song he puts forth a solution for this collective victimhood and trauma: a unified form of protest. In VAA *Vedan* inspires his comrades for a bloodless revolution based on ideologies. He asserts the importance of universal brotherhood. VAA rekindles hope that a new dawn is awaiting the minorities.

Come ...let's be

A one Tree Forest to those who need

Shade...let's be

Upon dead and arid soil

a One Drop Shower...let's be

On the dark path a glimmer...let's be

Voice of those turned voiceless

Come (VAA 0:54 -1:05)

More than a rap song VAA inspires the minorities to strive hard to achieve their aim. The song has the power to kindle

the emotion of downtrodden. One day or another it will rise and inspire the subalterns and make them perfect for an ideological revolution to regain their rights.

People may die but

their ideals won't

Heads may Grey but

never the Mind (*VAA 1:17 -1:21*)

So through these three rap songs *Vedan* creates a new rap song culture in Kerala and he proves that pen is mightier than a sword. Through poetry he also shatters the corner stones of social taboos. He aims a new world where all men are treated equal, and have access to food and other basic needs. Hirasdas Murali declares that the power of poetry is immense because through poetry he can inspire his fellows without weapons. His power of words and powerful experiences makes him an Orion, who is ready to haunt the devilish lords with his mighty weapon ; rap song. As the song says

But he that dies for a dream/is a thousand times resurrected//. (*VAA 2:35 - 2:38*)

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**Identity and Resistance: The Question of
Identity Card and Resistance in The poem “Identity
Card” by Mahmoud Darwish and “Identity Card” by
S. Joseph**

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Abstract

The ornate literature of the West has not incorporated the expressions of the oppressed. The growth of resistance, sheds light upon the oppressed communities around the world. Oppression comes through caste, race, religion, gender or any other forms of culture. Resistance struggles are inevitable for maintaining the identity of the oppressed. The Palestinian literature of resistance and the Dalit writings of resistance are epitomes of resistance literature to assert identity. Two poems with the same title Identity Card by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and Indian poet S. Joseph, placed in two different contexts analyses the voice raised by the voiceless. The paper intends to analyze the different notion of identity card in both the

poems with a focus on the resistance employed by both the poets.

Literature, once a monopoly of the hegemonic European countries has travelled beyond seas to assimilate the voiceless. Voiced, being the perpetrators of discourse creates the classics and subverts and forms a void in the history of the voiceless. Poetry, a vehicle for representation has a long history of the baroque or the embellishing styles and the themes which enlightens the grandeur of the West. The colonization accelerated the colonial nations to record their past and glory through the medium of the colonizer's language, English. An avid transformation occurred in poetry which deviated from the grandeur of the hegemonic to the struggling subordinate classes, which triggered the voiceless to assert their identity and in turn exhibited a scenario of resistance.

Identity connects an individual to the society. Each individual has a national identity which promises the protection of a nation. Our home, class, religion, dress code, rituals, language and profession marks our identity. Assertion of identity paves way for resistance. Resistance disregards the oppressor's dominant overtones in poetry and

defends the indigenous identities through the medium of literature. Identity is a mark of power and the annihilation of the identity of an individual or a group of individuals and the efforts of resistance for its preservation develops with wild exuberance in resistance literatures. To quote Fanon “Where there is power, there is resistance”. (Foucault, 1978: 95-96)

The twentieth century literature especially poetry is acquainted with the voice of oppressed where they form a chain of resistance to break oppressor’s treatment of the oppressed. The Palestinian literature, the most quoted epitome of resistance literature gained momentum since 1948 Palestinian Exodus, which displaced Palestinians from their homeland. It saw the blooming of eminent writers such as Ghasan Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al-Qasim. Primarily written in Arabic language, the translations enabled the Palestinian poetry to be circulated throughout the world. The uprootedness and homelessness shaped the poems of exile and later the literature of resistance.

The Indian scenario defines resistance through Dalit literature. The Chaturvarna system, a hierarchical categorization based on caste- the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas,

the Vaishyas and the Shudras made its journey towards caste discrimination. The Shudras being considered the lowest were given no rights for education and were treated as servants to the upper class. The social and economic upliftment of a long neglected society made the democratic nations to help them with a financial security. Even though many writers like Sharad Kumar Limbale, KanchaIlaiah fight the caste system through their powerful words still it exists in a modern Indian society where the relationships and friendships are balanced through a casteist structure.

Identity card, a cultural artefact of identity, marks the existence and the identity of an individual. “Identity Card”, a poem by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and Identity Card, a poem by S. Joseph although in different contexts marks the resistance of the voiceless. The identity cards in both poems acts differently, one being that of identity crisis and the other of discrimination. This paper intends to analyse the role of identity card in both the poems and the subsequent tone of resistance that the poets incorporate in their struggle against oppression.

Mahmoud Darwish, a Palestinian poet glorified the culture and dignity of his nation. A master figure in the

literary resistance Darwish's own experiences of Palestinian Exodus contributed to the evolution of a question of his identity. His family fled to Lebanon following the Palestinian Exodus and the Israelis had destroyed their village to prevent the return of the natives. When they returned, they were denied their identity papers as they were too late to be included in the Israeli census. Darwish carries a conversation with the Israeli Bureaucrat for his identity papers. Written in an aggressive tone he asserts his voice through repetition

“Put it on record

I am an Arab”

A transcend towards identity deviates the readers through the appearance, dress code (Arab's attire), family lineage and profession. The cultural artefact of attire and complexion mirrors his identity and the pride of an Arab. Frantz Fanon triggered the concept of cultural resistance, defending one's culture through the knowledge of their historical roots. He argued that the colonized should be aware of their past and culture which could sow the seeds of resistance against the colonizer ; a cultural resistance can be formed against the oppressor.

“For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity.”
(Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*)

Darwish’s lineage of peasantry and his accusation that Israelis had usurped their lands and vineyards mused on their history.

“My father is from the family of the plough

Not from high born nobles.

And my grandfather was a peasant

Without line or genealogy”.

You stole my forefather’s vineyards

And land I used to till”

History is essential when one intends for the change of society. The knowledge of the oppressed about their history and culture precipitates resistance.

The violent or the bursting tone in the poem lends a power to the oppressed to gain their identity and rights in their native sphere. The survival, existence, livelihood,

rights in their native land and the diminishing values of the oppressed enkindle a revolution and resistance within Arabs. The threatening words in the end prompts the poet to be a man aroused with the feelings of a national identity.

S. Joseph, one of the eminent poets in Malayalam literature crystallizes the oppression faced by the Dalit community in Kerala. Narrated through the incidents of his college love affair with a girl, deeply in love with him until she finds his misplaced identity card with red markings indicating his caste and the stipend he receives. The red markings exaggerates the societal norms and practices which deems above a relationship. The identity card, a cultural artefact of identity turns itself to a weapon of discrimination.

The mysterious conclusion prompts a resistance towards the caste structure and culture of the society. The love never triumphs over the parameters of caste which defines a person. In Kerala, the never ending trauma of caste creates rift between people. The marginalized on the verge of society dissolves to nothing more than the red markings in their identity card. The vicious arrows of caste are still dominant directly or indirectly.

“These days I never look at a
boy and a girl lost in themselves.
They will part after a while.”

An eerie situation in these lines stimulates the fact that the discussion on caste is useless in an arena where caste is vicious even among youth. Poet takes a nonchalant attitude towards lovers.

“I won’t be surprised even if they unite
Their identity cards
Won’t have markings in red.”

He believes that they won’t unite or if they unite there might be no red markings in their identity cards. The unalterable tones of caste distinctions hints at the unalterable casteist society. A tactful depiction that there is no use talking about caste in a changeless society. The financial security accorded to the marginalized itself acts as a means for their discrimination. There resonates a resistance struggle when he says a change is not an agenda in a changeless society.

The poems with the same title. In different contexts bestows a double way interpretation for the cultural artefact, the identity card but it targets at a resistance against the oppressor. Darwish values his identity card as a strong voice to claim that he is an Arab and has the right to live in his homeland. S. Joseph, even though his identity card projects his identity it has the malicious moves of discrimination or humiliation on the grounds of caste. Darwish employs a tone of defiance to resist his identity. On the other hand Joseph triggers an insouciant resistance struggle, an indirect presentation that nothing is going to change as the caste rules the society.

A power connects identity and resistance. The declaration of identity through resistance whether in belligerent or in an untroubled voice imparts a revolting voice to the voiceless and in turn allows the dominant power to think on their actions. The identity cards even though are placed in two different contexts, they projects the identity and in turn the resistance.

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An Introduction of Tibetan Poetry in English

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Tibet, now a days the answer to two questions which the world has been asking for the last couple of decades for testing their general knowledge. The two questions are (i) “Which country is situated on the roof of the world?” and (ii) “Which country is known as the forbidden country?” Nestled in the heights of the mighty Himalayas Tibet was one location, which had human habitation from the early Stone Ages. The Tibetan culture too is known for the diverse form of culture it possessed in contrast to the rest of the world. Forced to exile from the late 1950 s onwards, today Tibet is a fast diminishing culture, almost on the verge of extinction.

Geographically placed between the two Asian Giants India and China; for a long time Tibet was a peaceful political buffer between the elephant and the dragon. All the major rivers of Asia originate from the Tibetan plateau. It is also a storehouse of rare minerals. Most of Tibet is cold

grassland occupied by the nomadic races of the Mangoloid stock. The higher areas were dependent on animal rearing while the lower range were dependent on agriculture and mining to a limited level. Rock salt and more medicinal plants were the ones that attracted traders to Tibet. The philosophic debates had attracted the scholars to Tibet. It certainly is known for the Vajrayana type of Buddhism and the various monasteries who practice the same in a number of ways. Vajrayana is practiced only in Tibet.

The most prominent image of Tibet that we find today is that of the octogenarian Buddhist high priest HH Tenzin Gyatso, the XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet. The world had bestowed the prestigious Nobel Prize for Peace. He has been the face of the exiles and the image of the Tibetan state for now over 70 years.

Tibet had been a theocratic country until the 1950s as China had occupied the whole of the Tibetan mainland. From the 1950s on, they had been colonising the land by bringing in the Han migrants and distorting the cultural practices of the land. The oppressive influence is so high that the exquisite faces of the Tibetan culture are forcefully being wiped out. Many Tibetans, both the monks and the people, have fled for asylum in India and all over the world.

Tibetans consider India as their spiritual guru. The Buddhist Philosophy texts, script and much more things have reached Tibet from India, India and its culture are considered as a superior one for the Tibetans. The 33rd Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo had invited the Buddhist maestro sage Padmasambhava and his disciples Santarakshita and Vimalasila to spread the Buddhist faith to his empire that consisted great parts of the present day China also. The new faith of the Guru Rimpoche, as the Tibetans address the sage Padmasambhava, was accepted with open hands, it received much attention and fused very easily with the traditional Bon religion. One may rightly point out that this was the beginnings of Tibetan theocracy and the monastery based system. This was in existence for over a thousand years. The Mongols chiefs and the Chinese emperors had accepted this. Altan Khan, the great grandson of Chenghis Khan, gave the title Dalai Lama to the high priest of the Gelng order of Tibetan Buddhism as he embraced Buddhism. The title when translated to English means the Ocean of Wisdom. The Dalai Lamas are the rulers of Tibet for the last 500 years re-incarnating 14 times in the shape of successive Dalai Lamas. During the years of the Han occupation, the Dalai Lama has taken asylum in India,

has re-established the Tibetan monasteries in India, and had been working hard to preserve Tibetan culture. He had established a government in exile and by 2012; he had renounced his political leadership and had transferred to powers to the democratically elected Sikiyong (Prime Minister). India is now once again a guru for the Tibetans providing them education, asylum, migration, identity and preserving their culture.

Due to the importance given to the monastic cultures and the ritualistic ceremonies, nature of the culture charting had been an important feature. Printing had gained popularity in a much later time though China was known for Printing and papermaking. The inaccessible high terrains of Tibet and the nomadic/monastic nature of the people in the wilderness might also have contributed much to the same. However, songs and poetry had a great role in the development of the Tibetan literature. The charts of religion also had merged with folk music tradition of the land. Thus, poetry as a literary genre had been deeply inscribed in the Tibetan psyche consequently poetry is the most powerfully literary device used by the Tibetans. They use it as a representative element of their cause. They use the Tibetan language and English language to highlight their cause to

both the insider as well as the outsider. The poems in exile we the most powerful ones. One might not fully understand the pain and the passion of the poets; but they continue to sing even if it is in a refugee land. They sing of a lost world but with a hope of return.

There are three generations of Tibetans in exile. The poets of the period are representative of the same also. The first generation of exiles who were born and brought up in Tibet and were forced into exile in the decade of 1950s. The second generation of exiles were born around the 1950s and had to grow up as exiles in other countries. The third generation were born in the roadside work camps of the Tibetan exile workers. The first generation had clearly seen Tibet in its good days and they know how the oppressors have sub... the Tibetans. The second generation has only faint memories of the land. What they know most is the traumatic experience of being pushed out of their homeland and the experience of the orphan in the world stage. The third generation does not know anything about their homeland except for the myths and memories of their ancestors. They were completely exiles who only know Tibet as their home away. There is a fourth generation. If Tibetans growing up in the exile they do not know Tiber nor

the exile camps as they are gross migrating between the various exile camps.

The hope of return of the first generation, the anxiety of the second generation, the rootlessness of the third generation and the confusions of the fourth generation can very well be found in the poems of the Tibetan poets of the respective ages. The first generation poets include Ando Gendun Cheophel, Chogyam Thurngpa Rimpoche and Dhondup Gyal. Gendun Cheophel and Chogyam Thrunpa had travelled across the globe and spread the message of Tibet across the nations, Thrunpa in influenced the American Beat Poets as he had migrated to the US while Gyal had never left Tibet but remained an outsider inside the occupied Tibet. The poems of these generation celebrity Tibet and its glorious past and culture - a kind invitation to the outside world.

The second generation were born around 1935-65; born in the troublesome path to exile. The earlier sections of the generation were born in Tibet while the later sections were born on the highways of exile. They were the early exiles to various Tibetans settlement. They were also part of the Chushi Gudring - the revolutionary underground uprising. K. Dhondup, Lhasang Tsering, Gyalpo Tsering,

Ngodup Paljor, Tsoltim Shakabpa, Gendum Cheophel, Tenzin Sonam, and Norbu Tsangpo were the famed poets of this period. They aimed at presenting the reality of exile and the wish to return. They had understood, exile, resistance and probably the impossibility of return. These poems are unlike any other exile poems filled with hope and not with sadness.

The third generation were the continuation of the second generation. The new exiles from Tibet were also there. By then the exile government was created and settlement and education of the refugees were considered important. The governments where these persons had settled could not manage the situation this refugee crisis. The Indian government had employed them in the road building camps along the border. Many of the early third generation were born in the makeshift tents along the border. A later part of the generation had been in the forests of Bylakuppe and the hills of McLeod Ganj where the Indian Government had settled them. They hope for a return but to an unknown land where they have no inheritance. They are also aware of the fact that return is not as easy as their parents had dreamed. The land had been drastically by the oppressors. The poets of these generation were truly international as

they were from all over the world and were able to influence the world as they used English then their another tongue. The most importance poets were Tenzin Tsundue, Tsering Wangpo Dhompa, Buchung D. Sonam, Thupthen N. Chakrishar, Kathup Tsering, Thopden Tsering, Tsamchoe Dolma, Tenzin Trinley, Tenzin Gelek, Kalsang Wangdn, Ugyen Cheophel, Namgyl Phuntsok, Shehrab W. Cheophel, Gur Gyal, Tenzin Phuntsok, Tenzin Palason, Dawa Woser, Wangchen Tsering, Tsering Dolker, Dhargyl Tsering, Puma Tenzin, Cherin Norbu and Tsering Dickey. The later sections of poets of the above list are part of the fourth generation. They can be considered as the poets of the 21st century.

Throughout these poems Tibetans discusses the existence of Tibet against the realities of exile. They have rooted their poems and their lives on exile with a specific goal to preserve their ethnic identity and voicing their anxiety. The harsh realities of life really add up to their poetry. This makes their poetry powerful and influential. Among these three generations of poets, the writers of the third generation poets are the ones who have had international education as well as an international exposure. Their poems are global in nature as they gave more priority

to writing in English. One poet stands out in particular he is Tenzin Tsundue, a relentless freedom fighter for the Tibetan cause. He is a one-man army for the Tibetan cause. He has limited resources, which can be carried on his backpack. With his house on his backpack; a truly exile person; he roams around the cities and village of the world and tells the people about the invasive oppressions of his land.

Let us briefly try to analyse the poems of these Tibetan poets. Horizon the most celebrated poem by Tenzin Tsundue runs thus:

From home for have reached
the horizon here
From here to another
here you go.
From there to the next
next to the next
Horizon to Horizon
Every step is a Horizon
Cant the steps
and keep the number
Pick the white bebbles
and the funny strange leaves
Mark the curves

and the cliffs around.

For you may need to
come home again.

He presents the reality of return as a horizon that moves art of focus, each time when we come closer to it. But he is not losing hope and keeps count of the surroundings and believed one day he might have to return.

Buchung D. Sonam, another poet in exile, represents the reality of exile in “Banishment” writes it as follows.

Away from home
my minutes are hours.
Spiders travel from the window to the celing
Bee flies from the window to the bin.
I stare out of the window
Neither speaks each other tongue
I wish you would go deaf
Before silence.

Exile and return are mentioned in a similar manner to that of Tsundue. Gendun Cheophel of the second generation had expressed the same as follows:

I feel myself
standing in the wilderness
cold

alone
empty
beauty all around me
pain constricting my heart
The road of life lies long and empty
and no balm exists to smooth me.
It was loss and broken heart.

It is quite evident from the lines that new exile had influenced the second generation also. Lahsang Tsering another second-generation exile activist and a former Tibetan guerrilla has mentioned the same in his poem “Bamboo Curtain Burning” as follows:

We have seen the Berlin Wall collapsing,
And with it freedom’s Bell ringing,
Why? Why then must we believe?
That our prison walls will remain,
Forever and forever - and forever
We have seen the iron curtain crashing,
And with it old nations in freedom rising,
Why? Why then must we believe?
That the Bamboo curtain will remain,
Forever and forever - and forever
We know that throughout human history,

Kingdoms came and kingdoms go,
Empires rise and then they fall,
That no kingdom and no empire last,
Forever and forever - and forever.
I see our prison walls collapsing,
I see our lay oppression ending,
I see from exile returning,
I see Bamboo curtain burning
Forever and forever - and for ever
Come fellow Tibetans, let's not sit and wait,
Come fellow Tibetans, let's not lose courage,
Come fellow Tibetans, let's rise up together,
let's go for freedom - we can be free!
let's fight for freedom - TIBET WILL BEFR

The first generation poet Chogyam Thrunpa also mentions
the same as follows:

The red flag flying above the Potala
The people of Tibet are
Down in an ocean of blood
A vampire among fills the
Mountains and plains

Exile might be viewed as a violent reality here. This might
be as violent a reality for the fourth generation also.

Poetry therefore is the most prominent branch of expression for the Tibetan poets. They have changed our perceptions of the world and have given us a world which is to give an ear to and yet another world where the facts are much more differently and peacefully.

What makes these poems different from others is really a subject of analysis. It is something that we cannot find in other writers. We may call it as an essentially Tibetan nature which you cannot have a parallel anywhere in the world. This term is used specifically as many believe Tibetans were just part of the Chinese stock. They do have similarities but the differences are more in number. This quintessential Tibetan speciality can be found in their religion and culture, ethnic identity three generations in exile, importance given to human rights, the desire to return, presence of a voice of hope, and a cry of political orphans who speaks of their right to exist and express.

Exile is that experience that had minded Tibetan poetry to this form. It has fabricated a new consciousness to the poets and their poems there by creating a world different from all the pre-existent models. It is a world that was opened to us disregarding the previous experiences. The aim of each poet in exile is to cry out land out to the world, just

like the little bird inside a nest crying on and on helping for somebody to hear. The world, the mother bird perhaps might bring out this cry and bring relief to it.

As a closing note, I heard Someone in the Street, a poem by Tendro of the fourth generation will reveal the real situation the Tibetans are facing in exile. It goes thus:

I heard someone in the street say
Those was the year when you lost
Your home and your job to pay for
Freedom's dear cost.
But the street lamps silently rejoice
That in fact you find your light
And your sort and your voice
Avoid the dark of the night
I heard someone in the street weeping
What about the jailed and slain?
And the buried and the missing?
Will they come back again?
But look, their forces shine in our fears
With wrinkles day big smiles not age
May their faith shatter our fears
And break open our case.

Tibet is sure to have its land and rights back. The work of the poets will not go wasted. As the Tibetans say Tashi Delek (Good Day) – Bod Gyalo (Hail the land of Bod); Tibet will be free.

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Land and Freedom: An Abandoned Tryst

A Study of Agha Shahid Ali's Poems

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Abstract

Agha Shahid Ali, the Kashmiri poet, explores the untold miseries of the generations of loss whose plight after independence was no better than before. Most of his poems echo the lament of the land and cultural maladies of citizens of Kashmir, bearing the imprints of Indo-Islamic tradition. He contextualizes poetry in terms of history and passes through the landscape of memories through Ghazals. The major problem a Kashmiri faces is whether to identify himself as an Indian or as a Kashmiri. The unique position of Kashmir intensified the conflict and thus the land has turned to be a space for the othering of Kashmiri self. The present study aims at analyzing Agha Shahid Ali's poems through defining the land,

differentiating it from nation and examining the concepts such as nationalism, regionalism, terrorism etc. with the objective to eradicate the prejudice towards individuals standing on the margins. Problematizing the very notion of unity in diversity envisaged in the Constitution it tries to throw light upon the shadows of poet's vision, moving deep into its roots. The relevance of the analysis lies in unraveling the predicament of an individual who feels as an outsider inside the broad shelter to which he is supposed to get entangled. The issue addresses not only Kashmiris but also the ethnic, religious, linguistic communities throughout the world who are confined inside the barbed wires of sectarianism. The scope of the reading can be extended to delve deep into the history of India, the idea of freedom and its dimensions and the post-colonial aspect i.e. the dual role that language plays in relation to history, viewed through the looking glass of contemporary existence.

Key Words: Promised land, Tryst. Kashmiri, Partition, Diaspora

Memory is no longer confused, it has a homeland—

Agha Shahid Ali, "Arabic," *Ishmael*

The cultural geographical territory, land, has often possessed allusions to a generation's past, not simply past but a sort of glorified nostalgic memories, whether it be a period of suppression, marginalization, discrimination or even under colonial subjugation. The reason for such a group of images the individuals cherish about the history of home land would be the delusion derived out of hope- regarding a premeditated meeting with one's dream. They like to call it a tryst and believe that meeting would bring about the freedom in every sense of the term. A touch of loss is felt in the minds of such a group who are forced to limit their wishes and live with the aspiration that the tryst, which is abandoned, will happen but not at the present moment. In search of the paths to the dream of a generation to come to be true, the politicians, activists, writers and laymen devise their own strategies without being anxious of the consequences. As it could be seen in any field of resistance the modus operandi is multifaceted and at times to demarcate patriotism from terrorism would be a tedious job. So is the attempt made by expatriates to portray the ever and never present entity, their homeland, an act with no guarantee of success.

The partition of India and after math, especially communalism, terrorism and prejudice, were voiced in many literary pieces of different genre such as Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*, Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions* and so on. Rudolf Steiner in his work *The Philosophy of Freedom* distinguishes between concept and percept as the acceptance of universal view about his existence and individual's understanding of one's existence respectively (Steiner 121). Freedom is a percept as well as a concept as far as the Indian context, especially the context of Kashmir is concerned. The outsiders can perceive it to be a part of the Indian sub continent, but the right of the citizens of Kashmir is limited due to its peculiar kind of existence in the boarder - as a child claimed by two mothers- India and Pakistan. The political manifestoes of no government could fulfill the hope of Kashmiris to live peacefully, enjoying the right of freedom that Indian Constitution offers. Obviously the unique travail the Kashmiri faces makes him to rethink the resort to which he is to be identified. He is torn in between two identities as a Kashmiri and as an Indian, though the second contains the other. This feeling of abandonment or a sense of othering in motherland may

contribute to the yearning for the independent status he pleads.

Agha Shahid Ali, holding the pains of partition- the inevitable compromise of establishing the utopian idea of emancipation from the clutches of prejudices and rivalries, in his poem “Post Card from Kashmir”, ironically calls himself as a survivor, because he had already taken shelter in the security of a nation far away, when the threat of unsafe existence remained, or better aggravated in homeland. He wished to call himself better as an expatriate rather than exile because the feeling of uprootedness is not that much strong in him as compared to the other diasporic writers. This can be read in another way too. Agha Shahid Ali, born a year after Indian Independence, studied in University of Kashmir, has already learned to cultivate a mindset to feel at home in the midst of disputes and the same idea of adaptation made him feel at home in United states. But delving deep into his works, whether it is *A Walk Through the Yellow Pages* or *The Half-Inch Himalayas*, *A Nostalgist's Map of America* or *The Country Without a Post Office* subtle images of his homeland and the agony the poet bears, the quest for freedom and the sense of history and contemporaneity of India in general and Kashmir in

particular is observable. More than a personal loss, Ali's poems marked the pain, the pangs of separation, urge to embrace the past that will be the primary motive of the other individuals – his parents or grandparents, friends from both sides of the globe and in certain situations the imaginary people. As Bruce King in *Modern Indian Poetry in English* remarked, with all his infatuations and inhibitions Ali is more a product of 'New- internationalism' than a category in Post- colonialism.(King 258). Being a tricultural writer , the metaphoric language he used to express the world he knew not only through sense perception but also through the spectacles of writers, ancestors and media influence his explorations. It is interesting to point out the medium of lyric of Urdu Ghazals he used to claim the melancholic celebration of his love with the Indian Islamic tradition that participated in the unified Hindu- Islam cultural memories , partition wiped away. In that view Ali's poems function as the alarms to remind us that the time has come to estimate the inheritance of our loss and to restore it.

In the poem titled 'Land' the writer reminds the makers and 'rulers' of India about an abandoned premeditated reconciliation with harmony. The poetic voice utters:

The hour has come to redeem the

pledge(not wholly?)

In Fate's "Long years before we

made a tryst" land. (5-8)

He reminds the equivocator that 'there is no sugar in the promised land'. The other adjectives the poet uses to represent the land include the capitalist, the missed, the prejudiced, the dismissed, anarchist, tourist, atheist(because God and human Gods failed to bring about happiness here)and amethyst. The attributes put can be applicable to his home(s) on 'both sides of the globe'. It well suits to the promised land- Kashmir in that incarnates Shahid's- beloved or witness, or beloved witnesses- named as terrorists with broken arms. The poem is filled with anger , as the poetic persona criticizes the personified land for insisting him to wait for the people who find a place for tourism-enjoyment- in his dismissed land where he could not find sweetness but only the cataclysm of the destroyed mosques and prays for the death of those bringing the doomsday a little earlier than it is expected to arrive. The poem begins and ends with the apprehensions of the poetic

persona about a land of promises. He brings out the attentions of Abrahams and reminds ‘his’ descendants about the promise. This allegory the writer incorporates is the typical Biblical note, i.e. Western and by attributing the same to the Eastern a universal colour is painted for the suffering and instills the pain in the minds of the readers whether they are from Palestine, Israel, Pakistan, United states, Germany, Latin American countries or Russia. The form of melancholy and beauty i.e. ghazal is taken as a medium to represent the melancholy of the land of beauty. The typical disputes lying at the backdrop of violence is revealed through the images such as of ‘a mosque now the dust of the prejudiced land’ and of ‘a land with blind hold temples with closed eyes thinking whether their deities are stolen for an atheist land. The writer uses the very term ‘Doomsdayers’ to denote the connoisseurs of demolition. In the poem land substituted the place of the omniscient voice of the God and the individual is seeking answers to his question on the very soil where the crisis originated. So the writer, in the whirlwind of anxieties where butterflies are lost is still confident of a spring that the destroyers envy, when the prison no longer filled with the cries of the ‘midnight’s children. The writer exhorts the land not to under

estimate the love of people like him who has 'borne no children' in the land of anarchy. At this point the writer shares his thought that it is not the anarchism that he meant for freedom.

In 'Farewell' the promised land is equated with Paradise where the happiest father and mother are cursed for disobedience. The guardians of this paradise are not the angels, but the Army convoys. For them peace may be the absence of wars even if they did not study the structuralism: "They make a desolation and call it peace. /Who is the guardian tonight at the gates of the Paradise?(9-10)Freedom lies not even in their wild dreams. The mosques and temples are locked here i.e. the freedom to worship in religions is under threat. The 'you' of this poem may be the symbol of the land, the 'track' of which the poetic persona lost at a certain point. However his memory is in fact the narration of the personal history of the land, when the reflections of the temples and mosques joined hand in hand in the lake. They were complementary and supplementary like a bride and bride groom and poetic persona doubts that the land soaked saffron to pour on them to bless the union. Here also he contrasts the freedom he witnessed in the west with his own country: there 'we' move

with our doors in our hands' and windows in children's hands, but here if one switch to open it, the country will be torn in to pieces. The barbed wires enclosing the boundaries are not only closed but also guarded. The writer fears the attitude the land has inculcated towards opportunists or selfish citizens of it and expresses his feelings of acceptance of the charge of deception: "I am everything you lost. You can't forgive me. / I am everything you lost. Your perfect enemy"(29-30). The ambivalence and irony are portrayed in the line containing the extremities i.e. 'the river of hell flowing through the Paradise'. By its beauty Kashmir is a Paradise for Tourists. But to the natives because of the multifaceted trouble they encounter due to communalism, terrorism, sectarianism and some sort of civil wars going on, the river or the life preserving force, the source of water appears to be life taking i.e. anything that is expected to protect a generation whether it is Government, religion, takes the life and freedom of the believers making them anarchists.

We are inside the fire, looking for the dark,/ one unsigned card left on the street says.(25-26) when it came to the sight of the witness (Shahid). When the freedom is threatened, one is compelled to be a refugee,

when the communication is dropped one may feel to be confined, he says in 'Country without a Post Office'. Undoubtedly one is threatened to be silent or to reduce the voice representing freedom to silence with the hope of finding a direction or the reestablishing of lost benefits. The condition that led to this house imprisonment is quite evident when the poet says:

The houses were swept about like leaves
For burning. Now every night we bury
Our houses and theirs, the one left empty.

We are faithful. On their doors we hang
wreaths.(19-22)

The house, the miniature of the cultural community is walled with fire and so is the land itself. However the "fire prophets" predict rejuvenation, a phoenix like rebirth for the land. The destruction conveyed a new message of survival to the prisoners who are free- the message of autonomy. The collaborators of time will not recognize the occurrence of the footprints of the new world in the leftovers of fire. The bodily confinement is well expressed through the images such as 'foot print', 'finger print', 'fingers at the edge of

pain’, etc. The inhabitants of the land knew well that even at times they will have to evacuate the land, in future they have to return because they are tied to the land by the chains of history and heredity. Hence the land which is free outwardly has turned to be a place of confinement and by proposing certain code of conduct such as to be deaf and to be silent to listen to the authority as a “mirror”; the individual, for survival , should forfeit his freedom.

The poem ‘Snowmen’ should be read as an extension of this imprisonment because the snowmen about whom the writer speaks in the poem are not only the ancestors of Kashmiri Muslims, but also the embodiments of emancipation. They being a wandering cult the historians could sense their breath in arctic, and the Anthropologists found their Skelton out from glaciers. They came from Samarkand. But the same wandering ancestors tied the forthcoming generation to their place of permanent occupation. This truth is evident when the poetic voice says:

No, they won’t let me out of winter,
and I have promised myself ,
even if I am the last snow man,

that I will ride into spring

on their melting shoulders. (19-23)

So not merely his personal association is the factors that lead the Kashmiri to stick to the 'house and land' but the collective memories lying at the basement or buried under the snow have their own roles to be enacted. Though he is with the homeland inwardly his body cannot obey his mind's call due to practical reasons: his identity is transformed and so is the land. In order to maintain the rapport he had, he made it shrink to his mail box and thereby balances the two souls dwelling in his breast.

Agha Shahid Ali not only depicts the past of the country, but also the future of the past metaphorically. In the poem 'A Lost Memory of Delhi', he writes:

I want to tell them I am their son
older, much older than they are
I knock, keep knocking

but for them the night is quiet
this the night of my being

they don't they won't

hear me they won't hear
my knocking drowning out
the tongues of stars.(25-33)

'I', in the poem may be the Promised Land and it continuously knocks at the doors of ancestors to make it free. But the ancestors either may not be aware of the presence of their followers or they may feel his existence to be safe as he is secure inside the mother land. But the promised one seeks autonomy which is discarded in the enthusiasm of the night of union and partition of the wedding night on 14th August 1947. In "Memory of Begum Akhtar", the poet admitted the meaninglessness of the post mortem of the loss of freedom. The land is already dead, he continues:

One cannot cross-examine the dead,

but I've taken the circumstantial evidence,
your records, pictures, tapes,
and offered a careless testimony.

I wish to summon you in defence,

but the grave's damp and cold, now when
Malhar longs to stitch the rain,

wrap you in its notes: you elude
completely. The rain doesn't speak,
and life, once again, closes in,

reasserting this earth where the air
meets in a season of grief. (28-39)

The metaphorical language and the images of his nostalgia ,softened anger and grief cover the reality by displaying the omniscient feeling as purely personal. But the trauma of being deceived is opened up in plenty of subtle images. But Ali still carries the flags of hope as he clearly states in “A Pastoral”:

We shall meet again, in Srinagar,
by the gates of the Villa of Peace,
our hands blossoming into fists
till the soldiers return the keys
and disappear. Again we'll enter
our last world, the first that vanished. (1-6)

Spirituality, religion, politics, hybridity and transnationalism cultivated the vision of land in Agha Shahid Ali's poems. In addition to them a psychological pull towards the collective unconscious of his predecessors prompted him to talk about the issues related to the Kashmir conflict and to pronounce the agonies of land through poetry. The typical medium of ghazals invited the readers' attention to the tradition of Indian Islamic art and music, the dying Urdu lyrics and the rendition of that through a foreign tongue. The global significance of the territorial division is also pointed out through metaphors and images. Even amidst these conflicts the writer is still optimistic about the second birth of his country that he, through his everlasting poems of lyrical nostalgia, set the atmosphere for the abandoned tryst between his land, Kashmir, and freedom, the percept of each and every citizen of Kashmir to which the writer identifies himself.

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**The Art of Slam Poetry: Exploring
the Amalgamative Avatar of
Written Word and Performance**
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Independent Scholars

Abstract:

Performative poetry is an emerging branch of artistic expression that has found a strong foothold in this age of technology. This paper focuses on Slam Poetry, the most celebrated form of performative poetry, which is about breaking conventions and taking poesy into the world of idiosyncrasy and individuality. This paper explores how the amalgamate format of written and spoken word seen in Slam poems result in a truly immersive experience from the perspective of the audience and raises issues of mental health, bodily disorders and other taboos by kick starting conversations addressing the issues thereby making people feel and think, in order to get them actively involved in the process of problem solving. The audience are educated about the

issues through first-person accounts of those involved and affected. The audience gets to experience the life of the poet performing, the beauty of written and spoken words. The slam poems brought into focus in this paper are Bitches by Melissa Lozada, OCD by Neil Hilborn and 10 Honest Thoughts About Being Loved by A Skinny Boy by Rachel Wiley.

Keywords: Performance poetry- Slam Poetry- Latina Women- Destigmatizing mental disorders-Body positivity- Audience centric poetry- Calorically-challenged.

Poetry can be considered the oldest form of written word art. From Classical to Romantic poetry, followed by Modern and Postmodern formats- the poetic genre continues to entertain and inform our hearts and minds. Many call poetry a dying form of art in this modern technological age and choose to disregard new poets and their verse as their sensibilities remain adherent to the rigid format and rules deemed necessary during the classical age, like

metre, rhyme scheme and diction worthy of many dictionary consultations. Then again there is the majority, who do not consider written word entertaining or informative in any fashion. The age of technology and social media does provide one with the opportunity to emerge as an artist and entertain one's self and others in many ways. It has taken away the 'exclusivity' from the art world – previously afforded by only a chosen few during the age of 'Analog'. Even though it is not the most preferred method of artistic expression, poetry remains one of the most superior. Poetry has always been the form of art chosen by survivors, thinkers and rebels. In this world guided by the internet and social media, poetry has evolved into an enticing, new avatar called Slam Poetry.

This evolution of written word into a very profound form of self-expression that encompasses aspects of a stage performance wherein elements of speech and action are involved, renders slam poetry different from a poem recitation, especially given the fact that there aren't any set rules. Poetry has become more than a printed text with the advent of Slam

poetry, where the author performs the poem written in an idiolect of their own, by reading the poem out loud, accompanied by actions and pauses. Every poem performed is idiosyncratic in nature, because most of them are anecdotes or testimonials of the trauma the speaker experienced, their insecurities are laid bare as they speak from a position of vulnerability, yet every word uttered is their truth, which in turn helps the poet/speaker amass strength and communicate with the audience in an impactful manner. Poetry turns into an immersive experience in which the audience gets to see a poet in their element-acting and enunciating the words. The intonation of the poem, the pitch and volume of their speech, the pauses- all helps in setting the mood of the poem and it reaches the audience as its creator intended.

Most of the times, the audience experiences a drastic change in their perception of ‘strength’, exemplifying the goal of any form of art, which is to have one stop and think, to cause change in pre-conceived notions and help see the world differently. Most of the poets featured in the competitions of Slam Poetry are people who belong to the category of the

‘other’, those who are cornered into margins. But they have made poetry into a tool to fight from the fringes, to write and make their voice heard in the mainstream circles and assure that their ideas and objectives are seen and known. Through this process, performance poetry has evolved into an art that can be owned by anyone with genuine passion or content to be shared. The speaker isn’t required to limit themselves from using graphic imagery in the poems or censor words. Slam poetry is criticized by some aesthetes because of how radical and different the art form can be when compared to traditional written word poetry, because it comes in the guise of an informal conversation or a confrontation of sensibilities between the poet/speaker and a live audience or online viewers.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica online dictionary, Slam Poetry is a form of performance poetry that combines the elements of performance, writing, competition, and audience participation. It is performed at events called poetry slams, or simply slams. The name slam came from how the audience has the power to praise or sometimes, destroy a poem and from the high-energy performance style of the poets. These poetry slam competitions are recorded

and featured on dedicated poetry channels and websites on different social media platforms that help in promoting the poets and poetry as a whole. An excellent example for one such website is Button poetry, the site from which the poems featured in this paper are taken. One finds that there's never been a more revolutionary reform in what qualifies as art or poetry than what Slam poetry has made possible. It is the realization of what Wordsworth and Coleridge had intended to

accomplish with their Lyrical Ballads, which was to transform poetry into an art form that catered to the common-folk, which wasn't completely alien to their experiences or averse to their participation. That intention is the driving force behind Slam poems. In the advertisement at the beginning of the *Lyrical Ballads, With a few other poems*, William Wordsworth announces that the poems included in his book are experimental in nature.

What drove him into attempting something new is stated as following:

Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are

executed; it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. (Wordsworth)

The poems examined in this paper are few of the many acclaimed works in spoken word poetry that showcases the differences between traditional written word poetry and peculiarities of the art form called Slam poetry in terms of the introspective nature of the emotionally succinct language used- the syntax and symbolism, the agency it gives people in voicing their identities through art, and aiding the fight against the established norms and stigmas. People who belong to the oppressed minorities, like the differently abled, the queer belonging to the LGBTQIA+ or any who has been denied a place in this conformist society finds a platform that represents their reality, their truth and passions in the art called Slam poetry.

The poem ‘Bitches’ is written by Guatemalobian (Guatemalan-Colombian) American poet and

screenwriter Melissa Lozada-Oliva. The National Poetry Slam champion of 2015 took the stage by storm when she presented her work. It's a widely known, yet seldom acknowledged fact that men and women get treated differently in our society, which is unquestionably patriarchal in nature. It is almost an accepted norm that even if women and men possess the same qualities of assertiveness and leadership, they are assessed and addressed differently, there exists an entirely different set of vocabulary exclusively for women in this man's world. When a man becomes a 'Boss' for being strategic, convincing and a visionary, a woman becomes a 'Bitch' who is too ambitious, calculating and manipulative. The cultural disparities and viewpoints on gender norms often find expression in language and the negative connotations piling up on the word 'bitch' is a mighty example for this. Melissa starts the poem which is now included in her book *Peluda* by stating that women in her family are bitches, "The women in my family are bitches. Cranky bitches, Stuck up bitches. Customer service turned sour bitches; Can I help you? bitches. Next in line bitches"(Melissa 1-6), this statement awakens the curiosity of the audience as to why anybody would call

womenfolk in their family by a derogatory term or swear word, carrying a very negative implication.

It is refreshing to take in a distinct interpretation of the otherwise derogatory slang- 'bitch'. Throughout the poem we see women from all walks of life, who are unapologetic and proud of their essence. They are opinionated and loud, "She has my eyes, my big mouth and my fight, bitches"(Melissa 18), this line signifies how their compassion presents itself through tough love, which is why they are deemed as bitches. Also, the poem is a testament to the fact that women across the globe are treated antagonistically the moment they try to establish their self-worth instead of accepting what the society deems their worth. The poem is an act of reclaiming the power that men exert over women by calling them names whenever they cross an imaginary line. The word 'bitch', is used repeatedly in the poem as an act of confronting the world that chooses to keep women downtrodden and weak as the submissive second sex. The poem is a proclamation that if being by being a woman with her own convictions and passion, one is made into a 'bitch', then all the women I know and love are Bitches who do not require anyone's approval, who do not limit themselves by staying in the goodgrace of any man. The poem is rich with words that

shine light on the Melissa's Latin American roots and familial bond- like La fiesta, Abeulita, bendiciones etc. We see the fraternal love women have for each other, how they look out for each other in lines- "I always wear heels to La fiesta and I never take them off bitches/ You better call me when you get home okay"(Melissa 12-15). This refers to how a woman is always aware of the dangers around her, how she can be attacked in the setting of a social gathering, because this is a man's world and she should be cautious. In another sense, 'Heels' are worn by women in order to stand as tall as men, as they are equals in every right- which also makes sense when we think about the poem as a whole. The poem named *Bitches* is a testament to the truth of womanhood, how women become each other's support system, how they help another get up when they fall down, which can be a metaphor for a multitude of scenarios exemplified in Melissa's line- "Sing to the scabs on her knees when she falls down bitches"(19).

When we consider the cultural aspects behind the origin of Latin American Feminism, we witness the seeds of feminism blooming from Mexico and spreading to the Caribbean and later to the Latin American countries, from the 1800s. In the 1950s-

1970s, young women like Rosario Castellanos of Mexico, who in her academically rich work *El Eterno Feminino*, boldly brought themes of gender, sex and ethnicity to the forefront, directing the feminist movement in Mexico, demanding the establishment of feminine subjectivity that challenges the norms imposed by patriarchy. That time was also characterised by pieces of women's writings helping them navigate through the world of chaos with prose and poetry. The 1990s were of great significance as the conversion from military regimes to democratic governing bodies and the liberation of women from the age-old cultural norms as orifices obligated to carry the future generations. The complex political backdrop paved way for the evolution of multiple feminist ideas. Emergence of Neo-feminism helped in realizing the autonomy of femininity in every aspect such as body, sexuality, lifestyle and career of a woman.

The world witnessed several movements of women empowerment since then, but racism, sexism, denial of sexual freedom and blatant objectification faced by the Latinas and women around the world still exist, aiding in the process of churning out bigotry and perilous living conditions. The Latin American

feminist studies are divergent which showcases that racial heterogeneity; a result of the colonization; still pertains in the minds of people and has been fashioned into a weapon used to suppress the multi-faceted Latina women, their passionate behaviour, curvy bodies and bold choices. A Latina is often portrayed as sassy, sexy and hot-headed, which stereotyped the entire community as fiery,

erotic and provocative women who catered to the male gaze. The sexualization of Latina women, which includes sexualizing comments, body exposure, self-sexualizing physical activities and the verbal/physical objectification in media has severe consequences on the mental health of women, especially young girls who are more prone to developing eating disorders to prevent turning in to curvy figures, which creates low self-esteem issues. In the journal *Sexualization in U.S. Latina and White Girls' Preferred Children's Television Programs* the researchers conducted a study on the effect of television programs on young Latina and white girls and they state that:

Young girls' identities are shaped in part by the messages they receive, through media and society, on what it means to be a teenager or woman.

When society's messages typically portray women or girls in sexualized manners, children and adults exposed to these communications will internalize the conceptualization of women as sexualized beings and develop outcome expectancies (e.g., relationship or sexual expectations) based on these perceptions. (Montez, Wallander and Cameron 2).

But that isn't the entirety of what a Latina woman embodies and Melissa's *Bitches* is an intense reply to the all the years of mistreatment and degradation of Latina women, who are reduced to sparkly objects, trophy wives and good times in the mainstream media.

Melissa verifies that Latinas are strong, non-complaint, layered women who contribute to their community and watch out for each other in the lines- "The vengeful, violent, pissed, prissed, and polished, lipstick stained on an envelope, I'll be damned if I'm compliant bitches"(22-27). These women are proud of their heritage and their roles as bread-winners, boss, friend, sister, mother and partner, along with all other roles they opt for. In the poem, the term 'bitch' takes up an entirely different meaning, encompassing all

spectrums of women, owning and empowering that word with the female narrative.

Crazy, Insane, Loony, Depressed, Psychiatric, Disabled, Screw loose, Mad, Unpredictable, and Demented- More than 250 such labels are used per annum to describe the people with mental disorders and none of them holds any sympathy for the affected. The wholesome life of a human has always been attributed to the physical well-being rather than a healthy combination of both physical and mental welfare. The mental disorders that has been discussed in popular media and literature are Phobias, OCD, Bipolar, eating disorders, anxiety, PTSD, clinical-depression and Schizophrenia. These were once considered taboo topics, unacceptable themes to base art on. In Greek tragedies like *Ajax* by Sophocles and *Heracles* by Euripides we see traces of mental illness as the characters slowly descend in to madness, but more than often these works described mental illness as a punishment or a dishonourable condition suffered by sinners. The stigma and shame attached to the word ‘mental disorder’ has resulted in the formation of an unsafe environment for those seeking help and has

single-handedly diminished their hopes. Many considered mental disorders as conditions caused by supernatural forces and buried it under the veil of superstitions, the importance of mental health and the need for proper treatments for those suffering were forgotten.

While diagnoses were recognized as far back as the Greeks, it was not until 1883 that German psychiatrist Emil Kräpelin (1856–1926) published a comprehensive system of psychological disorders that centered around a pattern of symptoms (i.e., syndrome) suggestive of an underlying physiological cause. Other clinicians also suggested popular classification systems but the need for a single, shared system paved the way for the American Psychiatric Association's 1952 publication of the first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM). (Farreras).

In this poem titled *OCD*, Neil Hilborn, the celebrated author of the book- *Our Numbered Days*, shares his heart-breaking love story about two very different people- who grew apart when their relationship met with a breaking point due to his

mental disorder termed obsessive-compulsive disorder. This is an umbrella term that refers to symptoms such as bodily preoccupation, impulse control and neurological disorders. The repetitive phrases in his poem, which might not make sense to a reader unfamiliar with the terrain of OCD, commands our attention and bring focus to the emotions the channeled in the poem. The characteristics that are intrinsic to his mental disorder along with the frustration and burden of being affected, of being different gets unveiled through his words. This poem is orated in such a substantial manner, the tone of the speaker/poet, his unguarded expressions and unshielded speech encloses the voice of a community who are treated with hostility due to the existing stigmas about mental disorders, though the patients hold no responsibility for it. The cause and consequences of the disorder goes beyond them. Neil begins the poem by describing the first time he saw his beloved, that someone who could untangle his mind from all the nagging thoughts inside his head, “The first time I saw her, everything in my head went quiet. All the tics, all the constantly refreshing images just disappeared. When you have obsessive

compulsive disorder, you don't really get quiet moments(1-5)". He's mesmerized by how the voices in his head became quiet at the sight of her, which was a novel experience for him. He narrates how even the simplest tasks like washing hands or locking doors were burdensome for him because of OCD. But the first sight drew him to the beauty and the minute details about the lady and he tries to court her, asking her out again and again until the proposal sounds perfect to him, even though he manages to communicate his intention and his beloved gives him a positive reply within the first few tries (16-18). His regret is evident as he explains how the first date, he planned with her was spent colour coding the meal rather than engaging in a conversation or eating. His habit of turning all the lights on and off for a number of times is realistically portrayed-"At night, she'd lay in bed and watch me turn all the lights off. And on, and off, and on, and off, and on, and off"(27-32). The lady accepts all his quirks and habits that are by-products of his mental disorder at the beginning of their relationship, but slowly she finds herself unable to tolerate his quirks and different way of seeing the world. She can no longer find comfort in his peculiar

behaviour and starts considering his obsessions and ways, a waste of her time.

The shocking reality of people living with mental disorders is revealed at this point. Even the people closest to them cannot understand the entirety of their underlying thought process. When the lady leaves him and informs him that the relationship was a mistake, we see the pain of the speaker in the line; “How can it be a mistake that I don't have to wash my hands after I touched her?” (39-41). The way he poses this question reflects the logic behind his sadness at the devastating loss of the only person whom he could love dearly and bear to touch without any inhibitions, because he is a germaphobe with compulsions who finds it hard to connect with anyone. The way he phrases his love story, using anecdotes of his repetitive actions and questions help us see that the way he sees the world is different, but that he is also human, just like the rest of his fellow beings, that he too has demons that need to be silenced. His poem read out aloud isn't necessarily a performance, but that is Neil just being himself, and that truthful delivery of words

help the audience/reader take in the harsh realities of living with mental disorders like OCD. In the end he doesn't know who she's spending her time with and it frustrates him endlessly that his former beloved may not be showered with kisses that are perfect. It is grief that makes him decide to leave the lights on and the doors unlocked, because he hopes that she will find her way back to him. "Now, I just think about who else is kissing her. I can't breathe because he only kisses her once, he doesn't care if it's perfect! I want her back so bad; I leave the door unlocked; I leave the lights on"(50-56), these lines are truly heart wrenching when we think about it from Neil's perspective. The audience might find this to be some of the simpler things considered as normal chores but for a person with OCD, this can be one of the hardest things to do. This shows the honesty and vulnerability of the speaker, who finds the will to combat his compulsions, because that is how important love is to him.

OCD is a poem that creates awareness on mental health and mental disorders, topics usually frowned upon by the society. The onstage oration

brought forth tangible emotions about reaching the state of loathing oneself due to inability to perform even the smallest tasks and accept their own lack of power. It is important to educate the masses about the mental disorders and inculcate empathy instead of hate speech, violence and bullying against individuals with such conditions. The poem was very influential and encouraged a lot of people to come forward in order to erase the shame associated with the disorder. Discussing mental health and mental disorders openly on mainstream media platforms is empowering and it is not something we see done enough through conventional art, but Slam poetry becomes a haven for all those looking for solace, acceptance and family inside words.

10 Honest Thoughts about being loved by a Skinny Boy by Rachel Wiley, the author of the poetry collection called *Nothing is Okay*, is a poem about the social life of a fat girl and a skinny guy who are a couple. This combination is quite foreign to the society we live in because they treat people only as labels divided. Rachel begins the poem with “I say I am fat. He says ‘No, you are beautiful/I wonder why I cannot be both’”(1-4). My college theater professor once told

me that despite my talent, I would never be cast as a romantic lead”(5-7). These lines showcase the different treatment people receive according to how much they conform to the unrealistic beauty standards of the society. The world we live in has very unnatural standards of beauty for women. To be considered beautiful a woman needs to be thin and have a sculpted figure with curves in all the right places. Such notions that are born from the male gaze, constantly fed by the media and fashion industry results in severe mental disorders like Body dysmorphia, Anorexia, Bulimia etc. Rachel depicts the shame she was subjected to as someone who is not considered appealing through this line, “but apparently no one has enough willing suspension of disbelief to go with anyone loving a fat girl”(8-9). Young girls grow up thinking they need to have certain body proportions to deserve love or attention or care, and if one by chance is obese, she is regarded unworthy of attaining anything good, in the eyes of the public which is depicted through - “The phrase ‘Big girls need love too’ can die in a fire. Fucking me does not require an asterisk. Loving me is not a fetish. Finding me beautiful is not a novelty”(Rachel 30-34). But Rachel is trying to

straighten out the trends that refuse to treat fat people as normal human beings, using concepts of body positivity. She tries to express the importance of self-love as well. She announces boldly that fat people are human beings just like the rest of the society who aren't calorically-challenged otherwise called "fit and proper". The idea that people labeled obese also deserve love and understanding just like others is acknowledged here.

The poem is a quite self-explanatory and leaves little unsaid about the bitter truths of how this world harbors biases against obese people, and refuses to treat them with basic respect and courtesy. The title of the poem draws attention to the crux of the message Rachel hopes to convey to her audience i.e., a fat woman is loved dearly by a skinny boy, who sees her worth and beauty. This concept alone may seem far-fetched to some very narrow-minded people in our society who believe that beauty is defined by an hour glass figure and perfectly sharp features. For a "normal" sized guy to find a fat girl attractive and find happiness in that relationship, is a scenario that seems too good to be true. Rachel admits that she searched for an ulterior motive on her

beloved's part, expected her to be a punchline in an elaborate joke he may be playing, even after being together for a long time. She says that she finds herself doubting her self-worth and beauty because of the unrealistic beauty standards propagated by mainstream media.

Rachel inadvertently says that such unattainable beauty concepts add to her stress and creates a mind space that is exceedingly negative about herself in the lines; "On the mornings I do not feel pretty, while he is still asleep, I sit on the floor and check the pockets of his skinny jeans for motive, for a punchline, for other girls' phone numbers/

When we hold hands in public, I wonder if he notices the stares- like he is handling a parade balloon down a crowded sidewalk. I wonder if he notices how my hands are made of rope"(11-19). Whenever obese or fat people are given any attention, it is called charity by many, just the representation of a novelty case in the mainstream. Their talent and personality are lost behind their being fat and they aren't anything more than their fat bodies in social circles. Rachel paints out how 'fat' and 'beautiful' are mutually exclusive ideas to this world, and all the insecurities that disparity

breeds. The most touching line from the poem is perhaps- “He tells me he loves me with lights on”(Rachel 24), this line lays bare the harsh reality behind many fat-skinny couples, or just people who aren’t confident about their bodies. More than often in many such relationships, the intimate moments are cursed to an existence in darkness, because most partners who get into relationships with calorically-challenged people refuse to completely accept their partner’s fat body even when they find them great otherwise. They can only tolerate their partner’s physicality when they do not have to look at them. In light, their differences become all the more evident, such a mentality is seen in people who are still ignorant, such people deserve being called true hypocrites. The lines “I can cup his hip bones in palms of my hands, feel his ribs without pressing very hard at all, sip wine from his collarbones. He doesn’t believe me when I tell him he is beautiful. Sometimes I fear the day he does is the day he leaves” (Rachel 25-29), exposes the other end of the calorically-challenged spectrum, which represents the skinny folks. Like fat people, skinny people are also judged and considered weak or juvenile.

Rachel's beloved refuses to believe his self-worth, just like her. They are a couple who consider each other beautiful, but are incapable of finding beauty within, all because of the toxic beauty standards that exist in this world. This poem is a proclamation that all boundaries are trivial before love.

All of these poems are ripe with emotions and truth that propels them, making it evident that Slam poems aren't a subpar form of poetry, but it is the way forward. The popularity and participation, spoken word poetry has garnered makes it clear that art evolves to suit the contemporary ways of life, since art is a reflection of life and life has never been presented as raw and real as in Slam poetry. As G.K. Chesterton opined, "What the world wants, what the world is waiting for, is not Modern Poetry or Classical Poetry or Neoclassical Poetry- but Good Poetry", which is exactly what spoken word poetry represents in all its honesty and integrity. It's the way forward for words unbridled and a world united.

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The Concept of Melancholy in Romantic Literature: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

It is an established fact that the seeds of Romantic melancholy also resides in the Graveyard School of poetry where Thomas Gray and William Collins contributed to a large extent to the same instinct of melancholy. With the same kind of melancholic spirit, on the other hand, the Romantic melancholy is of its own kind which has its genesis in the moments of depression inherent in almost every optimistic philosophy of the presence of God contrary to the pessimistic Idea presented by Hardy

Key-words: Melancholy, nostalgia, depression, disillusionment, seeds, spirit.

It goes without saying that melancholy is of a typical trait embodied in the poetry of Romantic period. The

Romantic literature is full of melancholy spirit as we find in the poetry of S.T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth, P.B. Shelley and John Keats which was the direct result of many factors-personal and impersonal. Beside some personal factors such as ill health, unhappy conjugal life and social ostracisation, most of the Romantic poets were led to occasional fits of melancholy which was inherent in their creed. Their Romantic attitude towards life was responsible for their wavering nature as they find themselves dwindling between hope and despair.

All the romantics are generally hailed as optimist, and like other optimists, tennis they fell into the moment of despair. It is beyond any doubt that Romantic melancholy is entirely different from that of melancholy spirit present in the works of Thomas Hardy or Sir Thomas Browne. Hardy, being a typical victim of Victorian age, was melancholic to the core that it leads to excessive pessimism in his life. His pessimism is mainly connected with his deterministic conception of the universe as in one of his poems he asserts

God is not in his heaven

All is not right with the world

which is essentially a pessimistic idea. On the other hand, there were Romantic poets who, like Robert Browning, preached the message of optimism as follow:

God is in his heaven

All is right with the world

Taking into consideration the melancholy of Sir Thomas Browne, it has its roots in subjective origin and was the direct result of subjects of decay, destruction and fatality dealt by him in his works. He was in league with the 18th century writers belonging to the Gothic school of fiction from where he borrowed the macabre imagination of Horace Walpole and Mrs, Anne Radcliffe imagination which always encouraged him to write his best.

It goes without saying that like Thomas Hardy who was pessimistic to the core, but quite contrary to him, the romantics were essentially optimist. Their pessimism was the result of numerous factors in which two factors largely and greatly contributed in this direction- first, all the Romantics were unable to bridge the gap between the

world of reality and their imaginative world in which they were residing; second, they found their visionary project not compatible with the materialization. In such situations, the melancholic spirit is the natural phenomena during the occasion when they came to be realised about that feasibility they will not be able to fulfill their Romantic ideals.

Of all the Romantics, William Wordsworth was least affected by pessimism or melancholy. The main reason behind that was he never found himself or thought of the state of loneliness or alienation. He made the ever consoling Nature and his sister as his companion, in and their company, he felt joy.

The melancholy strain that we perceive in Wordsworth's poetry was a direct result of some political factors rampant during his time. It is a well-known fact that both Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge were profoundly influenced by the tenants of French Revolution-equality, liberty and fraternity. French Revolution was also responsible for stirring the whole Europe to its depth. He was the first to feel the impact of French Revolution and

found the idea of fraternity, equality and liberty in conformity with his own ideals, and was cherished and exposed while living in Cumberland.

Moreover, he lived in a society that was based on democratic values as he witnessed a note of equality and fraternity in the lives of the rustic people in his area. So, he found these ideals in which he had been reared and brought up. In his famous volume, *The Prelude* Book-IX, we come across an atmosphere of brotherhood when he was in Cambridge:

We were brothers all

In honour as in one community

Scholars and good gentlemen

French Revolution was accepted and hailed with enthusiasm as Walter Raleigh says in this connection: "The revolution, in its early phases, involved no revolution in Wordsworth's mental life, it was also because the ideals that were held so dear to the poet were proclaimed anew in France. That was the main reason

why Wordsworth was enthusiastic about this event as he wrote in Prelude:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very heaven

In a passionate zeal and exuberance, the poet was accepting the end of the tyranny and cruelty as the French Revolution was heralding the new era of peace, equality and brotherhood of mankind. It was like a new promise for a glorious age in the life of human beings all over Europe:

Europe at time was thrilled with joy
France standing on the path of golden hours
And human nature seeming burn again

In that situation, William Wordsworth was full of all praise and applause for this event and in the fits of passion, he visited France in 1790 and found how the wave of enthusiasm was sweeping over the minds and hearts of people, and he was also mesmerised by

Songs, garlands, mirth
Banners, and happy faces, far and high.

In his volume of poetry, *Excursion*, the poet has explored new vistas to be brought about by this revolution as he asserts:

But now
To the wide world's astonishment appeared
A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn
That promised everlasting joy to France
But, quite contrary to the aspirations and expectations of Wordsworth, his second visit of France in 1791 gave a big setback to the poet as new you as he was deeply moved by the miserable and pitiful situation of French people. In this way, Wordsworth's melancholic nature was the direct result of the failure of French Revolution. With its failure, all the hopes of getting a democratic atmosphere and equality in all sphere of life were completely dashed to the ground.

But, this did not shatter Wordsworth's faith in the ideals of equality and liberty. He derived consolation from William Godwin's book, *Political Justice*. He deflected from the path of politics and turned to Nature in its pristine glory that he explored through his poetry. Nature was now the healing power that acted as a comforting balm for the poet as he wrote about the humble Dalesman of Cumberland, the simple and common life lived by the peasants restored his faith in the basic goodness of human life. Moreover, he was profusely indebted to his sister, Dorothy who helped him to restore his shattered faith in the welfare of man.

So, if we neglect the political phase of Wordsworth's life related to the French Revolution, we find him as a staunch optimist who believed and also felt that nature provides human beings with comfort and relief, and can heal the spiritual wounds of humanity. Like Crabbe, he was much conscious of the suffering of the rustic people living in the countryside, and he was an incorrigible optimist in that direction. In his most celebrated poem, *Michael*, Wordsworth conveys the painful idea that love sustains :

There is a comfort in the strength of love
Which makes a thing endurable, which else
Will oversee the brain or break the heart.

Even in his elegiac pieces, we come across
Wordsworth's optimism as we find in his elegiac stanzas

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights, of what is to be borne!
Such sights or worse, as are before me here,
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

But, if we come across at many occasions, we find how
the poet expresses the idea that misfortunes are an integral
part of human life. With his maturity, he got awareness as
he as the readers find in *Tintern Abbey*

For I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times
The still, sad music of humanity.

There is no doubt in denying the fact that even
Wordsworth's mysticism is also not deprived of the

subdue element of melancholy. With the failure of the French Revolution that inevitably led to the reign of terror and the rise of Napoleon, his interest in the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality faded rapidly. He concluded that the Revolution was not a natural but man-made which drove him straight away to the lap of nature as is evident through *Resolution and Independence*, in which momentary mood of melancholy can be seen visiting as he expresses in the following lines:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!

Totally engrossed in her personal life too, Wordsworth suffered from the pangs of melancholy strain as he had not a fruitful relationship with French girl, Annette Velon, but his poetry bears no testimony to the expression of melancholy bred purely by subjective causes.

S.T. Coleridge, one of the leading and major poets of Romantic period, also felt the same political impact on his poetry. Because he could not find the same healing power and consolation from nature and, that is why, he was more

melancholic in comparison to Wordsworth. In the beginning, both Coleridge and Wordsworth started with the same conviction that nature did never betray the heart that loved her, but with the passage of time, this idea stop dominating S.T. Coleridge poetry as an ailment of the spiritual wounds.

His poem, *Ode to Dejection* is a powerful illustration of the idea which is contradictory to Wordsworthian ideology. He does not thinks that nature as a spirit capable of leading even the most cheerless man to a heaven of joy, but which is considered as external by him, that means, a reflection of one of two feelings with enjoy your sorrow as he says:

O Lady! -we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live;
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud.

The feeling of cheerfulness is present or absent in a man depends on his or her angle of perception as he says:

I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within

He found that this passion and life has no connection with nature or anything that is external, rather he found it internal

We in ourselves rejoice!

And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight;

All melodies the echoes of that voice,

All colours a suffusion from mat Light.

A close and minute analysis of S.T Coleridge poetry reflects him to be a victim of spell that lasted for a long time or longer than expected or usual. The feeling of melancholy that one perceives in his poetry was the darkest born out of a feeling of guilt and from the persistent worry or distressing consciousness of the approaching demise of always certain poetic inspiration. He was totally addicted to opium and lived alternatively in the Arabian Nights world of utter despair and despondency fast approaching with its cruel jaws wide open. His poem *Ode to Dejection* is a soul rending lamentation for the dead and decaying in the end of his poetic talent. The effect of this composition by Coleridge was that his rest of masterpieces including *Kubla Khan*,

Christabel, and *The Ancient Mariner* were only the works where only a mental wreck remained behind.

There is no doubt in denying the fact that P.B. Shelley has been hailed as a Romantic dreamer. He had a vision of golden future which he believed that would arrive sooner or later. All his longer poems, including *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and *Queen Mab* are replete with optimistic ideology which makes light of all the conceivable hurdles. In these poems, the readers do not witness any pessimism, melancholy, disillusionment and skepticism.

But, without any shadow of doubt, Shelley's lyrics are marked with the note of melancholy and despair. Shelley, no doubt, when writes about the regeneration of humanity, he is full of optimistic zeal and very much sure of transformation. On the other hand, when he deals with his personal life, he writes in the most pessimistic vein representing himself to a victim of social traditions and circumstances. The picture delineated by the poet of his personal life is a man fallen upon his evil days and subject

to the worst suffering to which men can be subjected in his life.

In his two remarkable lyrics, Shelley has portrayed himself two different images. He presents himself an extremely pessimistic in his poem, *Alastor* when he says:

There was a poet whose untimely tomb
No human hand with pious reverence tomb
Breathed over his dark fate on melodious sigh
He lived, he died, he sung in solitude.

In this way, Shelley's personal lyrics are almost invariably melancholic in their predominant tone where the poet can be found lamenting and complaining as he says in one of his short lyrics *O World! O Life! O time!* Which is full of a sense of emptiness, the poet feels in his life:

O World! O Life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb'
Trembling at that where I had
stood before

When will return the glory of your
prime?

In his lyric, *Adonis*, the poet presents himself to be a gloomy and sad figure as he points out while describing it:

Midst others of less note came one frail form
A Phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its Knell

In this way, melancholy is the dominant note that we perceive in his poetry as the mood of despair and sadness overpowering his life. In his lyric, *Stanzas Written in Dejection near Naples*, we find piercing feelings of disappointment and sorrow emerging from the poet's heart when he exclaims:

Alas! I have nor hope nor health
Nor peace within nor calm around
.....
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor

Others I see whom these surrounds-
Smiling they live and call life
pleasure

Ian Jack rightly points out in this direction when he says:
“Shelley’s lyrics are the utterance of a solitary. These
lyrics are soliloquies not dramatic monologues.”

Shelley’s well-known and famous lyric, *Ode to the West
Wind* is an amalgamation of the two contradictory moods-
the optimism and pessimism. On the one hand, it strikes a
note of hope about the regeneration of future of mankind;
on the other hand, It portrays his own personal life full of
sorrows and suffering as he say

Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud

I fall upon the thorns of life I bleed

A heavy weight of hours had chained and bowed

One too like thee, tameless, and swift, and proud
What can be more melancholic than the desire of death
that is frequently repeated by Shelley in a more poignant
way that then Keats could express, in one of his most
celebrated lyrics, *Stanzas Written in Dejection near*

Naples in which the poet explores the feelings for death in a touching and melancholic manner when he says:

I could not lie down like a tired child
And weep away this life of care
Which I have born and yet must bear
Till death like sleep might steel on me

In this way, a closed and minute study of Shelley's lyrics- both personal and impersonal- reveals that his pessimism and despair did not emerge from any personal disappointment, but it was embodied of his temperament. Shelley's earlier works are imbued with a note of idealism as sadness and melancholy overwhelmed him whenever actual and the real forced itself upon his consciousness, and he realised the unrest between his vision and the reality.

So, without any shadow of doubt, Shelley's longer poems and his lyrics reflect the poet's two contradictory and opposite moods- optimism and pessimism respectively.

Ian Jack rightly and aptly says in this connection: “there is no basic contradiction between these two moods. Shelley was optimistic about the future of the human race, pessimistic about his own future as an individual. Being the most directly personal of all his poems, his short lyrics are full of rapture and disappointment, mental grief and piercing cry.

Religion has been described as what man makes of his solitude: the same description might be applied to Shelley’s lyrics. As Mary Shelley pointed out, “It is the nature of that poetry...which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow, and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.”

At times Shelley’s melancholy arises from objective observation rather than personal feelings. A good example is to be found in *To a Skylark*:

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not.

Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that
tell of saddest thought.

John Keats belongs to the younger generation of Romantic poets. In his poetry, we can witness a strong streak of melancholic spirit and sadness that can be seen running through. Some personal factors like ill health of the poet contributed a lot in shaping the melancholic spirit of the poet who died at the age of 26. In his poetry, one finds a strong undercurrent of realism as he deals with the reality of life as the theme of transience versus permanence in one of the recurrent themes in Keats' poetry.

Without any shadow of doubt, in comparison to other Romantics, Keats was an escapist who searched spiritual satisfaction in the Romantic draped Middle Ages in the Greek culture. He found these places as a land of ideal beauty and could not tolerate any close contact with the harsh reality of the world. Suffering from tuberculosis

was the important and vital factor for the melancholic nature of Keats as he was very much conscious of the impending death that was approaching to him slowly and gradually. In his Sonnet, When I Have Fear that I May Cease to Be time is a powerful exploration of the poet's deep rooted melancholy expressed in the last two lines of the Sonnet which are highly melancholic as the poet rises from the particular to the universal and places his tragedy against the background of eternity as he says in this connection

Of the wide world I stand alone, and think

Till love and fame to nothingness do sink

These lines are absorbed in sadness, of regret, of immense power frustrated by death. The rich images make the poem as the transmutation of personal grief into the general tragedy of human existence.

Keats remained untouched by the idea of the Revolution which filled the atmosphere of Europe at the time; at least from his poetry we do not find any indication of his interest in the Revolution. Though the contemporary

effects of history have not left any impression on his poetry, he deeply realised and expressed in his poetry the fundamental truths of life. Keats was a pure poet and would not allow any extraneous things like politics or morality related to disturb the pure waters of poetry. And, poetry is the expression of poet's own experience of life. Keats as he developed mentally and spiritually- and his development was very rapid- was searching for truth in his soul. The earlier hankering for the word of Flora and Pan- for unreflecting enjoyment of sensuous delights- is past; he now subjected himself persistently and unflinchingly to life. He faced life with all uncertainty and contradictions, its sorrows and Joys as he says himself:

Joy whose hand is ever at his lip

Bidding adieu

Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes

Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

In John Keats' poetry, melancholy arises from transient of joy and joy is transient by its nature. Therefore, Keats

accepts life as a whole- with its joy and beauty as well as its pain and despair. It is this alteration of joy and pain, light and shadow, that gives life its harmony, his is the truth of life-and truth is beauty. This acceptance of life- this triumph over display attained through deep spiritual experience is expressed most forcibly in his Ode on a Grecian Urn when the poet says:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st
Beauty is truth, truth beauty?" that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.

Keats' negative capability was also the direct result of his melancholic and sad nature as we find the poet always in doubt and uncertainty is which is evident through her his poetry in general, and odes in particular. Keats' poem *Ode on Melancholy* was inspired from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* as well as Milton's poem, *Il Penseroso*. It is full of his idea of melancholy which with Keats is a rare

emotion, delicate, refined and exalted. The poet says that we cannot experience it by associating ourselves with bloom, sadness and death, but with our contact with the joyful and beautiful things in the world.

The present ode is a powerful illustration of Keats' idea what we should not do, if we want to have a taste of true melancholy. We should not deaden our soul with liberal doses of sadness which will make us totally forgetful of the tender pain of melancholy. For that, we should neither extract for drinking the juice of poisonous plant, aconite nor bind our pale forehead with a poisonous plant, nightshade.

Keats explores all-pervading nature of melancholy in human life. it does not reside in sad and ugly things of life, but in joyous and beautiful objects of our earthly existence. it is in vain if we try to search melancholy in dark and sober aspect of things because

Shade to shade will come to drowsily

And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul

Melancholy springs from the transience of beauty and joy, and exalted, which none can experience save him who has tasted delight as the poet points out:

.....save him whose strenuous tongue

Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine

In this way, a close and incisive study of all the romantic poets reveals the fact that most of romantics were led by occasional fits of melancholia because they could not adjust themselves with the prevailing reality of the society. Their temperament was also responsible for not bridging up the gap between their imaginative world and the real world. Some personal factors like ill health and unhappy conjugal life also played a significant and vital role in shaping their temperament. They were living in their own world which they created in their imagination.

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**Poetic Expressions of Resistance; A Study on
Malappuram Padappattu (1883) by
Moyinkutty Vaidyar**

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Abstract

Struggles against oppressive powers have produced ample amount of literary expressions that articulate the historical, cultural and political parameters of those struggles which are overlooked by dominant discourses. The imperialist domination of the West and the national liberation struggles against these domineering forces kindled verses of resistance around the globe. This paper focuses on the war-poetry, Padappattu, of Mappilas, the minority Muslim community of Malabar, which inspired the illiterate common Mappila folk to resist the colonial tactics of the British and the oppressive measures of the

feudal lords. The composition of Padappattu escalated in the nineteenth century in proportion with the number of uprisings in Malabar against the colonial regime. British officials banned the circulation of numerous Mappila songs which motivated Mappilas to fight against British men, fearless of death. Cheroor Padappattu (1845), co-authored by Muhammedkutty and Muhayyudheen and Malappuram Padappattu (1883) composed by MoyinkuttyVaidyar constitute two striking poetic expressions of resistance which narrate the local conflicts between Mappilas and the British. Malappuram Padappattu verbalizes the agrarian revolt of Mappilas against the aristocratic feudal lords who tyrannized the minority Mappila community and threatened to demolish their mosque. The British government tried to exploit this hostile situation, and through this poem Vaidyardivulges the treachery of colonial masters and stresses on the significance of Mappila-Hindu harmony to battle the imperialist powers. This paper discerns the ways in which Padappattu resists the dominant colonial discourses and opposes political and social alienation.

Keywords: Resistance poetry, Mappila, Padappattu, Imperialism, Liberation struggles.

Literature, which necessitates resistance to threatening powers of society and born out of social injustice and political marginalization establish resistance literature. Barbara Harlow, in her seminal study *Resistance Literature* (1987), which inspects the literary products of the third world during national liberation struggles, observes that the term ‘resistance’ was first applied in a description of Palestinian literature by the Palestinian writer and critic Ghassan Kanafani in his work *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966*. In her study, Harlow stresses on the significance of investigating the literature produced during struggles for liberation as literature and poets have an articulated role “within the struggle alongside the gun, the pamphlet, and the diplomatic delegation” (xvii).

Harlow observes that poetry always played a crucial role during the time of liberation struggles, specifically in domains where Western Europe

and North America have sought socio-economic control and cultural domination, “both as a force for mobilizing a collective response to occupation and domination and as a repository for popular memory and consciousness” (34). The poems of Nicolas Guillen, the Cuban poet and participant of Cuba’s national liberation; the Cape Verdean writer Onesimo Silveira; Jorge Rebelo, a member of the Mozambican national liberation organization FRELIMO; the resistance poet from El Salvador, Roque Dalton; the South African poet, A. N. C Kumalo; Balach Khan of Baluchistan, a member of the Baluch People’s Liberation Front and the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish represent a few among the eminent poets of resistance investigated by Harlow, and she concludes that these resistance poets “acclaim and herald the possibilities inherent in the separate and collective liberation struggles for transforming the historical record” (72).

Centuries of colonial oppression and freedom struggles in India have emitted a substantial corpus of resistance literature, both narrative and poetic, and spans

across the linguistic boundaries of the nation. Plenty of the struggles advanced from the marginalized sessions of society have been denied its significance and national character in the dominant historical discourses. Their poetic works, which vocalized the political, ideological, and cultural dynamics of these struggles, and marked resistance against the colonizers, encountered alienation by characterizing those artistic expressions as country or folk literature, and neglected by academic intelligentsia. Maina wa Kinyatti, the Kenyan historian who documented English translations of 102 patriotic poems associated with Kenyan Mau Mau movement, concludes his preface to the collection *Thunder from the Mountains; Mau Mau Patriotic Songs*, by asserting that the “main objective in translating these songs is to let them answer the anti-Mau Mau Kenyan intellectuals and their imperialist masters who until now, continue to deny the movement’s national character” (x). The Mau Mau movement, armed agrarian revolt against the policies of British colonial state and its supporters, was suppressed by the British and concluded as irrational and primitive

savagery, even though it was motivated by economic and political causes and aimed to liberate their country from foreign clutches. It exemplifies the colonial agenda of conceding resistance from the part of natives and ethnic groups as organized criminal enterprise. The songs collected by Kinyattiaid in excavating deeper in to Mau Mau history and its political objectives.

Similarly, various resistance movements opposing the British imperialism and local feudalism, by the indigenous Muslim community of Malabar, Mappilasⁱ especially in the nineteenth century, had been suppressed, and colonial historians framed these struggles as emotive uprisings channeled by uncouth savage Mappilas. The age-old mercantile interactions between Malabar, the west coast of Arabian Sea in the northern part of Kerala, and Arabia resulted in the emergence of the minority ethnic Muslim group - Mappila community. Mappilas comprise all the progenies out of conjugal relation between Arabs and the local women, and the converts who embraced Islam and monotheistic faith to escape Brahminical prejudices.

Mappilas fashioned a specific type of poetry called *Mappilapattu*ⁱⁱ or Mappila song employing a unique script known as Arabi-Malayalam- Malayalam words encrypted using Arabic letters. A vital element that motivated Mappilas to fight, devoid of trepidation, against powers mightier than their troops is a particular sort of poetry they composed during this period, called *Padappattu*- Mappila war-songs, a sub-genre of *Mappilapattu*, explicitly dealing with wars, both Islamic historical wars of the Prophet and the local wars of Mappilas. Even the language deployed by the writers to compose proclaims a political statement and has significance in the analysis of resistance literature as the dominators were imposing their language and culture on the ‘uncivilized’ natives. Native linguistic expressions were relegated to secondary position and classified as primitive, and sub-national artistic articulations and discursive systems were threatened and alienated. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, who advocates the linguistic decolonization of colonized nations, in his book *Decolonising the Mind; The Politics of Language in African Literature*,

acknowledges that “[t]he choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.”

(4). Malayalam is the prominent local language of the region and Sanskrit, the classical language of the upper caste with strong literary tradition; colonial masters introduced English to this arena. Mappilas, shaped their own language - Mappila Malayalam- a dialectic variant of Malayalam with unique words and expressions along with loan words from Arabic, Persian, Urdu etc., which expressed their amalgamated identity as well as articulated their difference with dominant cultural traditions. The language of *Padappattu* itself manifests resistance against the anglophone domination and the linguistic and literary prominence bestowed to hegemonic Sanskrit both during Aryan invasion (1500 BCE) and colonial occupation.

The political and cultural invasion by the West, particularly Portuguese, inaugurated with the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498, itself was resisted by

Mappilas, and war poetries like *ThahreelAhlilIman Ala Jihadi Abadathissulban* and *Fathhulmubeen* ideologically fueled these confrontations. Poems describing the valor and heroism of martyrs who battled Portuguese invaders were composed and *Kunjimarakkar Shaheed* (1501) and *Chaliyampada* (1571) are notable contributions of this phase. Afterwards, with the retreat of Portuguese; Dutch, French and later British invaders advanced towards colonial invasion and occupation. Tumultuous nineteenth century, hostile to peasants and lower caste/class, as the British and feudal landlords allied in abusing authority, witnessed proliferation of *Padappattu*, and it is no wonder because numerous revolts ensued throughout Malabar during this period. Malappuram (1834), Panthaloore (1836, 1898), Mankada Pallipuram (1841), Muttyara (1842), Cheroree (1843), Pandikkad (1843), Manjeri (1849, 1896), Angadippuram (1894), Kulathore (1851), Kottayam (Thalasseri- 1851), Parol (1865), Thootha (1873), Melattoore (1880), Melmuri (1884), Mannarkkad (1894) and Chembrasseri (1896) constitute the major uprisings of this epoch. Obviously,

many of these revolts took place even before the documented first war of Indian independence in 1857. A P Muhammed remarks that, it is humiliating to teach that the Indian freedom struggle began after the demise of great Veliyamkod Umar Qasi (1765-1852), chief among the leaders who battled against the imperialistic policies of British (263)ⁱⁱⁱ.

As mentioned earlier, the classical Arabian wars and the local uprisings against feudal lords and the British thematically energized *Padappattu*. *BadrPada*, *UhdPada*, *Futhhusham*, *MakkamFathh*, *KhanthakPada*, *KhaibarPada*, *HunainPada*, *Karbala Pada* and so forth, even though dealt with Islamic historical wars, the contextualized verses in the backdrop of exploitation and oppressive measures, provided Mappilas with determination, audacity and ideology to fight colonial motives. Further, native revolutions materialized at Malappuram, Omanur, Cheror, Mannarkkad and Manjeri against landlordism and British power politics thematically invigorated *Padappattu* that celebrated regional revolts. *Cheror Padappattu*(1845) jointly

written by Muhammedkutty and Muhayyudheen, popular among these, vocalizes the battle fought against the fifth battalion of Madras regiment of English East India Company at Cheroor in Malappuram district in 1843 under the leadership of Mamburam Saydalavi Thangal. The iconic war-song which commemorates the battle waged by seven Mappilas against sixty armed British men, bolstered further uprisings and British authority banned the circulation of this song and confiscated the press which printed it. *Mannarkkad Padappattu* (1891) and *Manjeri Padappattu* (1896) which verbalizes the British-Mappila confrontation also include in the list of officially banned songs.

Yet another popular war-song that influenced the populace and infuriated the British authority, *Malappuram Padappattu*, penned by renowned Mappila poet Mahakavi Moyinkutty Vaidyar^{iv} (1852- 1892) in the year 1883, recounts the peasant struggles in Malabar in the eighteenth century. Vaidyar's *Padappattu* inspired many proletariat protesters even after his demise and it is recorded that the pages of *Malappuram Padappattu* were

seized from the hands of the martyrs of 1921 Malabar Mappila rebellion. British officials entrusted F. Fawcett to study Vaidyar's poems and its tremendous influence on the public and it culminated in the publication of "A Popular Mopla Song" and "War Songs of the Mappilas of Malabar" in *The Indian Antiquary; A Journal of Oriental Research* in 1899 and 1901 respectively.

In 1728, Para Nambi, a local land-lord had a feud with Ali Marakkar who collected taxes on behalf of the British authority, and Para Nambi conspired to assassinate Ali Marakkar and destroy the mosque of Mappilas to compensate the humiliation he confronted. This strained the amiable relation between Muslims and Para Nambi, and the British authorities and some local Nair feudal lords tried to exploit the situation. This escalated the dispute to a full-fledged revolt and records testify that more than forty Mappilas and a lower caste Hindu, from the oppressed caste that aligned with Mappilas, died in the revolt. *Malappuram Padappattu* sings this historical incident in rhythmic verses and Malappuram Nercha, an

annual ritual is conducted in Malabar, to venerate this agrarian rebellion and its martyrs.

The significance of *Malappuram Padappattu* lies not alone in its factual and faithful representation of otherwise neglected local historical episodes of the struggle against colonial regime, but also in the way accentuates on the necessity to dethrone British empire and their policies like ‘divide and rule’ which shatters the religious harmony of the nation. Imperialist rulers fixated on building fissures between Muslims and Hindus instituted the colonial construct of otherness whereby Hindus become ‘the other’ of Mappila. Further, colonial discourse fabricated Mappilas as religious fanatics, narrow minded and intolerant. *Malappuram Padappattu* subverts and resists this colonial notion by showcasing rational Mappila community which respects the plurality of social life. Vaidyar pictures sensible Mappilas when they request Para Nambi not to instigate violence against a community for the transgression of Ali Marakkar and also through the characterization of Arumukan and Mukunthan who attempt to advise the

Hindus not to blindly rebel, Vaidyar highlights the vision of Hindu-Mappila harmony and unity against suppressive colonial powers. *Malappuram Padappattu* parades British-Nambi alliance as anti-nationals and the rioters as paragon of communal harmony.

Malappuram Padappattu can also be perceived as an anthem of resistance when Mappilas were subjected to physical atrocities; onslaught on freedom of expression and professing their faith and religious practices. Mappilas opposed when Para Nambi anticipated to demolish their house of worship and persecute an entire community when he entered into a duel with one among them. *Ishal*^v 40 and 41 communicate the willingness of Mappilas to trade their land and valuable belongings to protect the mosque from igniting, and their rebellion transpires to be a protection of one's right to religion. Vaidyar exposes the follies of aristocracy and the conspiracy of the British to further manipulate the situation and eradicate the threat posed by Mappilas. Vaidyar's composition is also a chronicle of agitation against agrarian exploitation by the feudal lords

as the Nair landlords and British authorities joined forces against the uneducated peasant class and resulted in the oppression of the common mass. It fledged into an absolute class conflict when lower caste Hindu peasants allied with Mappilas in their struggle against the gentry.

Resistance literature, especially resistance poetry produced during political conflicts around the globe articulates the ignored parameters of liberation struggles that the hegemonic historic annals fail to document. *Padappattu* or the war-poetry of Mappilas ideologically boosted Mappilas to revolt against the colonial drives of the West, and the regional struggles against the Portuguese, in the early phase of invasion, and the British, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, in-turn provided thematic assistance to further pen verses. Many of these literary expressions were confiscated and deported to Britain. *Malappuram Padappattu*, the celebrated war-poetry of Mappilas which narrates the agrarian uprising against aristocratic feudal lords and the British government, exemplifies Mappila resistance poetry. *Padappattu* written in Mappila Malayalam is apparently

linguistic resistance against the hegemony of both colonial language and Sanskrit of the elite class, and an expression of protest against racial, religious, social, political and economic oppression under the British colonial administration.

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¹Mappilas usually referred to Muslims, Christians and Jews, religious minorities of Kerala; here it is used to indicate Muslims of Malabar who occupy the west coast of Arabian Sea in the northern part of Kerala from Kodungallur to Kasaragod. The portmanteau term ‘Mappila’ combines ‘maha’ (great) and ‘pillai’ (son) which denotes great son or son-in-law. It is also argued that this word

originated from the Arabic root word ‘Mahfil’, which means an assembly or gathering. Mappilas, descendants of a distinct origin, mingled with local culture, have developed their own cultural and religious identity, a fusion of both foreign and local culture that came into contact at a historical juncture.

ⁱⁱ*Mappilapattu* comprises the songs, hymns, eulogies and poetic works orally transmitted or written in Arabi-Malayalam language. The musicality, rhyme and meter utilised in *Mappilapattu* make it popular among both the traditional Muslims and modernists.

ⁱⁱⁱSee “Padakalil Pathinja Pattuveeryam” in *Mappila Keezhala Padanangal* edited by K.K. Mohammed Abdul Sathar.

^{iv}Moyinkutty Vaidyar (1852-1892), hailed as Mahakavi (great poet) was born in Kondotty to Unni Mammad Vaidyar and Kunjamina. He learned traditional medicinal practice from his father; hence the name Vaidyar. In his short lifespan he has written numerous works and his popular songs include *Husn al Jamal Badr al Munir* (1872), *Badrul Kubra* (1874), *Malappuram Padappattu* (1883). He was well versed in Sanskrit and he used numerous loan words from Sanskrit, Tamil, Urdu, Persian etc in his compositions.

Ishal is the meter of *Mappilapattu*. It provides a particular rhythm and tune to the poem. Vaidyar has divided *Malappuram Padappattu* into 71 *ishals*.