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Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities

Aims

The Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities (ISSN 0975-2935) derives its name from 'rup' (form) and 'katha' (words), which, when combined, mean 'myth' in Bengali. The journal gets its inspiration from the etymology and follows the principle that anything which has a form, visual, aural or mental could be studied from interdisciplinary perspectives. The journal seeks to promote criticism of emerging literature, innovation and art. One of its basic objectives is to promote interdisciplinary research for the study of the human condition, culture and the elimination of discrimination in a globally connected world.

- Aesthetic Studies: critical discussion, case study, computational analysis
- Animal Studies: Ethics, Aesthetics, Sports, Civilization and Biodiversity
- Cultural Studies, Critical Religion
- Consciousness and Intelligence
- Digital Humanities: Arts, Literature and the Digital Media
- Education Psychology, Applied Psychology
- Emerging Critical Theories involving Interdisciplinary Studies
- Environmental Studies and the theories of Evolution
- Ethnography, Ethnomusicology
- Fine Arts and Visual Studies
- Gender Studies: critical discussion, case study, survey
- Health Humanities
- Historiography, Memory, History of Emotions
- History of Science
- Human Rights Studies in Arts and Literature
- Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literature and Arts
- Linguistics and Language Teaching
- Film & Media Studies
- Performance Studies

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- Sci-Fi: the aesthetics of science, the science of aesthetics
- Scentific Philosophy: Artificial Intelligence, Biology, Economics, Neuroscience, and Psychology
- World History of Literature and Art
- World literatures and indigenous studies

Scope

The fundamental idea for interdisciplinarity derives from an evolutionary necessity; namely the need to confront and interpret complex systems. An entity that is studied can no longer be analyzed in terms of its singular objectivity but as a contending hierarchy of discourses emerging from multiple or variable branches of knowledge. We encourage authors to engage in inter political and intercultural discussion involving interdisciplinary perspectives from areas within and beyond humanities and the humanist sciences, wherever applicable. Authors must be first sure of the high value of their papers in their comparison to international standards and then submit their papers. Submission areas include but are not limited to the following.

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Contents

Somdev Chatterjee's Why Stories Work: The Evolutionary and Cognitive Roots of the Power of Narrative: A Review

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Stories are universal and storytelling is essential to the creation of meaning in human life. The story is "central to meaning-making and sense-making" (Peterson, 2). Our minds construct and analyse our truths and beliefs, as well as determine how they relate to other people's truths and beliefs, through the use of stories. We develop fresh viewpoints and a deeper comprehension of the world by listening to stories. By examining how others perceive the world and how they comprehend it, we are pushed to question and broaden our perspectives. Ken Liu a fantasy novelist states that "The planet is at the mercy of our history, our story, our spell." Furthermore, he adds that "Out of stories, we construct our identity, at the individual as well as the collective level. Our stories tell the world how to be" (Liu,2022). Somdev Chatterjee in his book Why Stories Work (2023) claims that the importance of stories is often overlooked and we are losing control of the narratives that shape our lives.

Somdev Chatterjee has made his debut in the field of writing with his book Why Stories Work: The Evolutionary and Cognitive Roots of the Power of Narrative. Chatterjee is a writer and filmmaker who teaches at the Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute, Kolkata. He is an experienced writer for television and has directed documentaries for international channels. In his debut work, he explores the relationship between stories and other aspects of human experience. According to the author, even today "our lives depend on the stories we tell and we live in" (Chatterjee, 2023, p. 8). Chatterjee reiterates Liu's argument that "We die for stories, and we live by them." The former goes one step ahead and states "Stories keep us alive and they can kill us" (p.8).

Chatterjee's aim in writing the book is to emphasise the significance of stories and story structure and to give a new perspective on the social use of storytelling. The writer analyses the "first principles of story structure and design – to answer questions like what makes a story, why it captures our attention, and how is the experience of consuming a story related to other experiences of life" (p.8). Chatterjee diligently analyses human experiences and emotions to unravel the intricate connection between stories and the essence of being human. In this thoughtprovoking book, he explores how stories have the power to "shape our lives and make us who we are" (p.9). The book is divided into four chapters that explore the various facets of storytelling from its historical roots to its contemporary relevance.

Chapter 1 titled Tell It Like Your Life Depends on It revisits the revolutionary history of humans to find the causes of the origin of storytelling and the survival benefits it confers. The writer's main argument in this chapter is that stories serve not merely as the vehicles of transmission of knowledge, but they have a

greater social use. It is a significant tool to bind groups together and helps to create a common identity. According to the author, universally shared stories "act as a protection from chaos and intra-group conflict" (p.31). Homo Sapiens had to step out of the known protected zone to the unknown territory for survival and to bring back physical or spiritual treasures. In the modern world "physical unknown is replaced by the social and psychological unknown" (p.32). But the pattern and challenges remain the same. The hero goes forth to fight the unknown, untamed, and hostile forces that threaten him or his clan. If he survives, he has a great story to pass on to his people, which might help them in their journey into unknown territory. Chatterjee asserts that "As culture becomes sophisticated, so do their stories" (p.34). He concludes the chapter by elucidating how stories are a powerful medium to influence people's attitudes toward ideas.

In the second chapter Learning to Inhabit the Unreal Worlds the author discusses why "humans inhabit fictional worlds, and respond emotionally to narratives they know to be false" (p.9). He explains how humans are capable of mental simulation. According to Chatterjee, when faced with a difficult situation that can have an uncertain outcome, people simulate various scenarios in their minds, and if one does not have a happy ending, they reject it and start simulating another one. These simulations help us try out different possible future scenarios in relative safety and thus greatly increase our chances of survival. The author asserts that "You die a hundred deaths in your mind to avoid having to die for real" (p.39). These mental simulations often have a narrative form and may be one of the foundations of our ability to mentally inhabit fictional worlds. With time, humans acquired the capacity not only to simulate aspects of the natural world but those of the social world as well. Chatterjee claims that mental simulation of social interaction is a significant factor in our survival and helps us to see the world from another person's perspective.

Chatterjee tries to explain why fictional worlds evoke real emotions in humans. He recounts the fitness, phylogeny, and ontogeny of the human tendency to create fictional narratives, to pay attention to them, and even to learn from them. He shows how being able to inhabit the fictional world enhances fitness, i.e., increases the chances of survival and reproductive success by enabling us to formulate and remember solutions to the problems in the social world" (pp. 46-47).

The skill of learning solutions to real-world social problems by collectively inhabiting fictional worlds is picked up in early childhood. Engaging in role-playing games is often a child's first step towards inhabiting a shared fictional world. This helps the child to develop the "appropriate emotional response to a situation" (p.47) in an environment that is relatively safe. When we open a book, enter a movie theatre, or hear someone say "once upon a time …" the experience is also framed as make-believe and safe. According to Chatterjee storytelling and children's play have common ingredients like "safety, trust, priming for surprise, and being still caught off guard" (p.49). The children's play makes them simultaneously experience two contradictory emotions the 'pretend' emotion apt for the fiction being

enacted and the 'real' pleasure of knowing the fact that they are only playing. Chatterjee argues that the capacity to experience contradictory emotions simultaneously is what gives us the "ability to enjoy stories and we are drawn to the stories that explore danger, taboo or deepest emotional conflicts" (p.48).

The central question discussed in the third chapter titled Maps of Experienced Reality is why stories are so powerful and why most of the stories share common traits, such as protagonists who pursue their desires against opposition from others and come into circumstances with uncertain results. Chatterjee also tries to explain why there is often a discrepancy between the protagonist's expectations of the world and what occurs.

Many narratives begin with the protagonist being confronted by an aspect of reality they had been either oblivious to or purposely avoiding. Chatterjee gives examples like Luke Skywalker whose peace is shattered when his adoptive family is killed by stormtroopers, propelling him into conflict. Gilgamesh, confronted with the tragic demise of his companion Enkidu due to a curse from the Gods, is compelled to face the inescapable truth of his mortality. Likewise, in most stories, the protagonist is made to confront the impermanence and suffering inherent in life which tests their strength, skills, and ingenuity.

In this chapter, Chatterjee argues that instead of seeing the world as it is, we only focus on its components that are pertinent to the goals we are currently pursuing. This enables us to function with limited cognitive resources. Based on our goals and objectives, we have a partial picture of the world. We notice anomalies that are important to our current pursuit in the world, which is another incomplete model. Therefore, the salience of things and people depend on their relevance to our current goal rather than their inherent importance. Chatterjee takes it one step further and says that "we experience reality within a narrative framework: I am trying to get from my present state to a future (more desirable) state and I see only what is likely to help or hinder my journey" (p.56). He states that the elements of the stories such as – "intention, desire, resistance, and unexpected outcomes may reflect the way in which we experience and make sense of our lives" (p.51). That is why stories have such a magical hold over us. Their structure reflects the fundamental mould in which we experience reality.

The roots of the power of stories go deep and spread wide. In the first three chapters, Chatterjee presents the positive effects of the narrative arts while in the fourth chapter titled How Stories Work, he explores how stories often exploit our cognitive biases and weaknesses to evoke powerful psychological and emotional responses. Giving examples from popular stories, Chatterjee explains how some of the most popular storytelling techniques like the use of subtext, melodrama, suspense, and mystery exploit our cognitive biases to hold our attention. By doing so, he aims to provide an answer to the question of why some stories are more likely to succeed than others without having to rely on well-established traditions of literary narrative theory.

According to the author, there are two main schools among those who take a biocultural approach to art. The first group views "art as an adaptation" (p.10) or "adaptive behaviour" (p.79) that humans have

picked up via evolution because it helps them survive and procreate. In the first three chapters, Chatterjee argues for viewing storytelling as an adaptation, showing how it serves significant purposes like knowledge transmission, development of the Theory of Mind, simulation of social interaction, promoting social cohesion, and allowing open-ended cognitive play with patterns that are fundamental for our survival. In the fourth chapter, Chatterjee adopts the attitude of the second school which primarily views art as a "byproduct of evolution" (p.10). According to this theory, artists have learned how to exploit the cognitive tendencies and biases acquired via evolution, to produce unearned, 'useless' pleasure.

The noted neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran once described visual art as "lawful distortions from reality to optimally stimulate the pleasure centres of the brain" (qtd 79). According to Chatterjee stories should also be seen in the same light. The adaptation of storytelling offers significant advantages for our survival; at the same time, stories can also exploit what are essentially flaws and gaps in our psychic nature to exert a kind of control over us that we cannot consciously understand, let alone resist. In this respect, storytelling seems almost like the practice of the dark arts. Chatterjee gives many examples of this, like the use of supernormal stimuli, narrative fallacy, peak shift, and puzzle-like structure in stories. These phenomena help explain the causes of the power of certain storytelling techniques by relating them to the structure of our brains and minds which have developed through the long process of evolution.

Supernormal stimuli, a term coined by ethologist Nikolaas Tinbergen can be defined as a "Stimulus that produces a more vigorous response than the normal stimulus eliciting that particular response" ("Supernormal stimulus,"n.d.). It takes over the natural response tendency and causes humans to respond more energetically, and preferentially, to exaggerated stimuli. Importantly, "it tends to activate some of the same reward systems in the brain that are involved in addiction" (Brooks, 2017). Chatterjee writes that "Supernormal Stimuli abound in all narrative forms" (Chatterjee, 2023, p.85). He affirms that it is not only the characters and individual situations that provide supernormal stimuli through unnatural concentration but the very narrative form does it. In the world of a story, every bit of information coming from any source is relevant to the outcome. This acts as a supernormal stimulus to our information-seeking instincts, and our brain's neurochemistry keeps us hooked. A masterful storyteller provides the right composition of "new information and surprises to keep the dopamine secreting glands in action" (p.87).

Human instinct is capable of creating a cognitive bias, which is called a "narrative bias or narrative fallacy" (p.87). Once we create a narrative to try to explain a set of events, we tend to interpret new information to fit the narrative and ignore what doesn't fit in. For example, history is most often presented as a grand narrative leading to a predestined conclusion rather than a chaotic mélange of random events that led to uncertain consequences. According to Chatterjee, this tendency can lead us

"horribly astray" (p.88). He says that "narratives are seductive because they create an illusion of understanding of the world" (p.88). Trying to harness the power of storytelling without being aware of its seductively dangerous side can be disastrous. So Chatterjee explains the significant ethical components of any act of storytelling.

In Why Stories Work Chatterjee has highlighted some of the significant purposes that stories serve which include, the transmission of explicit and implicit knowledge, the promotion of social cohesiveness, the dissemination and reinforcement of ideologies, the development of the Theory of Mind, the practice of one's response to potential future threats and opportunities. The biocultural approach offers a framework for investigating the relationship between story design and intended purposes. It highlights the necessity of letting the audience form their judgments as well as the concentration of character and scenario as a technique of conveying implicit knowledge.

The evolutionary approach to storytelling helps to explore the phylogeny of human storytelling, particularly concerning our capacity for mental simulation and social interaction. Chatterjee propounds that it is our ability to mentally simulate future scenarios, especially in social contexts, that has shaped our storytelling capacity. He examines the interconnections between our limited cognitive resources, attention, and the narrative nature of perception. Chatterjee writes that cognitive processes selectively shape our experience of reality. The writer's core argument is that our perception, shaped by the narrative framework, allows us to perceive the deepest layer of reality in a narrative form. He concludes that "The story (and therefore the storyteller) is powerful because it makes sense of our lives" (p.100).

The book reveals the author's love of stories and his profound grasp of their influence on people and cultures. One of the notable features of this book is the eloquent writing style of Chatterjee. The book is full of vivid descriptions of ideas, and logical arguments that are supported by insights from social sciences, psychology, and cognitive sciences. The author has scoured through a large number of books and resources and given examples to support his arguments. He examines storytelling in various contexts from ancient myths to contemporary literature, movies, and even advertising, to showcase how narratives shape our perceptions, beliefs, and behaviour. The chapters are well-organised and aptly titled. The language of the text is uncomplicated and precise. The simple illustrations offer contextual cues and supplement the text. However, there is a minor drawback that at times it becomes overly theoretical and academic, potentially making it a little dry read. Chatterjee could have had a more balanced approach that combines theory with practical examples or anecdotes.

Why Stories Work is an intellectually stimulating book that encourages readers to reflect on the significance of narratives in our lives. It serves as a reminder that storytelling is not just an entertaining pastime but an essential part of our human experience and stories possess the power to inspire, challenge, and transform individuals and societies. This book contributes to the study of narratives by fusing literary and film studies with scientific viewpoints. This research expands our knowledge of the

the universal attraction of storytelling by investigating the connections between the enduring qualities of stories and the patterns in our perception and sense-making processes. It gives storytellers a better understanding of the resources at their disposal, empowering them to create storylines that deeply connect with audiences. In the end, this work catalyses the fusion of science and the study of narratives, promoting a more comprehensive knowledge of human experience. The book is primarily recommended to people who aspire to become storytellers and for academic purposes. However, it is a good read for all those who love stories.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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The Third Eye and Other Works: Mahatma Phule's Writings on Education by Rohini Mokashi-Punekar

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The Third Eye and Other Works: Mahatma Phule's Writings on Education by Rohini Mokashi Punekar begins with a forward, written by Bhalchandra Nemade, which claims that Phule was a rebel who fought against Brahminical hegemony and their self-made Hindu social order. This book is divided into seven sections, although there are no chapter numbers or an introduction or conclusion, as are typically found in academic texts. The book offers a critical examination of Phule's original writings and social reform activism in order to comprehend the current educational system and social structure from India's subaltern class perspective. Historically ingrained social and educational inequality is still persistent in India, which hinders the state's educational growth of women and lower castes. This book gives a historical analysis of the dilemma of pervasive educational inequality and its effect on society. Punekar (2023) has been chosen as a case study amongst all historical figures in Indian history and discovered that due to his unconventional ideas, real-world actions, first-hand knowledge, and efforts to achieve comprehensive education for all, which makes him unique. The author has presented a critical analysis of the socio-political situation of 'Shudratishudra', women, and Muslims based on an analysis of Phule's original writings. The analysis reveals Brahminical exploitation of these groups as well as how British Administrative policies enabled the Brahmin elites to maintain their hegemony. The book has shed light on the struggles and hardships endured in order to construct his ideal society, known as 'Balistan' (p.4-11), which is free from oppression and exploitation but founded on science, reason, equality, and freedom.

In the first section of the book "Phule in His Times: A Brief Notes on His Life and Works," the biography of Phule is discussed at length. It has offered a detailed portrait of his upbringing, education, and exposure to Western science, as well as reformist ideas and significant figures that moulded and shaped his thoughts. Additionally, it provided a historical account of radicalinitiatives, including the establishment of schools for women, lower castes, working people, and widow remarriage, stopping infanticide for which he endured untold hardships (p.5-11). This section further offers 'Tritiya Ratna', a play by Phule that exposes the Brahmins' ideological hegemony, religious fanaticism, caste inequality, and the deprivation of education for women and people from lower castes. In order to acquire financing for publication, Phule had submitted his play, 'Tritiya Ratna', to the Dakshina Committee for consideration for the Dakshina Prize (p.7); but, as the author believed, the play was denied the prize owing to Brahminical politics. This prevented it from being published at the time, until 124 years later, in 1979. The essential ideas of Phule's writings, such as Tritiya Ratna, Gulamgir, Vidyakhatyateel Bhaman

Pantoji, and his plea and memorial address to the Indian Education Commission, have been lucidly explained in the text. To promote counter-hegemony against Brahminical rule and lead the cultural fight by constructing an alternative domain of culture, the public sphere, he reinterpreted and recreated history by rejecting the Brahminical understanding of Indian history, as discussed by the author.

The second section of the book 'The Significance of Tritiya Ratna: Phule's Play of Ideas offers a critical analysis of his play. This section opens with a brief history of contemporary Indian theatre, followed by an analysis of contemporary Marathi theatrical practices and literature. According to the author, modern Indian drama developed as a result of the influence of Sanskrit and European drama, as well as a fusion of traditional and popular, secular and ceremonial, rural and urban dramatic forms and practices (p.15-16). A synopsis of the development and evolution of modern Indian drama, including theatre in Marathi, Bengali, Odia, Gujarati, and Hindi has been referred. However, Phule's Tritiya Ratna stood out from the rest of the drama because it featured startlingly bold social issues and it was a fierce threat to their hegemony. A radical text advocating social emancipation, Tritiya Ratna was a groundbreaking piece of modern Marathi literature. It was the first piece of literature in Indian history to critically examine the caste system, and how the underprivileged are deprived of education (p.66-77). Phule visualises education as a tool that will enable the Shudratishudra to become aware of their suffering and enable them to achieve wealth, prosperity, and social dominance. He therefore sought to forge a sense of unity among all oppressed groups, including Muslims, Shudratishudra, and women (p.73).

The English-translated version of Phule's drama 'The Third Eye' is provided verbatim in the third section of the book. Within Phule's lifetime, this drama was not staged. The drama highlights the British government's policy gap as well as a pervasive system of caste exploitation and Brahminical dominance. Phule explained how British policy merely favoured Brahmins to monopolize opportunities and resources produced by the British government. According to the author, Tritiya Ratna is a political play that illuminates the connections between knowledge, power, and common experience in a Foucauldian perspective. Phule recognized the dynamic relationship between power, knowledge, and authority through caste and gender hierarchies ingrained in the Brahminical Hindu social system long before Foucault. This play might be seen as the first Bahujan manifesto for articulating one's identity, forging alliances, and transforming society in combating caste tyranny and gender injustice.

The fourth and fifth chapters are based on a poem by Phule titled 'Vidyakhatyateel BhahmanPantoji' (English translation: "Brahmin Teachers in the Education Department"), which was written originally in Marathi. In Maharastra, 'Powada performances' were frequent and widely preferred by the general populace. To create awareness among Shudratishudra about caste oppression, the value of education, and the alternative counter-history of the subaltern that was destroyed and misinterpreted by Brahminical forces, Phule used his poetry as toolof generating consciousness through the Powada.

In the sixth section, 'Situating Phule within the History of Education in India', a socio-historical

description of how contemporary secular education developed in India during the colonial period is detailed. The author has positioned Phule's struggle for ensuring that women and members of lower castes have access to education in juxtaposition to British policy, missionary endeavours, also prominent Brahmin's contributions towards the same cause.

Gandhi and Tagore's alternative indigenous educational model has criticized the British educational paradigm and some of its flaws. In response, Phule's perception on education provides a staunch critique of these two educational giants, who in their model fail to take into account the educational issues that women and lower castes face. This section provides a critical evaluation of how early Indian elites used Western education to modernize their society and enhance their employment opportunities in British administration, yet continuing to adhere to their sacred religious texts and frequently defending their position. But no effort was made by them to ensure that the subaltern had fair access to school or other institutions Further, the memorial address and the prelude to 'Gulamgiri' are presented in their entirety in the final two sections which address a number of issues in education, including practical and vocational education, the need for an appropriate curriculum, teacher training, scholarships, government-funded schools, teacher salaries, etc.

The original writings of Poole, along with their analysis of the book, are provided side-by-side in this book which makes it exemplary towards the wide readership. `This book is relevant for academia and researchers working in the field of education, subaltern studies and socio-political history of education in India. Additionally, social activists involved in the Bahujan/Dalit movements would find it informative and persuasive. It will be beneficial for development actors to learn more about the social structure of India and to contextualize the educational environment of the past with the present. This book offers an intersectional viewpoint on caste, gender and religion. Phule's petitions mentioned in the book are highly beneficial to policymakers in addressing the country's current educational gaps. By and large, this book is an interesting read

‘I’ll tell that human tale’: Documenting the Wartime Sexual Violence in Jing-Jing Lee’s How We Disappeared (2019)

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ABSTRACT

Sexual slavery as a phenomenon of war was rampant during the Japanese Imperial Army’s occupation of territories before and during the Second World War (1939-1945). These innumerable sex slaves, or “comfort women”, as the Japanese Army had named them, were women (a striking number of them being minors) who were forcefully captured and separated from their families and placed at comfort stations built to fulfill the sexual needs of the Japanese soldiers. While this entire system was created on the pretext of reducing wartime rapes and curbing the spread of venereal diseases, these comfort stations did just the opposite. Studies conducted into these comfort stations reveal how they had become sites of inhuman sexual violence, torture, disease, and death. This paper will look at how Jing-Jing Lee’s historical fiction How We Disappeared (2019) rewrites these innumerable, nameless, brutalized women into the world’s history as victims of a bloody war that had tainted unassuming lives and had snuffed out their existence ruthlessly. Lee’s narrative is scarred by violence committed along gendered lines – illustrating the reduction of the female body to a disposable sexual tool, existing merely to bear the brunt of a war that was not theirs. This paper decodes the politics of gender violence behind Japan’s enforced and licensed prostitution, the nature of sexual violence, the commodification of women’s bodies, the place of women in the socio-cultural context of the era, and the gendered role of women, in what was quintessentially men’s war.

Keywords: Sexual violence, prostitution, sexual slavery, torture, gender violence

1. Introduction: Gendering Sexual Violence

The history of mankind bears testimony to the gendered nature of violence. This gender-based violence has its roots in the perennial assignation of the woman as the weaker sex. The universal socio-cultural constructions of gender have naturalized the position of women as veritable sex objects existing only for man’s pleasure and for bringing life into the world. Man, on the other hand, has been created for ambitious pursuits, to venture beyond the domestic space and to continually negotiate new roles in society. In the divide thus created between masculinity and femininity, it is the latter whose position is eternally plagued by precarity. It is also important to note that the nature of violence perpetrated against women is mostly sexual – once again repositioning the woman as the object of lust. The woman’s body then becomes the site of sexual violence where masculinity exerts itself as a controlling force over which women could not exert autonomy. Male sexual aggression becomes almost like a performative ritual that over time came to reinstate and mythologize blatantly polarizing gender roles. This gendering of sexual violence can be witnessed even in the 21st century where women remain the primary victims of sexual violence still – whether be it in the form of rape, domestic abuse, sex trafficking, prostitution, or even in

the digital space. This paper attempts to explore the issue of wartime rape and the nature of sexual violence during the war with specific reference to the large-scale prostituting of women by the Imperial Japanese Army before and during the Second World War.

1.1. War and Sexual Violence

To quote Ikuhiko Hata (2018), "To speak of war is necessarily also to speak of rape" (p. 121). Historically, women have been as much a part of the war as men, but it is simply that their participation has been different. Instead of being on the battlefield, for by general belief the framings of femininity are unsuited to the nature of war, women's bodies have been made the site of a brutal sexual war, and it was a war from which women couldn't emerge victorious. As opposed to the 20th-century psychoanalytical theories on rape that conceived of it as an act of sex (McPhail, 2015), debates on wartime rape contend that rape is not an act of sex, but one that is imbued purely with violence. This paper draws attention to the multitudes of nameless women who were victims of mass rape and sexual violence under the consenting will of the Japanese Imperial regime from 1932 to 1945.

Theorizing on wartime rape, Hooper (2001) notes how "[s]oldiering is characterized as a manly activity…[and] [i]t has historically been an important practice constitutive of masculinity" (p. 47). Considering rape to be a reassertion of hetero masculinity (Alison, 2007, p. 77), wartime rape is merely an extension of the existing norms of gender violence. It is because of the war which necessarily mandates the suspension of all civil boundaries that mass rapes are witnessed. Nicola Henry (2016) concentrates upon the structural inequalities in society that presages sexual violence on women during times of crisis: "Attention to the structural causes of wartime sexual violence thus can help to situate the inherent connections between 'everyday' forms of violence in pre-war and post-war contexts and 'extraordinary' forms of violence during periods of armed conflict" (p. 50). Bordering on the same vein of thought Tompkins (1995) speaks of rape as something that "happens during war for the same reasons it happens during peace. It is a phenomenon rooted in inequality, discrimination, male domination and aggression, misogyny, and the entrenched socialization of sexual myths" (pp. 850-851). Wartime rape, thus, is preceded by the already existing gender inequalities in society and is to be seen as a brutal manifestation of it enabled, and at times encouraged, by the temporary suspension of law and order.

1.2. 'Comfort Women': Who were they?

Nothing is comforting about the lives of comfort women. "Comfort women", according to Kim et al. (2019), was a system of sexual slavery introduced by the Imperial Japanese government between 1932 and 1945, and it happens to be the largest reported case of government-sanctionedhuman trafficking and sexual slavery in recent history. Scholars have estimated that hundreds of thousands of women, including minors as young as twelve years old, were violated (Kim et al., 2019, p. 58). While the

'comfort women' that we know today, thanks to widespread reportage, is the licensed prostitution system created by the Japanese government, it was a system that had been in existence for quite some time. Ikuhiko Hata in her work Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone (2018) traces the genealogy of these 'comfort women' which revealed that there were several other euphemisms for prostitution including geisha, tea-pouring girls, drink-pouring girls, and so on. Hata makes the following observation on the system of comfort women in Japan: "It is appropriate to understand the system of comfort women and comfort women for the military as the wartime version of the system of licensed prostitution from prewar Japan" (p. 23). It is a wellacknowledged theory that comfort stations exclusively for the Japanese army were first built in Shanghai during the First Shanghai Incident in 1932 (Hata, 2018, p. 53).

The 'comfort women' of the Imperial Japanese Army were the casualties of a war where they were nothing more than usable and dispensable objects, victims of a cruel regime's warped machinations to keep soldiers satisfied on the battlefield. What happened to these comfort women was Government sanctioned rape for which "comfort women" or ianfu became aeuphemism. It is only as recent as in the early 1990s that several former comfort women from Korea and Japan came forward to seek redressal and an official apology for the gross violation of human rights before the Japanese government. Hata (2018) lists the headlines of the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun on January 11, 1992, which reported on the arrangements made by the Japanese government for comfort women and comfort stations –

> "Documents show military involvement in comfort stations"
> " Written instructions, journals of former Japanese military found at Defense Agency library"
> "Units instructed to set up [comfort stations]"
> "Control, supervision of [comfort stations], including recruitment, instructed under the name of the chief of staff. Some documents had the seal of the administrative vice minister"
> "Government view that 'private operators were in charge' challenged"
> "Calls for apology and compensation intensifying" (Hata, 2018, p. 01).

The undocumented suffering of the comfort women gained global attention when three Korean former comfort women filed a class-action lawsuit in Tokyo court to "demand an apology and reparations from the Japanese government on behalf of an estimated 100,000 victims" (Brownmiller, 1993, p. 18). While this entire system was created on the pretext of reducing wartime rapes and curbing the spread of venereal diseases, these comfort stations did just the opposite. Studies conducted into these comfort stations reveal how they had become sites of inhuman sexual violence, torture, disease, and death. Women, even minors, were coerced and abducted,and forced to become comfort women. However, some women had volunteered to become comfort women – primarily because they were former prostitutes, or because that was the only way for them to fend for themselves. The comfort women were

routinely raped and abused. They were frequently medically examined to detect venereal diseases and those who were found to be diseased were executed. A similar fate of execution awaited those who resisted the soldiers. Ok sun Yi, a former Korean comfort woman, testified that many women were murdered, brutalized, and even committed suicide at comfort stations, so much so that Yi compares those comfort stations with slaughterhouses (Kim et al., 2019, p. 60).

Jing-Jing Lee's How We Disappeared (2019) stands out as one of the very few novels in existence to document wartime sexual violence on Singaporean women during the Japanese occupation of Singapore. This paper will take a look at how the novel rewrites these innumerable, nameless, violated, abused women into the world's history as victims of a bloody war that had tainted unassuming lives and had snuffed out their existence ruthlessly. Lee's narrative is scarred by violence committed along gendered lines – illustrating the reduction of the female body to a disposable sexual tool, existing merely to bear the brunt of a war that was not theirs. The novel documents the trauma of rape, witnessing murders, the aftermath of surviving the comfort stations, and society's attitude towards these survivors – all portrayed through the life of Lee's protagonist Wang Di. This paper will decode the politics of gender violence that went on behind Japan's enforced and licensed prostitution, the nature of sexual violence, the commodification of women's bodies, the place of women in the socio-cultural context of the era, and the gendered role of women in what was quintessentially men's war.

2. 'Wang Di' or 'to hope for a brother'

This section of the paper tackles the popular contention that structural inequalities of gende precede any form of sexual violence, even wartime rapes. To establish this point of view, Wang Di's life will be illustrated from the vantage point of gender inequality to reveal the intersections of gender, sex, and violence. Wang Di's birth was but an anticlimactic start, a dashing of all hopes of a father who desperately looked forward to having a son, and stopped short of terminating her life upon reconsideration. While surviving the comfort station was no less a miracle than being spared by her father after her birth, this tug of war between life and death seems to shroud women's lives like a catastrophic foreboding. In the course of the novel, the meaning of her name is revealed: " Wang, meaning 'hope' or 'to look forward to'.Di, 'little brother'" (p. 25), and the factthat her birth was followed by the births of her two younger brothers, is taken to be a sign of"good luck" for her parents (p. 25). Much later in the novel, after surviving the comfort house,Wang Di would realize the self-negatory aspect of her name – how her entire existence waspredicated upon the existence of her brothers who could carry on the family name, while shealone must bear the burden of war so that they can be spared: But perhaps this was all for them – as my name suggested. My life for two of theirs" (p. 178).

Before being bundled into the troop carrier like shackled livestock to be taken to the slaughterhouse by the Japanese soldiers, Wang Di's life was remarkably ordinary, yet safe. by her father's opinion that women's utility lies only within the domestic sphere and that schoolinggirls is useless, Wang Di decides to help out in the house. It is only after that rumours startedspreading about the abduction of girls by the Japanese Army from the neighbouring villages thatit is decided to get Wang Di married off. But before that could happen, Wang Di is forcefully takenby the Army to the comfort station where she would spend the next three years of her life inunspeakable agony. When exposed to the routinized sexual abuse in the black-and-white house,Wang Di realizes the price of being a woman. Her mother's words "You are a woman now" whenshe had had her first bleed sits heavily in her mind and she ponders how being born a man couldhave saved her from this torture: "Not for the first time, I wondered how my life would have been if I had been…[a] boy instead of who I was" (p. 178)

As a wartime sexual violence survivor, Wang Di tries to rationalize her tragedy by ascribing it to her duty as a daughter. As a daughter, the only way for her to help her family was by being away from them at the black-and-white house. This was the motivational factor that gave her the strength to tolerate all of the rapes and abuse:

I was, in the words of my parents during their most desperate (poorest) moments, use less. Disposable. In my little cell in the black-and-white house, I had comforted myself with the thought that my time there might give my family some relief in the way of much-needed cash for food or medicine. That there, at least, I wasn't absolutely useless…That was how Ibore it, the rapes, the unforeseeable beatings, the humiliation of never having a choicewhen they told me to sit up, open wide, lie down, and shut up (Lee, 2019, pp. 276-277).

Given the picture of pitiable femininity that comes alive before the readers, it is perhaps not too hard to imagine the role of women in war. Of course, there were other women, like Wang Di's and Yan Ling's mothers, Huay's sister, and Lim Mui Joo, who could escape being comfort women but suffered all the same. It remains a fact that Wang Di, Huay, Jeomsun, and other comfort women across several comfort stations were embroiled in the war in a manner that enabled them to witness the depravity, needless violence, and quintessential dehumanization of men caused by war firsthand. Mrs. Sato, the one in charge of the black-and-white house, enunciates how her patriotism will go unrecognized simply because she is a woman:

The men we see every day, they do their soldier's duty, their shouting and killing, glorifying our country and saving others, like yours, from the white man's rule. Back home, they celebrate what their sons and fathers are doing. Even the dead go back heroes. But the women […] I won't go home to a hero's welcome. I am just a woman (Lee, 2019, p. 193).

By the logic of war, dead men are better than living women – no matter what role they had played in war. From the perspective of the comfort women, war's cruel reductive mechanism had robbed them of their bodily autonomy, had shown them the purview of their existence, and proved to them that their usefulness lie only in being sex slaves.

2.1. 'Black-and-white house': Wang Di's human tale

I'll tell my human
tale, tell it against
the current of that vaster, that
inhuman telling. (Li-Young Lee, 'Furious Versions')1.

The sexual violence depicted in the novel plays out in the "black-and-white house", which is the name of the comfort station where Wang Di was imprisoned along with other girls. Lee has not shied away from graphically depicting the inhuman torture that went on in the comfort stations. Lee has taken care to portray historically accurate details about the operative ways of the comfort stations. In the narrative, the black-and-white house is described as a shabby-looking dilapidated building where rooms were divided using slim wooden panels. The windows were boarded up from the outside so that the women could not escape. Each comfort woman was given a room where there would be a rattan mat and a small table along with a bottle containing an antiseptic fluid which was to be used after every soldier was done for sanitation purposes. The rooms would also be padlocked to prevent any escape attempts. Each soldier would have twenty minutes and there would be an unending line of soldiers waiting outside each door. The girls would be medically examined every week initially, and then every month, to prevent the spread of venereal diseases. Girls who would get infected, or pregnant, would be executed since they could no longer serve their purpose.

All the girls were given Japanese names. Wang Di is rebranded as Fujiko. Her raison d'être for the next three years was clarified by Mrs. Sato: "You're here to serve the Japanese troops. Make them feel welcome" (p. 135). She was told that for her work her family would receive money – a blatant lie to kindle some hope while the girls withstood innumerable rapes daily. Her clothes are taken away and she is given a thin dress that barely covers her and soon would also lose all the buttons after numerous

encounters with the soldiers. Fujiko/Wang Di is jolted into a new reality where most of the time, when the soldiers are not beating her up without the slightest provocation, she lies with eyes closed, hoping that it would be over soon: "After the initial week, I served around thirty men a day. On weekends and festival days, the number went up. Forty, fifty." (168) Maria Rosa Henson, a former Filipina comfort woman in her autobiography Comfort Women: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery Under the Japanese Military (1999) testifies to undergoing torture which is not too different from what Wang Di experiences in Lee's narrative:

Twelve soldiers raped me in quick succession, after which I was given half an hour rest. Then twelve more soldiers followed. They all lined up outside the room waiting for their turn. I bled so much and was in such pain, I could not even stand up. The next morning, I was too weak to get up…I could not eat. I felt much pain, and my vagina was swollen…I could not resist the soldiers because they might kill me (Henson, 1999, pp. 36-37).

Jan Ruff O'Herne, another former comfort woman who had been forcefully captured and prostituted during the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies voiced how she was robbed of her basic human rights: "They had stripped me of everything. They had taken everything away from me, my youth, my self-esteem, my dignity, my freedom, my possessions, and my family" (Kim et al., 2019, p. 61). Henry (2016) is of the opinion that "the common thread between all wars is that rape is a product of warped (yet normalized) militarized hegemonic masculinity, which arguably is structurally embedded in pre-conflict gender inequality and unequal power relations" (p. 44) Wartime rape is a product of the culturally embedded binaries of femininity and masculinity, but it is also so much more than just that. Yuki Tanaka in his book Hidden Horrors (2018) brings the issue of ethnicity and nationality to the conversation. In the same book, he talks about how the rebranding of the Chinese comfort women with Japanese names reflects the Japanization of the Imperial Army's occupied regions, while also maintaining the purity of their own people:

There were Japanese prostitutes during the war, but most were in a different position from the comfort women. The Japanese prostitutes mainly worked in brothels that served high- ranking officers, and they experienced much better conditions than the comfort women. The Japanese military forces did not believe Japanese women should be in that role ecause they were supposed to be bearing good Japanese children who would grow up to be loyal subjects of the emperor rather than being the means for men to satisfy their sexual urges (Tanaka, 2018, p. 97).

Speaking of the larger socio-political connotations of rape, Tompkins (1995) avers how enemy women are targeted for sexual violence because of "women's vital importance in constructing and maintaining the ethnonational group" (pp. 850-851). To amplify the matter further, Seifert (1994) talks about how the female body itself is a "symbolic representation of the body politic" and that the rape of women can be seen as the "symbolic rape of the body of [the] community" (pp. 62-4). The black-and-white house, itself a site of violence, also made women's bodies the site of violence. The twelve-year-old girl that was brought was murdered by a soldier because she kept resisting. While women were being brutally killed for no reason, some even succumbed to being subjected to prolonged violence. One girl cracked her head by simply fainting in the bathroom, and another girl's stab wounds got infected and she died. Reflecting on the amplifying inhumanity of the soldiers with the increasing tension in the war, Wang Di surmises that perhaps this show of violence was a manifestation of being completely powerless on the battlefront like these women were before them: "These incidents were becoming more frequent with the bombings as if fear was chipping away at the men, the people they once were, before they left home and came here, and made monsters out of them" (p. 229). These women existed so that the soldiers could vent their frustrations on their bodies.

Violence becomes the essence of the black-and-white house, but it also witnesses the blossoming of a beautiful friendship among the girls, especially between Wangi Di, Huay, and Jeomsun. It was a friendship that allowed them to forget for a while the animalism that they just witnessed in their rooms. It was a friendship involving caregiving that kept them close to their humanity: "The three of us took care of each other in turns by way of saving any food we got from the soldiers and passing it along to the one who felt poorly" (p. 179). Their friendship sustained them through hard times, but finally, the false sense of complacency cracked. Huay was the first one to fall. Struck with a venereal disease that left painful rashes all over her body and even caused her to lose her memory, Huay's disorientation worried Jeomsun and Wang Di. The psychological toll is heavy on Huay as she experiences every rape anew and finally, after getting tired of her resisting, screaming, and crying, a soldier shot her. After Huay is shot, the impossibility of escape and freedom settles in, and Wang Di realizes that this is how these women will be obliterated from existence: "This, I thought, this is how we're going to disappear" (p. 200).

2.2. Fujiko's Afterlife: Survivor's Guilt and Shame

Wang Di lives three lives – there is the pre-war Wang Di, then Fujiko of the black-and-white house, and finally, the post-war Wang Di, Fujiko's afterlife, the "comfort woman". Wang Di returns home after being the only one to survive the black-and-white house. She is plagued by nightmares where she is haunted by Huay and Jeomsun, and sometimes even Cheng Xun, her deceased son whom she had given birth to in the black-and-white house:

With sleep though, came dreams; I would see Huay and Jeomsun most nights, and if I was lucky, Cheng Xun as well. Then I would wake, my face damp, remembering how I'd left them like that. The relief of being back with my family and the guilt of it spilling over into each other so that I almost wished I hadn't survived. Almost (Lee, 2019, p. 272).

Wang Di is in the grip of survivor's guilt as she feels that by surviving she has somehow betrayed her comrades. This does not mean that she would rather have died along with them, but a bitter realization that her grief of losing them will forever continue to weigh heavily on her conscience for surviving the brothel. She is unable to share her grief with her family since they strictly avoid bringing up the issue like it is a shameful past that must be shaken off. According to Kelly et al (2016), rape survivors have historically been ostracized and exiled from their families and community and sometimes even refused entry into the household. In the novel, Wang Di recounts an incident where another comfort station survivor went home only to have the door shut in her face because her family members blatantly refused to recognize her (p. 275). Wang Di's own brother spat out, "Why did you come back?", and, "You should have just stayed dead" (p. 273). Wang Di's traumatic past is blanketed by a politics of silence undergirded by victim blaming that forbids her from even making a faint reference to her past. Her mother becomes society's mouthpiece through which victim shaming is articulated:

Don't tell anyone. Not me or your father or any of the neighbours. Especially not your future husband […] No one must know. You need to forget her, Huay, and the other girl.They didn't exist. You understand?" [my italics] (Lee, 2019, p. 279).

Lee's novel, then, effectively addresses the invisibilization of these comfort women and how it had come to be. The post-war nation-state refused to bring to light the nation's shameful defeat where the spoils of war had been their women. Wang Di's mother's statement "They didn't exist" tersely captures the politics of erasure, silencing, and invisibilization which had begun at the grassroots level. Wang Di was not looked at as a victim, but as an ally of the Japanese army despite belonging to the enemy party. Initially, after Wang Di's return, people started to avoid and even ignore her entire family. They would make Wang Di feel like an outsider to society by refusing to buy things from her. Even her father would refuse to speak to her when she would be alone, and during meals the entire family would be busy discussing daily affairs, not even acknowledging the fact that Wang Di had not been home for the better part of three years. Addressing the silence surrounding Singaporean comfort women, the novelist Jing-Jing Lee mentioned in an interview with Alan Fisk the factors of shame and exposure that threatens the people:

Although Singaporeans take for granted the fact that local women were abducted during the Occupation, no victims have come forward to give testimony. During my research, I came across several interviews in which war survivors mentioned having seen, or heard about, such events. The women involved, invariably, would be a distant relation or a friend of a neighbour – someone conveniently removed from the interviewees' own private sphere so that they can remain fairly untouched by the trauma and shame. So no, the issue is not being discussed as openly as in Korea and China. I believe the size of the country is a one factor. Its smallness prohibits any sense of anonymity so that there's nowhere to hide from the shame of being a rape victim once you've confessed to having been a comfort woman for the Japanese soldiers (Fisk, 2019, para. 6).

It is only her husband whom she addresses as "the Old One" who encourages her to pour out the torrent of trauma swirling inside her: "There's nothing to be ashamed about. You did nothing – nothing wrong" (p. 9). He tries to absolve her of any modicum of shame and guilt she might be having for being forced into prostitution. Wang Di's husband has an inkling of her past but never brings up the issue against her will. No one, then, in her life knows what happened to her in the black-and-white house, and about her departed son Cheng Xun, whom Wang Di had desperately wanted to keep even though he was born of rape, violence, and bloodshed. The death of Wang Di's son, which happens simultaneously with her escape from the brothel and the defeat of the Japanese army, comes to symbolize a new beginning for Wang Di and her country. But the memory of Cheng Xun comes as a bitter aftertaste once again symbolizing the country's pyrrhic victory and Wang Di's scarred existence.

2.3. Memory and Trauma

In a study conducted by Kuwert et al (2014) where the long-term effects of conflict-related sexual violence were compared with non-sexual war trauma in World War II female survivors, it was revealed that survivors of wartime rape had greater severity of PTSD-related symptoms and also experienced anxiety along with severe sexual problems during their lifetime. These survivors also went unrecognized and unacknowledged as trauma survivors as opposed to non-sexual survivors. Such is the fate of Wang Di in the narrative. While the study undertaken by Kuwert et al (2014) talks about the psychological state of sexual abuse victims that leads to sexual problems later in life, Wang Di's condition was more physiological. She has to undergo a hysterectomy because of her pelvic inflammatory disease which was in all probability a result of suffering years of sexual abuse within the unsanitary walls of the black-and-white house. Aware that she is unable to fulfill the most important role as a wife – motherhood – she is apologetic: "I'm so sorry I never gave you children. That I'll never give you children. Can you forgive me?" (p. 217).

Wang Di's husband, Chia Soon Wei, is also a victim of the war albeit his victimization was different from hers. As they began their journey as husband and wife, they both realized that there were gaping wounds marking their individual histories. They come together as victims of war, and while her husband wants to open up and share their past trauma to unburden themselves, or perhaps to share their burden of trauma, Wang Di refuses to have that conversation. That Wang Di has still not healed from her past is made amply clear in the physical manifestation of her trauma when approached by the Old One to initiate a conversation on their past:

[The Old One] had brought it up one day at home, was beginning to tell Wang Di what happened during the invasion but stopped when he saw that she was drawing back from him as he spoke, as if she were an animal, netted in the wild; and her face, how wide her eyes had become, how very still. The point was made even clearer when she woke that night, kicking and thrashing, cracking the dark with her cries (Lee, 2019, p. 8)

Wang Di's present existence comes filtered through a past whose memories have been etched deep into her psyche. Mentally, Wang Di is still trapped inside the black-and-white house, along with Jeomsun and Huay. Unwelcome memories of her past infiltrate her consciousness without prior warning and she is transported back to the brothel. In an attempt to forget her traumatic past, Wang Di muffles the voices of her comrades, but their voices keep ringing in her head as both Jeomsun and Huay have become a part of her: "She couldn't stop hearing their voices – not just Jeomsun's, Huay's as well. After decades of muffling their voices in her head. Of trying not to see them when she closed her eyes at night" (p. 16).

Judith Herman (1992, as cited in Card, 1996) avers that shell-shocked soldiers' post-traumatic stress disorder syndrome was quite similar to post-traumatic stress disorders seen among female survivors of sexual violence. Herman makes the following case: "The subordinate condition of women is maintained and enforced by the hidden violence of men. There is a war between the sexes. Rape victims, battered women, and sexually abused children are its casualties" (pp. 28-32). Memories of Huay and Jeomsun and her deceased son linger in her waking life, and Wang Di's refusal to bring up the invasion is but a feeble attempt to push them back deep into her subconscious. Every reference to the war triggers in Wang Di a vitriolic manifestation of her post- traumatic stress disorder:

Why talk about what happened during the war? Why now? […] That night, the nightmares returned (her first in years) and he had to hold her hand while she slept, as if trying to prevent her from being swept away by a swift current (Lee, 2019, p. 63).

It is only after the Old One passes on, Wang Di realizes the importance of a person's history. Parted by death, Wang Di strives to get closer to her deceased husband by uncovering his past, what happened to him during the invasion, how the Japanese had rounded the civilians in his village and murdered every one of them, leaving aside her husband and his son who went missing after the incident. When Wang Di finally finds Kevin, the Old One's grandson, he inspires in her the courage to record her own life for other people to hear. After her story is told and recorded, in several attempts, she faintly says "Everything I just told you […] [is] true" (p. 337), as if she suspects so much violence is humanly incomprehensible to someone who has not experienced it. But as she was narrating her life story it was as if she was "reliving" every moment and subjecting herself to the violence once again.

However, Wang Di leaves it up to the readers' and Kevin's imagination to figure out what she did with Cheng Xun. Did she give him up to an old, childless couple, did she leave him behind in the hospital where she was brought, or did her son pass away in her arms knowing that she'll have to leave him behind just like she has to leave the black-and-white house behind, buried him in the earth along with his mother, Fujiko of the black-and-white house? Wang Di's memories and consequent trauma becomes a larger analogical playing field to illustrate the millions of women whose existence has been wiped out. Their unrecorded, unspoken, painfully lived, and undocumented lives are now remembered as statistical figures of irrevocable loss and irreparable damage.

3. Conclusion

Virginia Woolf famously stated in Three Guineas (1938) that war is a problem created by a male-dominated society. It is in these wars that women get violently involved. Women's bodies become battle zones where the gender war is fought. Theorizations on wartime sexual violence have declared rape to be a natural product of war. Indeed, cases of mass rape during wars are frequently heard of and aren't uncommon. Take for example the mass rape of Jewish women during the German invasion of Poland in 1939 hailing the initiation of the Second World War. In a conflict as recent as the Russo-Ukraine war, it has been reported that mass rape has been committed by the Armed Forces of Russia. The weaponization of mass rape has been exhaustively addressed by conflict theorists. Claudia Card (1992), who equated mass rape with martial rape, sees civilian rape as a form of terrorism (p. 6). Identifying wartime sexual violence with Card's notion of martial rape leads to the conclusion that wartime rape can also lead to genocide as the victims are more often than not executed after they are raped. This was the case with the comfort women. In the novel, when the war was over and the comfort women were allowed to walk away, most of them were shot to death before they could have safety. This happened primarily because the Japanese government did not want survivors to tell the world about what the Japanese Imperial Army had done.

It can thus be ascertained that rape is a quintessential aspect of war and that it is a universal phenomenon witnessed in every war that has happened in the history of mankind. What, then, is the specific need to study the "comfort women" as introduced by the Japanese Army? The main significant point that justifies the need to study the phenomenon of comfort women separately is that in the case of other wartime rapes, the act was not sanctioned by the rival government. It had been a case of human savagery and bestiality that war inspires among men. Japan has been under fire for this because they made special arrangements for women to be raped to boost their soldiers' morale while they are fighting for their nation in foreign territories. All the rapes, beatings, torture, murder, and execution happened under the watchful eyes of the Japanese regiment who proactively aided the soldiers in the kidnappings of women for prostitution and even sponsored a medical team to check the women.

In 2007, Japanese ex-Prime Minister Abe Shinzo also roused international interest in the matter after he denied allegations about Japan sanctioning comfort stations (Hayashi, 2008, p. 123). The incident was first brought to light when a former comfort woman from South Korea decided to break decades of silence. Since then Japan's atrocity has become a controversial topic upsetting international relations. It can be said that in the case of other wars there had been silent consent for rape from the rival government, but in the case of Japan the soldiers were given the license for mass rape and as such it becomes a cause for humanitarian concern. It goes on to show the precarity of women's lives and the subjugated role that they play in the world's political economy.

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On the Perceptibility of Motion: An Inquiry from the Indian Philosophical Traditions

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses an important issue regarding the concept of motion from the perspective of Indian philosophical traditions. We can recognise two camps in Indian philosophical schools regarding the epistemic means (pramāṇa) through which one cognises motion. Some Indian philosophical schools claim that motion is completely imperceptible and one infers motion by perceiving contact and separation of an object with another object or space. Among these schools, we have considered Patañjali and Rāmānuja (the author of Tantrarahasya) as the main advocators of this position. The other group claims that motion is perceptible and we infer motion only when the object possessing the motion is not perceptible. Supporters of this position are mainly the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school and Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa the author of Mānameyodaya. While summarising and critically analysing these positions, we support the view that motion is perceptible by showing the following: (1) The position that motion is non-perceptible leads to some ontological issues (2) The position that motion is perceptible is more economical and simpler.

Keywords: motion, perception, inference, Nyāya-Vaiśaṣika, Vyākaraṇa, Mīmāṃsā

1. Introduction

This paper discusses an important issue in the philosophy of motion from the perspective of Indian philosophical traditions. The concept of motion has been putting forth challenges to philosophers all the time. In Western philosophy, the concept of motion has been the focus of discussion from the time of pre Socratic philosophers. This concept started gaining importance when change was highlighted and conceived as the base of everything in the world. by Heraclitus (c. 540 BCE-c. 480). Heraclitus propagated that change (or motion) is the fundamental reality and essence of all things.[i] Opposite of this position was the position of Greek philosophers from Elea. They advocated that change is merely an appearance and it does not exist. According to them "nothing can change and if we think we see change we are fooled; for it cannot be" (Frost, 1989). Parmenides (c. 485 BCE) taught that any change is inconceivable and that whatever we perceive as change or motion is an illusion. Zeno (490 BCE), from the same philosophical school, tried to show that proving the existence of change would lead to a contradiction.[ii] Thus, the concern of Western philosophers seems to be focused on the question of the existence of change (including motion). But when it comes to the Indian philosophical schools—the

philosophical schools we are concerned with in this paper—there seems no disagreement with regard to the existence of change or motion. They all agree that motion exists and we experience it.iii The disagreement arises concerning the epistemic means (pramāṇa) through which one grasps motion. This leads to an interesting discussion in the tradition as to whether motion is perceived through our senses or if is it the case that we perceive merely a displacement and infer motion as a cause of such displacement. This paper tries to articulate the positions of a few schools of Indian philosophy on this issue and critically analyse them.

The debate is between two camps. One camp belongs to the supporters of the position that motion cannot be perceived at all but it is inferred. According to them, what we perceive is merely a contact or separation of an object with a specific space at a particular moment in time. Motion is a logical explanation for the contact and separation of an object from that specific space. Primary advocators of this position are Patañjali (between the 2nd century BCE to 4th century CE) in his commentary on the Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇinī (between 6th and 4th century BCE) and Rāmānuja (ca.1500 AD), the author of Tantrarahasya, a text of Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā school. We also can find supporting thoughts in Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra, a text of Indian grammar and its commentaries Prabhā and Darpaṇa. Among the Indian grammarians, Patañjali clearly states that all actions are inferred. This undoubtedly implies that motion is inferable and not perceptible.

But Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra seems to rethink this and hold the position that a part of the motion is perceptible whereas, as a whole, motion is inferred. The opposite camp propagates that motion is perceived but it is inferred in certain cases where the object in motion is not perceptible or depending on the context.

Players of this camp include the Indian realist school Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa (16 CE) a Mīmāṃsaka and author of Mānameyodaya, an important text of the Mīmāṃsā school. We mainly consider the arguments of the Indian realists from Nyāyabhāṣya of Vātsyāyana (ca. 350 CE) and Nyāyavārttika of Udyotakara (6CE), as well as arguments from Mānameyodaya, supporting this view.

While summarising and critically analysing these positions, we support the view that motion is perceptible by showing the following: (1) The position that motion is non-perceptible leads to some ontological issues (2) The position that motion is perceptible is more economical and simpler.

2. Basic ontological exposition of motion

2.1. Grammarian's view

Grammarians' approach to the concept of motion is analysing the word referring to it.iv The word used for motion in the tradition is gati. The grammarians analyse this word further as a combination of two parts: The verbal root 'gam' (dhātu) and the suffix 'ti' (pratyaya). The verbal root 'gam' refers to a specific activity (vyāpāra) that favours establishing contact (of an object) with a subsequent space.v

According to the grammarians, vyāpāra is the set of denotations of all the verbal roots (dhātuvācya). Words kriyā, bhāvanā, utpādanā are said to be synonyms of the word vyāpāra.vi Vyāpāra is an activity that brings about some change (utpādanā). We do observe things/objects in the world. Along with objects we also cognise activity that is different from objects and it brings about some change in the state of affairs of objects. All such activities are denoted by the word vyāpāra.

Activity has a different nature from that of an object. E.g., one cognises easily and successfully an object like a pot as 'there is a pot. But when it comes to an activity, recognising an activity as 'one activity' or segregating one activity from the other is not an easy task. E.g., defining a simple activity such as 'cooking' raises several philosophical questions. What does the activity 'cooking' refer to? Is it one activity or a set of activities? Can a cogniser point out the starting point and end point of this activity? If it is a set of activities, then whether all the internal activities are always carried out? Are they all done together or can one perform an activity with some time gap? etc. Grammarians decide on an activity as 'one activity' depending on the result that activity is supposed to bring out, or in other words, the result that activity regularly brings out. E.g., the verb 'pacati (cooks)' is constructed from the verbal root 'pac'. This verbalroot denotes a vyāpara, i.e., a set of all the activities that result in cooking some dish.vii The vyāpāra denoted by pac includes several internal activities like blowing the fire (phūtkāra) or turning on the burner, placing the vessel on the oven (cullyuparidhāraṇa) etc. Thus, reference to a verbal root is some groups of internal activities that aim at a particular result. Thus, an activity of cooking is a group of all those activities that help in producing the desired food.

Among all the activities, motion (denoted by gam root) is defined as the activity that results in contact (of an object) with a subsequent space. The suffix 'ti' is used in the sense of bhāva, i.e., action again. But it merely declares the action denoted by the verbal root gam. Thus, when put together (gam+ti), gati only means 'a specific activity (vyāpāra) that favours establishing contact with a subsequent space'.

2.2. View of the Indian Realists

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school draws its ontology from the Vaiśeṣikas.viii We see two tendencies in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts regarding motion. The first one is to consider motion as one of the five types of actions namely, upward movement (utkṣepaṇa), downward movement (apakṣepaṇa), contraction (ākuñcana), expansion (prasaraṇa) and motion (gamana/gati).ix Here, the word motion is used to refer to those movements where directionality is not fixed like the other four actions. In other words, these are actions where we cannot specify one directionality. The second tendency is to consider motion synonymous with action, or in other words, any action is motion whether directionality is fixed or not.x

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika ontology divides the entire world into seven basic categories (saptapadārtha). These categories are substance (dravya), attributes (guṇa), action (karma), inherence (samavāya), universal (sāmānya), unique particular (viśeṣa), absence (abhāva).xi Any object that one can name or

recognize is either a category or a combination of these categories. E.g., when one recognizes the colour 'red' of a cloth, the colour is an attribute. The red cloth is a combination of two categories: (1) a substance, which is the substance of earth (pṛthivī) in the case of cloth and (2) red colour, an attribute. These categories are subdivided into nine substances, twenty-four attributes, five actions, one inherence, infinite universals, infinite unique particulars, and four absences.Among these categories 'action' is a basic category that always inheres in the substance.

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, inherence is a relation that resides between two inseparable (ayutasiddha) entities. Two entities x and y are called inseparable if the existence of any one of them presupposes the existence of the other.xii Even action and substance are inseparable since action cannot exist without a substance. Action cannot inhere in any other categories. E.g., we never experience 'a colour is moving' or 'a pot-ness is falling down'. Among the seven categories only substance gives us a cognition that it is moving. Even among substances, the omnipresent (vibhu) substances like the aether or the self also cannot house motion. Thus, although motion is an independent category it can be located only in non-omnipresent substances.xiii

3. Is motion perceived or inferred: the main debate

Different Indian philosophical schools and philosophers have disagreements regarding the epistemic instrument (pramāṇa) that cognizes action. The issue is about how motion is grasped by a cogniser. Is it through perception or is it the case that we perceive merely the change in place (displacement) of an object and infer motion from such observation?

3.1. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position

Motion is perceptible according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school.xiv Their explanation is as follows: First, the sense faculty of the eye connects with the object, say a ball, and perceives the ball. When there is motion in the ball, the eye sense faculty (cakṣurindriya) connects with the motion inhering in the ball. This type of connection is called connected-inherence (saṃyukta-samavāya-sannikarṣa). The sense faculty that grasps the substance through this connection also grasps the attribute and action inhering from that substance. Among our sense organs, only the eye and tactile sense faculties can grasp a substance. Since a motion inheres in substance only, we can grasp motion either by seeing or by touching an object.

The principle that motion is perceptible has certain exceptions according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. One of the cases of such exceptions is the motion of the Sun. According to the Naiyāyika, the motion of the Sun is not perceptible but is inferred. The inference is as follows: We perceive that at t1 the Sun is located at a space S1 and at t2 at another space S2. Since the shift in space (displacement) is possible only through motion, one can conclude that the Sun has motion.xv

Uddyotakara (6th century CE), the commentator on Nyāyabhāṣya raises certain interesting questions regarding this inference. In this inference, Target (sādhya) is motion, the subject of inference (pakṣa) is the Sun and the Reason (hetu) is the displacement.xvi The pervasion (vyāpti) is 'where displacement there motion (yatra deśāntaraprāpti tatra gati)'. Locating the Reason in the subject of inference (pakṣadharmatā) is important and necessary in the process of inference. E.g., when one infers fire on a hill from smoke, one must for sure, locate smoke on the hill as a first step. Similarly, in the present inference, one must establish that the Sun has displacement, i.e., the Sun has shifted from one place to another as a first step for further inference.

According to Uddyotakara, the present inference suffers from the problem of establishing the displacement of the Sun. As per his observations, the problem arises since the displacement of the Sun is also not perceivable.xvii Following is the justification of Uddyotakara: To perceive the displacement of an object, one must perceive the contact of that object with different loci at different moments of time. At time t1 a cogniser perceives the contact (saṃyoga) of an object A with a specific place l1. At time t2 the cogniser perceives the contact of the same object A with another place l2. This leads to the conclusion by the cogniser that object A is displaced. A contact is a type of relation (saṃbandha) that occurs between two relata. According to the rule of contact, a contact is perceivable only when each relatum of the contact is perceivable.xviii E.g., when there is contact between a pot (relatum 1) and a table (relatum 2), both the pot and the table are perceivable. Therefore, the contact between the pot and the table is perceivable too. But although there is contact between a pot (relatum 1) and time (relatum 2), such contact is not perceived simply because one of the relata—time—is not perceivable. In the present context, the contact between the Sun and space is not perceivable. Although the Sun is perceived, the other relata, namely either aether (ākāśa) or space (dik) is not perceivable according to the system of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Therefore, even the contact between the Sun and aether or the contact between the Sun and space is non-perceptible.

Thus, Uddyotakara claims that it is not possible to establish displacement (Reason) of the Sun through perception. This inference has a prerequisite for another inference to be valid. The first inference must establish the displacement of the Sun. That inference is as follows: The Sun is displaced since there is a separation of the Sun from a steadfast sight or the Sun is not seen again with a steadfast sight, like Devadatta.xix In this inference, Reason is 'perceiving the separation of one object from another object with a steadfast sight'. The Target is displacement. The pervasion is 'where there is a separation of an object from a steadfast sight, there is a displacement of that object'. Thus, this inference establishes that the Sun is displaced. After the establishment of the displacement of the Sun, one can apply the first inference and conclude that the displacement of an object is possible only through motion. Therefore, the Sun has motion.

Although the motion in the Sun is inferred, the Naiyāyikas agree that other motions are perceptible. The

condition is that the object that holds the action must be perceptible.

3.2. Grammarian's position

According to the Grammarians motion is never perceived, it is always inferred. Motion is considered one type of action (kriyā) and Patañjali clearly states in his Mahābhāṣya that no action can be perceived. According to him, any action is completely imperceptible. It is a whole (samūha) made of consecutive actions and hence it is impossible to point out an action as we do in case of any mass.xx

Patañjali's aphorism clearly states that all actions are imperceptible and thus one infers an action. Vāmanajayāditya supports the view with an explanation of the nature of an action. According to him, any action can be explained as a whole made of a series of internal short actions. All internal actions (of one action) happen one after the other in time. The crucial point to be noticed is that the main action is spread over a period of time and it is taking place or happening (sādhyamāna) from the point of view of each moment involved in it. In this sense, it is still in the state of 'taking place/happening' and not in the state of 'completed' at the moment of time involved in it. In this sense, the main action is 'not-existing' when it is taking place. Our sense faculties are limited. They are capable of perceiving only those objects that exist at the time of perception, i.e., a pot or a mat in front of the eyes of the cogniser. But action is non-existing when it is taking place. Then how can any sense organ perceive an action? Thus, any action is nonperceivable or indirect (parokṣa).xxi

Among the aphorisms of Pāṇini, two aphorisms related to action are repeatedly discussed in the literature. There seems to be some incompatibility between these two aphorisms as they seem to go against the statement of Patañjali (i.e., all actions are non-perceptible). The first aphorism of Pāṇini is 'parokṣe lit'. This aphorism states that a particular grammatical usage called 'lit' is to be carried out only in cases of nonperceptible actions. The word 'non-perceptible' used by Pāṇini as specifying a category of actions, seems to assume that there are perceptible and non-perceptible actions. In that case, the explanation of Patañjali that each and every action is inferred seems incorrect.

Vāmanajayāditya discusses this discrepancy in Pāṇini and Patañjalī. He points out that although all the actions are non-perceptible, perceptibility is superimposed in the case of some actions. As he explains in Kāśikā commentary, there are actions which seem to be perceptible (pratyakṣābhimāna) due to the perceptibility of the substances or elements that hold the action. In other words, if the end result (sādhya) of an action is perceptible then we superimpose the perceptibility to the action itself. E.g., the result of the verbal root 'gam' is the contact of an object with a different place. When the object and the place are perceptible, we superimpose perceptibility to the action of motion as well.xxii Pāṇini segregates such actions from the actions wherein along with the action, the components of actions are non-perceptible too. E.g., when one mentions an action that took place many years ago and the components are not perceptible now. According to Vāmanajayāditya, Pāṇini points to these actions by stating them as non-

perceptible (parokṣa).

Kaunda Bhaṭṭa also seems to take the same path to explain the discrepancy. But he differs slightly from Patañjali's position of non-perceptibility of each and every action in some of his explanations. He furnishes two different elucidations while trying to bring consensus between Pāṇini and Patañjali. The first one is similar to the lines of thought of kāśikā that by non-perceptible (parokṣa) one must understand that elements/objects involved in that particular action (sādhana) are not perceptible.xxiii E.g., a person x moves from point a to b in a time period tab. Once the action is over one may perceive x, say at a later point in time. But, x qualified by the time period tab cannot be perceived at any other point in time. Such actions as movement from a to b are referred to as non-perceptible actions by Pāṇini.xxiv

While furnishing the second elucidation, Kaunḍa Bhaṭṭa seems to deviate slightly from this position. He brings in another important issue regarding the perceptibility of motion. This issue is raised and discussed at length by the grammarians. The issue is about the meaning of a very well-used statement 'paśya, mṛgo dhāvati (look, the dear is running)'. The issue is about the meaning of the word 'look' in the statement. If we accept the position of Patañjali that no action is perceptible, then how can one explain the meaningful usage of the word 'look' in the sentence? The word 'look' in the statement in fact refers to the action of running. Such usage of the word implies that motion can be seen. To accommodate such usage of words towards motion, Kaunḍa Bhaṭṭa hesitatingly states an alternative. According to him, we may say that parts of an action are perceived whereas the whole action is always inferable since the entire action is not a physical object like a pot or a mat.xxv

Prabha commentator seems to disagree with the second option. As he points out, there is no further undividable point for the parts of an action. Even a part has sub-parts.xxvi A part of an action is also a mixture of its parts. They are not independent referents of the verbal root but are referents as parts of one action. Then logically, how can one claim that as a whole an action is not perceptible whereas a part of the action is perceptible?xxvii He also adds that the word 'look' in the disputed statement can be understood as 'cognize' or 'know' which includes inferential cognition as well. In this way, the statement does not contradict the views of Patañjali.xxviii

Prabhā commentator quotes Bhartṛhari in support of his position that motion is inferable. Bhartṛhari looks into action in general, as a group of sequenced parts. According to him, cognition that there is one complete action is a mental construct, i.e., in reality, we can never perceive the entire action at any point in time. This is because—as he points out—action is always a group of sequenced parts, i.e., parts that are spread over atime period. Because the parts are sequenced, among these sequenced parts only a few are perceived and few are not. Because few have occurred whereas others are yet to take place. Thus, due to the nonperceptibility of some parts of an action, the action as a whole must be non-perceptible. As Iyer translates the relevant passages of Vākyapadīyam:

What is called action is a collection of parts produced in a sequence and mentally conceived as one and identical to the parts which are subordinate to it. The parts which occur in a sequence and are partially existent and partly not so cannot enter into contact with the senses like the eye whose objects are always the existent. Just as the whole word "cow" is not perceptible to the senses but, after its parts are perceived, is understood as a whole by mind. (Iyer, 1974).xxix

Interestingly, Bhartṛhari's statement on the perceptibility of motion is used as support by the grammarians holding either position: One, every action is imperceptible or second, only parts of the action are perceived but as a whole action is not perceptible. The statement merely states that an action as a whole is nonperceptible. It also states that action is a mixture of existing and non-existing parts, which may be read as at least some parts of the action are perceived. But at the same time, it does not specify whether the perceptible elements are further undividable. If they are further dividable then how to consider that they are not wholes but only parts.

3.3. Mīmāṃsaka's view

Mīmāṃsakas are divided about their views on the perceptibility of the action. We can observe both views that (1) motion is perceptible and (2) motion is not-perceptible but inferable in this school.

A prominent Mīmāṃsaka Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa states clearly in his work Mānameyodaya and upholds the view that motion is perceptible. Motion resides in those substances that are not all-pervasive (avibhu), it is perceptible and is of the nature of the movement.xxx Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa comes up with the following argument to prove the logical fitness of his position:

According to him, the presence of sense faculties is a prerequisite for cognition of motion. Motion cannot be cognised without the presence of sense faculties. As we observe the positive and negative pervasion (anvaya-vyatireka) between the sense faculties and the perception of a pot, we can observe a positive and negative pervasion between the cognition of motion and the presence of the sense faculties. The positive pervasion is 'where sense faculties there the cognition of motion (indriyasatve karmajñāna satvaṃ) and the negative pervasion is 'where the absence of sense faculties there the absence of cognition of motion (indriyābhāve karmajñānābhāvaḥ). Due to such positive and negative pervasion, we can conclude that the sense faculties are necessary. For the effect, i.e., the cognition of motion, the cause, i.e., sense faculties cannot be a dispensable antecedent (anyathāsiddhaḥ)xxxi. Thus, the cognition of motion is generated by the sense faculties. Hence, cognition of motion is a perception.xxxii He further develops the argument by raising some pertinent questions. Following is the argument:

The main opposition to the position that motion is perceptible comes from observation. The observation is that at each moment, we perceive either a contact (saṃyoga) or separation (vibhāga) of an object from a particular space. The work of the sense faculties ends here. The perception of contact and separation

becomes a noneconomic standpoint.

Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa points out certain problems in this argument. According to this argument—as he puts it—only contact and separation are perceived and they are the Reasons (hetu) to infer action in an object. Let us test this with an example. Suppose that an eagle sits on a rock and flies away. According to this argument we perceived only a contact between the eagle and the rock and a separation between the eagle and the rock. If one has to infer motion by this, how one decides that the only eagle has motion and the stone does not, whereas both the eagle and the rock are equally party for the contact and separation?xxxiii

One can oppose Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa's argument by saying that motion in an eagle is already well established (klṛpta). When one sees an eagle flying one of the conjuncts of this contact (contact of the eagle and the space) namely space/aether is all-pervasive and therefore sure that there is no possibility of motion in space. As a result, one concludes that only the eagle has motion. Thus, the possibility of motion in the eagle is already well established. Therefore, one can infer motion in the eagle and not in the stone, when the eagle comes in contact with the stone and moves away. Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa refutes this self-raised opposition. He points out that, when the eagle flies, the contact or separation is with space/aether. But aether/space is also non-perceptible along with being all-pervasive. The rule of contact and separation says that contact or separation is perceptible only when both the conjuncts (saṃyogī) are perceivable. If one of them is imperceptible, then, as a result, contact and separation with such a conjunct also cannot be perceived. Then, without even perceiving the contact or separation (which are Reasons to infer) of the eagle with space/aether how can one infer motion in the eagle at all?xxxiv

He refutes the possibility of explaining the perception of contact and separation of a flying bird in space by claiming that it is a contact and separation between the light element (tejo 'vayava) in space and not space directly. But this brings in the same problem of logical undecidability regarding the conclusion that motion is in the eagle and not in the light element whereas both are conjuncts of the contact between the two.xxxv

One may oppose Nārāyaṇādvayī the following way. The question is how is it that a person who sits in a moving ship, and staters down at the bottom of the ship, can never perceive motion in that ship? or even we cannot perceive motion in a ship which is far away in the ocean? Had motion been perceptible one should have been able to perceive motion in both cases. If we consider motion as inferable then we can logically explain both the cases that there is no perception of any contact or separation in both cases. Therefore, one cannot infer motion in both cases. But, Nārāyaṇādvayī answers this opposition that the nonperception, if motion in both cases is due to the defect of the object being too close (atisāmīpyāt) to the sense faculties or too far away (atidīrāt) from the sense faculties.xxxvi

The Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsa holds the view that motion (all actions) is inferable and not perceptible.xxxvii Following this school and supporting the position of Patañjali, the Tantrarahasya by

Rāmānuja holds the view that each and every motion is inferable.xxxviii

Śābarabhāṣya states that motion in the Sun is to be inferred by the contact of the Sun with a different space (deśāntaraprāpti). It is similar to our perception of a person Devadatta coming into contact with a different space as a result of motion. Therefore, when we see that Sun has come into contact with a different space (say from east to west) we infer that Sun has motion.xxxix

4. Whether the motion is perceptible or inferable?

These positions on the perceptibility of action (kriyā) in general can be applied to the perceptibility of motion. This will give us the following four positions: (1) Every motion is perceptible (2) Some types of motion are perceptible some are not (3) A part of the motion is perceived but as a whole, motion is inferred (4) Every motion is inferred.

Among these positions, the second position can be considered as an extension of the first, since, this position agrees that motion is perceptible. The non-perceptibility of an action depends upon the non-perceptible nature of the object that is moving. When it comes to the third position, it seems to lose relevance in the case of motion. About the other activities, it becomes meaningful to analyse an activity by recognising the

sub-actions involved in it. But, differentiating between the movement of a very short distance and a long distance brings little sense in the present context. Because the present question is about the perceptibility of motion itself. It may be movement of a very short distance say a to b that is completed within a minute.The question we are interested in is not about not-perceivable destinations or very high-speed movements.

The question is about the movement of a perceivable object say a ball, from a perceptible starting point a to a perceptible destination b in a short time. In other words, it is about the movements of objects those seem to begin and end in front of our eyes.

Thus, we are left with two options, the first and the fourth, i.e., either such a motion is perceptible or it is inferred by perceiving the contact and separation of an object from another object. The main objection from the supporters of the position that the motion is perceptible (here onwards we mention it as Position-1) to the supporters of the position that the motion is inferred (here onwards we mention this position as Position2) is as follows:

The pivotal argument from the supporters of position-2 is that when we say an object has moved, we perceive merely a contact of two objects a and b at t1 and separation of the objects a and b at t2. Motion the logical justification for such contact and separation. We cannot perceive motion since it is not an object with some shape or colour (piṇḍībhūta) like a pot or a mat.

An important objection from the supporters of Position-1 is the one raised by Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa. We can analyse this objection with the following example. Let us imagine there are two objects a and b. A

A cogniser perceives a contact between a and b at t1. At t2, the cogniser observes a separation between a and b. According to Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, if the cogniser had to infer motion based on this observation, then there would be a problem. In this observation, there is no deciding element (vinigamaka) to conclude whether only a has motion or only b has motion since both a and b possess contact and separation equally. Additionally, separation can take place when only a moves or only b moves or when both a and b move away from each other. Had it been the case that we perceive only contact and separation between them, then it would be impossible for the cogniser to decide which object has motion. But we perfectly cognise the object in motion and the object that did not move.

Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa's objection can be answered the following way: The perception of contact and separation more comprehensively than it is put by Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa. E.g., let us suppose that there is a ball on a specific part of the floor and there is a butterfly on the ball. Let the ball be b, floor f and butterfly r. Let the contact between b and f be C1 and the contact between b and r be C2. We perceive both C1 and C2 along with the conjuncts. When we further perceive that only C2 is no more perceived (when C2 is broken) and C1 continues to exist, we decide that butterfly has motion. When both C1 and C2 cease to exist we infer that both the butterfly and the ball have motion. Thus, inferring motion in one object is more systematic and relative.But even this argument seems to face some issues. This kind of relative conclusion about motion requires at least one object to be not moving. The not moving object, ultimately, is a part of the floor (prithiviavayava). But how does one decide that the part of the floor is not moving? It is possible only when we observe that that part of the floor/earth is in contact with a specific space (ākāśadeśa) all the time. That contact between the part of the floor and a specific space is not broken for a long time. But this leads to another problem because contact between space and any object is not perceivable, since space (one of the conjuncts) is non-perceptible.

Bhartṛhari's concept of perceptibility about the reference of verbal root in the case of motion can be interpreted as supporting both positions. The supporters of position-1 interpret his statement about motion as follows: Motion also is made of parts (avayava). But parts of motion are a mixture of existing (sat) and non-existing (asat) elements combined chronologically. This means a part of the motion, which Bhartṛhari calls existing, is a part that takes place in front of our eyes. Hence, it is perceptible. The supporters of position-2 interpret his statement about motion differently. As parts of motion always include some nonexisting (asat) or in other words, not yet existing elements, motion cannot be perceived at all

5. Conclusion

We can see that Position-2 leads us to some loose ends. The supporters of Position-2 face a problem as to how one can someone perceive a contact or separation with space wherein space is considered to be imperceptible. This position puts one into the trouble of accepting that ultimately one cannot perceive

even contact and separation. This means we need some other reference point to infer even contact and separation, which becomes inexplicable at this point. Additionally, compared to Position-2, Position-1 seems to be simpler and more economical. There is no need to imagine anything over and above our experience. As Naiyāyikas also point out, motion is very similar to the properties like colour etc. that reside in a substance. If the colour of a perceptible object is perceivable then so is the motion in that object, since motion is very similar to property. Sense faculties have limited capacity. One cannot see an object behind or which is too small or too far or too near. Humans cannot hear certain frequencies of sounds. Similarly, we cannot perceive a certain speed that is too slow or too fast. In such cases, it is agreeable that motion has to be inferred. But when a perceivable object moves between two perceivable reference points in space at a perceivable speed, even then, claiming that motion is not perceptible seems uneconomical and imaginative. Just like how a perceptible fire becomes inferable in the case of a hill that is far away, motion is perceptible and inferable according to the context. This avoids inexplicable situations as in Position-2 and can explain the situations like a bird moving high up in the sky where we cannot mark any reference points to fix its location.

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Colour as Symbols in the Select Works of Yann Martel

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A B S T R A C T

Colours can draw an identity to all living things. Natural colours can either calm down or disturb a person's inner Self. At the times of crisis, it tends to give the individual soul wit and hope. Colours also have alchemical significance and can impact every man's mind in certain ways. Colour representations have been used by many symbolists throughout literary history from the past to the present. Symbolists point out the importance of symbols in the poems of symbolist poetry. Moreover, the use of colour symbolism in literature contributes to the treasure of literary forms. In Canadian literature, Yann Martel holds a prominent position for his adaption of symbols and uses them to portray the inner quest of his characters. Frequently, his symbolism embodies a deep search for a spiritual quest with a religious component. Colour is one of the most important aspects in deciphering the psyche of his heroes. He has constructed various symbolic interpretations that exhibit the spiritual longing of individuals. Many colours like red, black, white, green, orange, etc have been used as symbolic representations to decode the mindset and religious beliefs. Among them, black and white colours play a vital role in an in-depth portrayal of the leading characters. The religious quest of the characters has been satisfied through the identification of colour representations and ancient relics. They were satisfied at the end. Hence, his works depict that colours have symbolic dramatic elements that naturally novelize the central theme of the search for Self. It also emphasizes the development of the Self with the supremacy of faith in the Almighty God. This paper deciphers the black and white colour symbols in the novels, "Self", "Life of Pi", "Beatrice and Virgil", and "The High Mountains of Portugal" of Yann Martel.

Keywords: Colours, Symbols, Black and White, Yann Martel.

1. Introduction

Colours have a magical allure that captivates the essence of every living being. They can evoke emotions and can create a soothing or disturbing atmosphere. This intrinsic quality of colours has been recognized by alchemists, symbolists, and artists throughout history. Colour symbolism in literature is a daring and powerful technique that enriches the narrative and intensifies the characters' inner struggles and emotions. One of the most celebrated Canadian writers, Yann Martel, is renowned for his masterful use of colour symbolism. His heroes are imbued with various symbolic interpretations that reflect their Self. Martel's depiction of colour, especially Black and White, is evocative and dramatic, playing a crucial role in his characters' journeys of self-discovery. This article will explore Martel's use of colour symbolism in his works and examine its significance in portraying the central theme of finding oneself amidst the power of faith in God.

The psychological method aims to recognize a person's psychic aptitude. It focuses primarily on the unconscious mind. The foundation of Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory is interpretive techniques. In his

book The Interpretation of Dreams, he claims symbols are prevalent in everyday life. Everyone is transported to the other world of symbols by thought. The symbolic theories of M.H. Abrams and Earnest Jones state that symbols convey different hidden meanings depending on the situation. Symbols may produce different expressions or meanings for other people. The symbol and the matter it represents have an unbridgeable difference. In his novels, Yann Martelhas used enormous colour symbols wherein Black and White play a prominent part in portraying the characteristic traits of the characters. The colours reveal the emotion and feelings of the characters.

This research aims to study the colour representations found in the four novels of Yann Martel. Self, Life of Pi, Beatrice, Virgil, and The High Mountains of Portugal are the four novels wherein the novelist, through the use of colour symbols, tried to imply the eternal presence of God in the lives of human beings. The negative colours represent the struggles and negative emotions of the characters. These colour representations, especially black and white, form the main focus of this research. A careful reading of the novels and the available research findings and research and critical opinions on the works of Yann Martel paved the way for the research gap.

2. Review of Literature

Visvaganthie Moodley (2016) examined symbols and symbolisms in various literary genres in her article, "Symbols, Symbolism, and Significance in Yann Martel's Life of Pi: Specific Content Knowledge for Teacher Development." Moodley views symbols and symbolism as potent rhetorical tools that enhance the writer's narration and convey deep meaning beyond narrative descriptions. However, to combine the education methods and improve learners' cognition, the interpretations must be context-based and involve an in-depth understanding of certain symbols and symbolism. This article sought a specific experience by analyzing literary allegory, symbolism, and its importance in Martel's Life of Pi.

Rashmi Doke and Dr Arunaprakash (2017) distinguished between reality and fiction in "Multiple Adventure and Thrilling Experience of Pi in Yann Martel's Life of Pi." The novel Life of Pi is interpreted internally as an allegory, magical fable, or realism fable. One could read about the marine adventure there. Both the approach and the subject are endearing and rife with mystical awe. Doke and Arunaprakash have found a variety of phrases that support the novel's development in a gripping manner.

The restrictions of symbolism in Yann Martel's Life of Pi was the investigation by Hamza Karam Ally in "Which Story do you Prefer?: The Limits of the Symbolic in Yann Martel's Life of Pi," published in 2020. Life of Pi is criticized psychoanalytically and phenomenologically for being a carbon copy of Herman Melville's Moby Dick. The self-actualization and fulfillment of the main character Pi were highlighted by Ika Rahmawati Diniar (2015) in her article "Pi Patel's SelfActualization in Yann Martel's

Life of Pi. The study used Abraham Maslow's theory to evaluate the character's level of self-actualization. A person who has attained the proper level of actualization, in Moslow's view, can develop into a mature human. Diniar's research has assessed Pi's mental state. Diniar discovered that Pi Patel is far more successful than the average person at achieving self-actualization and meeting his demands in life. He is a self-actualized person because he has faith and trust in God.

Junwu Tian (2020) examined Yann Martel's Life of Pi in the context of biblical reference, maternal cannibalism, shipwreck tale, and spiritual journey in her article titled "The Metaphor of House and Post-Colonial Identity Formation in Yann Martel's Life of Pi." In this article, the metaphorical houses were debated. It also represents the protagonist's identity, loss, and development during survival. While Pi's house in Toronto represents his achieving third-space identity as an adult, the house images in Pondicherry, India, represent Pi completely losing his identity as an innocent youngster. In her thesis "Bamboozled: Chaos Theory and Yann Martel's Life of Pi" from 2010, Marie Tichborne examined how stories about hope are created and how readers react to them concerning the Chaos Theory.

In "A Howl and a Black Cat: Allegory, Nonsense, and Ethics in Yann Martel's Beatrice and Virgil," Jenni Adams (2012) examined the protagonist as the author's satirical alter ego. The relationship between the author's experience, representation, and the traumatic history of a society or culture is questioned by non-realist techniques like magical realism, fantasy, and surrealistic approaches. The study examined how non-realistic symbolic forms and the ability to write about trauma relate to one another.

In his article "Animal: Representing the Seeing Animal in Yann Martel's Beatrice and Virgil," published in 2017, Brazier-Tompkins addressed how writers sometimes appropriate symbolic representations to fit particular objects or creatures into their distinctive forms. Martel uses refined language, writing style, and diction in his works. Yann Martel's Self was explored by Joseph Arul Jayraj (2010) in "A Study on the Physiological, Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives of Different Selves in a Self" with attention to the selected issues. Using various situations, it examines how Martel classifies the hidden Self, the physiological, psychological, and spiritual viewpoints.

In his article (2021), "Symbolism of Chromatism in Life of Pi," Dr Arul examined the significance of colours used in literature as symbols to express feelings and implications beyond what is said. According to his research, every person's existence involves colours on an emotional level. Language and literature have much in common with colours; authors often use them as symbols to convey deep meaning. Colours have the power to reflect sentiments and emotions. In the novel, Pi Patel gets his passion and vitality from particular hues that he sees at special times. He feels spiritually energized when he first sees the hue orange. The following colour, a golden shade, denotes success. The final colour, a green shade, indicates brand-new ways of living. Life of Pisurely developed a greater meaning and knowledge through colours that may be interpreted as symbols.

3. Definition of Symbol

Etymologically, the word "symbol" derives from the Greek word 'symbol' (symbol), meaning a 'token,' a watchword, or a sign by which one infers permission. It is the mix of 'syn' meaning'together' with 'bole' meaning 'a casting.' It means 'throwing things together'; it could be understood as 'contrasting' or'comparing' (symbol) to determine if something conveys genuine meaning. Probably, it refers to the outward sign of something, so its purpose stands forsomething else.

4. Theoretical Framework

M. H. Abrams (1999), in his Glossary of Literary Terms, states that a symbol is "anything which signifies something; which in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term 'symbol' is applied to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself." (311). Hence, symbols can perform various roles in a literary work, such as conveying the writer's idea, connecting the world's reality, mystifying the work, or adding beauty. It may also be used in different ways to polish characterization, theme, plot, portray conflict, or what the writer wants to communicate to the audience. For example, colours are used as symbols to convey different hidden meanings depending on the situation. The colour red symbolizes bravery, blood, or death. The black colour indicates suffering, death, and mystery; blue indicates sea, sky, soul, and peace; white indicates hope, peace, purity, faith, etc; and saffron means sacrifice, hope, etc. The colour green suggests life, energy, hope, etc. The colour symbol is also very flexible and may have different expressions or meanings for other people.

Ernest Jones' The Theory of Symbolism examines the influence of symbols on human action and intellect. According to Jones' hypothesis, symbols have a solid and innate power over the subconscious, and their interpretation and meaning can significantly impact behaviour and attitudes. Additionally, his research provides evidence for using symbols in ritual, art, and other kinds of cultural expression to convey and express emotions and feelings. Jones lists six steps to identify them:

1. A symbol is a representative or substitute of some other idea from which, in the context, it derives a secondary significance not inherent in itself. It is important to note that the flow of value is from the primary idea to the secondary to the symbol. Hence, a less critical one typically symbolizes an essential concept. Thus, a shred of material called a flag may represent all sorts of essential things.
2. It represents the primary element by having something in common with it. Thus it would be a stretch of language to call a mnemonic knot in a handkerchief a symbol of the idea that has to be remembered, although some writers do so. The association may be an internal or an external one. However, an association that is superficial to the reason may often be significant in feeling, especially in the unconscious.

3. A symbol is characteristically sensorial and concrete, whereas the idea represented may be relatively abstract and complex. The symbol thus tends to be shorter and more condensed than the concept meant. The explanation of bowing given above illustrates this well.

4. Symbolic modes of thought are the more primitive, both ontogenetically and phylogenetically, and represent a reversion to some more straightforward and earlier stage of mental development. They are, therefore, more often met with conditions that favour such a reversion; for example, fatigue, drowsiness, bodily illness, neurosis, and insanity, and, above all, in dreams, where conscious mental life is reduced almost to a minimum. A simple observation in this connection is that a tired man usually prefers looking at an illustrated paper, where ideas are presented on a sensorial plane, to reading.

5. In most uses, a symbol is a manifest expression for an idea that is more or less hidden, secret, or kept in reserve. Most typically, the person employing the symbol is unaware of what it represents.

6. Symbols resemble wit in being made spontaneously, automatically, and unconsciously in the broad sense of the word. (Jones 183)

Symbols can thus play a variety of roles in a literary work, including the portrayal of the author's intentions and emotions, tying the world's reality together, and enhancing its beauty. Jones' symbol theory is thought-provoking, clear, and engaging to pursue research.

5. Black and White Symbols

Rabelais claims that White symbolizes happiness, comfort, and enjoyment in the tenth chapter of Book 1 of Gargantua. For him, all around is white as his spirit is dazzlingly filled with delight. Rabelais points out that White also reflects the light of Christian insights. According to Plato's Laws 956a, the colour white symbolizes the gods. Everyone is amazed by the whale's whiteness in Melville's Moby-Dick. Black has negative connotations in Greek and Latin and is used as a symbol. In Homer, death is depicted as black symbolically (Iliad 2.834). Black has been regarded by Christians as a colour omen, representing mortification, the necessity for purity, and an impending need for salvation.

Martel has employed different colours to portray various emotions and life situations in his works. He has deciphered the deepest recesses of the mind using Black and White colours. He picked the hue white to symbolize Christianity in Life of Pi, which stands for a person's purity and love. The main character Pi, who lives in a secular environment, has a spiritual quest that leads him to combine his faith in Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam during his time as a castaway. Pi's family departs for Canada, but the ship sinks in the Pacific. Pi is a castaway and spends 227 days at sea with Richard Parker, the most dangerous Bengal tiger.

The revelation of Christianity is a white light. I can well imagine an atheist's last words: '"White, white! "L-L-Love! My God!"' and the courageous act on the dying. (LP 64). In Canada, Pi experiences God's presence as he claims, '"One other time I felt God come so close to me." Snow is falling, and it is a winter

day; “All nature was blanketed in white”’ (LP 62). Pi returns home and, as he relates, “In that falling golden dust in that sun-splashed clearing, I saw the Virgin Mary” (LP 62/63), sees the Virgin Mary in the woods. He explains, “Her skin was pale. She was wearing a white dress and a blue cloak; I remember being struck by their pleats and folds”. According to Pi, the colour white in this context stands for both love and beauty: “She looked beautiful and supremely regal. She was smiling at me with loving kindness.” (LP 63) Given that it has a divine nature, the colour white in this context represents godliness, love, joy, and purity. As Pi states, “The presence of God is the finest of rewards” (LP 63); he is graced by the fact that God exists.

Martel has used White as a pivotal colour to represent the thoughts and sentiments of the main characters in The High Mountains of Portugal. In the novel, he uses white to denote innocence and love, representing the divine bond between Peter Tovy and Odo, the chimpanzee. Odo and Peter Tovy's connection is depicted cryptically. After six months after the death of his wife, Tovy discovers Odo in a zoo. Odo travels to Portugal with Peter for his origin and spiritual fulfilment. He develops a strong attachment to the company. Peter perceives Odo's fondness for him as mysterious and senses a spiritual bond between them. Odo reciprocates by showing a great deal of care for Peter's companionship. Peter finds Odo at the Institute for Primate Research at the University of Oklahoma.

The word “White Lily” is employed as a symbol in The High Mountains of Portugal. It stands for the harmony between humans and animals, and purity. Due to its ethereal white hue, the white lily is the flower that appears in literature, the second most often used flower after the rose. The lily symbolizes beauty, brevity, and other high ideals in Latin literature. St. Cecilia receives another lily from Chaucer's nun. It is described as "'hevenes lilie,' / For pure chaastnesse of virginitee" (Second Nun’s Tale 87–88). The lily has been associated with Jesus Christ, the Church, and the Virgin Mary because of its whiteness, which connotes purity, and its beauty, which connotes unmatched perfection.

With no regard for his status as a Canadian Senator, Peter pays the Institute a sizable sum to own the ape and transports it to his native Portugal. Odo and Peter had a spiritual connection fromthe beginning, as Peter himself says of Odo, “He’s been aware of me all along” (HMP 237). Peter enjoys Odo’s companionship. Peter often finds it very puzzling that Odo always wishes for his presence, as he asks himself, “Why Odo wants his presence, his in particular” (HMP 289). Odo has been with him until Peter’s death. Martel used the white flower to symbolize their love’s enigmatic feeling and sincerity. As the narrator says, “The lovely cut flowers so graciously left on the table by Dona Amélia? Before devouring them, Odo extended a white lily to him” (HMP 291). It shows how much Odo cares for Peter. Martel tries to show that Peter and Odo’s relationship is a true love between two humans rather than a love between a human and an ape.

In his novels, Martel makes symbolic use of white and black clothing. Pi travels to Munnar and stops at a church, where the interior is painted white, and the priest is attired in White. White stands for serenity

and faith in God. Pi says, "The vestibule had clean, white walls; the table and benches were of dark wood; and the priest was dressed in a white cassock-it was all neat, plain, simple. I was filled with a sense of peace" (LP 52). According to Pi, a priest's primary responsibility is to preach and spread love because that is what a priest's life is ultimately all about. In describing the role of the priest, Pi registers:

But more than the setting, what arrested me was my intuitive understanding that he was there-open, patient-in case someone, anyone, should want to talk to him; a problem of the soul, a heaviness of the heart, a darkness of the conscience, he would listen with love. He was a man whose profession it was to love, and he would offer comfort and guidance to the best of his ability. (LP 52)

Martel uses the "white shirt" motif in The High Mountains of Portugal. The white shirt is portrayed as the heavenly colour that comforts Tomás in his great distress and crisis. It stands for hope. Tomás encounters many difficulties and sufferings on the way to his quest, including bandits, vehicle malfunctions, a lack of gasoline, inclement weather, fire, etc. Tomás experiences hell when the robbers chase him. He feels like heaven whenever he overcomes obstacles and threats.

After Arez, Tomás switches the route into a designated track to continue his search. He has faith in his map that it will guide him. Unfortunately, he got off track and turned into a few other confusing routes. Due to the abundance of rocks, the tracks' quality degrades. The narrator speaks, "He becomes confused. Surrounding him in all directions is the same rocky, dry, silent countryside, with silver-green olive trees as far as the eye can see and bulbous white clouds boiling up high in the sky". The narrator adds, "He's lost, a castaway. And the night is coming" (HMP 90). Tomás reaches a strange land at night, and the car hits and struck into a large tree. He observes the exquisite winter blossoms on the rock-strewn ground in utter solitude. The narrator registers them as "Pink, light blue, red, white -he doesn't know what kind of flowers they are, only that they are beautiful. He breathes in deeply" (HMP 91). Tomás feels extremely helpless and desperate in this place. Tomás exerts a lot of effort to cut down the tree but still finds it difficult to get his automobile moving again. Tomás is physically and mentally helpless until a peasant with a white shirt suddenly arrives on his facade as a God-sent deliverance. His coming instills confidence in him. The narrator describes the entry of the peasant:

He hears the voice just before a hand touches his shoulder.
"My friend, you are hurt."
He looks up, startled. A peasant has materialized out of the air. Such a bright white shirt he is wearing.
Tomás chokes on his last sob and wipes his face with his hand.
"You've been thrown so far!" says the man.
"Yes," replies Tomás. (HMP 98)

Simão is the peasant's name, and he acts as Tomás's guardian angel. The narrator describes how the peasant comforts Tomás with one of his arms. Simão sets him down on the footboard of the car after half-carrying him there. In Simão's presence, Tomás senses the existence of the all powerful God. Simão assists in guiding the vehicle back onto the correct route. Simão is shown in this view as a peasant wearing a vivid white shirt. White is a colour of salvation and hope. Simão is a divinely sent angel who gives Tomás the motivation and energy to continue his mission. Tomás saw Simão's crucial assistance as the active intervention of God. With joy, Tomás shouts, "Thank you, thank you again" (HMP 103). Simão waves goodbye and moves away from Tomás. Tomás overjoys and believes that he will succeed in his mission.

In Self, Martel uses the colour white as a representation of pride. The white kerchief is a potent symbol used in the novel to represent a culture's pride, attained through killing an innocent animal (a bull). The main character, a travel writer, travels to many nations with various people. She travels to Mexico's well-known tourist destinations with Françoise, a Frenchwoman. They participate in fiesta taurina, an event featuring bullfighting and animal torturing, where the bullfighters' victories are declared by waving white handkerchiefs. The narrator finds the bullfight a barbaric one. On the other hand, the entire community celebrates the win, shouting, "Olé, olé, olé." The narrator continues, "White handkerchiefs waving" (S 236). The white kerchief represents pride in this instance, representing the people's pride in their triumph over the strong bull. It is a cultural sign suggesting that a group of people has triumphed and that success resembles white.The custom of wearing a black colour dress or robe in mourning is depicted when Theseus encounters the march of widows "clad in clothes blake" in Chaucer's Knight's Tale. (899) Black symbolizes bad omens, loss, mourning, death, and the pursuit of spiritual unity in The High Mountains of Portugal. Three different images of women in black have been utilized in the novel. When Tomás is out searching in the first chapter, "Homeless", in the town of Ponte de Sor, he comes across a woman dressed in black. She is clothed entirely in black. Black is represented here as a symbol of ominous signs, as a man addresses the woman as, "Oh, here comes Demetrio and his mother. She's not one you want to cross" (HMP 70). The locals of Ponte de Sor view the older woman, the mother of the town fool Demetrio, as a bad omen and forbid Tomás from approaching or conversing with her. The woman's yell gives Tomás a mystic impression. The elderly mother yells at Tomás because she believes that the only reason her son is sobbing is because Tomás may have taunted the youngster. The black outfit the older woman wears here represents the novel's discussion of loss, death, and grief. Tomás learns about the villagers' customs and the difficulties widows face in Portugal. Tomás and his wrecked car leap out and flee Ponte de Sor rapidly, louder. Black is a colour that represents death and pain. The dark outfit also represents her mental decline and insecurity after losing her husband.

Martel also utilized the colour black to represent Tomás's sorrow and loneliness. The narrator states that the darkness and isolation start to wear on him "when the sun has set, and the sky is inky black" (HMP

93). The unexpected deaths of his father, wife, and kid make Tomás much more isolated. Travelling to a distant land with many obstacles and worries makes him lost. The loss of his loved ones is symbolized by the sunset (the orange colour setting and the black colour emerging), while the pitch-black sky and nighttime represent his mental anguish, misery, and isolation. To find peace in his miserable life, this negative influence drives Tomás to embark on a quest-an inward study of his 'self' directed towards the Almighty God.

The second section, "Homeward", again uses the colour black as a symbol in the form of black clothing. Here, the black dress stands for mystery, search, and death. Maria Dores Passos Castro arrives late at night in São Francisco, the city's main hospital. Eusebio Lozora is the principal pathologist of São Francisco. When Eusebio Lozora opens the door, Maria is standing there strangely, wearing all black and holding a large bag. The narrator describes:

This woman is older. A black-dressed widow. A stranger. She eyes him. There is a large beat-up suitcase at her feet. Surely the woman hasn't been travelling at this late hour? He notes something else. Hidden by wrinkles, blurred by time, hindered by black peasant dress, but shining through nonetheless: The woman is a great beauty. A luminous face, a striking figure, a graceful carriage. (HMP 171)

Maria Castro looks weird, and her eyes search for a strange fact. Maria Castro needs Eusebio's assistance to perform the autopsy on her husband, Rafael Miguel Santos Castro, whose body is kept in the bag. She wants to understand "how Rafael lived" by unravelling the mystery, not how he died. As they converse:
"And what do you want me to do with him, Senhora Castro?"
"Open him up, tell me how he lived." (HMP 184)

By talking about her past life and her love for her husband, Maria persuades the hesitant Eusebio to perform the autopsy. Rafael was a church caretaker, and he and his wife lost their little kid in an accident (who was hit by Tomás' automobile in the novel's opening section), which the villagers still regard as an unusual death. When Eusebio checks Rafael's dead body, he discovers several odd items, including a flute, playing cards, a crimson cloth, and other things, adding to the story's mystery. Martel uses black to symbolize sadness and loss, explicitly connecting it to Portuguese culture. The narrator says, "She's wearing black, but so does every woman over forty in rural Portugal who has lost some relative somewhere." The narrator adds, "The apparel of mourning is a permanent dress for rural women." (HMP 181/182) Maria Castro is shown to be a woman who is grieving and lost. She lost two priceless lives, her beloved spouse and her only son. The grief on her son's death is expressed as, "What's the point of being a mother if you have no one to mother?

It's like being a flower without a head. On the day our son died, I became a bald stem" (HMP 202).The world appears empty and dark to her.

When the autopsy is completed, Maria moves all the strange items (obtained from Rafael's corpse) into a suitcase. Maria eventually removes her black dress and submits herself to Rafael's lifeless body. Eusebio sews the stitches of Rafael's body as he hears Maria's faint voice, as it is said, '"He hears her only faintly as he finishes the torso: "Thank you, Senhor doctor."' (HMP 209) Maria Castro acknowledges that her home is her husband's body. The narrator says, "Leaning over Rafael Castro's body, nudging here and there, pushing and wiggling, making space where there seems to be none, filled as he is already with two creatures, Maria Castro carefully settles into her husband's body." She repeats, "This is home, this is home, this is home." (HMP 208/209) It serves as a reminder that Adam and Eve were created from his ribs. Maria's spiritual journey reveals her deepest desire to be united with her husband.

Martel again focuses on using the colour black to represent death in the third chapter of the novel "Home". He discusses the widows' black clothing and connects it to the ape's black colour. Odo's darkness is displayed to explain the deeper meanings of colour symbolism. In this section, Martel depicts the Portuguese tradition of widows donning black clothing to signify death and sadness. The narrator describes, "As a result, the village widows who at first shrank away from him, retreating into surliness, transform into the most devoted ones to him." The narrator adds, "It's a good fit, the short, stooped woman dressed in black and the short, stooped animal with the black coat. One might be forgiven for mistaking one for the other from a distance. (HMP 306)

Martel is keen on the traditional and cultural merits of the black colour. It is typically portrayed as the colour of sorrow, death, and loss. The black dresses worn by Portuguese widows convey a lot about the loss-related pain they are experiencing. The black colour is a metaphor for Peter's grief at the recent loss of his beloved wife. Even chimpanzees are black; they do not emit any negative vibes. Odo's life had tragic experiences in the zoo, and with Peter, he enjoys complete freedom and has a spiritual connection with him.

Martel frequently utilized the colour black to represent bitter traits in his works. In Life of Pi, he used black to symbolize loss and death. Pi is thrown out to a lifeboat, and he notices the blackness of the ship in the hovering dark whirlwind. Pi says, "When I looked overboard, the drop wasn't sheer anymore. I could see the ship's great black side" (LP 103). The colour of the ship indicates not only the destruction of the enormous ship but also the fear and hopeless condition of Pi. The ship's black side refers to the darker side of life. Indeed, his lurking heart with a glimpse of hope expecting to be saved by the mercy of God.

Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, Hades, the river of the dead is black (29). The novel also makes use of the symbol 'Black Ocean'. Pi associates the sorrow and suffering from the unexpected loss to the black ocean. Pi says, "There was nothing. Only rain, marauding waves of the black ocean, and the flotsam of tragedy. The darkness melted away from the sky. The rain stopped" (LP 107). Pi is in absolute blackness

in the lifeboat on the black sea. The line "I seemed to be floating in pure, abstract blackness" is uttered by Pi (LP 118). Pi is accompanied by four wild animals in the lifeboat, including the deadly hyena and the dangerous Bengal tiger. Pi witnesses the vicious hyena's terrible brutality as it attacks the helpless zebra and innocent orangutan. Pi fears the hyena and especially at night. "Everything about the end of the day scared me," he claims. "At night, a ship would have difficulty seeing me. At night; the hyena might become active again and maybe Orange Juice too." (LP 118) His heart fears and begs God to take him away from the obsceneness of the colour black.

Black represents horror. The blackness refers to the horror and grief of the ship's wreckage and its members' deaths. The shipwreck scene is given more catching in the movie Life of Pi, by its director Ang Lee. The loud expiration, groans, grunts, and numerous wet mouth sounds in the pitch-blackness symbolize the death cries of his relatives and the passengers of the enormous ship. Pi frequently dives from the lifeboat to save himself during the dark times at sea, especially from the dangerous Parker. Pi feels tragic in the hopeless position of floating in the dark Pacific Ocean. "Being in the water was terrifying," quips Pi. "It was cold, dark, and furious" (LP 106). Here, black symbolizes both the brutal nature of the murky sea and the threat posed by animals. Pi constructs a raft connected to the lifeboat to protect himself from potential threats. He endures excellent hardships when sleeping on the raft, nevertheless, during the nights. "Pitch-black darkness" represents Pi's miserable circumstances and his heart filled with fear of animals and the water, as well as the grief of loss and the passing of his parents. He has moments when he questions whether all his setbacks and hardships result from God's wrath.

On the other hand, Pi chooses not to give up on God and continues to believe, love, and live. Pi says, "Despair was a heavy blackness that let no light in or out. It was a hell beyond expression. I thank God it always passed." He adds, "The blackness would stir and eventually disappear, and God would remain a shining point of light in my heart. I would go on loving." (LP 209) Pi overcomes all the blackness of his sea life through his strong hope and deep faith in God. Pi's words make the statement strong:

And now I leave matters in the hands of God, who is love and whom I love.
I heard the words, "Is someone there?"
It's astonishing what you hear when you're alone in the blackness of your dying mind. A sound without shape or colour sounds strange. To be blind is to hear otherwise. (LP 242)

Martel employed the colour black to represent mystery and death in Beatrice and Virgil. Another vital symbol Martel uses in Beatrice and Virgil: "black water." The taxidermist includes numerous scenes that depict the misery, brutality, and fatalities experienced during the Holocaust in his allegorical drama. The taxidermist explains some awful deeds, which a cruel boy and his companions instigate, on some innocent women and their children, which the characters Beatrice and Virgil witness. The same boy who

kills Beatrice and Virgil carries out the horrific acts. Here, black symbolizes death and brutality, which neglects compassion and mercy and serves as a catalyst to wish for goodness and benevolence in the name of God.

Beatrice and Virgil are standing by the village pond when they see two young women running towards the pond wearing long skirts and heavy peasant boots, fearing the boy and a gang of men. According to the taxidermist, “Terror and the grimmest determination were written on the women’s faces.” (BV 180) He continues, “The men lining the edge of the pond-there must have been ten or so-far from offering any kind of help, jeered the women on.” (BV 181) Because they fear the gang, the young women drop and drown their babies in the dark water. The taxidermist says, “When she was confident that her baby could no longer be alive, yet still clutching it beneath the surface, one of the women, now past her waist in the black water, plunged head first and immediately drowned.” He adds, “Neither she nor her baby broke the surface again. They both sank to the bottom.” (BV 181) In the gloomy pond of death, the young women commit suicide and drown. The taxidermist writes, “Whereas the first woman’s death had proceeded with the swiftness of gravity, the second woman’s took longer.” (BV 181) He describes their struggle to die. The boy and his group rejoice when the mothers struggle and lose their infants. The black water pond represents the Holocaust-related sorrow and deaths. Even though they had some faith in divine power, they did not relish watching their infants perish at the hands of ruthless men.

In Life of Pi, when Pi was a castaway at sea, he experienced heavy white lightning while enveloping the gloom of his sorrows. Frustrated, He groans, “Once there was lightning. The sky was so black, the day looked like the night” (LP 232). His sufferings are represented by black, and his positive energy is represented by white. Pi witnesses a white splinter pierce the water as it falls from the sky. It appears to be a sizeable celestial tree standing in the water with white roots. This scene in the movie Life of Pi is presented beautifully by its director. Pi believes it to be a sign of hope, survival, and a direct order of affirmation from God. Pi expresses his excitement and sense of awe by saying, "It was something to pull me out of my limited mortal ways and thrust me into a state of exalted wonder" (LP 233). The whiteness of celestial lightning repeatedly blesses Pi and Richard Parker. Pi details his experience:

For two, perhaps three seconds, a gigantic, blinding white shard of glass from a broken cosmic window danced in the sky, insubstantial yet overwhelmingly powerful. Ten thousand trumpets and twenty thousand drums could not have made as much noise as that bolt of lightning; it was positively deafening. The sea turned white, and all colour disappeared. Everything was either pure white light or pure black shadow. (LP 233)

In the paragraph above, the phrase “the sea turned white” is a potent symbol that highlights the superiority of light, which has a better quality to rid Pi’s consciousness of the sea of anguish and

suffering. In Christianity, God is white, whereas evil and Satan are black. Here, the white colour's strength dispels Pi and Richard Parker's agony and suffering's dark shadow. Pi says, '"I shouted, "Stop your trembling! This is a miracle. This is an outbreak of divinity."' (LP 233) Pi abruptly forgets all of the difficulties and the sadness all around him. Pi is rendered speechless and suffocates in genuine happiness and ecstasy. The white light is a heavenly message of blessing and deliverance. Thus, the colour white has inspired kind thoughts in Pi's mind, which has helped him understand God's omnipresence and how God's compassion can help him survive.

6. Conclusion

Symbolism is employed to explain the ways that go beyond what is communicated. To increase the importance of symbols in work, writers use literary devices like metaphors, similes, and allegories. Symbolism has the power to make sensations and emotions more beautiful. Symbols can also powerfully draw readers' attention. Colour symbolism represents something outside of its literal sense. Colour is an essential tool in storytelling. Writers of different genres have used it powerfully to instantly set the tone and mood and infuse the words' deeper meanings. Besides, the colours are also used to convey subtle messages that reveal the influence of culture, religion,spirituality, and individual perception through the colours. In his novels, Martel has advocated using colours as symbolic representations and incorporated significant hidden meanings through their use. Black and white colours are successfully used by Martel as symbols to symbolize the equally opposing feelings and circumstances of his main characters. The desire for the individual search and hope in God is seen in Martel's protagonists. Through the colours, God is the essential force driving all attempts and deeds, despite denial and violence, and good people can still find the omnipotent God even in the dire circumstances of Martel's prime characters. According to M.H. Abrams and Ernest Jones' symbolic theories, a symbol can effectively communicate inner intentions and emotions. Through the use of colour symbolism, author Yann Martel has been successful in expressing the intentions and feelings of his characters. Further research can be doneon Yann Martel's novels from the perspectives of religious, mythic, archetypal, aesthetic, and individual symbolism.

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