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The Corrosion of Culture among the Second-Generation Immigrants in the Works of Jhumpa Lahiri

Sarmistha Das

Abstract

A known face in the literary world, JhumpaLahiri encapsulates what it means to be a global citizen in today's world, possessing knowledge of more than one language and culture. In her works, we find how diasporic Populations and immigrants have been brought up away from their homeland, wherein they no longer have linguistic restrictions, and boundaries based on country culture,but on the contrary with an emphasison multi ethnicity and plurality of languages, which have become a core part of their lives, something which was incogitable in the generation of forefathers. English for them had a 'colonial' and therefore a negative connotation and in India, her homeland, emphasis has always been laid upon the use of mother tongue. However, while residing in foreign country, using English is key to "fit in" and to that effect one often finds oneself in conundrum regarding whether to keep a clear demarcation between when to use which language,

to discard the mother tongue entirely. Hence this fragile link tween language, culture, and identity in Lahiri explores the ltifaceted relationships of individuals with their families and ditions which in turn come into contact with foreign cultures ross global spaces.

Keywords: Generation, Culture, Identity, Immigrants, anguage

Ever since the 20th century, there is a continued and increased nflux of Indian married couples who are immigrating to the United States of America or the USA. Quite naturally thus, one of the esults of their settlement abroad is giving birth to offspring here,and most of the literary manifestationof such offspringis in the form of adolescentsand teenagers in the works of Lahiri. Known as "today's generation", her narratives voice the confusion and ambiguity which they harbor towards their homeland culture and mother tongue, while English remains persistently the language they speak with pleasure and ability.

In Nation and Narration Bhabha observes, "…. such cultural movements disperse the homogeneous, visual time of the horizontal society because 'the present is no longer a mother-form [read mother-tongue or mother-land] around which are gathered and differentiated the future would be but modifications." Bhabha uses the concept of hybridity to analyze the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized as ambivalent and therefrom claims that cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he terms as the"Third space of enunciation" (37). This third space consists of the hybrid identity as affected by cultural diversity and differences: it is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory….may open up the way to conceptualizing an international

culture, based not on the exotism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (38). It is this third space or the in-between space that contains the meaning of cultureand develops hybridity, which is true in the case of immigrant parents-Ashima and Ashoke in The Namesake.

Contrasted with their parents, the second-generation Indian immigrants in Lahiri are willing to do away with their Indian culture entirely- if their Indian parents can argue that India was, is and forever will be their home and homeland,they would retort backand declare that the only placethey consideras their home and homeland is America. Lahiri's narrative technique through the child's perspective is handled very deftly in order to reveal what really goes on in the mind ofa childwho has always known USAas its homeland. In The Namesake, when Gogol is a young adult and involved in romantic entanglements with white women, one of them,Maxine, expresses her surprise regarding how wildly different his family is: that all his parents' friends are Bengali, that they had an arranged marriage, that his mother cooks Indian food everyday, that she wears traditional saris. "But you're so different. I would have never thought that." Her remark makes him acutely aware of how their lives bear no resemblance to that of her parents who openly display affection towards each other. Seeing the two of them together, Gogol is reminded that in all his life he has never witnessed a single moment of affection between his parents because for them, love is utterly private, uncelebrated thing. The encounter between Maxine and Gogol's parents is a moment of shock for the latter as she addresses them by their first names, something which is forbidden in Indian society. Hence both Gogol and Sonia are as far- flung as possible from their Indian roots and make no attempt to learn a thing their parents try to indoctrinate within them – however, Gogol undergoes a slight change when Ashoke dies, and he finds the urge to shave his head according to Bengali death rituals, Years later Gogol had learned the

significance,that it was a Bengali son's duty to shave his head in the wake of ha parent's death.But at the time Gogol was too young to understand; when the bathroom door opened, he had laughed at the sight of hairless, grief-stricken father, and Sonia, just a baby, had cried".

It was Ashoke's train accident and partial paralysis that had inspired him to move as far away as possibleand start a new life on the other side of the world. For him, it was staying in a foreign land whilst remaining Indian at heart, but for his son, right from birththere was an identity crisis, starting with the mistake of his being named Gogol, defining and distressing him for so many years. He spent his childhood trying to correct the randomness of that error, but yet it had not been possible to reinvent himself fully, to break from that mismatched name. His marriage to another immigrant, Moushumi, had been something of a mishap as well.Though these events have contributed to shaping Gogol into who he becomes by the end of the novel, it is impossible to miss how he throughout is desirous to fit in. we receive a visual proof of this in Mira Nair's adaptation of the novel into a movie. As is characteristicof most of immigrant children, Gogol is determined to not speak in his native tongue, ignoring the repeated behest of his parents. Generation gap between parents and children is a potent source of c conflict in every family, but it is exacerbated in situations where culture in a foreign land comes into play. Michael W. Cox states that Lahiri's youngest characters provide her readers with "amore probing insight, perhaps, than her adult characters might allow into cultural difference and cultural accommodation, and in particular, into the not uncommon impulse to exaggerate or exoticize distinctions" (120). According to Cox, children do not come with the same emotional or cultural baggage as their adult counterpart and therefore are "largely judgement-free" (121), allowing them to act as translators between American culture and Indian culture (or Indian American culture). Essentially, his notion is that children in Lahiri"s novels are not only observers

and mediators between two majority differing worlds that encounter each other on American soil but are also given the burden of being the conduit that would create a kind of middle ground that allows them to explore a culture outside their own. The influence of white children plays a significant role in this, for often they are racist in their approaches to their Indian peers, asking them why their skin tone and hair is darker. At a tender, impressionable age, Indian children automatically assume that there is something wrong with not being like their white counterparts, which catapults the process of discarding Indian culture in favour of Western culture. When they become teenagers, the desire further increases to emulate Western ideals in order to have a comfortable standing among friends, thereby leading the corrosion of culture to a point of little or no return.

Bela in The Lowland is the author's portrayal of progression from a childhood without a maternal presence to maturity- she becomes a victim of alienation and withdraws herself from family, and as is common in the West but never in India, decides to follow a nomadic life and never marry. The psychological displacement she undergoes is solely due to the eccentric and capricious behavior of Gauri. It is only years later, that the 34-year-old Bela finally discovers the truth of her parentage and though enraged at the disclosure, forgives Subhash- since he has been the only parent she has ever really had been loved by. However, this does not motivate her to embrace her culture, on the contrary Bela completely adopts a certain American way of life and indulges herself in a tattoo that was like an open cuff above her ankle, bleaches a section of her hair, and adds a silver hoop to her nose.She does not feel the need to visit Shubhash on a regular basis as sha feels no sense of duty towards him other than on certain occasions like during Christmas or at emergency. When she leaves him, she never tells him where she would be heading next or when she would return again; this way is her chosen one, a "rootless path" nonetheless. Shubhash has no choice but to learn

to accept er unconventional, independent life, no matter how far-fetched it is from the way he would have wanted to rear a child, according to the Indian way of life; however, he never tries to interfere with her Americanized life though deep within his mind, he always worries for her, for the possibility of a future marriage.

The loneliness of Ruma is well understood by her father as he finds her in the situation of herwife. His wife has also experienced the pang of managing the family alone in the foreign land and has suffered deeper solitude. Like her mother, Ruma, though second-generation expatriate and familiar with the American lifestyle, is not exception to the solitude of life. Ruma's dilemma is the result of her upbringing. Children obtain the sense of filial duty from their family set-up; and the second-generationdiasporas, like Ruma, are aloof from the concern for the aged members, the concern that connect the family in India. On the other hand, the modern western family is mostly nuclear, and hence, isolates the the elders; everyone composesa family for themselves. It is the impact of such a family pattern that leavesRuma continually in dilemma regarding whether her father should live with her family; though she very soon realizes that her father turns out to be a great help, rather than a burden. We observe the lifestyles of father versus daughter in a foreign set up, while the former leads a life of se of self-reliance whole maintaining his culture, the latter was accused of "being ashamed to be Indian" by her mother when was alive.

The second generation definitely assimilates faster, but their problem is of different nature. Having been born in the new country, they can embrace and adopt anew culture more easily, but this does not alleviate their sense of denial which is exacerbated when they are constantly reminded by their peers that they do not belong. The first-generation diasporic Indians have an emotional investment in the country of their origin but the second-generation diasporic Indians have no direct links with their cultural roots. They identify

themselves with their motherland through their parentage. As they ascend to adulthood, they become more aware in expressing their anguish about the dual nature of their identity. It is a constant process of switching on and off between two modes of living- the stereotypical Indian inside the four walls of their homes, and the American outside. In this connection, Shubhashree Mukherjee rightly points out:" a cultural drift, pulling the second and third generations embracing a new and fascinating way of life is brought forth through the espousing of Americans by the non-native Bengalis. Several couples in the stories are shown to perform inter-community marriages or possess secret ties with American or British nationalists of the opposite sex. Untoward happenings failed love affairs, unsuccessful marriages, alcoholism and unlawful relationships make the lives of second and third generation immigrants miserable."(Mukherjee, 2010:63)

Lahiri seems to have voyaged in such the very journey she has written about. Her stories describe with universal compassion, the fragmentation of identities, the alienation and sense of loneliness experienced by all immigrants, giving voice to their anguish and probing into complex psychoses. The question of identity which is always a difficult one, but more so for those who are culturally displaced, like the immigrants are, of those who grow up simultaneously. The idea of India as homeland, roots and history of the first generation is nothing more than a figment of imagination,a childhood narrative or even amyth. America is their reality, their place of activity and the soil that sustains and nourishes them. The natural outcome is hybridity, a blend of Indian origin with western mindset. The sense of loss, severance and alienation is negligible as opposed to their parents as the second generation gets caught in the dynamics of the changing world around them.

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A Feminist Cartography of Loss: Displacement, Belonging, and Women's Memory in the Film *Mati*

*Sarmistha Das**

The intimate, embodied, and silent aspects of historical trauma—aspects that are frequently missing from official historiography—have consistently been highlighted in women's work. By using female memory, home space, and intergenerational heritage to trace relocation and grief, the movie *Mati* takes part in this feminist intervention. The movie *Mati* can be interpreted as a feminist cartography of loss in which women's experiences of Partition and its aftermath serve as a mediator for geography, memory, and identity. The chapter analyses how the movie relates to the issues and narrative techniques of women's writing by drawing on postcolonial theory, feminist historiography, trauma studies, and cultural geography. The story centers on Meghla Choudhury a historian by profession deeply attached to her ancestral roots in Bangladesh.

Mapping political, cultural, and emotional absence onto actual locations rather than geographical boundaries is known as "Cartography of loss." This kind of mapping is consistent with Pierre Nora's concept of Lieux de Mémoire which holds that when lived memory starts to fade, memory attaches itself to locations (Nora 7).

Forced migration and identity disruptions, especially as a result of Partition, have had a significant impact on South Asian history. The emotional topography left behind—lost houses, broken families, and inherited memories—is frequently explored

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in films that revisit this terrible region. The movie '*Mati*' places itself in this tradition. It follows the protagonist as she returns to her ancestral homeland, showing how a location can become a storehouse of suffering and memories.

This essay examines *Mati* via the academic prism of "cartography of loss," which is a mapping of historical and emotional shifts. Instead, telling a straightforward tale of return, *Mati* examines how the past is still present in places, things, and public perception.

Meghla the protagonist of the movie, upon discovery of her grandmother's murder travels to Bangladesh to confront the past. A helpful framework for comprehending how the ancestral house in *Mati* becomes both intimate and alien is provided by Homi K. Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness—the estrangement felt within familiar surroundings (Bhabha 9). As a result, the movie turns space into an emotional repository with inscriptions of loss and memory.

The concept of *unhomeliness* is justified in *Mati* through Meghla's encounter with her ancestral home in Bangladesh. When she enters the house, she recognizes its spatial familiarity—rooms, corridors, and domestic arrangements—yet remains emotionally displaced. The presence of another family living in the house intensifies this estrangement. The home is no longer a site of comfort but a reminder of historical rupture. This moment visualizes Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness, where the private space of home is disrupted by public history, producing a sense of belonging and unbelonging simultaneously (Bhabha 9). The film thus translates theory into lived spatial experience.

Meghla's reading of her grandma Kumudini's diary exemplifies Hirsch's theory of post memory. Meghla responds with grief, wrath, and resentment—emotions disproportionate to her own experienced experience. The film's focus on inherited memory, where trauma is passed down through textual fragments rather than firsthand observation, justifies this response. Meghla is able to emotionally embody a history she never experienced by using the journal as a post memorial object that shrinks temporal distance (Hirsch 22). The idea that trauma is affective and intergenerational is supported by this scene.

Mati challenges linear historical narratives by focusing on a female protagonist whose relationship to Partition is inherited rather than lived, emphasizing what Marianne Hirsch refers to as post memory—the generational transfer of trauma (Hirsch, 22). The film is situated within a feminist tradition that values emotional truth over territorial claims due to its focus on domestic spaces, silences, and ethical healing. This chapter argues that *Mati* extends the discourse of women's writing into film by redefining belonging as a relational and ethical engagement with memory rather than land ownership.

Movies and literature on partition have come to recognize that displacement is not experienced by everyone in the same way. Women's experiences of Partition were dominated by sexual abuse, homelessness, and forced silence, as feminist researchers like Ritu Menon and Urvashi Butalia have shown (Butalia, 13; Menon & Bhasin, 43). Kumudini's death is never openly discussed within the family; her suffering survives only through fragmented diary entries. By identifying the source of pain in Kumudini, the grandmother whose death during Partition serves as the narrative's emotional focal point.

The silencing of Kumudini's story within Meghla's family directly reflects feminist historiographical arguments about women erased Partition experiences. The film never stages Kumudini's death visually; instead, it remains partially narrated, fragmented, and unresolved. This absence mirrors what Butalia identifies as the syste*Matic* suppression of women's trauma within family memory and national history (Butalia 3–5). The film moment where Meghla realizes that her family avoided discussing Kumudini's fate justifies the application of feminist historiography to the narrative.

Kumudini never speaks directly in the film; her voice is mediated through writing and memory.

Despite Kumudini's physical absence, her presence is sensed throughout the ancestral home through spatial imprints, diary entries, and memories. What Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to as the subaltern female subject—one whose voice is historically erased—is represented by her body, vulnerability, and silent suffering (Spivak 287). In keeping with feminist narrative principles

that reject voyeuristic depictions of female pain, the film avoids spectacularizing her trauma by letting her absence speak.

Mati emphasizes relocation as a gendered wound that is passed down through matrilineal memory rather than patriarchal ancestry through Kumudini's story. This strategy places the movie completely in the language of women's writing, where history is frequently told via household upheaval and personal tragedy.

Women's writing is distinguished by its preference for oral testimony, diaries, letters, and personal tales over official history. Kumudini's journal serves as a feminist counter-archive in *Mati*, providing an alternative historical account that challenges erasure and silence.

In this context, Marianne Hirsch's theory of post memory is very pertinent. Meghla, the main character, inherited the anguish of Partition through textual and emotional transmission even though she did not experience it (Hirsch 22). The diary serves as a conduit for memory to move across space and time, converting personal sorrow into historical awareness.

As a feminist counter-archive, the diary in *Mati* challenges state-centric Partition histories that place more emphasis on political events than on individual suffering (Butalia 13). *Mati* is in line with women's literary traditions that reclaim history via personal narratives rather than formal documentation because of her emphasis on private recollection.

The house, courtyard, and village evoke strong emotional responses despite no physical ownership. The ancestral home in *Mati* is a prime example of what Yi-Fu Tuan refers to as the emotional construction of place, in which attachment and memory give space significance (Tuan 6).

The house becomes a shared space of memory rather than a site of exclusive ownership. The house is now an unfamiliar place haunted by survival and loss rather than a place of possession. In keeping with Edward Soja's concept of Third space, where lived experience subverts fixed spatial oppositions, its takeover by another family complicates binary ideas of victim and offender (Soja 56).

Mati's emphasis on internal domestic spaces is consistent with feminist geography, which acknowledges the house as an essential location of vulnerability and belonging.

The film avoids graphic depiction of violence and instead relies on pauses, silences, and emotional restraint. Trauma theory suggests that extreme experiences resist direct representation and instead emerge through repetition and silence (Caruth 4). *Mati* employs this strategy through pauses, restrained dialogue, and visual stillness. Such narrative restraint reflects feminist storytelling practices that resist closure and spectacle.

Meghla decides not to reclaim the ancestral home and instead acknowledges the suffering of the current occupants.

The film's ethical resolution—where Meghla chooses empathy over reclamation—resonates with Carol Gilligan's feminist ethics of care, which emphasize relational responsibility over retributive justice (Gilligan 19). Belonging, therefore, is redefined as ethical engagement rather than territorial possession.

By emphasizing women's memories, domestic space, and ethical reconciliation, *Mati* presents a potent feminist re-mapping of relocation. The film's geography of loss is in line with women's work that questions nationalist divisions and patriarchal historiography. Feminist thinkers have suggested that honoring women's experiences during the Partition is an ethical intervention into history itself rather than just an act of healing (Butalia 278). *Mati* shows how film may serve as a feminist archive of memory and connection by converting loss into a common human geography.

Every theoretical framework used in *Mati* naturally arises from certain film moments rather than being forced from the outside. Abstract theory is regularly translated into lived cine*Matic* experience through the story, spatial design, and character selections. The film's interpretation as a feminist cartography of loss is strengthened and the multidisciplinary approach is justified by the strong alignment between theory and cine*Matic* material.

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Reframing Womanhood: Discourses, Identities and Resistance is a multidisciplinary edited volume that explores women's identities, struggles, empowerment, and resistance in contemporary society. The book discusses themes such as motherhood, reproductive rights, unpaid care work, digital feminism, political participation, education, and marginalized women's experiences. Through literary, social, economic, and historical perspectives, the articles challenge patriarchal norms and highlight women's agency and resilience. Special emphasis is given to voices from Assam and Northeast India. The volume promotes gender equality, inclusive knowledge production, and feminist scholarship, making it a valuable academic resource for students, researchers, and scholars



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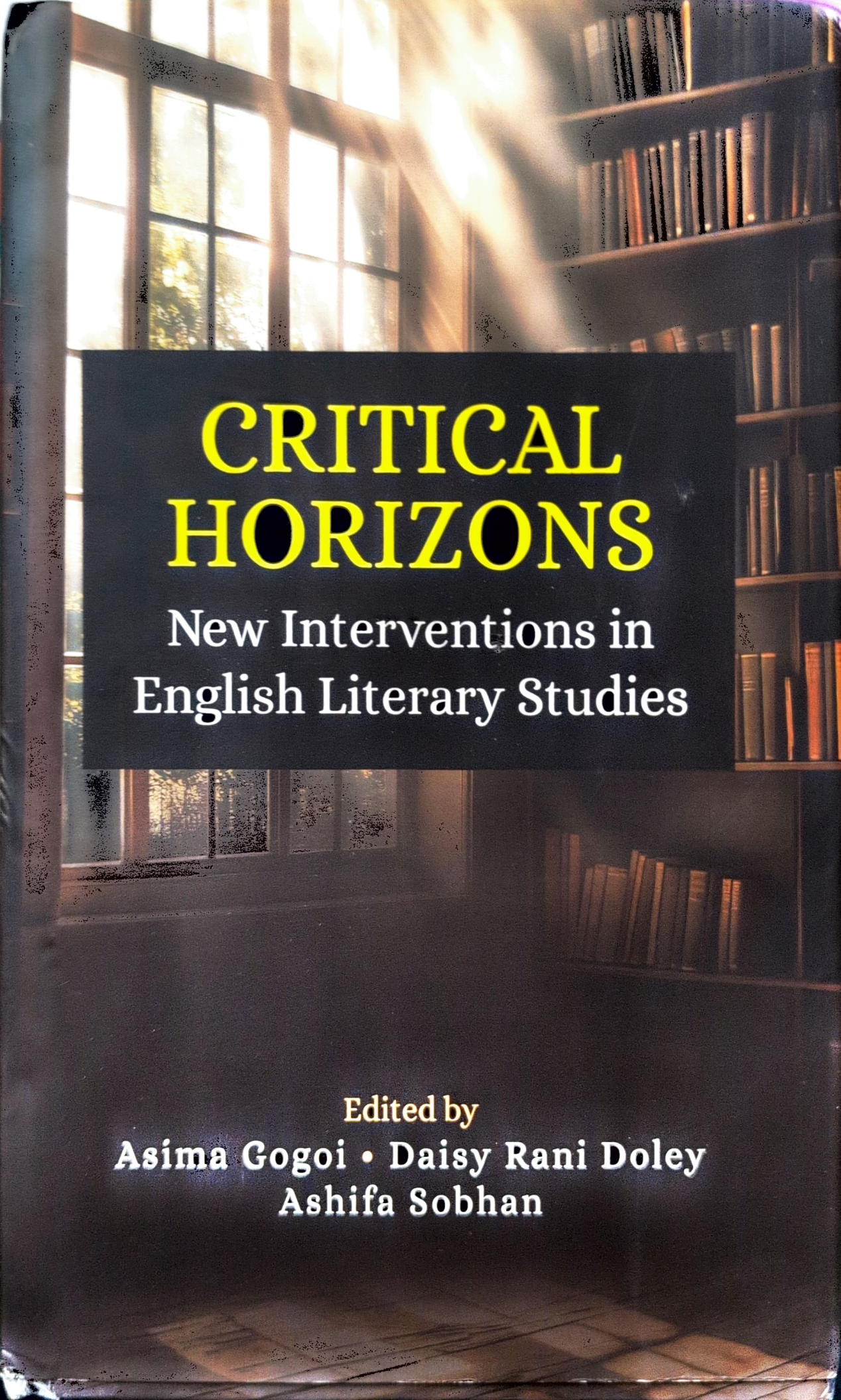
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Voices at the Margin: A Feminist Interpretation of Manik Bandopadhyay's "The Final Solution"

Sarmistha Das

Introduction

Manik Bandopadhyay is an Indian author regarded as one of the prominent writers of 20th Century Bengali Literature. He is known for his sharp portrayal of harsh realities of life, psychoanalytical depth, marginality, and social inequality. In *"The Final Solution"*, he focuses towards the human psyche under pressure—where poverty, moral decay, and social power intersect. A feminist approach to this text reveals how women's oppression is interlaced into the fabric of the narrative. Feminist literary theory is a highly effective and indeed essential tool for analyzing multi-layered gender relations within the narrative.

Feminist Literary Theory is applied in the story "The Final Solution" to highlight the struggle, exploitation and resilience of women during partition. Mallika is positioned as a symbol of both vulnerability and resiliency since her story reflects the challenges women encountered following the Partition. In order to support her family, she is compelled to defy gender norms and expectations by leaving the home, a choice that is frequently portrayed as rebellious in a patriarchal society. The combined forces of gender-based violence and class exploitation make her struggle even more difficult. This story explores the feminist critique of patriarchy by analyzing how it constructs and polices gender roles, renders women economically dependent and commodified, and both restricts and reclaims women's bodily autonomy. Mallika's situation and Bandopadhyay's critique of

patriarchy can be illuminated through scholarly feminist theories such as Marxist, intersectional and postcolonial feminism which collectively reveal the layers of her oppression and resistance. In "The Final Solution", these concerns help unpack how women exist within a system that continuously negates their agency. Male voices predominate in moments involving ideological debate throughout The Final Solution. Women are present but silent, while men explain political logic, defend violence, and discuss solutions. Without being recognised as participants, they pass around these areas doing household chores or listening. Women in the narrative are structurally forced to remain silent rather than being quiet by nature. They are present when decisions about safety and violence are made, but they do not give their agreement. From the feminist point of view this silence as epistemic violence, in which women are deprived of both narrative validity and power.

The patriarchal power is represented in male character Pramatha a self-proclaimed protector, preys on women. In the story we find how patriarchal norms valorizes women as 'Second Sex' and venerable while simultaneously exploiting them. This process shows how patriarchal protection turns into exploitation.

The crux of Mallika's problem is her financial despair. The chaotic and lawless condition created by the partition led to widespread abuses where women's bodies were treated as commodities to be exploited and controlled for profit. Mallika due to hunger and starvation had no choice but to trade her body. In Marxist terms, poverty and patriarchy turn Mallika's body into a commodity. Many critics pointed this economic dependence. Mallika's poverty is reflected through the length of her spread mattress on the Sealdah station platform with her child crying for food. Everything, everyone the entire world of them is squeezed in this small spreadsheet – "Mallika her husband Bhushan, their two-and-a-half-year-old son Khokon and her widowed sister-in-law Asha; tin suitcases, beddings, bundles, pots and pans" (19). The perilous and ephemeral of such a location may cause the reason for the family's rootless and destabilized existence. When the tout Pramatha comes to Mallika with the offer of "some jobs still available for women", she smells the risk, yet one look at her child "now reduced to a skeleton" allows her consent, as she says "there is no other way out for us". Concerns about women's safety become more apparent

as the story's political tension rises. The story frequently switches focus to male-given directives about where women should stay, how they should stay within, or how they should be protected. Although this is presented as a worry, the text quietly exposes how controlling it is.

Women are not questioned about their preferences or perceptions of the hazard. Their bodies take crucial symbolic roles in the imagining of community honour. This is in accordance with feminist criticisms of nationalism, which argue that during times of conflict, women are frequently portrayed as protectors of cultural integrity. Mallika in such distress had no other option but to cling to Pramatha to save her child. Critic Roy calls Mallika's body 'the only medium through which she can transcend economic oppression'. Her maternal love compels her to compromise her body and dignity. As she says to her sister-in-law, Asha," I would be ready to die if that could keep my child alive". In Marxist terms poverty and patriarchal social relations turn Mallika's body into a commodity.

Bandopadhyay depicts patriarchal social system that not only devalues but also commodifies women. Partition does not allow Mallika to stay as a dutiful wife and mother it intrudes her domestic space ad turns into a hellish state of exception. Circumstance compels her to be the breadwinner of the family. Patriarchy forces her into the public sphere of work under extreme duress sacrificing her dignity to feed her child.

The character of Mallika is used to illustrate how women's body becomes site of contention under patriarchy controlled by male desire. Mallika the protagonist is enticed by Pramatha with the fundamental human needs for survival but immediately targets her body, treating as a commodity within the economy of male desire. Despite accepting the offer of flesh trade by Pramatha, Mallika is repulsed when Pramatha makes sexual advances to her. "She had accepted the fact that Pramatha was going to engage her in prostitution but she could not tolerate the fact Pramatha was going to enjoy her first before introducing her to the profession" (29).

Women's domestic work emerges as an important but underappreciated aspect of the story thanks to Manik Bandopadhyay's attentiveness to everyday life. Men can engage in ideological conflict because women take care of the home, cook, take care of children, and handle emotional stress. According to Marxist feminist theory,

this type of employment is consistently undervalued since it produces no discernible economic profit (Federici 8). Despite being missing from political discourse, women's unpaid labour supports both familial and political life in The Final Solution. This erasure presents women as doubly marginalised beings by exposing the nexus between gender and class oppression.

Bandopadhyay's story depicts women as economically dependent and socially vulnerable, showing how class and gender oppression reinforce each other. Postcolonial Feminism is also seen to be reflected in this story through the depiction of the female protagonist Mallika's struggle for agency. Mallika's character symbolizes a deviant femininity. Rather remaining docile and submissive she challenges the patriarchal cultural norm and goes out to ensure her family's survival, by adopting prostitution. Women experience ongoing vulnerability, psychological fear, and a decline in household safety as a result of violence. According to a feminist interpretation, the story's violence is ingrained in women's daily lives long before it manifests as a clear political incident.

In colonial Bengal—where the story is set—women's bodies became political and social sites of control. A postcolonial feminist reading reveals how structural poverty and colonial economic pressure shape the lives of the female character. Partition and class oppression has forced Mallika in a vulnerable position. Being a female and a refugee was an added disadvantage for her body to be commodified. Pramatha who appeared to be a human God promised to support her with food and shelter was actually larking over her body for capital gain. In these power battles, men might utilize women as symbols to reinforce the dual nature of patriarchal oppression between and within genders. Therefore, this intricate interaction of power, authority, and societal expectations ingrained in patriarchal culture is reflected in the representation of masculine characters.

In "The Final Solution", male characters express politics in terms of finality, justice, and need. In contrast, women react to violence with hesitancy, dread, and worry for continuity. Instead of emphasising ideological reason, their responses highlight lived effects. Mallika the protagonist of the story in order to serve her family, provide milk to her child, adopts the proposal given by Pramatha the tout. A helpful foundation for comprehending this difference is provided by Carol Gilligan's ethics of caring. According to Gilligan, women's moral thinking is relational and context-based, giving caring

and responsibility precedence over impersonal ideals (Gilligan 19). Women's resistance to violence is presented in the text as an ethical criticism rather than a sign of emotional frailty.

Women in the story are rarely granted a voice of their own. Feminist theory recognizes silencing as a major form of patriarchal oppression. Mallika had no other option but listen to Pramatha to support her hungry child. Despite her vulnerability Mallika's role is subverted as a victim. When Mallika discovered the intention of Pramatha to enjoy her, his violation of promise is like a personal betrayal of her trust in him. The act of betrayal shatters the last remnant of her patience, which intensifies her anger to strangle him to death. The murdering of Pramatha by Mallika for self-defense symbolizes her reclaiming control over her body and identity. The money she takes from the dead man's pocket represents "the final solution" as she says in the end, "we'll never be hungry again.... My son will have milk four times a day" (30). She becomes empowered by killing him, when she says, "What did he take from me? Am I weak just because I'm a woman?" The transition of her action from docile, subdued, and exploited character to a resistant to commodification and oppression represents a form of anti-hegemonic feminism. Her violence reverberates with Frantz Fanon's idea that "violence could be necessary for the sake of reclaiming one's humanity in oppressive conditions". Likewise, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak's concept of subaltern is critically centered on the condition that the subaltern- marginalized groups or individual cannot "speak" or have their voices fully represented within hegemonic power structures. In her essay "can the subaltern speak?" Spivak argues that the subaltern is not only voiceless but structurally silenced due to the ways intellectuals or institutions represent or speak for them, thereby limiting their agency. This concept appears in the story: Mallika being marginalized, murders Pramatha can be interpreted as "resistance that challenges the hegemonic structures of power". The system which tries to silence her sees a new Mallika, whose voice marks a shift from an oppressor to a challenger.

Postcolonial feminist theory interrogates how colonial power, nationalism, and patriarchy intersect, producing forms of violence that are unevenly distributed along gendered lines. In "The Final Solution", Manik Bandopadhyay anticipates this framework by revealing how ideological attempts at absolute resolution erase women

lived realities. The term "The Final Solution" is very satirical and politically charged, yet it is not descriptive from a feminist perspective. While the story itself reveals the impossibility and moral brutality of such finality, particularly for women, it emphasises the masculine desire of complete conclusion. The patriarchal inclination to pursue mastery, control, and closure over intricate social reality has long been criticised by feminist philosophy. The word "final" conveys a desire to put an end to uncertainty by taking definitive action, which is frequently violent.

Thus, the narrative presents male characters who think that social disorder may be brought under control with a single, decisive action. The notion of a "final solution," which implies that complexity can be conquered through resolution, is intimately aligned with this ideological faith. Manik Bandopadhyay demonstrates how having the power to make decisions—even when those decisions involve violence—is linked to masculinity. The reduction of real experience to abstract issues is challenged by feminist ethics. The title employs a technocratic, instrumental vocabulary by employing the word "solution." The title reveals how patriarchal reasoning erases gendered and emotional realities by turning social crises into equations that can be solved. Women's ongoing life in terror and devastation is the story's most potent refutation of the title. The Final Solution's presentation of social conflict as an issue to be resolved rather than a human condition to be endured is one of its most remarkable aspects. Ideological terminology reduces vulnerabilities, relationships, and histories into simple categories.

Male characters in "The Final Solution" constantly seek decisive ideological action, portraying social turmoil as a crisis that requires resolution rather than introspection. In ideological discourse, emotional repercussions—especially the fear and anxiety felt by women—are marginalised and confined to domestic settings. Violence appears both necessary and reasonable as a result of human complexity being reduced to a "problem" that has to be solved. Manik Bandopadhyay illustrates the moral cost of this abstraction through this narrative framework, showing how the erasure of lived, gendered experience is necessary for the promise of a "final solution." Critics point out that the story refuses to provide a single, unchanging definition of feminism or womanhood. Rather, Mallika's persona challenges essentialist classifications and emphasize how gender intersects with caste, class,

and past trauma. Her experience demonstrates how complicated, situation-specific, and frequently costly female subjectivity and the fight for oneself. Feminist theory reveals that patriarchal system agonizes both genders—yet the impact fall more sharply upon women.

Conclusion

A feminist interpretation of Manik Bandopadhyay's "The Final Solution" highlights the intricate connections between gender, class, and colonial history. In the narrative, women occupy a realm characterized by vulnerability, quiet, and limited action that is formed by both larger socioeconomic factors and home patriarchy. Using feminist literary theory-particularly Marxist and postcolonial feminism—the narrative becomes a potent critique of the mistreatment of women in colonial Bengal. Readers are prompted by Bandopadhyay's portrayal to consider systemic inequities and acknowledge the ways in which economic institutions, cultural beliefs, and social norms all work together to impede women's autonomy. Because of this, "The Final Solution" is a timeless work for feminist research as well as a critique of patriarchy.

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At the Crossroads of Modernity and Violence : Displacement and Loss in Mamang Dai's '*An Obscure Place*'

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ABSTRACT

Mamang Dai is a celebrated English poet and novelist from Arunachal Pradesh, a northeastern Indian state. Her work showcases the indigenous people's historical, cultural, and ecological aspects. Arunachal Pradesh is home to a wealth of oral tradition and stories that have been passed down through generations. The state population being illiterate, the stories could not be preserved due to a lack of written script. The absence of written script is not the only factor that causes displacement and loss to the state's breathtaking natural beauty. This paper will examine the auxiliary factors that contribute to displacement and loss, providing an understanding of her poem 'An Obscure Place. In this poem, we will explore how the inhabitants and traditions of the region are

displaced by the intrusion of modernity and insurgency.

Keyword : displacement, insurgency, loss, modernity, and tradition.

India today is a victim of development. Ask MedhaPatkar or SundarlalBahuguna about the victims of development ....the perilous process of environmental injuries, the polluted rivers, the disappearing mountains, the depleting mineral resources, the uprooted tribal, the submerged mother earth, and the vast multitude of marginalized human beings who are appalled by the terrorism of development and await their turn to be sacrificed at the inexorably market-hungry, altar of poignant, irrevocable 'blood and iron' Development Maniacs (Iyer 1998).

Displacement is one of the major issues of the postcolonial era. A displacement can take place in the sense of moving or being moved from one location to another. In the nautical sense, displacement occurs into two stages: one physical and another psychological. In psychology, a displacement is the transference of a site of trauma from one person, scenario, or object to another. This paper will reflect on Mamang Dai's an obscure place contributing to displacement from psychological angle.

Arunachal Pradesh, a land of silence and natural beauty, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs, has changed due to the emergence of modernity and insurgency. The society and culture of the tribal people transform with the development of science and technology, the effort of modernity, and globalization. Manifold factors like economic development, geopolitical considerations, etc. are responsible for the displacement and loss of tradition and culture of the state.

Indigenous traditions borrow from verbal or oral stories. Poetry is transmitted from generation to generation through community singing, griots, prophets, and balladeers. Such literature uses local typography, seasons, myths, and legends in order to situate the theme in the song (90, Nayar).

The hills, rivers, and mountains specified in the poem 'An obscure place' have legends attached to them. The society being preliterate has many needs that explain how the tribes lost their alphabet.

According to the tale, this alphabet was written in deer skin, and in a fit of hunger, the forefather cooked and consumed the deer skin. In the beginning of the poem, Mamang Dai writes,

'The history of our race

Begins with the place of stories.

We do not know if the language we speak

belongs to a written past. '

North East writings capture the sense of dispossession in the post-independence era. A region riven by strife marred by military presence and deaths, literature from' Seven Sisters' states Is a particularly relevant case of postcolonial anguish and protest. Poetry from the region links topography and guns together. It protests against the homogenization of a country where regions are marginalized and oppressed.' (112, Nayar)

Mamang Dai, born and brought up in the region, has witnessed many seachanges as a result of modernism and terrorism. With its varied topography and climate, the place is surrounded by lush green forests, deep river valleys, and beautiful plateaus that serve as habitats for a wide variety of flora, fauna, and amphibians.

Arunachal Pradesh sharing a border with China has many geopolitical tensions. Following independence, the government of India has taken steps to incorporate the region into the national mainstream and also extended its administrative jurisdiction to include distant and border areas. Action was taken to the border outpost, military infrastructure, border, and security in order to strengthen the defense potential. Airports, highways, and communication systems were constructed in the area to improve accessibility, which resulted in the displacement or loss of the pristine beauty of the natural world.

The poem celebrates the cultural heritage of the poet's homeland, which is still considered obscure to the world. Dai, deeply rooted in her native land, presents the excellence of serene beauty in the poem. She bestows her homeland as stories in the past which has been overrun by violence and terror. She writes

If there is no death, the news is silent.

If there is silence, we should be disturbed.

Listen, the tone of a prayer is hushed.

The lines suggest that violence took over the land and left everything dead and still. The phrase

' The tone of a prayer is hushed' gives the impression that everything has become silent after the brutality of the violence.

The people of the north-east are deeply concerned about insurgency, and no notable poets can dismiss the truth. Insurgency has been witnessed by her from close quarters and the line

A smoke cloud chases the ants

So ! They have slain the wild cat

And buried the horn bill in her maternal sleep

The mountains described in the poem provide an eclectic picture of the surroundings. People pray as they walk down the slopes of the mountain. Certain slopes of the cloud looked like chasing ants.

The patterns of the cloud and the imagination in the writer's mind seemed to be a conflict between the ant and the wild cat. The mountain is well aware of the past, present, and future.

All the dark secrets, like the fact that the hornbill, a magnificent bird, had been buried in her maternal sleep, are known to the mountains. The atrocities caused by the war are inflicted not only upon the human race; the animals too were not spared. The above lines illustrate the danger faced by animals as a result of violence. Hornbill, a symbol of the statebird, has been killed by

humans. The stories of strangers led the people into a deep mist, across grassy slopes where the bones of their forefathers lay buried beneath immense beauty.

'Their are mountains. Oh! There are mountains

We climbed every slope; we slept by the river

But don't speak of victory yet.

The concluding lines describe that the people of the region climbed every mountain and spent their nights beside the river hoping to find a new home. But success is a distant memory. Mountain represents not just people's collective consciousness of hope but also fear and unmute expectations in a changing society.

The horrors of insurgency, neglect, and exploitation have brought misery to the land, which is known for its diversity and beauty of nature.

CONCLUSION

Displacement and loss are the major causes of postcolonial literature. Mamang Dai portrays the notion of displacement and loss in the scenic beauty of the region. The beautiful land with lush green forests is displaced and lost because of insurgency and modernity. The oral tradition of stories has been carried over generations. With the advent of modernity, everything is alluded to. The natural beauty is destroyed and exploited with insurgency. The memories of the land's past glory, its myth, and its cultural significance are all alluded to, suggesting these are forgotten or obscured with the passage of time and the onslaught of modernity. Apsychological displacement is inherent in the lines of the poem. It is not just geographical but also spiritual and cultural, as the traditions, stories, and ways of life that were once tied to the land are fading away.

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