

the notebook



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Post Graduate Centre
Bengaluru -95
www.jyotivas.org
Ph 080 -25502143

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Our Motto : Let Your Light Shine

Our Vision : Communion, Excellence, Service and relevance

Our Mission: To Turn Out Intellectually Enlightened, Morally

Committed Upright, Spiritually Oriented, Socially & Emotionally Balanced Young Persons

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The Sixteenth Issue of
The Notebook is Dedicated to

Sr. EMILIA D'MELO
(12th December 1935 – 1st August 2021)

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MESSAGE (VOL. 16)

" A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit." ~ Richard Bach

The Note Book is the endeavour which instils the creative urge and potential in students who would otherwise neglect in spite of having the ability to write, to enliven Richard Bach's dictum the Note Book strives to make students increase and utilize their skills in writing and give them an occasion to engage in research and prepare them for higher levels of academia. The students explore literary areas of their choice and shape their accepted wisdom and reflection which comes to us in the form The Notebook. I am sure that the 16th edition of 'The Notebook' is the continued efforts by the staff and students of the Department of English to keep giving life to the word in written form.

In the last two years, the MA students have put in enormous work to make research an important part of their academic life. Initial hiccups met with few affronts did not diminish their spirits and enthusiasm for they gradually emerged as winners in their own style and that's what makes them unique. After much research, the pieces of their story were put together and that is what the college will treasure for years to come, and they will leave on in the golden pages of 'The Notebook'.

I take this opportunity to thank our staff members, for patiently guiding our students in their preliminary years of research and giving them the joy of seeing their written forms take shape. I hope our students will continue to learn and grow in the world of research carving a niche for themselves. I want to thank and congratulate Ms. Diya Prasad, Ms. Akhila Prakash, and Ms. Pooja, the student editors and Dr. Prakrithi H.N., faculty in charge for editing and compiling "The Note Book Vol. 16'.

It's my pleasure to pen my thoughts. I do so, with much zeal and delight for they are my hope and in them I see a new world taking shape, a new era of writers emerging with a desire to conquer it all letting it go its way and take its wings and find its paths and space in its own time.

I am sure each of us has a dream, a worthy goal and is willing to work for it. Life is a journey not a destination and in other words, life is meant to be finding one's specific purpose, nurturing one's innate talents and making one's dreams come alive. In this discovery, each moment, each day you possess will look different. That's the exact crux of the journey. The lesson is in accepting what you are at, in this journey and having the audacity to enjoy it. This applies to all of life and so we give it all to embrace life in all its fullness.

Carry on lighting this excitement, and unravelling the endless potential within you as you step out of this knowledge for a richer and fuller life. "Let your Lights Shine"

May God Bless You

Dr. Sr. Lalitha Thomas

Principal, Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous

Psychological Determinism in the Show *BoJack Horseman*

Akhila S Prakash (II M.A. English)

BoJack Horseman is an American animated web series. The protagonist is BoJack Horseman, an actor who acquired great fame back in the 1890s with his show *Horsin Around*. But in the present era, he has lost his popularity. This show is recognised as a dark comedy owing to the fusion of comedy and dark reality presented in it. Oftentimes, humour is used to present grim reality and to engage with topics that the society perceives as taboo. This paper attempts to explore BoJack and his relationship with other characters, especially, with his mother Beatrice, and how the concept of psychological determinism is reflected in it.

Psychological determinism is an aspect of determinism and determinism is a philosophical concept that does not believe in the random occurrence of events. Instead, it sees the events as an effect of an already existing cause. Thus, there is the establishment of a cause effect relationship. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, "Psychological Determinism is defined as the general position that psychological phenomena including behaviours result from the factors outside the control of the person". Thus, an individual's behaviour is perceived as something that is not characterised by the individual's free will, which is the opposite of determinism. There is no notion of free will here. It is seen as something that is shaped by the environmental or internal deterministic factors like genetics. The same principle is reflected in the characterisation of BoJack. He is identified as a character close to an anti-hero. He cannot be naturally perceived as morally wrong either. It is his environment that stimulates him to become the person he is. The lack of affection and complete parental ignorance that BoJack experienced as a child are identified as the driving forces for his perception of life and the world. His disillusionment with life and hatred for his mother Beatrice stem from his own childhood experiences.

If one were to analyse Beatrice, she would also come across as a character with a pitiful childhood and adulthood. She lost her brother early in life who was killed in the Second World War. Consequently, her mother suffered from depression. Her father was not attentive to her needs. As she grew up, her marriage to BoJack's father also did not end well. He committed adultery, and she had to give birth to BoJack even though she did not want a child. Therefore, she could be seen as a victim of immense pain and suffering. However, later in life, she becomes the victimiser and her object of abuse becomes her own son. She inflicts the same mental agony and pain on BoJack which she experienced throughout her life. This affects BoJack as he grows up and determines his relationship with others. Here, this action becomes cathartic for Beatrice, whereby she vents her pent up sufferings. Similarly, BoJack does the same to others around him. He does not consciously torment them. However, inadvertently he becomes the cause of destroying their happiness. In any society, it is always the powerless who become the object

of abuse or oppression. Here, children are the victims, the childhood selves of Beatrice and BoJack. Their childhood selves become the subalterns. Thus, what Beatrice suffered as a child is inflicted on BoJack when he is only a child. There is also an allusion to Henrik Ibsen in the show. His work *Ghost* could be seen as reflected in BoJack's own life when it is revealed that he has a half-sister similar to the play where Regina is revealed to be Oswald's half-sister. Like in the play, in the series also, ghost is a metaphor for something that continues to haunt, something that does not stay hidden, that is, the pain and agony of Beatrice and BoJack from the past that continue to haunt them in the present. Their wounds are never healed.

Moreover, the notion of memory is closely associated with psychological determinism. If psychological determinism is about the behaviour of an individual being influenced and impacted by their environment then memory plays an important role in the prolonged influence of that behaviour, as in, memory triggers that behaviour. In the context of the series, it could be seen how memories continue to haunt the characters and how they transition from victims to victimisers, thus, this cycle is repeated. BoJack is deprived of happiness and he attempts to impose the same suffering which he experienced on the people around him. On the surface, he might seem like an arrogant, self-obsessed individual. But on a closer observation, he is seen as highly insecure and reckless. He comes across almost as if he were a child. It could suggest that his emotional growth has remained stagnant since his childhood.

For Beatrice, as she ages, she suffers from dementia. It is a blessing in disguise for her. Here, dementia symbolises her escape from the painful memories of life, because to remember is also to re-experience the events in the mind, that is, to suffer.

With everything that happens in BoJack's life, the entertainment field or Hollywood becomes a means of escape, to get away from the dreadful realities of his life. His 90s TV show *Horsin Around* becomes a metaphor for the perfect life he secretly desires, but is never attained. It is also the conditioning that does not allow BoJack to lead a happy life. His mother's constant words of demotivation and discouragement lead him to perceive himself as somebody who is unworthy of a life of their choice. Here, again the lack of free will is asserted which reinforces the notion of determinism. Conditioning happens to BoJack in the perception of his own works also. In one of the initial episodes, his mother visits him on the set of his show and says, "Well, it is not Ibsen". Beatrice belittles BoJack's works. This affects BoJack. A few episodes later, he says to himself regarding his work, "It is not Ibsen anyway". Thus, this shows how psychological determinism is reflected in BoJack, that is, his behaviour is influenced by factors outside his control. In BoJack's case, the conditioning he undergoes is an important factor.

It is interesting that the characters in the show are a combination of humans and anthropomorphic animals. The technique of employing anthropomorphic animals could be interpreted as going back to the folktale tradition. The combination of humans and talking animals could also be analysed from its connection with the whole process of conditioning. Once a person begins watching this show, it would seem odd that humans and

animals exist and interact on the same level and behave as if it was a normalised way of living, where various kinds of relationships are formed between the two species- familial, friendship, romantic and professional. Moreover, the protagonist of the show itself is a talking horse. But as one continues to watch the show, with every successive episode and season, it feels normal to see the human and animal characters as coexisting. It is more like the viewers become conditioned to see the characters on the show the way they are presented. This suggests how conditioning functions. If a person is told or shown something as normal, over the course of the time, they are conditioned to perceive it the way it is presented. Conditioning is an external force, as a result of which the behaviour of an individual is shaped. Individuals are conditioned to see certain things as normal without questioning it. This becomes reflected in their behaviours and in their responses to events.

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Relationship between Music, Resistance and Identity in Select Bob Marley Songs and Brathwaite's Calypso

Sanya Mishra (II M.A. English)

Like art, music is a form of human expression which comes out of a social, political and cultural context. Often, music has been used to mobilise dissent and show resistance against structures of power. Billie Holiday's *Strange Fruit* protested against the lynching of Black Americans. During the Harlem Renaissance, jazz was used to give voice to the African American experience. John Coltrane's "Alabama" mourns the killing of four African American girls by the Klu Klux Klan.

Bob Marley's songs which come out of Jamaican ethos helped bring visibility to Jamaica worldwide. It is interesting that Marley uses the Jamaican musical form Reggae which is born out of Rocksteady, Ska, American Jazz and Rhythm and Blues. Marley brought attention to the 'third world' at a time when the international music was dominated by the whites and the western music. The lyrics to Marley's music are influenced by the syncretic Rasta religion which is a combination of Christianity and African spiritualism.

Marley's hypnotising "Get Up, Stand Up" was released in 1973 as a part of The Wailers album called *Burnin*. It becomes a song of protest and resistance especially in its connection to Rasta movement. Marley who was a Rasta for most of his adult life believed that there was light or an upward movement in seeking Jah (creator). Marley makes a plea to his listeners to see through the materialistic ways of Babylon that keep people apart in the following lines:

"It's not all that glitters is gold and
Half the story has never been told

So now you see the light aay" (Marley, *Get Up, Stand Up* lines 7-9)

Along with pushing forth the Rasta philosophy of seeking life, the song criticises all types of "isms" including racism, elitism and sexism. The Rastas encouraged reading the Bible critically from the African perspective and this is reflected in the song. The song reinforces the Rastafarian identity by contrasting the ways of Zion as against the darkness of the New World. This is a subversion to the colonial hierarchy of light and darkness. For Marley, the journey to Zion can be made by following the principles of Jah and by resisting the Babylon.

In "No Woman No Cry" which employs the rim shot and one drop as well, Marley reassures women that there is no need to cry when they have turned to the Rasta roots. The song not only differentiates itself from the western music in terms of rhythm but also by creating a sense of community instead of being about the individual. The song is a part of the album called *Natty Dread* which is one of Marley's names. Dreadlocks were a part of the Rasta way of living and symbolise refusal to be "civilised" by the whites. References

to personal life become a source of identity and are used to connect with the poor community. "Trenchtown" and "cornmeal porridge" talk of the constant struggle to survive. The song takes a dig at Jamaicans who imitated the white man by terming them "hypocrites".

In a similar vein, Brathwaite urges his people to take pride in their own Caribbean culture and stop being "Afro-Saxon" subjects. In the poem Calypso, Brathwaite historicises the Caribbean island and traces how the European colonialist venture led to the exploitation of their land and people. Brathwaite uses the Calypso music to satirise the whites. Although euphemistic the intertextuality in the line "Mrs. P.'s quick irrelevant crimes" is a characteristic feature of the Calypso music. The identity in the text is inclusive of Caribbeans who share a vibrant culture and the experience of colonialism. Brathwaite shows how people like John feel disillusioned staying in the island and migrate to the metropolitan centres for better prospects.

The resistance comes from asserting the Caribbean identity which may conventionally be looked down upon as immoral or perceived as interfering in each other's family matters. Avoiding any kind of romanticization, Brathwaite paints a vast picture of the decolonised Caribbean state and captures the essence of the cultural space using a lively oral form. Another way the text resists is by using the Calypso music which has often been disregarded as carefree. Calypso which uses a variety of instruments like trumpet, saxophone, clarinet, banjo and flute has been used to make socio-political commentary. Brathwaite uses the same form which was first performed in tents by the Blacks as a 'call and response' device to lend an orality to the song about and of the nation. The form has its origins in Trinidad and Tobago.

Like Marley, Brathwaite criticises the capitalistic culture of the white man which eroded the indigenous culture of the Caribbean. The hegemony between white and black still exists in the minds of people. It is this lingering western discourse that Brathwaite seeks to resist. Brathwaite's text has a tint of satire inherent to Calypso. Calypso rhythm is quite significant throughout the text especially in the lines:

"Steel drum steel drum,
hit the hot calypso dancing
hot rum hot rum". (Brathwaite, lines 34-36)

There is an innovative use of language influenced by the African model and which becomes what Brathwaite calls "nation language" in the essay titled the same. Orality and the audience are important here as it is not merely intended for an individual to read. Instead of the iambic pentameter, the text uses dactyls. The use of "Nawth" and "catchin' hell" are reflective of a Caribbean identity. Caribbean islands are constructed as ferocious and vibrant which adds onto the postcolonial sensibility.

Therefore, Brathwaite and Marley ground their resistance on music: Calypso and Reggae respectively to urge their people to take pride in their own culture and identity. While Marley's philosophy relies on religion to make his people see through coloniser's exploitation, Brathwaite unites people under a national identity to pedal a recovery from psychological colonial hangover.

To conclude, there are similarities in resistance but differences pertaining to specific contexts. Nonetheless, both are narratives that challenge European literary standards and aesthetics.

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Existential Turn in 'Dark'

Sonu Fakiha (II M.A. English)

'Dark', a German series though is filled with theories of quantum physics and deterministic ideology, the basic thematic premise of the show is on Nietzsche's eternal recurrence theory. The series is encoded with existential themes and ideas. Nietzsche and Heidegger, two of the most important philosophers of existentialism hailing from 19th and 20th century Germany respectively, their theory of existentialism is dominant in the series. Existentialism started as a cultural movement, continued as tradition. Existential writers and philosophers have addressed the existence of man differently but overall they reinforce the idea of individuality, freedom which comes with choice and responsibility. Existentialism focuses on reaffirming and reinforcing individual subjectivity in an objective scientific world. Darwin's evolution caused havoc in Christianity based Europe. Nietzsche's nihilism and famous statement 'God is dead' shows the religious absurdity the 19th Century existentialists upheld.

The evolution theory impacted Nietzsche who came up with the concept of *Übermensch*. Nietzsche saw an *Übermensch* or over man as the last stage of evolution who has control over his life. He is not driven by herd mentality, sets his own values and codes. He is concerned about the present life (his life on earth) unlike Christianity and gives meaning to meaningless life. Adam (who Jonas gradually turns into) can be seen as nihilist but not an *Übermensch*. He kept the time loop going on because he wanted to destroy the origin (his son). He accepts there is no God. He also defies many Christian codes and morals. He kills his mother and pregnant Martha. His only aim was to destroy the origin(his son) which is the root cause of suffering and pain .The facial changes Adam goes through also indicates that he cannot be seen as an *Übermensch*. He also uses science to control things which leads to more chaos.

"The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust "(Gay science). The next Nietzsche philosophy the show deals with is The eternal recurrence theory from Nietzsche's Gay science. The theory talks about the repetition of life cycle again and again. The repetition of same sorrows, same joys, and sufferings. This Philosophy is stark in the show, the lives in wine are knotted in the time top. Nietzsche further expands this in Thus spoke Zarathustra, to make an individual aware about his hold on his life, the choices he makes. This becomes a life affirming thought. Nietzsche proposes this thought so that people would be aware about the choices they make and not get carried away by herd mentality. The statement that keeps recurring in the show "The end is the beginning, the beginning is the end again reinforces this idea. The lyrics in the theme song"

neither ever, nor never goodbye” suggests this theory. The eternal recurrence theory is a counter or opposition to the Christian belief of ‘afterlife.’ Adult Noah’s belief in afterlife is portrayed as something foolish and Adam uses this as a pawn to manipulate Noah. This also shows the atheistic idea of non existence of afterlife, hence the need to embrace this life with pain and suffering is reiterated.

Accepting pain and suffering is another prominent existential theme which the show uses.

This is also reinforced by eternal recurrence theory. The characters in the series try to escape death, pain and suffering. Jonas, who later as Adam throughout his life, tries how he can

eliminate the knot of time loop(symbolic of eternal recurrence) so he can avoid the suffering and pain caused by the deaths of Martha, Michael Kanhwald or even apocalypse. There is constant denial of Death by everyone, it is only Claudia who accepts death.Claudia (old Claudia), on the other hand, can be seen as a figure representing existentialism because her choice of not following her alternate, breaks Knott. Her subjective thinking puts the fragments of narrative in place. The knot of the time loop is broken. She is aware about the responsibility of her choice (she is aware she will no longer exist in the original world with such a move). She accepts her death. She also lets go of her daughter’s death in an alternate world because she knows, her death in this world will make her live in the original world.

One’s being is determined by the impossibility of not being there. Understanding the meaning of death can happen if one encounters a personalised death(death of relative or close relation). Heidegger is of the opinion that a personalised death or loss of someone should make an individual aware about his ‘loss of being’ which should motivate him to lead an authentic life (with freedom). Death also makes him aware about the choices he makes. In the show there is no character that realises this loss of being except Claudia. Jonas wants to stop his father’s death, Claudia doesn’t want Regina or her father to die, Jonas does want Martha to die.

Everyone wants to avoid the death of their loved ones. Failure to accept the inevitability of death or any kind of suffering or pain can lead to loss of individuality and in authenticity. Heidegger’s fallen man (inauthentic life) can be seen in Adult Noah. Noah’s individuality is never seen in the series. He believes in the afterlife, his only aim was salvation. He gets disillusioned with Adam’s promise of salvation. The Absence of Charlotte (his daughter) makes him resort to science, to create a time machine. He uses children from different time frames as lab rats. He is representative of inauthenticity Heidegger talks of. He also manipulates young Helge using the bible. Adam and Eva’s World are consequences of a failed scientific experiment. This also suggests religious absurdity Nietzsche and other existentialists of the time were addressing. It portrays the conventionalised meaning of creation which is shared by groups/ religion which leaves no space for individual thinking.

The show's portrayal of Noah and the bunker (like the arc) which survives apocalypse highlight the religious absurdity.

HGTanhaus attempts to create a time machine as a result to bring back his dead family. He resorts to objective scientific measures to escape pain and suffering caused by death. However Failed Tanhaus, realises the meaning of his being, accepts suffering and pain. Travellers ask him about the past and future, he always said he believed in the present and now. The title of the series 'Dark' highlights another feature of existentialism that is nothingness. Heidegger, Nietzsche and others reiterated the notion that life is meaningless and we give it meaning. Existentialists are aware of nothingness. The characters in the series are caught upon a world.

They are trying to make sense of nothingness. Instead of giving it a meaning, they try to escape using external sources like science. The passage (abyss) leads to Adam's and Eve's world which is also the religious aspect we human beings resort to, to give meaning to a world of nothingness (which creates more chaos, and absurdity). Nietzsche's quote is used in the opening of one of the episodes "if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes into you" which is a direct reference to nihilism Nietzsche talks of. The passage is also the consequence of nuclear accident. The show using Nietzsche's eternal theory of recurrence highlights the importance of existential thinking. The relevance of existential thinking, not escaping pain or death or suffering is important. The ending shows Adam and Eva's world ceases to exist.

The visual technique used to show their cease also suggests how one's life is nothing and meaningless. The ending takes place in the original world, the characters who died in an alternate world exist. There is a portrait of Claudia in her daughter's house. This may suggest that Reginadidn't try to escape her suffering caused by her mother's death. Hannah says she dreamt of this situation and had a deja vu and the characters wish for 'world without winden a statement made in the beginning of the show (in an alternate world). This also suggests the ambiguity of eternal recurrence theory through such ending, the creators are hoping that the real world would include people with individual, subjective thinking leading an authentic life. Thus, the show stresses on the relevance of existential thinking and reinforces the importance of evolution of human beings to superman or overman in a deterministic world or world where free will is controlled through religion and is driven by technology and science.

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Animation and Politics

Sarah Jennifer (II M.A. English)

Animations is a technique of a sequence of drawing positioned to create an illusion of movement when the film is shown. Animated movies are mostly made with CGI or computer-generated imagery; animations take longer time to be created because of all the work that goes into it.

Animations, cartoons, graphics are most of the time not taken seriously and many consider them as low art and ignore to understand its importance and they are often considered as children's show because of which many do not focus on its importance. 'Children's show' sounds like an attractive word which attracts a child's attention. Children's shows/ books are largely considered as beneath the notice of intellectual and cultural gurus. To many audience children's genre is only a matter of a private delight. Private delight seems like something that does not need justification for a study. Recently, children's literature and shows have received a lot of attention and become a centre of study and analysis. But this paper focuses on animations which are made/intended for children.

Animation is a method in which figures are manipulated to appear as moving images. Animations are important because it enables us to tell stories and communicate emotions and ideas in a unique, easy-to-perceive way that both small children and adults can understand. Animations connect people throughout the world in a way that sometimes writing and mainstream films cannot. It acquaints people of different cultures with one another.

Animations can also be political as they are characterized by both metaphorical and satirical narratives. They may convey certain contexts, problems and corruptions of a political or any real-life situation. They put forth a commentary on these issues. Another unique pattern of these shows is that there are episodic.

In the children's show *Looney Tunes* we can see a lot of stereotypical characters and episodes. *Looney Tunes* has many episodes that depict stereotypes, racial prejudices, or problematic content unsuitable for children. *Looney Tunes* was a classic children's animated series, considered as one of the Golden Age cartoons. It was produced by Warner Bros and featured many iconic characters like Bugs Bunny, Tweety, Daffy Duck, Road Runner, and Porky Pig.

In the episode, "Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips(1944)" which was released during at the peak of Second World War, Bugs Bunny is stuck in an island inhabited by Japanese forces. The Japanese are depicted as short, buck toothed, and bare footed. They speak in mocking accents and Bugs Bunny calls them 'slant eyes' and 'monkey faces'. Another episode called "Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs (1943)", where the title itself shows that it's a black parody of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. This short episode shows how the African-Americans are stereotyped and depicted as not humans or dwarfs but as creatures. The irony in this episode is that it was said to be a

tribute to African-American jazz musicals. Another controversial element was the skimpily-clad and hypersexualized protagonist called Coal Black.

Another episode called "Jungle Jitters (1938)" has the Natives and African Americans stereotyped as cannibalistic. The character Speedy Gonzales created in 1953 becomes a stereotype of the Latin Americans because of its strong Mexican accent and costume. This show reflects the racist American ideology and their insecurity in depicting other cultures for young viewers, which might lead them to stereotype other race, culture etc. from these kinds of shows.

Animations are often about taking things to exaggerated comedic extremes, but it can get problematic. *The Simpsons* is considered as the longest-running scripted animated television show that still manages to get to the heart of issues which established newspapers struggle to analyse amid the rush of 24-hour news, allegations of widespread misinformation and declining attention spans. There are various supporting characters from this iconic, highly influential series, who are the most overtly rooted in stereotypes and clichés, whether racial, religious, socio-economic, cultural or otherwise.

From the very beginning the show had a constant goal of *The Simpsons* as Culture: using Springfield as a setting to critique various offices of authority within American culture. Like in *Malgudi Days*, Malgudi is a microcosm of India, here *The Simpsons* is a microcosm of American culture. They brought in social, religious, political satire into the show, *The Simpsons* is now America's favourite animated show because they write scripts surrounding real issues, they criticize the politicians and bring out corruption and they are very episodic. It is also seen as a satirical comedy.

They address on Societal & Environmental Issues in episodes like "Calling Out the Bleak Future of Global Warming and Climate Change", "Addressing the Melting Glaciers". These episodes show America's take on global warming. "Tackling Body Image Issues and Eating Disorders" and "Exposing Corporate Gender Stereotypes" show American ideology and their hypocrisy. The episodes also address on bullying and harms of bullying.

Over its 27 seasons, *The Simpsons* has seen four presidential administrations, seven major campaigns and countless political scandals and embarrassments. One can see how the writers are not threatened by the entertainment industry as they use and present real-life characters. For example in one of the episode Homer has hashed out some serious issues with George H.W. Bush, Lisa has crusaded against corruption in Washington, and Moe, the bartender, has railed against "them immigrants". The rising issue of marriage and support for the LGBTQ community are also presented.

Even though this show has addressed issues, it still has stereotypical characters in them, which can be seen has a reflection of racist America. Besides this, there are other shows similar to *The Simpsons* that address the political issues, but they don't deliver the message like this show because of which they are criticised or ignored.

The Family Guy is the opposite of *The Simpsons*. *The Simpsons* brought to light the hypocrisy of America whereas *The Family Guy* did not criticize but openly make fun of serious issues. It led to lot of controversies which in result

led to the cancellation of the show. One of the controversies was when the show stereotyped and discriminated trans-genders and portrayed them as vulgar. The show was addressed as transphobic because of the way they portrayed them.

In *BoJack Horseman* the harsh reality and the dirty underbelly of Hollywood, drug abuse, death, fame, trauma, patriarchal criticism and asexual relationship are some of the topics that are looked upon. The character deals with existentialism and that is shown through BoJack. It also shows the personal life of BoJack on how he becomes a reckless and arrogant person because of his traumatic past. The show gets way too real at times as it shows life in general through different characters even though the theme of narration and setting is Hollywood.

Not only animation, graphic narratives too address serious topics. There are graphic novels which address a political or historical incident. For example, *Maus* by Spiegelman is a graphic novel addressing the experience of his father as a Polish Jew and holocaust survivor. Spiegelman represents the Jews as mice, Poles as pigs, Germans as cats, the novel is anthropomorphic in characterisation. The novel shows the harsh reality of Polish Jews through its detailed drawing.

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi is another graphic novel. It's an autobiographical novel, a bildungsroman which is set during the Iranian war. It shows how the Iranians suffered. It is like an insider's information on how the war affected and changed the people of Iraq. It also talks about the Iranians who migrated to other places during the course of the war.

To conclude, to assume graphic narratives or animation as not serious and merely for entertainment can be problematic. It becomes important to study and analyse these genres as it can convey more than what it shows superficially.

Gender and Power in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*

DIYA (II M.A. English)

Popular culture has been a part of our lives but, it was considered more of a low-brow form and was promoted to a more significant artistic experience through critical analysis. It attempts to reach the mass and its main objective is to entertain. The medium includes a whole lot of varieties and the experiments on this field is ever growing, adopting various aesthetical dimensions over the years. The popular paradigms include music, painting, poetry, cinemas, television programmes, dance and a whole lot of other innovative trajectories. In popular literature, the statistics have risen and it has gained the highest readership quota, owing to artistic experience.

Children's literature, graphic novels, detective novels, magazines and many others, form a part of popular literature. Children's literature is gaining momentum in this 21st century of prominent writerly texts. The nostalgic books of Enid Blyton, Rudyard Kipling and Roald Dahl still occupies the shelves of libraries and wonderfully lit drawing rooms, across the world. Magicians, sorcerers, evil aunts, grandparents, bullies, tarts, milkshakes, pies and hot Chocolate, are only some of the archetypes of this awesome world. Many popular books of our time like, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory", "Secret seven", "St Clare's" and "Malory towers" have strived to create a pleasant reel experience and has diverted the unpleasantness of the real and the monotonous. Peter Hunt, a famous literary critic has elevated the position of Children's literature within a canonical prejudiced system. He says, "Children's books do not exist in a vacuum, they have real argumentative readers and visible, practical, consequential uses. So, the theory of children's literature constantly blends into the practice of bringing books and readers together".

Children's literature is a matter of private delight and the ending always seeks to prioritise good over evil. In other words, it always has a good ending and does not deliver agony of unrequited desires. Children's literature also exists to serve didactic purposes, the do's and don'ts in life, worldly manners and how to behave with elders. Several scholars and professors of various universities have found out that, writing children's books is not so easy as it seems but, is a whole lot complex when it comes to integrating childish innocence. The adult author has to replenish the child in himself, view the world from an immature side and splash heavenly colours of childhood, to afford favourable attraction from the little mind of his\ her anonymous reader. This paper attempts to explore gender and power concerns in the popular book, *Matilda* by Roald Dahl.

Roald Dahl's books have entered the arena of popular culture since, the 1930's. They play an important role in shaping the thoughts and feelings of

both children and adults. Her contributions are enormous, starting with “The Gremlins”, “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” and “James and the giant peach”, all printed during 19th century. All his novels were sold in bulk and he himself became a commercial enterprise soon. His playful frameworks have provided impetus to a number of popular adaptations. Among heaps of this man’s magnificent collection, the novel *Matilda* stands out as an attractive showpiece. The British writer came up with this book in 1988 and mesmerised the readers with its fancy narration. His attractive illustrations were featured by Quentin Blake.

The title of the book suggests, the central character of this wonderful tale, a little girl called Matilda. Matilda is depicted as an adorable tiny child, with long black hair and a pleasing demeanour. Though placed under conditions of poor parenting, Matilda’s abilities are far beyond her age. Just being three years old, she was deeply attracted to the world of literature and spent most of her time locked in her room, reading books. Without the aid of her parents, she went daily to the public library, fetched books and soon started investigating about wonderful adult books that she could read.

Her favourite novelists were Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway, Jane Austen, H.G Wells, William Faulkner, Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling. It was her teacher Ms Honey, who discovered the extraordinary abilities of this intelligent child and worked to the level best to develop her natural instincts. Through the novel, we recognise that Matilda is not only good at academics but, is a child prodigy. She has the unique capability of telekinesis; the ability to move objects using her eyes. Ms Honey, astonished by her fabulous student, calls her a precocious child and finds her to be an equal to herself, when it comes to understanding life and its various obscurities.

The book propagates the defeat of evil by the good, creates binaries between correct \ wrong, being wise \ foolish and reward \ punishment. It also warns the adult readers regarding bad parenting and how it is important to care and love fellow beings. Matilda is not subordinated by her worthless parents; she chooses to punish them for their idiocies and finally decides to live the rest of her life with her beloved Ms Honey. Most of the obstacles that our lovely Matilda faces, owes to the fact that, she’s a girl. In other words, Roald Dahl has depicted the patriarchal mind-set of the society, since the beginning of history. The fact that the patriarchal instincts are articulated within the four corners of Wormwood household is itself astonishing. Throughout the novel, we can see that the parents, Mr and Mrs Wormwood, continues to prefer their son over their daughter. It is therefore, not a surprise when they decide to leave Matilda with Ms Honey.

In fact, Mrs Wormwood says “It will be one less to look after”. Would she have proclaimed that, if Michael wanted to stay? Not so sure about that right. The obtained values pertaining to the well-established patriarchal system has thus been crucially reflected in the book.

Moreover, Matilda's parents are quiet foolish. They pretend to ignore the fact that their child is a Prodigy. Mr Wormwood scolds Matilda for reading books, he expected her to be submissive, naïve and occupied with the "womanly" chores of the house. Here, the parents refuse to recognise the talent of their child, they neither encourage or try to develop it.

An instance in the book, mentions that, "The parents, instead of applauding her, called her a noisy chatterbox and told her sharply that small girls should be seen only and not heard".(pg 5) This again reflects the preconditioned notion of "Proper little girls", configured by the society. They should be taught manners, they should cultivate their wifely instincts and should be prim and proper. Mr Wormwood even calls Matilda a spoilt brat, for reading books but, at the same time encourages his son to inculcate business tactics. He seems to have prepared a whole plan chart for Michaels's future and expects Matilda to marry into a respectable household.

The egoistic monster within himself, does not acknowledge the fact that, Matilda can run his business better than anyone else. He therefore calls her a cheat for her triumph over mathematics. One day while boasting about his business skills, he says to poor little Matilda, "You're too stupid. But I don't mind telling young Mike here about it seeing he will be joining me in the business one day".(pg 16) Furthermore, he acts as if Matilda is an invisible force and continues to strangle her under his mighty temper. One of his famous assertions are indicated through his conversations with Mrs Wormwood. He says "Your daughter's a cheat and a liar. "No wonder we endure sheer pleasure when Matilda finally, takes revenge on her haughty father! (pg 49)

Mr and Mrs Wormwood coming from a traditional background, does not consider their daughter's education as important. They carelessly let her join school only when she had become five and a half years old, which meant that she was late to start school. Whatsoever, the book has transgressed from the usual male hero stereotype and has presented to us a female child who breaks all hierarchies and fulfils her significant desires. Mrs Wormwood is a typical middle-aged lady, belonging to the upper-middle class section of the society.

As depicted in the book, we see that she spends most afternoons with her friends, playing Bingo and spends a considerable amount of money on decorating herself. For example: she uses platinum dye on her hair, goes to the parlour every month and maintains abulky body, matching her heavily powdered face. She rarely spends time at home and her only duty seems to be cooking for the household. She has no say in material, political, and social matters. She is subordinated by her dominating husband and though she has little agency, she refuses to help Matilda break the shackles of patriarchy.

The book also mentions that; Mrs Wormwood keeps herself updated through a cookbook called "Easy Cooking". This reflects the age in which Roald Dahl wrote, an age where women were not expected to read intellectual books but nurture themselves to be ideal housewives and mothers in future. Mr Wormwood asserts his superiority by calling his wife, bad and unrespectable names and the latter tries to get out of his way. We have read of the instance where the writer says, "When Mr Wormwood arrived back from the garage that evening his face was as dark as a thunder cloud and somebody was clearly for the high- jump pretty soon. His wife recognised the signs immediately and made herself scarce". (pg 32)

These instances deliver the idea that Mrs Wormwood is continuously objectified in the narrative and is rendered voiceless. Mrs Wormwood's idea of a sensible girl is one who makes herself attractive and hoodwinks a worthy husband. She is quite intellectually poor and finds education a burden, when compared to a life, dependant on husband's social status and wealth. She shamelessly calls Ms Honey an unattractive lady and says that a girl cannot attract men with her brains. Looks happen to be her utmost priority and tags Matilda as a worthless "Blue-stocking girl".

Domination and subordination form a major theme of this amazing child fiction. Power comes with authority here and while Matilda retaliates against it, Ms Honey gets suppressed. Matilda seeks her revenge on Mr Wormwood after, the latter expresses his crankiness in frequent outbursts. She does his hair a platinum colour tone, gets his hair stuck to a hat and finally, scares the lights out of him, by borrowing a parrot. In other words, Matilda has been able to resist the exploitation of her worthless father and gained maximum satisfaction, without ever being caught. In the end too, she takes an independent decision to stay with a person, whom she was comfortable with.

Ms Honey, on the other hand was not a brave girl during her tenuous stay with her monstrous aunt. She was horribly abused physically and mentally by Ms Trunchbull and spent her childhood days in absolute terror. She was denied ownership to her house and was also stripped of all financial sources. She had to live in utter poverty for long and until, Matilda dear comes to the rescue. She did not even attempt to detest her aunt, argue over her rights or express her anger in any ways.

Ms Trunchbull is an absolute nightmare to all the children in Matilda's school. She somehow despises small children, she loves to bash them up, pull them by the hair and shrivel them up to bits. Observing her tactics at teaching and managing the school, no one would ever believe that she is a school headmistress. She is the complete opposite of what an ideal teacher should be. Her really strange desire is to banish all the small grade kids from school and rejoice forever. Lavender, Matilda and Bruce seems to be the only ones who undermine the superiority of their crazy headmistress, through witty deeds. Therefore, we can say that both Mr Wormwood and

Ms Trunchbull are oppressive figures who poisons the construction of the society, as a perfect environment for children to grow up.

In conclusion, we can say that Matilda's assertion and challenge makes her independent of parental control and of the domination of by unruly teachers. She does not comply but, unearths ways to excel the powerful structures of society. In Joyce Ann Kaufman's essay "Sexism in Children's literature" he says that in most books, "The Female Exhibits passivity, docility and dependant behaviour. Little girls endlessly play with dolls, cry over dolls, give tea parties and look on helplessly or admiringly while boys take action." (Sexism in Children's Literature, pg5) From this codified perception we satisfactorily realise that Matilda breaks such stereotypical gender roles and as a result defies the traditional conventions of the society.

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Analysis of The DW Documentary: Have You Ever Heard Of The Emoji Commission”

POOJA (II M.A. English)

Emoji is the most used digital language in the world. It is present in almost all the social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, etc. In the new smartphones, there is an emoji keyboard inbuilt in it. The tiny digital image is ruling the world. Representation by emoji validates identity, cultural experts say. Emoji are used by 92 percent of the global population online, Unicode says. Emojis were developed in Japan in 1999 for mobile phones. In Japanese, emoji means picture-writing-character. The selection of emojis was quite small when they were launched, but over time the variety of emotions and activities they express has expanded. Apple updated its emoji collection in 2012 to include a lesbian and homosexual couple, for example. Now, emojis are becoming more racially diverse and have added to its fold pictures that depict women in all professions, LGBTQ rainbow flag but it is problematic as it doesn't include the flag of Tibet or Kurdistan. As the emoji gets more inclusive, there are more challenges to depict different sections of society.

This is the politics of emoji making and the documentary explores “Who has power over the emoji? Where are emojis coming from?”. Director Mea Dols de Jong got a foot in the door during the quarterly meeting at Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Seattle, but also ran into the shocking closeness of the tech sector. The deeper she delves into the world behind the seemingly little icons, the better she sees that this micro-world is a reflection of the world. What does it take to get a new emoji on the phone's keyboard? Why is the LGBTQI rainbow flag emoji on the keyboards, but not the one that stands for transgender people? Where lies the power to make such decisions?

The documentary also uncovers the power structures where emoji are created and coded which is the “High Council” of online communication that is difficult to access and has the power over our emoji selection on the keyboard: The Unicode Consortium. This group is difficult to access and meets four times a year on the west coast of the United States. This tech giants committee makes decisions about language and shapes the infrastructure of the online world. Representatives from Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Google, IBM, Netflix, Amazon, and Intel set the global standard for symbols, characters, and fonts in digital (visual) language so that all our devices can communicate with each other effortlessly. Part of Unicode is the twelve-member “Emoji Commission”.

They get to control and decide what emoji should be added to the keyboard and what should not. This committee consists of predominantly white

males who get to decide which emoji should be added to all devices and platforms. The documentary poses the question about this decision-making process about emoji representation by big tech giants.

This decision-making takes back to the power structures and hierarchies that we see in society, creating emojis that are shown to racially diversify their features but are they really inclusive of all the sections and representations of society. The documentary is a fascinating critique of the corporate decision making behind emojis, we witness how the pictorial characters come to life through the Unicode Consortium. While emoji is often understood as a type of democratic global language, the individuals who control the technology are privileged representatives from the major technology corporations. As only a certain number of new emojis are approved each year, these individuals and their corporate overlords have the power to shape how billions of people communicate. No other language has evolved in such a top-down fashion, and it also goes against the principle of equity in the context of our modern globalized society. People outside of the developed world have little influence over the emoji language compared to those in wealthier countries. Not only are minority groups underrepresented at the Unicode Consortium, but the consortium's focus is clearly directed towards those in countries with a high degree of technological consumption.

While critical of the Unicode Consortium, the documentary considers how some gatekeeping to the emoji world is necessary. For example, as symbols differ in their meanings across cultures, it is wise to prevent certain symbols from entering the platform if they would be deeply offensive to some groups. However, the consequence of this can be oppressive when the feelings of privileged groups are protected at the expense of others. We see this in the case of transgender rights activists who campaign for trans-specific symbols as well as in the case of nations who want their own flag emoji (e.g., the Palestinian flag was only added in 2018).

These parties must compete for attention from the Unicode Consortium along with advocates for somewhat-less-important symbols, such as the ladies from the white wine lobby featured in the video (it's a great example of social privileges too). The result is a non-offensive, corporate-friendly language that serves the interests of the global status quo. Documentaries not only show the society and its practice, it also conveys a message and introduces to the new trends of the society. Some of the questions raised in the documentary are: What will the future after emoji bring? Will it be unicode or our code? Do we settle for pre-programmed formats and icons? Or Will mankind, insist on the freedom to keep thinking outside the box?

The documentary uses a phrase frequently that is "the decision made behind the closed Doors" The "closed doors" can mean that others are restricted, it can mean the room is inaccessible, it can also mean it has a selected community. Since emojis are created by 'experts' in the west, there

is a least representation of Africa and other Asian countries though emoji is made based on judgement as said by the Unicode consortium member. Controlling emoji is also a new form of Neo colonisation because it is predominantly created by the west and the influence of it is globally seen.

Though there are activists from different countries trying to lay proposals for additions of emojis that represent their culture and identity , there is politics in emoji commission too which allows the proposals and sanctions it based on the committee's decision. This shows how the documentary is open to different ideas, which makes people think. It also brings awareness and highlights the key issues of the Emoji Commission. It gives us an insight about the power play in the techworld and the decision made behind the closed doors.

“This was a surprisingly interesting documentary. I never thought about emojis in this way. This problem however is part of a much bigger issue that we have nowadays. Big tech companies don't just control our emoji keyboards. They control our lives in many more areas. For the relatively small issue of emojis I guess, the difference between emojis and other languages is that in other languages you have a number of letters and anyone can freely create an infinite number of words with those letters as they like while others can copy those words and make them their own.

So the languages are created and changed by the people who use it every day. The only way to do that with emojis is to let people make their own emojis. Anyone would have to be able to draw their own emoji, add it to their keyboard and share it with others. Only then it would be a free language for everyone, worthy of a free internet.”, this was the comment made by the viewer of this documentary. This shows how the documentary is open to different ideas, which makes people think. It also brings awareness and

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