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Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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## From the Movies to Chicken Rice: Narration no Utopias

By Dra. Berta Carricarte Melgarex

*Universidad de La Habana*

**Abstract-** This article starts from social-symbolic anthropology, taking meals in Cuban cinema as a specific topic. The mention, elaboration, ingestion or simple presence of food in the film will serve as an indicator to diagnose the nature of that presence in the plot, in relation to its social context. Content analysis will be the applied technique. Since most Cuban fiction films contain elements alluding to food, the film Barrio Cuba (2005) will be taken as a particular case study, because it constitutes a masterpiece in the career of Humberto Solás. Brief notes will also be added in relation to the films Lejanía (1985), Hasta cierto punto (1983), Miel para Oshún (2001) y La última cena (1976).

In general, the eating habits reflected in the confronted movies are representative of reality. On the other hand, food already appears as a sign of socio-class affiliation and indicates social inequalities and differences in the purchasing power of the population.

**Keywords:** *cuban cinema, anthropology, food enculturation.*

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# From the Movies to Chicken Rice: Narration no Utopias

## Del Cine Al Arroz Con Pollo: Narración Sin Utopías

### Food Enculturation in Cuban Cinema

Dra. Berta Carricarte Melgarez

**Resumen-** En este artículo se parte de la antropología social-simbólica tomando como referente específico las comidas en el cine cubano. La mención, elaboración, ingestión o simple presencia de alimentos en el filme servirá de indicador para diagnosticar la naturaleza de esa presencia en el entramado argumental de la obra, en relación con el contexto social que la genera. La técnica aplicada será el análisis de contenido. Dado que prácticamente todos los largometrajes de ficción cubanos, contienen elementos alusivos a la alimentación de un modo u otro, se tomará como caso particular *Barrio Cuba*, que constituye una obra cumbre dentro de la excepcional carrera cinematográfica de Humberto Solás, con un esbozo comparativo respecto a los filmes *Lejanía* (1985), *Hasta cierto punto* (1983), *Miel para Oshún* (2001) y *La última cena* (1976).

Los hábitos alimentarios reflejados en las obras confrontadas son, en general, representativos de la realidad. Por otra parte, la comida ya aparece como signo de adscripción socio-clasista y señala desigualdades sociales y diferencias en el poder adquisitivo de la población.

**Palabras clave:** cine cubano, antropología, endoculturación alimentaria.

**Abstract-** This article starts from social-symbolic anthropology, taking meals in Cuban cinema as a specific topic. The mention, elaboration, ingestion or simple presence of food in the film will serve as an indicator to diagnose the nature of that presence in the plot, in relation to its social context. Content analysis will be the applied technique. Since most Cuban fiction films contain elements alluding to food, the film *Barrio Cuba* (2005) will be taken as a particular case study, because it constitutes a masterpiece in the career of Humberto Solás. Brief notes will also be added in relation to the films *Lejanía* (1985), *Hasta cierto punto* (1983), *Miel para Oshún* (2001) y *La última cena* (1976).

In general, the eating habits reflected in the confronted movies are representative of reality. On the other hand, food already appears as a sign of socio-class affiliation and indicates social inequalities and differences in the purchasing power of the population.

**Keywords:** cuban cinema, anthropology, food enculturation.

*Lo que Clyde Kluckhohn dijo alguna vez sobre la antropología –que es una licencia para la caza intelectual furtiva– no solo parece más verdad ahora que cuando él lo dijo, sino que parece verdad con respecto a un montón de cosas aparte de la antropología.*

Clifford Geertz.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Dice el sociólogo argentino Arturo Fernández que ciertos productos cinematográficos pueden emplearse para en el estudio de algunos aspectos de una sociedad determinada, y que, si son debidamente utilizadas, las pistas que nos proporciona el cine nos ayudarán a encontrar el sentido objetivo de la realidad estudiada. Asimismo, Fernández comprende las limitaciones teórico-metodológicas que existen en el uso de las manifestaciones artísticas como fuentes de información objetiva. Por lo tanto plantea que si bien el cine no puede constituir un método de investigación científica, sí puede ser una técnica de investigación, “la cual será más o menos exitosa si se la pone al servicio de un proyecto presidido por un marco teórico-metodológico consistente.” (Fernández 2012, 275). Él sugiere entonces, el análisis de contenido como técnica para develar los mecanismos reales que determinan un fenómeno social, partiendo, en este caso, del cine; aunque parece imposible soslayar del todo la «contaminación artística» del objeto observado.

El cine etnográfico tiene muchos padres y padrastros. Si limitamos su alcance a la indagación y registro de lo que acontece en otras matrices culturales, ahí aflora un ejemplo insoslayable de la época silente: *Nanook of the North* (1920-1921) de Robert Flaherty. Luego el sonoro amplió las expectativas del registro filmográfico. Bien distante del cine colonial, donde la alteridad se define como baluarte para el reforzamiento de los estereotipos imperiales, encontramos ejemplos incluso polémicos: *Afrique 50* (1950), de René Vautier, que representó una denuncia contra el colonialismo francés en los pueblos de África Occidental. Resnais y Chris Marker, realizan tres años después también en África, *Les statues meurent aussi*, aproximación singular cuya eficacia comunicativa y aliento descolonizador hizo detonar la censura del gobierno francés que, en ese momento, vetó su exhibición. Por su parte, *Les maîtres fous*, calificado como etnoficción y rodado en 1954, pertenece al ciclo de filmes experimentales de Jean Rouch, quien en 1961 realiza *Chronique d'un été* junto a su eventual compañero de experimentos fílmico-etnográficos, Edgar Morin. Esta cofradía de artistas

franceses, Vautier, Marker, Resnais, Rouch y Morin, se propusieron abordar la realidad de pueblos que hasta entonces habían estado desplazados del imaginario europeo, (como no fuera para explotar su exotismo), y lograron así ensanchar los horizontes temáticos del filme galo y alimentar la ilusión de un cine antropológico, que ha sido, por fortuna, más poético que científico.

Pero hay otra línea que se monta en la etnografía urbana, y que recoge títulos como: *Berlín sinfonía de una ciudad*, (Walter Ruttmann, 1927) *A propos de Niza* (Jean Vigo, 1930), *En pleine forme* (Pierre Etaix, 1971), y que en sus gestos más vanguardistas nos llevaría hasta *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1983). En una antología más extensa y prolija estaría incluida *Suite Habana* (2001) de Fernando Pérez.

Como apunta el investigador y ensayista Adolfo Colombres, el cine etnográfico es un desprendimiento del cine documental en cuanto arte de lo real y no un mero intento de aplicar dicha técnica al registro de la investigación científica<sup>1</sup>; lo cual merece más atención que los intentos por alcanzar una objetividad impalpable, semejante a una prótesis mental que, convierte el cine en instrumento de laboratorio y rebaja al sujeto filmado a la condición de papagayo de zoo.

## II. EL CINE Y LA ANTROPOLOGÍA DE CARA AL SIGLO XXI

En nuestros días el cine (el audiovisual, debiéramos decir) ocupa un lugar privilegiado dentro de la industria cultural, porque sus modos de circulación se han democratizado, así como sus modelos de producción. La transferencia a formatos digitales, así como las diferentes plataformas del ciberespacio, permiten acceder a la producción nacional y global con relativa facilidad.

Los estudios sobre cine, y el cine mismo está preparado para incorporarse en calidad de generosa herramienta para el análisis y evaluación de fenómenos conectados con los saberes de la antropología; hoy con más facilidades que antes, pues se multiplican y popularizan cada vez más los medios para el registro audiovisual de prácticas culturales y el auxilio del trabajo de campo. Si la antropología se ocupa del ser humano como ser social y actuante dentro de la cultura, el cine no se ocupa de algo muy diferente: no existe el cine de cosas no conectadas con el ser humano. Aun el cine abstracto puede llamarse tal porque nace de la curiosidad intuitiva de la persona, es captado y comprendido por esta, a quien le es dado a través de la comunicación audiovisual.

Al parecer la antropología también debía ocuparse de la diversidad humana, que no existe solo

en la confrontación con las matrices étnicas foráneas – la antropología empieza por casa, dice Malinowski –, sino que existe dentro de nuestras propias fronteras y en todas las gamas posibles: racial, social, sexual, religiosa, política, etaria, económica, profesional, habitacional, ético-moral, cultural, y otras reservas sociales como la polaridad rico-pobre, urbano-rural-, emigración-inmigración, medicina natural alternativa- medicina occidental científica, accesibilidad-no accesibilidad a las fuentes de información. Si la antropología es capaz de ocuparse de todo esto, si le atañe de una u otra manera, entonces no puede proseguir su camino de espaldas a los New Media, dentro de los que el cine, junto a la internet, ocupa un rango elevado.

Aquí interesa el acercamiento a la antropología social-simbólica tomando como referente específico las comidas en el cine cubano, a partir de la mención, elaboración, ingestión o simple presencia de alimentos en el filme. El objetivo principal ha sido diagnosticar la naturaleza de esa presencia en el entramado argumental de la obra, en relación con el contexto social que la genera. La técnica aplicada será, obviamente, el análisis de contenido. No puedo dejar de aclarar que este ensayo está directamente inspirado en la siguiente frase del antropólogo norteamericano Clifford Geertz: "Muchos científicos sociales —dice— se han apartado de un ideal explicativo de leyes y ejemplos, en beneficio de otro ideal de casos e interpretaciones, persiguiendo menos la clase de cosas que conecta planetas y péndulos y más la clase de vínculos que conecta crisantemos y espadas". (Geertz 2003, 10).

Dado que prácticamente en todos los largometrajes de ficción cubanos, está presente la alimentación de un modo u otro, se tomará como caso particular *Barrio Cuba* (2005), que constituye una obra cumbre dentro de la excepcional carrera cinematográfica de Humberto Solás: "No sé si con su última obra Humberto consiguió su mejor película..." (Caballero 2010, 281).

## III. ANTROPOLOGISMO EMPÍRICO EN LOS FILMES CUBANOS

Como parte del universo que la institución arte supone, el cine cubano está sujeto también a los requerimientos epistemológicos que validan su presencia en el panorama cultural contemporáneo. Entre las varias funciones del texto artístico, cuentan la estética, la expresiva, la cognoscitiva, la valorativa y la lúdica. Visto como producción simbólica, no toda obra cinematográfica que tributa a lo histórico, o que plantea un debate en el terreno sociocultural, porta una irreprochable calidad artística. Para el presente análisis importan mucho más las funciones cognoscitiva y valorativa del filme. La primera de ellas porque se

<sup>1</sup> Cfr: Adolfo Colombres (selec. y pról.), *La descolonización de la mirada. Una introducción a la antropología visual*, Ediciones ICAIC, La Habana, 2012, p. 24.

conecta de modo natural con la antropología cultural. Y la valorativa porque focaliza una dinámica bilateral que involucra directamente a emisor y receptor del mensaje artístico, partiendo para su elucidación, de la hermenéutica y la semiótica. El estrecho vínculo con una axiología de lo social, que domina la producción cinematográfica cubana, constituye una de sus invariantes fundamentales. Viene al caso, entonces, recordar la siguiente afirmación de Julianne Burton:

Desde una perspectiva aún más amplia, dos temas centrales son evidentes en todo el cine cubano, lo mismo en la producción de ficción que documental: la historia y el subdesarrollo. (...) el subdesarrollo como herencia de la dependencia colonial económica y tecnológica, que tiene sus manifestaciones más arraigadas en la psicología individual y colectiva, la ideología y la cultura; la historia como un complejo de influencias formadoras que ilustran el presente e informan el futuro. (Burton 2003, 92)

Para comprender la importancia, pertinencia y utilidad del cine como instrumento de aprehensión antropológica hay que tomar en consideración varios aspectos:

- El filme es el lugar de encuentro del cine y de muchos otros elementos no cinematográficos, y en virtud de su naturaleza crea una sensación de realismo tal, que su impacto en el espectador desencadena reacciones muy complejas y muy diversas. En ello intervienen elementos como el gusto, la formación cultural, etc.
- Como la antropología es una disciplina que regula el estudio de acontecimientos acaecidos en el tiempo-espacio en que el ser humano vive y transforma su realidad, y esa dimensión no puede cristalizarse, un filme histórico tampoco excluye el dato actual, o sea, el deslizamiento de información extraída de la realidad inmediata. De hecho, algunas de las cintas mencionadas en este trabajo, han devenido útiles herramientas de valoración del pasado, en virtud del tiempo transcurrido, y no portaban esa carga adicional cuando fueron creados.<sup>2</sup>
- Este acercamiento debe ser muy cauteloso por parte del investigador ya que rara vez la reconstrucción ficticia resulta confiable, verídica, exacta, y prácticamente es imposible plantearse en esos términos, sobre todo en el cine cubano, continuamente privado de recursos financieros

suficientes.<sup>3</sup> En lo tocante a los alimentos las peculiaridades son obvias. Como ya sabemos, la forma en que el cine encara la realidad pasa por la subjetividad de los creadores, y por el filtro estético-artístico, e incluye licencias dramatúrgicas y estilísticas.

Dice Dennis Tedlock, que la antropología convencional es analógica, no dialógica, o sea, «equivalente a», es «proporcional a», por lo que el modo dominante de la etnografía analógica es el monólogo. (Tedlock 1992). Ese primer nivel ya manipulado, al transfigurar el testimonio en texto fílmico, queda como imitación regulada de esa experiencia etnográfica. Está claro que el género documental viene a ser una traducción etnográfica de segundo grado, dado que el primero resulta del diálogo (monólogo para Tedlock) entre investigador e informante. En este segundo nivel de mediación, interviene el punto de vista de la cámara, que en el caso de la antropología implica la presencia de un equipo de realización, además del antropólogo. En dependencia del grado de elaboración estética que porte, la componente artística también será un nuevo tamiz por el que pasará el testimonio del informante.

En términos de la ficción entonces tenemos, ya no al antropólogo, al menos en el sentido disciplinar del término, ni tampoco al informante como fuente directa, pero tenemos un observador participante (guionista, director), un actor trasfigurado en informante, el resto del aparato cinematográfico, y finalmente una información que no deja de estar conectada con la realidad, pero que ha sido reelaborada por un acto de creación, y exige ser cotejada, evaluada, si se quiere extraer de ella una información científicamente válida. Aun así, *Conducta* (Ernesto Daranas, 2014) es un documento insuperable de cierta parte de la realidad cubana actual, como lo es *Los dioses rotos*, *Madagascar* y *Suite Habana*. Esa es la "antropología" empírica que dialoga hoy con el ciudadano cubano. Por eso nuestro cine ha sido, desde la fundación de ICAIC, un cine artístico, de autor, pero también un cine con fuerte compromiso social que deviene periodístico, antropológico, sociológico.

#### IV. MOROS Y CRISTIANOS: ENDOCULTURACIÓN ALIMENTARIA EN BARRIO CUBA

Uno de los aspectos que se evidencia en la escena fílmica cubana es la pérdida de la presencia de nuestra cocina. Se come poco en las películas cubanas. Dentro del proceso de endoculturación, que supone la transmisión-adquisición de costumbres y hábitos culturales dentro de una comunidad

<sup>2</sup> Incluso el tiempo que media entre la realización (producción) de un filme y su momento de exhibición puede decidir que el resultado que llega a los espectadores esté añejado en cuanto a la información factual que implica. Esto sucedió con *Alicia en el pueblo de Maravillas* (Daniel Díaz Torres, 1989), cuyo *epos* ficticio, elaborado a partir de datos de la vida cotidiana, resultaba obsoleto cuando casi tres años después se produjo su estreno.

<sup>3</sup> En *José Martí, el ojo del canario*, las ristras de ajo fueron hechas con jabas de nylon, como también son puro atrezo los jamones y embutidos.

determinada, las peculiaridades históricas de la ingesta en Cuba, sufren un proceso de menguamiento y mutación en los últimos decenios, derivado de la crisis económica, que donde primero haya su reflejo es en la mesa del comedor.

Sería justo señalar que después de 1959 comenzó un proceso de cambio significativo en los hábitos alimenticios del cubano. Como dice Jerzy Szacki: «Dignas de atención son también las profundas diferencias de actitud hacia la tradición que existen entre los períodos de revolución, en los que bastante a menudo se puede observar una negación, si no de la tradición como tal, en todo caso de muy numerosos componentes de ella, y los períodos post-revolucionarios, cuando se puede observar por lo común una rehabilitación de la tradición.» (Szacki s.f.). Un ejemplo claro es la recuperación de la Navidad después de la visita del Papa Juan Pablo II en enero de 1998, expresada en el día de asueto oficialmente incorporado al calendario “constitucional” del país. Con ello la celebración de la Noche Buena, abandonó su apariencia clandestina. Del excelente corpus antropológico que la obra cinematográfica de Enrique Colina constituye, recordamos el testimonio del escritor cubano Eduardo Heras León, en: *Los bolos en Cuba: historia de una eterna amistad* (2011) cuando relata que, en medio de los combates de Playa Girón, mientras recibían los avituallamientos, vio por última vez una lata de frijoles Kirby y por vez primera una lata de carne rusa.<sup>4</sup>

En el cine de ficción cubano, los alimentos presentados, elaborados o consumidos pueden guardar un estrecho vínculo con la dirección de arte, ya que están planificados el guion, y decididos, en última instancia, por las gestiones de producción. Muchas veces se comportan como objetos visibilizados en la historia, y ocupan un lugar preciso en la composición plástica del encuadre. De hecho, pueden ofrecer claves reveladoras en cuanto a la historia.

La primera escena de *Barrio Cuba*, se introduce con un diálogo entre dos de los personajes principales interpretados por Enrique Molina y María Luisa Jiménez. Le antecede un bocadillo de carácter tópico:

<sup>4</sup> Interesante, en muchos sentidos, resultan las siguientes palabras de Fernando Martínez Heredia: *Había más reses que personas en Cuba. Y no solo en 1959. El censo de 1968 dice siete millones once mil reses todavía. Entonces no había refrigeración de la leche, los soviéticos no refrigeraban nada y los americanos se fueron. Cuando tú tienes una cantidad enorme de leche—si alguno de ustedes es del campo lo entiende—, uno termina dándosela al ganado. Pero a la vez, cuando usted recibe los barcos llenos de trigo, ¿qué haces?: ¡pizzas y espaguetis! Pero si el pueblo cubano no tenía ninguna inmigración italiana, aquí no existía ninguna costumbre de comer comida italiana. Hasta mediados de 1963 y 1964 el pueblo cubano comenzó a comer pizza de tal manera que había una pizzería en todos los municipios. Yo no he visto un cambio de dieta más grande y en menos tiempo en ningún lugar del mundo. Cfr. (Martínez Heredia 2018)*

- ¿Quién es el último para el periódico? Se sabe que, en Cuba, la compra del periódico es un trabajo de jubilados. Y allí está el padre de Magali, en su cola del periódico:
- Dejé las judías en remojo. -Le dice Magali
- ¿Judías, con el calor que hace?
- ¿Qué tú quieres que yo haga, si fue lo que dieron este mes en la bodega? Dile a Willi que no se le olvide echarle la mitad de la morcilla que saqué del hospital, y que haga más arroz, porque ese que está ahí no va a alcanzar.

¿De cuánta información de carácter antropológico disponemos en este sencillo diálogo? De España nos viene comer potajes lo mismo en invierno que en verano. De hecho, una de las claves de nuestra alimentación tradicional es no distinguir entre platos de estación.

Cómo se elaboran las judías, y en general los frijoles en un hogar actual de bajos ingresos: poniéndolas en remojo, ya que no existe la alternativa de ollas sofisticadas que acorten el proceso de cocción. Y aun así, la tradición dice que se deben dejar los frijoles en remojo un tanto, antes de ponerlos al fuego.

Por lo general, nadie en Cuba come lo que quiere sino lo que puede dentro de un rango de opciones que se ven limitadas tanto por el poder adquisitivo, como por la oferta real. Del diálogo se infiere que hay una distribución normada de alimentos, y *lo que se oferta ese mes son judías*. Durante el crudo período especial podía distribuirse frijoles colorados o chícharos durante meses ininterrumpidamente. En los últimos años el frijol dominante es el negro, mientras el chícharo ha pasado a la venta libre.

Se alude al modo de preparación que incluye echarle morcilla u otros embutidos. En este caso, Magali, que es enfermera, ha sacado del hospital donde trabaja un trozo de morcilla. Este es uno de los modos de completar el menú doméstico, o sea, procurando conseguir víveres suplementarios en los circuitos de acción laboral, ya sea por vía autorizada (en ciertos centros de trabajo se ha hecho venta de provisiones sistemática o puntualmente), o por vía ilegal, que parece el caso de Magali, según se deriva de cómo lo expresa: *que saqué del hospital*. Por otra parte, la necesidad de economizar alimentos: *que eche solo la mitad*.

Y completar con arroz, en cantidad suficiente como para saciar el hambre; es nuestro cereal por excelencia.

Es temprano en la mañana, Magali va en camino a su trabajo, pero como bien se sabe, desde que amanece la cubanada está invirtiendo energías físicas y mentales en garantizar el alimento restaurador más importante en la primera mitad del día: el almuerzo, o previendo lo que hará para la comida. No veremos desayunar a ningún personaje, ni siquiera con la



tradicional tacita mañanera de café.<sup>5</sup> Este último, ni se menciona. Sin embargo, se hace constante alusión a los frijoles y el arroz.<sup>6</sup>

- Hoy lo único que hay es arroz y frijoles- dice Adela Legrá en el papel de tía de Santo, mientras pela unas papas para hervir y se queja de que solo quedan tres huevos y no alcanzan ni para un revoltito (forma típica de preparar los huevos cuando hay más comensales que posturas.

La cosa mejora cuando una de las muchachas recuerda que su esposo trajo carne *de la obra*<sup>7</sup>, porque es *amigo del cocinero*. El carácter contrabandístico de ese acto se revela, cuando la tía espeta que algo le pedirán a cambio: un saco de cemento, una pieza, además, Santo, no puede enterarse, porque evidentemente Santo no comulga con esa forma de mejorar el condomio. Ya hará algo peor cuando la desesperación lo domine. Cual conde Drácula, ofendido por la traición de Dios que le arrebató a su amada, romperá sus votos de castidad revolucionaria, y se convertirá en un ladrón vulgar donde los hubo.

Ninguna proteína animal se libra de ese halo místico, que la acerca a la visión del maná cristiano:

- El picadillo que nos comemos hoy, se lo debemos a ella, le dice la madre a Vivian, tras reprocharle que no le escriba nunca a su hermana residente en Miami. Algo de razón asiste a la madre, pues Vivian, urgida de cumplir una promesa religiosa, le escribirá pidiéndole la corona con que deberá presentarse ante la Virgen de la Caridad, patrona de Cuba.

El Chino, marido de Vivian está sazonando los frijoles y su mujer le recuerda echarles comino. En una secuencia posterior dice Abelardo, padre de El Chino, que cuando él era propietario de sus dos bodegas, allí no solo se vendía arroz y frijoles (también muchos bonos del 26 de julio). Abelardo es un tipo resentido. Pero adora a sus nietos: “nosotros estamos bebiendo y ellos están jugando”. Los hombres toman ron, las mujeres cerveza. Se ve a los hombres consumiendo bebidas alcohólicas constantemente. Se toma en vasitos plásticos que pueden compartirse entre familiares y amigos. En otra escena El Chino bebe ron Habana Club mientras disfruta un juego de básquet por la tele. Ya hemos escuchado a su hermano quejándose de que:

- Traer dos bocas al mundo, a mantener, es tremendo problema.

<sup>5</sup> En otras piezas como *Conducta*, se ve cómo tan pronto existe una situación económica más o menos holgada, reaparece el desayuno consistente en café con leche y tostadas o pan con mantequilla; es lo que le ofrece Carmela a Chala, en una de las escenas finales.

<sup>6</sup> La dieta básica “ideal” del cubano a principios del siglo XXI, incluiría arroz, frijoles, carnes, huevos, leche, viandas y vegetales.

<sup>7</sup> Término popular para referirse al trabajo en el sector de la construcción.

Con un pedazo de pan en la mano, el padre de Magali la espera.

- ¡Mira la hora que es! - por detrás se escucha al locutor del NTV- ¡y todavía no se ha hecho la comida!  
(En la mayor parte de los hogares cubanos se come entre las 7 y las 8:30.)
- Cuando tu madre nos dejó, los crié yo solito (...) les di de comer. Así es que tengo derecho a preguntar a qué hora y qué se va a comer- continúa en su diatriba el padre de Magali.

Las expresiones relacionadas con alimentos surgen con espontaneidad: Santo se complica la vida por una deuda de “diez cañas” y en su alocado periplo se tropieza con Lissette, *el bombón* de Mayarí. Su desventura lo lleva a involucrarse con una pandilla que roba sacos de leche, de un almacén estatal.

- Tía, ¿trajiste chicle? – preguntan los sobrinos políticos de Vivian.
- No.

El chicle era algo inexistente en los años posteriores al triunfo de la revolución, por lo cual había una especie de fetichismo respecto a un producto que se fabrica allende los mares. En una escena de *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (Tomás G. Alea, 1968), Sergio cuenta que recibe de su madre en Estados Unidos una carta, dentro de la cual le envía cuchillas de afeitar Gillette y chicles. Con la aparición de las *shoppings*, y los establecimientos de venta en divisa, el chicle volvió al menú de golosinas infantiles, pero es raro ver adultos consumiéndolo: no existe hábito en la población cubana, más bien tabú, pues se dice que el chicle no alimenta.

- ¿Te preparo algo? –pregunta Vivian a su marido.
- Salgo a comerme una piza- le riposta El Chino. No compartir alimentos ni el espacio de comensalidad doméstica, es síntoma de la crisis matrimonial que atraviesa la pareja.

La comida también se toma como una señal de perdón y reconciliación:

- Papi, quiere que vayas a almorzar el domingo, dice Magali a su hermano gay, cuyo padre al fin acepta su condición. En otro momento, a Miguelito, el hijo de Santo, le llevan sus amiguitos un cake para zanjar un desagradable episodio.

Al regreso del aeropuerto, de la despedida *quasi* luctuosa, están almorzando El Chino, Margot y Abelardo. La jarra de agua preside la mesa, acaso a Abelardo no cesa de caerle *una jarra de agua fría* con la partida del hijo y los nietos, sabiendo que pasarán varios años antes de que los pueda volver a ver. Los tres platos solitarios, con un menú frugal. El padre en la cabecera.

El alimento también se puede comportar como medicina: A Santo la vieja le da un caldo. A Miguelito (el



hijo de Santo) le llevan un vaso de leche, como sustituto de los alimentos que él se niega a ingerir.

En algún momento aparece un vendedor ambulante, que ejecuta un simulacro de pregón; apenas se entiende qué dice, al parecer vende refresco o granizado, pero su producto no está expuesto. Más que todo, parece estar allí para recordar que ya prácticamente no existe el pregón, como no existe el viandero tradicional, en cuya carretilla además de papa, boniato, yuca, malanga, ñame y plátano macho, iban frutas, carne y hasta pescado.<sup>8</sup>

Casi al final, Magali está en un restaurante con Guido, un pretendiente añoso que pondrá fin a sus penurias materiales. Sus ojos se deslumbran frente al plato de carne que le sirven, y que por su presentación responde a estándares de la alta cocina. El virtuosismo histriónico de María Luisa Jiménez, concentrado ahora en su expresión facial, es suficiente para transmitir el significado global de esa escena.

La tía está escogiendo frijoles cuando llega Santo de su prolongado e infortunado periplo. La aparición de tales leguminosas no puede ser aquí más simbólica y necesaria.

Importa lo que se come y lo que no se come, ni se menciona aun cuando sabemos que forma parte de nuestro imaginario alimenticio. Por ejemplo, ya hemos dicho que en ninguna escena de *Barrio Cuba* se toma o brinda café. En *Madagascar*, donde se describe un momento de mayor angustia existencial, se llega al colmo de la «deculturación» alimentaria: no se come, se deglute col y solo col, vegetal que sostuvo los requerimientos vitamínicos y nutricionales de buena parte de la población cubana en el arrecio del Período Especial. Ya forman parte de la mitología cinematográfica cubana, los personajes de *Madagascar* que entre la gente del gremio son conocidos como “los comecoles”. Esa es una de las razones por las cuales esta cinta de Fernando Pérez constituye metáfora y paradigma de la sociedad cubana durante el primer lustro de los 90 del siglo pasado.

## V. LA BONANZA DE LOS OCHENTA

Si comparamos lo observado hasta aquí, con un filme de los años 1980, años de presunto esplendor, la diferencia es más que notable. En *Lejanía* (Jesús Díaz, 1985), se le brinda café a la madre del protagonista (encarnada por la estelar Verónica Lyn), que llegada de Miami y trae una cafetera eléctrica de regalo. El hijo, saca dos huevos del refrigerador, y los pone a hervir. Mientras, su madre lo interroga:

- ¿Hay leche?
- Sí
- ¿Y huevos?
- Los que quieras- Él pica una rodaja de pan, le unta mantequilla y comenta: A la mantequilla le decían Ulises..., porque regresó después de 15 años.
- ¿Hay jamón?
- Sí, un poco más caro.
- ¿Y pollo?-
- Demasiado.

Fue una respuesta oblicuamente profética. Por entonces, era más asequible el pollo, que se podía adquirir en mercados agropecuarios estatales. No existía venta legal de carne de res, ni se autorizaba el sacrificio de ganado vacuno. Hasta 1990, la libreta de racionamiento normaba la venta de cierta cantidad de carne o pollo cada nueve días (“la novena”), y a veces se sustituía la entrega de carne por pollo, hasta que, llegado el Período Especial, quedó solo el pollo. El pescado ha desaparecido casi de la oferta normada, para instalarse con irregularidad en pescaderías “liberadas” estatales, donde entre muy eventuales calamares, langostas, sardinas, y camarones, se destacan por su perseverancia especies sustitutas que no parecen haber figurado en la dieta tradicional: la tilapia, la tenca y la claria.

Siguiendo con *Lejanía*, un personaje regala un estuche de Habana Club, con el comentario de que es mejor que el Bacardí. Y a la comida, sirven un abundante bufet presidio por el pollo a la barbacoa, plato que se menciona en otra cinta de la época: *Los pájaros tirándole a la escopeta* (1984).

En *Hasta cierto punto* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1983) los personajes aparecen bebiendo café varias veces, mojito, ron con limón, cerveza, ron Carta blanca con soda. El hijo de la trabajadora portuaria que representa Mirta Ibarra, se prepara una merienda de pan con queso crema o mantequilla, y la madre, en otra escena, se dispone a cocinar un picadillo de res. No aparecen alusiones suspicaces a la comida. Eran los tiempos de bonanza.

Volviendo a la Cuba actual, en *Miel para Oshún* (Humberto Solás, 2001), aunque el personaje de Roberto, un cubano americano que ha venido a Cuba en busca de su madre, va a un agromercado, no compra nada de lo que le ofrecen: plátanos, fruta bomba, etc. Sin embargo, entra a la tienda de un hotel y compra, bajo la orientación del taxista: aceite, puré de tomate, leche, jamón, pollo, carne, mantequilla y pan. En un momento de descalabro en la aventura que han emprendido los personajes, comparten una cajita de croquetas elaboradas en una cafetería de mala muerte, y beben un preparado de algo similar al trago denominado cubalibre: ron con refresco de cola. Algo que no escapa a la suspicacia del espectador es un jocoso comentario, totalmente fuera de guion, que hace

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. Miguel Barnet: *Los vendedores ambulantes (el viandero, el tamalero, el vendedor de objetos religiosos, el yerbero)* En: Catauro Revista cubana de antropología, año 3 No. 5 enero-junio 2002 p.150-157. Sin la lamentable apariencia, y los precios abusivos que tienen hoy buena parte de los productos que venden los carretilleros cuentapropistas o ilegales, da igual.

el taxista (Mario Limonta) con relación a las croquetas, y que remite a la prudencia de reservar provisiones: “¡no las botes...!” Hay que ver a Perrugorri y a Isabelita Santos literalmente atacados de risa, fuera de sus personajes, en un arranque de espontaneidad que sobrevivió a la edición.

En *La última cena*, que contó con el asesoramiento de Manuel Moreno Friginals, Rogelio Martínez Furé y Nitza Villapol, y cuya trama se ubica a finales del s. xviii, en algún momento el maestro de azúcar Monsieur Gaspar, explica parte del procesamiento de la caña. No se hace notar demasiado el menú que los esclavos comparten con el patrón. Como parte de un referente bíblico, la mesa es larga y en su justo medio se sienta el conde, los discípulos se reparten a su lado, en las cabeceras y frente a él. La mesa está vestida con mantel. Se adorna con naranja y ramas de laurel. Las velas en los candelabros, vajilla de cerámica de pasta blanca, vasos con agua, y vino. El menú consiste en arroz, cerdo asado, incluida la cabeza –que casi al final de la noche un esclavo pretende guardarse y otro utiliza para escenificar un *patakin*<sup>9</sup>–, plátano fruta, mazorca de maíz asado, papas, pescado y pan. Todo lo que se va a comer está colocado sobre la mesa. Y no se sirve ni café<sup>10</sup> ni postre. Al final todos terminan ebrios de vino, tinto, como la sangre que se derramará en el curso del día siguiente, viernes santo.

La ingestión de comidas en los filmes se convierte en un problema porque generalmente se toma varias veces la misma escena, y por lo tanto tiene que haber un *raccord* entre los planos, las acciones y el consumo paulatino del alimento. También está el hecho de su conservación, y su (re)utilización en el momento conveniente. Por otra parte, el simulacro de cocción implica riesgos para los artistas y sobrecarga los presupuestos. Para un cine que tiene estándares de inversión muy bajos la disponibilidad y elaboración de las comidas se torna un verdadero dolor de cabeza. No es común ver en nuestro cine el consumo de tamal, harina, viandas, frutas, jugos, batidos, potajes, ensaladas, pastas, carnes y pescado, postres caseros, dulces finos, alta cocina en general; tampoco son comunes escenas en restaurantes, cafeterías, hoteles, bares, en los que se consuman alimentos o bebidas, y mucho menos el comentario sobre la elaboración de algún plato. Salvo excepciones, la falta de originalidad que acompaña la precariedad de opciones en la mesa actual del cubano, se repite en los esquemas de representación del tópico en el cine, así como un

empobrecimiento en el servicio mismo del comedor hogareño representado. El gusto por el adorno culinario, las circunstancias del preparado y la etiqueta, están condicionados por una visión que la realidad oprime y regula.

## VI. EL CINE CUBANO, FUENTE Y DESTINO DE LA ANTROPOLOGÍA

A modo de conclusión se puede afirmar que, según muestra *Barrio Cuba*, los alimentos consumidos, así como los procedimientos de elaboración, resultan homogéneos dentro de un sector social de bajos recursos. Las condiciones de elaboración, y los utensilios empleados difieren: en la casa de Vivian son ligeramente más modernos que los que se observan en casa de Magali y de Santo. En cuanto a métodos de conservación, en casa de Santo no hay refrigerador. El régimen de comidas diarias es irregular. No se desayuna.

De preferencias, se consume frijoles negros, arroz, carne. Los potajes se consideran comidas “calientes”. La leche –producto básico en el frugal desayuno cubano–, es un alimento que sustituye el almuerzo o la cena en caso de falta de apetito. Es síntoma de una mesa bien servida la combinación de diferentes platos en una misma comida. La transmisión y aprendizaje de las prácticas, y formación de hábitos alimentarios, parte de modelos familiares, como muestra el caso de Magali y su hermano, quienes los heredaron de su padre.

Por otra parte, la comida ya aparece como signo de adscripción socio-clasista y señala desigualdades sociales y diferencias en el poder adquisitivo de las diversas familias como se constata en *Lejanía*, *Barrio Cuba* y *Miel para Oshún*. Todo esto revela que las obras confrontadas reflejan hábitos alimentarios que son, en general, representativos de la realidad en que se inspiran.

Por último, no estaría de más agregar que, los estudios derivados de la antropología en todos sus campos, sería fuente fiable de conocimiento, para las investigaciones que los directores, guionistas, directores de arte tienen que emprender ante cada nuevo proyecto cinematográfico. El audiovisual no solo puede contribuir a la socialización de esos saberes, sino servirse de ellos para construir su universo de acción ficcional. Me pregunto si la ausencia de películas sobre la temática aborigen y la etapa de colonización española en Cuba, no se debe solamente a la pereza investigativa de los realizadores, al alto costo que se presume en los filmes de época, a la carencia de iniciativa para explotar tales temas, sino también a la falta de estudios divulgados sobre tan lejanos momentos históricos. Por ejemplo, la conclusión en 1992 de la obra científica “Estudio arqueológico de la historia de los aborígenes de Cuba”, tal vez merecería

<sup>9</sup> Cuento o fábula inspirada en la mitología afrocubana.

<sup>10</sup> El cultivo y consumo del chocolate en la Isla precede al café, que no alcanzará protagonismo hasta bien entrado el siglo XIX. Para entonces, tomar café marca una distinción entre criollos y peninsulares, y viene a simbolizar el anhelo independentista de los cubanos. Cfr: Niurka Núñez González: *El cacao y el chocolate en Cuba*. Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2010.

mayor divulgación.<sup>11</sup> Después de la avalancha de lo que internamente en el ICAIC se conoció como "negrometrajés", apenas se ha rozado el tema de la esclavitud en nuestro cine. Sin embargo, los realizadores, tanto en el documental como en la ficción se arriesgan todos los días en temas vinculados con la realidad cotidiana, que sin dudas resulta apremiante. Revisando un viejo número de la revista Catauro encontré un interesante trabajo en el que Lourdes Serrano planteaba colocar en el centro de las investigaciones antropológicas:

(...) los problemas fundamentales que están relacionados con la educación, la lengua nacional y los factores socioculturales que en ella inciden, las manifestaciones culturales y sus peculiaridades locales y regionales, la familia, la función de la mujer en la familia y la sociedad, las relaciones interraciales, la dinámica de los procesos culturales, así como los procesos étnicos nacionales, incluida la comunidad cubana en el exterior.<sup>12</sup>

Y termina la investigadora apelando al enfoque multidisciplinario en el estudio de nuestra cultura y sociedad para lograr los propósitos antes enunciados. Al menos yo no puedo imaginarme semejante tarea sin el concurso del cine, como instrumento y como fuente.

La de los antropólogos, sociólogos e historiadores cubanos parece hoy una labor clandestina, mientras que el periodismo cotidiano va a la zaga; ya lo he dicho en otro lugar. El cine en tanto expresión sociocultural guarda relación con la mayoría de los tópicos que interesan a la antropología, desde lo filosófico, lo religioso, lo urbano y lo rural, la diversidad y la identidad, la familia, la emigración, etc., hasta lo nutricional y de la alimentación. En casi todos los filmes se come, o se visualiza la presencia, ingestión producción y/o elaboración de alimentos: *La última cena* (1976), *Los sobrevivientes* (1978), *Fresa y Chocolate* (1993), *Madagascar* (1994) *Suite Habana* (2003), *El viajero inmóvil* (2008), *El cuerno de la abundancia* (2010), *Habanastation* (2011), *José Martí, el ojo del canario* (2012), *Conducta* (2014) y destaque de *Omega 3* (2014), donde el cineasta lleva el asunto a los términos de la ciencia ficción, y fabula sobre una presunta guerra entre facciones, por imponer un determinado modelo nutricional.

Aunque, por razones obvias, se han privilegiado aquí los largometrajes de ficción, la escuela documental cubana también ha dejado testimonio de su trasiego por los predios gastronómicos. Al propio tiempo ha servido de memoria gráfica y espacio cultural en el que se forjaron muchas de las obras emblemáticas del cine cubano, bajo la rúbrica de cineastas como: Santiago Álvarez, Nicolás Guillén Landrián, Enrique Colina, Sara Gómez, Marisol Trujillo,

Lisset Vila, Belkis Vega, et. al. Mención aparte merecen obras más actuales como *Buscándote Habana* (Alina Rodríguez) que, como resultado de su enjundiosa investigación y tratamiento artístico, dejó muy por el piso obras anteriores de similar temática; o *Bretón es un bebé* (Arturo Sotto, 2008) fabuloso viaje etnográfico hacia los intersticios de un etnos sumergido e insospechado, y *Las makarenkas* (Niurka Pérez, 2014), impresionante documental sobre la primera generación de maestras makarenko, las vicisitudes, los riesgos y los corolarios de aquella inconmensurable operación histórica.<sup>13</sup> De esta suerte los cineastas siguen subiendo la parada, sin empantanarse en falsas utopías, sazonzando como corresponde el pollo del arroz con pollo, aunque la realidad les obligue a pasar gato por liebre.

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<sup>12</sup> Lourdes Serrano. ídem, p. 42

<sup>13</sup> En el caso del documental la mención, elaboración, ingestión o simple presencia de alimentos precisaría de otro posicionamiento por parte del analista, pues es fácil sospechar que las reglas del juego en ese caso, varían de manera ostensible.

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## Cultural Action and the Defense of the Society

By Suzana Schmidt Viganó

**Abstract-** This article proposes a reflection on cultural action in the context of Brazilian society, given the challenges that the country is facing, regarding the intensification of ideological tensions between political sectors and civil society, threatening the constitution of civil, labor and cultural rights in the country. We start from the idea of barbarism, as stated by Adorno, and trace a brief history of cultural action in the country, through the understanding of Paulo Freire and François Jeanson's influence on this concept, in order to understand cultural action as a dynamizer of social relations and of diversity in the occupation of public space, according to the ideas of Hannah Arendt. We focus on a case study analyzing the actions of a theater collective active in the outskirts of the city of São Paulo and we confront the analysis with a political-ideological context understood as "cultural war" that is placed on Brazilian society today.

**Keywords:** *cultural action; artistic action; cultural war; interculturality; social diversity.*

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# Cultural Action and the Defense of the Society

## A Ação Cultura e a Defesa da Sociedade

Suzana Schmidt Viganó

**Abstract** This article proposes a reflection on cultural action in the context of Brazilian society, given the challenges that the country is facing, regarding the intensification of ideological tensions between political sectors and civil society, threatening the constitution of civil, labor and cultural rights in the country. We start from the idea of barbarism, as stated by Adorno, and trace a brief history of cultural action in the country, through the understanding of Paulo Freire and François Jeanson's influence on this concept, in order to understand cultural action as a dynamizer of social relations and of diversity in the occupation of public space, according to the ideas of Hannah Arendt. We focus on a case study analyzing the actions of a theater collective active in the outskirts of the city of São Paulo and we confront the analysis with a political-ideological context understood as "cultural war" that is placed on Brazilian society today.

**Keywords:** cultural action; artistic action; cultural war; interculturality; social diversity.

**Resumo** Este artigo propõe a reflexão sobre a ação cultural no contexto da sociedade brasileira, face aos desafios que o país atravessa quanto ao acirramento das tensões ideológicas entre os setores políticos e a sociedade civil, ameaçando a constituição dos direitos civis, trabalhistas e culturais no país. Partimos da ideia de barbárie, conforme colocada por Adorno e traçamos um breve histórico da ação cultural no país, por meio do entendimento de Paulo Freire e da influência de François Jeanson sobre este conceito, a fim de compreender a ação cultural como dinamizadora de relações sociais e da diversidade na ocupação do espaço público, de acordo com as ideias de Hannah Arendt. Focalizamos um estudo de caso analisando as ações de um coletivo teatral atuante na periferia da cidade de São Paulo e confrontamos a análise com contexto político-ideológico compreendido como "guerra cultural" que se coloca sobre a sociedade brasileira atual.

**Palavras-chave:** ação cultural; ação artística; guerra cultural; interculturalidade; diversidade social.

### 1. A AÇÃO CULTURAL E A ESFERA PÚBLICA

A base da democracia moderna pressupõe o reconhecimento e a vivência de um conjunto de direitos: individuais, sociais, econômicos, políticos e culturais. Esses direitos constituíram-se ao longo do processo histórico e determinam a condição necessária para a aquisição da soberania e a participação na vida pública. Garantir direitos aos cidadãos é o dever de qualquer Estado que se diz democrático. No Brasil, no entanto, ainda assistimos a uma grande violação dos direitos humanos, enquanto se observa igualmente uma implementação muito

incipiente dos direitos sociais (educação, saúde, habitação, lazer) e coletivos (partilha do patrimônio científico, cultural e tecnológico).

A criação de espaços sociais de convívio e participação coletiva na esfera pública são então essenciais para se quebrar preconceitos e situações de intolerância, mediando-se e confrontando-se o poder hegemônico para que se garanta cada vez mais a realização das liberdades civis, da justiça social e do respeito ao cidadão. Este, por sua vez, através da ação política, age em favor de uma cidadania ativa, tornando-se consciente dos seus direitos e da possibilidade de ampliá-los e atualizá-los.

Dessa maneira, a ação cultural é aqui compreendida sob uma perspectiva crítica, englobando as esferas da arte, da cultura e da política. Ao se desenvolver a consciência estética, aliada ao julgamento crítico, ganha-se uma maneira especial de se ver o mundo, que passa pelos sentidos, pela imaginação e pela capacidade de se criar alternativas e possibilidades de existência. Com essa prática, a percepção de si e dos outros e das questões sociais torna-se mais aguda, pois o indivíduo aprende a melhor se relacionar e se posicionar frente à sociedade. Caminhamos assim na construção dos alicerces para um processo de emancipação, condição necessária para a participação na vida pública.

Para Hannah Arendt (2003), é através da ação e do discurso que os seres humanos podem distinguir-se e é nessa distinção que são capazes de se apresentar na pluralidade do espaço público. É nesse momento que abandonam a esfera privada e colocam sua voz no mundo, mostram à sociedade qual a sua escolha e atitude em relação à vida. Para a autora, a ação e o discurso são práticas sociais que realizam mediações entre o particular e o universal na relação entre cidadãos. Agir implica em tomar iniciativa, imprimir um movimento a alguma coisa e liga-se diretamente à prática da liberdade, compreendida, sob este ponto de vista, como a possibilidade intrínseca de inserir-se no mundo e começar uma história própria. Este conceito vem diretamente ao encontro da ideia de que a ação cultural não consiste simplesmente na transmissão de produtos que se propagam em instituições, cursos e debates. A ação cultural se baseia diretamente na produção simbólica de um grupo. Ou seja, mais que um repasse de técnicas ou um aproveitamento de bens culturais, é imprescindível que

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ela seja carregada de um espírito questionador e pluralista, criando condições para a ação no espaço público.

Segundo Hannah Arendt (2003), a sociedade contemporânea relegou a vida pública - o espaço de ação política por excelência - a um segundo plano. Atualmente, a esfera privada sobressai-se nos interesses particulares que direcionam a vida, no culto das celebridades, dos individualismos narcisistas e na efemeridade das atitudes consumistas. Não existe equilíbrio entre público e privado, entre o cuidado de si e o convívio com os outros em um mundo comum. Com a transformação da preocupação individual em preocupação pública e com o isolamento radical causado por uma sociedade focada na produção e no consumo, chegamos ao impasse no qual, ao buscarmos desenfreadamente a abundância, o hedonismo e o individualismo atomizante alcançamos, no entanto, a destruição do nosso mundo e a nossa própria infelicidade.

Assistimos hoje a uma guerra entre ideologias e identidades, que tem a cultura como seu campo de batalha. Essa guerra cultural, empreendida especialmente pelos movimentos de extrema direita, não apenas no Brasil, mas ao redor do mundo, evidencia-se na defesa antidemocrática de pautas ditas conservadoras que limitam, restringem e procuram excluir modos de vida e práticas culturais divergentes, além de pregarem uma educação moralizante e, muitas vezes, fundamentalista. Reivindicam, por meio de um comunitarismo homogeneizante, a defesa e a proteção de seus iguais e de suas propriedades individuais a partir de suas próprias leis, negando a vida em sociedade.

A ação cultural, ao contrário, traz em seu histórico a defesa da sociedade e as premissas da democracia, ao compreender a esfera da cultura como dinamizadora da vida pública e ao promover ações que tenham por base o convívio das pluralidades e o alargamento das visões de mundo e modos de vida. Abrimos então a reflexão sobre de que maneiras a ação cultural possibilita o enriquecimento do espaço público e a produção de uma vida em sociedade que não seja ideológica ou moralmente pré-definida, mas que traga em si o movimento próprio da esfera da cultura: o entendimento da própria história, por um lado e, por outro, a possibilidade de reinventá-la e de transgredi-la.

Focalizamos mais à frente, para essa análise, uma experiência no campo da prática teatral na periferia da cidade de São Paulo, por compreendermos o teatro como um meio capaz de empreender essa tarefa. Ao proporcionar a experiência estética, o sentido de coletividade e a capacidade para o diálogo, o teatro torna os indivíduos aptos a fazer escolhas e produzir um discurso crítico sobre a realidade, para então levá-lo ao debate do espaço público. A origem da palavra drama se encontra no grego, agir. Dessa maneira, o

teatro possui um caráter eminentemente político – Hannah Arendt afirma que o teatro é a arte política por excelência - por ser um fenômeno público e coletivo que se propõe a emitir um discurso estético sobre a experiência humana frente à vida. Além disso, é ação, mais do que simplesmente trabalho, pois é uma atividade que se exerce entre homens, sob a condição da pluralidade.

O enfrentamento da guerra cultural que atravessamos torna-se hoje uma tarefa ética comum aos que defendem a vida em sociedades democráticas. Os agentes culturais e artistas que se colocam assim como seres fronteiriços, atuando entre as margens de um e de outro grupo cultural, de um e de outro espaço urbano, de uma e de outra realidade social, têm à frente de si, como diz Bauman (2012), a tarefa de se tornarem tradutores, compreendendo a diferença como modelo de mundo à nossa volta e a diversidade como modelo de mundo dentro de nós. A tradução, por sua vez, configura-se como diálogo contínuo, incompleto e inconcluso, constituindo o movimento de coabitação do espaço fronteiriço, a partir do qual todos os que ali convivem emergem modificados pelo convívio (e/ou confronto democrático). E é nesse espaço fraturado que procuramos analisar como as ações culturais e artísticas desenrolam o redemoinho de seus desafios e contradições.

## II. ARTE CONTRA A BARBÁRIE

Em um debate com Helmut Becker, transmitido pela rádio de Hessen, em abril de 1968, Theodor Adorno (2000), preocupado com o terror disseminado pelo nazismo, começa por afirmar que combater a barbárie seria o problema mais urgente da educação. Por barbárie, entende o filósofo um impulso de destruição imanente, uma agressividade instintiva, apesar do mais alto grau de desenvolvimento tecnológico e civilizatório. Tais impulsos, eminentemente psicológicos e extrapolados nas práticas dos campos de concentração deveriam ser, segundo Adorno, enfaticamente combatidos. Para isso, sugere que se radicalize a consciência dessas tendências em cada ser humano, para que possam ser controladas por princípios éticos, pela busca de novas maneiras de se relacionar com os outros e pela recusa da ideia exagerada de competitividade, que ele cita como um instrumento largamente utilizado na educação com a finalidade de aumentar a eficiência.

A lógica da barbárie - o impulso de destruição - opõe-se diretamente à lógica da cultura: a *construção* de um mundo. Para Adorno, a barbárie se evidenciaria na falência da cultura, quando esta aniquilaria valores e práticas, dividindo os homens. Talvez seja mais apropriado falar-se não de falência, mas de crise. Para Hannah Arendt (2003), em cujo pensamento destaca-se a ideia da particularidade humana pela capacidade de

iniciar processos e construir mundos – e, portanto, produzir história - uma crise ocorre sempre que se fracassa ou se recusa a tentativa de buscar respostas. Para a autora, em toda crise destrói-se algo comum a todos, destitui-se uma parte do mundo.

Integrados ao conceito de cultura estão práticas, valores, bens materiais e simbólicos que constituem um conjunto por meio do qual os homens de uma determinada comunidade se relacionam, dialogam, criam objetos, ações e símbolos, instrumentos e crenças, deuses e demônios. Que momento seria esse então em que se perde a conexão entre os homens? Em que as regras criadas se prestam mais à indistinção ou à criação de barreiras?

Ao refletir sobre a crise da cultura contemporânea, Teixeira Coelho (1989) alerta sobre a radicalização não mais do autoritarismo, mas do relativismo e da mercantilização das relações de troca e produção simbólica, o que levaria à perda da capacidade crítica. Para o autor, a barbárie também poderia ser chamada de indistinção, ou seja, a impossibilidade de se distinguir entre uma coisa e outra, fazendo-se equivaler os valores e sentidos das mais diversas experiências.

Pode-se dizer que o próprio *ethos* da sociedade contemporânea não apenas atomiza os indivíduos e as suas relações, mas tende, a partir desse processo, à sua própria aniquilação. Com o advento da sociedade industrial, a emancipação do trabalho, a mecanização das relações de produção, a supremacia da indústria cultural e o atual estágio da mediação tecnológica e informacional das relações, a humanidade prendeu-se a uma cadeia autofágica de produção e consumo. E o funcionamento desta cadeia guia-se pelo objetivo de se manter o altíssimo nível de sofisticação técnica, eficácia, produtividade e abundância que se conquistou nos últimos séculos.

Hannah Arendt (2003) chamou esse sistema de sociedade de operários, tendo o homem se fixado na sua condição de *animal laborans*, aquela que corresponde à manutenção dos processos biológicos do próprio corpo: nascer, comer, digerir, descansar, dormir. Criou-se assim uma cultura onde se precisa produzir em abundância, para depois consumir em abundância, em um ritmo muito mais acelerado que o natural: o ritmo das máquinas.

A supremacia do *animal laborans* frente à condição de artífice do próprio mundo ou à de ator único em sua relação diferenciada com a coletividade, com o debate e a ação no espaço público é uma das marcas essenciais da crise da cultura contemporânea. Esta deixa então de ser um meio de diálogo, ação e um elo entre as gerações. Na possibilidade de descarte rápido de qualquer de seus elementos, nos tornamos uma sociedade sem tradições e sem ancestrais.

Uma sociedade de operários deve estimular constantemente o ciclo da produção e consumo para

garantir a manutenção do processo vital e isso não apenas se aplica, mas se expressa também na produção dos bens culturais. Segundo Hannah Arendt, o problema não está na ampla distribuição desses bens e sua relativa homogeneização para serem mais facilmente consumidos, mas no fato de que se destrói a cultura para se produzir entretenimento, de caráter efêmero e substituível. Dessa maneira, reduzir-se bens e processos culturais a um mero caráter de funcionalidade seria uma ameaça à própria cultura, pois todas as coisas seriam tratadas simplesmente como funções para a satisfação das necessidades sem nenhuma valoração simbólica ou existencial.

Trazendo o foco dessa análise para a supremacia do neoliberalismo como sistema político e econômico na ordem mundial, observa-se também uma posição ideológica derivada desse sistema que nega a necessidade de instituições sociais e coletivas, assim como a existência do próprio Estado. Tal abordagem julga que qualquer movimento em direção à igualdade cidadã e à justiça social seria uma afronta à liberdade individual, estabelecendo uma forte oposição à construção de políticas públicas consistentes e traçando a indistinção entre discursos de ódio e liberdade de expressão, entre fatos concretos e verdades criadas pelas edições das redes sociais.

Essa postura, chamada por alguns teóricos de libertarianista, aprofunda-se nos movimentos de extrema direita, trazendo novamente para o centro do palco mundial a barbárie tão temida por Adorno que, em suas propostas sobre a educação, visava justamente afastar o perigo da radicalização nazista, evitando a possibilidade de novos genocídios. E, no entanto, nas sociedades nas quais impera a desigualdade, como a brasileira, os genocídios, tristemente, nunca cessaram de existir. Apenas concentraram-se impunemente sobre as populações apartadas, pelo poder hegemônico, dos direitos sociais e da sua própria cidadania. O geógrafo Jaime Oliva nos alerta:

Snyder, na mesma conversa com Judt, chama atenção para um aspecto chave, que diz respeito à desinstitucionalização da sociedade e do seu principal produto institucional que é o Estado. Na sua visão, o mercado não apenas busca alargar suas margens de manobra diante do regramento estatal/societal, mas no registro libertarianista, ele próprio se transforma numa fonte de direitos ou até de ética. Uma figura da totalidade totalitária. A política, nessa condição, não tem lugar, e a “antipolítica” prospera. Tony Judt indaga o que resta num mundo pós-político, despojado de sentido ético ou narrativa histórica. E responde: “Certamente, não a sociedade. A única coisa que resta, como Margaret Thatcher foi famosa por insistir, são ‘famílias e indivíduos’”. E o autointeresse deles, economicamente definido”. (Oliva, 2021, p.57)

Acompanhando essa lógica, a cultura deixa de ser um fenômeno de um mundo construído pelo



homem. Mundo este que expressa e relaciona suas crenças, valores, pensamentos e atitudes poéticas. Ao mesmo tempo, a arte deixa de possuir um fim em si mesma e passa a servir ao entretenimento, ou à aquisição de um maior status social, adquirindo um valor proeminente de uso e de troca. A cultura rompe com o fio da tradição e passa a ser manipulada como qualquer mercadoria.

Hoje somos barbarizados pelo *marketing* de uma globalização indiferenciada, pelo excesso de informação esvaziada de sentido, pelo individualismo narcisista que surge da confusão entre as esferas pública e privada, pelo modo de produção alucinante e cruel das grandes corporações, pela hegemonia do capital financeiro. E essa barbárie contemporânea garante a sua força na desigualdade, gerada pelos que detém o controle e o acesso das redes de informação, tecnologia e circulação do capital. O próprio conceito de pobreza é compreendido hoje em relação a múltiplas variáveis, que englobam as desigualdades econômicas, políticas, sociais, culturais e étnicas, entre outras. (Dupas, 2000).

Unidos pela aldeia global das redes digitais, nós, consumidores (e não cidadãos) mundiais, somos, no entanto, despojados dos mecanismos de produção cultural. Somos impossibilitados de compreender a totalidade dessa fragmentação em mil pedaços, em grupos anacrônicos que não se unem mais em torno do interesse de uma *polis*, mas em ao redor de interseções de múltiplos direcionamentos que não encontram o elo da construção de uma sociedade. Nesse contexto, nos vemos em um impasse gerado pela dificuldade de conceber um mundo comum, além da impossibilidade de ação fora do mercado.

Num mundo estritamente utilitário, todos os fins tendem a ser de curta duração e a se transformarem em meios para outros fins, seja para o aperfeiçoamento tecnológico, seja para o progresso econômico. Isso gera um pensamento limitado, pois não se consegue olhar para além dos padrões que vinculam o homem a relações instrumentalizadas, tanto com os produtos de diversas naturezas como com os outros homens. Perde-se a capacidade de fabular, imaginar realidades desprovidas de função, submetem-se as ideias e os sentimentos à necessidade de uma determinada serventia.

Adorno chega a mencionar uma sensação de claustrofobia dentro de um mundo administrado, um "sentimento de encontrar-se enclausurado numa situação cada vez mais socializada, como uma rede densamente interconectada" (Adorno, 2000, p.122). Ao mesmo tempo que nossa sociedade integra mais as suas partes constituintes, tende à desagregação, ao confundir público e privado e ao destroçar a percepção do movimento histórico e multidimensional das ações humanas, esvaziando a reflexão política.

O problema está na natureza do quadro de referências categórico de meios e fins, que transforma imediatamente todo fim alcançado nos meios para um novo fim, como destruindo assim o sentido onde quer que este se aplique, até que, no decurso do aparentemente interminável questionar utilitarista: "para que serve?" Em meio ao aparentemente interminável progresso onde a finalidade de hoje se torna um meio de um amanhã melhor surge a única questão que nenhum pensamento utilitarista pôde jamais responder: "e para que serve servir?" (Arendt, 2003, p.115).

Uma questão, porém, ainda permanece: é possível articular comunidades fragmentadas em torno de um novo projeto de sociedade? Apesar da sensação de dissociação, constatamos que seria preferível a derrubada das barreiras tão fortemente levantadas entre classes, gêneros, raças ou outros grupos determinados, para que as múltiplas vozes da sociedade pudessem de fato se fazer ouvir e atuar no espaço público. Segundo Hannah Arendt, a única atividade que se exerce diretamente entre os homens, sem a mediação das coisas ou da natureza, é a *ação*, que corresponde à condição humana da *pluralidade*. E essa é a condição de toda a vida política.

Fragmentados em nosso senso de comunidade, atomizados pela nossa necessidade de consumo, acelerados em nossa vida cotidiana, indiferenciados em nossas práticas culturais, escravizados pela tirania da utilidade, somos assim destinados a uma posição de isolamento, que nos impede tanto de compartilhar nossas ações com outros homens, quanto de estarmos a sós, mas na plenitude de si. E o isolamento é a posição mais contrária à condição humana da pluralidade: não pode ser suportado por muito tempo.

Ao nos compreendermos enquanto humanidade somos iguais na origem e no destino e, ao ocuparmos o espaço público, somos iguais enquanto cidadãos. Uma sociedade democrática pressupõe a convivência entre a diversidade e não a sujeição às necessidades e ao comando de outros. Para que se rompa o isolamento, observa-se a necessidade do confronto e do debate democráticos, para que se garanta o fluxo entre o público e o privado.

O perigo reside em colocarmos as diferenças como barreiras para o diálogo. Neste caso, estas são utilizadas como mecanismos de reforço de desigualdades. Visam manter não apenas as estruturas hegemônicas, mas também limitar o acesso ao controle dessas estruturas. Observamos a necessidade de conscientizar as pessoas sobre esses mecanismos, ao mesmo tempo em que se despertem capacidades que se afinam tanto com a razão quanto com a imaginação e a afetividade. Buscamos assim uma cooperação entre experiência, necessidade e conhecimento, na tentativa de se abrir espaço para novos movimentos coletivos e para a procura de novos sentidos para a humanidade. Esse é o espaço que buscamos para a ação cultural.



### III. TORNAR-SE SUJEITO DA CULTURA

Cunhado originalmente na França, onde aparece como carro-chefe da política do primeiro Ministério dedicado exclusivamente aos assuntos culturais, o termo surge em terras brasileiras pela primeira vez no trabalho de Paulo Freire. Em “Ação Cultural para a Liberdade e outros escritos” (Freire, 2013), o educador refere-se a práticas que não apenas dialogam com uma determinada ideia de ação cultural como trazem em si conceitos caros ao que constitui esse conceito em nosso entendimento contemporâneo.

Ao compreender o ato de estudar como uma atitude frente ao mundo, Freire dialoga com o cerne da ação cultural, que pressupõe a ampliação da inserção dos sujeitos sobre a vida cultural e sobre as possibilidades de ação e transformação sobre o mundo. Além disso, o trabalhador social, para o autor, deveria trabalhar *com* e nunca *sobre* os indivíduos, sem invadi-los culturalmente e convidando-os, por meio da ação cultural, a se tornar conscientes sobre as opressões presentes nas estruturas sociais, percebendo as suas contradições e problematizando os conflitos da sociedade.

Para Freire (2013), a ação cultural pressupunha como horizonte a libertação por meio do ato de conhecer. Dessa maneira, podemos dizer que o trabalho dos “círculos de cultura”, empreendidos pelo educador, não se constituía por uma relação pedagógica, mas por uma relação intercultural. Mesmo partindo da cultura própria dos trabalhadores, com respeito à sua realidade e aos seus elementos materiais e simbólicos, na medida em que Freire introduz a palavra e o universo letrado, há uma tradução e um alargamento cultural, que apropria o trabalhador do que significa escrever e *dizer a palavra*, envolvendo ação e reflexão no exercício intercultural de se estar com o mundo e ser capaz de transformar suas estruturas.

Os analfabetos sabem que são seres concretos. Sabem que fazem coisas. Mas o que às vezes não sabem, na cultura do silêncio, em que se tornam ambíguos e duais, é que sua ação transformadora, como tal, os caracteriza como seres criadores e recriadores. Submetidos aos mitos da cultura dominante, entre eles o de sua “natural inferioridade”, não percebem, quase sempre, a significação real de sua ação transformadora sobre o mundo. Dificultados em reconhecer a razão de ser dos fatos que os envolvem, é natural que muitos, entre eles, não estabeleçam a relação entre não “ter voz”, não “dizer a palavra”, e o sistema de exploração em que vivem. (Freire, 2013, p.41)

Inicialmente contrária à perspectiva colocada por Freire, no entanto, a proposta de ação cultural colocada por Malraux como fundamento básico do Ministério da Cultura francês não pressupunha a noção de interculturalidade e procurava estabelecer uma relação direta entre o público e a obra de arte, sem qualquer tipo de mediação. Foi apenas com o

movimento de Maio de 68 que essa política foi colocada em xeque, quando os próprios diretores das Casas de Cultura, questionaram a noção de democratização da cultura, alegando que esta, ao se apartar das bases populares, corroborava, na verdade, com uma lógica de difusão das culturas de elite.

Falar de cultura ativa é falar de criação permanente, é invocar os próprios recursos de uma arte que não cessa de estar em processo. E o teatro, em si, aparece imediatamente como uma forma de expressão privilegiada (...), por ser uma obra humana coletiva proposta à coletividade dos homens. (...) Nós nos engajamos então a manter em qualquer circunstância este lugar dialético entre a ação teatral (ou mais genericamente artística) e a ação cultural, para que suas exigências respectivas não cessem de se enriquecer mutuamente, até mesmo nas contradições que não cessarão de surgir entre elas. (*La Déclaration de Villeurbanne* apud Abirached, 2005, p.195).

A partir desse movimento, elaborou-se a ideia de ação cultural como prática que leva os indivíduos a tornarem-se sujeitos da cultura e não seus objetos (Jeanson, 1973). Tornar-se sujeito da cultura significa tecê-la como um cidadão ativo. De acordo com Hannah Arendt (2003), tanto a ação artística quanto a política se exercem na esfera pública, o lugar do que é comum a todos e no qual habitam as diferenças. O significado da vida pública consolida-se então na importância de ser visto e ouvido pelos outros a partir de ângulos e lugares diferentes: “[...] a esfera pública, enquanto mundo comum, reúne-nos na companhia uns dos outros e, contudo, evita que colidamos uns com os outros, por assim dizer” (Arendt, 2003, p. 62).

Tal acepção busca, assim como em Freire, compreender a ação cultural sob uma perspectiva crítica e emancipatória, abrangendo o questionamento sobre as hegemonias do poder e ampliando os espaços de participação na esfera pública. Além disso, ao abarcar a ação artística, enfatiza-se a dimensão estética de se *estar com o mundo*, permitindo a liberdade de criação, encontro e reinvenção de si, experimentando novos horizontes sociais e poetizações sobre a vida e promovendo o enriquecimento da coexistência em sociedade.

Isso nos remete à ideia de cidadania cultural, que compreende a constituição de grupos e espaços de identificação, expressão e solidariedade social. Além disso, a prática contemporânea da ação cultural traz em seu bojo a noção de diversidade e de articulação entre diferentes territórios, experimentando tanto a criação e produção artística quanto trocas pessoais e simbólicas, ultrapassando a noção de democratização do acesso aos bens culturais e caminhando na direção da construção de uma democracia cultural.

### IV. AÇÃO CULTURAL E CIDADE

Voltando-nos agora mais especificamente para as relações entre cultura e cidade, buscamos tecer a

análise relacionando o conceito de ação cultural com um olhar mais qualificado sobre a cidade de São Paulo, a maior e mais populosa do Brasil e a ideia de urbanidade, em seu potencial de diversidade e copresença. A cultura é uma dimensão ativa e constitutiva da própria cidade e a ação cultural, em diferentes modalidades de projetos públicos e intervenções de coletivos artísticos e culturais, tem contribuído para a formação de agentes capazes de participar da vida pública, além de impulsionar o enfrentamento dos desafios da vida pessoal e coletiva, estimulando a formação de ambientes comunitários favoráveis à inserção cultural e à expressão artística.

Em uma metrópole como São Paulo, os desafios se multiplicam, tendo em vista os seus contrastes sociais e a grande circulação de práticas, agentes e produtores culturais, que demandam necessidades diversas. A história das políticas culturais na cidade sofreu a influência dos ideários e das tendências contemporâneas, atuando na vanguarda das políticas nacionais. Sua dimensão a colocou em um cenário internacional tanto em termos de metas como de um mercado de arte, turismo e entretenimento. Tal projeção, no entanto, não a isentou do enfrentamento constante das demandas populares, o que gerou movimentos, por vezes, de alianças entre diferentes atores sociais e, por vezes, de conflito.

A cidade de São Paulo apresenta uma diversidade socioespacial, como diz Milton Santos (2008), manifesta em formas de trabalho, vida e lugares contrastantes. Como metrópole, ela sofreu e ainda sofre um processo de urbanização que altera constantemente sua infraestrutura, configuração arquitetônica e urbanística e estilos de vida, promovendo deslocamentos populacionais a partir da especulação imobiliária. Os investimentos em instituições culturais, ambientais e educacionais, assim como a escolha de sua localização, fazem parte dessa lógica. Operam com a valorização de certos lugares em detrimento de outros, a fim de atrair o capital circulante para determinadas regiões. Esses investimentos têm em vista, inclusive, o critério de tornar a cidade internacionalmente atrativa, e não necessariamente confortável ou estruturada para todas as camadas populacionais que nela habitam.

Grande parte das instituições que atraindo e fomenta atividades artísticas, nacionais e internacionais está em situação de acessibilidade restrita. O embelezamento e a provisão de serviços culturais são elementos que diferenciam as regiões umas das outras, criando discrepâncias quanto à ocupação e à fruição da cidade pelos seus próprios habitantes. Além disso, existem diferenças profundas com relação às moradias, aos serviços de infraestrutura básica, ao comércio e à proximidade do trabalho. Isso cria a distância socioeconômica e conflitos sociais. Como diz o geógrafo David Harvey (2013), a expropriação do

espaço, do sentimento de pertencimento, da cultura, da solidariedade social e da criatividade são perdas não reparáveis com pagamento em dinheiro. A ação cultural atua diretamente nesses fluxos de posse e desposse na cidade de São Paulo, confrontando as suas demandas, gerando reflexão sobre esses fatos, ou interferindo no espaço e em seus trânsitos.

Ao pensar a cidade e seus diferentes territórios, consideramos a constituição desses lugares e as possibilidades de ativação e significação que as práticas artísticas e culturais podem lhes atribuir, dinamizando mobilidades e potencializando relações e modos de vida. Ainda segundo Santos (2014), as cidades trazem em sua fundação o potencial da liberdade, da diversidade, do intercâmbio de saberes e criações, sendo que cada cidade se constitui como singularidade a partir do seu desenvolvimento histórico e sociológico. Investigar a potência da ação cultural a partir de um diálogo qualificado com o conhecimento da cidade em sua estruturação, potencial de urbanidade, espacialidades e problemáticas contemporâneas possibilita a ampliação deste conceito, no entendimento tanto dos significados que podem se atribuir à ação cultural, quanto à investigação de práticas que possam ativar os espaços urbanos e com eles dialogar.

Ao refletirmos sobre a relação entre cultura, cidade e vida pública, trazemos a ideia de um processo permanente, que leve em consideração não apenas os espaços das cidades e suas populações, mas as dinâmicas que os regem e criam seus usos, simbolizações e também segregações e desigualdades. Assim como as cidades, a ação cultural carrega em si a possibilidade de abraçar diferentes práticas e visões de mundo, inscrevendo-se diretamente na vida pública, tanto a partir de políticas que privilegiem uma noção universalizante ou pluralista da cultura. Desse modo, ela é potencial transformadora dos próprios agentes culturais, dos espaços, das concepções sobre a prática artística e sua inscrição no campo da cultura. Ao mesmo tempo que ela afeta os contornos das cidades e da vida pública, seus agentes são afetados pelos encontros que ali se produzem, criando transversalidades e correspondências.

Dessa maneira, torna-se essencial a pesquisa e a ação consistente sobre campos que possibilitem a revitalização da vida pública e dos espaços da cidade, prevendo a participação dos cidadãos no debate, a fim de reinventar os laços que constituem o tecido social democrático. A partir dos desgastes que temos sofrido como sociedade, buscamos a constituição de práticas que tragam em si a proposta de compreensão do humano pela diversidade cultural, sem criar, no entanto, nichos excludentes de participação na vida pública. Procura-se assim fortalecer o pacto democrático, instaurando o debate comum sobre as porções de partilha na sociedade. A ação cultural, como braço das

políticas públicas de cultura, pode proporcionar a formação de agentes que contribuam para esse processo, capazes de estabelecer fóruns de diálogo e participação cidadã por meio da experiência artística e do fortalecimento das práticas culturais, ativando, dinamizando e trazendo novos significados para os diferentes espaços da cidade.

## V. TEATRO E AÇÃO ARTÍSTICA NA CONFIGURAÇÃO DE NOVOS TERRITÓRIOS CULTURAIS

Criada como motor da cidade, a região periférica da cidade de São Paulo foi se constituindo ao receber trabalhadores de outros estados, majoritariamente do nordeste e de lugares mais pobres do sudeste. Esses trabalhadores, ao mesmo tempo em que alimentaram e impulsionaram a cidade em suas obras e serviços, foram alijados do seu usufruto. A própria cidade que construíram acabou designada a quem, pela soberania do capital, outorgou-se a propriedade das regiões mais passíveis de moradia confortável e fruição de serviços. As distâncias entre os vários centros e periferias da cidade foram configurando-se a partir das arquiteturas culturais e de classe que constituíram as suas espacialidades.

Segundo Harvey (2011): as forças do mercado e as mudanças dos valores de propriedade desempenham um papel fundamental nos desenvolvimentos das grandes cidades, o que acarreta em lutas políticas sobre a ocupação dos espaços mais ou menos privilegiados nos conglomerados urbanos. Entre os fatores considerados nesses conflitos estão as questões de segurança, preferências culturais e preconceitos, desenvolvendo um sentido de distinção e propriedade dos grupos sociais em relação aos espaços em particular. Isso gera, segundo o geógrafo, o medo generalizado da despossessão. Cabe aos trabalhadores migrantes e seus descendentes, os quais ocupam as muitas periferias de São Paulo, a mobilidade constante em seus papéis sociais, nos ofícios que exercem, nas materialidades que criam, nos bens culturais que inventam, nas lutas sustentadas por uma grande capacidade de adaptação. O sentido da migração completa-se nessa circulação criadora, em um movimento de desterritorialização permanente.

Para Santos (2008), vir para a cidade grande é deixar uma cultura herdada para se encontrar com outra. A experiência da migração é um embate entre o tempo da ação e o tempo da memória. O espaço é um dado fundamental nessa descoberta por ser, ao mesmo tempo, “concluído e inconcluso”. É nesse sentido que o percurso artístico do coletivo *Estopô Balaio* interferiu em seu território de atuação, impulsionando esse encontro e os sentidos que se criaram a partir dele. Isso se deu nas vidas das pessoas que tomaram contato com o seu trabalho: artistas diretamente ligados às suas obras,

moradores envolvidos em suas encenações, ou espectadores que estranharam esse novo corpo instalado em sua vizinhança.

A trajetória do grupo inicia-se em 2010, a partir do encontro entre artistas do Rio Grande do Norte, recém-chegados em São Paulo em busca de uma mudança de vida, e do bairro do Jardim Romano. A necessidade de sobrevivência na nova cidade gera o acaso detonador do encontro com outros migrantes, que há 20 ou 30 anos também se mudaram para São Paulo, mas em condições mais duras. O confronto entre arte e realidade estabelece a relação entre esses artistas, a nova cidade na qual se instalam, os sofrimentos de uma parte da sua população e os desejos dos jovens que se aproximam do seu trabalho. Eles ressignificam suas histórias por meio de processos artísticos e interculturais; descobrem o bairro e experimentam interferências no campo da ação cultural a partir de uma situação liminar que exigiu o reconhecimento de pressupostos, concepções e aspirações.

O Jardim Romano é um bairro do extremo leste da cidade de São Paulo, na região do Itaim Paulista, formado pela ocupação de áreas de várzea do rio Tietê. O bairro sofreu vários alagamentos, sendo o maior deles o de 2009, quando permaneceu literalmente embaixo d'água por três meses. As águas que invadiram o Jardim Romano tomaram as ruas e as casas de assalto, numa grande onda caudalosa de um rio que desaguou sem pedir licença. A força da tragédia obrigou seus moradores a reconstruírem suas vidas, material e simbolicamente. Este território é o lugar das redescobertas desses indivíduos migrantes e palco real de uma tragédia social que delimita o campo de construção simbólica, de negociações intersubjetivas e de reinvenção existencial, artística e cultural dos artistas envolvidos no coletivo *Estopô Balaio*. Entrar em relação com o bairro e conhecê-lo, confrontá-lo como migrante, como estrangeiro, tornando-se presente nele, foram etapas fundamentais para as traduções interculturais e artísticas necessárias para o estabelecimento do trabalho do grupo.

A identificação com o bairro, determinada pela condição de migrantes nordestinos, não isentou os artistas, porém, da sua condição de estrangeiros: chegaram a uma nova cidade e a um novo lugar exercendo um ofício incomum. As inquietações que surgiram a partir dessa condição inicial levaram à construção de estratégias de sobrevivência e aguçaram a curiosidade sobre as histórias das enchentes que ali ocorreram (e que ainda se faziam presentes como marcas físicas e simbólicas no território do bairro), movimentando os gestos de aproximação. Esses gestos se deram, inicialmente, em processos artístico-pedagógicos no Programa de Iniciação Artística (PIÁ) da Secretaria Municipal de Cultura de São Paulo. Foi como artista-educador desse programa que o fundador

do grupo, João Júnior, chegou ao bairro; e foi por meio das práticas estabelecidas nos encontros com as crianças que o olhar teatral passou a focalizar seus procedimentos sobre o real pungente no bairro.

Eu fui o primeiro viajante a chegar. Houve um encantamento inicial, porque todos os jogos e práticas lúdicas que a gente fazia no PIÁ desembocavam em experiências com a enchente: fábulas criadas a partir desse imaginário que as águas traziam para aquelas crianças, além das histórias que eles relatavam com o seu olhar: os peixes que eles pescavam, a lua que se refletia na rua, já que agora ela era rio, os peixes que elas criavam em casa. Todos meus procedimentos de aula passaram a ser em torno disso: eu os entrevistava, eles me entrevistavam, criávamos falas a partir das histórias (informação verbal, João Júnior em palestra ministrada no Centro de Formação e Pesquisa do Sesc-SP, em dezembro de 2014, em parceria com Carolina Machado e a autora.)

Jovens moradores participantes do Programa Vocacional, outro programa de formação artística da Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, tiveram a sua atenção despertada para o trabalho dos arte-educadores do PIÁ, e uma rede de colaboração passou a operar entre os Programas ali existentes, a biblioteca, os pais de aprendizes e os moradores próximos. Keli Andrade, participante do Vocacional, procurava um espaço para ensaios com o seu grupo de teatro. Em um encontro com João Júnior no bar de dona Lica, nasceu o núcleo inicial do *Estopô Balaio*, agregando definitivamente “artistas moradores” e “artistas estrangeiros”. Com a constituição do grupo, o seu primeiro projeto artístico se configurou e se tornou possível por meio de subsídio público.

*Daqui a pouco o peixe pula*, enfocou em seu processo artístico a poetização das narrativas coletadas sobre as enchentes, transformando-as tanto em plasticidade – com os grafites do artista Ignoto – como em materialidade cênica. As histórias dos moradores estavam em primeiro plano: as maneiras como cada um superou a tragédia, como foram formadas as redes de solidariedade, como casas e vidas foram reconstruídas, quais os sentidos e os aprendizados que foram gerados com essa experiência. A encenação mesclava elementos do teatro popular nordestino e elementos documentários e performativos do teatro contemporâneo.

O espaço público do Jardim Romano foi, dessa maneira, invadido por novos peixes: os artistas do *Estopô Balaio*. Eles percorreram, com esse primeiro espetáculo, as vias, as escolas e as instituições do Jardim Romano e de cidades do alto Tietê. A experiência vivenciada pelo bairro e traduzida em expressão artística procurava dar conta do reconhecimento dos lugares sociais dos quais eram expressas as falas dos moradores ou dos estrangeiros. Além disso, marcava a distância entre essas presenças singulares que, no entanto, partilhavam uma transformação pessoal e, como diz Rancière (2005), da

tentativa de conversão dessa experiência em riqueza comum, em igualdade poética compartilhável.

Nas periferias de São Paulo, as ruas ainda são lugares de convívio. É alta a circulação de pessoas que não são simplesmente transeuntes: as crianças brincam, jogam bola, donas de casa conversam e se ajudam, adolescentes trocam ideias. Das ruas, podem-se ouvir as pregações das igrejas com suas portas abertas, pode-se ver o interior dos salões de beleza, dos bares e restaurantes. A apropriação da rua pelo *Estopô Balaio* como espaço de interferência artística aproximou-o de um público receoso de adentrar as grandes instituições e os espaços, públicos ou particulares, reservados para a atividade cultural e artística, por falta de hábito, pelo estranhamento em relação aos produtos artísticos oferecidos ou pela desconfiança em relação aos equipamentos públicos. A aproximação com o espaço compartilhado do bairro foi estratégia fundamental no estabelecimento do vínculo entre o teatro e a vida do Jardim Romano. Criaram-se pontes que possibilitaram o processo de identificação com a obra que, por sua vez, estava diretamente ligada aos dramas sociais e pessoais vivenciados pelos moradores durante as enchentes.

O estranhamento em relação às práticas e aos procedimentos artísticos pelo público em geral é comumente observado em muitas propostas de formação, inclusive naquelas oferecidas por instituições públicas. Essa distância evidencia as diferentes necessidades e as práticas culturais que não se reconhecem e não dialogam de antemão. A aproximação entre esses mundos passa por outra via de entendimento a qual exige a construção de um espaço de troca artística e intercultural, em que se pode aprender o que nunca foi ensinado e ensinar o que nunca foi aprendido. Nesse sentido, as estratégias desenvolvidas pelo *Estopô Balaio* para que o bairro encontrasse o teatro constituíram o cerne dos atos disparadores da proximidade, do se deixar afetar, da visibilidade e da possibilidade de reinvenção no trânsito da vida local.

As ruas continuaram a ser ocupadas, com *performances* e intervenções artísticas em linguagens diversas. Cartas pessoais foram escritas e distribuídas para os moradores, os muros e as calçadas foram grafitados com novos temas sobre o sentido das águas, os ensaios abertos continuaram, assim como as passagens de som, e novas ações como o *Sarau do peixe*, as *Quintas de cinema* e o *Cabaret d'água*. Aos poucos, as portas foram se abrindo e o desejo era de que o bairro adotasse a sede do grupo como centro cultural, e outros artistas e moradores se agregassem ao projeto como colaboradores e propositores de ações.

O conflito e o estranhamento por parte de muitos moradores, no entanto, estiveram sempre



presentes, o que exigia do teatro a sua reinvenção, o seu próprio abandono, na direção de se construir uma linguagem que cruzasse a fronteira transcultural; e essa transposição dava-se pelos renovados jogos que se estabeleciam entre o teatro e o território. A relação constante do fazer artístico com o testemunho do espectador intensificou o encontro entre os dois. Abriu-se espaço para um reconhecimento que se manifestou como uma nova territorialidade e uma nova percepção sobre a arte, interferindo reciprocamente nos artistas e nos espectadores, nos propositores de processos e em seus vivenciadores. Os moradores do Jardim Romano passaram então a conviver cotidianamente com procedimentos artísticos antes inusitados. O estranhamento inicial foi dando lugar, ao longo dos anos de residência do grupo na região, à formação de uma identidade que se reconhecia em suas obras e a uma ludicidade que se permitia vivenciar durante as interferências do grupo nas ruas do bairro.

Como na experiência da migração, na qual o lugar de chegada e suas dinâmicas afetam a vida dos indivíduos migrantes, também o lugar da ação artística afeta as operações da consciência de quem a vê e de quem a pratica. O estranhamento e a surpresa propiciam a curiosidade que leva à descoberta. No caso do Jardim Romano, a interferência do *Estopô Balaio* em sua dinâmica espacial, alterando o cotidiano de ruas, casas e estabelecimentos comerciais, abriu as portas de seus moradores e praticantes para um elemento até então desconhecido na produção da sua história. Para alguns, em particular, foi fundamental para refazer os sentidos de suas migrações, identidades e escolhas, trazendo uma nova dimensão para o espaço do Jardim Romano, para o espaço íntimo de muitos de seus moradores e para a sua relação com a cidade.

Encontrar-se com a cidade de São Paulo é viver o assombro da sua imensidão, da sua velocidade, suas mudanças constantes, sua violência, suas formas múltiplas e variadas, suas injustiças evidentes, sua aparente desumanidade. Conhecer-la e decidir agir sobre ela e para ela implica deslocamentos internos, que reconfiguram olhares e atitudes diante da vida. Habitar a cidade é estranhar, desterritorializar. É, ao mesmo tempo, lutar para construí-la, repensá-la e refazê-la coletivamente. A trajetória do *Estopô Balaio* operou diretamente a partir desses fluxos de posse e desposse, pelo confronto da condição de migrante, das diferenças culturais e de classe entre seus artistas, do encontro com o drama social do bairro e do empreendimento da ação cultural como proposta de interferência sobre as realidades íntimas, as relações sociais, a produção e fruição dos bens culturais e as paisagens urbanas.

Muito se fala e se pratica sobre o teatro na periferia. Muitos coletivos instalam-se ali com um ideário e um discurso específicos, pautados nas lutas

de classes, nas relações de trabalho, no teatro como conscientizador das opressões. Esses coletivos têm grande mérito em suas empreitadas e lutas, mas, em muitos momentos, a ideologia toma a frente do processo artístico, sendo espelhada em peças, procedimentos pedagógicos e publicações, como se ela chegasse antes do teatro e servisse como bloco uniforme de explicações e proposições. Interessa-nos, ao contrário, observar como os procedimentos artísticos vão abrindo espaço na imaginação e no cotidiano do espectador e dos artistas que ali se formam, aprofundando a capacidade de fabular, a necessidade de abrir espaço para o outro, para o diferenciado, para as possibilidades de se sonhar outra cidade.

Perguntamos então: É a experiência estética ou a ideologia o que move o espectador? Ao chegar à periferia de São Paulo, os nordestinos do *Estopô Balaio* não se propuseram a fazer “teatro de periferia”, mas a estabelecer uma relação ética e estética com algo que impulsiona a vida. O teatro, quando experimentado no âmbito da ação cultural, surge como lugar de investigação segura para deslocamentos internos e de modos de vida, porque se constitui num corpo poético. Exige, ao mesmo tempo, uma dimensão estética ao se realizar enquanto experiência e matéria discursiva e uma dimensão ético-política, ao penetrar transversalmente nas relações humanas.

O gesto artístico dá-se nessa dimensão das imagens que nos atravessam e despertam em nós perguntas germinantes, percepções sutis, ainda sem formulação e resposta. É como quando se olha para o céu e se descobre a Via Láctea e, de súbito, em meio ao silêncio, percebe-se que um movimento está em curso em nossas vidas. É como todos os insights que se tem ao presenciar a natureza, ao caminhar peregrinando, ao sermos tocados pela delicadeza de um filme, ao ver nossos filhos crescer. São as experiências que nos fazem avançar na vida, entrar em contato com essas forças inexplicáveis que constituem o que está em movimento no universo. É a percepção sutil da relação entre essas coisas; são os sentimentos que nos assombram e que não conseguimos sequer nomear. Ou, por outro lado, a experiência violenta da tragédia, da morte, das perdas que nos desnudam de tudo e nos deixam desprovidos de verdades e, assim, reconstituem-nos.

A força da arte reside justamente nesses núcleos não discursivos, no que fica para além dos conceitos, no que vai sendo semeado e passa a despertar olhares, curiosidades e interesses que ainda pouco se compreendem, arrebatamentos que vão se aprofundando. Grande parte dos moradores do Jardim Romano ainda tem desconhecimento ou uma aproximação tímida do que é o teatro. Todavia, por onde ele passa, instaura curiosidade e uma brecha de que ali se vê algo diferente. O *Estopô Balaio*, em seu



ciclo das águas, encontrou fecundidade na lama; e com a poeira que se espalha a partir do que é pequeno, fez o seu germinar.

## VI. CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS: EM DEFESA DA SOCIEDADE

A sobrevivência do mundo hoje e, principalmente, do homem no mundo hoje, depende da criação de alternativas para a ocupação do espaço, para a captação e utilização dos recursos naturais, para um novo entendimento sobre as relações humanas e para o senso de comunidade. E, para isso, observamos a necessidade do fortalecimento do conhecimento de si e do outro, para que juntos possamos enfrentar os desafios da barbárie contemporânea.

A perda da conexão com a própria história provoca o esquecimento de que as relações humanas são necessárias e interdependentes. Vivemos todos dentro da lógica de um mesmo sistema, mas vivemos em partes fragmentadas, o que nos dá a ilusão de sermos distintos e de estarmos em universos distintos. E o primeiro passo para o equilíbrio entre a liberdade e a igualdade é a coragem da coexistência na diversidade. Dessa maneira poderemos, ao invés de nos alienarmos em falsas necessidades de produção e consumo, buscar o enfrentamento e a possibilidade da construção de um mundo onde não imperem as desigualdades, a injustiça social ou a destruição desenfreada dos nossos recursos e da nossa história.

No ambiente de uma cidade, por exemplo, constitui-se em alguma medida uma dimensão pública formada por laços impessoais, que orienta coletiva e racionalmente as ações e as relações. Isso quer dizer que o indivíduo não está isento de responsabilidades sociais e públicas, que exigem algum nível de envolvimento, algum nível de relativização de sua liberdade. Porém, não há como negar que nas sociedades modernas os horizontes da liberdade individual se mostram contraditórios à construção e ao enriquecimento da esfera pública, da sociedade, portanto. (...) Se o horizonte for uma situação de “elos sociais frouxos”, a vida social será mais barata para o indivíduo. Colando-se na balança a sociedade/igualdade e o indivíduo/liberdade, para que lado ela está pendendo? (Oliva, 2021, p.53)

No Brasil, a experiência democrática efetiva-se com dificuldade. Enquanto cidadãos, somos em muito pouca medida educados na prática do diálogo, na orientação das necessidades coletivas e no comportamento participante. Nascidos da dependência em relação à metrópole, em relação ao latifundiário, em relação ao empregador, nós ainda seguimos largamente uma mentalidade paternalista e colonial, ainda distantes da plenitude de nossos direitos civis, sociais e culturais. A falta de diálogo e a hegemonia do poder das elites conservadoras, racistas e patriarcais como característica presente em nossa formação histórica e social nos lega ainda uma tendência a

práticas de submissão e de formação de mentalidades rigidamente autoritárias e acríticas.

A ação cultural, aliada à ação artística pode contribuir no alargamento de uma experiência social e humana que questione os padrões vigentes, ao fazer com que os indivíduos se envolvam em ações não mediadas pelo valor de troca e de uso, nem pela lógica da eficácia, mas pelo prazer das descobertas e pelo risco das revelações. As vivências culturais e a experiência artística podem nos conectar com espaços internos adormecidos e de nos despertar para a beleza e o cuidado com o universo que nos rodeia. E, mais do que tudo, possibilita a dinamização do espaço público para que, junto com a coletividade, possamos redescobrir nossos caminhos no universo da cultura e enriquecer nossa vida em sociedade.

A experiência do coletivo *Estopô Balaio* nos mostra que a ação artística aliada à ação cultural não visa à construção de um horizonte pré-determinado, nem uma prática voltada para o consumo e para o espetáculo, mas a uma atitude que rompa as barreiras e amplie a consciência de quem o experimenta, desfazendo estereótipos e preconceitos, articulando desejos e modos de vida por meio do discurso artístico. Dessa maneira, a ação artística passa a se constituir em um encontro: de seres humanos consigo mesmos, de seres humanos com outros seres humanos. de homens e mulheres que vivenciam suas experiências para depois narrá-las. E ao narrá-las, estabelecem o elo entre o passado e o futuro e, ao compartilhá-las e confrontá-las com as de outros, constroem a história.

Como observa Bauman (2012), nem a inclusão ou a exclusão, nem a disposição de ouvir ou o impulso de mandar, nem a postura solidária ou a negligência hostil constituem-se em maior ou menor probabilidade de se realizar, ao menos em potência. Sua passagem ao real deve ser mediada pela sociedade política.

A sociedade moderna é uma comunidade política de larga escala, e a substância do vínculo social e político é o reconhecimento recíproco, que é um ato jurídico. No reconhecimento há um elemento de igualdade que se define sem condições (mesma raça/etnia, mesma cultura, mesma história, mesma nacionalidade, mesma classe etc.), sem prestações (de obrigações, de trocas, etc.), mas com disposições. A disposição de reconhecer. (Oliva, 2021, p. 63).

Para que se possa então equilibrar liberdade e igualdade em nosso pacto social, é preciso evitar julgamentos e debater idéias, desencadear ações e propostas para a construção, manutenção ou transformação do mundo. Mas para isso deve-se, primordialmente, aprofundar a qualidade das experiências humanas nas relações que se estabelecem entre os homens, com a sociedade e com o meio que os acolhe, sustenta e garante a sua sobrevivência.

A história, em contraposição com a natureza, é repleta de eventos; aqui o milagre do acidente e da infinita improbabilidade ocorre com tanta frequência que parece estranho até mesmo falar de milagres. Mas o motivo dessa frequência está simplesmente no fato de que os processos históricos são criados e constantemente interrompidos pela iniciativa humana, pelo *initium* que é o homem enquanto ser que age. Não é pois, nenhum pouco supersticioso, e até mesmo um aviso de realismo, procurar pelo imprevisível e pelo imprezível, estar preparado para quando vierem e esperar “milagres” na dimensão da política. (Arendt, 2003, p. 219).

E ao desempenharmos os nossos papéis, ao fazermos as nossas escolhas pela descoberta de novos sentidos para as palavras, de novas cores para os sentimentos, de uma confiança que cresce com o reconhecimento e o acordo coletivo, exercemos também o nosso dom de realizar milagres. E é nas lacunas abertas pelo sistema e nos vazios que se colocam entre o fim de uma crise e a possibilidade de um novo começo, que devemos nos alimentar com novas forças, sonhos e esperanças, para que se possam renovar as possibilidades de ser, para que se possa reinventar a realidade, para que se possa reconstruir o mundo.

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# Women Seeking Divorce in India: Multiaxial Analysis of a Traumatic Process

By Kyra Dcunha & Jan Ivern Sala

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**Keywords:** *arranged marriage, divorce seeking, financial dependence, family courts, mental health.*

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# Women Seeking Divorce in India: Multiaxial Analysis of a Traumatic Process

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**Abstract** This paper attempts to critically analyse the lived experience of women seeking divorce in India. A theoretical framework of knowledge is laid out by examining the familial, social, financial, legal and mental health factors that are relevant to a woman's marital experience and the decision to stay or leave an abusive marriage. Empirical data has been reviewed to provide preliminary support to such theoretical claims. Thereafter, the paper adopts a single case study approach to converge such a theoretical framework with the lived experience of a woman seeking divorce in India, to expose an all-encompassing understanding of the intersection of gender, marriage and divorce in India. The study has revealed several hypotheses that warrant critical examination and empirical studies.

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## 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF KNOWLEDGE

### a) *The grand societal affair: marriages in India*

A ceremonial act predominantly conducted for societal approval, marriages in India have come to signify the very purpose and 'must be' desired attainment of a woman's life. The deep rooted and deliberately unobstructed assimilation of religious and by extension, patriarchal laws leads most women in India to believe marriage as the hallmark of utmost fulfilment (Bhattacharyya, 2020). The intolerance towards and stigmatisation of pre-marital affairs and repression of a woman's sexuality, makes marriage the only avenue to engage in 'permissible' sexual relations (Singh & Jaswal, 2021). Breach of this societal norm is met with absolute social ostracisation and inescapably causes irreparable reputational damage to the woman's family as opposed to the man's. It is no surprise that until September of 2018, adultery law in India unjustifiably and arbitrarily protected men and extremely penalised women (Babar, 2016; Hajare, 2018). As a result of such social contract, it is regrettably common for women found pregnant outside of wedlock, to meet with the fate of either suicide or honor killing (Kalyanwala et al., 2010; Dublisch & Khan, 2021).

The satisfaction and wellness of people bound by arranged marriages in India is often viewed with much curiosity and suspicion by westerners (Nanda, 2015). Factors of love, trust, loyalty and compatibility

play an important role in the selection of potential mates in the West (Asoodeh et al., 2010). Individuality is premised on and love is undisputedly considered as the precursor of marriage (Desai & Andrist, 2010). In contrast, the Indian society views marriages as a familiar affair, wherein family values are given precedence over individual choice (Sonpar, 2005). While this arrangement may ostensibly seem as overstepping individual will, these cultural values form a concrete part of an individual's conscience. Such shared beliefs and ideas then converge to form the collective conscience of society, which has the effect of stifling individual free will and unceasingly demanding conformity to the common will of the group (Barnwell, 2017). The enforcement of such collective conscience within the framework of patriarchal laws and societal norms results in the concretised belief that engaging in socially approved marriage is the only means to attain a respectable status in society (Dhar, 2013).

Recourse must be unmistakably taken to Hindu scriptures that outline and dictate the purpose of the institution of marriage and its participants. According to the Satapatha Brahmana, wives are considered as 'the half of the husband', whereby completeness can only be achieved upon unison in marriage (Dhand, 2002; Sharma et al., 2013). In Hinduism, such unison is considered the only means to the end of performing religious and sacramental duties and symbolises the relationship of souls which extends beyond a single life through incarnations (Bhattacharyya, 2020). Accordingly, marriage is not only a ritualistic practice but the solemn duty of a Hindu. This sacramental union once entered into cannot be rescinded and is to be sustained throughout one's life and the lives upon one's reincarnation (Darin, 2019). Self-interest is frowned upon and self-restraint is celebrated and deemed indispensable for the fostering of love and unison between the families - "enjoy the heat of a log, and heed the advice of the elders" (McKendry-Smith, 2017). The Hindu scriptures such as Manu, Dharma Shastras and Puranas dictate that a woman has no claim to divorce (Rangarao & Sekhar, 2002). Even in the event of the husband leaving her deserted, she is expected to be a faithful wife because her mind is never permitted to be freed from the thoughts of her husband. It thus, becomes blatantly apparent that divorce has no place in Hinduism's conceptualisation of marriage (Mukherjee, 2013).

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### b) *Divorce in India: hidden truths*

The proportion of divorced or separated Indians is below 1 percent for Hindu men and women in both rural and urban areas, which contrasts with the worldwide statistics of 50-70% (Dommaraju, 2016; Zineldin, 2019). Even with divorce cases increasing over the last decades, the Indian sub-continent has the lowest divorce rate in the world and credits the culture's emphasis on family and togetherness as the glue holding distressed marriages together (Cherlin, 2013). Most divorce cases in India are filed by women despite them being required to produce more reasons to divorce (mainly interpersonal problems between partners, extramarital affairs and domestic violence) and being aware of the consequences such as social stigma or financial issues, will be worse solely because of gender (Faye et al., 2013; Shaifali, 2009). Under such circumstances, it is no mystery why the population that is separated almost trebles the divorced (Jacob & Chattopadhyay, 2016). References to the legal and societal implications of divorce, especially on women, is a carefully kept national and cultural secret. In a society where marriage is the holiest of all sacraments, divorce unquestionably becomes a rarely committed sacrilege regardless of the household situation.

In Indian culture, the woman is expected to move into the groom's house post their nuptials and studies reveal that this societal norm results in more than 90% of married women beginning their marital life at their husbands' home (Sonalde & Andrist, 2010). Apart from the apparent patriarchal implications, such migration also implies the symbolic severance of the woman's life from her maiden family. She is then expected to 'submit' herself to the caretaking of her new family and procreate. Such severance is expected to be effected on both ends - from the maiden family and herself (Rajamickam et al., 2012). Accordingly, in the event of a divorce, the woman has no recourse to her maiden family. She remains shunned not only by the society but also by the very family that birthed her. The woman may lose common friends of the former couple, as they perceive her divorce status as a threat to the status-quo of married couples (Gerstel, 1987). She may also be given the status of a woman who failed to serve and satisfy her husband's needs, someone with a 'sexual vacuum', who would be tempted to interfere with other families' relationships (Agra et al., 2018). There is no honourable outcome for a woman after a divorce in Indian society; if the husband asks for the divorce, it is understood that his woman failed at satisfying him and their marriage. On the other hand, if the woman asks for the divorce she failed at her very main life goal of enduring her relationship. Thus, the Indian patriarchal system is unapologetically 'regressive' and inextricably ties divorce to the lack of family honour.

Divorced women face the risk of sexual harassment, social ostracisation, have limited rights to

access psychological and legal support and have no right to claim assets or properties earned during marriage (Dommaraju, 2016; Mehta, 2016). In 2020, a man was found guilty of throwing a starving cobra onto his sleeping 25 years old wife to induce death by snakebite because she asked him for a divorce (TNN a, 2021). Even when women survive the period of finalising divorce and make it through, their nightmare rarely ends there. In many cases, former husbands may deem it necessary to assert their 'right' to sexually and physically abuse, harass, persecute and kill their ex-wife. If the woman enters into a new relationship (which is another reason for social rejection), it may be perceived as an extra-marriage affair by the ex-husband. Accordingly, women may never truly be free and often run the risk of being continuously exposed to their ex-husbands' belief of ownership over them and his pursuant actions being morally acceptable in society. In 2021, a man stabbed to death his ex-wife after harassing her for months because of his suspicion that she was with another man. With satisfaction and no sign of remorse, the man himself called the police and told them, "I have gotten rid of my characterless wife" and showed them her dead body (TNN b, 2021).

While India may have the lowest divorce rate, this doesn't translate into an increase of the happiness of women in marriages (Myers, 2005). As discussed in the preceding section, women are brought up with constant reminders of their place and purpose in society - one of selflessness in marriage and childbearing. Longing for happiness, compatibility and equality in the marital sphere is vehemently frowned upon, while compromise and purity are considered the greatest virtues of Indian womanhood. The wife is expected to adjust and comply, regardless of the nature of oppression, whether it be in terms of domestic violence or infidelity. The Indian states with the highest rate of prevalence of domestic violence by husband or relatives, have the lowest rate of reported cases. In Lakshadweep and Nagaland, the reporting of domestic violence cases stands at 0 (NCRB, 2019). This systematic under-reporting of cases by women has a direct correlation to the imminent possibility of retaliation from the husband as well as society. Gender-based violence is often approved and enforced by the mother-in-law, the sister-in-law and the rest of the husband's family system. The lack of allies in the wife's environment is absolutely asphyxiating and devaluing (Rastogi, 2006). As a result, we have a society with the lowest divorce rates but the highest suicide rates of married women.

Dowry-related issues (8%), other marriage-related issues (7%), love affairs (6%) and family problems (32%) were exposed as the reason for the majority of suicide cases in 18-29 years old females in India. In contrast to many other societies where old people are the most vulnerable to suicide population,

18-39 years old women are more at risk of suicide than any other in India and suicide is their foremost cause of death (Snowdon, 2019). The fact that mean age at marriage in India is 17.39 years, the very beginning of such period of vulnerability, illustrates a strong cause-effect relationship between marriage and the act of suicide (Desai & Andrist, 2010). The consequence is that married women account for the highest proportions of suicide deaths among women in India. Arranged and early marriage, wife-husband age gap, young motherhood, low social status, family separation, domestic violence and economic dependence are all factors that contribute to making marriage way less protective than in other countries (Dandona, 2018). There is also research evidence to suggest that in countries such as India, where arranged marriages are common, the social and familial insistence on maintaining marital harmony despite presence of overt abuse is a factor that increases the risk of suicide for married women (Gururaj et al., 2004). In essence, the longevity of marriages is nothing but a facade to the societal and legal protection of rigid patriarchal values premised on the systemic oppression of women. The suicide phenomena amongst young married women in India is nothing but a camouflaged form of gender-based violence. Such suicide by housewives is an important reminder that homicide is not the only potential outcome of domestic violence and gender-based abuses (Sabri et al., 2015).

c) *Financial dependence: the deterrent to seeking divorce*

The statistics on the financial independence of women in India, brings forth another tale of economic abuse by husbands. A recent survey by SBI General Insurance revealed that 50% of women in India were not financially independent (Express News Service, 2022). One in every 4 women claimed that their economic liberation remained shackled to the patriarchal chain of command, whereby women were relegated to the private sphere of household chores and child nurturing. Women are excluded and not permitted to partake in any financial matters, even if it pertains to the family unit. The forced exclusion from routine tasks such as visiting the bank, leaves them financially illiterate. A majority of women usually do not own property in their own name (Rastogi, 2006). The mixture of such patriarchal ideals with a generous dollop of economic barriers placed and vigorously guarded by husbands, leads women to uncontestedly prioritise family over any self-financial needs (Shobha & Shalini, 2015). The economic decision making power of wives, regardless of their education and profession, remains clenched in the hands of the husband (Sharma & Kota, 2019). This is a classic case of concretely established gender roles defining the limits of a woman's capability and decision-making power. Many regard education as the ticket to their liberation

from dictated ideals and choices. However, for most women in India, education only translates into their earning power, rarely into the power to manage their finances (Baluja, 2016). In summary, the factors that contribute to the lack of financial literacy of women compared to men include lack of access to basic education, dearth of independent financial resources, lack of accessibility to financial institutions and the social stigma that withholds women from financial decision-making and discourages women from acquiring financial knowledge and independence (Siddiqui, 2012).

As a precursor to finalising an arranged marriage, families often have discussions concerning the economic status of the woman after marriage. As the woman is expected to move into the groom's family, main considerations include the willingness of the woman to follow the 'rules' and satisfy the 'wants' of her new family. The woman is expected to uninhibitedly compromise her personal and financial needs, including her career, for the betterment of the family unit. The bride's family is also expected to give the son-in-law's family a dowry (properties or valuables) as an appreciation of the man's will to marry their daughter. Dowry-related violence, as a consequence of dowry promises not being fulfilled due to financial incapacity, puts women at a severe danger of being abused, harassed, deserted and killed during their marriage (Rastogi, 2006). Working women are considered less capable of fulfilling their domestic duties and are thus, less preferred. Given that unmarried women face brutally unapologetic social rejection for 'failing' to conform to the conventional life pathway, women often are left with no choice but to give up their earning power to enter into marriage. This is one of the most predominant sociological factors that results in 79% of Indian women never seeking work (Misra, 2021). It is no surprise that India has the lowest female participation rate in the world.

The lack of financial freedom is an often overlooked factor that plays an important, almost decisive role in determining the feasibility of a woman seeking divorce (Hilton & Anderson, 2009). Women in dysfunctional marriages who once put their careers on hold to look after their children or those who chose to not seek work by obeying their husband's wishes or those who have never entered the workforce or those who simply do not have a financial backing, face a unique conundrum - to suffer in the marriage, to divorce and face the known consequences or to kill themselves. Women who choose to divorce have to necessarily re-enter the workforce, with a reduced earning potential and even more reduced self-confidence. The unflinching patience required to endure the years of struggle to click reset and begin from the very bottom rung coupled with the years of economic dependence on their spouse and the persistently induced belief of worthlessness outside

of the role that has been ordained, heavily dissuades women from seeking divorce (Thakur, 2009). Moreover, the psychological and economic burden of initiating and sustaining a divorce, the uncertainty and longevity of court proceedings and questions concerning child support, are factors that tip the scales towards the decision to stay in a marriage (Trivedi et al., 2009). Studies have brought to light empirical data to substantiate the aforementioned hypothesis. The data suggests that economic inequality and dependence is associated with lower likelihood of the dependent initiating divorce (Rogers, 2004). There is a direct positive linear correlation between a wife's economic resources and the likelihood of her initiating divorce. Further, a study conducted on the divorce cases in the family court at Visakhapatnam revealed that the foremost reason for women not seeking divorce is financial dependence (Rangarao & Sekhar, 2002). Thus, women are faced with the fate of choosing either to stay in a prolonged unhappy and abusive marriage or risk being left destitute.

*d) Justice obstructed is justice denied: divorce proceedings in family courts*

Seeking divorce in India implies going through a complex judicial process that poses its own challenges and high barriers to entry, in addition to all the other mentioned persuasive factors. The feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s, led to the enactment of the Family Courts Act in 1984, which laid down the judicial framework for specialised courts to adjudicate family matters such as divorce, succession, custody, maintenance and adoption (Vanka & Kumari, 2008). Such an alternative, non-conventional legal framework aimed to increase the access to justice, by eliminating the need for lawyers to facilitate proceedings. Precedence is given to conciliation in divorce petitions, with counsellors advising and mediating the marital dispute. The language of the law in relation to the conciliation process reads "preserv[ing] the institution of marriage and promot[ing] the welfare of children" (Department of Justice, 1984). In line with the larger societal conception of sacrosanctity of marriage, the very law that attempts to provide justice based on objective facts and circumstances, makes an unconcealed one-sided attempt to preserve the institution of marriage at all costs. Within this legal framework, conciliation is often interpreted as reconciliation whereby women are vulnerable to continued violence and oppression (Jogani, 2018). The research on the ethnography of family courts in Kolkata revealed that counsellors often cite parables wherein they negotiated the contours of the woman's freedom married to an obsessive and routinely violent husband. For instance, as part of a settlement, the woman was 'allowed' to pick up her daughter from school (Basu, 2012). Instead of seeking an absolute end to the cycle

of physical and psychological abuse, women are left at the mercy of unreliable promises made by the man (Basu, 2006). The triumph of marriage over divorce by skilled negotiation is celebrated, whereas the potential of violence upon reconciliation is blissfully ignored.

The informal system of adjudicating disputes in the family court, attempting to resolve both emotional and legal issues, seeks to carve out matrimonial disputes from the public sphere and place it back into the private sphere, albeit being operational within the legal framework. Such a shift is fuelled by the notion that matrimonial disputes are private matters that concern individuals and not the society at large (Nagasaila, 1992). On paper, this shift is perceived as easing the access to justice, however, the underlying assumption of equal bargaining power between the parties to the negotiation is cause for concern. Men are more often than not in a powerful position, which leads to the power imbalance to shift the scales in favour of them (Nagasaila, 1992). The result of such inequality and the emphasis on reconciling marital discord, implies that settlements may force women to compromise their interests and well-being. The informal set-up also allows for the subjectivities and social values of the judges and counsellors to influence settlements. For instance, women who registered a complaint of domestic abuse with the police and later approached the family courts, were declared self-defeating and vindictive by the judges and counsellors (Basu, 2012). Any departure from the conventional vulnerable woman needy of the court's paternalistic protection is seen with disdain. Thus, the informal system often validates patriarchal values and reinforces the gender roles that dictate a woman's place in society (Eaton, 1986).

*e) On the cusp of sanity: women divorce seekers and mental health*

Women seeking divorce have to encounter and deal with three aspects of the process: the human-emotional, the formal-legal, the societal stigma and status related exposure (Waseem et al., 2020). The interaction of women with these dimensions of obtaining divorce, has significant implications for their mental health. Moreover, the nature of the divorce process implies important effects on each of the above mentioned aspects simultaneously and at high intensity for a brief period of time (9 to 18 months). Consequently for women, divorce often implies the feeling of anxiety, helplessness, aggression, sadness, guilt, regret, shame, lack of self-esteem, emptiness, loneliness, and uncertainty about the outcome of divorce proceedings (Mendoza et al., 2019). In such a state of vulnerability, social judgement (especially strong in women with children) often converges with the divorce-seeking women's self-judgement, which leads into an internal battle of two contradictory thoughts of success, "I will become an independent human and be free" vs. failure,



"I have not been able to continue my marriage and I'm responsible for it" (Gerstel, 1987).

A study conducted in India by Faye et al. (2013) concluded that divorce-seeking women had significantly higher psychopathology compared to men as a consequence of the divorce process. The most prevalent psychiatric diagnoses associated to this phenomena include post-traumatic disorder, major depression disorder, somatization disorder, anxiety disorders, interpersonal sensitivity, self-harming behaviours and suicide attempts (Faye et al., 2013; Pachauri & Rath, 2018). Mental health is strongly impacted by the opinion of the family of the woman seeking divorce, and having children is a risk factor for the occurrence and the worsening of psychopathological symptoms (Trivedi et al., 2009). There is also research evidence to suggest that in countries such as India, where arranged marriages are common, the social and familial insistence on maintaining marital harmony despite presence of overt abuse, is a factor that increases the risk of suicide for married women (Gururaj et al., 2004).

Having a mental illness is one of the three main aspects that lead people to suffer stigmatisation and marginalisation in India, with the other two being the gender status (being a female) and the marital status (being divorced) (Moorkath et al., 2019). The vulnerability of facing a mental illness due to the divorce process leaves them in a "triple tragedy" of being a "divorced mentally ill woman". This label makes the discrimination and abandonment from the Indian society completely unbearable for the individual, which may lead to institutionalization in case of family rejection (Sharma et al., 2013; Srivastava & Kumar, 2021). Moreover, women's mental illness is a socially accepted reason for the husband to ask for a divorce, as well as finds support in the legal grounds for divorce in India (Narayan & Shikha, 2013; Corrigan & Rao, 2012). Considering that the resulting process has significant negative effects on women's mental health, those women who are already ailing from mental illness are susceptible to compounded suffering which may lead to devastating consequences (Bhugra et al., 2003).

In the long-term, literature reveals a significant difference in the treatment of divorcees' in the Indian context compared to the western culture. A study that was conducted in Canada concluded that the lives of those individuals who got divorced 20 years ago did not improve, and their mental health got worse or continued to be in a similar state (Waite, 2002). In the United States, Avison et al. (2007) studied the evolution of the mental health of people who sought divorce due to unhappiness in marriage and found that the symptoms of depression and low self-esteem did not reduce for two out of three of the participants after two decades. On the other hand, Sharma (2011) studied the progression of the mental health of women in Indian

society and concluded that the harmful effects of divorce on mental health decreased over time and their extraversion increases as they become more capable of developing a social network. The authors also exposed that the divorce-seeking process in India causes a much more severe impact on mental health than in the west because of the social stigma and greater economic hardship associated with it. This data summarises the 'funnel effect' of divorce-seeking in India, which represents an impassable barrier for the vast majority of Indian women, and the small minority who manage to survive the traumatic experience, have a significantly better mental state as years pass by (Sharma, 2011).

Divorce is an expensive affair. Moreover, as indicated in the preceding section, a staggering amount of Indian women are financially dependent on their husbands. By logical extension and supported by empirical evidence, divorced women are more likely to face financial hardships (Trivedi et al., 2009). Studies have shown that the income levels of divorced women could fall by 27-70%, even if they remarried (Madara, 2020). Research has also consistently shown that in virtually every society, economic hardship and low socioeconomic status are associated with high rates of mental disorder (Trivedi, 2009). Thus, it is fairly established that the mental health of women is likely to be impacted by economic hardship faced as a direct result of seeking divorce.

Many researchers have studied the effect of divorce on mental health, however, there is an absolute lack of research on the mental health of women seeking divorce in India. While welfare, financial and legal services are available for women undergoing divorce, there are barely any organisations that provide psychological support (Akter & Begum, 2012). Conducting research on the psychological effects on women undergoing divorce, can offer valuable insights and probe the availability of psychological services or help integrate psychological support in existing organisations that assist divorce seeking women.

## II. METHODS

A single case study approach has been adopted to critically analyse the multiple axes of oppression and discrimination faced by women seeking divorce in India. Single case studies have particular value in research areas which have not been systematically studied on a group basis and carry the potential to probe the scientific task of generating novel and innovative hypotheses (Persons & Jensen, 2018). In this paper, the single case study approach adopted, allows for detailed inspection of an unexplored field of study - the personal, familial, financial, societal and legal variables that influence and dictate the experience of divorcing women and the resulting effect on their mental health.

Yin defines a case study as an 'empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 2014). Accordingly, this paper attempts to sew together the existing research studies that are isolated and dispersed, in order to exhibit a cohesive pattern of causes and effects of marriage dissolution initiated by women in India. The case is fitting as it encompasses and provides real-life, subjective insight to all the variables that theoretical and empirical research, along with personal accounts of women released through newspaper reports and blogs have shown to pose a deterrent to women seeking divorce in India. The review of existing literature and the peculiarities of the case provides an all-encompassing understanding of the intersection of gender, marriage and divorce in India and has exposed several interrelations that warrant critical examination and empirical studies.

### III. A LIVED EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK OF KNOWLEDGE: A CASE STUDY

The case study is a narration of the experience of Archana, a divorce seeking woman in India. As requested by her, the names of the parties have been changed.

The marriage of Archana and Vivek was arranged by Vivek's sister and Archana's mother. At first the marriage was arranged without any conditions from either party. However, after a few days passed, a relative informed Archana's mother that Vivek's mother had demanded a car as dowry, a prerequisite to the consummation of the marriage. Archana's mother responded affirmatively. Further demands were made by Vivek's father to send more valuable items in a truck to his residence.

During the marriage, Archana was expected to always cover her head with a scarf. During her visits to Vivek's native village, she was also expected to cover her face. It was her duty to massage the feet of her in-laws as well as their guests or relatives that visited. Her sister in-laws would make constant demands for money and humiliate her in front of people on many occasions. In Archana's opinion, the jealousy stemming from the unmarried status of the elder sister in-law, caused her sister in-law to belittle and emotionally as well as physically abuse her. "My experience was horrible... more than horrible. I was never loved by that family, not for a single day. I had to beg for money, even for household expenses. He often threw money at my face."

Despite sex determination being illegal in India, Vivek had pregnant Archana determine the sex of her second child. On discovering that the child was female, Vivek verbally abused Archana for her 'inability' to give him a son and even made attempts to kill the fetus. In

response to this incident, Archana returned to her maiden home in March 2008 and lived with them for a period of 1 year 8 months. In November 2009, she returned to Vivek and that is when the cycle of physical assault began. Her injuries included chipped and broken teeth, several bruises, six stitches on her eyebrow and short-term memory loss as a result of her head being banged against the wall. The physical and mental harassment continued for more than 11 years and in 2020, Archana filed for divorce on the grounds of physical, mental, emotional, and financial cruelty.

"I did not file for divorce for 22 years because my two young girls were completely dependent on me. I had no work, no money and Vivek did not take on any parental responsibilities. I could not just leave my girls behind and go to work. However, in 2020 my younger daughter attempted suicide. That is when I decided that come what may, I will leave this man. My life ever since has not been easy, this divorce has affected a lot of my relationships. I haven't even received a call from so many of my friends because they are aware of my situation and neither have I called them. I never visit any of my neighbours who have men in their house. I am afraid for my safety and always prefer people coming to my house instead of me visiting them."

Vivek approached Archana's family members and pressured them to dissuade her from pursuing the divorce. He bugged their house and her phone to intercept all her conversations. He approached the bank manager of the bank with which Archana stored her personal finances and ever since, the bank manager has severely restricted her access to her own account. Vivek also approached the landlady of the house in which Archana resided with her children and informed her that since Archana has filed for divorce, she will no longer have his economic support and will be unable to pay rent. Archana was forced to vacate. Archana notes, "Of course he doesn't want to leave a free of cost 24x7 servant so he was very agitated and told my daughter that his ego was hurt."

"The legal system is very frustrating and tiring. It's been almost two years since I filed for divorce and I have yet not received maintenance. The judge keeps unnecessarily shouting at me but does not say a word to Vivek." Vivek has been intentionally delaying the proceedings by not appearing before the court, concocting lies and restricting Archana's access to finances. Archana also suspects that he has bribed her lawyers to present weak arguments or not appear before the court. Consequently, Archana had to change her representation a couple of times and is now being represented by her daughter's friend. "The case affects my mental health a lot and as well as those involved. A couple of days before the date of hearing, I am unable to sleep and even after the hearing, I am completely disturbed by the fact that things are just not moving. We invest so much of our time - physical, mental and

emotional energy into preparing for court that we are unable to focus on our work and move ahead in life.” The divorce is presently sub judice and the next date of hearing has been set for June 7, 2022.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Archana faced domestic violence for about 11 years during her marriage to Vivek. The systematic under-reporting of domestic violence cases in India and this unreported domestic abuse that sustained itself for over a decade, depicts the familial and societal expectation from the wife to maintain marital harmony *de hors* of domestic violence (Sabri et al., 2015; Gururaj et al., 2004). This deliberate suppression and oppression has the effect of inciting fear of retaliation by the husband, his family and society. Moreover, the validation of the violence inflicted by Vivek on Archana by her in-laws and the harassment faced by her at the hands of them, depicts the rigid enforcement of patriarchal rules within the family system, and by extension, takes the form of socially approved violence against women (Rastogi, 2006). However, the cycle of harassment and violence does not end with divorce. As witnessed through Archana's case, men often continue to assert their 'right' over their wives by creating social, financial and legal obstacles in the process of obtaining divorce. Such deliberately placed roadblocks may include delaying judicial proceedings, mounting pressure on the woman's family to dissuade her from seeking divorce, restricting access to financial resources and instigating social disapproval. Thus, the behaviour of the domestic violence perpetrator post-divorce is another factor that significantly influences the woman's decision to divorce or return to their violent relationship (Rhodes & McKenzie, 1998).

The complete relegation of child-bearing and rearing duties to the woman and the absolute exclusion of them from financial resources and decisions, is yet another dissuading factor from seeking divorce that plays out in the case study. Archana was responsible for fulfilling parental duties in the private sphere and was completely kept out of the reach of economic resources. Every time she wished to make an expense, she had to beg Vivek to provide financially. The lack of financial support and independence to sustain herself and her children and the inability to bear the costs of obtaining divorce, in this case, was one of the main factors that led Archana to continue in an abusive marriage for several years. Accordingly, the research findings as well as the lived experience of Archana, exhibit an association of high financial dependence on the husband with lower likelihood of the dependent wife initiating divorce (Rangarao & Sekhar, 2002).

It is common for women to stay in an abusive marriage for the sake of their children. Such women often make the decision to stay based on a belief that

maintaining the marriage may benefit their children and their family unit (Choice & Lamke, 1997). It is pertinent to note that such reasoning is qualitatively different from the reasoning to stay in a marriage due to the woman's inability to financially support her children. However, this case study brings to the forefront an interesting dimension to this two-sided approach to divorce decision making in relation to children. After 11 years of enduring domestic abuse, it was her daughter's attempt to suicide that impelled Archana to file for divorce. While researchers have studied the effects of divorce on the mental health of children and shown that women whose parents are divorced are at an elevated risk of suicide (Kleinsorge et al., 2012; Gould et al., 1998), there is an absolute dearth of research on the correlation between the mental health of children in abusive marriages and the decision of the woman to seek divorce.

Archana notes, “I am afraid for my safety”. This fear is not irrational, rather has ample grounding in the lived experience of divorce seeking women (TNN a, 2021). The sociological implications of seeking divorce for Archana in terms of reduction of social network, lack of social acceptance and support from existing social relationships coupled with the fear of societal violence for breaking the conventional mould of marriages, aptly depicts the manner in which theoretical frameworks and researched hypothesis exhibit the sociological effects of seeking divorce (Dommaraju, 2016; Mehta, 2016). The belief of ownership of the man over his wife and the attempt at liberation through divorce, often translates into the “right” of the society to avenge such transgression by married women. The statement, “I never visit any of my neighbours who have men in their house”, is indicative of Archana's acute understanding of how her status as a “divorce seeking woman” is perceived as a threat to married couples by society (Agra et al., 2018). Thus, divorce for women in India translates not only into the cutting of ties from the husband but also from the society at large.

As highlighted in this paper, the process to arrive at the decision to seek divorce for women in India is a vexed experience of the interplay between power dynamics, personal tragedies and social norms. However, arriving at the decision to divorce rarely signifies the end to the cycle of mental agony for the woman. The professional bias of the legal system towards marriage reconstruction over termination i.e. money, which is more often than not in the hands of the man, makes the process of obtaining divorce extremely arduous and disappointing (Black & Joffe 1978). Arandhya notes that her mental health has suffered a lot as a direct consequence to the court proceedings. Her experience converges with the research finding of divorce-seeking women having significantly higher psychopathology compared to men

as a consequence of the divorce process (Faye et al., 2013).

## V. CONCLUSION

As depicted in the preceding section, the single case study approach adopted in this research paper has enabled its authors to examine a subjective experience through the lens of the theoretical and experimental framework of knowledge concerning marriage, divorce and mental health in India. The focus on a single case has allowed for deeper exploration of an understudied area i.e. the multifaceted experience of women seeking divorce in India. The authors have attempted to take a deep dive into the subjective lived experience of a woman seeking divorce in India and have utilised the personal, familial, societal, financial and legal aspects of her lived experience to fill in the gaps of existing theories and research. Accordingly, the study has brought to light deficiencies in existing theory and uncovered new theoretical relationships that are worthy of scientific exploration.

1. The likelihood of lack of social support for women seeking divorce in India.
2. The correlation between low divorce rates and marital happiness and satisfaction of couples in India.
3. The likelihood of violence by husband against his wife seeking divorce in India.
4. The mortality risk of women seeking divorce in India.
5. The association between financial dependence of women in India and their willingness to seek divorce.
6. The association between low divorce rates and high suicide rates amongst married women in India.
7. The likelihood of women being dissuaded from seeking divorce in India due to the emphasis on reconciliation of marriage by the legal system.
8. Psychological effects on the mental health of women seeking divorce in India.
9. The association between family honour and the likelihood of women seeking divorce in India.
10. The association between the phenomenon of arranged marriages and the insistence on maintaining marital harmony by families of women seeking divorce in India.

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## Saudi Women's Status in the Social Novel Ibrahim Al-Nassir as a Case Study

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**Abstract-** The Saudi social novel devotes considerable attention to women as a theme, analyzing and debating several issues concerning them. This article will discuss the status of Saudi women in social novels. The article will look at the reason for this interest in women's issues. Besides, it will examine the factors that lie behind the weak position of women in Saudi society. Then, it will provide three images of women in the Saudi social novel that symbolize the transformations in Saudi women's status and that appear in al-Nassir's novels: traditional women, modern women, and radical women. With regards to the first of these types, they do not play an active role in the progress of the fictional events, reflecting the passivity of the role they play in real life. In contrast, their modern and radical counterparts play a central role in the narrative. Finally, this article will deal with the Arab Women's Liberation Movement, which has influenced some of al-Nassir's fiction characters.

**Keywords:** *saudi women, saudi social novel, al\_nassir's novels, arab women's liberation.*

**GJHSS-C Classification:** DDC Code: 813.4 LCC Code: PS1017



*Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:*



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Arabic Transliteration Table

ء ' ʿ	ذ dh	ظ ẓ/ẓ	ن n
ب b	ر r	ع ʿ	ه H
ت t	ز z	غ gh	و w
ث th	س s	ف f	ي y
ج j	ش sh	ق q	
ح H/h	ص Ṣ/ṣ	ك k	
خ kh	ض Ḍ/ḍ	ل l	
د d	ط Ṭ/ṭ	م m	

VOWELS:

LONG: Ā/ā - ʾ - Ū/ū - ʾ - ʾ - ʾ

SHORT: a - - u - - i - -

## I. INTRODUCTION

Like other Saudi novelists, Ibrahim al-Nassir found that women's issues provide rich literary material, so he dedicated two of his novels specifically to

this subject: *'Adhra' al-Manfā* and *Dam al-Barā'a*<sup>1</sup>. Al-Nassir features female characters who represent the liberation of women in society. They try to change traditional ideas about the role of women in a developing society by raising the level of social awareness about this topic. The social novel also investigated the relationship between Islam and women and revealed that society is trying to resist changes to the role of women by placing old customs and religion as obstacles in front of them.

The existence of this issue in Saudi narrative discourse is a result of the rapid changes—economic, political, and social—that have occurred in women's status and roles.

## II. REPRESENTING WOMEN'S ISSUES IN THE SOCIAL NOVEL

Women's issues are a central topic in a large number of Arab novels, and their depiction is usually regarded as one of the most significant concerns in Arabic narrative discourse. In discussing the image of women in the realist novel, critic Mohammed al-Shintī (2004, p.425) observes: "With regards to the female character in the realist novel at this stage, she is mostly characterized positively. Novelists give her a great deal of attention and track her progress".

Saudi Arabia's social narrative discourse pays close attention to women and presents many images of them as wives, daughters, mothers, and friends. In addition, it provides a variety of female characters, such as traditional, oppressed, educated, modern and radical women. Moreover, the novels discuss women's issues, such as their right to education and work. The social transformations occurring in all aspects of Saudi society have altered the social roles of both genders and changed numerous concepts and ideas about masculinity and femininity.

According to Hāmid al-Rubai'i (2013), *Adhra' al-Manfā* "narrates some important events in the lives of Saudi women, [representing] the story of women's struggle until they gained some of their legitimate rights". In her study of al-Nassir's novels, al-Mari (2006, pp.220-231) focused solely on *'Adhra' al-Manfā* to discuss the author's portrayal of images of Saudi women. Al-Nassir (1989, p.112) depicts the social injustice of how some

<sup>1</sup> 'Blood of Innocence' is the translation of this title.

customs and traditions in the region affect women, who still suffer from some of these restrictions, and he believes that these restrictions are not of a religious nature. It could be said that al-Nassir, who wrote '*Adhra' al-Manfā*' in 1978, had a clear vision of how these social transformations would impact women's lives.

Women's issues will continue to dominate novels as long as Saudi women remain marginalized. Khalida Sa'īd (1991, p.69) connects Saudi narrative discourse's attention to women's issues to the enormous number of challenges that women face:

Until there is full equality in legislation and in reality, as long as people have preconceived ideas about women that have been formed over the ages, from myths and illogical perceptions, as long as society is unwilling to accept women's freedom with respect for their humanity, free from discrimination on the grounds of gender or race, according to the Convention of Human Rights, as long as these issues remain unresolved, this case stays open.

### III. THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECLINE OF WOMEN'S SOCIAL ROLES

Since the unification of the Saudi state, at the beginning of the 20th century, the status of Saudi women has been a major source of contention within the Kingdom, since it has long been undeveloped due to their low rate of education enrolment. Certain parts of society have consistently opposed women's education, mostly on the basis of a form of strict religious doctrine, which has led to the spread of ignorance and illiteracy. Additionally, women faced significant social restrictions that led to the loss of their social role.

#### a) Customs and Traditions

There is still considerable debate concerning the factors that contributed to women's social roles declining significantly, as portrayed in the narrative text. BuShusha bin Jum'a (1999, p.643) identifies adherence to traditional customs as the main factor contributing to Arab women's traditional behaviour:

This type of woman is connected to the traditional mindset in terms of its mythical and metaphysical bias. It is also connected to the inherited habits and customs which they imitate. This model is the product of a strict conservative society which restricts women through prohibitions that deny her knowledge. [...] The model is related to the older generation who had no chance to obtain education due to colonialism. The female who used to be illiterate shows unlimited obedience towards man. This female role model is confined to taking care of her husband and children and doing housework.

Bin Jum'a blames persistent traditional habits and customs, referring to both negative Arab men's roles and colonization. All of these factors contributed to the development of a woman who is incapable of interacting with modern life since even when colonial

repression ended, it was followed by male repression, which delayed women's progress for many years.

A novel such as *Dam al-Barā'a* (al-Nassir, 2001) demonstrates the continuity of traditions, customs, and habits passed down through generations, especially within rural society, unaltered until such traditions become taboo. Several of these traditions limit women's roles in society, thereby isolating them. Rural society makes a concerted effort to preserve and perpetuate this ancient heritage of traditions, customs, and habits, which are seen as the foundation of rural social cohesion (Dīb, 1989, p.149).

#### b) Sexism

The Saudi social novel identifies several other factors that contributed to the decline of women's roles. Men's repressive culture has contributed to the decline of women's social roles. *Thuqbun fi Rida' al-Layl* portrays an autocratic father who attempts to mould his family's lives as he wishes. He denies his family members, including his wife, any independence, and everyone must obey his orders. Although the novel is dense with dialogue between the characters, there is not a single line of positive dialogue between the father and any family member, particularly his wife, who does not even express an opinion; her character is portrayed as totally passive and plays no role in shaping events.

A culture of repression is practiced not only by fathers, but also by sons (al-Nassir, 1961, p.12) who play the same authoritarian role:

أما صاحبنا بين أفراد أسرته وعلى الأخص بالنسبة لأمه . فلقد عيسى فلقد كان كبير ستة أخوة مما أعطاه ميزة لا تدانى كان في البيت نافذ الكلمة مهاب الجانب تكفي إشارة منه للحصول على ما يريد

Our friend 'Issā was the eldest of six brothers, a seniority that gave him distinction within the family, especially in his mother's eyes. He was listened to by everybody, and the smallest sign from him was enough to make him obey.

Arabs adore children, particularly sons, who serve as a source of pride and power. Mūḍī in *Dam al-Barā'a* (al-Nassir, 2001, pp.32-33) faces persecution because, despite her father's death, her brother continues to fulfill the same traditional male role in Saudi society. She feels under his control and he makes her life a living hell, making her wonder about a way to change her life: "Do I have to be a man to gain my right and to have an authority in this house?" The novel places Mūḍī in a struggle with this traditional authority, which makes this character very active in the plot, in contrast to the mother in *Thuqbun fi Rida' al-Layl*.

#### c) Religion

The novel '*Adhra' al-Manfā*' (al-Nassir, 1978, pp.14-17) makes reference to another factor that contributed to the decline of women's roles, which is severe religious teachings that were opposed to female

education. Furthermore, the novel (ibid., p.25) implies that some Saudi mothers prepare their daughters for a traditional social role confined to the marital home.

Islam differentiates between males and females but views them as equal in Islamic law. Gender inequality does not come from Islamic scriptures, but from different understandings and interpretations of some religious teachings, which fail to take into account the transformation of society over time. According to *Sharī'a*<sup>2</sup>, there is no distinction between men and women from the legal age of sixteen in terms of ownership, control, and use of money" (Yamani, 2000, p.11). Thus, the distinctions that exist between the genders have been created by society.

The Saudi social novel in general refers to the use of religion to rob women of their rights and limit their social roles. The protagonist of *Thuqbun fi Rida' al-Layl* (al-Nassir, 1961, p.81) wonders about women's status in his town, comparing it to that of women in an open society:

لا تبعد سوى فراسخ معدودة لا يسمح للبنات بأن ترفع صوتها حتى  
وفي بلدته .. هذه البلدة التي .. ومع ذلك فهو لا يسمعه الرجال  
الغريب لأن من واثق أن هؤلاء الفتيات لسن مجوسيات إنما هم  
هم مسلمات أو على الأقل أغلبهن كذلك يفعل ذلك لابد أن يكون مجوسيا  
.. فلم يبح الدين منح هذه الحرية مسلمات أو على الأقل أغلبهن كذلك ..  
فلم يبح الدين منح هذه الحرية لنساء مدينة بعينها في حين يمنحها  
بلدة أخرى كبلدته .. بل إن الرجال في بلدته يتمسكون عن نساء  
بأشياء كثيرة لا يتزحزون عنها حتى لو أقتضى الأمر أن يسيل  
الدم...!!؟.

His hometown, which is only a few leagues away, does not allow a girl to raise her voice, so that strangers should not hear this, lest she is a Magian. However he is confident that these girls are not Magians but Muslims, or at least most of them are. Islam did not grant freedom to women in one specific city and not another, like his hometown, but the men in his town cling strongly to many things, even if blood must be spilled over them!

This passage raises an important issue about religious rulings that differ from one place to another and the impact of these rules on believers. The passage demonstrates the level of women's subjugation in a village that is considered a closed society. The term "voice" does not only refer to the sound we make when we speak; (2004) it also refers to the right to express an opinion. As a result, in this closed society, women lack a voice in both senses and are severely restricted, and anyone who attempts to circumvent these restrictions is considered outside the pale of society. The protagonist wonders why there is a difference in the status of women in his own community and in more open places elsewhere, where Muslim women have more freedom. The passage suggests that religious teachings are subject to interpretation by society, which can choose to

read them in different ways. As the passage shows, the villagers still cling strongly to their old social customs and beliefs and will not only abandon them, but are willing to die to defend them.

#### IV. IMAGES OF WOMEN

The female characters in al-Nassir's novels provide various images of Saudi women as wives, daughters, sisters, friends, or lovers. These characters are portrayed as having different personalities, such as being peaceable or intrusive, and representing different types, such as the struggler, the leader, etc. However, there are three clear divisions amongst the female characters in al-Nassir's novels, which represent three types of attitudes towards social transformation in Saudi women's status: the traditional, the modern, and the radical. Traditionalists are most frequently seen in Saudi narrative discourse, but characters are also portrayed who adopt more radical attitudes toward their role in society.

##### a) Traditional Woman

In this context, the term 'traditional woman' refers to characters who appear to espouse a set of long-established ideals passed down through generations that have influenced the role and status of women in society and are still prevalent in contemporary society. Despite the fact that all countries have experienced some degree of social change as a result of development, globalisation, the industrial boom, and the technological revolution—effects that vary quantitatively and qualitatively from country to country—some women have retained their traditional roles despite these changes. According to Bin Jum'a (1999, p. 643), this traditional female type is constrained by societal rules and traditions and is viewed as the product of a strict, conservative society that confines women through taboos that prevent them from enjoying their rights. Rather than that, they are oppressed by male authority and dominance.

Adapting from Plato's allegory of the cave, traditional women might be seen as living in the shadows while men live in reality. Plato (2007, p. 193) uses the cave allegory to "make an image of our nature in its education and want of education." However, the terms 'shadows' and 'reality' here relate to women's position under men's control. The traditional woman has not gained important rights and freedoms, owing partly to the Islamic empire's weakness, the collapse of religious values in Arab society, and the revival of certain Arab tribal traditions and customs that abrogate women's rights. Thus, the shadow woman (i.e., traditional woman) is a result of the authority, volition, and willingness of the man who embodies reality. Thus, fathers, brothers, husbands, and even sons are seen as reality, but women are seen as their shadows. If women were to assert their natural status, this reality-shadow

<sup>2</sup> The system of religious laws that Muslims follow.



relationship might be transformed into one between two realities.

The Saudi social novel contains a large number of traditional female characters who appear to be mere shadows. As a result, they lack substance in the narrative text and are worthless or insignificant in driving the plotline. However, because the traditional woman is completely subordinate to male authority, she lacks the ability to exchange ideas with men. *Thuqbun fi Rida'* al-Layl illustrates Saudi society's male dominance over females. The episode depicting 'Issā father's reaction to his son's school punishment demonstrates that women lack power in the presence of male authority. The mother was powerless to defend her son from his father's punishment. He threw himself on his mother in need of protection, but she was terrified of her husband and was powerless to defend him. Her only answer was to murmur a few prayers for her son's protection from his angry father. If women had rights, the mother would be able to react more in this scene, and we would see an interaction between two realities, male and female, but the woman remains a shadow of the authoritarian man.

The traditional role of women as described in the social novel does not extend beyond doing housework and raising children, as shown in *Ra'shat al-Zil* (al-Nassir, 1994, pp.19-20):

في البواكير ماضية إلى عزرتها حتى تحلبها وتحضر له تلك من بعيد سمع ثغاء أغنام وهي تتعارك فتذكر أمه تبسم الرغبة تشيعه بركة الدعاء ما بين الرغيف الحار الذي تحرص أمه أن مباشرة مع عقب الإفطار الخفيف الذي [...] المرتعشة تقدمه لهم الحليب الفائر ينطلق إلى المطوع للدراسة مع رفاقه أبناء الحي من التنور الذي أوقدته بالجلة والحطب

From afar, he heard sheep bleating and fighting with each other. He remembered his mother starting her day in the early morning with the name of God and heading towards her goats to milk them. After a light breakfast, with a blessing of supplication, hot homemade bread, served directly from the wood-fired clay oven, and hot milk, he rushed to school with his friends from the same district.

Some traditional women were opposed to modern Saudi women's new role outside the home. Women, such as Zāhir's mother, are portrayed as role models for future generations, a position that is highlighted throughout the novels. *'Adhra' al-Manfā* exemplifies the traditional mother's relationship with her daughters. Zāhir's mother's responsibility is to educate her daughter in domestic skills like cooking and cleaning, in order to prepare her for the traditional social role of an obedient wife who satisfies all male needs and desires. When there is a fierce debate between Zāhir and his mother, she angrily tells him (al-Nassir, 1978, p.25): "Shut up, or I'll break your sister's head". This episode demonstrates how women influence their daughters to adopt the traditionally female pattern. Moreover, it is important to note that oppressed

characters attempt to oppress people who are weaker and less powerful than themselves as a means of regaining their confidence. Mufid Najim (2012) claimed that this explains why the mother characters in many novels practise cruelty and oppression on their own daughters.

In the Saudi social novel, the traditional woman is represented as being without will or decision-making abilities, even during life-changing events like her own marriage. *Safinat al-Dayā'* (al-Nassir, 2004, p.74), for example, depicts a traditional arranged marriage in which the wife is much younger than her husband and does not feel happy in her marriage, as her husband has noted. This marriage is not based on love; the wife is merely playing her traditional social role as she cannot refuse her family's decision. Highly critical representations of this type of marriage are found in many of al-Nassir's novels.

The spread of myths and legends and the domination of folk culture affect the responses of traditional women to modern technology and life, making it hard for them to easily adapt to the modern lifestyle. *Dam al-Barā'a* (al-Nassir, 2001, pp.10-11) shows the reactions of traditional women when told about the new lifestyle. 'Umm Sāmīr, a minor character who had lived abroad in a Western country, is a striking presence among the women in the village, and the other women like to listen to stories about her life abroad.

حين تتحدث لهن عما رآته في تلك البلاد البعيدة التي عاشت فيها تجهلها وتشربت وهناك في تلك المحافل تجد أن الحلقة تتسع حولها زما بالثقافات التي تضطرب في الأوطان البعيدة والقرية من بلاد كما يدعونها في ذلك الحين. طويلا فتعلمت الكثير من الفنون التي فهي تحدثهن عن مخترعات لم يسمعن بها إلا قليلا مثل ذلك النهار بالأحاديث والأغاني أو الجهاز الغرب أو بلاد الكفر الجهاز الذي يسمونه (بالراديو) الذي ينقل المكالمات من مدينة إلى أخرى الديار و نوع الطعام و الشراب وغير ذلك من يخشخش طوال والملابس التي يرتديها الناس في الأمور التي ليست مألوفة لديهن لأن تلك المخترعات لا بد ويسيرها الجن الذين يختفون في تلك فيصغين غير مصدقات أو يتعوذون من الشيطان تلك الأجهزة المريبة.

In their meetings, she was surrounded by many other women who listened to what she had seen in that distant country, where she had lived for a long time. She had learned many skills and absorbed many cultures in the Western country, or the 'land of non-believers', as they called it in those times. She talked about inventions which she had not known previously, such as a device called 'a radio' which broadcasts conversations and music, or another device used to make calls from one city to another. She also talked about the clothes they wore in that country, and the types of food and drink they enjoyed, and other matters that were unfamiliar to them. They listened carefully and could not believe it. They sought refuge from Satan because these inventions surely were controlled by jinn who were hiding in those suspicious devices.



This episode makes three points about traditional women. Firstly, that cultural knowledge, which to some extent is founded on myths and superstitions, is used to explain and understand new facts. Thus, their lack of education means they are not prepared for new ideas. Secondly, news about the arrival of modernity in Saudi society, with its new technology and inventions, was spread by word of mouth, which helped to lessen the impact of culture shock. However, traditional women are, to some extent, "isolated from the wider world outside, which could give women the appropriate amount of knowledge to bypass the oral culture" (al-Ḍab' 2007, p13). Finally, religion conditioned perceptions about the other (Western culture) at that time, placing a barrier between Saudi society and the other, meaning there was no acceptance of other lifestyles.

#### b) Modern Woman

The modern Saudi woman is an educated woman, often to a very high degree, and this education enables women to expand their social horizons beyond the house in order to pursue career prospects. Saudi social narratives demonstrate that modern women's education encompasses much more than writing and reading, showing education's critical role in transforming women's status.

Due to conservative Saudi society's prevailing attitudes toward women's status, women's education was one of the most difficult challenges the Saudi government faced. The Saudi government made the first significant move toward advancing Saudi women's rights in 1960, when it established the first government agency dedicated to girls' education, known as the General Presidency for Girls' Education. This was to pave the way for significant future changes in the position of women in society.

According to the Saudi social model, education is a legitimate right for both males and females and is a critical factor in the nation's development. *'Adhra' al-Manfā* devotes significant attention to the problem of women's education, which serves as a guiding theme throughout the novel and demonstrates the critical significance of education in transforming women's social roles and status in Saudi society. Additionally, the novel demonstrates the media's involvement in raising public awareness about the critical nature of women's education.

As many studies show, al-Nassir carefully chose the setting for this novel, selecting the western region of Saudi Arabia known as Ḥijāz, as is clear from the dialogue between some characters who speak the local dialect. This was Saudi Arabia's most developed area at the time the novel is set. Furthermore, it is associated with the beginning of modern Saudi female education and development. Numerous educated women were known to have resided there, notably 'Iffat al-Thunayyān,

who, in 1955, established Dār al-Ḥanān, the first private school for girls, intended especially for those who were poor and orphaned (Slamah, 2008, p.47).

In her study, al-Mari (2006, p.221) shows the importance of the Ḥijāz setting given that the region is considered the most open, culturally and intellectually; in addition, the first newspaper was established there. She also notes that in 1930, Ḥijāz used to be governed by Egypt, so this direct link between the region and Egypt created a new educational environment. Her study focuses on the impact of Egyptian culture on modern Saudi women, especially in Ḥijāz, and neglects the role of private schools in the region. The region had been under Egyptian rule since 1812, when Mohammed Ali succeeded in recapturing Ḥijāz (Dodwell, 1977, pp.43-44), and not in the 1930s, as the study suggests.

The narrative events highlight several factors—both external and internal—that led to the formation of the image of the modern Saudi woman. Firstly, scholarships to study abroad played a major role. These scholarships encouraged connections between Saudi women and their counterparts in more developed countries and meant these female Saudi students were influenced by other cultures. Like many Saudi girls from rich families, Buthaina (al-Nassir, 1978, p.15) studied in Lebanon as there was no chance for women to continue their education in Saudi Arabia. Since her father believed that she should play a responsible role in society, her new role after finishing her studies was to raise Saudi women's level of awareness about education.

Al-Mari (2006, p.221) mentions Lebanon's role in helping to create the modern Saudi woman, since it is the most open Arab nation in both intellectual and cultural terms due to its being more liberal. Another study (al-Qaḥṭāni, 2009, p.18-19) examines the direct contact between Egyptian and Saudi culture and the impact of the former on the latter, as many Saudi women, especially those from Ḥijāz, used to travel there to study. As a result, both Lebanon and Egypt have a significant impact on the intellectual and cultural development of modern Saudi women.

The novel also highlights other internal factors that contributed to the emergence of this new feminist image, such as the role of the media in educating citizens about the importance of women's education. *'Adhra' al-Manfā* (al-Nassir, 1978, pp.14-17) depicts the media's contribution to the formation of the modern Saudi woman by increasing social awareness of women's education. Buthaina's father, who is the editor-in-chief of a Saudi newspaper, strongly supports the need for women's education and plans to establish a page in his newspaper which will educate society on the importance of women's education; he assigns the task of supervising this to Zāhir and Buthaina. Her father states (ibid., p.15):

وطني وعلى دور كبير في نوعية بنات جنسها [...] . إن حضارة الجنسين في خدمة المجتمع من الجنسين واجب الفتاة المثقفة خاصة – لن تبرز أو تثبت وجودها مالم تتضافر جهود أية . كافة الميادين أمة أو شعب – في يقيني

Serving society is a social duty for both genders. Educated women especially have to play a major role in raising the level of Saudi women's awareness [...] the civilisation of any nation or public – in my opinion – will not excel or will not prove its existence unless both men and women work together toward this goal in all fields.

Zāhir agrees with what the editor-in-chief says and accepts the responsibility of supervising the page. However, he realises that this task will not be easy because society is resistant to this idea. Educated Saudis could be expected to actively contribute to spreading awareness about this issue among their fellow citizens. However, the novel depicts some of the social opposition to the issue, which comes from two groups—the religious conservatives and the traditionalists who believe that women's education leads to moral decay.

As the novel (ibid., p.79) relates, the launch of the women's page creates a strong impression on society:

، وتوجهت بصورة مباشرة إلى الشباب محملة وظهرت صفحة المرأة في الأفق كانت مقالاتها في غاية التركيز والموضوعية [...] الأمية مشيرة إلى ارهاصات ثم [...] الفكري لشباب الجزيرة والظلام التي إياه مسئولية المبادرة لمحو النهضة التي تبنت المنطلق الأول للتحرر من عبودية الجهل رسفت المرأة في أغلالها الانساني في حين أن أكثر تدرجت إلى أن تعليم الفتاة أصبح يشكل المعقول أن تستطيع أمة مواكبة التقدم طوال من نصف المجتمع مزاعم الفئات التي تتوجس خيفة من أن قرون. وتساءلت هل من يعيش في و متاهات الخواء الفكري؟! وفندت في الوقت ذاته يمتد عتمة الخرافة الانحلال إلى أغوار سحيقة فيما لو نالت المرأة قسطا من التعليم

The woman's page was published. [...] Its articles were very focused and objective. It directly addressed young people to take responsibility for putting an end to illiteracy. The page refers to the harbingers of the Renaissance, which had begun to be seen in the intellectual horizons of Saudi youth. [...] Then, gradually, the page began to discuss the issue of women's education, which is the first step of liberation from the bondage of ignorance and darkness that had restricted them for centuries. The page asked: Is it possible for a nation to keep up with human progress while more than half its population lives in the darkness of superstition and in the maze of an intellectual vacuum? At the same time, the page refuted the allegations of those groups who were wary about the possibility of moral decline if women got involved in education.

As implied by the above quotation, the newspaper's editor-in-chief hopes to create social mobility in the Saudi public through encouraging discussion about women's education. Due to the fact that the media is run by educated individuals such as

Zāhir, Buthaina, and her father, they support this idea as a means of overcoming ignorance and oppression.

The novel depicts a period of significant social change in Saudi Arabia, as women's status evolves from the traditional stereotype to that of a more contemporary, educated woman who is no longer confined to the home. Historically, the majority of women suffered from illiteracy and ignorance as a result of a shortage of schools dedicated to girls' education, their lack of equality with men, and a lack of social awareness of the importance of women's education. Thus, Saudi women had a limited role in society for a long period of time until the government took bold action and founded the General Presidency for Girls' Education in 1960.

Al-Nassir meticulously crafted the novel's characters to encapsulate various aspects of this issue. Zāhir's family represents traditional thinking, whilst Buthaina's family embodies the image of a modern, educated family. Thus, it is not surprising that a conflict arises between these two radically different ways of thinking. Additionally, al-Nassir serves as a bridge between two different families in terms of living and intellectual standards, as seen by the relationship between Zāhir and Buthaina, who are both well-educated and share the same ambitions. Buthaina represents the modern Saudi female due to "her ability as a symbol to express the author's vision and ideas about the world" (al-Mari, 2006, p.228).

Education and employment are inextricably linked, since educational attainment is the main engine of the labor market. Thus, education prepared women for their real social roles. The social novel exposed many educated Saudi women's desire to work outside the home. *Dam al-Barā'a* (al-Nassir, 2001, p.89) highlights the attitude of Hiba, who plans to look for a job:

دون خضوع أو مذلة. يحول دون تحقيق هذه الأمنية طالما تعلمت حياة ترغب أن تكون حرة في تفكيرها وفي تصرفاتها وماذا مع مؤهلها ويكفي مرتبتها لتحقيق ميسورة دون الحاجة لأي كان وسوف تجد وظيفة جيدة تتناسب

She would like to be free in her thoughts and attitude without facing any humiliation or submission. What prevents her from achieving this wish, as long as she studies and finds a good job that suits her qualifications? Her salary will be enough to secure an affordable life without the need for anyone.

Education has contributed toward building the character of Saudi women as willing to struggle in order to gain their full rights and freedom in a patriarchal society; it provides security to women who used to have no option other than complete dependence upon men. This passage highlights the absence of freedom in Hiba's community, which serves as the basis of modern women's thought. Hiba, like any other modern woman, is continually searching for this missing value.

c) *Radical Woman: Saudi Feminists Representation*

As a consequence of modern women's education, the radical woman represents the third noticeable transformation in the status of the Saudi woman. It is important to define the concept of radical women before discussing their depictions in the Saudi social novel. Nancy Whittier (1995, p.1), in her study on the radical women's movement in the United States, especially in Ohio, proposes a descriptive framework for women from the perspective of the radical feminist movement. The meaning of feminist in this case is "to be independent and strong, to take oneself and other women seriously, and to challenge the restrictions placed on women in a male-dominated society". Thus, the foundation of the movement is to maintain a woman's identity and strongly assert the presence of women in society.

There has been no special movement representing the issues of radical women in Saudi society as in Western countries. However, the lack of such an institution does not necessarily indicate a lack of radical Saudi women. Individual efforts have been made by some feminists to discuss many women-related issues, including Saudi women's driving and the creation of gender equality in terms of work opportunities, administrative positions, and freedom to choose a spouse. In addition, some Saudi women's rights campaigns<sup>3</sup> have emerged alongside other rights campaigns that use Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites to disseminate their ideas and garner support.

In Saudi Arabia, radical women contribute to media discourse as employees or freelance journalists who write about a variety of general interest subjects and promote dialogue on cultural and social concerns, including women's issues. They communicate directly with the people, rather than relying on men to do it. Additionally, women contribute to Saudi Arabia's cultural creativity via the writing of short stories, novels, poetry, and plays, as well as conducting scientific and theoretical research. Numerous well-known Saudi females, including poet Thuria Qabil, the novelist Rajā' 'Alim, the playwright Milḥa 'Abdullah, and the scientist Ḥayāt bint Sulaimān Sindi, have a significant cultural presence in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi authorities are likewise concerned with women's issues. Women's education was one of the outcomes of the government's initiatives to expand women's rights. Furthermore, the government now provides job opportunities in a variety of sectors and has empowered women to vote and run for office in

municipal elections. Moreover, women have been appointed to leadership positions and currently occupy 30 seats on the Shura Council, one of Saudi Arabia's most powerful decision-making authorities (al-Jazira, 2013).

Saudi Arabia's narrative discourse is filled with radical female characters who oppose the customs and traditions that limit and narrow their roles and rights within society. Buthaina in '*Adhra' al-Manfā*' can be seen as a symbol of the radical Saudi woman. Buthaina is a modern, educated woman with clear opinions about her social role and rights. She dazzles men with her intellect: "Zāhir was amazed by her accurate observations, which reflect a deep awareness" (al-Nassir, 1978, p.39).

Buthaina is a pragmatic character who does not enjoy living outside the boundaries of her social reality; she also enjoys adventure, especially in regard to those things she strongly yearns to achieve because, as she (ibid., p.112) states, "experience has broken all of the intellectual and human energies that I have." Moreover, she is strong-minded, a characteristic implanted in her personality by her father, who also allows her freedom, as he trusts her and is very confident in her decisions.

Although Buthaina believes in freedom, she is aware of the numerous societal constraints that limit women's roles in society, and hence she is always at odds with these customs and traditions, refusing to abide by them (ibid., pp.67-69). Freedom gives her the ability to voice a dissenting opinion in a society that provides no space for bold women, as shown through the abovementioned attitudes of Buthaina towards her society.

The narration reveals radical Saudi women opposing certain ideas and attitudes that are firmly established in the community's mindset. Buthaina does not like to play the conventional role of the traditional woman when dealing with her husband. Her opposition to this (ibid., p.109) is seen in a dialogue between Buthaina and her mother, who suggests that her daughter should ask her husband if he needs something:

—أسري. روجي له يمكن مستنيك  
إن احتاج لي حينادي من نفسه يا أمي.  
المرأة يابني لازم تشعر زوجها أنه محتاجها.  
وطفقت أمضغ طعامي على مهل وكأني لم أسمع ملاحظتها. بل أني لم أكن  
بحاجة إلى تلك الملاحظة لأنها تمثل طريقة الجيل الذي تنتمي إليه أمي في  
محاولة إلى كسب الرجل في كل مناسبة

Hurry up and go to your husband. He might be waiting for you.

- He will call me if he needs me, mom.
- A woman should show her husband that he always needs her help and he should feel he needs you.

I continued chewing my food slowly, pretending that I did not hear her comment. I didn't need it because

<sup>3</sup> To read more about the Saudi women's rights campaign, visit the campaign website through the link: [http://saudiwomen22.blogspot.co.uk/p/blog-page\\_22.html](http://saudiwomen22.blogspot.co.uk/p/blog-page_22.html)

it represents the way my mom's generation tries to win over a man at every opportunity.

The mother-daughter dialogue is an intergenerational exchange between two radically different ways of thinking — traditional and modern. As can be seen, the radical woman is aware that her husband is angry with her, but she has her own way of dealing with the matter. In the presence of men, the traditional mother has a weak and obedient personality and a traditional way of dealing with them. By contrast, Buthaina, as a radical woman, detests weakness and submission since she no longer accepts man's arrogance.

She (ibid., pp. 79–108) is fully aware that, despite the fact that the age of female oppression is gone, women like her mother continue to enable males to limit their freedoms through these traditional methods. Like any radical woman, she recognises the importance of work for women, so she has no great need to found her life with a man as she is able to take care of her own responsibilities herself. She does not mind working as a journalist in a male-dominated environment, as long as the relationship between them is limited to work. Her reason for choosing to work in the field of media is to spread awareness of the issue of women's education. Finally, she accomplishes her objective and convinces several social groups of her idea.

However, Buthaina faces some harsh criticism from certain traditional women who oppose women's new roles and status. Zāhir's mother compares her to a male because she works with them, and she is also fearful of what others will say about her son if they learn he is working with a woman, which is socially unacceptable. She blames women's education for their employment with males. However, Buthaina is unconcerned about what others think since she is confident that she is not committing an illegal act.

Radical women realise that their social role is not restricted to the home, a belief reflected in Buthaina's thoughts when she (ibid., p.121) says: "I won't accept this costume. Life is full of many things to do. I will fight for what I believe in". Although it appears that the radical woman is difficult to persuade and is willing to make sacrifices to accomplish her objectives, the relationship between Buthaina and her father, which is founded on respect, contributes to the development of this new type of woman because her father understands the nature of life and the impact of social changes on the role and status of Saudi women. Additionally, figures such as Zāhir demonstrate that some males backed radical women's efforts to reform women's social roles and status.

Buthaina is portrayed in the novel as a feisty fighter who disseminates many ideas about radical Saudi women and helps to drive the narrative forward. Buthaina, in particular, is considered to be one of the most effective characters in al-Nassir's novels, as al-

Mari (2006, p.219) claimed. Buthaina plays an active role in the narrative, demonstrating that radical women reject the long-established social conventions that no longer suit the modern era and the aspirations of modern women.

*Dam al-Barā'a* (al-Nassir, 2001, p.125) provides another representation of a radical Saudi woman who is just as active as Buthaina. Hibā falls in love with the protagonist, acting on her beliefs about women's freedom. Although she is aware that visiting a man who is not a relative is socially improper and taboo, she disregards these traditions and visits him at his home when he is injured (ibid., p.90). Additionally, she does not wear a veil, traditionally worn by Saudi women (ibid.). Moreover, she (ibid., p.125) knows that by social tradition she will be forced to marry a relative, but she totally rejects this idea, and prefers instead to remain single rather than be forced into an arranged marriage.

إن إن من فساد هذا النظام التعيس الذي تحرم فيه الفتاة من اختيار مجتمعهم المحافظ لا يقبل بمثل ذلك الاختيار [...] لا فائدة من عريسها الذي قد تظهر معرفتها بعد أن يكون قد اقتحم خندق الفتاة مساوئه بالعشرات ولكن

Conservative society does not accept such a choice. In this corrupt system, the girl cannot choose her husband, who could have many negative traits, and there is no way to know about these traits until after the marriage (ibid.).

The author criticizes this closed society in which long-established social customs and traditions disregard women's rights, even on the most critical issues affecting them. Regular meetings between Hiba and the protagonist (ibid., p.90) show her opposition to social customs and traditions. Both Hiba and Buthaina clearly present the ideas of radical women. There are other radical female characters in al-Nassir's novels, such as 'Itir in *Hittān al-Rih*<sup>4</sup>, proving that Buthaina is not the only active character in al-Nassir's novel, as al-Mari claims.

## V. THE ARAB WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The modern era has witnessed many calls for women's liberation accompanied by social movements. The Arab Women's Liberation Movement (1899), as it was named by Qasim 'Amin, the first feminist in Arab society, played a major role in advancing the status of Arab women. Mohammad Husaīn (1993, p.20), claimed that the roots of this movement extended to the era of Mohammad Ali Basha, the Governor of Egypt (1805-1848) who sent many Egyptians on scholarships to France, and they returned with different mindsets, having been affected by Western culture. However, Husaīn saw these scholars as attempting to reform Egyptian culture by employing Western ideas that

<sup>4</sup> 'The Windy Walls' is the translation of this title.



conflicted with Islam. Thus, the roots of women's liberation lie in an earlier era, but 'Amīn is generally recognised as the founder of this movement in the Arab world.

'Amīn wrote a book entitled *Tahrīr al-Mar'a* (*The Liberation of Women*) to show the importance of the need to raise the level of social awareness about women's rights, in which he outlined the need for action: I call on every lover of truth to examine with me the status of women in Egyptian society. I am confident that such individuals will arrive independently at the same conclusion I have – namely, the necessity of improving the status of Egyptian women. The truth I am presenting today has preoccupied me for a long time; I have considered it, examined it, and analysed it. [...] I have finally reached the point where it has become my dominant thought, alerting me to its advantages and reminding me of its necessity (ibid, p.3).

'Amin's study (ibid., pp.10-25) showed the impact of education on Western women who feel free and able to claim their rights, which in turn brings them to prominence. After the era of colonialism, Arab men started to colonise their own women, although Islam technically gives women full freedom and rights. Therefore, 'Amīn claims, Arab men are dictators, using a style of authority borrowed from dictatorial regimes. His study also commented on different trends in society's views towards female education, with some believing that women's education is not obligatory, whereas others were unclear on whether it is forbidden in Islam.

'Amin's ideas, which had many supporters and opponents, had an impact not only on Egyptian society, but also on many other Arab countries. Some scholars believe that they represent a kind of Westernisation that will destroy Arab Islamic identity (Husaīn, 1993, p.8-14). One hundred years after the publication of 'Amin's call for women's liberation, the University of Cairo held its first conference on women's liberation on October 23-28, 1999. The conference discussed 'Amin's opinions and the harsh criticism that they had evoked. Discussing 'Amin's ideas a century after they were first introduced suggests that little progress has been achieved in the liberation of Arab women, and, of course, the demands of this generation differ greatly from those of 'Amin's generation.

However, 'Amin's call for the liberation of women has had a clear impact on Saudi society and the modern Saudi woman. The Saudi narrative has also been influenced by these ideas and '*Athra' al-Manfā* suggests that Saudis are split between supporters and opponents of 'Amin's work. Zāhir (al-Nassir, 1978, p.20), who is responsible for editing a page on women's issues, is known amongst his friends as Qasim 'Amin's successor in the Arabian Peninsula, and 'Amin's ideas are seen to have the support of some educated Saudi women. Buthaina (ibid., p.78), for example, is pro-'Amīn

even though her father does not totally agree with him, as the following dialogue shows.

- إيه رأيك يا بابا في كتابات قاسم أمين؟  
 - فأجاب وهو يحرك يديه: متطرف شوية.  
 - وفغرت فاهها دهشة، فلم تكن تعتقد بأن أباهما يحمل مثل هذه الفكرة. هذا بالرغم من أنها فكرت أن تنقل بعض المقالات من مؤلفاته لصفحة المرأة ولكن هاهي الآن تصبدم بما يقضي على ما أعتزته بأي خيبة أمل هذه؟ [...] فأجابت بفتور: كنت أحسبك من أنصاره؟  
 - فقاطعتها بسرعة: هذا صحيح. أنا فاهم قصدك. ولكني لا أدين بكل ما ينادي به قاسم أمين. (ثم أضاف)  
 - يعني أختلف معه في بعض النواحي وليس جميع أفكاره أرفضها.  
 - فلانت ملامحها وعلقت بسرور: لقد أعدت لي الثقة بنفسي.

What do you think, Dad, about Qasim 'Amin's writings?

- He answered while his hands continued moving: He is an extremist.
- She opened her mouth in shock; she was not happy that her father had expressed such an opinion. She was planning to use some of his articles on the women's page, but now the shock made her forget what she had intended to do. [...]
- She answered lukewarmly: I thought you were one of his supporters.
- He interrupted her quickly: That's right. I understand what you mean. But I don't accept everything he calls for. (Then he added)
- I disagree with him in some respects, but I don't reject all of his ideas.
- She looked relieved, and she said happily: You have just restored my self-confidence.

'Amin's call to change the status of women, who at that time still suffered under the burden of illiteracy and social tradition, had an impact on Saudi society, especially educated women. Buthaina, who supports his ideas, appears surprised by her father's reaction when she raises this topic, as he is a very educated, liberal individual and a supporter of women's issues. However, he does not agree with all of the aims of the women's liberation movement, possibly due to his belief that all societies are different and their approaches to new ideologies will vary. In addition, the use of the word 'extremist' by Buthaina's father suggests that he might believe some of 'Amin's ideas are confrontational and that adopting them could cause social conflict.

'Amin's ideas produce a new type of female character in the narrative text. Buthaina, for example, plays an active role in the novel's plotline. In other words, Buthaina in this novel can be considered the embodiment of 'Amin's ideas.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This discussion of the representation of Saudi women in al-Nassir's work has shown how social change has impacted the position of females in the Saudi novel. These transformations in the role of Saudi

women faced a number of obstacles that slowed down the progress of the Saudi women's movement in comparison to the rapid development of infrastructure and the economy.

The novels explore the complicated relationship between women's roles and Islamic belief, which has been complicated by misinterpretations of religious teachings and texts. Additionally, al-Nassir's female characters exhibit the impact of feminist concepts, with the emergence of new kinds such as the modern woman and the radical woman. Female protagonists are shown to overcome some of their social challenges in the fields of education and work.

Saudi women are looking to achieve more and participate more fully in society. To date, they have succeeded in gaining just some of their rights and will continue their struggle against other unresolved issues. Conservative religious beliefs and long-established social customs are reasons for the slowness of the pace of change with regard to women's issues. In his novels, al-Nassir attempts to reflect the different roles that women play within Saudi society. Traditional women's characters take no active role in the narrative's progression. By contrast, the radical female characters play a major role in moving the plot forward and are represented as being free from restrictions.

Despite the Saudi government's concerted efforts to improve women's participation in the political, economic, and educational fields of the state, transformations in Saudi women's status appear to be gradual in comparison to other transformations. Male characters, on average, have a larger role in the Saudi social novel than their female counterparts. On the other hand, male characters are portrayed demanding freedom for Saudi women on the grounds that they believe females have the right to be involved in all aspects of society. Al-Nassir was regarded as the first significant advocate of women's rights during his lifetime, as evidenced by his works, which devote considerable attention to women's issues.

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## Marriage in the Era of Globalization:- An Insight into the Role of Media in Popularizing Matrimonial Advertisements in Indian Society

By Dr. Umaima Uneeb

**Abstract-** As we all know that world is interconnected globally. Internet provides ample opportunity to interact with each other. With the growth of technology, Internet had replaced newspaper to a large extent and also played a substantial role in growth of globalization since its easier, faster and cheaper method of communication. Although, for older generations Newspapers still remain the favorite means of communication, they prefer to give ads in newspapers itself but with changing technologies they too are required to shift to internet and gather information along with profile and pictures of their relatives. Present study is about marriage in Indian society through matrimonial ads in newspaper and websites. It has become a new and a popular medium for seeking marriage partners. It is a new dimensions of media usage and choice of partners. The study observed that media based changes in matchmaking is an overall social change in post liberalizing India, with new lifestyles and social realities, notion of marriage, love and gender need to be redefined.

**Keywords:** liberalization, globalization, matrimonial advertisements.

**GJHSS-C Classification:** DDC Code: 822.33 LCC Code: PR2836.A2



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage has always been an important factor in an individual's life. Marriage Ceremony is more of a religious and cultural function and represents the community's traditions. The matrimonial relationship between a man and a woman is not just for procreation but has a spiritual side too, it also act as social and financial security for women in India. Matrimonial advertisements is the modernised *avator* of the traditional process of bride selection , now days, the situation is that many newspapers publish separate Matrimonial Supplements along with the main newspaper. Today the world is witnessing a major shift in the nature of technology. As we move from desktops to smart phones, make computing personal, technology is becoming fast, easy, accessible and prominent. Twenty years ago, it would have been hard to imagine reading a book on a computer. Not only this, computerized supervisory systems in schools, offices, malls, banks, factories, hospitals, etc., have revolutionized the system of traditional management. One of the reason s for this is the wide variety of options that new technology offers. For instance, it is fashionable for many youth to join social networking

sites and these have conversely given them a space for social mixing in a competitive and busy life. While youngsters can maintain relations with thousands of friends online, sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter also offer the option to snap ties at will. In other words, new technology today controls human desire and human relations.

## II. GLOBALIZATION AND MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT

Each and every one of us are affected by globalization in one way or another. Globalization was first used during the 1930s to describe a holistic approach to Education. In the present times, when globalization is mentioned, it usually connotes the removal of economic barriers to facilitate inter-cultural transactions. In the same way, globalization became a factor for inter-racial and inter-cultural marriage, further removing discrimination barriers. (<http://EzineArticles.com/5235260>). Globalization can be defined as the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, including the rise of the telegraph and its posterity the Internet, are major factors in globalization, generating further interdependence of economic and cultural activities. (Wikipedia.org). According to Robertson, globalization as the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole. For Sociologists, Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King define globalization as all those processes by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society. For Giddens, Globalization can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.

Globalization of market, communication, network, and relations in the contemporary world have by now produced qualitative changes in our economy, society, culture, and politics. It is obvious that a "globalsociety" would invariably generate certain challenges for the tradition-bound societies of the East. This is in spite of the fact that societies globalize differently depending on their history, social structure,

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and cultural features. It has been argued that distant localities or “networksociety” today constitute a continuum and local events. (Castells, 2000). For many of the multicultural societies of the East, which have been evolving through assimilations and acculturations, “globalization” in the form of Mercantilism, Colonialism, Westernization, and Modernization did not pose a threat to their socio-cultural identities in the past. Hence, there are counter claims regarding the adaptive capacity of these cultures even in the present. Similarly, should not under-mine the scope of the growth of self-consciousness and local cultural identities due to the very process of cultural globalization (Oommen, 2005). It is worth noting that economic, political, and socio-cultural aspects of globalization often produce contradictory results. If the mixture of “global and local” cultures reciprocally contributes to what is called “globalization” (Robertson, 1992)

### III. ROLE OF MEDIA IN POPULARIZING MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Media plays a significant role in our society. With increasing number of T.V channels, internet youtube F.M Radio, Books, different varieties of Magazines that are available in Market, media is everywhere. Media not only affect our preferences, it shapes our beliefs, our likes and our dislikes. It can strengthen our knowledge and broaden our perspectives. Many different goals are achieved through the media. Without media, people in societies would become isolated, not only from the rest of the world, but from governments, law-makers, and neighboring towns and cities. The flow of information is important for the development of communities and the media facilitates this. Without a wide array of information, people's opinions and views would be limited and their impressions and conclusions of the world around them stunted. Historically, the most common form of the distribution of information was word of mouth, with the news often beginning with the words. Indeed, word of mouth is still one of the most powerful tools in the sharing of information today, particularly in tourism, but technology has allowed for this exchange to take place in an instant, forging the way for bigger and better media houses with the instant access to information with the instant gratification factor. Interpreters/surveillance guys Media workers are in essence interpreters of information.

Since the advent of science and technology world is more interconnected today than before. Internet provides ample opportunity to interact with each other. Earlier marriages were fixed by the family pandit, Nai, kinship or caste network. With the emergence of printing machines newspapers started as a medium of finding matches of one's own community and finally Internet replaced all of them which has proved the

easiest and cheapest means of communication. The global media age has opened up a whole new world of possibilities and renders a new dimension to the medialisation of the Matrimonial Market. Medialisation is a theory that describes how media increasingly shape and frame all social political and economic processes, It means a growing permeation of daily life by media (Hepp, 2012, Meyen 2009, Schneider 2012). With the growth of technology Internet had replaced newspaper to a large extent and also played a substantial role in growth of globalization since its easier, faster and cheap method of communication. Although for older generations Newspapers still remain the favorite means of communication, they prefer to give ads in newspapers itself but with changing technologies they too are required to shift to internet and gather information along with profile and pictures of their relatives. Indian matrimonial websites became a new and a popular medium for seeking marriage partners which has thousands of users. The first matrimonial website appeared on Internet was shaadi.com in 1997. Hardly any work is done on Matrimonial websites by academicians. The rise of Matrimonials website is part of a general boom that has taken place in Indian media landscape since 1990's with economic liberalization and privatization. (Munshi, 2001)

Indian matrimonial websites became a new and a popular medium for seeking marriage partners which has thousands of users. Unlike past people can actively participate in their own future planning nowadays. Its a new dimensions of media usage and choice of partners. Thus it can be said that media based changes in matchmaking is an overall social change in post liberalizing India, with new lifestyles and social realities, notion of marriage, love and gender need to be redefined. (Changing patterns of Matchmaking: The Indian online market, Titzman). The global media age has opened up a whole new world of possibilities and renders a new dimension to the *medialisation* of the Matrimonial Market. Medialisation is a theory that describes how media increasingly shape and frame all social political and economic processes, It means a growing permeation of daily life by media (Hepp, 2012, Meyen 2009, Schneider 2012). Earlier marriages were fixed by the family pandit, Nai, kinship or caste network. With the emergence of printing press machines newspapers started as a medium of finding matches of one's own community and finally Internet replaced all of them which has proved the easiest and cheapest means of communication. Although Newspaper still remains favorite means of communication for majority of population for a variety of reasons. Earlier there was just a small column of matrimonial advertisements in the newspaper but now there comes a separate supplement of around 5-6 pages with categories including caste, subcaste, sub-subcaste, regional status, citizenship and many more.

There are around 52 Newspapers publish from Delhi itself and 349 from all over India. English language Newspapers which are widely prevalent include Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Pioneer, The Indian Express, Asian Age, etc, Hindi Language include Dianik Jagran, Punjab Kesari, Navbharat Times, Rashtriya Sahara. Among Urdu most famous are Inquilab, Siasat, Munsif Daily etc.

The first matrimonial website appeared on Internet was shaadi.com in 1997. Hardly any work is done on Matrimonial websites by academicians. Their exact number is unclear random Google search for matrimonial advertisements Their exact number is currently unclear but a random Google search for 'matrimonial website' scores more than four million hits, the majority of which are Indian or target South Asian diasporic audiences. This is not surprising as marriage arrangements through newspaper advertisements, marriage bureaus, and family networks have a long-standing tradition in South Asia. The Internet is only an additional medium used to facilitate the search for a partner. India is called the new IT nation for a reason. The growing number of young educated computer users, fluent in English, explains the overwhelming response matrimonial websites are receiving. Overall, India's more than 100 million Internet users makeup the world's third largest group of online users after China and the USA (IAMAI or Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2012, ([www.iamai.in](http://www.iamai.in)))

According to the study conducted by IMAI, about 80 percent of matrimonial website users are between 18 and 35 years old, have at least a college degree, and live in one of India's mega-cities. These findings confirm the overall impression of a predominantly urban middle class phenomenon. The study found a rapid and continuous rise in number of users since 2005. It estimated that there were about seven million users of matrimonial websites in 2006 and 2007 (IAMAI, 2006: 2)

The online Market is led by three main websites: shaadi.com, bharatmatrimony.com, and jeevansathi.com, of whom Shaadi.com claims the highest number of users and successful matches. Shaadi.com's biggest competitor is bharatmatrimony.com, which has developed a different business strategy by mainly addressing regional affiliations. The portal consists of 15 regional sub-sites, called tamilmatrimony, bengalmatrimony, marathimatrimony, etc. and has a stronger hold in South India (Pepper, 2007).

The other websites have caught up with the trend of regional differentiation and today most of them provide their users with regional or linguistic sub-sites. A part from these big websites, there are a vast number of smaller ones attract plenty of Subscribers indianmatrimonial.com, pyar.org, thelifepartnerindia.com, matrisearch.com, merasathi.com. New sites are being constantly created, for example, the recently

launched simply-marry.com, "India's only metro-monial site," mainly addresses an urban clientele. Furthermore, there are numerous others catering to specific communities or customers: sikhingyou.com for Sikhs, nikah.com for Muslims, and trinitymatrimony.com for Keralite Christians, are some examples. Here, again, regionalization as a media strategy has been remarkably successful. I have come across several Gujarati websites, such as glagna.com and some of which even specialize in distinct castes, such as Patels, Kutchi Lohanas or Brahman, Kshatriya, sorathiya, Vaishnavs: PatelVivah.com, kutchilohana.com, brahmakshatriya.com. (Titzmann, 2011)

The number of websites designed for exclusive audiences is growing steadily. Unlike newspaper, the term 'community' is often used for 'caste.' community matrimony.com essentially offers caste based matrimonial advertisements: In India it is still believed that marriage within the community is healthy, happy and strengthens the bond within the community. Community Matrimony.com is a union of over 350 community matrimony sites catering to the needs of various communities. (<http://www.communitymatrimony.com>).

In 2007, the creators of shaadi.com bridged another gap in the market by launching the website secondshaadi.com, which has been promoted as the "No.1 Remarriage site for Indians." It now operates independently from its mother site shaadi.com. By creating a marriage market for seekers of a second marriage (i.e., for divorcees and widowed people), the founders questioned tradition as remarriage, at least for some Hindu castes and communities and more so for women, which has not always been acceptable. Even the general matrimonial sites contain profiles of a significant percentage of widowed and divorced marriage seekers, although the overwhelming majority has never been married Several new marriage websites followed after secondshaadi.com, while others, such as bharatmatrimony.com created a related niche with its portal 40plusmatrimony.com for targeting "elderly" singles. (IAMAI, 2006: 3).

One of the latest websites which has marked a change in the mindset of Indian society is the launch of www.idontwantdowry.com It is a matrimonial portal launched by NKG Info Services Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad. The portal is exclusively meant for those ideal people who say "I Don't want Dowry". It serves as a platform where brides can find their grooms who are against the dowry culture which is in itself a change against the age old dowry practices prevalent in Indian Society. The objective of this website is eventually to eradicate the Dowry system. The website is restricted to those who oppose dowry system. The website states "We proudly inform you that this is the first of its kind of service ever in the history and it has been dedicated to the people who oppose dowry. The service apart from meeting the



stated objective, is sure to help a lot of Indian women who can't afford to pay dowry. We would like to showcase the grooms listed here as the heroes of this generation which will surely motivate and inspire a lot of other people to take a similar path. (<http://www.idontwantdowry.com/>).

Matrimonial media needs to be understood primarily in terms of commercial enterprise, functioning according to market forces. Matrimonial websites are usually operated commercially and, considering the growing demand, one could also argue that the mushrooming of remarriage sites is plainly a response to existing needs. Another noteworthy aspect is the growing cooperation between print and online media that can be similarly observed in the news sector. This is increasing intermediality as well as media convergence. Almost all Indian dailies and magazines operate their own websites, with content exceeding the print version. Both media formats refer to each other and thus generate a convergent mixed format (Schneider, 2005).

The matrimonial market operates in a similar way. For example, The Times of India features advertisements of popular matrimonial websites and has close cooperation with the portal simplymarry.com. The South Indian Herald cooperates with bharatmatrimony.com and the Bengali Newspaper AnandBazar Patrika operates its own matrimonial website, abpatropatri.com, and finally India's Mobile Revolution has had an impact on the online Matrimonial Market. One can only validate a newly created profile on shaadi.com by entering a mobile phone number. In addition, website features are not limited to browsing profiles but include chat, call, and message modes, too. Meanwhile, the website has introduced "shaadi.com Mobile," connecting online accounts with cell phones and thus rendering the partner search even more mobile and interactive. Bharatmatrimony.com offers Apps for iPhone, iPad, Android, BlackBerry Smart Phone and Nokia. In addition, bharatmatrimony.com operates its own online TV channel, bharatmatrimony TV (stated to be the "World's 1st Matrimony Channel"), which features video polls on various questions (e.g., premarital courtship, love or arranged marriage, joint vs nuclear family), expert advice, success stories etc. Evidently, matrimonial websites are not an exception but a paradigmatic example of the general trend of media convergence and intermediality. Clearly, separable media are substituted by "mixed formats" that emerge from the combination of single media formats. For example, mobile phone providers the world over facilitate convergence with social media like Facebook, Instagram, thereby accelerating phone, internet and overall human mobility. Starting with ideas on the interconnectedness of media and mobility, the following sections look deeper into the changes in matchmaking in India due to increasing media use and influence. There has been a change in our perception and values with regard to the institution of marriage because of the

increasing importance of Internet as a matchmaking site (Schwittay, 2011: 358)

The role played by mass media in popularizing a consumer culture is no less significant. There has been a tremendous rise in the number of newspapers and periodicals at both the national and local levels over the last few years. The survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER, 2009) has noted that newspapers are able to maintain their dominance, with over half (53 percent) of all literate youth, or 177 million people, exposed to them. Again, according to the Indian Readership Survey 2009 (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010), about 68 million people read the 6,000-odd magazines that India produces. Similarly, television coverage and cable network along with facilities like telephone connectivity, cooking gas, and other services have greatly extended, particularly after private participation in these endeavors in the post-liberalized Indian economy. According to Biswajit Ghosh, Nearly half of our population today has direct access to television programs, and in urban India alone such access is much greater. There were just about 50 TV channels in 1996, but the number was more than 500 in 2010. There were 415 million TV viewers in the country by the end of 2007, which was among the world's highest figures. The NCAER survey (2009) also reveals that today television is the biggest media, with over 77 percent of the 333 million literate, or 259 million, youth exposed to it. Television, newspapers, and the computer network have given people greater access to information and allowed them to see a more extensive variety of forms of life than previously possible. (<http://www.academia.edu>)

Field research (Chatterjee, 2007; Sharangpani, 2010) shows that a traditional institution like marriage in South Asia is now blending with modern modes of networking as young people feel more comfortable meeting people online, especially NRIs (non-resident Indians), who are cut off from local networks and their ethnic and religious communities. This also reveals the limited involvement of the extended family in spouse selection.

This is probably the occasion to pose the question: where do we go from here? Since the Matrimonial advertisements are the modernised *avatar* of the traditional process of bride selection, are we going to see the concept of *single's site* of the west or the way the advertisements cited below, published in the Asian age from London? These have been put out by Indians settled abroad.

1. Hi ladies, my name is Pav, i am a professional based in London canary wharf working in Investment and Banking. 30 yrs of age. 5' 6", athletic build. Born and bred in London, UK, talkative and of great character. I am seeking for a female (Hindu or Sikh) for possible marriage,

preferably a professional Dr, but all welcome. I promise to read and reply to all your E-mails. Please send photos via E-mail to pavan\_dassrath@..... So you know what to do, look forward to hearing from you! Pav.

2. Match for a widowed Hindu Arora medico, 51 yrs old, settled in London for nearly 20 yrs. Working as a medical practitioner, financially secure, owned properties, cars, etc. seeks beautiful educated smart lady 38-47 yrs old unmarried/married/divorced preferably without children. No dowry/ Bars, Please E-mail your details with a recent photo to ajay747@.....
3. Affectionate considerate and sincere Khatri Sikh female, 37,5'5", slim, fair, and health conscious with an optimistic view on life. I am a post graduate from a noble profession from a status defence family London based willing to relocate for the right person. Interest include reading fiction, yoga, travelling keeping fit and active, country walks, cooking and café culture. Seeking an independent, mild mannered, well settled sikh male in business/ profession/army from a cultured background, preferably convent educated. (34-43), issueless only, based in India or abroad. I had a brief issueless arranged marriage contact with photo and full details to vandana\_kaur@(email address).

The above examples are interesting cases of tradition rising to step into modern age. 'Convent educational' and cast considerations are still lingering but a female listing out her own likes and dislikes is in no way bond by traditions.

*The Hindu* of September 27, 2017, New Delhi Edition published a report on an analysis of matrimonial advertisements over the past 50 years carried out by a premier Delhi-based consultancy firm and used by the non-government organization, Centre for Social Research (CSR). It has revealed that Modernization has resulted in empowerment of women and change in choice-making thereafter and also shows that marriage patterns in India have undergone a sea change. There is a noticeable shift from an exclusive focus upon the physical attributes of the bride and economic assets of the bridegroom to the intellectual and economic characteristics of the bride and personality-related attributes and career prospects of the bridegroom. Mediators such as matrimonial columns and marriage bureaus are playing a very critical role in contributing to the rise of a nationwide and sometimes trans-national system of information and choice-making in the context of marriage.

Another important trend emerging in most countries is the rising age of marriage. The reasons are intensive exposure to international media and the changing job roles of women who are now frequently taking on the role of breadwinners for the family.

Increasing intervention of the judiciary in resolving marriage-related conflicts is also an outstanding feature associated with modernity. "While the traditional pattern of marriage was marked by arranged alliances between two families through classical matchmakers such as family priests and relatives giving a minor role to the bride and bridegroom in decision-making, contemporary marriage is based more on an understanding between the about-to-be-married man and woman along with attention to the views of family elders," argues the analysis.

Similarly, a review of recent matrimonial advertisements in India has led some scholars (Chauhan, 2007; Shukla & Kapadia, 2007) to argue that urban middle-class families now are providing more space to individuals in expressing their preferences in the selection of a spouse. Quite obviously, the relevance of traditional "caste and kin network" for marriage settlement or role of ghataks (traditional matchmaker) in this endeavor has declined today due to these changes. There are negative effects also for example, weakening of parental control over marriage is contributing to increasing instances of love marriage in urban India (Mathur, 2008) Patriarchal control over marriage has led to recurrent instances of elopement of adolescent girls in rural Bengal. In either case, the traditional authority of the parents stands challenged. One opposite reaction to this trend of denial of patriarchal authority is "honour killing" of brides and grooms opting for Love marriages in marriages in Northern India. (Ghosh, 2009).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

After having given detailed analysis, One thing that we can safely say is that there has been a definite modernisation of the whole process of partner selections. Globalization in contemporary India has contributed to a certain homogenization of culture. This impact is more prominent in urban and semi-urban India constituting nearly half of the country. Yet, the process has also helped in accelerating the growth of cultural self-consciousness and cultural identities by exposing us to a wide variety of socio-cultural forms of life. (Ghosh.2009) As a corollary, several aspects of our custom and tradition continue to exist side by side as there is both adoption and rejection. The traditional role of the '*Naaee*' and the '*Brahmin*' has been taken over by the newspapers and internet. People from lower class, middle class to upper middle class section are taking advantage of matrimonial advertisements. Physical attributes have always been important and act as parameters of success in the marriage market. There is increasing specificity of requirements in the face of decline of the joint family system and this specificity is out in the open. Geographical considerations were key, decent marriages certainly were not. Individual characteristics which define the desired persona were

here to stay. Men were needed to be anything from "teetotallers" to "broad-minded". Although there were few cases where people had inter-caste marriages but it was between sub-caste, not exactly outside caste. We can say that matrimonial ads seem to reflect the same kind of ideals that mainstream advertising and programming content has persistently portrayed: the importance of physical beauty and material wealth in being successful and highly gendered social roles for men and women. The persistence of gendered lenses both in self-presentations and spousal expectations in this study is a reminder that androcentrism, gender, polarization, and biological essentialism continue to be at the core of individual identity and sexuality in Indian society. We also observed a movement towards modernisation whereas the traditional 'traits' of 'fair', 'slim', 'beautiful', etc. may still be there, there have been new additions like professional qualifications high educations, Caste No Bar, Sect No Bar; etc. Sociologically some elements of sanskritization can be discerned in that traditionally lower caste are also coming forward to take advantage of the newspaper and Internet. The change is in the attempt to accommodate some of the needs of the individuals concerned (bride and groom) in the terminology of the advertisements. The format of the "matrimonial ad" has proved flexible enough to accommodate this change," says the analysis. (K.Kannan, 2004). we have witnessed a tremendous rise in the influence of religion in the public sphere in recent times. An increase in the number of religious institutions and the large-scale participation of people in religious festivals like Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Sabarimal, Sangam Mela, etc., are also indications of the greater hold of religion on society. At the same time, the rise in ethnic identities, the demand for a job quota on religious lines, stress on spiritual education, incidences of "honorkilling" for caste/family pride, increasing incidences of crimes against women, and many more incidents refer to the challenges of socio-cultural life in contemporary India. Globalization is clearly at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, particularly in rural India. Therefore, it can be said, Globalization is much more broader, complex, and multifaceted Phenomena. Social and cultural changes today are not uni-directional and there are several contrary trajectories generating processes like homogenization, pluralization, traditionalization, and hybridization at the same time. In other words, "cultural globalization" does not refer to the possibility of a single global culture; it rather signifies the spread of plural cultural elements across the globe. Hence, instead of being a threat to socio-cultural identities, globalization has become a means for the construction of new identities and hence it has inadvertently resulted in pluralization. The challenge today is for us to recognize and respect plurality and multiplicity as a better model of globalized world.

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One should start brainstorming lists of potential keywords before even beginning searching. Think about the most important concepts related to research work. Ask, "What words would a source have to include to be truly valuable in a research paper?" Then consider synonyms for the important words.

It may take the discovery of only one important paper to steer in the right keyword direction because, in most databases, the keywords under which a research paper is abstracted are listed with the paper.

### **Numerical Methods**

Numerical methods used should be transparent and, where appropriate, supported by references.

### **Abbreviations**

Authors must list all the abbreviations used in the paper at the end of the paper or in a separate table before using them.

### **Formulas and equations**

Authors are advised to submit any mathematical equation using either MathJax, KaTeX, or LaTeX, or in a very high-quality image.

### **Tables, Figures, and Figure Legends**

Tables: Tables should be cautiously designed, uncrowned, and include only essential data. Each must have an Arabic number, e.g., Table 4, a self-explanatory caption, and be on a separate sheet. Authors must submit tables in an editable format and not as images. References to these tables (if any) must be mentioned accurately.



## Figures

Figures are supposed to be submitted as separate files. Always include a citation in the text for each figure using Arabic numbers, e.g., Fig. 4. Artwork must be submitted online in vector electronic form or by emailing it.

### PREPARATION OF ELETRONIC FIGURES FOR PUBLICATION

Although low-quality images are sufficient for review purposes, print publication requires high-quality images to prevent the final product being blurred or fuzzy. Submit (possibly by e-mail) EPS (line art) or TIFF (halftone/ photographs) files only. MS PowerPoint and Word Graphics are unsuitable for printed pictures. Avoid using pixel-oriented software. Scans (TIFF only) should have a resolution of at least 350 dpi (halftone) or 700 to 1100 dpi (line drawings). Please give the data for figures in black and white or submit a Color Work Agreement form. EPS files must be saved with fonts embedded (and with a TIFF preview, if possible).

For scanned images, the scanning resolution at final image size ought to be as follows to ensure good reproduction: line art: >650 dpi; halftones (including gel photographs): >350 dpi; figures containing both halftone and line images: >650 dpi.

Color charges: Authors are advised to pay the full cost for the reproduction of their color artwork. Hence, please note that if there is color artwork in your manuscript when it is accepted for publication, we would require you to complete and return a Color Work Agreement form before your paper can be published. Also, you can email your editor to remove the color fee after acceptance of the paper.

### TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD QUALITY SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH PAPER

Techniques for writing a good quality human social science research paper:

**1. Choosing the topic:** In most cases, the topic is selected by the interests of the author, but it can also be suggested by the guides. You can have several topics, and then judge which you are most comfortable with. This may be done by asking several questions of yourself, like "Will I be able to carry out a search in this area? Will I find all necessary resources to accomplish the search? Will I be able to find all information in this field area?" If the answer to this type of question is "yes," then you ought to choose that topic. In most cases, you may have to conduct surveys and visit several places. Also, you might have to do a lot of work to find all the rises and falls of the various data on that subject. Sometimes, detailed information plays a vital role, instead of short information. Evaluators are human: The first thing to remember is that evaluators are also human beings. They are not only meant for rejecting a paper. They are here to evaluate your paper. So present your best aspect.

**2. Think like evaluators:** If you are in confusion or getting demotivated because your paper may not be accepted by the evaluators, then think, and try to evaluate your paper like an evaluator. Try to understand what an evaluator wants in your research paper, and you will automatically have your answer. Make blueprints of paper: The outline is the plan or framework that will help you to arrange your thoughts. It will make your paper logical. But remember that all points of your outline must be related to the topic you have chosen.

**3. Ask your guides:** If you are having any difficulty with your research, then do not hesitate to share your difficulty with your guide (if you have one). They will surely help you out and resolve your doubts. If you can't clarify what exactly you require for your work, then ask your supervisor to help you with an alternative. He or she might also provide you with a list of essential readings.

**4. Use of computer is recommended:** As you are doing research in the field of human social science then this point is quite obvious. Use right software: Always use good quality software packages. If you are not capable of judging good software, then you can lose the quality of your paper unknowingly. There are various programs available to help you which you can get through the internet.

**5. Use the internet for help:** An excellent start for your paper is using Google. It is a wondrous search engine, where you can have your doubts resolved. You may also read some answers for the frequent question of how to write your research paper or find a model research paper. You can download books from the internet. If you have all the required books, place importance on reading, selecting, and analyzing the specified information. Then sketch out your research paper. Use big pictures: You may use encyclopedias like Wikipedia to get pictures with the best resolution. At Global Journals, you should strictly follow [here](#).



**6. Bookmarks are useful:** When you read any book or magazine, you generally use bookmarks, right? It is a good habit which helps to not lose your continuity. You should always use bookmarks while searching on the internet also, which will make your search easier.

**7. Revise what you wrote:** When you write anything, always read it, summarize it, and then finalize it.

**8. Make every effort:** Make every effort to mention what you are going to write in your paper. That means always have a good start. Try to mention everything in the introduction—what is the need for a particular research paper. Polish your work with good writing skills and always give an evaluator what he wants. Make backups: When you are going to do any important thing like making a research paper, you should always have backup copies of it either on your computer or on paper. This protects you from losing any portion of your important data.

**9. Produce good diagrams of your own:** Always try to include good charts or diagrams in your paper to improve quality. Using several unnecessary diagrams will degrade the quality of your paper by creating a hodgepodge. So always try to include diagrams which were made by you to improve the readability of your paper. Use of direct quotes: When you do research relevant to literature, history, or current affairs, then use of quotes becomes essential, but if the study is relevant to science, use of quotes is not preferable.

**10. Use proper verb tense:** Use proper verb tenses in your paper. Use past tense to present those events that have happened. Use present tense to indicate events that are going on. Use future tense to indicate events that will happen in the future. Use of wrong tenses will confuse the evaluator. Avoid sentences that are incomplete.

**11. Pick a good study spot:** Always try to pick a spot for your research which is quiet. Not every spot is good for studying.

**12. Know what you know:** Always try to know what you know by making objectives, otherwise you will be confused and unable to achieve your target.

**13. Use good grammar:** Always use good grammar and words that will have a positive impact on the evaluator; use of good vocabulary does not mean using tough words which the evaluator has to find in a dictionary. Do not fragment sentences. Eliminate one-word sentences. Do not ever use a big word when a smaller one would suffice.

Verbs have to be in agreement with their subjects. In a research paper, do not start sentences with conjunctions or finish them with prepositions. When writing formally, it is advisable to never split an infinitive because someone will (wrongly) complain. Avoid clichés like a disease. Always shun irritating alliteration. Use language which is simple and straightforward. Put together a neat summary.

**14. Arrangement of information:** Each section of the main body should start with an opening sentence, and there should be a changeover at the end of the section. Give only valid and powerful arguments for your topic. You may also maintain your arguments with records.

**15. Never start at the last minute:** Always allow enough time for research work. Leaving everything to the last minute will degrade your paper and spoil your work.

**16. Multitasking in research is not good:** Doing several things at the same time is a bad habit in the case of research activity. Research is an area where everything has a particular time slot. Divide your research work into parts, and do a particular part in a particular time slot.

**17. Never copy others' work:** Never copy others' work and give it your name because if the evaluator has seen it anywhere, you will be in trouble. Take proper rest and food: No matter how many hours you spend on your research activity, if you are not taking care of your health, then all your efforts will have been in vain. For quality research, take proper rest and food.

**18. Go to seminars:** Attend seminars if the topic is relevant to your research area. Utilize all your resources.

Refresh your mind after intervals: Try to give your mind a rest by listening to soft music or sleeping in intervals. This will also improve your memory. Acquire colleagues: Always try to acquire colleagues. No matter how sharp you are, if you acquire colleagues, they can give you ideas which will be helpful to your research.

**19. Think technically:** Always think technically. If anything happens, search for its reasons, benefits, and demerits. Think and then print: When you go to print your paper, check that tables are not split, headings are not detached from their descriptions, and page sequence is maintained.





**20. Adding unnecessary information:** Do not add unnecessary information like "I have used MS Excel to draw graphs." Irrelevant and inappropriate material is superfluous. Foreign terminology and phrases are not apropos. One should never take a broad view. Analogy is like feathers on a snake. Use words properly, regardless of how others use them. Remove quotations. Puns are for kids, not grunt readers. Never oversimplify: When adding material to your research paper, never go for oversimplification; this will definitely irritate the evaluator. Be specific. Never use rhythmic redundancies. Contractions shouldn't be used in a research paper. Comparisons are as terrible as clichés. Give up ampersands, abbreviations, and so on. Remove commas that are not necessary. Parenthetical words should be between brackets or commas. Understatement is always the best way to put forward earth-shaking thoughts. Give a detailed literary review.

**21. Report concluded results:** Use concluded results. From raw data, filter the results, and then conclude your studies based on measurements and observations taken. An appropriate number of decimal places should be used. Parenthetical remarks are prohibited here. Proofread carefully at the final stage. At the end, give an outline to your arguments. Spot perspectives of further study of the subject. Justify your conclusion at the bottom sufficiently, which will probably include examples.

**22. Upon conclusion:** Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium through which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

## INFORMAL GUIDELINES OF RESEARCH PAPER WRITING

### **Key points to remember:**

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

### **Final points:**

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

*The introduction:* This will be compiled from reference matter and reflect the design processes or outline of basis that directed you to make a study. As you carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed like that. The results segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and direct reviewers to similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you gathered to carry out your study.

### **The discussion section:**

This will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implications of the results. The use of good quality references throughout the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness to prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job, no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record-keeping are the only means to make straightforward progression.

### **General style:**

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

**To make a paper clear:** Adhere to recommended page limits.



### *Mistakes to avoid:*

- Insertion of a title at the foot of a page with subsequent text on the next page.
- Separating a table, chart, or figure—confine each to a single page.
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
- In every section of your document, use standard writing style, including articles ("a" and "the").
- Keep paying attention to the topic of the paper.
- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding the abstract).
- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
- Avoid use of extra pictures—include only those figures essential to presenting results.

### **Title page:**

Choose a revealing title. It should be short and include the name(s) and address(es) of all authors. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations or exceed two printed lines.

**Abstract:** This summary should be two hundred words or less. It should clearly and briefly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript and must have precise statistics. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Do not cite references at this point.

An abstract is a brief, distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less, a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approaches to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Use comprehensive sentences, and do not sacrifice readability for brevity; you can maintain it succinctly by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than a lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to limit the initial two items to no more than one line each.

*Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.*

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

### **Approach:**

- Single section and succinct.
- An outline of the job done is always written in past tense.
- Concentrate on shortening results—limit background information to a verdict or two.
- Exact spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else.

### **Introduction:**

The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.



*The following approach can create a valuable beginning:*

- Explain the value (significance) of the study.
- Defend the model—why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? Remark upon its appropriateness from an abstract point of view as well as pointing out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Briefly explain the study's tentative purpose and how it meets the declared objectives.

#### **Approach:**

Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity, and correctness of sentences and phrases.

#### **Procedures (methods and materials):**

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A soundly written procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replicate your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order, but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt to give the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to replicate your outcome, but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section.

When a technique is used that has been well-described in another section, mention the specific item describing the way, but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to show all particular resources and broad procedures so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step-by-step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

#### **Materials:**

*Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.*

#### **Methods:**

- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

#### **Approach:**

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

#### **What to keep away from:**

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.



**Results:**

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

**Content:**

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

**What to stay away from:**

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

**Approach:**

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

**Figures and tables:**

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

**Discussion:**

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."



Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

#### **Approach:**

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

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	A-B	C-D	E-F
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<i>Introduction</i>	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
<i>Methods and Procedures</i>	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
<i>Result</i>	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
<i>Discussion</i>	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
<i>References</i>	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring



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