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Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and Iqbal's Philosophy of *Khudi*: An Analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*

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Abstract

The decline of religion and the rise of secularism have led modern humans to adopt a materialistic perspective, resulting in a society marked by alienation, distrust, confusion, and anxiety. However, this narrow approach fails to capture the full richness of human experience, encompassing physical and spiritual dimensions. Literary studies have historically focused on uncovering hidden meanings and truths. However, an essential aspect of modern thought is the division between real and ideal, reason and judgment, and Spirit or Mind. To better understand the evolution of the self and human experience, French theorist Gilles Deleuze's concept of transcendental empiricism and South Asian Muslim philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of *Khudi* offer valuable insights. Examining Muhammad Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) through the lens of Deleuze's theory of desire and desiring-production, as well as Iqbal's philosophy of *Khudi*, can shed light on the role of desire in shaping the characters, classes, and interest within the novel.

Moreover, the research explores how ego-sustaining acts and an attitude of faith among the novel's characters can help individuals achieve a sense of dignity and self-respect, regardless of race or ethnicity. This study aims to promote a more holistic understanding of the human experience by sparking scholarly debates on creating a balanced and dignified lifestyle.

1. Introduction

What would happen to humanity if people stopped having an attitude of self-esteem and dignity in their lives and ignored the value of ego-sustaining acts in everyday life? History reveals that modern humans have adopted a materialistic outlook on life due to the 'death of God (Nietzsche, 1882) and secularism in modern times. European subjugation and colonization of Muslim countries have robbed Muslims of their dignity, honor, and self-esteem. There is an attitude of mental slavery towards the West, even though the colonizers have left. An attitude of mimesis and imitation, reinforced by "*ressentiment*" (a term introduced by Nietzsche to describe the manipulative strategies of the powerful in the disguise of 'charitable acts' robbing the weak of his self-esteem, dignity—a "triumph of weak as weak"

(Nietzsche, 1968). A leading cause of corruption in contemporary times is increasing materialism and dissatisfaction with one's life. The perpetuating trend for social media activities and self-obsession projected in love for selfies are symptomatic of the *ills of thought* (Deleuze, 1994) prevailing the society. The significance of promoting ego-sustaining acts and raising awareness of the dangers of ego-dissolving acts could not be overlooked. To comprehend Deleuze's analytic approach and philosophy of the subject as desiring-machine, one must first know his transcendental empiricism's concepts concerning thought, time, and desire.

1.1 Thought and Desire

French theorist and prominent philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925—1995) argued that a division between actual and virtual dominates Western thought. It has overshadowed the virtual power of becoming in Western thought. Deleuze affirms that the absence of God in modern man's life has led him to believe in an “image of thought” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 167). The ‘image of thought’ is a recurring concept in Deleuze’s philosophy. Why it poses a problem for Deleuze could be understood by Somers-Hall’s following words:

The image of thought is not that it is just a representation of thought but rather that it takes this representation, which is a moment of thinking, to be the entirety of thought. This feature makes it a *dogmatic* image of thought (Somers-Hall, 2013, p. 97)

Thinking is not *generalizing* (Colebrook, 2002, p. 36). Those in power exploit the emotions and desires of the masses through ideology. Deleuze holds that the question of power can only be put adequately through desire and asserts that desire is the productive force of life. “Desire is a power to become and produce images.” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 94). He posits that body parts are *invested* before the person. “the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our ‘self’ only because of these thousand little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says ‘me’” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 75/103). Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism rejects any being outside power and imaging. For Deleuze (1994), “Subject is the organization of impressions in time, which our imagination seizes from the chaotic flows of desire.

Deleuze argues, “Selves are the larval subjects; the world of passive syntheses constitutes the system of the self, under conditions yet to be determined, but it is the system of a dissolved self” (pp. 78-79)

Great South Asian philosopher and thinker Allama Muhammad Iqbal's (1877-1938) philosophy of *Khudi* evokes similar ideas. *Khudi* or self is linked with ideas of ego growth through ego-sustaining acts and abstaining from ego-dissolving acts. Iqbal (2013) states: “Thought and intuition are not essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. The one grasps Reality piecemeal; the other grasps it in its wholeness.” For Iqbal, Reality is a spirit with different levels of expression. Iqbal conceives Real as the Ultimate Ego. Iqbal states that “from Ultimate Ego only egos proceed. The creative energy of Ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities” (Iqbal, 2013, p. 80) And the energy of the Ultimate ego [Deleuze’s notion of desire in this context] that functions to unite egos is quite similar to Deleuze’s approach to the constitution of self which depends on action or deed. Iqbal’s argument is that the life of the ego has different levels of expression. Life offers scope for ego activity. Iqbal advocates that man is the supreme form of reality and creative activity, and man identifies with the creative energy of life through action.

In its deepest movement, however, thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose selfunfolding movement the various finite concepts are merely moments. In its essential nature, then, thought is not static; it is dynamic and unfolds its internal infinitude in time (Iqbal, 2013, p. 9)

Deleuze observed that the subject is an organization of impressions in time, which our memory seizes from the flow of time. Deleuze’s notion of the subject is in proximity to Iqbal's stance on the concept of *Khudi* egohood and affirmation of self. Both philosophers, Deleuze and Iqbal, stress the importance of action and acceptance of change and difference as productive forces in life. Iqbal writes that in the area of knowledge, scientific or religious, thought cannot be completely independent of experience (Iqbal, 2013). Bergson’s observation that intuition is only a higher kind of intellect furthers our understanding of the deepest movement of thought. Time is qualitative in nature, and the role of imagination (intuition), thought, and the notion of the organic unity of human origin characterize Deleuze’s and Iqbal’s philosophical insights. The importance of change [difference in repetition] in eternal becoming [Iqbal] instead of eternal creation [Nietzsche] is emphasized by both.

1.2 Transcendental Empiricism

In contrast to idealism, empiricism contends that ideas do not order experience; rather, ideas are the effects of experience. “We cannot use the subject and his ideas to *explain* the world or experience; we have to account for how

the subject is formed from experience” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 80). Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism is his effort to understand immanence (remaining within or becoming within) without losing temporal grounds. For Deleuze, the subject is another form of transcendence. Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism aims to understand the production of persons, classes, and interests from the chaotic flow of desire. Deleuze and Guattari (2004a) use the term passive syntheses for the mechanism of desiring-production (Deleuze’s term for unconscious): ‘It occurs in mind and does not happen in mind which contemplates, before all reflection and memory.’ Passive syntheses include a) synthesis of connection (mobilizes the Libido as withdrawal energy), b) synthesis of disjunction (mobilizes the Numen as detachment energy), and c) synthesis of conjunction (mobilizes Voluptas as residual energy). These syntheses act as mechanically as machines do; they have no self-awareness of what they are doing, much less a purpose or end in mind. Habit is the constitutive root of the subject. Habit or contemplation 'constitutes the habit of living, our expectation that "it" will continue. Habits are the "presents" (pure lived-time experiences) that our memory captures from time's flow while never ceasing to be temporal. Contemplation is contraction or habit, or what one does when contemplating. Contraction is the dual process of selecting what is good and essential from the environment and eliminating everything else as harmful or useless. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the question "How does desire work?" is the same as "How does the unconscious come into being," Both inquiries mainly center on the same problem: the auto production of Real. An important thing to remember is that passive syntheses are virtual in nature.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004a), assert that desire has two modalities: regime and nature. The regime is its capability or what it can do, whereas nature is what it does or its performance. According to Deleuze, there are two ways of perceiving the world: the illegitimate (sedentary, conformist behavior) and the legitimate (nomadic, nonconformist behavior). To add, the concept of deterritorialization is pervasive in Deleuze and Guattari's works and has a direct relationship with the notion of the machine. Due to the absence of subjectivity and an organizing core, the machine consists solely of the connections and outputs it generates; it is its actions. It is an ongoing deterritorialization or transformation into something other than itself.

A good and healthy life is an overflowing and ascending mode of existence, a form of energy that varies according to the forces it encounters. This is contrary to a deteriorated lifestyle that lacks action and "will to power," to use Nietzsche's (1968) terminology. Culture is expressed in literature. Art, philosophy, and science are responses to the force of life. Art is a sensory becoming, and excellent literary style accomplishes this in literature.

1.3 Literary Style

The issue of health is one that, in both its ethical and ontological facets, connects literature and life. “The perception of life as an organic unity is a slow achievement and depends for its growth on people’s entry into the main current of world-events” (Iqbal, 2013). Deleuze (1997) posits that writers and artists are symptomatologists, like doctors and clinicians. “Cultural forms, like literature, do not *deceive* us; they are ways in which desire organizes and extends its investments. This can work positively when intensities and affects are multiplied to produce further possibilities of experience” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 94). Deleuze replaced the limited term subject with his innovative term machine in schizoanalysis. Through the "disintegration of the normal ego," which can demonstrate that "neither men nor women are clearly defined personalities, but rather vibrations, flows, schizzes, and "knots"... everyone is a little group (un groupuscule) and must live as such," schizoanalysis is used to interfere in some way with the Oedipal, Capitalist capture of desire (the familial - sociodesiring libidinal investments) (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a). Schizoanalysis analyzes the rhizomatic connections that desiring machines make with other desiring machines/ social machines (social institutions) and separates desire from interest to unleash the flow of desire energy necessary for *people to come* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986). Deleuze’s approach to literature, writing as health, and his emphasis on style is his way to counteract the oppressive cultural and social practices affecting the life of ego/self. For Deleuze, style is not the depiction of life; instead, it evolves in life. Colebrook (2002) states that Deleuze and Guattari refer to schizoanalysis or micropolitics as the art of seeing the composition of generalities from singular investments. “The power of literature lies in its power ‘to take us away from the coded messages of language back to the sounds, marks and affects from which meaning emerges’” (p. 93).

2. Literature Review

Subjectivity is both an individuation and a socialization process. The subjectivity of any given society is a living, evolving entity known as culture. The notion of the subject has its roots in the writings of Descartes and Kant in Western philosophy. Kant believed that knowing involves active synthesis which relies on the categories of reason/judgment. The idea for Kant is a structure that allows reason to systematize knowledge. For Deleuze, it is a

structure that governs the constitution of the actual (Deleuze, 1994). Likewise, René Descartes (1596–1650), an eminent mathematician, influential scientist, and philosopher, also uphold the supremacy of thinking or cognitive faculties. Cogito, “the proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind” (Descartes, 1984a). In his view, the conviction that comes with this self-awareness, in turn, defines knowledge. The 20th century praised his famous “cogito” (Descartes & Maclean, 2006) starting point and disliked the sensory data that some argued was the legacy of his skepticism and held him up as an example of a culturally involved philosopher (Hatfield, 2018). Besides Kant and Descartes, research scholars and philosophers (Locke, 1905; Hegel & Lasson, 1812; Husserl, 1975; Foucault, 1971; Derrida, 2001; Sartre, 2003) have made valuable contributions to this field of study in their distinct manner. For instance, Foucault and Derrida favored constructionism and but they rejected subjectivism. (Foucault, 2003) and (Derrida, 2003) advanced their construction theories to analyze the variations within the human mind. Rather than focusing on the notion that consciousness and self-awareness influence how humans perceive the world, these theorists contend that the world shapes humans. Hence, they perceived religion less as a belief and cultural construct. (Husserl, 1939) and (Sarte, 1943) also held such ideas and strived to distinguish between physical reality and the human mind. They argued that the mind is subject to subjectivity due to its capacity for self-awareness and imagination, allowing the objective examination of religion as an independent discipline of study.

On the contrary, Sartre accepted it and strongly continued Descartes' work in phenomenology by emphasizing subjectivity. Through his arguments about the “being-for-others” and the “for-itself” in his opus *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Sartre argued that the ego was an inherently transcendent being, even within the material force of human society (i.e., an objective and subjective human being). Kierkegaard used the background of religion to conceptualize subjectivity (Hannay & Marino, 1998). Religious convictions differ significantly from person to person, although most individuals tend to believe whatever they do to be true. Descartes (1905) and Sartre (2003) defined subjectivity as anything that depends on consciousness, religious beliefs must be subjective since they require the existence of a mind with the capacity to believe.

South Asian postcolonial scholarship has approached Hanif’s novels differently. Scholars (Afzal, Pakri, & Abdullah, 2020) employ Derrida’s deconstruction theory in their postmodernist analysis of Hanif’s novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008). They posit that the interplay between the marginalized and privileged meaning of the text can construct multiple interpretations of a single text. Such research studies are driven by the authors’ inmost desire to interpret the text for its meaning. In her comparative analysis of *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) and *The Geometry of God* (2015), (Manzoor, 2016) uses the postmodern metafictional technique of historiography. She analyzed the meta-narrative in both novels and admired the narrative techniques used by both authors to generate mini-narratives. Her study aimed at understanding postmodern elements in both texts; her perspective comes closer to Deleuzian perspective about literature as a machine present experience which does not depend on a singular subjective perspective for its recognition. Like Deleuze, Manzoor taking help from Jean Baudrillard’s notion of simulation, advocates the idea of the creation of hyper-real as more than real in the context of the chosen novels. Reality is constructed, or a simulacrum of reality is created.

Scholars (Murtaza & Yasmin, 2012) have critiqued the comprador class of *Pakistani* society in their analysis of Hanif’s fiction. They critiqued the practice of colonial strategies in their analysis of *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) and debunk the corruption of the dictatorial government of the neo-colonial rulers of Pakistan. The comprador class or the mercantile class is responsible for sustaining the smooth transfer of the nation’s wealth and resources to the imperial center or the ex-colonizers. He is also critical of the biased plot construction of Hanif’s novel, as the author has not allotted much space to characters from underprivileged or minority social classes. (Murtaza & Yasmin, 2012) criticized Hanif for devoting a substantial portion of the book to the discourse of power, thereby marginalizing the discourse about the poor and ordinary people.

Scholars (Altaf, 2019, Huma et al. 2018; Tanvir&Arif, 2018). examined *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) as a postmodern novel, from Roland Barth’s perspective of myth, and from traced the strands of praetorianism. (Tanvir, Arif, & Hayat, 2018) believe domestic politics was not free from structural weaknesses. These researchers, in their study, have unearthed a peculiar state of military relationships. (Giddens, 1990) observation that the modern nation-state is distinguished by the military's involvement in state affairs could not be ignored in this context. Involvement of the military in such a manner was nonexistent during the First World War and only became prominent after the Second World War. Thus, the Marxist, Freudian, and utilitarian worldviews are insufficient to

comprehensively understand the ever-changing political, social, and economic flows of desire in contemporary times. Nazar (2016) investigated the uniqueness of Hanif's style by analyzing his portrayal of the protagonist, Alice. She emphasized the writer's deliberate decision to never use "I" for Alice Bhatti, despite her presence throughout the novel. She claims that the author intertwines the story's main plot and a related subplot and alludes to the author's use of the third-person narrative technique. According to her, "Our" in "*Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*" depicts possession and the desire to possess. *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) is studied by Shaheen et al. (2015) as a feminist novel. They argue that Hanif has presented an agenda of women's empowerment and has used the technique of magical realism for this purpose. (Arafat, Ahmad, & Mehdi, 2020) also critically analyze *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) and explore the impact of the totalitarian rule of General Zia on the Pakistani population. The researchers identified the neo-colonial practices of General Zia's regime marked by despotism and tyranny, treachery, injustice, illegitimate use of religious beliefs, and misrepresentation of religion and its ideology. Paul and Rai (2018) investigated the multifaceted strains of sexual violence against the backdrop of sainthood in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011). Even though Alice Bhatti is regarded as a saintly figure due to her gifts of healing people and performing the miracle of resurrecting a dead newborn, she cannot prevent herself from becoming a victim of sexual violence in Pakistan's maledominated society. According to these scholars, Alice Bhatti's spiritual powers have been shattered, and she is no longer safe from body intimidation. Paul and Rai (2018) have established their investigation on limited and misguiding ideological notions and cannot grasp Alice's nomadic and self-preserving perspective of the world. Hence, their understanding of her actions and experience leads them to a racist discriminating understanding of the events. Paul and Rai (2018), both Indian scholars state that 'even remaining 'an old spinster' in a 'nation of perverts' would also not be sufficient enough to avoid molestation'. The prejudiced and biased undertones of such statements could not be overlooked.

This section's analysis demonstrates that Anglophone Pakistani literature primarily addresses oppression, discrimination, subjugation, women's rights, minority rights, and neoliberal practices. Very few scholars have applied Deleuze to the Anglophone literature of Pakistan. However, these studies do not address the crucial task of ego or self-development.

3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature. It is a textual analysis of Muhammad Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (Hanif, 2011). It employs Deleuze's theoretical concept of transcendental empiricism, focusing on the notions of passive syntheses, the desiring-machine, and Iqbal's philosophy of *Khudi* to examine the novel. The research investigates two questions: Firstly, what role does desire play in producing Hanif's characters, classes, and interests? Secondly, how can ego-sustaining acts and an attitude of faith in the characters of the novel aid in winning a personality cherished by people regardless of race and color? The purpose of this study is to spark scholarly debates regarding the creation of a balanced, self-respecting, and dignified lifestyle.

4. Discussion and Analysis

A transcendental method does not begin from assumed terms, such as 'man' or 'human interests'; it shows the historical composition of those terms from intensities [desire]. Literary style achieve this by explores the 'conditions of reality' (Deleuze, 1994) It does not mean the depiction of life; it evolves in life. Deleuze refers to such literature as minor literature. "It repeats a voice, not to maintain the tradition but to transform the tradition" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 121). The power of the virtual in the domain of thought is explored in writing by using indirect discourse and infinitives— it is one of Deleuze's common appeals to literature. Indirect discourse reports a saying or speaking that 'comes from outside.' Free-indirect discourse is a bit complicated. It "uses third-person narration but speaks in the received, common or clichéd style of the characters described, so it is neither the author or the character who is speaking. We describe the character in the style that they might use." (Colebrook, 2002, p. 109) The free indirect style depicts characters through the language styles they may employ. The use of indirect discourse in the novel by Hanif allows the reader to follow the flux of emotions and feelings that traverse Alice's [protagonist] mind and body in various situations.

As the story unfolds, the reader learns that Alice was a qualified nurse but was condemned to sweep floors in the hospital due to her marginalized status in the patriarchal society. She was a Christian and belonged to the Chooras community of minority groups in the patriarchal society of Karachi, she was accused of a crime she did not commit, but due to the biased attitude of the judge, she was convicted and sent to Borstal jail. Alice was treated badly by the

interviewing panel of Sacred (the hospital where she worked as a sweeper). Although she had the qualifications for the job, she was dealt with discrimination and insulting behavior. The interview panel kept her waiting in the room. "...she has an odd sensation of overhearing a conversation, a conversation that she is meant to overhear" (Hanif, 2011, pp. 2-3). Infinitives and indirect and free-indirect discourse complicate the relationship between speakers and language. The indirect discourse demonstrates that speech patterns are not derived from characters, as we all acquire language from external sources; the infinitive has no subject. "Infinitives allow language to be seen, not as naming but as doing" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 111).

When Ortho Sir plainly refused to interview Alice, even though she was the only candidate for the job. Dr. Prierra, the owner of the *Sacred* (himself a Christian and sympathetic towards Alice) intervened to rescue Alice. Ortho Sir was now obliged to interview Alice. He began with a racist question regarding her name. He asked Alice if she was Alice (Christian) or Bhatti (Muslim)? Alice got deeply confused and disturbed. She felt it silly to explain her name. Her body got deeply affected.

This is simple. Alice Bhatti knows the answer. She rehearsed it in front of the mirror. But now she needs water. Her heart beats in her parched throat. A strange croak comes out of her mouth, a voice that surprises her, the voice of a baby frog complaining about being too small for this world. She notices, for the first time in her life, that the lizard has four feet. (Hanif, 2011, p. 9)

It is important to note that when desiring-machines connect with other machines, may it be persons or social machines (social institutions, hospital in this context), they not only shape them but they are shaped by them also.

Ortho Sir's anger kept simmering in his treatment of Alice, his dialogues and gestures debunk his body's reaction.

When Dr. replied to his answer on Alice's behalf, Dr. ortho lowered his eyes and began writing 'furiously' on the paper. When this desiring-machine (Dr. ortho) connects with another desiring-machine (Alice), his attitude triggers a flux of emotions in Alice. These energy flows are unleashed on different body parts, setting a chain of *sense events*.

"Sense is not just the collection of words of a language, nor is it the bodies named; it is the way we think or approach those bodies" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 111). But it is noteworthy in this exchange of flows of desire is Alice's decision. Alice blurted out all the information. She forgot what she had practiced but decided not to surrender:

She decides to carry on recklessly, like a pedestrian caught in the middle of a fast lane who decides that if they close their eyes and rush forward, they will end up safe on the other side. It all comes out in a jumble (Hanif, 2011, p. 10)

Such details are the writer's investments in affects. Affects are essential for understanding Deleuze's concept of literature as a machine of expression and the writers' task as the doctor or clinician of society who diagnoses the 'ills of thought' prevailing in society. Deleuze separates being from 'affects' and propounds that through investments or connections, 'being' is formed. Alice's behavior is *legitimate* (non-conformist) or *nomadic* in Deleuzian terminology. She refuses to yield to pre given identity markers of race and gender. Alice does not give up. She decides to do her best even though she knows that life for a Christian junior nurse and a resident of the French colony life is a series of humiliations. The legitimate, non-conformist, nomadic behavior can be mistaken for perpetuating ruthless egoism when not guided by an attitude of faith/direction and value of action in the life of the ego. Such egohood would win a personality, an 'eternal becoming' (Iqbal, 2013) rather than an eternal creation[return](Nietzsche, 1968).

Deleuze (1968) argues that literature is people's affair It is about *people to come*, people who bring change to their lives by allowing themselves to follow their energy of desire productively. Our addictions and perversions are our territories, according to Deleuze. Life is a series of transactions, and the subject/desiring-machine is always in a state of becoming. But it is not always a very pronounced becoming. It settles like dust in our body gestures, a simmering reminder of the cracks in the tectonic plates of emotions that lie within. The segment related to desiringmachines, namely Teddy, PT Master(his father), and Inspector Malangi (Teddy's senior), exhibit an irruption of desire energy leading to a mixture of desire and interests. When these desiring-machines connect with each other, it reveals an ethics marked by the creation and selection of their power/ desire energy smitten with acts of ego-dissolution. They lack confidence, direction, and value in ego-sustaining acts. Their dialogues show the affects and the function they perform in connecting with desiring-machines. Their actions eventually lead to the tragic death of Alice. Teddy had a troubled childhood, owing to his father's loose morals and ethics, and has less control over his life and actions. He draws strength and power by holding the pistol in his hands. He even proposed to Alice while holding the Mauser in his hand. But he is suspicious of his wife, like his father, who liked to spend his time after school with his Scout boys and awarding them privileges in sports, which his son always yearned to have. Both men could not

overcome their weaknesses and distrusted their relationships while avoiding confronting their shortcomings. Malangi told Teddy that you cannot *keep* a woman happy. They betray you. He came up with the suggestion of pouring acid on her face when

Teddy expressed his desire: “I just want to make sure that if I cannot have her then nobody should be able to have her. Is that not fair?” (Hanif, 2011, p. 309).

Hanif brilliantly depicts the idea of the marginalization of minority groups through Sister Alvi’s thoughtful remarks. She stated that Fatima Jinnah was a dentist who sacrificed her career for her country, but she is only remembered as a spinster and the nation’s mother. Sister Alvi said:

“Now, if her brother is the father of the nation, how can she be the mother of the nation? They could have called her *sister* of the nation, but no. because then people might have mistaken her for a nurse, one of us.

It’s a nation of perverts, I tell you”. (Hanif, 2011, pp. 80-81)

Navigating through the rhizomatic connections between and beneath apparently smooth mutual relationships, the study explores the evolution of self/ego and the cerebral role choice, thought, and deed plays in the characters’ lives in the novel. Sister Alvi was a pervert herself. As the novel’s story unfolds, the reader learns that Sister Alvi is a Christian who converted to Islam after marrying Mr. Alvi. But she continues to perform her Christian religious beliefs and manners of worship.

Alice prayers work as miracles and she according to people brought back to life the dead baby. Although there was a clot that came out from his tiny nostril and he began breathing. Alice was next to him on her knees praying Yasoo. The entire incident was interpreted as a miracle by others. Inner experience is the ego at work. We appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving, judging, and willing. “She never claimed to have any miraculous powers, she always said, ‘It’s Him who cures. I just stitch up what has been cut open by life’” (Hanif, 2011, pp. 337-338). Her egohood brings out the best part of herself. The ego’s life is a tension caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego. The ego does not stand outside this arena of mutual invasion. It is present as directive energy and is formed and disciplined by experience. (Iqbal, 2013, p. 113) “Life has taught Alice Bhatti that a ritual humiliation precedes every little step forward in life... She accepts that role. “I’ll do my best.”” The disruption and flux in the flow of desire due to intervening social and cultural machines could not impede her desire, her ‘will to power’ (Nietzsche, 1887), her will to change. Her attitude of faith and love for humanity manifested in her decisions and actions is a step towards what Deleuze (1997) considers healthy living. Deleuze writes that when desire is not hindered and stopped from what it can do, we have an ontology of forces/intensities instead of an ontology of being. Attention to these intensities or singularities in the textual analysis precludes any attempt at creating any fixed identity. Such analysis of the text is not driven by the desire to find out the meaning of the text; rather, it is concerned with the ‘function’ of that meaning in the text.

Conclusion

In short, the study reveals that healthy living is impossible without ethics i-e growing our self/ego by reclaiming an attitude of faith and responsibility toward ourselves and our fellow human beings. The principle of the evolution of self/ego/desiring-machine/Oedipus—everything with which we make our “us” lies in deed or action a directive and Deleuze’s (1994) concept of “endurance” or Bergson’s “duration” are not very different from Iqbal’s *Khudi*, all strive to reach out to the “outside” of thought that is transcendental and not transcendence. “Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it” (Iqbal, 2013, p. 2) Great literature engages with the evolutionary process of self or ego, a reason why its appeal for generations never fades.

“Re-chisel, then, thine ancient frame; And
build up a new being.
Such being is real being;
Or else thy ego is a mere ring of smoke!” (Jawīd Nāma)

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