

# **Exploring Hybridity in Select Goan Fiction: A Critical Study**

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I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation entitled, "Exploring Hybridity in Select Goan Fiction: A Critical Study" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Discipline of English at the Sheno Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University under the Supervision of Ms. Poorwa Naik and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given in the dissertation.

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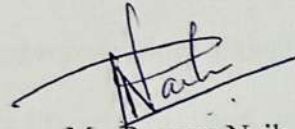
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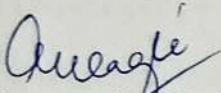
## COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation "**Exploring Hybridity in Select Goan Fiction: A Critical Study**" is a bonafide work carried out by **Mr. Chrisneil Savio Anthony Dias** under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts** in English in the Discipline of English at the Sheno Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University.

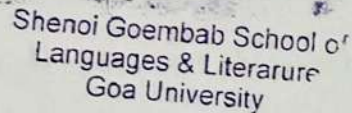


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“At a gathering of immigrants newly settled in

North America the question was debated:

Is there a distinctive Goan personality?

Almost immediately a rift appeared along the fault line dividing generations.

Yes, a hybrid of East and West, a mixture of

all the cultures that once dominated our ancestors. What is our culture anyway?

Song and dance, food, caste, religion.

An authoritarian culture, oppressive of women and the young.

Goans are like coconuts, ventured someone, brown outside, white inside.

There is really no Goan identity, another declared, only expediency,

survival techniques.

Chameleon-like adaptability. Some Indian elements

westernized, some western elements Indianized.

Attachment to the land. Sentimental nostalgia.

No no not so! What is it to be Goan? Warmth,

hospitality, family ties, a passion for excellence.

The village is the heart of Goan culture. Goan

youth abroad are completing the gradual loss of

identity begun by their elders.... They wanted to

be English or something... would not be found

cooking Goan, wearing Indian clothes.... We must look for our roots in India.

But... look at colonial history!... look what

they did! What options did our ancestors have?

...Other questions were asked: is religion the

decisive factor in Goan identity? Is the Portuguese

colonial legacy? If so, what is that

legacy? Does the mere fact of having been born

in Goa or of Goan stock endow one with a Goan

identity? Is there a Goan past, a history common to all Goans?" (Coutinho)

-João da Veiga Coutinho



## Chapter One

### Introduction

*“The issue of what constitutes Goan identity has baffled us now for some decades, perhaps because Goan identity must naturally be as fluid, as porous, and as amorphous as Goa’s borders have been down the centuries.”*

-Victor Rangel-Ribeiro

Only when one touches upon the topic of identity is he or she able to delve deeper into the intricacies of the culture or section of people that he or she belongs to. It is the basic identity of a person that defines him or her. Without a genuine idea of the same, one is like a lost soul in this world. It is the sole idea that speaks of one’s roots.

According to Victor Rangel-Ribeiro in his introduction to Donna J. Young’s book *Mirror To Goa*;

“While it is easy for us to recognise a fellow-Goan, it is far more difficult to identify a common Goan identity. Those of us who live overseas usually have little difficulty in spotting another Goan in a crowd, either in bustling Times Square in New York or in a packed subway car deep in the bowels of London, or Lisbon, or Paris” (3).

Through this, one can understand the depths of familiarity when it comes to recognising another person of the same culture. Another factor that comes into picture here is that of hybridity. The term originated from biology and botany, where it refers to a crossing between two species by cross-pollination which gives birth to a third “hybrid” species. In the twentieth century, the term extended beyond the biological and racial areas to embrace linguistics and culture.

Postcolonial theory is primarily a body concerned with the political, aesthetic, economic, historical and the social impact of European colonialism all throughout the globe since many centuries. The theory takes various shapes and interventions, but in the end, all share one common claim: The world one inhabits, is impossible to understand except in relation to the history of imperialism and colonial rule.

Hybridity is one of the terms used the most under postcolonial theory. It generates many debates and usually refers to the emergence of new transcultural forms within the contact zone established by colonisation. The term “hybrid” is used to refer to a new species as a result of the intermingling of two cultures. Many manifestations of hybridisation exist such as linguistic, cultural, political and racial. Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian-British scholar and critical theorist, whose work has been linked to the concept of hybridity, analyses the colonizer-colonised relationship, stresses on their interdependence and the mutual formation of their subjectivities.

Hybridity can be a very broad element of postcoloniality. On a basic level it refers to intermingling of Eastern and Western culture who have struck a balance between the two cultural attributes. This is a more general sense of the term and can be very limited in scope. Hybridity can have many layers to it. In racial hybridity, hybrids are defined as portraying a combination of two genetic streams. The resultant stream is the one known as “hybrid”.

The various layers of hybridity speak volumes about the post-colonial element. Some of the different ones include racial, linguistic, literary, cultural and religious. To define, racial hybridity means the merging together of two different races to result into a new one. Linguistic hybridity stands for the many elements of a foreign language that enter a particular one. Literary hybridity is mainly evoked in postcolonial writings wherein the colonialism impact on literature of a region is made evident. Cultural hybridity means the intermingling and combination of two separate cultures into one. And lastly, religious hybridity mainly means

the Christianity imposed on the colonised population. They end up not completely forgetting their roots and hence there is a combination of Christianity along with their former, original religion.

Not all of the above-mentioned layers will necessarily appear in the primary texts selected for study in the research. These are all mentioned to give the readers a fair idea of hybridity.

Many Goan people travel to different corners of the world for various reasons like education, job opportunities, business and other services. This in turn gives way to a lot of hybridization. Be it linguistically, culturally, or just about any manner of life. On reading many books and material, what can be understood of hybridity is that, the identity of an individual is a result of his or her interactions with various locations and their respective cultures. This is a reason for having many people in an area reflecting different cultures from different parts of the world.

Robert Young, a British postcolonial theorist, cultural critic, and historian avers that despite its overt intentions, the present-day cultural theory repeats and renews many of the key concepts such as hybridity, through which culture and race have been defined in the past. He traces the links between the paradigms of today's theory and writings on culture, civilization and racial difference in the nineteenth century. Culture is shown to have worked through an uneasy amalgamation, carrying within it an inner dissonance that marks a resistance to Western culture within Western culture itself. He asserts that 'Englishness' has been less fixed and stable than uncertain, fissured with difference and a desire for otherness. At the same time, racialized thinking has never been marginal to English culture. Even 'scientific' theories of race were always also theories of cultural difference. Race and culture developed together from the very first. And at the heart of Victorian racial theory, Young discovers colonial desire: an

obsession with sexuality, fertility and hybridity: a furtive fascination with miscegenation and inter-racial transgression.

The different populations of the world strewn all over the different parts of the world, due to the influence of the new places show clear signs of hybridity. One such area is that of writers. Their works reflect the various facets of hybridity. They infuse their knowledge and experience in their various books and novels and come out with amazing narratives! Texts of two such writers, namely Wendell Rodricks and Margaret Mascarenhas will be showcased in this work.

Having been a Portuguese colony for some 450-odd years, Goan people have experienced a lot of mobility in travelling within the rest of the Portuguese colonies. These include:

“Azores, Madeira, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe around the coast of Africa; Cochin, Goa, and Colombo on the Indian sub-continent; Macao and Nagasaki in East Asia; Mozambique and Angola in Africa; and Brazil.” (Cartwright)

This gave way to a wide range of hybridity in terms of culture, religion and most importantly biological origins. Thus, there is a wide variety of racial differences among the Goan people as well. This interesting fact has been the main driving force for the emergence of this work of research. As mentioned earlier, the writers from the colonies, in this case Goa, have given their valuable insights in their works regarding these aspects and come up with works of great literary merit.

The texts chosen to be worked on would reflect this very aspect of hybridity. Many Goans have emerged as a result of their intermingling with other cultures, which will be discussed at length during the course of this dissertation.

The following texts have been chosen for study:

1. *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* by Wendell Rodricks
2. *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas

➤ ***Poskem: Goans in the Shadows*** by Wendell Rodricks

*Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* sheds light on the young children taken in by wealthy families and retained most often as servants. The novel spans from Portuguese Goa to post the liberation of India's golden state. It takes the reader from Bombay to Lyon, Pune to Paris, and into the world of the *Poskim* (adopted) people and Goan recipes.

The book speaks about four main *Poskim* namely Alda, Liana, Nascimento and Sita who were separated from childhood and infancy since their single mother Shanta couldn't feed and nurture them by herself after her husband Vinayak's death. They were given up by her to different houses at different places. Hence, they were raised differently and on different religious principles as well.

Of interest to this dissertation is the novel's portrayal of hybridity in the Goan sphere. The outcome of this, the resultant Goan generation that one sees will be explored.

➤ ***Skin*** by Margaret Mascarenhas

The novel revolves around Maria Miranda Flores, aka Pagan, who is originally Goan, but is reared in the United States. On visiting her grandmother in Goa, she discovers not only her heritage, but also the skeletons in her family tree. She isn't the biological daughter of her parents, but instead is the fair-skinned biracial product of her uncle's relation with a servant of African descent.

This novel unlike its other Goan counterparts reveals that race is an aspect of Goan identity. Of interest to this dissertation is this very racial aspect of Goan identity.

Chapter 2 will analyse hybridity in *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* and chapter 3 will analyse the same in the other primary text, *Skin*. Comparisons between the two will be drawn in the following chapter, and will be followed by a concluding chapter.

### **Aim and Objective:**

This work aims to understand the facets of the postcolonial element of hybridity on present-day Goan culture with the help of Wendell Rodricks' novel *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* and Margaret Mascarenhas' novel *Skin*.

### **Research questions:**

By studying the hybridity in the texts, the following questions will be aimed to be answered through this research:

- To what degree is the Goan population a hybridised one?
- Which are the points of contact for being a hybrid population?
- Are the people of Goa still in the process of hybridising themselves?
- What is the real Goan identity like?

### **Literature Review:**

The following works have been worked on by various researchers on some Goan-based texts, written by Goan writers.

- ❖ Verissimo Coutinho, of Loyola University of Chicago (1975) worked on 'Goa's History of Education: A Case Study of Portuguese Colonialism'. Here he examines and analyses all the relevant forces that have been instrumental through the periods of history in shaping the socio-economic and political structure of Goa and their impact

on important institutions of the community. So, this entails the study of all such physical, economical and political forces and institutions.

- ❖ Karina Kubiňáková of University of Groningen, Netherlands (2010) analysed the topic ‘Whose Goa? Projection of Goan Identity in Rival Discourses’. Her focus is on the cultural and social developments and political processes within the European Union and reflects on integration, citizenship, values and cultural identity in Europe. The thesis deals with European culture, particularly Portuguese culture and its dissemination into the wider world. It provides a deeper understanding of formation of cultural identity in present-day Europe through the analysis of Portuguese colonialism and Goan identity.
- ❖ Rachī Dessai from Goa University (2021) worked on the topic ‘Exploring Myths and Superstitions in Select Goan Fiction’. Here she aims to analyse the many myths and superstitions present in the state of Goa. This she does by basing it on a steady foundation of Goan writing in English and Goan writing as a whole. Three texts from Goan writing in Translation have been undertaken to cater to what the study demands. ‘Age of Frenzy’ by Mahableshwar Sail, ‘The Kiln’ again by Mahableshwar Sail and ‘The Upheaval’ by Pundalik Naik.
- ❖ Professor Rupa Chanda, Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (2012) worked on the paper titled ‘Goans in Portugal: Role of History and Identity in shaping Diaspora Linkages’, where she talks about waves of migration from Goa to Portugal, the question of identity by the Portuguese community, identity issue manifestation in various ways, growing engagement between Goan community in Portugal and India

over the years and finally concluding by encouraging engagement with Goan diaspora community in Portugal.

- ❖ Jason Keith Fernandes, from ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon (2013) studied ‘Citizenship Experiences of the Goan Catholics’ for Degree of Doctor in Anthropology. Here he argues that the nature of the citizenship experience of Catholics in the Indian state of Goa is one of those located between civil and political society. His argument adds nuance to the nature of secularism in Indian Republic by introducing focus on a region outside British India, in addition to invoking caste and religion and looking outside of the binaries that determine the study of citizenship experiences of minority groups.
- ❖ Larisa Antoneth Fernandes of Goa University (2016) worked on a study titled ‘Goan Identity: A Pursuit Through Select Fiction and Films’. Here she understands how Goans perceive themselves vis à vis their political identity, whether Goans feel that they are distinctly Goan, Indian-Goan, Goan-Indian or Portuguese-Goan. The study shows that there is a sense of disorientation regarding Goan identity, that the work of art, especially literature and films are influenced by the issue regarding the identity of Goans, that there are contrary opinions on Goan identity which nullify each other and that there is a lingering presence of ‘two-Goas’.
- ❖ Glenis Maria D’Souza née Mendonça from Goa University (2016) worked on ‘Konkani Fiction in English Translation: A Critical Study’ in which she analyses the translation of Konkani Fiction into English, the praxes and processes of translation itself. She investigates whether this translation is rendered with fidelity and felicity by making a



comparative study of the Source and Target Texts. She also critically studies the select Konkani fiction in English translation by selectively using relevant theoretical perspectives.

- ❖ Selza Fatima Rodrigues, Goa University (2016) worked on the topic ‘Contemporary Echoes in the Konkani Fiction in English Translation’. Here the researcher examines the social concerns in Konkani fiction by exploring the various works of Mahabaleshwar Sail, Damodar Mauzo and Pundalik Naik. She also investigates the degree of sensitivity revealed by the authors in handling issues impacting the subaltern community, marginal women, environmental issues and to what extent they are tuned to their problems or a social reality.

What this work will be doing is that it will make the hybridity element in the Goan sphere crystal clear. The unique flavour of the state of Goa will be brought out in this work. Unlike these earlier works, where topics such as role of history and identity in shaping diaspora linkages, citizenship experiences of the Goan Catholics, Goa’s history of education, projection of Goan identity in rival discourses, exploration of myths and superstitions in select Goan fiction, Goan identity as a pursuit through select fiction and films, critical study of Konkani fiction in English translation and contemporary echoes in the Konkani fiction in English translation were explored, this dissertation will focus mainly on the points of hybridity from the Portuguese Goa of yore by applying post-colonial theory.

## Chapter 2

### Hybridity in Wendell Rodricks' *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows*

*“Ten minutes later, Nascimento, Alda, Liana and Sita disappeared, like the fruits, milk, sugar and ice-cream in the blenders at Hanuman Soda, into the mass of humans in buses travelling to various Goan villages and cities.”*

-Wendell Rodricks

#### 2.1 About the author and his work

Wendell Augustine Rodricks, an Indian fashion designer and author from Goa was born on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1960 to a young Goan couple. He was a family-oriented person and grew up being deeply interested in gaining more and more knowledge about his bloodlines and the hometown of his ancestors. Even though he grew up in Bombay, he always stayed connected to his Goan roots. He adored the lifestyle and culture of the state and took the small state to the international stage. He vibrantly represented Goa in his works.

He graduated with a degree in fashion designing in Los Angeles in the year 1988. Being the only student in the entire programme to graduate *summa cum laude*, he received the Excellence in Academic Achievement award. He established his own label in the year 1990 and moved back to his ancestral village of Colvale in Goa. Here he brought his creative and fresh ideas to life. According to him, the clothes of Indian women had to be an extension of their grace because they were very elegant and graceful. He also visited many different countries in order to gain inspiration. He was always immensely fascinated with the history that various countries had to offer. He died on 12<sup>th</sup> February in the year 2020 due to a heart failure during an afternoon nap.

His contributions towards professional fashion as well as writings are very significant.

Three of his published noteworthy books were as follows;

1. *Moda Goa: History and Style* – This work affixed the Goan fashion sense based on the historical facts of the time.
2. *The Green Room* – The book that narrated his own life experiences.
3. *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* – The work based on the former practice of adopting children in Goa, which will be discussed at length in this work.

It was in the year 2017 that he came out with this amazing book *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows*. It is a narrative that speaks about Portuguese Goa till after its liberation. The writer elaborates on the age-old practice in the state, of adopting parentless, orphan children into wealthy homes and mostly treating them no different from slaves or servants. Very rarely were they given a fair and good treatment. The book is a dedication to all the *poskim* of Goa, a love offering to them and a sincere apology for all that they have endured till date. It is divided into five parts, including a prologue and an epilogue.

This work of fiction is Rodricks' first one. The term *poskem*, is a Konkani (Goan mother-tongue) word employed to denote the orphans taken in by families who were well-off, and employed such children for household help. Both, the positive as well as negative outcomes of being a *poskem* are presented here. Through various narratives, this is an unspoken history of the Goan culture.

The author's neighbour Rosa, who was one among the above-mentioned *poskim*, had died a decade before he wrote the book. This incident had prompted him to come out with a work as a tribute to her. The work describes all the shameful traditions of Goa that have since died out. Based on reality intertwined with fiction, this work comes out with the untold history of Goan culture through an array of perspectives.

## 2.2 Recapitulating *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows*

The work of fiction starts out with the scene of the famous Mapuçá Market in the state of Goa in the year 1984. Rodricks introduces it to the readers by describing it as a ‘sensory delight’ that can leave anyone in a state of fatigue with all of its overwhelming colours, textures, aromas and not forgetting the heat. In a very vivid manner, he describes the scene by employing his literary artist to its full potential. To begin with, one reads;

“Divided into sections that specialise in fruits, flowers, pottery, bread, textiles, metal utensils and jewellers, the market’s most coveted space is where villagers display their bounty from the Goan earth. No matter the quantity, from a few ripening chikoos to baskets full of mangoes, anyone within the range of the bustling bazaar can throw a straw mat or sackcloth upon the floor and sell their produce for a nominal (if at all) tax. It is here that one can source plum-coloured dry kokum, drum-roasted cashew nuts, fragrant jasmine garlands and pineapples, strings of homemade chorizo sausages, bunches of bananas or coconuts and an assortment of strange-looking tubers and medicinal herbs.” (Rodricks, 11)

Fig. 1 Mapuçá Market scene

(Google)



The story of the four siblings (the reader realises this only in the epilogue) in the novel begins from one of the eateries where food and drink are consumed. This place, not forgetting to mention, remains away from the Friday heat of the Mapuçá Market. Nascimento, the only male among the siblings is the first one to be mentioned. The scene takes place at a shop named ‘Hanuman Soda ice-cream parlour’. He spots the only empty table in the whole eatery in a far corner and surveys the menu for any changes but to no avail. Only the prices had changed. He orders one Gadbad ice-cream for himself.

Shortly, Alda blinks into the blackness of the shop as she enters inside. This is heightened by the hot afternoon sunshine outside. All the tables inside the shop were occupied. On noticing the only place available for her at Nascimento’s table, she ‘slunk her svelte self opposite him’ and inhaled his musky aftershave. He seems like a decent man to her and his kind visage ‘entranced, yet terrified her.’ She too orders the same, ‘Gadbad ice-cream’.

Thereafter the third one, Liana enters the place with an exclamation of “Ó Meu Deus! It’s full.” The owner escorts her to the same table where Nascimento and Alda are seated. On approaching the table, she lets out such strong fragrance of the perfume Chanel N° 5, that Alda is immediately reminded of Mama Annie’s *parfum de choix*. She also gives out a very strong ‘foreign-returned’ vibe who doesn’t even take off her wide-brimmed hat even though inside and away from the direct sunlight. What really fascinates Alda is that she and Nascimento have the same fingers as herself, the same square-shaped fingertips with a mild and dark ridge on the left thumb.

The bowls of the famous Gadbad ice-cream of the place appear into their view. The description of it is exquisite. It is a combination of teaspoon scoops of every ice-cream that is available on the menu. It is drizzled with chopped orange candied peel and then crushed along

with roasted peanuts. These candied peels twinkled and hence resembled Burma rubies in the weak light of the shop. Liana too ends up ordering the same.

The owner then returns to the table again and apologises to the three for having to add another lady to their already-crowded table. This lady is Sita, the fourth one among these widely scattered *poskim* (orphans). Alda then notices with huge surprise that this lady also has the same fingers. Sita as well orders the same, Gadbad ice-cream.

Soon, they get into a conversation. It started out with Nascimento asking Liana whether she liked the sundae. To which she replied in the affirmative with an emphatic “*Delicioso!*” The conversation then shifts to the places of habitation and the food availability. Liana says that some of the flavours from the many present in the ice-cream sundae weren’t available in Lisbon, her place of habitation. Nascimento says that he is from Bombay and says that he loved the colours, fruits, breads and the people in the Friday market. Unfortunately for him, some fish available in Goa wasn’t available in Bombay. Some he mentioned like *Chonak*, *Modso* and *Dineshio*. And disclosed that he is a chef in a hotel. Sita adds that she lives in Pune. And that sadly, the Goan fish isn’t available there. Liana added to the discussion by saying that her friends appreciated her cakes so much so that they said that they were better than the ones available at the Hotel de Lapa and that her Pastel de Nata was ‘creamier and flakier’ than the ones in Belém.

Alda, who was silent all the while with a ‘wall of hostility’ around her, then made another crucial observation. She noticed that all these strangers to her have the same ‘honey Muscatel wine-coloured brown’ eyes. In a while she made to go and Nascimento followed suit. He tipped an imaginary hat at the ladies who shared the table with him. To which Sita thought to herself, “A kind man. Men who cook are also very caring” (Mascarenhas, 18)

Being the only two left at the table, Sita told Liana that her husband cooked for her sometimes. To which Liana replied by saying that her husband never cooked for her and only knew to order dishes and everyday wanted a new version of *Bacalhau*. It was a challenge for her, but since she loved cooking, she didn't mind in the least. She said that he was a Portuguese and that the heat would've killed him had he been present at the place where they then were i.e. at the Mapuça Market.

Sita remembered with a sudden, sharp realisation that her own husband was waiting for her at the bus stop on taking a glance at her watch. She wished Liana a good trip back to Lisbon and made a move. Liana, left alone, slumped back into the bench with a sigh and appreciated the taste of the Gadbad ice-cream that she was enjoying and planned on ordering another one. To her, it brought back memories of her special treat which she treated herself to on rare occasions. She had named it as her secret 'Liana Cappuccino'.

The procedure for preparation for this is given. The initial step is blending a cup of apple vodka with a half-litre of yoghurt and once foamy and well blended, to be served demitasse cups. The resulting ecstasy would leave the relisher guessing all the ingredients present in it. She thought to herself, "Ah! What bliss there is in good food!" (Mascarenhas, 19)

Finally, she had another sundae and after ten minutes, all of them, Nascimento, Alda, Liana and Sita have disappeared into the crowd of the Mapuça Market very alike to the fruits, milk, sugar as well as ice-cream in the blenders of Hanuman Soda.

The first part starts with Alda and her having physical intimacy with her lover Maurício. Her life from the beginning of her entry into the Souza Correia family is spoken about. She is

excluded from many things owing to her dark skin. Rodricks describes it as 'a tawny-port golden' in the book. Whereas, the brothers Jerónimo and Maurício were 'pale-skinned' Goan lads. The villagers and people around used to hiss the word 'Mestizo' at her. And they used to look condescendingly at the family.

On asking Mama Annie, who is the maternal head of the house, the meaning of the term Mestizo, she was given a tight slap. One day, when out herding the goats, she asked the neighbour Joao the same. He answered her in the manner of a riddle. He said he doesn't know why it should matter to the villagers, but they said that her family was mixed. The fact being that all Goans had a disdain for those sleeping with the colonisers.

At ten years of age, she started realising her 'differentness'. Things like, the children went to school, whereas she stayed back at home and helped out with the household chores, drew water from the well and took the goats out to the hills. While the siblings bathed, she ate in the kitchen. Once, through her misery, Maurício consoles her troubled self. He tells her that he would look after her always.

When she gets impregnated by him, Mama Annie gets very angered. She keeps the rest of the family members away from this secret. She sends Maurício away by ship to live with her cousin in London. This saddened Alda so much so, that she gets very lost within herself and turns pretty 'wild' and the demon starts keeping watch over her all the while. Mama Annie destroys the baby boy soon after birth and buries the 'bundle' into the earth. Alda, who helplessly watches her baby boy, Solomon being covered under red laterite Goan earth enters the wonderful world of insanity that day onwards. She is referred to as 'Pishem Poskem' by the villagers from then on.



In the second part, some supernatural elements are described at the very beginning. Alda befriends many wild creatures. She is involved in a lot of supernatural activity. The reader is told that the family of the Souza Correia household had moved to Lisbon long time back. Only Senhor Souza Correia and the spinster sister Filomena were the only two left behind.

Papá Souza Correia was an old man with a very angry disposition. Alda steals Filomena's lover from her to exact revenge from her mother, who had taken her baby boy Solomon's life. She tempts him into physical intimacy with her, letting Filomena watch the happenings. This results in her turning insane in a world infested with evil demons.

The third part brings out Papa Souza Correia's mad lust towards Alda. And the invasion by the Indian Navy for Goa's Liberation. And in the last section Papa Souza Correia's death is spoken about at the very outset. The neighbours gossip about Alda since she gets the family mansion and six acres of land all to herself. And she, being an adopted child into the family gets this that's why she is considered a 'Lucky bitch'. The last incident mentioned about her is that of her dear friend Tommy. She takes revenge on Fausto Carvalho, the man who had sexually assaulted Tommy.

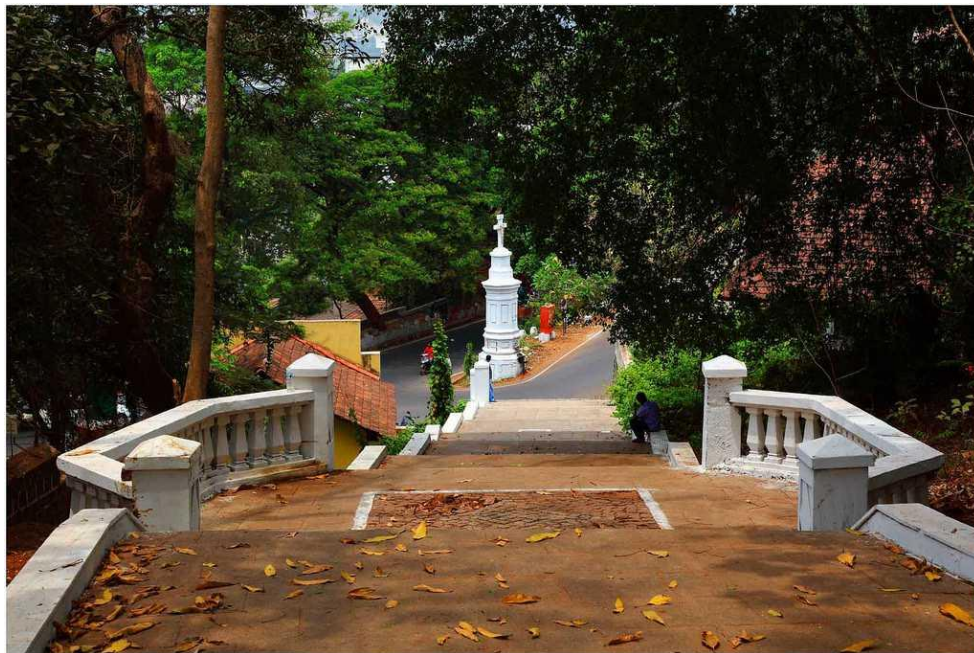
Shifting focus on Liana, the one who lives up on the Altinho Hill, the author says is the only child in the seven-bedroom home and doted on by her father. She knew every single tree on the whole of the hill by their names. One night, her father decides to tell the truth about her life. He decided to do this since someone at Clube Vasco da Gama had passed a rude comment at Liana. The parents together started by reminding her about the differences in their physical and emotional characteristics. One morning Henry, her father says that he saw a basket near

their gate. On summoning his wife, Marceline, he found out that they hadn't asked for any fruit basket or things of the sort to be delivered.

They find out that it was small baby Liana wrapped in a white sheet and accepted her as a gift from God, raising her as their own. She was made aware that she might be called a *Poskem* or *perfilhar* in Portuguese and to not let this loose talk hurt her. Liana listens carefully to their words of advice and instead of being in a mournful state at the realisation of her being an adopted child, she starts preparing sumptuous food for her parents in appreciation of them.

“The entire Altinho Hill knew that Liana was at her baking best as the aroma of the cake swirled around the hill.” (Rodricks, 20)

Fig. 2 Altinho Hill, Panjim



(Google)

A few years later, she meets and falls in love with a handsome young Portuguese army cadet at a celebration dance in Panjim. His name was Luis Miguel and he was an inhabitant of Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal.

On a visit to Europe to surprise Luis, she finds out that he wasn't in the country but instead in Mozambique, drafted there in an emergency. In the next section, Rodricks speaks about the tension on the eve of Goa's Liberation from the Portuguese. Liana has to leave with her lover for Portugal. A week later, her father passes away. By the time Liana was informed about this, she was pregnant with her first child.

The child, her son José grows up to travel to Brazil to study Gemology. And the last thing mentioned here is about how Liana's husband muses on the fact that he has been very lucky to be blessed with a wonderful wife.

Next, speaking about Nascimento, the boy chef in Bombay. He had come there at a very tender age of sixteen years after passing out from school. He was taken in by his foster mother, Rita Maria. She gave piano lessons and one day the Archbishop had summoned her and asked her if she was willing to take in Nascimento. He describes him to her as "He likes to sing all day and loves to slumber in the kitchen." (Rodricks, 46)

He is taken in, and though Rita's husband José Filipe was unhappy at first at having to feed another mouth in addition to seven already under his care, he ends up growing very fond of the boy all thanks to his remarkable culinary skills in addition to his good nature. He reaches great heights as a culinary specialist, a great chef. When the time is ripe for him, he marries Rosa in Divar following India's Independence.

He becomes a father and has a baby daughter named Petula. Unfortunately, she dies in a mishap in her mother's arms on the top floor of their rented apartment at Jer Mahal, leaving

Rosa in a severe state of trauma, only to meet with a similar death. However, Nascimento puts these tragedies behind and gets 'married to the Taj kitchen'. He dedicates his life totally to cooking. Ultimately, he becomes a great chef.

Sita is the fourth and the last one to be spoken about here. Initially the family haystack home, along with many others is destroyed in the moonlight at night. The incident is vividly described at the very beginning of the section dedicated to Sita. All this took place because some traitor had informed the Portuguese that the Rane soldiers were in hiding in the haystacks. The only survivors were Shiva, Sita and Aunty Shanti. It was Aunty Shanti's decision to go to Poona along with her nephew and niece Shiva and Sita. The Goan food was missed in Poona by the siblings. Aunty Shanti plans a weekend in the neighbouring place of Khandala, but herself couldn't make it since she had slipped on a banana peel few days before the trip. Only Shiva and Sita end up going there. Both of them spent the whole time together exploring the place, eating the food and much more. In the room they share the same bed and find each other's body so close that they get tempted to get intimate with each other.

Further one reads that Aunty Shanti discovers the closeness between the two. She discloses the truth that they weren't siblings by blood. They get married the following summer and have identical twins, Arjun and Lakshman. Finally, one reads about Sita's growing curiosity to discover her parents and roots. Aunty Shanti takes her to Bicholim to meet Indra, the oldest lady in the place, who tells Sita about her mother, Shanta.

She discloses that her parents were Shanta and Vinayak Halankar, a handsome couple. The father had died while trying to save an infant. Her widowed mother used to get a lot of help from Mohan, a man from the village. As a result, the villagers started spreading rumours

about them. Finally, Shanta had to leave the village when it got too much to bear. She was fleeced by an unscrupulous agent who sold her a house in a fake sale deed, rendering her and her infant children homeless. Eventually, she makes up her mind to give up her children for their better welfare and upkeep. The act pained her a lot, but she was helpless and couldn't do anything.

She started working at the laundry of a boarding school. And one monsoon, while working in the fields planting rice saplings, she was bitten to death by a cobra. This is the very sad ending to this work of fiction.

The epilogue acts like a continuation of the prologue. All the four characters are finally together, yet they do not realise that they are siblings. The author, Rodricks concludes by saying that just like most humans who don't realise the blessings from above, they never ever meet again.

The focus here, in the following sections, will be specifically on the hybridity aspect of the novel as mentioned in the title above. Many are portrayed throughout the course of the novel.

### **2.3 Alda**

The very first *poskem* (adopted child) one comes across is Alda. She is the only one among her siblings to have entered into the world of insanity. She has faced the cruelty and wrath of Mama Annie, Papá Souza Correia and Filomena. These were the members of the family she was adopted into, the Souza Correia family. The girl falls in love with Maurício, the son of this house into which she is adopted. And as a result of their union, Solomon their baby boy is born. Mama Annie, out of anger and hatred, kills the grey-eyed baby boy by drowning

him in a copper water basin with warm water soon after his delivery. She wants to hide the truth about the baby and hence sends Maurício away on a ship to London to live with her cousin. This she does on realising Alda's pregnancy.

In this section racial hybridity is evident. The definition of the term being 'racially mixed people' who do not belong to a particular one among those mixed. They are the outcome of the intermingling of the two.

Alda, being a *poskem* (adopted child), could also be a mestizo (she could be of African or some other mixed descent) and was excluded from the privileged sections of the family. Her lover Mauricio was a Goan-family born boy and therefore their baby son, Solomon was a hybrid of the two.

Alda had a darker skin tone. In the text it is mentioned as "a tawny-port golden". Whereas her two brothers in the adopted house were "pale-skinned Goan lads" and had "eyes the colour of a winter sky". Further one reads;

"That sunny May morning, Joao told her about the word in a riddle. "I don't know why it should matter to us but the village says your family is mixed." What he did not say but what Alda learnt later was that Goans had a disdain for their own people sleeping with the coloniser." (Mascarenhas, 25)

The whole point revolves around Alda's racial identity. Whether she was really a mestizo or simply just another Goan. This question of her racial identity arises here.

The part where Tommy, Alda's good friend is mentioned also is a good instance;

"Tommy was smuggled in by Grazieta to see the artwork when the family was at siesta. He walked into the triple chandelier ballroom, gasping in awe at the blue ceiling with gold baroque swirls cobwebbing the ceiling. Tall mirrors flanked the walls. Blue silk damask

covered the elaborate, intricately carved rosewood furniture. He was admiring the painting of the Risen Christ when he sensed a shadow fall near his back. When he turned around, the master of the house loomed above him” (Rodricks, 139)

In order to justify the above extract taken directly from the novel, a web article titled *Goa's Heritage Homes in Graphics* will serve the purpose well. In this one reads the following;

“The Portuguese arrived in Goa in 1510 and brought with them a host of cultural and aesthetic influences from Europe and other places. Goans who travelled abroad also returned with ideas and influences from other countries that they incorporated into their houses. Newly converted Christians embraced (or were encouraged to) a European aesthetic and lifestyle, though many aspects of their Goan cultural roots remained, resulting in a unique cultural mix, which affected everything, including the design of the houses.” (Beard Design)

Another one by Pallavi Siddhanta talks about the Goan house architecture. It starts out by stating that ‘Goan culture is an eclectic mix of Portuguese, Mughal and Indian influences.’ In speaking about the style, the Goan houses are in accordance with the ‘Goan-Portuguese’ style of architecture. The use of colour is very prominent. Bright and startling colours are used. From the yellowest of yellows to the brightest of blues. They consist of many arches and pillars, providing quite a unique look to them. The *Balcão*, which is the porch of the house for sitting around and relaxing is mentioned. The *Sala*, that is the large hall of the house used mostly for entertaining the guests on visits. Unique building material was used, such as laterite and stone, mother of pearls to line the windows, among many more.

Fig. 3 The Goan Balcão



(Google)

The altars of most Goan Catholic homes are elaborate, made of the finest wood and stone. This is the main praying spot for the entire family. The article ends with the following statement;

“Goan home is simply constructed with lots of love. They boast of some very typical influences from both Europe and India and the marriage of these two styles has resulted in the birth of a phenomenal range of architectural styles, making it a classic example of “The best of both worlds”.” (Siddhanta)

## 2.4 Liana

The second one of these *poskim* (adopted children) is Liana. This one too shows quite a lot of instances of hybridity. In contrast to Alda, Liana has a relatively more comfortable foster home. She has been raised by her foster parents Henry and Marceline as their own child.



Right at the very outset of the novel one reads;

“Suddenly, the air was filled with a perfume Alda instantly recognised and despised. Chanel N°5! Mama Annie’s *parfum de choix*. The voluptuous form slid over the bench next to her. Alda ignored this obviously ‘foreign-returned’ intrusion who did not remove her wide-brimmed hat. Keeping her eyes on the table, she stole a glance at the lady’s hand on an expensive bag. One finger glistened with a coral and diamond ring.” (Rodricks, 14-15)

As mentioned earlier many Goans travel to other countries all across the world which in turn leads to a whole lot of hybridity. In the above instance it is clear that Liana, who is, as the reader figures out later in the course of the novel, one of the *poskim*, has arrived back to her hometown, Goa from Lisbon, Portugal. The fact was that she had met an attractive Portuguese army cadet at a celebratory dance during her younger years and gets married to him. She then ends up having frequent travels between Goa and Portugal.

In part two one reads that Liana goes to Indian traders present in Lisbon. Here, she purchases spices in order to make a simple *Caldeen* and *Teesrio Pulao* as a token of appreciation for her aunt, her father’s sister at whose place she stayed on a small street just off the Parque Eduardo VII for the holiday in Portugal.

She proves to be a fantastic cook, in that, she blends Goan and Portuguese food really well. Like for instance in part four, in the section that speaks about her, one reads;

“It came to pass four days before José Luis Miguel was to fly to Rio de Janeiro. Liana thought to herself ‘This is perfect time to make José his favourite Assado de Leitão, Goan style. It takes three days to prepare. *Perfeito!*’” (Rodricks, 146)

Considering Goa’s history with Portugal, one can gauge the depths of blending in the above extract. It was happening in Lisbon, the very capital city of the coloniser country of Goa

some five hundred-odd years back. Goan style Portuguese food being prepared in Portugal speaks volumes here.

## 2.5 Nascimento

The only male *posko* (male version of adopted child) among the four siblings is Nascimento, the star chef among them. He was taken into foster care by Rita Maria. He was proud to have her as his mother. She gave piano lessons in her village and in Panjim. One fine day, the Archbishop sent for her in his office and offered young Nascimento under her care. He was seriously undernourished then. She was also told that “he sings all day and loves to slumber in the kitchen.” (46) She takes him in her house. But her husband, José Filipe is unhappy with this decision of hers since this would mean “another mouth to feed over and above seven of his own children.” (47) But he soon took a strong liking to him on account of his intelligence.

Food hybridity is largely present in Nascimento’s sections of the text. Food from different parts of the world, such as olives warmed with Turkish Raki and Tarragon, truffle oil drizzled on French Fries and Shaved Parmigiano, Barbecued Pike with Pernod Flambé and Philadelphia Cream Cheese coated with the Chilli Sauce used to accompany a Singaporean chicken-rice, served as an appetiser dip with nachos to name a few. All these were being cooked by Nascimento in Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay in post-independent India. These also serve as a very good example of the food influences that were brought in by the colonising countries to India as many of these dishes weren’t new to the people of the country.

The term ‘food hybridity’ can be defined as intermingling of two cultures based on food. Features of both are included in one.

Fig. 4 Taj Hotel Mumbai



(Google)

Racial hybridity is seen in Rosa, his wife who was a girl of Goan ancestry from Shivaji Park Bombay. She had dark brown eyes and a crinkly mop of hair. Since Goa was at the crossroads of trade since ancient times, it wasn't unusual to find blue Greek eyes, Persian beaked noses and Arab cheekbones. Rosa's ancestors had among them, the blood of an African slave which enriched the gene pool to create tall, handsome men and women that one sees till present-day in the state. She was a proud product of these Afro-Goan unions.

"Goa meanwhile fell into decline. The exodus of young Goans in search of jobs to Bombay and other British colonies in Africa and around the world began. What did the British stand to lose?" (Rodricks, 93)

This instance in the text only reiterates the statement made earlier that of Goans moving to other places in the world for plenty of reasons, the main one among them being jobs.

## 2.6 Sita

The only *poskem* among the four to be left by their original birth mother Shanta in a Hindu household is Sita. In the very beginning of the section based on her life, the readers read about how overnight the house in which she was living was torched and sent up in flames by some Portuguese troupes. In turn Auntie Shanti takes a train to Poona to her widowed Uncle Rama. She took up the responsibility to protect her nephew and niece.

Sita falls in love with Shiva her foster brother (she isn't aware that he is until later), and he in turn with her.

They start to get very close physically with each other while on holiday in Khandala. Auntie Shanti couldn't accompany them since she had slipped on a banana peel and twisted her ankle. Sita and Shiva were alone with each other on the holiday. This was where it all began between the two. One fine day Auntie gets to know the about what is happening between the two. She then tells them the truth. They get married and have two twins Arjun and Lakshman two years later. The truth was that Shiva and Sita weren't real siblings. The fact that Sita was given to the family by her mother two years after Shiva was born only comes out to them later in their life.

Here, one can see racial hybridity, in that, the twins Arjun and Lakshman aren't of one single race. Instead, they are a hybrid of the two races that their parents belong to.

One reads in the following during the course of the novel;

"Then the migrations started again. The Moira Jews converted to Christianity to keep their wealth. They built that beautiful church." (Rodricks, 131)

Religious hybridity is spoken about in this part of the text. The colonised had to forcefully convert to Christianity under the Inquisition in order to be socially acceptable and

live their lives comfortably. Anant Kakba Priolkar speaks about the same in his book titled *The Goa Inquisition: The Terrible Tribunal for the East*. He starts by introducing the topic about The Inquisition which was established in the state in the year 1560. Although the period was known as ‘Goa Inquisition’, its jurisdiction extended to all Portuguese colonies till the East of the Cape of Good hope. Since this time, four hundred years have elapsed, therefore his volume is described as ‘Quarter-Centenary Commemoration Study’.

Lastly, not forgetting to mention the amalgamation of many Portuguese words into the colloquy. Few examples being;

“It’s called Gadbad ice-cream. A *mistura* of all the flavours on the menu. Try it! Delicious!” (Rodricks, 15)

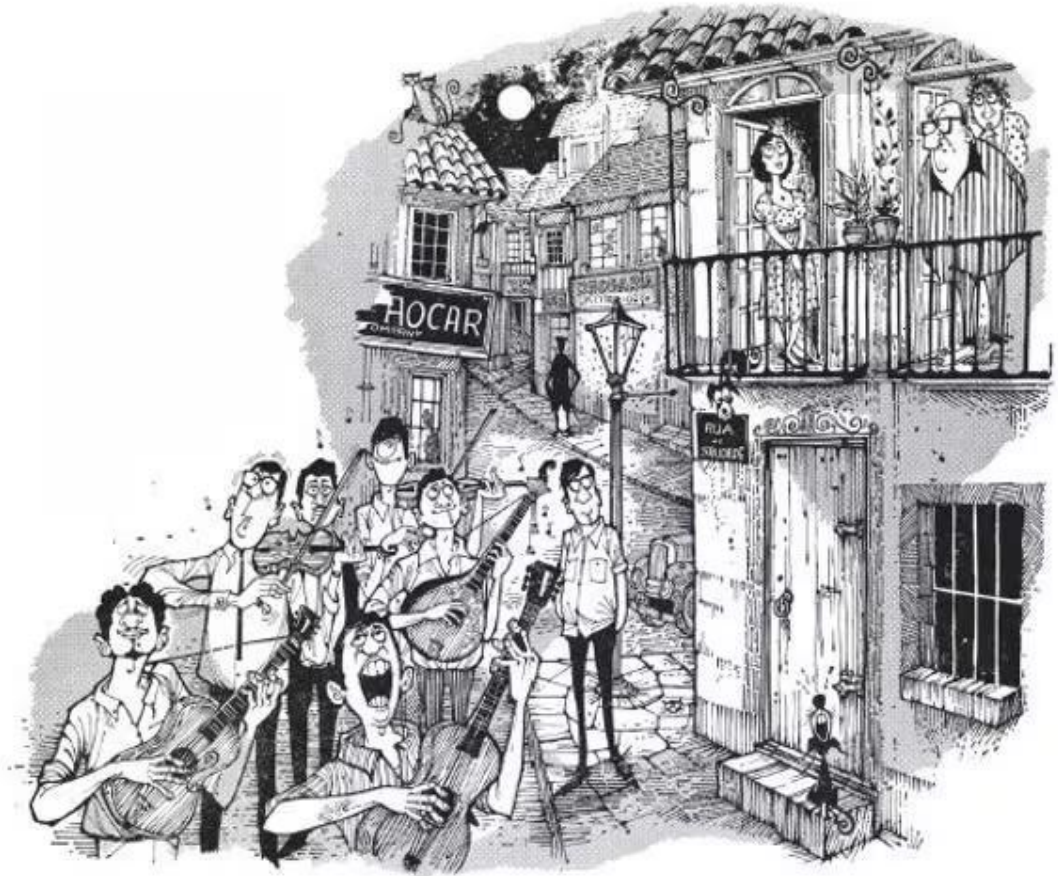
“*Obrigada Senhor*. I will order one” (Rodricks, 15)

“*Delicioso*. Especially the mango flavour. We don’t get some of these flavours in Lisbon... Where are you from?” (Rodricks, 176)

Thus, one sees how *Poskem: Goans in the Shadows* brings out the many layers of hybridity. It doesn’t initially, at one read show clear signs of it. Only on examining carefully does one get a clear idea of hybridity in the novel.

Wendell Rodricks proves to be a very fine writer with a quite distinctive and natural voice. The language that he uses is very simple. The whole vibe of it enchants the reader. Mario Miranda, a renowned Goan illustrator’s illustrations are featured in the book. The scenes are meticulously selected from Bombay, Goa, Pune and Lyon in order to suit the entire narrative. Also, worth noting and mentioning is the way that the many Goan recipes are showcased in the book. They give the book an authentic Goan flavour as well as a respite in between the intense storylines of the four main characters in the work of fiction.

Fig. 5 Illustration from *Poskem* by Mario Miranda



(Google)

## Chapter 3

### Hybridity in Margaret Mascarenhas' *Skin*

*“There is a word in Portuguese for which there is no English equivalent. It is Loss, Yearning, Nostalgia, Bitter-sweetness – all at once. The word is Saudade.”*

- Margaret Mascarenhas

#### 3.1 About the author and the novel

The author of the novel, Margaret Mascarenhas was an overseas citizen of Indian, more so of Goan origin. She was a writer, editor, teacher and an independent curator. She was born in US and spent some of her childhood years in Venezuela. Nevertheless, she has always strived to remain as close as possible to her roots in Goa. She was suspected to have died on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019 due to cancer.

One classic example of her efforts in her strife to remain close to her roots is her novel *Skin*. The novel was her first and the main character, Pagan has many parallels with her own life. In the novel, Pagan tries to discover her cross-continental family diaspora which originates with the Portuguese slave trade in India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The story starts with Pagan's present-day life but gradually moves into a flashback as the chapters progress, into the earlier and younger years of her life. The novel is divided into eight parts and contains a prologue and an epilogue.

In this 2001 published novel, Mascarenhas speaks highly of the complicated tale of two families, whose intertwined lives span several centuries and continents, originating from the commencement of the colonisation. The Miranda Flores household is an upper

caste family that has derived, among many other sources, a whole lot of wealth from the Portuguese-controlled African slave trade. Their counterparts are slaves who have descended from Kimpa Vita, who is a fictionalised historical Angolan prophetess in the text. The book highlights the African enslavement in the Indian maritime region in connecting the Portuguese possessions of Goa and Angola and questions as well as broadens the preconceived concepts of Geography.

One gets to see a strong sense of the complexity of the writing process involved and the challenges that are faced by the author of the novel. Though Mascarenhas has lived in the West for most of her life, she has managed to come out with a novel which has moments that steal the reader's mind off things in addition to the moments that feel a bit edgy, wherein her aim is revealed quite obviously. The read is a thrilling as well as a terrifying one, thanks to the complex thought process that has been employed in the sculpting of all the characters which successfully stretch the readers' imagination.

The reader, who has not the faintest idea, where his or her mind is being taken or maybe what might transpire all through the chapters because of the numerous characters spread widely through the various timelines and locations. The readers are given an unforgettable and vivid tale of the Portuguese Goa of the past and all the characters who have lingered during the rich heritage of Africa. Pagan proves to be a cultural hybrid, seeking to fill the void within herself, only to uncover her ancestry in a very unexpected way in due course of time.

Through the read, one learns that Pagan's origin wasn't one of the Saraswat Brahmin or any other Goan Catholic. But instead, was a result of an African and Spanish history. The work of fiction brings out an amalgamation of different cultures and is not just



restricted to the Goan and Portuguese relation, but with its many other links owing to its colonial past and the trade advancements.

### **3.2 Recapitulating Mascarenhas' *Skin***

The readers come across Pagan's life as a war-reporter and how it is artistically portrayed by Mascarenhas. The setting is initially in the country of Angola. The country is ridden with terror due to the severe war. Many terrorising activities were taking place. In a surprising instance in a car parking lot in San Francisco, Pagan ends up threatening a man at gunpoint when she sees him behaving rudely and violently towards his wife and children. He finally gives in to her threats and apologises to his family. She appears tired and worn out with the life that she is living in Angola and other such war-ridden countries. Fortunately for her, her Indian paternal grandmother Dona Gabriela (Gina), takes seriously ill and she is forced to fly to India, more so to her home soil, Goa. This event comes to her rescue just when she needs it the most.

Further, one reads that Pagan pays a visit to Esperança, her maid since childhood. The superstitious beliefs are spoken about here. The fact that Esperança used to ward off the 'Evil Eye' is shown.

The merging of the real world with that of superstitious beliefs can be seen in the following extract from the novel that speaks about this;

“When Pagan was younger, Dona Gabriela had attributed anything that went wrong with her – fever, poor grades at school, a bad mood – to the Evil Eye. People were envious, Gina said, of the child's fair complexion. In order to protect her granddaughter from native envy, Gina insisted upon a weekly ritual cleansing. Esperança would be summoned and, while Pagan stood meekly in front of the altar in her grandparents' bedroom, her grandmother monitored the proceedings. Esperança muttered unintelligible incantations,

lightly passing a handful of red chillies and chunky sea salt over Pagan's entire body with her right hand. This procedure completed, she waved the fist that gripped the chillies over Pagan's head, still muttering. Afterwards, they walked in processional fashion – first Dona Gabriela, then Pagan, and finally Esperança – to the kitchen, where the chillies and salt were consigned to the wood fire. The three of them stood watching as the chillies crackled and popped like Rice Krispies.” (Mascarenhas, 39-40)

The slave trade is also spoken about. Mixing of culture as a result of the trade can be seen. According to Savia Viegas, the author of *Let Me Tell You about Quinta: In Hour of Eclipse*, in a video titled *Margao Book Club discusses “Skin” by Margaret Mascarenhas*, the Jesuits who came to Goa played a crucial role in slave trade. She says that this is what perhaps legitimizes the role of Goans in slave trade. Since the church was involved in it and they were such avid church-goers, they also fall into it. The slaves were brought to the state for using them in church-related jobs like building churches. After the completion of the building of the church they were disbanded. A lot of Ethiopian slaves were also brought. Large slave armies were brought to defend Goa at different crucial points of time when they felt that there would be an attack by the English or French. So, they would protect the peripheries. So, she thinks the slave connection with Goa is also this.

The other thing is they would bring in women who were actually supported by royal dowries, and they would bring them to Old Goa in one of the convents, possibly St. Monica's (located on the Holy Hill opposite the ruins of the St. Augustine Church in Old Goa) and keep them there. And local elites, especially men would choose some of these girls as their brides and they would get a huge dowry. So, the first phase is when the Muslims are defeated, another phase is when the Muslim women are given as wives to the Portuguese who are there after the winning of the war. But at the second phase, a lot of Goan elites got married to these women and many of them had African blood, though they

may appear fair-skinned, they have a percentage of African blood and very often this has been found to surface in families.

In the book one reads;

“Back at Livia’s, Pagan pulls out a book entitled *Portuguese India* from the well-stocked library, and absconds to her bedroom. Curled up in bed, she opens the book. In the chapter on the Portuguese slave trade, she reads of treatment meted out to those captured in Angola and Mozambique during transit and wonders whether Esperança’s ancestors arrived on those ships. It occurs to her that she has never asked Esperança about her origins.” (Mascarenhas, 43)

As can be deduced from the above extract from the novel, Pagan’s ancestry could be any on planet earth. There is a complete ambiguity about it. Here, the concept of racial ambiguity comes into picture. In their article on the same, Sarah E. Gaither, Laura G. Babbitt and Samuel R. Sommers in *Resolving racial ambiguity in social interactions* postulate;

“What are you? Are you mixed? Where are you from?”

These are questions often asked of people who appear racially ambiguous. Racially mixed and racially ambiguous individuals do not fit neatly into just one racial category—for example, while some of their features may suggest they are White (e.g., smooth brown hair and thinner lips), other features (e.g., dark eyes and darker skin tone) may suggest another racial background such as Hispanic, Middle Eastern, or Black. As the ubiquity of the questions above implies, perceivers often feel a strong need for closure when faced with social ambiguity (Kruglanski, 1990), and in this case, that need for closure may manifest in terms of using cues to determine how to fit another person into a preexisting racial categorization scheme (e.g., Freeman & Ambady, 2011; Freeman, Pauker, Apfelbaum, &

Ambady, 2010). Moreover, biracial individuals also feel the desire to be accurately categorized by others and prefer interactions with people who know their actual racial background (Gaither, 2015; Remedios & Chasteen, 2013). Therefore, resolving racial ambiguity seems important both for the multiracial target and the perceiver, but whether it actually improves social interactions has not been empirically tested.” (Gaither et al., 259)

This one can apply to Pagan’s frantic need for wanting to get acquainted with her origin and roots. She tries her level best to achieve this, ultimately prodding her since childhood maid and companion Esperança to give all the possible information about the same.

One reads further about her childhood friendship with Yvonne LaFayette, the now established cultural anthropologist. About her father, Francisco being a Hindee and a Catholic at the same time. A reason why he won’t be going to heaven Pagan is told by her Aunt Sarah.

Next, the strained relationship between her parents, Frankie and Katie due to her mother’s ongoing affair with Leandro, Pagan’s uncle (father’s brother) is brought to the fore. Her stay during her childhood at her maternal grandparents’ (Bigdaddy and Bigmama’s) farm is spoken about. The attachment and bonding which she shared with her Bigdaddy and his untimely demise is brought out.

All the children together get into a painting on a wall in Pagan’s aunt (father’s sister), Eva Miranda Flores e Costa’s day-care center, in unison and explore a fairyland-like area. Since childhood, very imaginative that she was, it was initially Pagan’s idea that they pray to the Goddess in an instance of magic realism, in that, the real and unreal world were blended and merged together fantastically.

“The general plan of action was this: they would make their getaway at night, after Tia Eva went to sleep. They agreed to wake one another up if anybody should doze off before zero hour. The way they would get into the painting was by praying together to the Goddess. Pagan figured she was their best bet in terms of getting such an unusual request granted. Pagan appointed herself the Chief Priest who would lead the prayers while everyone else held hands, closed their eyes and repeated each line of the prayer after her. Then, the Chief Priest would count to three and say, “JUMP”. (Mascarenhas, 77)

Mascarenhas very artistically delves into the topic of magic realism here. Encyclopædia Britannica defines the term in the following manner:

“magic realism, chiefly Latin-American narrative strategy that is characterized by the matter-of-fact inclusion of fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realistic fiction” (Encyclopædia Britannica)

Unlike the usual Catholics, Pagan doesn’t get baptised immediately after her birth. Instead, she gets baptised many years after her birth since her parents let her decide her religion. Livia, her father’s unmarried sister is chosen as her godmother and she is named after her, i.e. Maria Livia.

Also, the tale of Dom Bernardo, the son of the greedy trader Dom Afonso Miranda is spoken about in the third part of the text. Dom Afonso Miranda could not be satisfied with a simple life. He lusted for power and wealth and therefore, became a trader...

“In the early seventeenth century, many ships were coming in and out of Goa, piled high with things the Europeans wanted from India and Africa, and things they had taught the Indians and Africans to want from them. ‘Goa Dourada’ is what they called this land, Golden Goa, the Rome of the East.” (Mascarenhas, 101-102)

Dom Afonso was one of the most powerful slave-traders of the century at the age of twenty in the year 1685. His son later established the house and line of Miranda Flores through a fortuitous marriage with Maria Flores and inherited his grandfather's trade as well as his greed in the year 1739. He ends up making a lot of wealth through slave-trade and also ill-treating the domestic slaves.

The next part speaks of the leader of the field workers on the Daman property of the Miranda Flores family. He was a *manducar* (bonded labour of the *fidalgos*) and his name was Bosco Rodrigues. He was known by everyone as Gor-Gor, meaning thunder, on account of his legendary temper so to speak. He impregnates Consolação, another servant of the property and harasses her a lot. Ultimately, he steals the infants of their union from her due to his hurt ego when she does not forgive his ill-treatment of her. Dona Alma, a daughter of the Miranda Flores family ends up rescuing them from his evil clutches to return them to safety in their mother's arms.

In part five, the beginning of Pagan's relationship with her lover, Xico is brought out. Right from the proposal at a JFK cafeteria. Pagan starts wondering, "What is it about cafeterias?" since her father also had proposed her mother in a cafeteria.

Part six speaks about how Pagan is touched and caressed inappropriately by her Hindi tutor, Mr. Prabhu. At the Immaculate Conception, the Boarders' Mistress, Sister Agnes would "feel up the girls while they changed into their nightdress or P.T. uniforms. Her pudgy sweaty little fingers would run up and down their inner thighs frantically. "For your circulation," she had said, as though they were a bunch of arthritic geriatrics instead of perfectly healthy ten-year-old girls. When Sister Agnes rubbed, she grinned like Mr. Prabhu. But at least what Sister Agnes did didn't hurt. This is what Pagan told Livia"

(Mascarenhas, 175-176) Such inappropriate conduct towards Pagan and other girls at school is mentioned here.

Then comes Pagan's encounter with Sister Marie Magdalene, whom the readers later realise is her mother and Saudade who is mentioned numerous times all through the text. She is gifted 'a stone and a secret' by her. The stone being the one given to Sister Marie Magdalene by her own mother which she passes on to Pagan to 'wear it close to her skin' since it'll help her along her journey. And the secret was that she believed 'in the God and Goddess spirit within each one'.

Mary Elizabeth Ward, Pagan's Bigmama devices solutions to take her granddaughter into her possession. She flies to India after her many letters go unanswered. She ultimately ends up going to Bombay when her counterpart, Dona Gabriela i.e. Gina turns out to be very unrelenting. As can be seen in the following extract from the text;

"When she arrived in Bombay, Mary Elizabeth Ward had gone straight to the American Consulate. She was given an immediate appointment with the Consul to whom she presented a copy of documents identifying her as the legal guardian of one Miranda Flores, minor, U.S. Citizen. She explained her fear that the child's paternal grandmother might oppose her legal right to custody." (Mascarenhas, 188)

In part seven, Pagan's paternal grandmother, Gina's tough time in hospital is seen. So is also Gina's stepmother's ill-treatment of her seen in a flashback. She had to do a lot of the household work and was troubled a lot. The situation worsened after the death of her father due to a heart attack.

So also, is Xico's arrival to India seen and a get-together held by Pagan where guests arrive from all walks of life. One striking point here being that her cousin, Carmencita admitting to Pagan that she always had a crush on her while they were dancing.

But it is also said that whether she meant it or not couldn't be said since "with Carmen, you can never tell" (Mascarenhas, 215)

After a few days Gina dies on the feast day of St. John the Baptist amidst all the monsoon clamour of frogs and rain hitting the roof. The final view of her reminds Pagan of one of those people at the Wax Museum in San Francisco. Of the entire funeral ceremony, the only part that makes any sense to Pagan is that of Livia playing Clara Schumann's nineteenth century Romance in B minor, one of Gina's favourites. She feels detached from the rest, as if the funeral had nothing to do with her or her grandmother.

The last part is one of many revelations. The story of Esperança's daughter, Saudade is being told from the leather diary that Esperança possesses. Her whole affair with Leandro is brought out here. Her children, Alma and Maria, half-identical twins are mentioned. They were made up of one egg split in two and fertilized by different sperm and they were two fair-haired green-eyed girls. Leandro being the father of the two. It is revealed at the end that Sister Marie Magdalene is Saudade and also the mother of Pagan.

### **3.3 Hybridity in the text**

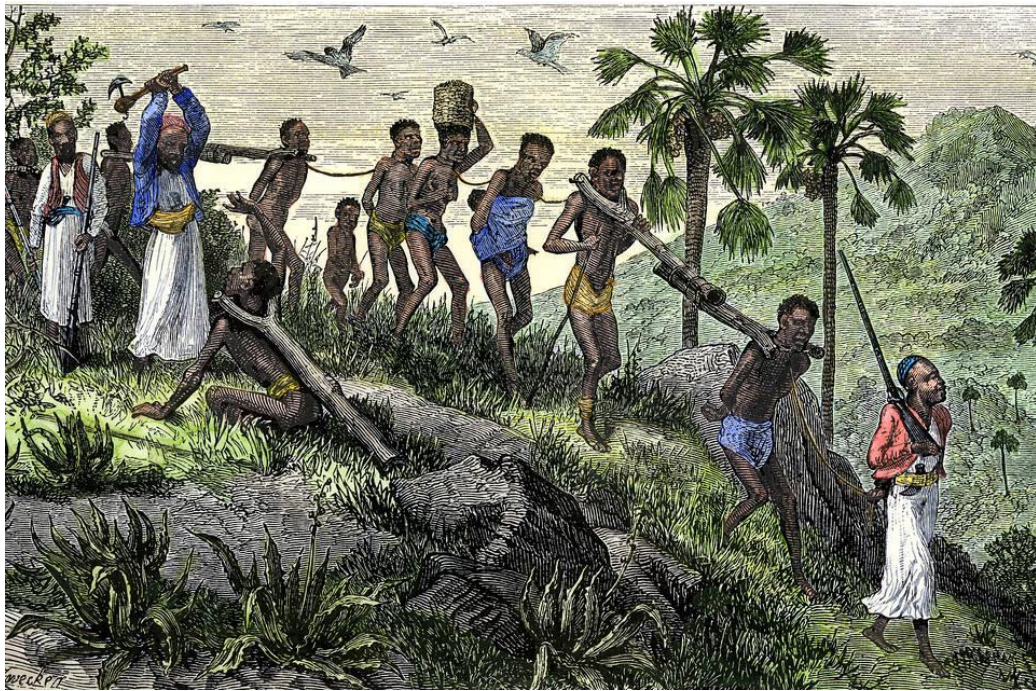
The novel *Skin* has various portrayals of cultural hybridity. These include the many layers of hybridity. As seen above, the story centres around Pagan, the protagonist of the fictional story. She is a cross-cultural hybrid product similar to that of the author herself. Pagan's Goan ancestors were a well-to-do family due to gaining many profits from the Portuguese-era slave trade. Whereas, on the other hand the other side family were severe subjects to the slave trade. Hence the resultant hybridity due to all the trade going on.

In the words of R. Benedito Ferrão in his work titled *The Other Black Ocean: Indo-Portuguese Slavery and Africanness Elsewhere in Margaret Mascarenhas' Skin*;



“*Skin* expands the black experience of slavery across space and time as one on the cusp of, if not as, modernity itself. Gilroy [settles] on the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe . . . [and] Africa,” just as Mascarenhas’ novel does; furthermore, where *The Black Atlantic* adds the spaces of America and the Caribbean to portray ships as “living, micro-cultural, micropolitical system[s] in motion” (4), *Skin*, through Esperanca’s voice, cites the ships that used Goa as an entrepot, “piled high with things the Europeans wanted from India and Africa, and things they had taught the Indians and Africans to want from them” (*Skin* 93). Gesturing at capitalism, Esperanca underscores the onset of early modernity that made the colonized culpable within the practices of empire. This is exemplified by Bernardo de Miranda Flores’s greed and the involvement of “[t]he Ashanti [who] were especially helpful to the slavers” in acquiring slaves from other African tribes (94). So, as *Skin* mirrors the black experience of the Atlantic in the gamut of the Indian Ocean, it also amplifies Gilroy’s recognition of modernity as the imperial force that involved the colonized themselves in the exercise of subjugation within protracted hierarchies of power. What is also common to both oceanic arenas is the use of violence as an inherent scheme of modernity.” (Ferrão, 32)

Fig. 6 Slave Trade



(Google)

Pagan didn't know her own identity. She said that she was "an onion having many layers, one skin over the other." Let us talk about one of the many layers of hybridity i.e. religious hybridity here.

It all started with the Inquisition by the Portuguese in Goa way back in the year 1560;

"After the Portuguese had established colonies in India many Jews from Portugal settled down therein with the object of taking advantage of the new opportunities for trade and commerce. Later on, when the Portuguese Jews were forcibly converted to Christianity and the life of the new converts in Portugal became increasingly precarious as a result of the growing ferocity of the popular odium against them and threats of organised persecution at the hands of the Church and the State, others sought refuge in the Indian colonies in quest of greater security and tolerance. There were also Jewish communities who had made their

home in India from ancient times. Many according to Padre Lucena, was, as a consequence, known as the King of the Jews. However, even in India, they were persistently pursued by the hatred and intolerance of their Christian brethren. The Inquisition, as stated earlier, started in 1560. However, Gaspar Correia, records in his *Lendas de India*, that an Auto de Fé took place in India as early as in 1543.” (Priolkar, 20)

Fig. 7 Portuguese Inquisition



(Google)

The following instance can be seen in the book itself;

“Before the Portuguese came, we were Kamats – Saraswat Brahmins who migrated to Goa from northern India centuries earlier. One branch of the Kamat family converted to Catholicism in order to retain their land and assets in the mid-sixteenth century. Because of their light skin and eyes and cultured ways, the Saraswat Brahmins who converted were accepted by the Portuguese and assimilated into Portuguese culture; they were often given high-level government and administrative posts. Portuguese landlords, officials, and soldiers were encouraged to marry the white widows of Goa’s Muslim defenders, or,

alternatively, Hindu Saraswat Brahmin girls, many of whom could have passed for Europeans with their light eyes and skin. But most of the Brahmin converts have managed to retain the purity of their bloodline.” (Mascarenhas, 28)

The first migration of the Saraswats to Goa happened in 700 BC. It took place directly from the banks of the river Saraswati via Kutch and southwards mainly through the sea routes. The name was taken from either the river Sarawati or from the spiritual leader Great Sage Saraswat Muni who lived on the banks of the river. Throughout history, the Saraswat Brahmins migrated to various locations and they are found mostly on the Western Coast of India. The Bhojas, the Chediyas and the Saraswats were the three main groups that came to Goa. The Saraswats immersed themselves into occupations like farming, fishing and trade. Many Saraswat Brahmins worked alongside the local and indigenous people like the *Kunbi* who exist even today.

So, as can be seen, the Saraswat Brahmins who were already in the state before the arrival of the Portuguese had intermingled with them and formed their own progeny. As mentioned in the above extract, in order to save their property and land, they had to forcefully convert to Catholicism, the religion that they had brought along with them. They hence gained many perks over the rest who did not do so.

Fig. 8 Gaud Saraswat Brahmins



(Google)

According to Aditi Rajeev Shirodkar in her work *Faith in Conquest: Colonialism and Catholic conversion in Goa*,

“At the height of the brutal evangelizing mission in colonial Goa, European missionaries, travellers, and residents wrote with astonishment of colonized Goans’ fervent embrace of Christianity. Converts seemed to display more discipline and passion in their profession of the faith than the Portuguese colonizers themselves. However, because of this demonstrated surrender to a faith imposed upon them, Goans provoked anxieties regarding the sincerity of their conversions and were subject to persecution—both punished by colonial authorities and ostracized by fellow indigenes.” (Shirodkar)

Also, Ângela Barretto Xavier in her book *Religion Empire in Portuguese India* in the introduction states the following;

“In the last few years, a significant body of literature has come to focus on the local population. A good part of this new literature is of Indian, and above all Goan, authorship, with some of it participating in the postcolonial critique of Orientalism and Imperialism. Many such writings, however, continue to articulate “nationalist” interpretations. Albeit influenced by the Subaltern Studies school of thought, a number of them deny different types of agency to groups of local origin in the design of the imperial order, drawing attention almost only to the more violent aspects of Portuguese colonialism and Goan resistance. Many of them presuppose the existence of a Goan nation before the arrival of the Portuguese, ironically reinforcing Orientalist assumptions about the organisation of rural life in India and its unchanging nature. Other studies characterise the Goan population as immune to Portuguese influence. In general, the behaviour of the local population is shown within a classic Orientalist scenario dominated by communities, castes, and Hinduism. Moreover, in these studies most “colonised” identities survive the colonial period practically untouched.” (Xavier, 5-6)

The pre-Portuguese Christianity in Goa was a totally different scene altogether. The religion had flourished in India right from the beginning of the Christian Era. The Syrian Christians of the country believe that their form of the religion is Apostolic i.e. derived directly from the Apostle Thomas. They asserted that their version of the faith is different and independent of those forms established in the West by St Peter and St Paul. According to scholars like H.O. Mascarenhas and Cosme José Costa, the religion in the state has pre-Portuguese roots. The roots are probably alike to those of Thomas Christians or the Nasranis of South India.

Further one reads that Livia, Pagan’s aunt, explains to her that though there isn’t any documented evidence of the exact circumstances under which the Kamats’ conversion

took place in the state, there exists sufficient historical references that indicate how the Portuguese Jesuits conducted their missionary activity with fanatical zeal.

She states that, “As the colony grew and their power increased, they began to use force – demolishing Hindu temples and erecting churches in their places. Hindus who still clung to their faith were forbidden to practice it, and they were left with no viable alternatives – they could continue living in Goa as Roman Catholics, or they could live in exile. One branch of our family chose conversion” (Mascarenhas, 30)

The question of religious identity arises when a new born baby’s religion is in question. When Francisco and Katie decide to let Pagan decide her religion when she turns old enough, Bigmama utters protest against the idea. She asks them “How on earth can you allow this poor child to grow up not knowing who she is?” (Mascarenhas, 53) To which Katie smiles defiantly and states that the kid is hers and that she will decide what’s best in her interest. Not forgetting what she says about religion, that she doesn’t believe one’s religion is who one is.

Olivinho Gomes in the introduction to his book titled *Goa* tells his readers;

“Christianity is believed to have come to its shores much before it did in Europe, soon after 52 A.D., according to some scholars, when Christ’s apostle Thomas entered Kerala and then Tamilnadu in the south, spreading the faith in the area, being martyred near Chennai. Its sphere of influence might have extended to Goa later. The other apostle, Bartholomew, is quoted by others as having evangelized the Thane area and other parts of the Konkan coastal tract, (which could have included Goa) and was skinned to death in that town. Native Christians were found by the Arab chronicler Ibn Battuta in 1334 in Goa, as well as by the Dominican friar, Jourdain de Severac, around that time, in Thane, where he was later stoned to death. Much later the Portuguese conqueror Afonso de Albuquerque



found vestiges of that religion in Goa, while digging into parts of the damaged fortress of Banastarim surrounding the city of Goa, on his conquest of it in 1510. This religion was, however, bestowed on its people again in a western garb and seared into their active consciousness, leading to their total absorption of it into their own culture over time in the most natural manner possible.” (Gomes, xi-xii)

A lot of cross-continental exchange is also seen in the novel. Firstly, Pagan works in Angola as a press reporter. The situation is seen to be pretty tense there. Pagan is an Goan-Indian origin girl, living in America because of her American-origin mother and ends up working in war-torn Angola. Secondly, in part two of the novel, a very young Pagan is seen living in California under the care of Katie and Frank. Once, Isabel and Christina, Pagan’s cousins fly to India along with her father and her. The Portuguese language influence, hybridity of language is seen when Frank discusses money matters in Portuguese with his sister who often faces financial monetary difficulties. This he probably does so that whoever’s around shouldn’t be eavesdropping on their conversation.

“After the ignominious death of her owner and illicit grandfather, Dom Bernardo, Consolação had devoted herself entirely to the care of his only heir, Alma de Miranda Flores. The impromptu amalgamation of cells from the Castilian and Saraswat genetic pools was an authentic success – Alma was a breathtakingly beautiful child with bewitching emerald eyes. There was something Moorish and wild about her, which only served to enhance her appeal. Consolação adored her. It was a mutual admiration society, because Alma returned her ayah’s affection to such a degree that she would refuse to sleep or eat or play without Consolação at her side. Looking after this fairy-child required Consolação’s undivided attention well into her thirties. She had no time for a man in her life, and, in any case, did not have much use for them. When Alma was thirteen – old enough to be handed



over to the governess and tutors – Concolação was nearly forty. And when she was forty, she married a very bad man.” (Mascarenhas, 121)

Here Alma de Miranda Flores, Pagan’s great-great-great-great-great-grandmother is spoken of as being an amalgamation of cells from Castilian and Saraswat genetic pools. Here Castilian means an inhabitant of Castile. According to Dictionary.com, “Castile is a former kingdom comprising most of modern Spain: originally part of León, it became an independent kingdom in the 10th century and united with Aragon (1469), the first step in the formation of the Spanish state.” (Dictionary.com)

On the other hand, the Saraswats, as has already been discussed above were those who migrated to various locations and they are found mostly on the Western Coast of India. So, these two categories of people amalgamated into one. Alma is the epitome of one such union.

“Get rid of it,” said Gor-Gor when he heard the news. “Mix yourself some medicine that will kill it.” But when he saw her features move from shock to stubborn resolve, his own face became mottled with rage and he slapped her with the back of his hand, shouting, “You stupid cow. Do you think I’m going to raise some dirty mulatto half-slave in the same house as my son.” (Mascarenhas, 127)

Gor-Gor impregnates Consolação and then doesn’t want to raise the child. Instead calling it a ‘dirty mulatto half-slave’. Half slave because Consolação was a slave on the Miranda Flores estate, whereas he was a *manducar* (tenant) there. ‘Mulatto’ is a classification based on race and used to refer to people with mixed African and European ancestry. The term is now considered obsolete. Also, it is considered offensive in many languages like English and Dutch, whereas in other languages in others like Spanish and

Portuguese it isn't. On the other hand, it could also be a source of pride. A 'mulatta' is a female version of the term. The baby hence proves to be a hybrid of the two.

Nevertheless, Consolação does raise these 'light-skinned twins' and names them Eusebio and Piedade. Just her eight-year-old stepson was present to help her out during the delivery.

"There is a distinct cultural gap between those of my relatives who grew up under colonial rule and those who grew up after. The pre-liberation people, educated in Portuguese, have not made the adjustment to the Indianization of Goa – they are bitter about the present and nostalgic about the past. Stuck in a time wrap, they cling fastidiously to a language that contemporary Portuguese people would consider antiquated and they live in a faded European tradition and customs, the understanding of which seems to be primarily conveyed to them through Hindi films. But, given the opportunity, they will pack their bags and be off like a shot to England or America. A green card is a precious commodity and is frequently used as a bargaining chip in arranged marriages." (Mascarenhas, 158)

The Portuguese came to Goa and greatly influenced and got them to merge into their way of life. Therefore, some were very attached to the Portuguese culture among other things like trade and religion among others.

The Portuguese took control of the Asian maritime trade from the Arabs who were at it till the 15<sup>th</sup> century end. They monopolised the control of the Arabian Sea. In this manner they came in so many ways to exercise colonial rule over the state.

Esperança weaves fascinating Angolan-origin stories. When she was young, she spent all her time with her mother, Caridade. One day she told her the story of a poet's wife which she relates to Pagan.

“In a village in Angola, there was a poet who was the custodian of history, the tale-spinner of his tribe, the keeper of their oral tradition. He was a very important person among the people. Another very important person in the tribe was the medicine man. At that time, the Portuguese traders had an encampment about a day’s walk away from the village. Some of the tribal people had been to the trader’s camp and they returned with tales of the Uzinga – men with white skin and hair on their faces, who carried weapons of fire. They also reported that the whiteskins had their own medicine man, a man who wore little windows on his nose through which he observed those who were sick.....He stopped singing the history of his people. And that is how their history was lost.” (Mascarenhas, 169-171)

Angolan stories like these were spilled in Goa out the mouths of the people of Goan-origin who lived there. This was like the blending of two cultures into one.

Fig. 9 Luanda, Angola



(Google)

Language hybridity is seen in the case when a Hindu Hindi tutor is arranged for her during her summer break, this has been done by Gina because according to the nuns at her school, the language was the only subject she ‘had trouble with’. This was due to the Devanagari script of the language. Before appointing him, Gina mentions to her that he is like ‘a member of the family.’ And had taught her children English and taught her mother the rudiments of Portuguese, though she never really picked it up. And finishing with ‘Americans have no ear for language.’

Here the point of meeting is education. A Hindu tutor teaching Hindi could be considered ‘standard’. But the same person dealing with other languages apart from Hindi, namely English and Portuguese is something ‘different’. These are the languages that the colonisers brought to their colonies.

The entire connection of Portugal with Goa started with the capture of Goa in 1510 by Afonso de Albuquerque. Initially, in 1498 Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and landed at Calicut. But then, in 1510, the Portuguese admiral Afonso de Albuquerque attacked the state of Goa on the request of the local chieftain Thimayya.

“In Goa, Albuquerque started the first Portuguese mint in the East, after complaints from merchants and Thimayya, whom the Portuguese called Timoja, about the scarcity of currency, taking it as an opportunity to announce the territorial conquest. The new coin, based on the existing local coins, showed a cross on one side and the design of an armillary sphere (or “espera”), king Manuel’s badge, on the other.” (Vas, 36)

There is also an eye-witness account available in the above text titled *Veni, Vidi...Goa* by Luis S.R. Vas. To be brief about the same, it speaks about the situation of the island of Tisuari in which Goa stands. Then all the incidents that happened in the wake of Albuquerque’s arrival. Then about his second arrival.

Pagan has been enrolled at a community college at Carmel as a result of which, she and her Bigmama had lived like two peas in one pod. Pagan then gets transferred to Berkeley and majors in Communications and minors in African Studies there. One reads that her cousin Meredith, the cousin who was studying sociology in San Francisco has called in order to invite her for a 'ski trip' during the midterm break which sadly Pagan outrightly declines by saying that she had spent all her vacations with her grandmother.

During her midterm break, when her Bigmama asks Pagan about what interests her about African Studies, and that she would've thought that she would be more interested in India, the land where her father came from, Pagan relies by saying that she has had enough of India. Thereafter, four years later, Pagan travels to New York, which is a bestowed graduation present on her from a proud Mary Elizabeth Ward.

Further in the storyline of the fictional novel, one sees that Pagan arranges a get-together for family and friends. Her Brazilian boyfriend, Xico, is also present here. This also the first time her friends and family meet and interact with him. There is a multitude of guests from all over the world, dressed in a wide variety of attire present at one place at this event. All this varied people meeting and blending together many cultures and identities evokes a very strong sense of hybridity within the readers' creative minds.

Firstly, one sees how Pagan "selects a sleeveless crisp shift of white linen, flat bronze sandals and a bronze rope-belt from her wardrobe. She dresses slowly, each movement an effort. The shift, which ends just above her ankles, looks florescent against her tanned skin. She loosely French-braids her hair from the underside up, and pins the braid into a knot at the top of her head – a trick she has picked up from Livia which gives the impression of having spent hours at the hairdresser. She belts the shift. She wears no

jewelry, save the sapphire ring, and hardly any make-up. Just some mascara and lip-gloss. When she surveys herself in the mirror, the effect is faintly biblical. (Mascarenhas, 212)

The readers read here about how Pagan takes great pains to dress very eloquently. This is done in anticipation of so many varied guests. Her Brazilian boyfriend, Xico has apparently chosen a white kurta-pajama of khadi which Pagan had given him on his arrival in India. It is very interesting to note here that the overseas man Xico, is seen wearing the khadi material.

During the same event, a mention is made about the post-liberation Goan Catholic ‘baby-boomers’ (persons born in the years following the Second World War when there was temporary increase in the birth rates) who’re very prone to be selecting English names for their babies. “Names like Keith, Tyrone, Jared, Neville, for the boys. Russian names for the girls. Ninotchka, Anastasia, Anushka. Alternatively, Indian ethnic is also “in”. Vijay, Ashok, Sunil. Alisha, Sonali, Kavita. Sounds that jar with Portuguese surnames. Da Silva, Cabral, Rodrigues.” (Mascarenhas, 216)

A sad instance can be seen in the following paragraphs which speaks about a sort of ‘lost identity or culture’, so to speak. Pagan Thinks to herself that the state of Goa has been invaded by various other cultures and none knows who they are anymore, much less to what culture they belong. She thinks the following...

“The Goan Catholics are trying to be Hindus. The Goan Hindus are trying to be Maharashtrian. Only the tribals know who they are. But for how long? Already their populations are dwindling at an alarming rate, their forests cut out from under them. Soon they too will be absorbed into the viscous mainstream soup, their children seduced by cable TV. They will want Kinetic Hondas, Kodak cameras. IFB washing machines. They will take jobs where they will be insufficiently remunerated and learn to take money under the

table. Then they will be just like the rest of us, only more lost, because they lack our cynicism, they have bought whole-heartedly into the belief that happiness can be achieved in the World of Things. Sister Marie Magdalene was right, Pagan thinks, we have lost our tribes.” (Mascarenhas, 216-217)

The next instance would make one very sentimental in their discovery of a child facing this very same loss or ambiguity of culture and identity. This would happen on reading Pagan’s doubts on what a child of her union with Xico would be like.

In part eight, titled ‘A dream traveller’s diary’, Esperança’s daughter, Saudade is seen being drawn towards convent life. It was the exquisite poetry of the Mass in addition to her hopelessness that had drawn her to the convent life. The prayers that were being said during the Mass were changed after she had returned to India. According to her, they were made ‘clumsy, ugly, alien’. Nevertheless, she had continued to say them the ‘old way’, possessively and that too in the French language. It was the way she had been taught by the order of Belgian nuns in the city of Paris where they had taken her in. The reason of shifting to another region being religious interests.

Saudade then goes to Angola on her first mission. This region is a French-speaking one of Cabinda. Most of the people that she came in contact there spoke a sort of French Creole, in addition to Portuguese and Bantu, which was the dominant local language. This is another instance of language hybridity.

“After five years in Cabinda, some of us were transferred to a desperately poor village populated with people of Ovambo origin in the region of Huambo. Huambo is comprised principally of rich farmland and, at the time of my posting there, these lands were owned by mestizo and European – Dutch and Portuguese – landlords.” (Mascarenhas, 244)

Another interesting episode in this work of fiction is that of Francisco presenting a paper for a seminar in Paris. It was part of his thesis which was entitled 'Mitochondria in DNA – the key to unlocking our collective memory'. He had proposed here that the life-force and core enzyme activity of a cell only passed on through one's mother and that an invisible thread links the humans not solely to the primitive homo sapiens but also to that of our future beings. With an implication he explains that, say for example, if the first homo sapiens' mother was an African native, all humans around the globe ought to hold her DNA in their cells and would continue to carry her endlessly all along the chain of evolution.

Unfortunately, after the paper presentation, all of his ideas were portrayed as those of a madman in all the newspapers and scientific journals of Paris. The unanimous verdict was that he made a 'mockery of science'.

On his visit to Saudade at the convent on the morning before his departure, when she asks him whether he was discouraged since he had appeared very worn out and tensed, he replies very emphatically, "Not at all!" In order to prove this, he tells her a small incident, thereby justifying his stance in the whole point that he is trying to make. He says the following;

"One day when she was three years old, I stood with my daughter on the porch under the light of a full moon. Pointing to it, she said, Manat. That is the moon, I explained. Manat, she repeated. Some years later, on a clear summer night after many days of rain, I sat outdoors, conversing with my friend Ahmed, who is a professor of Arabic. Looking up at the sky, Ahmed pointed to the Moon and said, Manat is out tonight. When I asked the meaning of the word, Ahmed told me it was the name of an Arabic moon-goddess, venerated by pre-Islamic tribes. How could she have known? Collective memory is the



only logical explanation. And for collective memory to exist, there must be a genetic code. One day I will crack the code.” (Mascarenhas, 251)

Further Yvonne Lafayette, Pagan’s childhood friend is mentioned. This happens after Saudade discloses that she had been rather hastily transferred to a mission on the Andaman Islands on her return to her convent near Pondicherry on successful completion of her doctorate in sociology at the university in Paris after four long years. Here, in Andaman, she worked alongside and learnt from the Negrito people of the region.

Then, when back in India, for construction of environment-friendly living, teaching and working areas, she goes to Auroville to learn about eco-architecture. She attends a lecture at the Alliance Française during a visit to Bombay. This lecture was by none other than the then-renowned African-American novelist, poet and cultural anthropologist, Yvonne Lafayette. They meet afterwards and have a conversation on a film that she was going to be producing which was based mainly on her highly acclaimed auto-biography entitled *White-Magic is really Black* – a book written in prose that was pretty raw and wonderful that it tore her heart.

On the jacket cover the book reads;

“The opening chapter recounts the humiliation of a six-year-old Afro-American girl (Yvonne) whose white school-mates distribute bits of quartz among themselves – with the idea that stones will magically prevent them from being contaminated by Yvonne. The young Yvonne’s suffering is mitigated somewhat by another outsider, a girl of part Indian origin, her only friend. Yvonne loses her friend when her parents transfer her to another school.” (Mascarenhas, 255)

At the end of the novel, when Saudade and Pagan, the mother-daughter duo meets, the readers get to know that they spent all of their free time and spoke for three consecutive

days. It was more of Saudade speaking and her daughter listening. She was asked questions, to which Saudade replies. The questions were quite considered and intelligible but never frivolous. These were very unlike those usually put forth by pampered teenage girls.

As the author puts it, to Saudade, this girl turns out to be an ‘extraordinary blend of ingredients. She seemed to be a ‘living bridge between races, between continents, between the physical plane and that of the spirit’. A perfect conduit between the old and new ways, a cultural hybrid who would fit anywhere and also nowhere, forever being suspended between two worlds.

Coming to the epilogue, Mascarenhas mentions Pagan writes stories under the pen name of Pagan Maria. That she divides her year into two – half a year in Goa and the other half in Brazil. In the final few lines of this epilogue, she describes their twins in the following manner;

“Braz is like Xico – dark and scruffy, wild and wiry, a forever boy. Beatrice is like me – small-boned and sleek, with a gap between her teeth. But their eyes are the same. Green. The eyes of a Jesuit priest of the eighteenth century. Like Leandro’s like mine. My heart often hurts with love for them, I am fierce in my protection of them. (Mascarenhas, 262)

In the end, she puts forth her concerns regarding her daughter, Beatrice. About how she would manage in the maternal branch tradition of the family if at all she gives birth to yet another pair of twins. Hinting at the ancestry, she lastly points out that even though she had two lovely bouncing breasts, she had only one nipple.

Like in *Poskem*, in *Skin* too one sees Portuguese words strewn in the colloquial language spoken throughout the course of the novel. For instance;

“When Saudade reached a certain point in her life, she did away with herself. At least her “self” as people knew her the. She was *desaparecida*. Gone.” (Mascarenhas, 5)

“There is a word in Portuguese for which there is no English equivalent,” she says to Xico on the way to the airport. “It is Loss, Yearning, Nostalgia, Bitter-sweetness – all at once. The word is *Saudade*.” (Mascarenhas, 18)

“Pantera” she heard the say.” (Mascarenhas, 141)

Mascarenhas has the experience of cultural differences and has successfully expressed the manner in which various cultures know each other through the novel, both Indo-Portuguese and African. One sees how colonisation has led to the amalgamation of numerous cultures.

## Chapter 4

### Comparative Analysis of Portrayal of Hybridity in the Two Texts

#### 4.1 Introducing the manner of the texts

In this chapter, a comparative analysis will be attempted between the two texts based on the hybridity portrayed in them. The two novels, even though authored by Goan-origin writers have some significant differences in their portrayal of hybridity in their own respective manners.

Wendell Rodricks, in *Poskem*, comes out with his idea in the manner of adopted children. He has shed light on the practice that had been going on in the state of Goa for many years since the time of being under the yoke of Portuguese colonisation. In doing so the author spans a vast multitude of geographical area. In traversing between two continents, namely Europe and Asia, he moves from Goa to Lisbon to Bombay to Poona and back again to Goa. This goes on quite a few times, only to finally land in Bicholim in order to tell the readers of the origin of his fictional story.

On the other hand, Margaret Mascarenhas in *Skin*, combines magical elements only to weave out a fantastic tale that crosses all borders across the oceans. In due course, the author comes out with the African slave trade during the Portuguese colonisation of their colonies. The main character, Pagan proves to us to be a truly cross-continental breed. She moves from US to Angola to Mozambique to Goa. These are the many places where we hear from her.

## 4.2 The analysis

As has been discussed above, *Poskem* deals with four siblings scattered in four different corners of the world. Alda in Camurlim village in Goa, Liana in Lisbon in Portugal, Nascimento in Bombay in the Indian state of Maharashtra and Sita in Poona, again in Maharashtra. They show a wide array of hybridity in their own respective ways.

The baby boy Solomon, who was born out of the union of Alda and Maurício, her stepbrother belongs to a mixed origin. This is so, since Alda was supposedly of a mixed ancestry. Maurício, on the other hand, was a pure-blood Catholic Goan boy. This is one of the main points of hybridity in the first section.

In Mascarenhas' *Skin*, one can see a similar instance with the birth of Pagan, the cross-continental protagonist of the novel. The readers come to understand that she is in fact, the result of her uncle Leandro's union with Saudade, when she was working as a slave. Here too, the resultant child belongs to a mixed origin.

Moving on, one reads in *Poskem* how Alda avenges the sexual exploitation of her beloved friend Tommy who was ravaged by Fausto Carvalho, the master of the grand Carvalho estate. The elaborate description of the interiors of the estate mansion. This mansion has many Portuguese-inspired elements present in it. All of these have been discussed in the second chapter.

On the other hand, we do not read any such description of houses in *Skin*. Many descriptions are given in the text but none of them are so vivid descriptions of the houses inspired by the former coloniser.

The readers read about Liana as a 'foreign-returnee' right at the very beginning of the story. As mentioned earlier, she had married Luis Miguel and hence had moved to Lisbon, his place of origin.

In the novel *Skin*, one reads about Pagan returning from the United States at her maternal grandparents' farm to her hometown in Goa. She is torn between two identities. Her both parents belong to two different cultures and locations.

One also sees Liana visiting the Indian traders in Lisbon for purchasing spices in order to prepare some dishes in appreciation of her aunt (father's sister) for letting her stay with her on her visit to the country's capital city.

In an almost similar situation in Mascarenhas' work, one reads about Pagan's maternal grandmother, her Bigmama in Bombay on a visit to the Consul.

"When she arrived in Bombay, Mary Elizabeth Ward had gone straight to the American Consulate. She was given an immediate appointment with the Consul to whom she presented a copy of documents identifying her as the legal guardian of one Miranda Flores, minor, U.S. Citizen. She explained her fear that the child's paternal grandmother might oppose her legal right to custody." (Mascarenhas, 188)

Liana proves to be a fantastic cook. She cooks various tasty dishes. One such dish is the Assado de Leitão, Goan style. This she prepares just four days before her only son, José Luis Miguel was to fly to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for his further studies.

In Nascimento's section of the text in *Poskem*, one sees a whole lot of food hybridity. The amazing chef conjures up food dishes of exceptional quality. Various international food he prepares at the Taj Hotel in Bombay.

Nothing of such calibre is seen in the other text. A sad realisation for food lovers.

Nascimento's wife Rosa's origin is spoken of in detail at the very first mention of her at the part where his marriage is spoken about.

“Rosa was a quiet girl of Goan ancestry from Shivaji Park in Bombay. She matched Nascimento’s smile with her dark brown eyes. Her hair was always kept short. She had the crinkly mop of black hair like her father. Goa being at the crossroads of trade since ancient times, it is not unusual to find blue Greek eyes, Persian beaked noses and Arab cheekbones. Among Rosa’s ancestors, the blood of an African slave enriched the gene pool to create tall, handsome men and women that one sees till today in the state. Rosa was a proud product of these Afro-Goan unions. She was kind and compassionate. Nascimento found in her a companion to end the lonely hours after work. They rented a small apartment in Colaba which they would move into after they married. The marriage was held in Divar a week after India got Independence from the British.” (Mascarenhas, 51)

In a similar manner one sees the origin of various characters, like that of Pagan questioned.

Goa’s fall into decline and the exodus of young Goans is spoken about in *Poskem*. The primary reason this being for job requirements.

In Sita’s section, one reads about the two twins that are born as a result of her union with her stepbrother. These two boys, namely Arjun and Lakshman are an epitome of hybrid offspring.

The main similarity between the two texts *Poskem* and *Skin* is that of Portuguese words being infused in the colloquy. This has already been discussed above.

At the same time, many things portrayed in Mascarenhas’ *Skin* are not at all seen in Rodricks’ *Poskem*.

To begin with Pagan’s travel in airplane to India is described. She takes it up because her paternal grandmother, Gina suddenly takes seriously ill. In doing so, Pagan

traverses boundaries for her loved ones. She returns to her homesoil and starts investigating into her roots.

Secondly, the love relationship blooming between Katie and Frankie on a soil away from home. Something similar to this isn't seen in the other text.

Another concrete difference is that of Yvonne Lafayette, the cultural anthropologist and Pagan's childhood friend coming out with amazing finds based on culture. For instance, the auto-biography she has come up with entitled 'White Magic'.

This sums up the chapter based on the comparative analysis of the two primary texts used in this work.



## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

This chapter will be the final one to this work. Now that the similarities and differences between the two have been brought out, draw clear conclusions will be drawn here.

It has been seen in the previous chapter in detail all the various manners in which the hybridity is seen in the two primary texts, namely *Poskem* by Wendell Rodricks and *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas. The readers are left enthralled by the time they make it to the end of both these breathtakingly exquisite narratives.

Both of them have been unique in their own way. In this conclusion chapter, it is required to shed some focus and at the same time revisit on some of significant instances worth mentioning. In addition to captivating the readers' attention and leaving them spellbound, these totally pull at the readers' heartstrings and evoke a sense of deep pity in them.

Not forgetting to mention the following very heart-wrenching scene in *Poskem*;

“Shanta, on seeing this, began to hurry away. She did not turn back. Her tear-streaked face and a broken heart could not bear the emotion of what she had done. ‘Please God, look after them. I beg you...’ (Rodricks, 168)

This, as one knows, happens in the very last section of the text dedicated to Shanta, the original birth mother of the four *poskim* in the fictional story. The scene takes place near the Souza Correia household, after Shanta has left Alda at God's mercy there. Just the thought of it in imagination and visualising the scene is very heartbreaking.

The following scene in *Skin* too has a similar effect on the readers;

“One night, just before bedtime, Pagan was wrestling with Bigdaddy on her grandparents’ four-poster bed, when her right shoulder popped out of its socket. Katie couldn’t be reached at home. “We can’t wait for her,” said Forrest Ward, “Get the truck out.” (Mascarenhas, 71)

Forrest Ward alias Bigdaddy, who is Pagan’s maternal grandfather, was feeling very guilty for causing such inconvenience and pain to his beloved granddaughter. He cradles her in his arms all the way till they get to the Bakersfield Memorial Hospital. And because medical attention is delayed once at the hospital since the grandmother had to fill up a couple of forms at the emergency lobby desk, in his impatience, he starts bellowing at the passing nurses with “Is there a doctor in this Goddam hospital?” And was quite beside himself.

On reading further, one sees how Pagan protects her Bigdaddy, whom she loves a lot, from any sort of accusations. On being asked by the doctor the reason for her fall, she says that she was jumping on the bed and fell off it. She is, in a way, pretty fierce in her protection of him so to speak.

One has come to realise in due course of the novel, that the skin of a person plays a very crucial one all through the novel. If it is a lighter tone, it takes a role of superiority and privileges. But on the other hand, if it is on the darker side, it takes the role of numerous hardships. This ‘skin’ also represents and speaks volumes of the caste relations and religious identities as well as the tensions that surround these factors in an individual.

One comes to see that the true origin of Pagan is quite different from the one that Livia, her aunt and godmother initially tells her. The one about the Saraswat Brahmins and their conversion in order to save their land and other assets. It is Esperança, her maid and

companion since her childhood who tells Pagan about the brutal history of the slave trade during the Portuguese colonial era and how her ancestors troubled and dehumanised those of Esperança's. This leaves no stone unturned in doing, just to make sure that Pagan has gained the right information from a credible source.

Dale Luis Menezes, in his blog titled *The Valley of Words: The DNA of Slavery* writes the following;

“Just like the mitochondrial DNA, which we can only receive from our mothers, the stories or histories in *Skin* are relayed by women. (As an afterthought, how about calling this *mitochondrial narration*?). Women are at the center of this novel. Their longings and losses are skilfully portrayed. The men who genuinely love the women in this book die an untimely death and the ones who don't, meet a ghastly end.” (Menezes)

Through this work, Mascarenhas has spoken about some African genetics involved in the genetic build-up material of many Goans. Many aren't aware of the same and the author comes out with a valid point in doing so. The more the readership, especially among the Goans, the more will be the awareness about the same.

The main point to be kept in mind is that the few Goan diasporic writers in the field of writing do not have much readership. This is the main reason why many people, especially other Goans themselves are not aware of the two primary texts used in the course of this work. Although many of these Goan-based texts are now being included in the curricula in many schools and colleges, there is yet a whole lot of unawareness about certain topics that concern Goans.

It is similar to the practice of adopting orphaned children that had been going on in the state for a long time as discussed earlier in this work. In addition to this, as mentioned earlier, many of the Goan natives aren't even till date aware of their African roots. Many

more such topics exist in other Goan texts as well. The people have a lot to discover in them.

In addition to that, the many layers of hybridity brought out in the two primary texts would serve to enthrall such readers who will be caught totally unawares. Hence bringing out such stuff to a wider audience is the need of the hour.

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



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Dias, 1 "At a gathering of immigrants newly settled in North America the question was debated: Is there a distinctive Goan personality? Almost immediately a rift appeared along the fault line dividing generations. Yes, a hybrid of East and West, a mixture of all the cultures that once dominated our ancestors. What is our culture anyway? Song and dance, food, caste, religion. An authoritarian culture, oppressive of women and the young. Goans are like coconuts, ventured someone, brown outside, white inside. There is really no Goan identity, another declared, only expediency, survival techniques. Chameleon-like adaptability. Some Indian elements westernized, some western elements Indianized. Attachment to the land. Sentimental nostalgia. No no not so! What is it to be Goan? Warmth, hospitality, family ties, a passion for excellence. The village is the heart of Goan culture. Goan youth abroad are completing the gradual loss of identity begun by their elders.... They wanted to be English or something... would not be found

Dias, 2 cooking Goan, wearing Indian clothes.... We must look for our roots in India. But... look at colonial history!... look what they did! What options did our ancestors have? ...Other questions were asked: is religion the decisive factor in Goan identity? Is the Portuguese colonial legacy? If so, what is that legacy? Does the mere fact of having been born in Goa or of Goan stock endow one with a Goan identity? Is there a Goan past, a history common to all Goans?" (Coutinho) -João da Veiga Coutinho

Dias, 3 Chapter One Introduction "The issue of what constitutes Goan identity has baffled us now for some decades, perhaps because Goan identity must naturally be as fluid, as porous, and as amorphous as Goa's borders have been down the centuries." -Victor Rangel-Ribeiro Only when one touches upon the topic of identity is he or she able to delve deeper into the intricacies of the culture or section of people that he or she belongs to. It is the basic identity of a person that defines him or her. Without a genuine idea of the same, one is like a lost soul in this world. It is the sole idea that speaks of one's roots. According to Victor Rangel-Ribeiro in his introduction to Donna J. Young's book *Mirror To Goa*; "While it is easy for us to recognise a fellow-Goan, it is far more difficult to identify a common Goan identity. Those of us who live overseas usually have little difficulty in spotting another Goan in a crowd, either in bustling Times Square in New York or in a packed subway car deep in the bowels of London, or Lisbon, or Paris" (3). Through this, one can understand the depths of familiarity when it comes to recognising another person of the same culture. Another factor that comes into picture here is that of hybridity. The term originated from biology and botany, where it refers to a crossing between two species by cross-pollination which gives birth to a third "hybrid" species. In the twentieth century, the term extended beyond the biological and racial areas to embrace linguistics and culture.